

Imperative to inculcate BEST PRACTICES in energy usage

A concerted effort coupled with cost-effective solutions from the chemical process equipment manufacturers can provide a new dimension to the SMEs in chemical manufacturing and pave the path for them to embrace energy-efficient technologies.

■ Prasenjit Chakraborty

Convincing SME players to adopt energy-efficient alternatives has always been a challenge by itself. "However, the challenge persists only till cracking the first customer for any application. The others just follow. We work like business partners with our customers," says Amit Kapur, Director, Everest Group. Any indigenous company understands the price implications faced by its customers in a developing nation and the need to ensure cost-effectiveness. There are companies, which have high-quality manufacturing unit in India, and hence enjoy the benefit of lower cost of production. "Our management believes in forwarding these benefits/privileges to our customers, while not compromising on quality, performance and services at any time," observes Kapur.

Elaborating on the challenges faced by equipment manufacturers while convincing SME players to go for energy-efficiency, Kapur states, "Probably, the most important issues for any industry today include better resource utilisation, reduction in process time, higher yields and better product quality." The major concern today is ensuring low energy consumption per unit of product manufactured, and this objective is a major decision-making factor. "Innovation is the essence of the

world today. Resources and market advantages do not matter much. Intellect and innovation do. The chemical and pharmaceutical industries in India are also experiencing the same. However, current demand patterns suggest tremendous growth potential," he points out.

In order to make SME players energy efficient, equipment manufacturers are providing customised solutions to them. "We provide customised quality products, maintaining the highest level of design and manufacturing standards, and sized appropriately to give the most competitive prices and maximum energy savings to our customers," says Kapur.

Marketing strategies

Effective marketing skills play an important role in convincing SME players to go for any new equipment or technology. Besides, the marketing team should find potential areas where products marketed by it can do wonders. The SME sector, by and large, prefers to operate with traditional technology. The reasons behind it are mindset and financial constraints. Against this backdrop, deciphering right information to SMEs is must. "Our marketing team constantly works on identifying areas where our products can revolutionise process. Having identified a niche, our technical team designs and develops products to suit the requirements," says Kapur. Citing an example, he says that vacuum booster manufactured by Everest Group has found a niche in vacuum distillation processes in menthol industry

where it has provided huge improvements in processing efficiency. "We believe in diversifying our application engineering and earning out of satisfied customers rather than diversifying the product mix itself," explains Kapur.

In its endeavour to convince SME players to become energy efficient, Forbes Marshall conducts training programmes. "We have a training centre where we conduct training programmes. A large number of our customers attending these programmes are SMEs. We also work with industry associations like Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to generate awareness on energy efficiency," says Pradyumna Madhusudan, Manager, Energy Service Division, Forbes Marshall.

The company also brings out several publications; for instance, the energy conservation tip compilations, which are widely distributed free of cost. "We have carried out a campaign where energy conservation tips are freely and widely circulated through email on a weekly basis. Besides, we have developed and distributed energy conservation tip posters," he adds. Most importantly, Forbes Marshall has formed clusters for process industry where they benchmark the specific fuel consumption, and offer comprehensive solutions based on cutting-edge technology, yielding the lowest specific thermal consumption and best value for money. Similar steps by other companies would take SMEs to new heights as far as energy efficiency is concerned. ■

Email: prasenjit.chakraborty@infomedia18.in