Delivering On A Promise



Metecno Lanka entered the Sri Lankan roofing industry 25 years ago as Metroof, one of the pioneering companies of the zinc/aluminium roofing segment. Anuksha Sri Nammuni, Director/Chief Executive Officer discussed the progress and future plans of the company. At a time when asbestos

sheeting was the prevalent roofing solution, Metecno offered zinc aluminium roofing sheets, which at that time was an innovative product. As a subsidiary of the Metecno Worldwide Group, the company has since embarked on a remarkable journey.

By Gayathri Kothalawala
Photography Geeth Viduranga

Can you elaborate on the journey of Metecno Lanka?
We established the company 25 years ago in 1993 and offered zinc aluminium roofing sheets to the customers. Metecno was one of the first companies to introduce the product and was pivotal in popularising the product in Sri Lanka. At that time, there were only asbestos sheeting and clay tiles, as such, people were looking for alternative roofing. We therefore, promoted zinc aluminium roofing sheets among the customers extensively.

25 years ago, we started manufacturing with a small facility, but of course now we have proudly grown to include three fully-fledged production facilities.

How does Metecno Lanka benefit as a member of the Metecno Group?
The Metecno Worldwide Group is one of the leaders in this product category, and operates in more than 25 countries in Europe, the Americas, Latin America and in Asia. In these 25 countries, we have over 20 working plants. In the Asian region, we also have factories in India, Thailand, Vietnam and in Sri Lanka.

> **Our Flagship Product Is The Polyurethane Sandwich Panel. It Has Today Become An Accepted And Popular Product In Both Commercial And Domestic Markets.**

As we are not a single entity operating alone, we are able to garner the knowledge and experiences required from the Group. In the Americas and Europe, technological development is swift. When new technologies are introduced in these

countries, it automatically transfers to countries such as Sri Lanka through the Group. Therefore, we are constantly upgrading our quality and the technological level of our products.

Can you talk about your existing product portfolio and recent additions?
We started with a basic zinc aluminium-roofing sheet. However, over the years we have analysed the market and seen what is needed by the construction industry. Thus, we were able to introduce various new solutions to the market.

The most popular solution in the market is the sandwich panel, which is ideal for countries like Sri Lanka, because it comes with the roof, the insulation and the ceiling integrated into one panel. Our flagship product is the polyurethane sandwich panel. It has now become an accepted and popular product in both commercial and domestic markets.

Based on these sandwich panels, we have diversified our portfolio. We are now manufacturing the rockwool panel. This is a sound-proof and fire-proof panel. Rockwool is a natural material, which is created from volcanic rock, and woven into fibre. The panel contains two steel sheets with the rockwool fibre in between.

This product is attracting increasing interest from the manufacturing sector. The machinery at production plants often creates a raucous noise that sometimes carries beyond the factory premises. However, if you case it with rockwool panels, the sound is absorbed. The material is also fire-resistant and can withstand heat up to 1,000 degrees for two hours. Hence, it can help to safeguard the plant, the assets and the human resources of a production facility.

Apart from the roofing solutions at Metecno, we also offer various other necessary items for homes or factories including rainwater accessories, different types of flashing, valance boards and purlings. In addition, we offer installation services as well.

The Customer Has The Convenience Of Buying The Products And

Getting It Installed From A Single Company

Metecno is a one-stop shop where the customer can come, look at our product range, choose and buy it from one location, without going from place to place. The customer has the convenience of buying the products and getting it installed from a single company. Furthermore, our warranty gives our clients the assurance that the company has their best interest at heart.

What has contributed to your success?

We believe that from the very inception, our people have been our main strength. Anyone can start a factory; anyone can bring the material in and manufacture a product. But it takes a dedicated team to go into the market, to educate the people and popularise the product.

When we recruit personnel, we attempt to recruit the ideal person for the position with the right balance of attitude, qualifications and personality. Consequently, we are able to retain our employees for a considerable length of time. We always attempt to create the environment and freedom to help them achieve their best potential.

In Sri Lanka, there are around 60 manufacturers currently in this sector. But for nearly a decade, we have been the undisputed market leader because our brand gained the trust of the people. The main secret or the formula behind Metecno's success is that we always deliver what we promise. If we promise something to a client, they can be assured that the promise is fulfilled. The quality levels and the service levels will be maintained throughout.

That is why, 95 per cent of our customer base consists of return customers. Because if they do business with us once, they become our business partners. That is our philosophy; we deliver, we do not compromise on quality or service levels and that is why customers consistently prefer us.

Were there any challenges that the company had to overcome?

Definitely. Like in all industries, there are periods of ups and downs and many challenges. For example, steel is not available in Sri Lanka, so we have to import the steel. Currently with the economic situation and the downturn in the construction sector, there are immense challenges in operating a company successfully.

The construction industry is also fluctuating, and we are dependent on the construction industry. The best thing that we can say is that, in both peak times and low times, our company has been doing quite well within the segment.

Can you tell us about your reach within the island?
We have six of our own branches island wide in areas such as Kandy, Matara, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura and Negombo. Apart from that, we have a dealer network that exceeds 400, spreading from the North to the South; covering the entire island.

> **A Company Cannot Focus Merely On Survival; It Has To Grow, It Has To Earn Profit, People Have To Grow.**

We have a sizeable network of staff servicing the dealer network. Therefore, the dealer network plus our own branches cater to every customer in Sri Lanka, regardless of the location. We are happy and proud to know that people identify with this product by its name; they ask for the Metroof branded product.

Can you tell us about yourself and how you incorporate your experiences as well as your knowledge into the daily operations of Metecno?
I have been in this company for about 12 years as the Director and Chief Executive Officer. Prior to that, I have gathered a diverse range of experience in other companies that include consulting, communications and the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors.

By profession, I am a Chartered Management Accountant as well as a Chartered Marketer with a Degree in Business Management and an MBA. That experience has

given me the ability to guide the company forward because these are challenging economic times, and due to that you have to have a good grip on the company's finances and marketing for the company to survive and go beyond survival.

A company cannot focus merely on survival; it has to grow, it has to earn profit, people have to grow. Together with my management team, we are happy to note that we have been successful in doing that with the guidance of our board of directors.

Is there potential for further growth for the company? What are your plans for the future?

Two years ago, we started to expand our operations and our manufacturing facilities. I am happy to note that by 2018, we have completed our expansions very successfully, with a state-of-the-art new factory. We have also invested in new machinery so that customers receive better quality products.

The market response is very good and the management is thinking of going into the next phase of expansion; we are studying some products currently available in the European as well as in the American markets. We hope to introduce those products to the Sri Lankan market and the construction industry. We are always in a constant expansion phase, because products in this category are constantly evolving with the advancement of technology. We definitely plan to offer something better, where the quality is high, but also at an affordable level for all the Sri Lankan customers.

We are contemplating on products that are ideal for Sri Lanka; products that reduce heat; reduce the risk of fire; absorb clamour; and makes your home, your business place or your factory very aesthetically pleasing and a safe place for your family and your employees.