

A NEW ENGINEERING PARTNER WITHIN THE FOOD INDUSTRY



Astratek, a new engineering “kid on the block”, opened its doors during the COVID lockdown. The organisation was conceptualised just before the pandemic and faced the daunting task of starting up operations during this difficult time. Thanks to its forward-looking attitude, the company managed the transition to a work-from-home organisational setup.

During this time, it helped clients adjust to the difficult operational circumstances. It managed to conduct business effectively during this time, including projects such as designing for a large cheese manufacturing plant during the national lockdown; even conducting factory walkthroughs and site visits remotely. The company's response to challenges

presented by the global pandemic demonstrates its resilience in the face of challenging odds.

Astratek is the brainchild of Peter Grobler, who has over 35 years of experience in managing fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) manufacturing operations. After a long career of managing the manufacturing operations of two of South Africa's greatest FMCG groups, Peter conceptualised and founded Astratek as “the only engineering company in the South African market that specialises in FMCG manufacturing”.

While managing the manufacturing portfolio of an up-and-coming food manufacturing group, which eventually listed successfully on the JSE, Peter assembled a team of specialised engineers with experience in a variety of African manufacturing contexts to design state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities as well as operate and optimise existing facilities. During this time, the team has grown proficient at solving modern manufacturing problems with the latest technologies and techniques.

For more than 10 years, this established team has been working with food manufacturers to design, build and manage effective FMCG facilities, that run cost-effectively while achieving optimal output.

The team has worked on FMCG plants specialising in the production of a variety of products, such as:

- baked products – including designing a brand-new par-baked sourdough breads production line
- dairy
- prepared meals
- confectionery and snacks
- beverages and bottled water
- spices and condiments
- household and personal care
- fishing and processing.

Astratek offers an end-to-end service including managing full engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) services, outsourcing plant operations and optimising projects. This includes three broad service streams, namely engineering, operating and optimising.

Astratek's engineering expertise allows it to take this responsibility off your hands. This may entail an initial feasibility study to determine whether a long-term project is worthwhile pursuing. It may also entail assisting with the selection of ideal equipment for a facility or production line to operate optimally.

Astratek designs facility layouts using operational modelling techniques to ensure the harmonious flow of materials, product and people. This includes the planning of services and utilities such as electricity, water, fuel, steam and condensate and compressed air.

Modern facilities must comply with safety requirements that are growing exponentially. With an intimate understanding of hygienic plant design principles, Astratek reduces complexity and minimises risk using proprietary risk assessment tools to stop problems before they happen. As members of the European Hygienic Engineering and Design Group (EHEDG), they know how to conduct their services with compliance in mind. As EHEDG members, Astratek has access to the latest standards and manufacturing techniques to manage any compliance concerns.

Astratek takes care of construction projects, which entail an extensive set of tasks. Here they offer you the opportunity to avoid supplier margin build and to limit the overall risk of a project.

In addition to this, Astratek can also take charge of your operations by offering their extensive experience in this area. This can be an attractive, low-cost option especially for those unfamiliar with local operations or where manufacturing is not a core organisational capability. This may include maintenance planning and service implementation.

To round out their offerings, Astratek managers optimisation. Rising levels of complexity, skills shortage and lean structures can result in suboptimal performance, but with techniques like remote plant monitoring and performance analytics, Astratek can help to optimise your production facility.

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