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Process Equipment Must Be Competitive On A Global Basis

Operating in the international mining industry has almost become a non-negotiable in today's exacting mining climate, in which the focus is strongly on optimising existing assets. This exposure ensures that South African companies are able to offer products to the local industry that are competitive on a global basis.

Through its international footprint, leading mineral solutions provider Multotec collaborates from a market intelligence and a product knowledge perspective across mining territories, adopting learnings from its experience in foreign markets that benefit all its customers and successfully benchmark its technology against the world's best.

"We're very aware that our customers are being compelled to squeeze their plant assets to extract as much value as possible," Thomas Holtz, Multotec CEO, says. "The beauty of our business is that we have a broad portfolio that incorporates product lines comprising both services and consumables, as well as capital equipment.

"Current conditions allow us to leverage a value proposition that derives from a 39 year track record in minerals processing. This extensive profile proves that we stand by our products for the long haul. Our after sales service proposition in particular comes to fruition in economically challenging times, because optimising recoveries from a plant and reducing the cost per ton of ore processed are key to that plant becoming more cost effective.

"Our business focuses on looking at the products we supply in the context of the circuit, rather than in isolation, and we're able to reconfigure and adjust our equipment to suit the changing demands of a specific plant over a period of time."

Multotec's extensive and steadily expanding African infrastructure is able to deploy highly technically competent personnel to customer sites for regular maintenance activities and at short notice. Although the members of these technical teams comprise experienced people with actual

work experience in a processing plant, they are required to undergo regular training to keep them abreast of the latest information and skills. These field personnel also have access to the greater metallurgical knowledge pool within the group.

“Our portfolio works for us in multiple ways,” Holtz continues. “We’re able to offer the service our customers in Africa require in the same time zone, in the same country or from a country close by. The significant value-add that accompanies our products renders price a less critical factor. These are mission-critical products and the value we add centres around correctly specifying products that work efficiently, fail predictably, are maintained sufficiently and that sustain the required efficiencies throughout their working life.”

Some of the latest technology emerging from Multotec is attracting attention in the industry for its innovation and world class quality. For example, its new injection moulded polyurethane TeePee™ screen panel dramatically increases open area and drainage and is proving very popular in dewatering applications, achieving higher tonnages from the same piece of equipment.

Another area of growth is sampling, specifically in-process mechanical sampling, to optimise plant processes. Multotec’s sampling product line is moving counter-cyclical, with steadily increasing volumes being sold to customers who recognise the value of being able to fine-tune their processes to improve efficiencies. Also in the realm of asset optimisation, Multotec recently entered into a technology and supply partnership agreement with Longi Magnet Company Co Ltd in China, the second largest and fastest growing magnetic supplier in the world. Certain of these products focussing on the dry separation of some ores — notably iron ore, offer significant process benefits.

In addition, the company’s Hawkeye Internet-based predictive software tool is increasingly coming into play in Multotec maintenance contracts, in line with customers’ need to achieve maximum uptime.

“Next year we celebrate the group’s 40th birthday,” Holtz says. “What started out as a screens company has successfully diversified into a variety of product lines, at the same time growing in size and technical maturity to be able to handle this multiple range of equipment. It would be impossible

to start up a group like this from scratch — you have to build local competence to be able to offer expert advice on the ground.

“Intimacy with customers is another key component. In the somewhat conservative mining industry there are no revolutionary technology changes. Instead, when it does come, change is slow and incremental. So in this hard-core industrial environment, our customers’ fundamental requirement is that the equipment we provide performs reliably every day and that as its supplier, we should be readily available and sufficiently competent to provide the necessary support.”

GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE PIC 01 : Thomas Holtz, Multotec CEO, says the group has a broad portfolio that incorporates product lines comprising both services and consumables.

GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE PIC 02 : Skilled and experience personnel produce a variety of screen panels at Multotec's facility.

GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE PIC 03 : Multotec's new injection moulded polyurethane TeePee screen panel dramatically increases open area.

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