

Press Release

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Voith cost optimisation directly benefits platinum producers

With the platinum price plummeting to just over US\$1000/Oz, production has become highly-challenging in this volatile mining sector. In these tough conditions, local operations can minimise overhead expenditure by purchasing Voith's high-quality range of hydrodynamic technology-based power transmission solutions at considerably reduced cost.

Voith successfully achieved cost optimisation on a global scale following a year-long focus on internal optimisation processes, such as commercial manufacturing, business costs and rationalising. The most widely-used hydrodynamic power transmission technology used in platinum mining is fluid couplings, and end-users benefit directly from these cost savings.

According to Voith South Africa Area Sales Manager Gary Allison, quality has not been compromised at all. "There has been absolutely no compromise on quality in terms of materials, processes and manufacturing. Instead, we used advanced algorithms to determine where smaller components could be used to lower cost, without affecting performance."

The hydrodynamic principle of a fluid coupling makes it easy to gently accelerate driven machines. Fluid couplings limit torque, provide load sharing, and dampen torsional vibrations. This protects the drive system from damage even under extreme operating conditions, while reducing downtime and ensuring an uninterrupted production process.

"Our drive solutions are reliable and specifically tailored to each drive system – from individual couplings to complete driveline solutions. The transmittable power ranges from 300 W up to 6 MW, making our fluid couplings ideally-suited to the platinum sector," adds Allison.

While the achievement of cost optimisation in the current economic climate is a major accomplishment, Allison admits that Voith faces a number of

challenges in maintaining consistently-competitive prices, considering the fact that the major components for fluid couplings are imported.

Potential for growth amidst a gloomy market outlook

Despite a sluggish market, Allison is optimistic that Voith can achieve long-term growth in the platinum sector. "Projects are currently very limited, as there are no new mines or shafts being built. This is globally-driven due to commodity prices. Companies have to optimise their resources to stay afloat, and this is where our cost advantage plays a major role."

In addition to cost advantage, Allison notes that Voith sets itself apart from the competition due to its unrivalled after-sales back-up and support. "In tough times, operations need to be able to rely on suppliers that provide full back-up and onsite product support when required. This forms part of our value-added service offering, which is a major driver in maintaining contracts, while winning new ones when markets turn," he concludes.

Voith Turbo, a Group Division of Voith GmbH, is a specialist for intelligent drive solutions. Customers from highly diverse industries such as oil and gas, energy, mining and metal processing, ship technology, rail and commercial vehicles rely on advanced technologies from Voith Turbo.

Voith sets standards in the markets energy, oil & gas, paper, raw materials and transportation & automotive. Founded in 1867, Voith employs more than 39,000 people, generates € 5.3 billion in sales, operates in about 50 countries around the world and is today one of the largest family-owned companies in Europe.

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