TT Electronics confident of robust growth in Indian market

New emission norms to propel company prospects

By N. Balasubramanian

In the world of automobiles, there are so many vehicle parameters that need to be measured and controlled in extremely dynamic conditions which call for high a level of precise and reliable electronic solutions. UK-Headquartered TT Electronics has been a pioneer in the field of engineered electronics catering to a wide range of industry segments across the globe. The company is a leader in developing sensors and control solutions for automotive OEMs and Tier-1 suppliers across passenger car, commercial vehicle (CV), two-wheeler and off-highway segments. Under the AB Elektronik product brand, TT Electronics develops multiple vehicle applications, at its engineering centre in Germany, including power controls, gear position and pedal sensors, fluid and emission sensors, with a strong focus on safety and driver assistance features.

TT Electronics has a manufacturing footprint in several countries across the world of which its plants in Austria, China, Germany, India, Mexico, Romania and the UK make products for the transportation vertical. Its Indian subsidiary TT Electronics Sensing and Control India Pvt. Ltd. was founded in 2012 and has made good progress since its inception. We spoke to Mr. Frank Rothe, Product Application Manager (Pressure, Temperature and Fluid Property Sensors), TT Electronics, and Mr. Vikas Chawla, Director - Sales & Marketing, TT Electronics Sensing and Control India Pvt. Ltd., to find out about the company’s focus areas and plans for the Indian market.

Long-term commitment

TT Electronics has a production facility in Manesar where speed sensors and accelerator pedals are being produced at present with other products including temperature sensors set to go into production in future. Indicating its long-term commitment to the Indian market, TT Electronics has also established a 35-engineer strong R&D and Development Centre in Bangalore which works from concept stage to the end-solution and caters to the company’s global facilities apart from handling local requirements.

Talking about TT Electronics’ focus on the Indian market, Mr. Frank Rothe says: "India is one of our three growing markets along with China and North America. In order to be successful in India, we must have advanced technology coming from Europe but with local production to be cost-effective. At present, our focus is on the final step to BS-IV in April next year as a result of which we expect to get good volumes from Indian truck
manufacturers as we are already supplying BS-IV products to them.”

Adding his views, Mr. Vikas Chawla says: “With our Government’s Make-in-India initiative and sustained efforts towards economic growth and development, this is the best time to invest in India. There is huge potential in the market and our products have been well accepted by customers who have confidence in our products, technology and capabilities.”

TT Electronics works with a wide range of top vehicle OEMs across segments in different geographies. The company has secured orders from some leading names in the Indian market as well, and is confident of expanding its presence further in the coming years. “Globally, around half of our turnover comes from the CV segment, nearly 40 per cent from passenger cars and the rest from off-road vehicles. We supply to Premium in cars and are growing in heavy- and light-duty trucks and buses with supplies to all major truck makers in Europe and US. In India, we supply to Ashok Leyland and hope to add more CV customers in the future”, shares Mr. Rothe. “We have also started off-road supplies in India and work with the likes of TAFE, Escorts, Sonalika and Mahindra in the tractor segment”, adds Mr. Chawla.

Gearing up for BS-VI

TT Electronics has a portfolio of products related to emission reduction solutions which means it is set for some exciting action ahead in the Indian market given the pan-India move to BS-IV from April next year and the challenging leap to BS-VI by 2020.

How challenging would the BS-VI jump be? Mr. Rothe answers: “India took a lot of time to introduce BS-IV and when it did the main challenge was to provide the required quality of fuel. Right now, the market is expanding with everyone talking about BS-VI for 2020 which is very demanding. But once the BS-IV step is mastered, there is not much left to do to reach BS-VI. We are supplying for BS-IV systems and with just some adjustments we will be ready for BS-VI. It is an exciting step to skip BS-V and though challenging it is definitely possible by 2020 and gives a good perspective to the Indian market.”

The exhaust after treatment system space will remain one of TT Electronics’ target segments where its high temperature and thermocouple sensors are used by some of the leading system suppliers including major German players. Having achieved positive feedback from customers and robust growth in sales, where does TT Electronics make a difference from other suppliers in its field? Mr. Rothe replies with a smile: “Our approach makes the difference. We listen to the customer, understand their needs and then provide a solution to help them. We don’t have many off the shelf products because we listen to our customers’ issues and solve them with tailor-made solutions. Our annual turnover is around 600 million GBP and we have over 5,000 employees which gives us financial stability, yet we are able to be nimble and flexible with customer requests and use our experience to support them. When I started working at the company, almost twenty years ago, we had just two different temperature sensors. Today, we have more than sixty different temperature sensors – it just goes to show we have broadened our portfolio to meet our customers’ demands.”

With its engineering expertise and customer partnerships TT Electronics is well poised to make strong progress in the Indian market. While the company is bullish about its prospects thanks to the impending emission norm changes, it plans to further expand its ties with existing customers and also partner new ones.

“As we move ahead, our focus will be on engine management system suppliers, expanding to other tractor OEM customers and bring in new products suitable for the Indian market. We will also work closely with passenger car makers and be part of their growth strategy”, states Mr. Chawla.

“We would like to take a significant share in BS-VI sensors because that’s the potential space. We have a good product portfolio in the CV segment where we would like to improve our presence. Overall, our focus would be on being present where our customer is because it’s most essential”, concludes Mr. Rothe.