

## Celebrating 30 years of unmatched experience

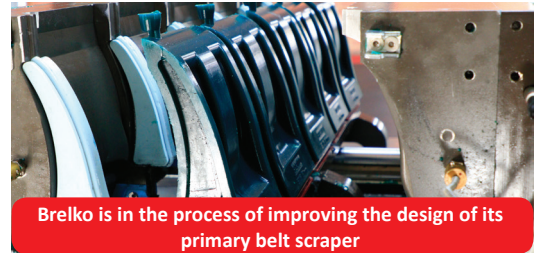
### IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

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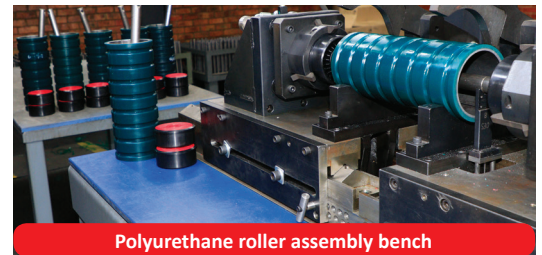
Conveyor belt cleaning equipment designer and manufacturing company Brelko Conveyor Products is celebrating 30 years in business in 2017. The company's success is testament to its hard work over the past three decades, which has seen it transition from a mere conveyor belt cleaning product manufacturer into a total transfer point spillage control solutions provider. CHANTELE KOTZE visited the manufacturing facility to find out more.



Brelko's fully automated polyurethane dispensing machine to mould about 12 tpm of polyurethane



Brelko is in the process of improving the design of its primary belt scraper



Polyurethane roller assembly bench

### Headed by MD and Co-founder

**Kenny Padayachee**, Brelko is far from an average manufacturing company – a tour of the company's 16 566 m2 facility proves this.

The property, which is located in Booyens, south of Johannesburg, was acquired by Brelko in March 2009, after which it was demolished and fully refurbished. Keeping only the existing palms and indigenous trees on the property, Brelko spearheaded the design and construction of its new purpose-built manufacturing facility that fully meets its needs – a stark contrast to the property it originally occupied in Selby, Johannesburg, Padayachee recalls.

Having taken occupancy of the fully refurbished facility in October 2010, Brelko continues to renovate and extend the property as the business matures – the most recent extension being that of a warehouse, which will be used to assemble and store its latest range of products.

Padayachee prides himself in successfully establishing Brelko as a world-class showroom-like manufacturing facility, with modern administrative buildings and a training centre to boot.

### Innovation game

Judging by the level of research and development that goes into the design and manufacture of a new product, investment innovation is a key factor in Brelko's successful business history and will continue to play the biggest role in the company's future success.

Over the years, the company has not only introduced new products to its range of conveyor spillage control solutions, such as Brelko's latest product innovation – a patented belt tracking system – but has also improved on and redesigned some of the features for some of its products. "This means that we are frequently

introducing enhanced versions of existing products," Padayachee notes.

For example, Brelko is in the process of improving the design of its primary belt scraper – a product range that has been around since Brelko was founded in 1987.

In order to do this, Brelko has had to redesign the mould in which the polyurethane belt scrapers are cast, and is currently at the point of testing the mould.

Once proven successful, the company will manufacture additional moulds with

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Kenny Padayachee







Investment in innovation is a key factor in Brelko's successful business history over the past three decades

the aim of being able to produce 2 000 of these improved belt scrapers each month.

### Streamlining efficiencies through automation

The highlight of the manufacturing facility is the fully automated polyurethane dispensing machine, which is housed in a section of the manufacturing facility called the "bakery".

Acquired by Brelko 2014, the machine is now able to mould about 12 tpm of polyurethane, compared with about 300 kg a month in Brelko's early years. Not only has Brelko automated its polyurethane dispensing machine, it has also automated much of the product assembly too.

One such example of this is the polyurethane roller assembly bench – an automated in-house machine that was designed and built by the company to streamline and speed up the once manual task of assembling the roller.

The company has also designed and built an automated 'cooling bench' which uses nitrogen to flash freeze one of the components that is used in Brelko's torsion holders for secondary scrapers – a time consuming task performed manually in the past.

### People-focused

At the heart of Brelko, and also key to the

company's manufacturing strength, is its employees.

With 10 executive managers reporting directly to Padayachee – 70% of whom have been with the company for +15 years – Brelko operates like a well-oiled machine with each manager responsible for one of the various portfolios within the company. These managers are at the core of driving the company's objectives forward.

"You can have an amazing product and an amazing facility but without the right people, you have nothing," says Padayachee, nothing that you can build a "super business" with the right people at its core – and they are in fact the real assets of any business.

### African growth

While the bulk of the company's turnover comes from the South African mining industry, Africa's untapped potential will stand Brelko in good stead to grow its market share.

"Despite the mining industry's ups and downs, we believe we have the ability to remain a key supplier to the mining industry for many

more years to come, specifically in the SADC region, where we already have an impressive foothold, with agents in all of the SADC countries as well as Mauritius, Madagascar, Ghana and Tanzania," says Padayachee.

Testament to this is the significant demand for Brelko products in almost all of the southern African countries, especially in Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia. "We have also had interest in our products further up north into Africa, and recently supplied a large order to a gold mining operation in Egypt," Padayachee notes, adding that Brelko remains bullish on the prospects for Africa in future, most specifically in West and Central Africa where precious metals are on the up. **MRA**

