



WITTUR INDIA

The global brand considers India the place to be.

by Kanika Goswami

Wittur Group is one of the world's largest independent suppliers of components and systems for the elevator industry. Its portfolio includes elevator

doors, safety components, gearless drives, cabins, car frames and counterweight frames. India's burgeoning elevator market attracted the



Sumanth

brand to the country three years ago, and the venture has been successful since.

Speaking on the entry of Wittur in India, R. Sumanth, managing director, Wittur Elevator Components India Pvt. Ltd., says:

"India is the second-largest market for elevators in the world, followed by China. The market is growing 10-13%. The urban population was 377 million as per [the] 2011 census, and this [number] is expected to grow to 590 million by the end of 2030. This will translate to vertical growth in cities that are starved of construction

spaces. [The] estimated urban housing shortage was close to 19 million units in 2012. The building industry that will close this gap will be the target for the elevator market, too, and this will be the biggest driver for the growth of the brand in India."

Wittur is present in more than 50 countries with 10 production plants and sales offices. With the corporate motto "Safety in Motion," the group focuses on safety in the elevator industry and continuously looks at ways to improve the



safety performance of its products. In addition, aesthetics are increasingly important in elevators and end users are becoming more demanding for designs and technologies that ensure these. “The increasing enforcement from statutory bodies is driving up quality levels across the entire industry,” Sumanth adds. “To cater to the demand foreseen from global and regional manufacturers, Wittur decided to enter the Indian market.”

The company is ISO 9001 and 14001 certified and has a facility equipped with modern computer numerically controlled equipment for sheet-metal work, assembly lines and test equipment for assembling elevator components.

Products

Wittur India has been operational since mid 2012 now with an advanced production facility in Chennai that currently manufactures car and landing doors, and cabins. Its portfolio includes complete kits for new installations and modernizations, as well as home lifts. Its first offering was the MDS1 door system, which has been well received in the country, and several thousand of these are in use all across the country. Sumanth elaborates:

“Wittur decided to enter with basic door systems, initially, as this is a major share in the component business, and over the years, has added framed glass doors, heavy-duty multi-panel doors, modular car systems, etc. We will grow our portfolio based on market needs. We aim to be the market leader in the region and also be the most preferred supplier of components with full capability to design and manufacture as per the market needs in the region.”

“In 2012, we started with just two variants of the door, but as we grew closer to our customers and understood their needs, we [produced] more than 40 variants [of] our doors, including vision panels, framed glass doors and [a] variety of unique finishes. Also, we have introduced the MCS1 range of cabins in India, which cater to the middle and high end of the elevator markets. The cabins with glass panels are under development and, very soon, will be introduced in the market.”

Continued

Opposite page, top to bottom: The administration building; a worker on the assembly line

This page, top to bottom: A worker using a bending machine; a meeting in the concern room; an engineer using design software; finished products on display



“The highlight of the MDS1 product is its ease of installation and maintenance. The sturdy packing that has been designed to suit Indian conditions ensures that no transit damages occur. These are two-panel doors with a range of openings between 700 and 1200 mm and heights between 2000 and 2200 mm, with both center- and telescopic-opening door options. A limited range of framed-glass variants [is] also available. Customers across the country have been using these doors for two years now and are very happy with [their] performance. In addition, a globally tested and proved Hydra range of multi-panel doors [is] available for heavy-duty applications and for openings larger than 1200 mm.”

The MDS1 door system is fully compatible with the MCS1 cabin systems and minimizes overall installation times. Several features are built into the system to simplify and speed up erection. By the end of this quarter, the brand plans to introduce its own car frames, which can service the market up to speeds of 2.5 mps. “Sooner than later, we plan to supply full machine-room-less kits to our customers from India,” Sumanth adds.

Challenges and Opportunities

Supplying to more than 300 customers across the country is a big challenge in itself, but the biggest challenge the brand faced was ensuring customer satisfaction. Sumanth very strongly feels that

customers’ perception is the company’s reality, so Wittur India endeavors to make a customer, rather than a sale. To achieve this, it took such initiatives as having the technical support team as part of the sales team to ensure all customers had adequate post-sales support in training and installation, available physically and locally across the country. The other initiative was to supply the products to the customers’ doorstep by taking responsibility for their transportation and the liabilities involved. “We are happy that our customers have appreciated our initiatives by giving us more business. We will continue to do the right things [to] make it easy for our customers to do business with us,” Sumanth adds.

With the recent call of the Indian government to encourage the “Make in India” concept for industries, many brands like Wittur stand to gain market ground. The program, as the company perceives it, is designed to facilitate investment, foster innovation, enhance skill development, protect intellectual property and build best-in-class manufacturing infrastructure. Like several other sectors, the elevator industry will also benefit from this.

Sumanth cites the government’s development of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) as one initiative that will benefit Wittur. The manufacturing and investment destination will utilize the 1,483-km-long, high-capacity western Dedicated Railway Freight Corridor as its backbone. The objective is to increase the share of manufacturing in the gross domestic product of the country and create smart sustainable cities, where manufacturing

will be the key economic driver. The project is featured in KPMG’s “100 Most Innovative Global Projects” and is what Sumanth calls “one of the world’s most innovative and inspiring infrastructure projects.”

Twenty-four manufacturing cities are envisaged in the prospective plan of the DMIC project. In the first phase, seven cities are being developed, one each in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, and two in Maharashtra. Five other corridors have been conceptualized: Bengaluru-Mumbai Economic Corridor; Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Development Corridor; Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor; East Coast Economic Corridor; and Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor.

Sumanth comments on the big governmental projects:

“Due to anticipated higher local content stipulations from the infrastructure sector, we are getting enquiries from existing customers and potential customers [on] our [ability] to manufacture products that have been traditionally imported by them, and this will set us thinking in terms of new investments.”

People

Wittur’s vision statement is “Wittur should be a place where people are proud to work.” The same philosophy applies at Wittur India, where the company provides necessary training to teams and individuals, and promotes a customer-oriented work culture in the company. Sumanth concludes:

“Our vision is to be the market leader and most preferred supplier of elevator components to the elevator industry in India and neighboring countries, with full capabilities to design and manufacture as per market needs.” 

Above: The safety room