OPTIMIZING BUSINESS

Supplying its products for nearly all of Korea’s industries, Alfa Laval Korea has grown rapidly with the market.

The Korea operations of the Sweden-based Alfa Laval group ranks third among its company’s 55 subsidiaries worldwide. Considering Korea is vastly smaller in industrial size and population than each of Alfa Laval’s top-five performing nations, the ranking indicates an ideal country-company match.

“This is really a remarkably good fit for our products, what Korean industries need,” said Peter Carlsberg, Managing Director of Alfa Laval Korea. “This is one of the most important countries for us.”

Celebrating its 35th anniversary this year, Alfa Laval Korea provides equipment and services used to heat, cool, separate and transport products including oil, water, chemicals, beverages, foodstuffs, starch and pharmaceuticals. The company’s customers range from Korea’s conglomerates to many small- and medium-sized companies across industries.

“What the Korean customers are producing is perfect for us. We can really help them with our products and solutions. They are shipbuilders, offshore, construction companies and they are in various process industries. The biggest construction companies in the world are Korean. And they are building things where our product goes very well,” said Carlberg.

Alfa Laval started doing business in Korea in 1962 through an agent, well before the official establishment of Alfa Laval Korea in 1979.

Today, Alfa Laval Korea focuses on the marine, offshore, petrochemical refinery, power station, food and construction industries with two offices, in Seoul and Busan, and an assembly plant in Pyeongtaek. An almost entirely Korean staff of 150 sells, assembles and provides after-sales service for three core products: centrifugal separators used to clean liquids, cooling/heating products called plate heat exchangers and pumps and valves.

Separators were Alfa Laval’s first invention, back when farmers separated the cream from milk using a centrifugal separator. Today the company’s machines are used to take particles and dirt out of most liquids and used everywhere from oil power plants to wineries.

Plate heat exchangers make up the bulk of Alfa Laval Korea’s business along with the separators. Whether it’s in a nuclear power facility or aboard a ship, production generates heat, which then requires the cooling of water or air. Alfa Laval Korea built a plate heat exchanger assembly plant in Pyeongtaek 15 years ago to meet the needs of Korea’s leading shipbuilding, offshore and other industries.

“To be able to serve the Korean demanding customers, we built the factory here, in order not to wait for [the product] to come from Europe, China,” said Carlberg. “In addition, some of the Korean customers have their own special requirements. In some cases, we need to customize a product. And in order to be able to do so, you have to be close to the customers.”

One of the company’s most interesting projects in 2013 was the 123-floor Lotte World Tower in Seoul, which will be the tallest building on the Korean peninsula and the third tallest in the world once completed in 2016. It will be equipped with Alfa Laval Korea’s heat exchangers. A similar Lotte skyscraper will be built in Busan and equipped with Alfa Laval’s products as well.

Pumps and valves used for hygienic and efficient fluid transport and regulation make up Alfa Laval Korea’s third product group. The company’s other products include Aalborg boilers, as Alfa Laval acquired the Danish Aalborg Industries two years ago, and desalination technology to make freshwater from seawater, for ships and offshore. With all of their products, Alfa Laval Korea’s goal is to optimize customers’ processes and energy efficiency.

“Today it’s all about saving kilowatts, saving energy, and there’s a huge demand in Korea of improving the processes built 20-30 years ago... This is a big growing business here because the opportunities are actually in every factory and every building,” said Carlberg.

Did you know?

- More than half of the world’s ocean-going ships are equipped with Alfa Laval’s products and solutions.
- More than half of the 60 million tons of starch produced in the world every year comes from Alfa Laval’s products and solutions.