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INTERVIEW

Saurabh Mittal

MD & CEO

Greenlam Industries Ltd

FACILITY VISIT

Classic Marble Company



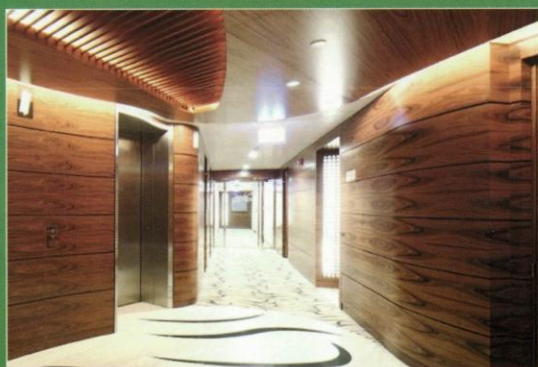
Time, Space & Culture

Constructing one's perception!



"Our biggest challenge is unorganised sector"

The purchase decisions in the laminate industry are primarily influenced by interior designers, architects, carpenters, dealers, friends and family, however, with the increased awareness customers opt for products that are long lasting and low-maintenance says **Saurabh Mittal**, MD & CEO, Greenlam Industries Ltd in an interaction with **Prasenjit Chakraborty**



Brief us about your company and its offerings to the market

Greenlam Industries Ltd is the leading manufacturer for surfaces solution in India. We are Asia's largest and world's third largest laminate producer with the manufacturing capacity of over 12 million sheets. We offer an exquisite range of decorative products such as laminates, compacts, restroom cubicles & lockers, exterior & interior grade claddings, MFC (Melamine faced chip board) decorative veneers, engineered wood floors and engineered door solutions across company's marquee brands - Greenlam Laminates, Decowood Veneers, Mikasa Real Wood Floors and Mikasa Doors & Frames respectively.

Our products are produced in the world class state of the art manufacturing facilities at Behror, Rajasthan and Nalagarh, Himachal Pradesh. Our superior design, quality, systems and environmental commitment have been awarded the ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001, GREENLABEL and GREENGUARD certifications. Greenlam also meets rigid international quality standards like NEMA of the US and BS of the United Kingdom, accordingly.

What sets apart Greenlam Industries Ltd. from others?

Simply put, we are distinguished through our unique and differentiated products, our manufacturing practices and largest & widest distribution network of over 12,000 distributors, dealers and retailers across the country. In the international market, Greenlam is present in over 100 countries with its own marketing and distribution setup in over 11 countries. We offer integrated decorative solutions to cater to the needs of customers across price segments. In addition, we have introduced new segments in the market such as engineered real wood floors, engineered doors & frames, HD veneers (veneer with texture), digital laminates and digi junior - ideal for kid's rooms and even commercial spaces like pediatrician clinic and playschool.

With over two decades of experience in the surface décor space, we have been the pioneers in introducing décor trends in India and in the International markets.

What are the latest International trends you introduced in laminate design (pattern, colours)?

We at Greenlam Industries Ltd consider ourselves lifestyle detectives. We take inspiration for our designs from various segments such as textile, stone, glass and apparel. We undertake extensive research across various countries, have a wide network of architect council and participate in international exhibitions where trends of two years are predicted and our range is the inspiration that we derive from these International exhibitions.

The 2015 Greenlam laminates range is a classic example of trends that we bring to the market. The range with its naturalistic and contemporary colour pallet provides myriad interior schemes which resonate with the national and international audience. The latest range comprises: Smoked wood collection, greytone, naturale collection, stone and embossed interweave collection.

We are the first company to introduce Supply and Install Model in this industry. We install Mikasa Floors with matching accessories like beading & quadrant, veneered skirting, reducer mouldings, stair noses etc. Similarly, Mikasa engineered doors are installed with matching frame & panel. We provide MFC (Melamine faced chip board) with matching edge bands.

Any major trend witnessed in the recent past?

Grey tone and soft natural looks are the latest buzz not just in the interior but fashion world as well. Smart designs that have been inspired by dynamic patterns in reimagined woods, textiles, stone and glass are massive trends. Made with utmost precision and care, our laminates are a concoction of visual and tactile elements that give you a sense of the actual material whether granite, concrete, marbles or wood.

"As for the design aspect, the US market is not too experimental. Trends change very slowly in 5-7 years. The Europe market is however more experimental and trend changes in 2-3 years. They use more subtle and pastel shades. Where trends are concerned, India and APAC region follow the European market."

Saurabh Mittal,
MD & CEO, Greenlam Industries Ltd



What are the new technologies being incorporated by you in laminate manufacturing?

We have incorporated latest technology in all our product lines. Greenlam Clads come with unmatched GLE technology that makes them fade-resistant, weather-proof and fire-resistant. Clads can be used as exterior façades. The superior GLE technology from our R&D team makes them a sturdy product that can withstand extreme weather conditions and makes it perfect for exterior use.

We are also pioneers for Digital, Custom laminates and HD Gloss. Digital/Custom laminates have the most distinct and wonderful patterns printed digitally on them. Customers can also get their own images, artwork, photographs or illustrations printed on laminates. Greenlam HD Gloss has been developed with the most advanced technology to create the best-in-class Gloss. These laminates are resistant to MAR, scratches, scuff & abrasion.

At Decowood, all our veneers are made using Melamine Impregnated Tissue Technology (MITT) that ensures there is no compromise on the bonding strength of veneers. Also, we are the pioneers to produce first-of-its-kind range of pre-polished and ready-to-use veneers available in satin, satin plus & matt variants.

Mikasa real wood floors are produced in India for the first time at our fully automated plant where each piece of wood is enhanced using the latest technology to bring out the true character of wood.

What are the challenges being faced by the laminate manufacturers in India?

One of the biggest challenges that we face in our industry is the un-organized segment which forms 60% of the industry and the low quality standards of the product. In addition, the market for laminates is primarily driven by the increasing demand from the housing and real estate market. Laminates have become a vital part of big and evolving markets like furniture market, modular kitchen market as well as the flooring market. However due to the slow growth of new construction & renovation industry, the demand for laminates is also relatively slow. Further, the Implementation of Goods and services Tax (GST) in the near future will provide an impetus to laminate industry.

While purchasing, what influences a customer? Explain.

The purchase decisions in our industry are primarily influenced by interior designers, architects, carpenters, dealers, friends and family. However, with the increased awareness customers opt for products that are long lasting and low-maintenance.

Could you draw a brief comparison between India and developed countries (buying behaviour, design aspect, preference, etc.)?

In Indian market, the end consumer is influential in the final buying process behavior. Whereas in the International market, the end consumer has no influence in the buying behavior. In India, with the exception of few metros, people purchase surfacing products like laminates and veneers to make the products. However, in international markets consumers purchase finished product like furniture/countertops etc. This behavior of purchasing pre-finished product has started in few Indian metros.

As for the design aspect, the US market is not too experimental. Trends change very slowly in 5-7 years. The Europe market is however more experimental and trend changes in 2-3 years. They use more subtle and pastel shades. Where trends are concerned, India and APAC region follow the European market.

International markets prefer stone finished laminates as stone is extremely expensive there. Also, in cold countries people use less stone/marble whereas laminate is neutral and used across the globe. In India, people use more of wood finished laminates whereas in International markets, people prefer to use real wood.

Your vision 2020

Most of the products we have added over the last few years have tremendous potential to grow in the future and we are certain that this will build up our revenues and profitability in the coming years. The product offering has become quite robust and we are pretty geared up to meet the demand in the market. If one looks at the product offering from the company we are now practically into every decorative based products in the panel and our manufacturing capacities, distribution network, our teams in domestic and global markets are quite well positioned. We hope to take complete advantage of the potential market growth going ahead and we are pretty confident that the business and the growth of business will accelerate in the coming years. ▲

Saurabh Mittal is the Managing Director & CEO of Greenlam Industries Ltd. His hands on engagement across the entire value chain to build the business from its infancy has garnered him nearly two decades of first-hand experience in various fields. He has been deeply involved with the manufacturing process and has progressively added production capacity that is best in the industry. As MD & CEO, he was the prime mover of the exponential growth of Greenply Industries Limited and for carving a niche for Greenlam Laminates and allied decorative products.