



# India cannot afford to buy cheap systems

René Meuleman provides a personal reflection on the gradual change of mindset enabling growth in India's glass industry.

Since agreeing to join Eurotherm by Schneider-Electric as Glass Business Development Manager, I find myself travelling the world more than before. I remember my first trip to India very clearly. It was in 2008 when I helped my Eurotherm India colleagues set up their stand at the Glass World Expo and attended our booth during the trade show. When we left the venue the evening before the opening, there was chaos all around and I had visions of it being a disaster. I was wrong! By the time we arrived the next morning, all was cleaned up and looking very nice, a workable situation and inviting for the industry to visit.

We only had a small stand but we met a lot of people and had many interesting discussions. The further the trade show progressed, the more I became aware that most of those who came to visit us were discussing pricing instead of talking about technical solutions and price-performance. On the second day, we changed our strategy and focused more on trying to convince our audience that performance, quality and ROI have a price and if one only keeps looking for the cheapest solution, nothing good will come from it. Systems in the glass industry need

to perform for many years, they need to improve the process, increase the efficiency and help customers to be more competitive. I do not like the word 'cheap', as it simply does not cover what we are looking for. 'Cost-effective' covers more of what we try to achieve for customers. 'Best price-performance' perhaps even more.

This year, I travelled to India to attend the Eurotherm stand at the GLASSPEX India 2015 trade show in Mumbai. Although I have visited the country frequently over the past seven years, I was astonished by the improvements. Considerable transportation improvements, an incredible new airport and a much better organised trade show. The only things that remained unchanged were the beautiful people and the exceptional food.

Something else that has also changed, however, is the discussion about 'cheap'. Nobody in India is looking for the 'cheap' option anymore. They look at performance, innovation and price-performance now. I met many people at the trade show and at their production facilities who have amazingly stepped up to a higher level of manufacturing performance and understanding.

India is changing quickly and



Outside the exhibition venue on the day before GLASSPEX India 2015.

I would not be surprised if the country soon overtook China, if it has not already done so. Understanding that there are other, more important factors than 'cheap' is important because if you buy cheap, you most probably need to buy twice. Once a country understands that, its people will be able to accelerate their growth faster. I bet India will move extremely quickly and we as innovation providers should support that the best we can. ■



On the opening day of the show in Mumbai.



René Meuleman (at right) in discussion with customers on the Eurotherm India stand.

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