

Valence's Valstat VR20X static eliminators

A.T.E.'s continued engagement with packaging and printing industry

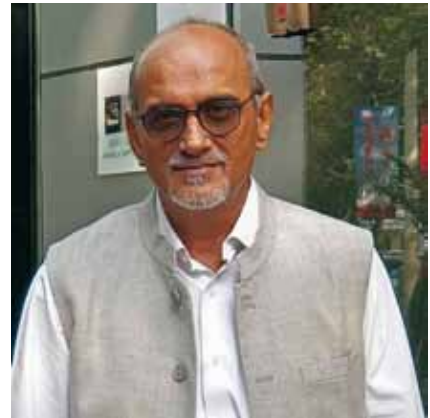
Shardul Sharma

A.T.E. has been partnering the print industry – covering gravure, flexo, and offset printing – for over 35 years. The company has played a pivotal role in this through its range of novel products and integrated solutions designed to improve quality, raise productivity, reduce waste, and thereby enhance competitiveness. Ashok Sethuram, director, Valence Electronics Pvt. Ltd., an A.T.E. Group company, spoke with *Packaging South Asia* about how A.T.E. supports the print and packaging industry.

Bengaluru-headquartered Valence Electronics offers solutions for managing static electricity, ink handling, surface cleaning, and heat recovery in various industrial applications. The company is involved in the design, manufacture, marketing, sales and support of various products and serves customers across the world. The company also makes automatic register controllers and defect detection systems. It caters to a range of industries such as flexible packaging, printing, textiles, plastics, glass, and pharmaceuticals.

"Our presence in this market for over three decades has helped to build a close and constant connect with the OEMs and end users. It enables us to better understand customer requirements. This learning in turn has given an impetus to our product development efforts," says Sethuram.

"We are proud to say that all our products are not only manufactured but also designed in India, ensuring high quality import substitutes at affordable costs. Also, our pan-India after-sales service team provides prompt service. Needless to say, we work towards continual development and are an ISO 9001:2015 certified organization," he adds.



Ashok Sethuram, director, Valence Electronics an A.T.E. Group company

The new ATEX-certified static charge eliminators

The company has recently launched ATEX-certified static charge eliminators. In gravure printing and coating machines, in particular, high levels of electrostatic charges are formed on the plastic film and paper. These electrostatic charges can cause sparks that are potentially hazardous and even disastrous. The only way to remove these static charges is through a process of ionisation. Since ionisation requires a high voltage for operation, these active static eliminators need to be certified for use in the solvent vapour-laden environment of a rotogravure printing or coating station.

Valence's Valstat VR20X static eliminating bars are designed to efficiently neutralize electrostatic charges from fast-moving plastic films in explosion-prone environments. "We are the first Indian manufacturing company to offer ATEX-certified static charge eliminating bars. A row of electrodes, provided along the active length of static eliminating bar, generates ions of both polarities, ensuring that positive and negative charges are quickly and effectively neutralized. These shock-less spark-free static charge eliminators are helpful in improving output quality and enhance productivity with fewer machine stoppages. Static eliminating bars are powered by high voltage AC power sources and are a compact,

sturdy and efficient electrostatic charge removal system," says Sethuram.

■ Future growth path

According to Sethuram, A.T.E. continues to hone its products and services as the company works towards providing customers with innovative and cost-effective solutions for all of these needs.

"We can see that flexo and digital printing will soon be the next big thing in the Indian print and packaging industry. The advancements we have made in the print control and vision systems group are part of this drive. As a conscious decision, in order to be future ready, we started the design and development activity for ATEX-certified static eliminators, vision and defect-detection products several years back. Now, we have launched and stabilized these products," he says.

The company is also giving a major thrust to exports.

■ More comprehensive solution needed to tackle plastic waste

Although Sethuram supports the Maharashtra government's aim of tackling plastic waste, he says a more holistic approach is needed rather than a blanket ban.

"Plastic is a wonder material which has positively impacted humankind and nature on multiple fronts. In my opinion, instead of a blanket ban on single-use plastic we must look for more comprehensive solutions such as recycling and reuse of plastics. The collection points for used plastic must increase and recycling processes should also improve. While banning single-use plastic, we must evaluate other options, which are also eco-friendly," he says. ■