

MATERIALS HANDLING

BY NELENDHRE MOODLEY - SA MINING - NOVEMBER 2018

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...

Happiness doesn't come from doing easy work, but from the satisfaction that comes after the achievement of a difficult task that demanded our best. This sentiment by Theodore Isaac Rubin, an American psychiatrist and author, underpins the philosophy of Brelko Conveyor Products, MD Kenny Padayachee tells SA Mining.

It is also the reason the company chose to supply robust conveyor belt cleaning equipment used in the most arduous aspects of the mining process, such as the crushing and milling processes, among others, rather than equipment for standard processes. "Our products are used primarily in the crushing of hard rock and the more severe the application, the better aligned it is to the Brelko product range."

In turn, this requires the design and development of equipment that is best in class, notes Padayachee, who highlights the company's focus on research and development, and innovation, as key investments driving the company's success.

In line with developing products that are robust and durable, Brelko manufactures its products from polyurethane material which ensures product longevity and flexibility.

The company supplies polyurethane rollers, belt scrapers, chute sealing systems, belt centralising systems and belt cleaning systems to predominantly the mining sector.

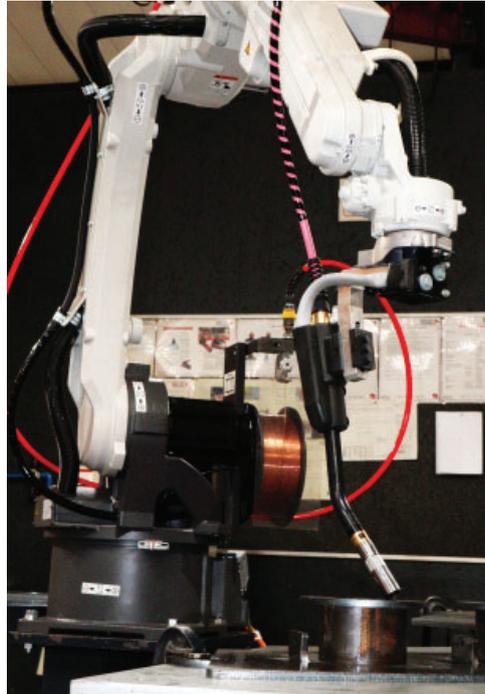
The Gauteng-based company remains true to its vision of being a local content manufacturer, being involved from design through to the manufacturing phase.

"Our aim has always been to design and develop solutions to local conveyor belt cleaning challenges and to produce equipment that we are proud to brand as Brelko. In fact, so successful has been the quality of the product that it is supplied to global destinations, including the United States, Europe, Australia and more recently, the Middle East. By developing equipment

that works exceptionally well, repeat business has become the standard. In essence, we are not volume-focused but precision-driven."

Brelko backs up its product supply with an installation and maintenance package and has 45 service teams on site to service, maintain and refurbish equipment daily.

Interestingly, author and former professor at the University of New Orleans, Michael LeBoeuf, noted that a satisfied customer is the best business strategy of all.



INNOVATION

Following continuous improvement of product, original equipment manufacturers have to design and develop product to keep pace of the latest industry requirements.

"Over the past 20 years, engineers have radically improved product, producing conveyor belts that are wider, stronger and faster than their predecessors. Twenty years ago, a conveyor belt operated at a speed of 3m/sec. Today they operate at a speed of 6.5m/sec – this means that belt cleaning equipment has had to adapt to deliver improved quality and capability."

The future trend of conveyor belt cleaning equipment will move towards less-maintenance, smaller-than-before and more interchangeable longer-lasting parts, explains Padayachee.

BRELKO

- Brelko Conveyor Products was established in 1987. "We have over 30 years of experience as a supplier and adviser on spillage control to the bulk materials-handling industry and offer proactive and ongoing maintenance for preventive spillage control and optimum belt cleaning."
- Apart from mining, which constitutes around 75% of business, Brelko supplies product to the steel, food and beverage, cement and recycling sectors.
- Brelko's business is built on the back of strong relationships with engineering and project houses such as DRA Mineral Projects and Sandvik Mining, Tenova, FLSmidth, Hatch and ELB Engineering.
- The company is Level 1 BBEE accredited.





Pitched as the “Rolls-Royce” provider of conveyor belt cleaning equipment, Brelko supplies conveyor belt equipment to niche markets and remains keenly focused on manufacturing equipment that surpasses existing industry standards. “We invest heavily in research and development and training to upskill staff to deliver innovative products and services.”

Brelko’s decision to change from rubberised rollers to polyurethane rollers has borne fruit in terms of delivering high-quality products that outperform standardised products.

For instance, Brelko’s hard-wearing polyurethane conveyor belt rollers, scrapers and skirting equipment have extended longevity and, according to Padayachee, last three times longer than equipment produced from rubber.

“Polyurethane is 33% lighter than rubber and is therefore a more efficient material, and apart from being super

R5m

Cost of robotic arm purchased from Panasonic. It will be used for precision welding.

resilient, it is extremely flexible, allows for less bounce, damage and reduced wear and tear.”

Of the 300 000 conveyor rollers produced per month by the local industry, Brelko produces just 1% – 3 000 units for niche market applications. However, Brelko’s recently refurbished factory is capable of doubling capacity, Padayachee says.

On a recent factory tour, Padayachee showcased Brelko’s latest purchase – a R5-million robotic arm which will be used for precision welding. The robotic arm, acquired from Panasonic, will come in handy given the company’s in-roads into the Saudi Arabian market. The robotic arm is equipped with smart technology that will enable accurate calculations and thus precise welding capability.

Brelko has an extensive footprint across Africa which accounts for roughly 25% of business, a global footprint accounting for 25% of business (the US and Europe, in particular the UK), while South Africa still accounts for 50% of business.

New business endeavours include recent orders from Mexico and Saudi Arabia where Brelko won a contract with Ma’aden, a Saudi Arabian mineral company, for the supply of 50 units of conveyor cleaning equipment, including skirting and conveyor cleaners, for its phosphate plant. Ma’aden is a diversified mining house operating gold, base metals and aluminum projects. In September 2017, Brelko was awarded a second contract for the supply of 30 units of conveyor belt related equipment for the Ma’aden project.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

According to Padayachee, Brelko has a holistic view to sustainability and apart from upgrading parts of the area surrounding its factory, which includes developing a 5 000m² park close to its offices, the Gauteng-based conveyor equipment producer is rolling out an extensive sustainable solutions plan. This includes rainwater harvesting and installing a solar system.

Phase one and two of a four-phase solar installation project, amounting to some R5m, has been completed – the project involved the installation of solar-power panels to power the factory. The aim is to ultimately work off-grid, explains Padayachee.

Since the installation, Brelko has reduced power consumption by some 33% and is looking to achieve close to 65% of electricity saving when it completes phase three, which includes equipping the factory with LED lighting. Phase four of the project is scheduled for completion by mid-2019.

As part of its sustainable solutions programme, Brelko purifies around 135 000 litres of rain-harvested water, which it uses for gardening and car washing.

