

Bulk Handling Today - May 2011

## Model Factory For Conveyor Products

*Visiting Brelko, one of the foremost conveyor product manufacturers in the world, has always been an entertaining experience because managing director Kenny Padayachee effortlessly makes his visitors feel at ease and comfortable. As if his subtle sense of humour and quirky remarks throughout the visit aren't enough, he has a unique and interesting business philosophy, evident in the success of the company.*

**F**or many years "Bulk Handling Today" has visited Brelko's premises in downtown Johannesburg, but this time we were heading to Booyens to see him at the new home of Brelko's international headquarters. This is no longer the Brelko tucked into the evershrinking space they had in Selby, but rather a very impressive, modern office block with built dings surrounded by age-old palms and other indigenous trees.

*The first impression was a gob smacked, Wow!*

### New facility

"I insisted that the old trees be kept and we simply had to plan construction of the buildings around them," Kenny says as he greets us at the front door of the new admin building. "As you can see, we also



The administration building with trees left intact



Kenny Padayachee, Managing director of Brelko

utilised the available space inside and outside to give a feeling of openness and airiness." Kenny has always had a philosophy that "it is the people in a company who make it," which is clearly evident in his manager's offices where each individual was able to choose what he or she needed in terms of the layout.

### Projects

"What's more, we did all of this ourselves," he says with a proud smile, indicating the rows of buildings that now house the company. "After considering an architect and a building contractor we decided to do it ourselves, much like a special project running in parallel with our normal work. With the help of a couple of key people to run it as five separate projects, each with its own budget, requirements and deadlines, I just had to make time to manage the building project in between running the business of manufacturing conveyor products."

*Business in Africa has sprung up and locally our business is on a solid base*



## Far afield

Brelko has one of the most versatile and comprehensive ranges of bulk materials handling equipment available on the market. Innovation plays a major role, and through clever management to protect the intellectual property of the designs, the products are now well-known worldwide. "Besides our offices in the USA and UK we have also opened a joint-venture business in Australia," says Kenny. "Business in Africa has sprung up and locally our business is on a solid base with all the major project houses and mining companies specifying our products because we continuously improve on the range.



The new Training Centre

## Training

"My philosophy has always been that you can not back-up a good product if it doesn't come with an equally good service," Kenny adds. "We're in the service business where we help people with their spillage problems. We don't just throw a good product at the problem if it is not installed and serviced correctly. I believe that, as principle manufacturer, we have to extend our philosophy by providing training for the people who use and service our products in the field." The training centre on the new Brelko 'campus' is like the rest of the new facilities, well thought through and planned out. "We take trainees through our workshops to show them how we work and how we maintain ISO standards," explains Kenny. "Apart from training our own staff here, we train the technicians from clients who prefer to do



Scrapers off the production line ready for shipping

their own maintenance and we also train sales agents who are scattered all over the continent of Africa and the rest of the world now, selling our products."

## Design

The heart of Brelko's engineering operation is the design office, now housed in a large room where we find several design engineers behind work stations running the latest CAD software. "Basically everything comes out of this office," explains Kenny. "They get an idea, put it into a design drawing and then we'll go into the workshop and do a trial. If it works and has merit, then we'll go ahead and patent it. If it becomes a manufacturing item, a production item or a mould design for casting a part, all the drawings for it will come out of this office." Finally, just a thought from "Bulk Handling Today" - for anyone who intends to build a world class manufacturing facility and wants to do it properly; find an excuse to visit Brelko to see what can be done.



Brelko also introduced automation in some manufacturing processes

