Ashok Leyland
Transportation and Mobility Case Study
Ashok Leyland also relies on improvements in technology and to its internal processes to help forge its way to the top of the sector. It has streamlined business processes and invested in software solutions that are helping it improve customer service and product quality. “A satisfied consumer is our ticket to the top,” Natarajan said. “When customers come to Ashok Leyland, we want them to live the Ashok Leyland experience. Whether it applies to the look and feel of our showrooms, to the reception they get when phoning us, or the documents they receive from us, we want them to have a consistent and pleasant Ashok Leyland experience.” This philosophy also applies to the company’s products. “Our vehicles are known for their ruggedness and reliability. Customers buy an Ashok Leyland vehicle because they value acquiring a product from a company that has a strong reputation for excellence,” Natarajan said.

**N=1 theory and the customer experience**

At Ashok Leyland, catering to thousands of consumers does not mean ignoring the individual. “We believe in the N=1 theory,” Natarajan said. This means that even if a company serves many customers it still needs to focus on the individual experience. “But the question is,” Natarajan asked, “to what extent do you offer clients the possibility to customize their products? When you go out for ice cream, you have a limited number of flavors to choose from. The vendor does not authorize you to go into the kitchen and create your own one-of-a-kind flavor. After a certain point, it becomes economically unviable to allow unlimited choice and freedom of options. Choice, yes, but not at any cost.”

Ashok Leyland has found the right balance between standard product offerings and individual choices by equipping its IT department with a platform that enables customers to express their preferences. “With Dassault Systèmes’ 3DEXPERIENCE Platform, we have a robust and flexible solution,” Natarajan said. “Customer preferences can be collected through virtual prototype testing and used to influence...

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**Challenge**

To figure among the world’s top five bus manufacturers and top ten truck manufacturers within five years.

**Solution**

Ashok Leyland implemented Dassault Systèmes’ 3DEXPERIENCE Platform with CATIA for design and ENOVIA for data management and collaborative innovation.

**Benefits**

Easy and centralized access to data and improves Ashok Leyland’s customer service. Product customization is possible without incurring additional development costs.

Venkatesh Natarajan is confident about his company’s future. In an age where celebrity endorsements can propel brand awareness to new heights, Indian commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland has signed cricket superstar Mahendra Singh Dhoni as brand ambassador and the new face of Ashok Leyland. “Mr. Dhoni’s wide appeal and popularity will attract attention to our company’s initiatives and new product innovations through television spots and print ads,” special director of information technology, Venkatesh Natarajan, said. Ashok Leyland is counting on this first-ever association with a celebrity, a hero by Indian standards, to convey its product and service mantras of quality, reliability, and durability. With this awareness campaign, Ashok Leyland has confirmed its intention to become one of the leading players in the global commercial vehicle business.

Founded more than 60 years ago, Ashok Leyland is today India’s second largest commercial vehicle manufacturer. The company has its sights set on expanding its presence to figure in the global top five in the bus sector and the top ten in the truck sector within the next five years. Working toward that goal requires taking some bold measures. The company has expanded beyond the boundaries of India to secure a foothold in foreign markets through a series of acquisitions and joint-ventures. On the European continent, it obtained stakes in UK-based bus manufacturer Optare and in Czech Republic trucking company AVIA. It has expanded its bus manufacturing facilities to the United Arab Emirates to target the Middle East and African markets. Recently, it entered the light commercial vehicle market with the DOST, born of its joint venture with Nissan.

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Venkatesh Natarajan, Special Director of Information Technology, Ashok Leyland.
product development.” However, providing increased flexibility requires streamlined development processes to manage personalization in a cost-efficient manner. “We are working toward this goal with the 3DS application CATIA by relying on modularization and parts standardization. It promotes reusability and consequently, shortens time to market. Moreover, working with 3D digital mock ups improves design precision and quality. We can say that CATIA is the lifeline of our design process,” Natarajan said.

The path to innovation
When Natarajan speaks of innovation, he really means transformation. He feels that while technology is an enabler of transformation, the people who work with the technology are also an important component of change. “Innovation is not always trying to invent new things,” Natarajan said. “Innovation is looking out for best practices or for new ways of developing products. To be innovative means having people who are always on the lookout for better ways of doing things and questioning the status quo. How can I improve on this? How can I provide more value to my customer? With the 3DEXPERIENCE Platform, our people can try out new ideas. It has built momentum within our organization and that is very important. ENOVIA Version 6, Dassault Systèmes’ 3DEXPERIENCE application for data and process management, promotes better quality in the way we work because information is capitalized and easily accessible from anywhere. This leads to better products and customer service.”

Mobile customer service
To overcome the hurdles that its personnel sometimes face when working out in the field, Ashok Leyland recently innovated by investing in mobile technologies that will enable employees to obtain information to improve service to the customer and to upload field data to the main office for more efficient diagnostics. “Field personnel can obtain up-to-date technical or sales information because it is consolidated in ENOVIA,” Natarajan said. “everyone has access to the data they need to perform their job. Workflows are also formalized in this application, which means that everyone knows what needs to be done and when,” Natarajan explained.

Focus on Ashok Leyland
Flagship company of the Hinduja Group, Ashok Leyland is one of the largest commercial vehicle manufacturers in India.

Products: Buses, trucks, light vehicles, engines
Revenue: US $ 2.5 billion in 2011-12
Employees: +15,000 (Hinduja Group)
Headquarters: Guindy, Chennai, India

For more information
www.ashokleyland.com
Delivering Best-in-Class Products

Dassault Systèmes, the 3DEXPERIENCE Company, provides business and people with virtual universes to imagine sustainable innovations. Its world-leading solutions transform the way products are designed, produced, and supported. Dassault Systèmes' collaborative solutions foster social innovation, expanding possibilities for the virtual world to improve the real world. The group brings value to over 150,000 customers of all sizes, in all industries, in more than 140 countries. For more information, visit www.3ds.com.

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