

# Thriving through innovation

In view of the changing competitive landscape and evolving consumer aspirations, **Rakesh Khanna, MD & CEO, Orient Electric**, tells us how the company is using technology led innovation to create the differentiation that the new age consumers expect.

**In today's fast-changing business environment, how central is innovation to maintaining a competitive advantage?**

>> With the ever-evolving business landscape and consumer preferences, change is the only constant. We at Orient Electric have always focused on building sustainable competitive advantage through a culture of innovation, whilst keeping our consumers at its core. We have consistently invested in technology, in people and in building a collaborative culture. We continuously work on improving quality and performance, increasing service reach and keeping our eyes on the market and ears around our consumers.

Take for example, our aerodynamically designed Aero Series fans, which we launched around 2 years ago. We started with a fresh thinking, brought in aeronautical engineers in our R&D center and validated our approach through con-



sumer research. While the consumers had a latent need for silence and a pronounced need for aesthetics, performance was still the decisive factor.

The Aero Series addressed this need gap with its defining aspects, which include significant noise reduction, increased air delivery with aerodynamic design and stunning aesthetics. The phenomenal success of Aero Series range has helped us capture No. 1 position in the premi-

um fans segment with over 35% market share in a period of just 18 months.

We have recently introduced India's first metal bodied, modular outdoor cooler which can be assembled in 90 seconds and dismantled and stored away when not in use. Similarly, in lighting business, Orient was the first brand to get 3-star rating for LED bulbs and is once again the first one to get 5-star rating for LED bulbs. We are also the first in creating awareness about the flickering problem associated with age old conventional fluorescent tubelights and triggering their replacement with LED Battens. We are spearheading our Switchgears business on SDB (Snap Disc Bi-Metal) technology which is far safer and superior technology than what is currently available in the Indian market.

Our focus will remain on driving sustainable competitiveness through innovation, while addressing

the consumer need gaps.

**How is Orient Electric contributing to Make in India?**

>> We are one of the oldest fan manufacturing companies in India and the largest as well. You would find it interesting that every second fan exported out of India is an Orient fan and we have more than 60% market share in exports covering 35 countries. We are also the second largest manufacturer of LED bulbs in India. We have an established electronic design competency center which enables us to manufacture in-house drivers for most of our lighting products. I feel proud to share that not only are we technologically ready to address the global demand, but we are equally competitive globally in terms of cost and quality. So, I would say "Make in India" as a philosophy is engrained in our DNA, not just in Orient but all the companies within the CK Birla Group, since long.