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INSIDE THIS ISSUE: INTEPLAST GROUP – SUCCESSFUL SYNERGY





Inteplast Group

Dr. John Young explains how this plastics manufacturer continues to be an innovative leader with a humane spirit and scientific eye.



Successful Synergy

Science and spirituality are not two words you often see in the same sentence unless the context has to do with conflict, of course. But for Inteplast Group's Dr. John Young, those two words form a symbiotic recipe for success. As the president and founder of this leading plastics manufacturer, he is demonstrating how pragmatism can yield progress—and how a spiritual connection to social responsibility allows innovation to flourish.

"I have always believed strongly in our obligation to the environment," said Young. "In fact, our company was founded on the idea that we would practice social responsibility and create self-sustaining products, alleviating the demands we put on the earth."

PVC Potential

Young founded the plastics manufacturing plant in 1990 at a time when many companies in the industry were moving their operations outside of the US. He stationed the company's one and only large manufacturing plant in Lolita, Texas, where it still conducts most of its centralized manufacturing operations today.



The company is split into three main divisions: AmTopp, Integrated Bagging Systems, and World-Pak. It primarily specializes in producing immediate or finished industrial products, including bi-axially orientated and cross-laminated films, stretch wraps, plastic bags used by retailers, trash can liners, fluted plastic sheets, PVC sheets, and expanded boards.

A large portion of Inteplast's clients are processing or converting companies that use the products as raw materials. It also sells PVC sheets, also known as TUF board, as maintenance-free wood replacements. A variant of these boards is being sold to large retail outlets like Home Depot.

Having manufactured these wood alternatives for more than 20 years, the company naturally evolved into developing a whole series of home-building substrates, including a line of cellular PVC decking that it's marketing as the industry's first dual-color, dual-sided cellular PVC deck board. The product mimics the texture and appearance of wood yet is rugged and impervious to the ill effects of Mother Nature like wood rot, said Young.

In September, Inteplast announced a licensing agreement with CEVN Corp. Inteplast will be manufacturing and distributing the patented CEVN decking to customers in the Northeast through Wolf, a building supplier based out of York, Pa. The production of these durable plastic products prevents the destruction and deprivation of unnecessary natural resources, said Young. And because of Inteplast's careful,

cool, and collective internal processes, it's more than prepared to branch out into this innovative territory of the construction product industry.

"It's not easy to enter a new market sector and produce a new product line coming out of a major downturn," said Young. "However, we have a strong yet lean infrastructure that helps us stay stable through the good and bad times, and it allows us to be nimble and responsive to this ever-changing industry."

Mathematical motivation

Young points out that all companies require internal evaluation to remain profitable and survive. To effectively assess any progress or potential for growth, he claims that it's beyond crucial to keep a close eye on the bottom line at all times. "Everything we do is streamlined and revolves around the transparency and flow of our data," said Young.

"We have harnessed our data flow in such a way that on any given day of the month, we can put a financial number to our performance level," he continued. "Most companies wait a month or two and then adapt or devise a plan, but by then, you're dealing with old data, and a lot can change in the meantime."

A physician who holds stock in the analysis of cold, hard facts, Young relies on numbers to be the irrefutable source of comfort and transparency throughout the company. Unlike

organizations that act on the emotional aspects of a problem, Young said he lets the numbers do all the talking.

“Numbers don’t lie,” said Young. “You can’t argue with them, or skew them to your liking. They paint the entire picture, making the plan of action obvious and easy to interpret. I think that’s why our culture is different here; we have a calm and rational approach to everything.”



To keep track of all those telling numerals, Young said Inteplast developed a complex and collective computer-data system inhouse, keeping track of everything from profit and expenditures to stocking and supply statistics. It is an entirely paperless process that allows Young and his team at Inteplast to act accordingly with great efficiency and decisiveness, he said.

In addition, Young developed a management group devoted to keeping tabs on all facets of the company, ensuring every step of a process or procedure is carefully outlined and followed. Inteplast takes a similar systematic approach with its training program and management communications.

“Every objective must have clear guidelines and well-defined expectations regarding performance,” said Young. “If you can define it to the point that it’s a quantitative process and couple that with the right incentives, your associates will know and respect what’s expected from them.”

Conscious considerations

Although many of Inteplast’s processes are down to a calculated science, Young said he works with a strong sense of responsibility and integrity and allows his employees the autonomy to do the same. “We all enjoy some degree of freedom, and I believe people are most productive and creative when they are allowed to bring their own ideas to the table.”

Inteplast rewards and recognizes the efforts of employees regularly with built-in incentive programs designed for all employees and through special recognition awards given at the end of the year. Those accolades encourage employees to develop concepts on how to produce new products or alter a process to mitigate waste and costs that could translate into more socially responsible and cost-effective products for the consumer, said Young.

Further promoting that spiritual value of social responsibility, Inteplast gives back to the community and environmental causes by supporting many charities and programs. For example, Young is in the process of expanding Inteplast’s recycling program for schools where children recycle plastics back to the company in exchange for donations for educational programs and activities.

“Engaging in these types of programs lets us demonstrate how we are trying to lead by example when it comes to practicing generosity and social responsibility,” said Young. “We are extremely conscious of our place in the industry and impact on the world, which is why we continue to grow through innovation but not without conscious and careful considerations.” ■

—Erica Garvin