

Delmege Forsyth: Matching Innovation With Reliability



Attention to detail, globally reputed brands, customised service and timely delivery have made Delmege Forsyth – Lifestyle Cluster the preferred name for architects, interior decorators and contractors. Nilantha Fernando, Director and CEO, looks back on the company's 25 year journey.

By Mamduh Waheed

The speed with which new products and technologies are introduced is not specific to an industry or sector. In the building trade, those who are abreast of such changes and new developments are those who always manage to keep an edge over their competitors. Whether supplying flooring or installing pipes and fittings, it is in representing consistently reliable and durable brands that Delmege Forsyth has maintained an advantage in the interior decor business for the last 25 years in Sri Lanka.

''We try and understand and study the requirements and aesthetic choices of our clients very closely before recommending our products. We also make a continuous effort to provide the latest technologies and products from the brands we represent," says Nilantha Fernando, Director and CEO – Delmege Forsyth, who was instumental in setting up the interior decor wing of the company; the Lifestyle Cluster. He has also been with the company throughout the 25 years of its growth. The holding company, Delmege Forsyth itself is over 163 years old and was established by Britishers living in Sri Lanka. Primarily a stockist and supplier of a wide range of high quality specialist building products, the company now comes under the purview of Dhammika Perera, Chairman – Valibel Group since 2011, and the company has grown significantly under his vision, business acumen and leadership.

''Some of the brands we represent in Sri Lanka and the region have been working with us exclusively for over two decades and it is a testament for our longstanding and trusted relationships. This is also a guarantee to our clients who take it as a mark of our stability and consistency in providing quality and reliability," explains

Nilantha Fernando highlighting on how the company has managed to maintain a stronghold in the market.

Working closely with the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects and its members over the last 25 years, Delmege also works closely with interior designers, contractors as well as directly with customers. The range of clients Delmege has added to the company's portfolio over the years include government institutions, local and international banks, finance companies, hotels including leading five star properties, restaurants, hospitals, schools, auditoriums, gymnasiums, cricket stadiums, offices, airports and factories. In addition to clients in Sri Lanka, where the company's brand is firmly established, Delmege has also undertaken overseas projects in India, Bangladesh and the Maldives.

With its long years of consistent service, Delmege also represents some of the most renowned agencies and brands in the business. They include carpet manufacturers 'Brintons' and 'Shaw Industries' of which the latter is the largest manufacturer of carpets in the world; 'Hunterdouglas', a world leader in ceiling systems, 'Gerfor', largest manufacturer of vinyl, healthcare and sports flooring in France; 'Dux', a manufacturer of Polybutylene hot water pipes and fittings; 'Unilin', a reputed brand in laminate flooring and 'Hufcor', a leader in operable partitions.

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One of the large projects the company has recently completed include carpeting of the guest rooms/corridors, and flooring for the banquet hall at the recently opened Kingsbury hotel. Other well-known hotels where Delmege has recently completed projects include Cinnamon Grand, Hilton Residencies, Galadari and Mt Lavinia Hotel. Leading brands in the financial sector where the company has successfully completed projects include various branches of HSBC, several branches of DFCC, L B Finance, branches of Pan Asia Bank, Sampath Bank, and Nations Trust Bank.

''We have learnt that customised services can go a long way in this trade. This has to be matched with the timely supply of globally respected products," emphasised

Nilantha Fernando, elaborating on what he means by ‘customised services’. ‘‘For all projects we come up with a mock-up room at the beginning of the project and this is done according to the requirements of the client. We can do this either at the site of the project or at our warehouses in Colombo.”

Delmege has also been recently awarded an overseas contract to install vinyl flooring for an area of 70,000 square feet at a factory in India. And the company has expanded its product portfolio to include ‘Junckers’, a pre-finished solid wood flooring product from Denmark. Several new commercial and residential projects have since been completed. The company is also looking at more sustainable and eco-friendly products and three years ago an eco-friendly bamboo flooring was introduced to the market which has proved very popular with hotels and residences.

In addition to this Delmege also markets insulation foil, PVC doors, instant water heaters and sinks. Delmege acquired Grip Furniture, a local manufacturer exporting high quality furniture to Nordic countries as well as marketing its furniture range in Sri Lanka.

Delmege also represents Hayworth-USA, a leading manufacturer for office furniture, and successfully completed the IBM and Oracle projects. “We stock a range of office furniture and supply Banks, Corporates, Hotels, Hospitals and Stadiums”.

One of the most ambitious projects Delmege has undertaken to date, is the supply of and installation of Burma Teak flooring at a luxury apartment complex. The entire floor area of the complex is 90,000 square feet, and is one of the largest flooring projects undertaken by the company.

Delmege Forsyth presently employs over 60 staff and with those working on outsourced tasks and assignments, at any given moment the company maybe working with as many as over a 100 individuals in various projects. And with the increased growth in the real estate, tourism and health care sectors post 2009, the company’s trajectory seems set for more growth in the coming years.

