

ElectroMech emerges preferred material handling solutions provider

Over 6,000 cranes installed across 50 countries

By N. Balasubramanian

Every time we step into a huge manufacturing plant, say, of an auto OEM, we cannot miss noticing these large overhead cranes running across in different directions. Ever wondered what it takes to make such cranes that need to perform round the clock with the highest levels of reliability and without the smallest of blips, considering the fact that they lift and move huge parts and structures with human workforce beneath?

With over 6,000 crane installations worldwide, ElectroMech is India's largest industrial overhead crane manufacturer and one of the most reputed brands in the field globally. We find out about the company's journey to the top and its future growth plans in an exclusive interview with Mr. Tushar Mehendale, Managing Director, ElectroMech.

Excerpts:

ElectroMech has emerged one of the most popular and respected brands in the materials handling space. Please give us a brief background of the genesis of the company and your growth over the years.

ElectroMech has had an interesting journey over the past 38 years. My father, Mr. Vinayak Mehendale, started the company in 1979 and took it to a respectable level. However, his sudden and untimely demise in 2000 led to a change of guard. I took over the business reins the same year. Over the past 17 years, we have grown almost 100 times. This high growth was primarily due to development on two fronts – growth in the Indian economy and our increased market penetration and market share. Today, ElectroMech has pan-India presence and a widespread sales and service network. Our headquarters and the main manufacturing facilities are in Pune and we have sales and services offices in New Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai.

At the global level, we have our own sales



Mr. Tushar Mehendale, Managing Director, ElectroMech

and services offices in Dubai and Indonesia with international partner presence in Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Egypt.

In terms of volumes and values, ElectroMech is today India's largest industrial overhead crane manufacturer. It has always believed in the philosophy of being a solutions provider, and we pride ourselves in the fact that our clients approach us with full faith that we will be able to address their concerns that they have in material handling.

You seem to provide solutions to various industries. Which are the top three segments you cater to? Are you exploring entry into any new segments/industries?

ElectroMech's products find use in almost all industries that involve discrete material handling. Our clients are across all critical industries like Infrastructure, Automotive, Heavy Engineering, Manufacturing, Oil and Gas, Nuclear Power Plants, Railways, Pre-Cast Manufacturing, Ship Building, and Steel. We have just entered the Retail and Warehousing segment with our agreement with Hyster-Yale Material Handling Systems Inc. for Yale forklifts and lift trucks.

A substantial chunk of ElectroMech's annual revenue comes from the Heavy and General Engineering industries. This is closely followed by the General Engineering and specifically the Automotive Sector.

With a vision to always stay ahead of the curve and to handle the requirements of higher capacity, ElectroMech has been consistently investing in partnerships



with technological leaders and global leaders in particular niche segments. Our partnerships with global leaders like Abus, Stahl and Yale allow us to cater to a wide range of industrial segments across the globe.

How strong is your presence in the automotive space? Could you share references of some of your key customers in the sector and the facilities you have supported them at?

The automotive sector is the backbone of the manufacturing industry in India. We have been supplying our crane solutions to the automotive industry ever since our inception. We have our cranes across a majority of automobile companies in India, like Bajaj Auto, Mahindra, MAN, Maruti, Mercedes Benz, Tata Motors, Volkswagen and Volvo. Apart from the main auto manufacturers, we are present in a big way across all the major Tier-1 and Tier-2 auto ancillaries, both Indian and global.

In the auto industry, our cranes are present in press shops, in injection moulding setups, in seat manufacturing, in engine and transmission line manufacturing and in the tire industry, etc.

Why do customers prefer ElectroMech cranes and solutions? What, according to you, are the top three factors that have put you ahead of competition in the market?

ElectroMech is recognised for providing most optimal material handling solutions. While recommending a perfect solution, we take into consideration several aspects, including a preliminary study of the factory / site, in-depth analysis of the existing and planned material handling requirements, production speed, work-flow, plant integration possibilities and environmental aspects. Our extensive product range and about 38 years' of crane installation experience for a variety of applications allow us to

design and recommend a perfect solution.

We specialize in developing customized solutions for our clients. It is this capability to develop solutions that not only consider the existing needs but also account for future requirements and possibilities of expansion that makes us India's largest industrial cranes manufacturer.

Please tell us about your collaboration with global brands – Abus, Stahl, Yale and Zoomlion. How and why did you come together with these brands? What more could we expect on the collaboration front from ElectroMech?

ElectroMech is a preferred partner of several global leaders for their foray into the India markets. ElectroMech's established brand, sales and service capabilities and pan-India reach give these companies an edge in the new market. The partnership with global leaders gives us a technological advantage and the partner company gets an advantage of an established presence. ElectroMech firmly believes in offering the latest and the best products and services to its clients.

Our tie-ups with renowned companies allow us to explore advanced technology solutions from world leaders. These solutions, together with our domain knowledge, understanding of the local market and infrastructure, help our customers to get world-class solutions from a trusted partner like ElectroMech.

Abus is a global leader in overhead crane and hoist manufacturing. Our partnership of over 12 years has helped us cement a leadership position in India and the neighbouring countries. We are an exclusive India partner of ABUS Crane Systems, Germany, to provide standardised hoist and cranes using ABUS crane kits.

Stahl is the world's leading manufacturer of explosion

protected (EX) systems. The Stahl products are considered to be the gold standard in all hazardous crane applications across the world. Apart from India, ElectroMech and Stahl jointly execute international projects across the Middle East and Africa.

Zoomlion is the world's 6th largest construction equipment manufacturing company in the world and is also the world's largest manufacturer of tower cranes. This partnership allows us to offer our customers one of the widest product portfolios of tower cranes in the world.

While the partnerships with Abus, Stahl and Zoomlion are consistently growing and have reaffirmed our position in the market, we recently signed an agreement with Hyster-Yale Material Handling Systems Inc. for the sales and Service of their Yale and Utelev lift trucks in India. This partnership specifically for the sales and service of the Yale and Utelev forklifts reinforces its lead in the material handling solutions in India and will enable ElectroMech to offer a wider range of markets with products that range from a pallet truck to the customised solutions. This partnership works perfectly with Hyster-Yale's goals of strategic alliances in the burgeoning markets. Our agreement allows it to expand and strengthen its presence in the Indian market by offering products aimed at meeting specific customer needs.

Maintenance and servicing of material handling equipment is a concern that a large number of industries face. Can you elaborate on the servicing arm of ElectroMech, Cranedge?

Cranedge is a subsidiary company of ElectroMech and provides efficient industrial overhead crane servicing for all makes of industrial overhead cranes. The crane services provided under this brand name have become a benchmark in the services in India and include repair, refurbish, capacity enhancement, modification, relocation, certification and preventive maintenance. With this approach ElectroMech is able to ensure nearly zero down times for the cranes. The expertise and efficient service has earned the loyalty and continued business of our customers.

How many crane installations have you done till date? How do you provide service support for your customers across the country? Please share details of your presence across different geographies within India.

We currently have in the range of 6000 cranes installed across almost 50 countries across the world, ranging from Mexico in the West to Australia in the East. Today, ElectroMech has earned a reputation for being the most reliable name in the field of material handling systems through its products and efficient service.

The sturdy ElectroMech cranes operate year after year in extreme climatic conditions, irrespective of whether it is the sweltering heat of Rajasthan or the Middle East, or the biting



chill and altitudes of the Himachal or Afghanistan.

Being one of the most organized players in the field, what are your views about the material handling space (let's be specific to the automotive, steel, manufacturing applications, in this case) in the country? How organized are we as a sector? Are safety and productivity being given due importance? What are your expectations from different stakeholders for things to move ahead?

The Indian material handling industry is an extremely fragmented one. Almost 50 per cent of the market is controlled by the top 10 manufacturers and the remaining market is shared by 300+ small companies. Due to this fragmentation, there is a huge disparity in the goods being offered to the customers, and one comes across a wide spectrum of products ranging from world-class to low quality products.

It is also due to this fragmented nature of the industry that the safety norms are given least priority by a large chunk of the unorganized sector. Since the entry barriers are absent and because there are no strict statutory requirements, there is a proliferation of unsafe and low productivity cranes and hoists in the market. Whenever a customer is making a "buy" decision, he needs to consider the reality and then approach the suppliers with open eyes. The general rule of the thumb that is followed by most purchasing professionals is that "cheaper is better", which unfortunately can prove to be disastrous while making a decision about their crane supplier.

What are your medium to long-term plans as a company? Please share targets in terms of sales and turnover figures, if possible.

Our aim is to continue on our path of growth in the material handling sector, not only in India but across the world. We will be introducing newer products that will cater to a wider range of material handling requirements of our clients and will further help us in cementing our position as the material handling equipment company of choice. ♦