

# Chemique



Chemique has a structured programme of product development keeping it at the forefront of adhesive technology



Mick McMullen, CEO and Founder of Chemique Adhesives

**M**anufacturing companies in a continually advancing and changing environment of production processes and techniques must have the ability to be flexible and embrace change to move forward. This is even more so for SME businesses such as Chemique Adhesives and Sealants Ltd., which has stringent budgets to work within and are competing against multi-national companies.

Chemique are manufacturers of industrial adhesives, supplied to markets such as furniture manufacturing, transportation and construction. Formed in 1985, the company has a production facility in Aldridge, West Midlands and a warehouse and sales office facility in Kennesaw, Georgia, USA. The combined turnover is in excess of £15M.

The challenges for a SME company come from both within your own organisation and from factors outside. This demands strong leadership and direction from the very top. As Chemique has grown, the company has developed from an entrepreneurial, single owner run culture, to one of a senior management structure, encouraging empowerment and responsibility for decision making. The new company structure is enabling Chemique to look forward positively and meet challenges as a focused team.

## External Challenges

Modern manufacturing companies are constantly looking at new materials, quicker and more efficient production methods. Above all, they seek changes and processes that are going to be more cost efficient and add money to the bottom line.

## FACTS ABOUT CHEMIQUE

- » Independently owned for over 30 years and Headquartered in the West Midlands
- » Operational facilities in the UK and US;
- » Focus on quality, service and performance
- » Products used across a wide range of industries which include furniture production, construction and transportation
- » Offering a full 'turnkey solution' using our own adhesives and application equipment

“Chemique is today positioned to compete on the global market, through niche market focus, offering superior adhesive product technology”

These requirements have led many companies to look at the use of adhesives as an alternative to traditional fixing methods that are more costly and not suitable with modern materials.

Even though being in an evolving market sector is very positive, this can throw up numerous challenges. These include:

- » Constant demand for new and evolving adhesive technology;
- » Numerous competitors fighting for the same business;
- » Pressure from multi-national competitors, with seemingly, infinite resources;
- » Sector and market requirements for approvals and standards;
- » Looking for growth away from some core saturated markets, in new overseas developing territories.

Meeting these challenges with limited budgets requires a process of research, review and planning to ensure that Chemique as a business can continue

Increased production output has been critical to continued growth



to move forward and are able to add new innovative products to the portfolio and look at new market opportunities overseas.

Chemique has a structured programme of product development, focused on developing new products that help keep it at the forefront of adhesive technology and manufacturing requirements, whilst at the same time ensuring these products to be competitive in a market with more resource rich rivals.

Growth in export markets has to be managed realistically, with both financial and manpower resources used effectively. The company strategy for this is to focus on key brand lines that can add value to overseas markets, offering new adhesive technologies, differentiating Chemique from the competition. A programme of market research is undertaken to identify these key markets and map out the best route to market available. Chemique has been successful in setting up a satellite company in the USA to cover USA, Canada and Mexico, as well as seeing success in markets such as UAE, Oman, Russia and Turkey through a specially selected distribution network.

### Internal Challenges

Along with having to adapt to external challenges, Chemique must also address internal challenges. The main ones are:

- » Manufacturing operations required to meet growth demand;
- » Change in company structure and culture to encourage greater empowerment;
- » Closer management of all cost budgets to meet multiple growth strategies;
- » Development and training of new and existing staff.

Regular management meetings and sub team groups means that all projects are tackled with an inclusive and team working approach. This has encouraged individuals to promote new ideas and follow these through, taking responsibility for the successful implementation of processes and procedures.

Production output has increased through implementing new processes based around lean manufacturing techniques and methodology. These techniques are also being utilised as Chemique moves into a second production facility, doubling the square foot floor space available and allowing for an even greater increase in production output.

In meeting this output growth and customer demand, Chemique has invested in the development of its staff, encouraging individuals to personally develop their skill set and to progress in their careers as the company evolves. This programme of inclusiveness and empowerment has allowed every department in the company to flourish and meant staff turnover is pretty much at zero levels.

### A Bright Future

As Chemique recognised a fast paced changing environment in external markets and the demands these would have on the business internally, the decision of Mick McMullen, the owner, to devolve to an empowered management structure that would allow better positioning to meet these challenges, allowing for growth, was visionary.

Through this foresight, Chemique is today positioned to compete on the global market, through niche market focus, offering superior adhesive product technology and backed up with ever efficient customer service levels.



The Chemique Senior Management Team



Second production facility housing new equipment to support increased production requirements and the manufacture of new products

The culture of openness at all levels of the business has led to significant increases in output, a more efficient working ideology and a feeling of teamwork and togetherness amongst the workforce.

With many new business strategies being followed, this has proven that with the correct focus and management, any SME business can be successful and ensure a bright future for all those involved.