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Balaji Furthers Its Extrusion Coating and Laminating Capabilities with **Rajoo Kohli**



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“Cost is not the only factor to make this choice. An important criterion which led us to choose Rajoo was that they have evolved as a professionally managed company. They are open to suggestions, they are fast and customer-centric in their approach to provide customised solutions,” conveys Pranav Bhalara, in dialogue with POLYMERS Communiqué.

Q. As you have been using machines acclaimed globally, what attributes, both technical and commercial, drew you to shortlist Rajoo Engineers as your preferred supplier for your latest Extrusion Coating and Lamination (ECL) line?

I must say that there have been a few reasons for this choice. Infact, to tell you, when Rajoo first launched their ECL line, I had approached them and knowing my requirements, they asked me to wait. If that was not the case, I would have been their first customer.

Coming back to the question, Rajoo Engineers is a known supplier, a local supplier with easy access. Attributes that I think are crucial for making such a decision.

To add, going by what our beloved PM promotes, ‘Vocal for local’, I thought I should also stand by that and promote our Indian suppliers, being a responsible citizen. Hence, I approached them and expressed my wish to go for an ECL line from them. I am of the opinion that we need to encourage and promote Indian manufacturers, of course they should be able to deliver on machine performance coupled with good aesthetics and sturdiness.

The pandemic further highlighted to me the importance of a domestic supplier. In fact, this machine decision was taken in the previous year when the pandemic first wave had begun. Going by the trend of the pandemic, we could sense that this would not go away soon and we would have to deal with unnecessary delays in spares and technical support if we rely too much on the South East Asian (SEA) suppliers. To tell you, we have not seen





From the Desk of Chandrakant Bhalara, Managing Director

We at Balaji are very happy with the equipment supplied by Rajoo Engineers. Their extrusion coating and laminating machine is good. I must say here that I normally do not look majorly into these machines, but the way the Rajoo machines have been working, I am happy with their performance.

too many foreigners / engineers visit our country in the past one year and there have been cases when lines supplied by overseas suppliers are lying idle for want of installation which is least desirable or could not be serviced. We, thus, thought that it would be not only in our interest, but also in our country's interest to encourage local suppliers.

Furthermore, I have machines supplied by South East Asian suppliers which are basically Chinese and Taiwanese. Overall, while I am not unhappy with their support and services, however, at times, they do use a lot of components from SEA which pose a challenge for its procurement in India, leading to sourcing and logistics issues.

Q. The concept of 'appropriate technology' of the Rajoo Kohli ECL line supplied to suit your specific needs. Please comment.

At the outset, I must admit here that I am quite satisfied with the performance of the Rajoo Kohli ECL line. What do you need to look for when validating an ECL line...to validate any ECL line, one needs to look at two major components, one is the extrusion part, which is called the hot part and the other is the web-handling or the cold part, including anchor coating. Rajoo is already very strong in the hot part i.e. the extrusion part. I was aware of that and had seen their extrusion machines and was happy with their performance. The only challenge was the web-handling and my confidence was boosted by the fact that they had a collaboration with

Kohli, and I have known people from Kohli since long - the way they work and their machines. I was confident about the machine and I am happy to say, that at the moment, the machine is running just like any other good world-class machine.

When we purchased our first ECL machine, we purchased a fully loaded machine since we did not know too much about the machinery. The second purchase was more prudent and we only took what we wanted, i.e. the right need and right modules were identified and purchased. The best part of the Rajoo Kohli ECL line is that they are customisable so that you can get the appropriate technology that you are looking for. Here, it is important to understand the typical Indian mindset; as a buyer we would want maximum value for our money. This sentiment stems from the fact that as Indians, we value our hard-earned money. Typically, we want all the possible features and more, at the most reasonable cost. Am glad that we took the Rajoo Kohli ECL line.

Q. An attribute that has immense impact on the commerce of running such a line is its energy consumption. How does the Rajoo machine fare on this ground?

To be honest, we have had this machine with us for the past one and a half month only. While I have no comparative figures as such to quote on the energy efficiency of the line; I am sure Rajoo has focused on this very

important parameter and worked out their numbers, but I do see energy savings already. I am a very hard task master and I shall do this audit soon. After a few more months of running this line, my team would conduct an audit by loading the same job with the same parameters on all the lines which should be able to give us fair numbers on the energy efficiency.

Q. If you have to highlight 3 aspects of the machine that impressed you, what would they be?

There are three very clear aspects that come to my mind which can be highlighted:

The first one being the quality of the parts and assemblies put together in the equipment are of a high grade. I feel Rajoo has taken even the minutest of care to ensure all aspects are covered when it comes to technology and has integrated the bought-out assemblies well, whether it is related to the hardware or software.

The second point being the build of the machine. The amount of material being used, the quality of building it is quite heavy and chunky. The Rajoo Kohli machine feels very solid and sturdy, and gives you an overall satisfaction that you have purchased a great piece of technology.

The third aspect being the look of the machine or the aesthetics. If we have to compare them with millennials, they all prefer to have good looking machines accompanied with good performance. This machine from Rajoo looks very clean and neat.

Q. How important is automation in similar lines of today? Overall, how do you rate supplies from India?

To state a fact, amongst all the ECL lines that are present or sold by the SEA region, there is only 60% to 70% automation. They have to work hard on

the Industry 4.0 aspect, which I see is the future. The Europeans are quite ahead in the race in this aspect, having fully automated lines. We do need to catch up fast.

Also, another point to highlight here is that some of our Indian suppliers reduce prices by offering options to purchase ancillaries and additional features directly by the customer. While this may make them more approachable to the customer in terms of cost, it also poses as a deterrent to the customer as he will have to source them from different vendors with variable pricing and then depend on the Indian supplier to integrate it. Here, the Europeans have a complete package supplied to you and a single window to contact for all spares and support, which is most convenient.

And this has been Rajoo's approach too, most of the requirements they have included in the equipment and integrated them well.

Q. How was the commissioning experience; did the product achieve its desired output?

The machine installation time was satisfying. It took 2 - 3 days max, to satisfactorily reach the desired production output levels. This was due to the fact that Rajoo had already conducted extensive trials within their plant before it was commissioned here. Infact, there are not very many set ups in the country of having an ECL line as this with a line speed of over 300 m/min. I guess there is some industry apprehension. Team Rajoo did quite well here. This ECL line comes with a line speed of 350 m/min, trials of which were anyway conducted by Rajoo on their shopfloor.

It is creditable being their fourth or fifth machine and they have evolved extremely fast. Although Rajoo team took a tad longer to supply, may be because I am a tough customer and I like things to be done in the correct

manner and absolutely prim and proper. Initially, there were some discussions and then things got streamlined and things fell in place.

Q. Beyond the machine, how has been your overall experience with Rajoo?

I must tell you this...I had heard a lot of stories about Rajoo, which were hearsay until I really got to know them well. As a company, they have evolved very well. I am inspired with their growth story.

They have a clear mindset and have a good understanding of the customer's requirements. They have managed to stay abreast with the latest techniques and technology. They operate as a very clear and transparent company which is, at times, taken as being blunt and rigid. In my opinion, it is good to be clear and upfront, rather than being surprised or shocked at a later stage. Rajoo, as a company, conduct themselves with professionalism of global standards - lots of clarity and straight forward in approach. They are doing well and are evolving fast and this is the correct time to promote our Indian manufacturers as these and take them to the next level.

From a broader perspective, today,

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even Indian manufacturers source best components from across the globe, resulting in a good build, quality and energy efficiency. Additionally, earlier Indian manufacturers' approach was rigid and also not customer-centric, which has changed rapidly. I am sure that the best in the world too are feeling the heat from quality Indian machine manufacturers. I feel, we may soon see mergers and acquisitions, infact which have already begun.

Q. What is your message to the Indian flexible packaging industry when making capex decisions?

With my 14 years of experience in this industry, I can clearly say that cost is not the only factor to make this choice. An important criterion which led us to choose Rajoo was that they have evolved as a professionally managed company. They are open to suggestions, they are fast and customer-centric in their approach to provide customised solutions. Moreover, extrusion coating and lamination is itself a very challenging subject, it's not that easy, so it's crucial to identify a good partner here.

Q. Any views on the Rajoo Innovation Centre? As a user, how do you evaluate the blown films from Rajoo Innovation Centre?

I have visited the Rajoo Innovation Centre (RIC) quite a few years ago and I think it is a wonderful concept. It is a remarkable effort to have a production line installed in the plant and have your customers use it for testing and also for their production as well. This is a commendable effort and I think it's a first in the industry in India.

I have been using films from their RIC and the quality is good; I have no complaints. It's important for users to understand here that the quality of the film is dependent on the input material, process parameters as well as the machines. ■■