

Hot stuff

Prompt service helps HRS keep ahead of the market



PAKASH JADHAV

Das: HRS is unique in giving process guarantees

“We are our own competitors!” says V. Gokul Das, managing director, HRS Process Systems. The company’s UK parent, he points out, is the world number one in the manufacture of corrugated tube heat exchangers, an innovative product that gives HRS the technological advantage of helping its customers reduce their cost of ownership and increase their own capabilities. “But we also make plate heat exchangers, which are the cheapest, as well as the top-of-the-line Schellentube ones, which cost the most, because they have the highest metal content and the best heat transfer coefficient,” he explains. “So, we can get into every market.”

The corrugated tube technology has been developed over time from the food industry, Das says. “We have a design programme to correlate the heat transfer coefficient with the temperature profiles, and we can demonstrate this. We have installed some 6,000 units in the field, especially in pharmaceuticals manufacturing companies, over the past seven years. With a bulk drug unit needing an average of two heat exchangers, this is a

major sector,” he points out.

Apart from pharma, HRS also finds customers in the chemical process and edible oils industries, having participated in all the expansion projects of majors like India Glycols and Ruchi Soya. And the clients keep coming back for more: “About 40 per cent of our sales are repeat business,” says Das. Food and fruit processing, where evaporation is a major aspect of the pulp and beverage manufacturing processes, is also a big market. Heat exchangers are vital equipment in steel, power and cement plants, too. The company’s ‘key customers’ list is a virtual who’s who of biggies in all these sectors, from ACC, Biocon and Coca-Cola to Reliance, Syngenta and UltraTech Cement.

Consistency of performance

“We have been buying corrugated tube heat exchangers from HRS since 2000 onwards,” says V.P. Garg, senior vice-president, project & development, India Glycols, Noida. “These are primarily used by us for clean service. We must have done a business of more than ₹7 crore with them.

We found a consistency of performance with the required data from HRS and there was a good benefit.”

The Hyderabad-based pharma giant Dr Reddy’s Laboratories has also done over ₹6.5 crore worth of business with HRS over the past five years, which translates into more than 500 heat exchangers. “HRS has good quality standards, and performance to the duty conditions is consistent,” says K.S. Viswanath, senior manager, engineering services department, chemical technology operations. “They have perfected the technology, and maintain delivery schedules well. The performance is the criterion for preferring HRS over their competitors.”

Das explains that HRS’ heat exchangers are price competitive when compared on design parameters and what they do. “They are smaller and more compact, but not more expensive,” he points out. But the big plus the company guarantees, he says, is in terms of reliability and service. “Our people are at the customer’s site within two hours of receiving a call about any problem,” he says. To achieve this, it has regional offices in Delhi, Vadodara and Hyderabad. Also, it gives process guarantees – and delivers on them, with the equipment performing according to each client’s requirement – which other, smaller manufacturers do not, he adds.

HRS India, which was established in 2003, has built up annual sales of ₹28 crore, recording a compounded annual growth rate of over 25 per cent. Exports, however, are under 5 per cent – mainly to group companies in the UK, Spain, Germany, Peru, the US and Dubai. Direct sales, though not restricted geographically by the UK parent, are mainly to Southeast Asian countries. “We have our global manufacturing units in India, Spain and of course the UK,” Das explains. “Inquiries go wherever the expertise in a particular area of customer need is available. We are also working on the modular manufacturing concept to leverage specific advantages at the different locations.” HRS India now plans to expand into Thailand and Indonesia, which he says are growing markets.

♦ SEKHAR SESHAN