



# Oilmax: Crusade against wasting scarce resources

The Pune-based Oilmax has apparently coined its name from its mission to help industry maximize the use of process oil. Today the company's activities can be summarized into three words: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. A brainchild of an electrical engineer A.P. Gokhale, Oilmax has been built around the concept of conservation. 'Why waste when you can save' is the company's operating philosophy. In line with this, it has come up with a wide array of products which help in bringing circularity in production and attaining sustainability. By using these green products, the industry can save and reuse oil & coolant, conserve resources and bring enormous savings to the nation, discovers Chief Editor Balasubramanian in an interview with **A.P. Gokhale, Managing Director, Oilmax Systems Pvt. Ltd.** Excerpts:

**Q. Could you brief us on your humble beginnings and your metamorphosis into the present status?**

Our beginning was very modest. We started in a small garage with one office assistant as the first employee. On the personal front, I grew up in a small town, studied in a government school and graduated in Electrical Engineering from Indore Engineering College. I started my career at the age of 21 as a Trainee Engineer with Kirloskar Filters and subsequently with Lucas TVS and Denso India in marketing and design departments. After 13 years of service, a business opportunity came my way and I

decided to quit the job and start my own business. I pulled out my Provident fund and bank savings and started trading of imported centrifuges. This was a new product in the Indian market with applications in the diesel engine segment. I did not have any knowledge in this field as my qualification and experience were in the electrical engineering stream. However, the product was very innovative and after test marketing I got confidence that it had a good potential.

We first targeted mining, cement and DG Set segments, where engine running was very high. We extensively visited these customers spread in remote areas

of MP, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, etc. - at times travelling for weeks. Our turnover in first year was a meagre rupees 3 lakhs. However, we did not get deterred as the product was very unique and cost saving and had good potential in future. The main constraints which we faced initially were that the customers were located at distant places. Since it was a new concept, customers were not sure how effective it is. So they mostly wanted field trials which was time consuming and expensive. Lead time to generate order and receive payments was quite long. There was also resistance from Engine OEMs as our products affected their

consumable filter sales. We overcame all these initial difficulties and in last few years we have grown very rapidly.

We have been consistently growing at a CAGR of 20% with exports contributing over 30% of our turnover. Our turnover in last 10 years has grown from Rs.2crore to 26crore. Exports have also grown from Rs. 1crore to Rs.10crore during this period.

We are a profitable and zero-debt company since inception. Our current employee strength is 70. Marketing is the most challenging aspect of our business, as all our products are completely consumables-free and having long life so we have very little spares business. We have to therefore constantly look for new customers, new market segments or new products. This is the key challenge for us. Another challenge for our growth is finding good distributors in foreign countries for expanding Export business. We have very unique and innovative products which save cost, improve quality and help in protecting environment. We hope that there is a great potential for our products and our company to grow in the coming years.

**Q. In the formative years when you were selling the concept of conservation, what was the reaction of the industry?**

Our product extends oil and coolant life. Initially there was not much interest or

awareness regarding conservation of these natural resources, however lately due to public awareness, discussions and campaigns about global warming and its effects, there is much better acceptance of these products. Also we have over 10,000 successful installations and happy customers as referrals.

**Q. How do you help improve product quality and reduce machine downtime on the shop floor?**

Our Oil and Coolant cleaning systems help to remove solid contamination from oil & coolant. This ultimately improves oil & coolant life, leading to reduction of machine downtime and maintenance cost. Our oil cleaning systems are used as online filtration. Hence oil & coolant gets cleaned while machine is in operation. It helps to reduce job rejection due to damage caused by the use of contaminated oil & coolant.

**Q. What's the extent to which we can recycle waste?**

We can recycle waste up to the extent we want based on oil testing. Our product helps to reuse the oil and we can extend the oil change period many times. Our industrial waste management product helps to reduce volume of industrial waste in order to achieve savings in storage and transportation costs as well as to achieve better melting yield.

**Q. What's your range of manufacture today?**

We have the following products in our basket:

- Coolant Sump Cleaner & Tramp Oil separator in CNC/VMC machine shop
- Oil Recovery Centrifuge to recover oil from machining chips
- Oil Cleaning System for - Hydraulic Oil, Quenching Oil, Grinding / Honing / Lapping oil, Cold Forming / Fastener / Thread Rolling, Tool Grinding, Test Bed Oil, Tube Manufacturing, Wire Drawing, Rust Preventive Oil, etc.
- Waste Compactor for Industrial scrap & waste
- Chip Compactor & Swarf Baling machine

**Q. What's unique about your Centrifugal Oil Cleaning System?**

Following are the USPs of our Centrifugal Oil Cleaning:

- No Filter Element
- No Replacement Cost
- Improved Product Finish
- Reduced Oil Consumption
- Extended Oil Change Period
- Reduced Machine Downtime
- Reduced storage and Disposal Cost of Waste Oil
- Reduced Pollution and Environmental Impact
- Lifetime Machine



**Q. Could you explain the process of Coolant Sump Cleaning with your equipment?**

Sump Cleaner removes very fine dirt from Oil / Coolant up to 10µ and below by Vacuum created in the sump cleaner tank. There are no consumables, hence no recurring cost. Collected dirt can be easily cleaned and the unit put back to use again. Oilmax Coolant / Sump Cleaner removes sludge, metal chips and swarf from Coolant / Oil tanks and filters it via reusable steel mesh filter. The System Works on the Principle of Vacuum Suction. A powerful vacuum blower creates vacuum in the tank of the unit, which sucks in coolant, metal chips Swarf, etc., passing it thru mesh basket. Contamination gets collected in the basket & clean coolant flows through to the tank of the unit. A centrifugal delivery pump delivers back the clean coolant.

**Q. How do you ensure circularity in production leading to sustainability?**

In our manufacturing set up, we have implemented conservation measures like Rain water Harvesting, Solar panels, segregation of Plastic waste & reusing it as packing material for outward despatches, etc.

**Q. How does your chip compactor function?**

Since many years in Machine Shop Cutting tools & coolant is used during the machining process. In this process, a lot of cutting oil is also wasted with chips or grinding dust. These chips are collected in trolley and moved to scrap yard. Huge space in the scrap yard is utilized for this conventional chip storage method. The cutting oil from chip spills all over the storage area & creates environmental hazard.

With the help of Chip Compactor, we can save space and transportation cost, while we can reuse oil & coolant. Chip compactor compresses loose chips into



a dense briquette. This enables better melting yield and saving on electrical energy consumption in the furnace.

**Q. Who are your major customers?**

Our customers in automobile & engineering sector are Ford, Hyundai, Mahindra, Escorts, Honda, Bajaj, Hero, Tata, Eicher, Nissan, Yamaha, Hitachi, Cummins, Bharat Forge, etc.

In the Cable Manufacturing sector, Havell's, Polycab, Sterlite, Finolex, RR Cable and KEI are our customers.

Our customers in the Cement manufacturing sector include UltraTech Cement, ACC, Shree Cements, Ambuja Cement, Dangote Cement, JK Cement, Heidelberg Cement, etc.

Besides these, we have customers in almost all manufacturing sectors like Aluminium Extrusion, Gear manufacturing, Plastic moulding, Plywood manufacturing, Steel Plants, Pipe Manufacturing, Shipping and Transport.

**Q. Could you update us on the economic aspects of oil retrieval and recycling?**

Millions of litres of oil are consumed

every year in the manufacturing and transportation sectors. A large quantity of this can be reused, thereby enabling huge savings. We have helped thousands of customers to save several thousand crores on oil expenses. One example is a leading Gear Manufacturer in Pune who has saved over 80,000 litres of oil in three years, thus saving Rs.1.2crore.

**Q. You seem to be doing a great service to the industry by 'converting waste into wealth'. What is your greatest contribution to the nation?**

Our greatest contribution is helping industry in cost reduction, achieving sustainability and protecting environment by reusing the process oil.

**Q. How do you envision the future of Oilmax?**

We foresee a great future for Oilmax. In last 3 years, we have more than doubled our turnover with the top-line growing from Rs.12 crore to Rs.26 crore. We are quite confident of maintaining this trajectory with continuously increasing awareness about environment, conservation and sustainability. ■