

New polyester staple fiber plant Wellknown deepens Oerlikon partnership

After years of working with Oerlikon Barmag, Chairman Anil Gupta is leading Wellknown into the polyester staple fiber market with a new Oerlikon Neumag plant in India.

Anil Gupta is a man who knows what he is looking for. As chairman and managing director of the Wellknown Group, one of the largest integrated Polyester Filament Yarn (PFY) producers in India, Mr. Gupta recognizes the importance of having a vision and a strategy.

"One of the reasons behind our success is strategic planning," he says, reflecting on the company's recent expansion. "This is the man-

agement process of creating and maintaining a balance between the resources currently available and the evolving market trends."

Founded in Mumbai in 1987, Wellknown has become one of India's leading exporters of textured yarn, delivering to satisfied customers in more than 50 countries worldwide. "Our company is in the process of expanding and consolidating its business activities," he says, explaining the strategic vision moving forward. "We are experiencing solid demand for our products on a continual basis." The company is now focused on creating additional value for its existing product lines while attracting new clientele.

Building on established success while venturing into new business areas is of course a delicate process, but Mr. Gupta knows where to look for the right kind of partnerships. "Wellknown has always believed in working with global market leaders," he says. "For more than 10 years, we have been very closely associated with the Oerlikon

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Anil Gupta, chairman and managing director of the Wellknown Group

Barmag brand, with very positive experiences throughout." When Wellknown set its sights on expanding into the Polyester Stable Fiber (PSF) market, it did not have to look very far for a new trusted partner in Oerlikon Neumag.

In particular, Oerlikon Neumag's Research and Development Division caught Mr. Gupta's eye. "From my point of view, the availability of R&D infrastructure is the most important criteria for any technol-



ogy and engineering company," he says. "I was very impressed with the Oerlikon Neumag's facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, I was also impressed with the variety of Oerlikon Neumag's active product lines. This gave me an impression of a very stable and broadly-based company – a pre-requisite for long-term sustainability." In practical terms, Mr. Gupta realized that long-term sustainability would also require sound investment planning. For Wellknown, the question then became what kind of investment

would make the most sense for the PSF market. After deliberations and discussions, Wellknown and Oerlikon Neumag decided to construct a two-step plant in Daman, on the West Coast of India, which could deliver 225 tons per day – not a small task by any measure. "Our positive experience with Oerlikon Barmag has continued with Oerlikon Neumag as well," Mr. Gupta says proudly. "The plant was delivered promptly and commissioned in record time, and we have been able to produce very good fiber quality."

In a competitive global marketplace, quality is increasingly more important. "We mainly focus on the high-end market for blended cotton yarn," Mr. Gupta says. "In this segment, customers are also very demanding. Quality is a given – without it, you cannot even enter the market – but above all else the most important demand is to have a high degree of consistency in everything we do." Over the years, Wellknown customers have come to expect a high-level of quality in the company's PFY products.

When it came to establishing new PSF product lines, Wellknown had to look for synergies. "The additional product line needed to be both complementary and supplementary to our existing product mix," Mr. Gupta says. "This would create the most optimum use of our entire infrastructure and investments, stretching across three decades. Our industry is very cyclical, with strong peaks and valleys. Our focus has always been on adding new investments to our portfolio which will be in line with our existing capabili-

ties, while offering opportunities to balance out the business cycles of our existing lines."

In order to achieve fiscal balance throughout the business cycles, Mr. Gupta knew the PSF lines would need to be global in outlook, which meant that the plant would need to function at a global level. "Our first criteria was that the plant should have a global scale in terms of the productivity per line," he says. "At the same time, the technology should offer enhanced products and

value for our customers. In addition, the technology should also be able to guarantee the production of competitive products for our customers as future trends on the market surface."

Looking to the future, Mr. Gupta is pleased with the direction Wellknown is heading. "We would like to become a trendsetter in whatever field we operate," he says. Evaluating the progress of working with Oerlikon Neumag so far, Mr. Gupta reflects on the first time he stepped foot into the Neumünster premises: "Last but not least, the overall environment Oerlikon Neumag conveyed had a certain amount of warmth, be it the customer center or the greenery within the complex." In the end, progress can only truly be measured by the way it helps people in their daily lives. » (wca)



After years of successful filament yarns production, Anil Gupta (left) and his son Rahul Gupta (right) are now expanding their business into the polyester staple fiber market.

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