

MANUFACTURING THE NEW NORMAL

THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED THE MINDSET AND PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS WORK, LIFE & BEYOND. READ ON TO KNOW HOW MANUFACTURERS ARE DEALING WITH THE PANDEMIC, DISRUPTION AND THE NEW NORMAL.

BY SWATI DESHPANDE



COVID-19 has shaken the whole world. There is no country, economy or industry that is not affected. Describing this adversity, **Deepak Pahwa, Chairman & Managing Director, Bry-Air** says, "The world economy is in shambles and will take some time to recover. According to reports, China's GDP that is approx. 19.7% of total global GDP, will decelerate by 1–1.25 percentage points over 2020 because. Which means the estimated loss, the global GDP will suffer will be somewhere between 0.5– percentage point. Here, the economy was already at a downturn, and thus, may take longer to recover."

VDMA India had conducted a survey about a month back, which suggests that 91% of the companies anticipate an overall loss of revenue in 2020. Almost 34% of the respondents predict the loss of revenue would range between 20-30%.

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Having said this, essential services are still running and some of them are also experiencing higher demand. This is due to people being confined to their homes, which has led to increased consumption. On this backdrop, **Michael Train, President, Emerson & Chairman, Emerson Automation**

Solutions "As the lockdown in India continues, successfully meeting challenges require the industries and people maintaining critical physical assets that are the backbone of daily life to have the ability, guidance and support they need to continue operating safely with utmost vigilance and care. We have a responsibility to ensure everyone has access to the resources and essential services – like food, medicine, electricity and transportation – they need to safely live their lives and feed their families. India is an early mover in this case but, there are and will be many anticipated areas of intervention in the coming months. The people maintaining & manufacturing these resources have a vital role in providing the necessities of daily life – the essentials that create an environment to deliver safe care & that enable families in every part of the world to safely shelter in place while having their basic needs met. Countless behind-the-scenes workers sustain the industries that many may take for granted



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– Deepak Pahwa

grade hospital mattresses as there is a surge in demand from the hospitals. We have received number of orders from Governments of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh & Odisha for these hospital beds. Although every section of the society is impacted by the pandemic, especially medical professionals got even more impacted as they are working tirelessly for extended hours with hectic schedules. Our intention is to provide them a comfortable sleep to enable them to continue taking care of the COVID-19 patients after a rejuvenating nap. Hence, we will be providing these mattresses to various hospitals as per the requirements. We have already supplied our PU Foam to one of the Head Gear for medical fraternity manufactured in Hyderabad.”

CUSTOMER FOCUS

In this difficult time, it is important to support customers in their endeavours. With this thought in mind, many companies have taken steps to educate and train employees and end users.

Through Service Mandi, a digital initiative, Ashok Leyland provides roadside breakdown assistance along with HPCL. With the task force & field executives of Ashok Leyland, contact the stranded drivers across the country through WhatsApp & phone to provide assistance. The company is also working along with Delhi Transport Corporation to keep their bus service running for essential service providing personnel.

Many other companies have offered extended warranty to their customers. To name a few, TVS Motor Company, Acer India, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, etc. have undertaken such initiative. TVS has also ensured that customer service helplines like toll-free number, customer care email id & Road Side Assistance (RSA) continue to be accessible to all customers. Also, Free



“This year, we will have our first ‘virtual’ Annual Business Conference.”
- Sanjay Joshi



“We are utilising this period to ensure a convenient and effective work-from-home.”
- Sameer Gandhi

3. Ashok Leyland's ventilator



IMTMA HAS BEEN CONDUCTING VIDEO CONFERENCES WITH ITS MEMBER COMPANIES ON TOPICS SUCH AS:

- Looking beyond domestic markets and aggressively focusing on exports.
 - Deliberating on the various relief and stimulus measures provided by the Government of India for income tax, GST, company law, banking & finance, etc.
 - Achieving breakthrough results in machine tools & accessories manufacturing through six sigma approach.
 - How to design, engineer & build high performance machine tools.
 - Maintaining business continuity.
 - Understanding Force Majeure clause in the context COVID 19 and beyond.
 - Special session for MSME member companies to apprise them on the various stimulus measures offered by the government.
- Simultaneously, IMTMA has been holding webinars where industry experts share their knowledge on various subjects.

service, warranty, and AMC services in the duration of lockdown have been extended by the company.

Narrating Acer India's other initiatives, **Chandras Panigrahi, CMO and Consumer Business Head, Acer India** mentions, “Through our e-store we have come up with an initiative called ‘Book Now and Pay Later’ option, which is feasible for both small business and individuals. We are also working with businesses to upgrade the technology infrastructure to meet their business continuity planning and mitigate any future impact of such pandemics.”

Adding a different perspective to the conversation, **Varun Pahwa, President, DRI - Pahwa Group** says, “We are conducting various virtual training programs for our customers. This is done through webinars. We are getting good responses to it as such educational programs are useful for them. Also, it helps us keeping on-going customer engagement.”

Agreeing to it, Gandhi says, “Along with continuously keeping them posted, the team is putting in efforts to strengthen connect with customers and channel partners so that they are able to work in a more mutually beneficial

manner. This will help us to support them appropriately once the lockdown is over. For this we're organising online training sessions and covering topics that include sharing information about maintenance as well as new products and solutions."

Sanjay Joshi, Chief Manufacturing Officer, Nuvoco Vistas Corp says, "We are connecting with our customers via social media & sharing the Best Construction Practices. Nuvoco Knowledge Series, a programme through, which we are connecting with our stakeholders, entered its fourth week. Participants have an opportunity to interact live with experts and learn practical tips for building sturdier structures."

Even associations are helping their members to stay updated. In this regard, V. Anbu, Director General, IMTMA says, "As an advisory service, IMTMA has prepared a general guideline, 'protocol for resumption of activities' which may help members to work out a plan to suit their individual organisations. IMTMA also advised members to build an element of assurance, within the plan, of strict adherence to safety norms as required for prevention of the pandemic disease, specifically social distancing, screening & sanitisation.

EMPLOYEE INITIATIVES

Apart from the production for essential goods, most of the manufacturing had come to the halt. It is easier for office-staff to work from home but same policy can't be implemented to the shopfloor workers & other factory staff. Then how did the companies utilise this time? Makkar replies, "My day had been far



busier than older routine as I spoke to plant heads & other department heads on a daily basis. Additionally, we have created various learning modules, which were delivered through webinars. Moreover, some of the employees chose to get themselves certified through outside agencies for specific subject matter like sustainability and green manufacturing, greenhouse gas emission check, etc."

DRI - Pahwa Group as well carried interesting activities for their employees. Speaking about it, Varun Pahwa says, "We kept in touch with our staff on a daily basis. This was important to know their well-being as well as to keep them motivated. As a result, we worked out on daily tasks for them. This helped us keep them engaged."

Sameer Gandhi, OMRON Automation, India says, "We are utilising this period to ensure a convenient and effective work-from-home for them. Also, we have developed a module of relevant virtual skills development programs focusing on technical as well as non-technical aspects. So far, the participation has been enthusiastic, and this is surely going to help them strengthen their professional acumen to emerge stronger & better. We are also holding group chat & virtual 'tea-sessions' to keep them motivated as well as get adjusted to the near-term possibility of many people continuing to work from home."

Sanjay Joshi, Chief Manufacturing Officer, Nuvoco Vistas Corp speaks about the company's



"There are separate training programs designed for workmen & housekeeping, highlighting aspects important to their role in day-to-day activities."

- Mukesh Chawla



"Despite the disruption, we continue to invest in our team members."

- Deep Agarwal



"We have created a committee to make policies and provide information to executives & front-line staff."

- Chandrasahas Panigrahi

4. Jyoti CNC Automation's ventilator

5. Demand for hospital & medical equipment are increasing



world, but it has also presented an opportunity for us to learn how to better manage a similar situation in the future." He further anticipates: (a) sectors like retail and healthcare will need to re-assess the resilience of their supply chains to keep production running in order to enable fulfillment to their customers. (b) Business continuity plans have led to split-team work arrangements, which stresses out the workforce of essential businesses like supermarkets and daily essential stores, thereby



prompting them to find ways to help their front-liners achieve greater productivity and efficiency at work."

"For (a), we anticipate the demand for e-commerce to be even higher because people would have grown comfortable with ordering online. This means that fulfillment operations will have to leverage on technology to scale their abilities quickly to meet with this anticipated growth in demand. For (b), we expect businesses to recognise the importance of augmenting their front-line staff with the right technology to increase their efficiency & productivity to cope with the situation. By providing them with tools that have a relatively low learning curve, their front-line staff will be able to shorten the on-boarding time required and enable them to start using the devices effectively at work sooner," he mentions.


Seconding the same, Anbu says, "We foresee demand picking up in healthcare industry, especially with companies from various industry sectors manufacturing ventilators, masks, 3D printing, face shields, personal protective equipments, etc. India is likely to increase its spend on infrastructure development over the next 5 years including development of rail & road networks, upgradation of medical colleges & health institutions, which is likely to spur demand for construction equipment. All these are expected to be up & running once the lockdown ends. Firms from various sectors are accessing market intelligence to adapt & grow, and moving forward the new mantra will be 3 R's: resolve, rebound & reimagine. In the long-term industry will also be proactively exploring opportunities in aerospace & other sunrise sectors. It is likely that industry in post-Covid world will become agile, dynamic & diverse in its offerings to cater to various sectors."

Revealing the company's approach, Chawla asserts, "Our approach would be to bank on au-



tomation, and to invest in cobots, etc. in areas of production which will help us achieve better productivity to meet the demand. The efforts will be towards meeting the demand through proper planning & prepare ourselves to meet a higher demand scenario in the future."

Naveen Soni, Senior Vice President, Sales and Service, Toyota Kirloskar Motor sums up the situation by saying, "The lockdown and shutdown of the plant gave us time to rethink on our strategies. We are looking at three buckets – 1. What is to be stopped? This means those things that are not important. 2. Change – People will need to change themselves in terms of up-skilling. We are also looking at re-skilling the people. 3. Continuity - means continuing whatever we have been doing. "

On a concluding note, Deepak Pahwa, says, "The Coronavirus outbreak is something like an earthquake with a shifting epicenters and never-ending aftershocks spreading across the globe. Having said that, as we stand today with a hope of resuming a semblance of manufacturing operations, we are preparing to face the new normal." 

Inputs contribution from Jayashree Kini-Mendes



"This was important to know their well-being as well as to keep them motivated"
– Varun Pahwa

7. Manufacturing of medical equipment will gain momentum

8. The new safety norms and regulations will be the new normal in the industry