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*Employees and Company Culture Play
Vital Role For EsseL Propack's Success*

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Essel Propack

Employees and Company Culture Play Vital Role For Essel Propack's Success

*Written by: Robert Spence
Produced by: Jason Wright >>>*

Regional Vice President Ted Sojourner discusses how a strong company culture combined with superb employees and innovative technology is imperative to keep Essel Propack a world-class organization

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Employees and Company Culture Play Vital Role For Essel Propack's Success

Essel Propack is the largest specialty packaging company in the United States. Formed in 1984 in Mumbai, India, the Company manufactures laminated tubes and seamless extruded plastic tubes for an array of companies, selling more than 5 billion tubes each year. Through their state-of-the-art facilities in more than 12 countries, Essel Propack caters to diverse packaging needs for a variety of sectors, including oral care, cosmetics, personal care, pharmaceutical, food and industrial as well as customized solutions products. With innovation and sustainable packaging solutions, Essel Propack has become the Global Supplier of Choice.

In 2002 Essel Propack came to the U.S. to establish a long-term supply agreement with a key global consumer corporation. The Company specifically set up operations in Danville, Va., due to the close proximity of shipping

ports combined with the availability of a strong workforce and the financial benefits provided by the state and local community. For the last 10 years, the Company has continued to be a world-class organization and manufacturer by implementing extensive employee training programs combined with strong core values and continuous improvements.

“We realize as a company we need to demonstrate continuous improvements as our market is competitive and our customers are continuously looking for us to come up with ways to partner, to innovate in support of their new products and also to help manage costs for them,” explains Regional Vice President Ted Sojourner,

Company Culture

Strategically located in the Southside of Virginia, Essel Propack employs more than 300 employees and operates in a 200,000 square-foot facility. At this, the largest laminated tube supplier in the

world, company culture, recruitment and employees play a vital role in success. The Company is committed to being an employer of choice and supporting associates in terms of self-development and education. Essel Propack has implemented several programs to accommodate employees and identify opportunities the Company can learn from and improve.

“We’ve been very fortunate to have the support of our associates to provide the right culture and environment to make our employees happy,” says Sojourner. “Every year we do a corporate employee engagement





survey that allows our associates to express their commitment to the Company and identify areas of opportunity so we can grow and improve in terms of supporting our associates with their commitment to Essel Propack.”

As a global supplier, Essel Propack has a strong blend of customers worldwide and within the Americas Region supplies all of North America, Canada, Mexico and Colombia. Unlike many

other companies, Essel Propack manufactures and ships all of their products in-house at their facility in Danville, Virginia. The Company utilizes the SAP system, which is a business management software system for improving business process. In addition, Essel Propack has their own planning department for production, procurement department for purchasing raw materials and laminate, and logistics team for

shipping and receiving.

A large part of Essel Propack's success is its relationships with global customers.

“We have a customer based in Europe that is a major player in the U.S. and we were recently selected to be part of their strategic suppliers,” says Sojourner. “I think out of several thousand suppliers they probably have only 20 as strategic suppliers and we're one of them. We feel pretty good about

our capabilities, strengths and value added to be selected by this huge global Company.”

Safety

As a manufacturing company, safety plays a key role in the success of Essel Propack. The Company conducts various town hall and communication meetings, as well as regular meetings for employees focused on safety and quality. The Company also



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conducts seven at seven meetings, which are designed to select seven different associates at various levels and various departments to share ideas, concerns, rumors or anything the employees wish to confer. These meetings represent an opportunity for management to sit down with employees and achieve great interactive feedback.

Essel Propack has also implemented Six Sigma and established measurement metrics process to determine their production efficiency, utilization, scrap and inventory management.

"My head of manufacturing is a black belt in Six Sigma and I was fortunate to recruit him from our EP Corporate Team and bring him to the Americas Region," says Sojourner. "When you talk about Six Sigma or other programs where we focus on being a strong organization, he and I work closely together on various ideas and discuss cost saving projects. We continue to look for ways to better our raw materials and procurement of products."

Growing Trends

To stay competitive in their respected market, Essel Propack is constantly discovering and adapting to new trends in the

industry. As the biggest supplier of plastic and laminated tubes, the Company can manufacture a wide variety of tubes in different sizes, materials and structure, helping to stay updated with customer demand. The newest trend for laminated tubes is different sizing, including thinner structures.

"We do different structures and the trend right now seems to be on the laminated side to do thinner structures," says Sojourner. "The standard today is 275 microns but we're now doing 250, 220, 200 and thinner and thinner."

"There's a cost advantage with smaller tubing structure and another for the environment," Sojourner says. "There is less waste going into landfills and less compost when you have a thinner structure laminate."

Another growing trend for Essel Propack is decoration tubing. The Company has recently introduced high-definition decoration, a type of tube printing that provides a much higher resolution allowing clearer clarity of images on tubes. Oval tubing is another hot trend. Essel Propack is leading the industry in innovation and decoration development.

Unlike other companies, Essel Propack is adapting to current

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trends by reinvesting in production processes and equipment.

"While we do have a variety of production lines, the process is all the same. When a customer wants a new product or size we invest in different tooling," explains Sojourner. "We recently had an opportunity to do a very popular brand of hair products but they wanted it done in a 22 diameter, which is a tube size we typically don't do. So instead of declining the offer, we simply made a tooling investment and now we're able to produce them regularly."

Focusing on the Future (change this headline to fit in the SAFETY section)

As Essel Propack looks to the future, the Company is adapting to new trends and styles. A major trend the Company is seeing is a move towards tubes, which is preferred packaging because of the convenience, portability and functionality to dispense almost the entire product inside.

"We're seeing jars, bottles and tubes becoming more popular because of the benefit for esthetics and cleanliness," says Sojourner. "Products like shampoo and conditioners that are typically in

bottles but we're now seeing a trend towards tubes."

Another trend Essel Propack looks to capitalize on in the future is food.

"Food is one segment in the U.S. that we haven't seen in tubes but I think that may change down the road," explains Sojourner. "That trend started in Europe and I think we're starting to see more and more food products in tubes. When you look at business segments, I think tubes are becoming a package of strong preference and growth."

STATISTICS



INDUSTRY:
Specialty Packaging

FOUNDED:
1984

HEADQUARTERS:
Mumbai, India

KEY PEOPLE/TITLES:

- Ashok Goel, Vice Chairman/Managing Director
- M. Ramasamy, President
- Ted Sojourner, Regional Vice President/Americas

PRODUCTS:
Extruded Plastic Tubes, Laminate Tubes, Caps/Closures, Laminate, Flexible Packaging

REVENUE:
\$330 million USD

EMPLOYEES:
2,400

WEBSITE:
www.esselpropack.com

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