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BASE OILS

2.07.2020

Multisol & Neste: A strong partnership creates a good foundation to meet evolving market demands

What is the value of a successful long-term partnership? David Hopkinson - CEO of Multisol - and Ed Potter - Head of Speciality Products at Neste - sat down virtually for a discussion about two decades of working together and the key requirements that need to be met to be ready for current and future challenges.

Ed Potter: We started our partnership around the turn of the millennium, and at that time Neste was just introducing Group III base oils into the passenger car lubricant market.

David Hopkinson: Multisol took on distribution of NEXBASE in the United Kingdom and soon after also in France. It was our first move into the Group III market, but for us as an automotive lubricants distributor, it made a lot of sense. Our relationship has continued to develop from there, with further growth enabled by Multisol joining the Brenntag Group in 2011, and we have always been quick to respond to any changes in market requirements.

What is required in an evolving, increasingly demanding market?



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David: This is one of the crucial things. Neste were the first to develop Group III in the European market and have led the way with obtaining OEM approvals. Through NEXBASE Group III, we were able to satisfy customer needs by offering top tier products. And our two companies have been perfectly aligned to do that with the technical knowledge, the sales resources, the required know-how to serve the market and, of course, the product itself.

What does it take to meet customer expectations?

Ed: We always aim to serve our customers by providing a base stock which meets specifications, offers great performance and remains consistent in its quality. This gives customers the needed peace of mind when choosing us and our products.

David: Our customers do not only rely on us to provide approved products. They also benefit from the professionalism, market knowledge, strong logistics, supplier reliability and - what I would see as a key NEXBASE brand advantage - flexibility in terms of the wide capabilities for blending.

Ed: But there is also something else that needs to be added to what we have said about the flexibility and the uniqueness of our mutual offering.

David: I think I know what you have in mind. Some things are hard to predict, but we do our best to be prepared for the unexpected. So, for example, if for whatever reason one of our customer's business continuity might be interrupted or even if they are simply going through a plant turnaround, Multisol has the capability to support them by blending for them in our plants and supplying them with top-quality product using NEXBASE.

Ed: Maybe we should see this in an even broader way. It's not only about being prepared for the unexpected. A lot of our development efforts go into ensuring we are ready and able to face the future and be flexible for the unexpected. For example the operational ramifications of Brexit have been difficult to understand and predict. Through Multisol's storage of NEXBASE in the UK, some of the burden of uncertainty is lifted for our customers.

What is essential to meet future market demands?

David: We see how the market continues to evolve and how improved fuel economy requirements and lighter viscosities have become increasingly important. Then there's the electrification of the passenger vehicle car parc and its potential proliferation. Irrespective of the rate of growth of electric or hybrid passenger car vehicles, the internal combustion engine will continue to be the main powertrain for cars for many years to come. So it is essential from a climate perspective that the products for these engines need to be as clean as possible, to reduce emissions and improve fuel economy. And I believe we offer just that with NEXBASE: base oils with the needed approvals, meeting the most stringent requirements for fuel economy and minimized emissions.



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both the technical performance and with sustainability goals, and we can help with both.

How will a successful partnership evolve?

David: I believe that the twenty years of our partnership have allowed us to develop our understanding of the market and to better serve our customers. This is a strong foundation to build upon in the future. We ensure that we offer top-tier products, services and technology and have the ability to support our customers in any circumstances, and to recognize the opportunities to further strengthen this offering.

Ed: The marketplace and our customers' requirements are always changing. The success of the Neste-Multisol/Brenntag partnership is due to the regular communication between our technical and sales teams that connects the producer to the end-user at a very nuanced level. I'm confident that with this approach new products and services will be developed to allow our customers to continue to be successful. And if they are happy, our partnership will only continue to flourish.



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