Something old, something new

Have (pronounced har-ver) set about dragging the company kicking and screaming into the 21st Century. The company had many inherent strengths, not least of which was its long-established quality culture. Its workforce, especially its production and technical staff, were amongst the most skilled and experienced in the industry. Its products were also widely recognised as being the world standard for quality and reliability. On this, Have decided, there could be no compromise so competing on quality and lowest lifetime cost rather than price continued to be the primary weapon in gaining and retaining customers.

He also felt that these strengths were almost a ‘trade secret’ within much of the market so a much more proactive approach to its sales and marketing was adopted with a focus on providing end-users with scientific evidence of the superiority of Dunlop conveyor belts.

“We would normally expect our belts to last up to 50% longer than our competitors and in many cases even longer than that,” claims Mr Have. “Buyers are naturally tempted by prices that seem to be too good to refuse but what is often not recognised is that they will use two or three inferior quality belts when they could have paid a little more at the start and used only one Dunlop belt. The old saying that you only get what you pay for has never been truer.”

Riding out the storms

Despite the on-going problems in the world economy that started in 2008 and the raw material crisis in 2010 that saw the market prices of raw materials spiral, the company’s growing strength has so far enabled it to ride out the storms. When the going gets tough, many companies resort to cost cutting and research and development is usually the first to fail victim to such measures. Dunlop did the opposite. Applying the old adage of “attack is the best form of defence” they took the bold step of expanding their laboratory and investing huge amounts in the very latest production equipment. Dunlop maintain that because of the growing demand for longer belt life economy as well as rapidly evolving technology, failing to move forward is the equivalent of going backwards.

Thanks to the ground-breaking developments that are now seemingly commonplace in their laboratory, Dunlop is creating a ‘new generation’ of conveyor belts that are increasingly able to withstand just about anything that can be thrown at them. From highly abrasive, razor sharp materials to ozone pollution. From extreme heat to extreme cold, Dunlop belts can handle it, they say, largely due to the work carried out in their laboratory.

In the future

Dunlop continues to invest in the future. Their current multi-million euro factory expansion includes the introduction of the latest, most technologically advanced steelcord manufacturing line in the world. Historically, Dunlop had only ever produced rubber multi-ply belting in their Dutch factory but in 2013 they will be able to supply their customers with steelcord belt line, which is primarily used for long distance conveyors. At the same time, another new “double daylight” vulcanizing press will allow them to increase production capacity on their traditional range of multi-ply belting.

Dunlop is also rapidly expanding its network of international sales offices and Dunlop Service centres. According to Have, they need to be physically closer to their customers in order to provide the best possible technical and service support. “We have our own sales and service operations in France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Morocco, Russia, and within the next few months we will also be opening up new centres and offices in the Middle East and in Africa. We also have a good network of authorized agents and distributors.”

Edwin Have sees the ‘Company of the Year’ award as welcome recognition of the efforts being made by everyone in the business. “We are very proud to receive this award. There can’t be many companies, especially in Europe at the moment, that are expanding their production facilities and building a network as we are doing with Dunlop Service as well as developing new products. It’s a very exciting time for all of us.”

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