

Brelko 30 years in business

Having just celebrated its 30th birthday, Brelko Conveyor Products says it is continuing to focus on superior quality, both in products and service. Founded in 1987 in Selby, Johannesburg, Brelko's first manufactured product was a belt scraper and the company now has over 30 products to keep conveyors clean and spillage under control.

“Our 30 years of success is because of many dedicated people who are committed to maintaining our excellent reputation in the industry,” says owner and Managing Director, Kenny Padayachee, “and to our commitment to continually innovate and manufacture superior products and provide exceptional customer service.”

But Padayachee did not start out as the successful person he is now. At the tender age of 17 he was arrested for getting involved in political protests. Soon after that he went to work at an engineering company as a workshop planner, and, using his common sense and street-wise-knowledge, made an impression on the foreman. The foreman encouraged him to learn

about all the machinery on the factory floor, and this developed into a love for problem solving. Fast track a few years into the future where Padayachee and three of his colleagues opened the doors of Brelko in 1987.

It is now 30 years later and Brelko employs 200 people at its premises in Booyens. The property in Booyens was purchased in 2008 and has been developed into what Padayachee believes is a world-class working environment. Brelko services its clients nationwide, having 42 fully-fitted service vehicles on the road at any time. The company has expanded its offices, ensuring that whatever is required to make employees and customers happy, is on the property. The current project is the expansion of the warehouse so that all products are always available and there can be quick turnaround times for customers.

Padayachee firmly believes in continual investment in Brelko and the South African market. “Our locally-manufactured equipment is world-class, and often superior to international products,” he says. “In the last seven years, we have built a strong local manufacturing base – we do extensive research and development, and believe innovation is a

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Above: Brelko has built a training centre on the company premises, which is used for both employee and customer training. Right: Brelko employs a highly-skilled workforce at its premises in Booyseens.



fundamental to move this industry forward. We come up with amazing ideas, and then make them happen."

Before the move to local manufacturing, Brelko focused mainly on assembling, but now builds everything it requires and continues developing and innovating both for itself as a company and for its customers.

"We are not only suppliers of superior quality products, but have also become expert advisors on spillage control to the bulk materials handling industry," says Padayachee. "One of the many examples of innovation and quality is the polyurethane rollers manufactured by Brelko – they last five times longer than the standard rubber rollers currently used in the mining industry. This thread of continual improvement and excellence runs throughout the company, not only in its products but also in its customer focused philosophy, and its approach to health, safety and environmental issues."

The same attention which is paid to products and services is also evident in the emphasis put on employee well-being. Consistent and regular training is a non-negotiable for Brelko, and to this end Padayachee has built a training centre on the company premises, which is used for both employee and customer training. "Our philosophy is based on getting buy-in from our employees – we work hard, with integrity and honesty, and keep focusing on our people. They are really the most important asset of Brelko. We focus on people's strengths

and develop what they are good at making them great at it!"

Padayachee firmly believes that to have productive employees you need to have happy employees. He has put his money where his mouth is and has developed an impeccably clean and environmentally friendly working environment – the pride being the 65-year old peppercorn tree that takes centre stage on the property.

The factory is built on the principle of having as much natural light as possible, and a 'nothing on the floor' policy has been instituted. The factory floor is not only swept and mopped continually, but all containers have wheels for ease of mobility, and no part lies on the floor – they all have their place on shelves or on trolleys.

Brelko is also committed to being environmentally active. Rain water is harvested for the immaculate gardens and solar powered geysers have been installed. Brelko not only cares for its customers and employees, but has made an impact on the community within which it is situated. It has converted a barren piece of land alongside the Brelko property to a green picnic park which has a soccer field and a basketball court for the use of the residents. "Everything we do at Brelko is deliberate," concludes Padayachee. "We believe in excellence in every area of our business and practice this on a daily basis."

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