



Q. Constantia has been a market leader in its field and is known for investing in the best in class when it comes to technology; what are your thoughts regarding this statement.

Let me take a step back referring to the time when we were 'Creative'. We were always known to take a measured approach to things - What is absolutely required, is what should be bought.

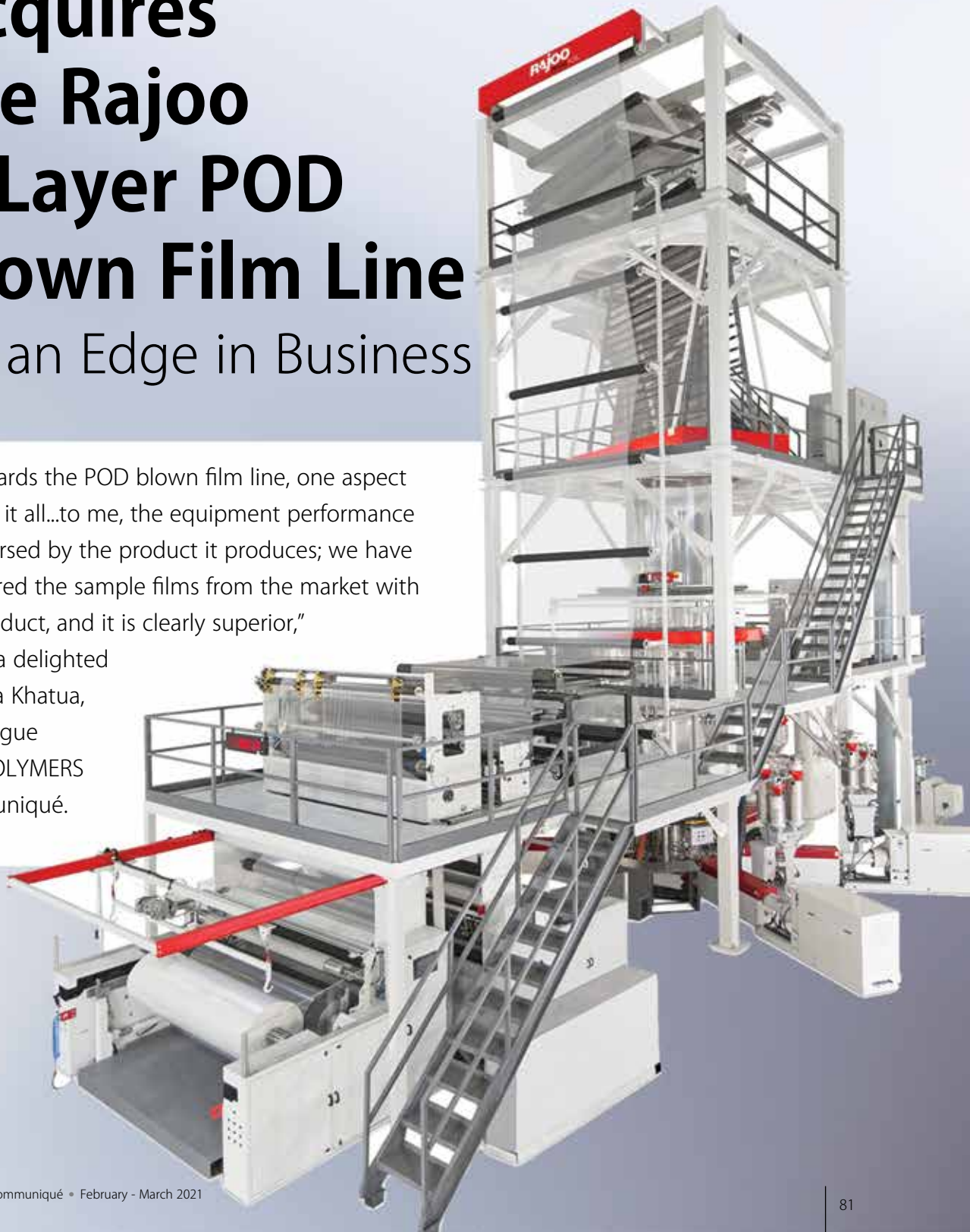
During the process of the takeover of Creative by Constantia, there was a team of delegates from overseas who were evaluating / assessing the takeover. By then, we had placed an order of a fully loaded

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Constantia India Acquires the Rajoo 5-Layer POD Blown Film Line for an Edge in Business

“As regards the POD blown film line, one aspect will say it all...to me, the equipment performance is endorsed by the product it produces; we have compared the sample films from the market with our product, and it is clearly superior,” shares a delighted Srikanta Khatua, in dialogue with POLYMERS Communiqué.



three-layer line with Rajoo for our Puducherry plant; the machine was delivered after the takeover happened. The machine was installed and it performed extremely well. In fact, we pushed the machine to produce 650 kgs per hour, which was 100 kgs more than the nameplate capacity. The Constantia team clearly understood the Creative way of working and appreciated the technology and working of the Indian OEM. During the last years, we have also experienced Rajoo in context to its supply, service and support at the Puducherry plant. I must say, we were extremely satisfied.

When it came to placing an order for a 5-layer POD blown film line for the Kolkata plant, there were options of global players who have supplied equipment in the past, wherein their prices were high, but the output was similar as compared to the Indian equipment suppliers. We decided to look at Indian manufacturers. On the same criteria, we then invited quotes from Indian OEMs for the 5-layer POD blown film line. We instated a total evaluation in terms of technical, commercial and service support by a four-member team, of which I was a part. Even a survey was conducted by the team covering all the suppliers for their equipment pan-India and the data was evaluated.

After a complete evaluation of all the data that we had gathered, we were clear about our requirement that the equipment needs to be close to European standards, fitting within our budget, fulfilling quality requirements as indicated, with strict performance criterion, both in terms of output and energy consumption, while adhering to mandated safety norms. After a

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few rounds of discussions and agreements, Rajoo was the unanimous choice to be our preferred supplier, although we were MNCs!

Q. How important is a 5-layer POD blown film for your business today?

A 5-layer POD blown film is very useful in current times. The market is very competitive, and a 5-layer POD blown film gives the business a competitive edge i.e., an ability to supply a stronger film at a lesser price. This is due to the technological difference. The end result being higher customer satisfaction due to the high quality of the product at an aggressive price. In Puducherry, we have a 3-layer machine to produce lamination grade film; but now, we would use the 5-layer POD blown film line to deliver this product.

Q. You have been using blown film lines from globally acclaimed suppliers. How do you see Indian manufacturers?

There are a couple of attributes that are looked at whilst making a decision for an OEM supplier i.e. price, quality, service and availability. To give you a flavour as to how Indian OEM equipment suppliers compare to global standards is that after our satisfying experience with Rajoo, Constantia India considers Rajoo as its preferred supplier. We are supplying products made on Indian machines that are matching global standards. I must also add here that even demands of Indian customers these days are very stringent. From our Kolkata operations, we supply quality laminate products to domestic and overseas markets.

Further, if we have to compare the quality, material and precision of the equipment from Europe versus India, the Europeans may be superior, but so is the price which is quite the decider. The buyer also needs to understand whether such high-end specifications are essential or desirable, and its impact on the end product quality; consistency definitely is an important parameter that is always considered. Another crucial aspect that needs to be considered when it comes to after-sales support is the response to emergencies, costs of spares and services.

On the broader side, I surely feel that machines from India do have the ability to meaningfully compete in the global arena.

Q. As regards the Rajoo equipment, in your evaluation, what are the key attributes that you considered while making the purchase? Specifically, as regards the 5-layer POD blown film line from Rajoo, what was the reason of this choice?

As a company, Rajoo are pioneers in the film extrusion industry. Rajoo has amassed enough expertise and skill to value-add in this industry.

Inhouse manufacturing of critical units, besides all mechanical parts, is a significant attribute for 'quality machines'. This I see as an area of immense strength for Rajoo and a big comfort for their customers. Coupled to this, is the inhouse availability of spares that furthers the customer comfort.

An attitude that deserves a mention here is the approach and ability of the top and middle management of Rajoo. They all seem to have dedicated their lives to the business of extrusion and are very devoted to this business; this makes them stand apart in their field with their years of commitment to the industry.

As regards the POD blown film line, one aspect will say it all...to me, the equipment performance is endorsed by the product it produces; we have compared the sample films from the market with our product, and it is clearly superior. We had received a commitment that the supplied 5-layer POD blown film line shall produce a film with a thickness of 25 microns. We have pushed it to below 20 microns and that too on a 5-layer POD film structure and it is running absolutely well, that's some engineering.

To top it all, is the energy consumption of this production line is 20% lesser than comparative European machines; a higher output, as mentioned earlier, only makes the deal sweeter.

Q. What application categories do you wish to address with this machine?

This Rajoo equipment would immensely help us with our R&D to develop more products that would be used to strengthen the product packaging during transit and, thus, offer the products a better shelf-life. Furthermore, the customer gets a comfort level when they know that they have a 5-layer blown film plant to deliver products, as the product quality and strength is assured.

The food segment is the most booming sector as of now. I am pleased to inform you that it's just months that we commissioned this machine, and, today, we are running at full capacity with no space; the produce from this machine is completely sold out! For records, this machine was commissioned in October, 2020 and right from Day 1, I do not remember that there was a trial run... it has been running to full capacity. That speaks volumes for the product and the company behind it.



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Q. Any specific challenges you faced while buying the machine in these unprecedented pandemic times?

Taking you through the journey a little bit, the decision of placing an order of procurement of the Rajoo 5-layer POD blown film line was taken during pre-COVID times. I must credit Rajoo here who handled the very demanding activities like building, virtual testing at factory, packaging, dispatch, transport and commissioning, all done during the prevalent unprecedented pandemic times. I can certainly say that at Constantia, if we were stretched 25%, Rajoo were stretched 75% to make this project happen!

The Rajoo team has been excellent in their commitment to deliver. Can you believe it, that in the prevailing times of so much uncertainty, such a big project was delayed by just 3 weeks; a very commendable feat. In retrospect, the Rajoo planning to procure the most critical components, air-freighting the imported parts and having it in their facility just before the lockdown proved to be the game-changer.

What followed then was a determined team effort. As regards commissioning, all the protocols were followed by both the parties in terms of hygiene, sanitisation and enough care about other health hazards to ensure that commissioning of the machine went off smoothly. As we look back, I must applaud every member of the team. ■■