

'We will revitalise domestic fans market with BLDC'



THE DOMESTIC FANS INDUSTRY was considered technology-stressed, where players found it challenging to differentiate their products in the absence of technological breakthroughs. Things are likely to change now with the advent of a new breed of fans, which provides a quantum leap in energy efficiency for the power-starved nation. Built on a brushless direct current (BLDC) motor technology platform these fans, according to various studies, are almost twice as efficient as traditional ones built on the induction motor.

Orient Electric's foray into the BLDC domain, with the launch of its Ecotech range, is being viewed as a watershed moment for the fans market. The venture could potentially contribute in saving an estimated two billion kW hours of electricity annually for the country; and avoid almost 24 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions during their life.

Anindya Das, Orient's senior VP & fans business head, speaks to *SEL* on how the company is poised to bring about a change in the burgeoning energy-efficient domestic market. Here are the edited excerpts:

years of research. We are only acquiring electronics for our Ecotech fans from an American firm. We are confident that our company will revitalise the fans market with BLDC technology.

Q. How will Ecotech fans be a game changer for Orient Electric?

Remember the 90s, when we shook up the domestic market with the revolutionary PSPO (Peak Speed Performance Output) technology? [smiles] It's in the same way that we'll leverage our BLDC tech. Our launch of Ecotech fans is well timed, considering that energy saving has been increasingly gaining public consciousness, and sustainability is becoming the fulcrum of the gen-X business and governance. As an early mover in the turf, our company believes that BLDC fans will be able to generate at least 10-15% of revenues in its fans business within the next two years.

Q. How are you marketing your ₹4,800 BLDC fans in a price sensitive market?

We have aligned our marketing strategy of fans with the company's brand promise of 'switch to smart'. This means

Q. Availability and high cost of materials like magnets and electronics in India are considered to be challenges for manufacturers who want to bring out BLDC fans. How did Orient Electric overcome this challenge?

Innovation is in the DNA of Orient Electric, and we have been able to take care of these crucial factors with the help of our R&D at the Faridabad plant. The company has been able to develop BLDC technology indigenously after

that every product that customers see from our stable will not only be technologically advanced, but will have the smartness quotient of being eco-friendly, efficient, easy to use and aesthetically pleasing. At ₹4,800 Ecotech's payback period is less than two years, it offers 15 years of unblemished performance, and comes with a two year warranty on the motor. What also makes our fans different from BLDC peers is their capability to operate even at a voltage as low as 140V, and deliver the same air-speed performance of a conventional fan. This is a poignant marketable feature for a large chunk of areas that suffer from a chronic low voltage power supply. The permanent magnet rotor, electronic commutation and constant torque at all speeds make Orient Electric's BLDC motor a winner with additional advantage of zero electrical noise. We think that a 5-speed remote, 4-step timer control, aluminum blades and choice of three colours in white, brown and ivory also add up to smart features of the fans.

Q. Going forward, do you think that the domestic fans market will convert to the BLDC platform?

The story of fans could well pan out much like the Indian lighting industry, which is adopting LED and phasing out incandescent lights. Our company believes that the future of fans belongs to BLDC.

But, this genre of fans will take a while in become quintessential for consumers. As a fans leader, our company is of the view that much of the market proliferation will be on the back of technology awareness and branding. We have started all-round BTL activities for our channel partners, who give us a footprint of one lakh retail outlets pan-India. Besides, our company is aggressively engaged in institutional sales cutting across various application areas and sectors. The government also has a role in promoting the BLDC technology by inviting tenders in its projects for such fans, and rolling out awareness campaigns similar to BEE's Standard & Labeling programmes (star-rating).

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