

Axis House

Reagent expert celebrates 20 years

A keen understanding of customer needs, a strong focus on research and development (R&D) and an ongoing drive to create better reagent solutions. These are the tenets that have seen **Axis House** cement its position as a leading reagent specialist for the past 20 years. Now, the company is set to increase its global footprint. **GERARD PETER** finds out more from **BERNARD OOSTENDORP**, technical and laboratory manager and **GARETH HEYNES**, sales manager: Africa.

Oostendorp starts by saying that the primary reason for the company's immense success is its customer-centric approach with a keen focus on addressing specific customer needs. It is with this in mind that Axis House places a lot of emphasis on R&D to deal with the issues that the global mining sector is facing. "We deal with customers on a one-on-one basis, asking questions such as: What are the processing issues you are facing? How can we solve your problem? Are you making the targeted product quality? How can we be more economical in what we offer?"

Meanwhile, on the commercial side, Heynes avers that the success of the company over the past 20 years is the ability to adapt to any situation. "We have always been an agile organisation where decisions are made quickly and implemented just as quickly. We are able to adapt our service delivery to ensure that our customers' requirements are serviced and their expectations are exceeded," he says.

Over the years, Axis House has developed a footprint throughout Australia and Africa with the southern and central regions of the African continent being key focus areas where it has built an established route to market. Moreover, the company is currently also expanding its global footprint and have established offices in Turkey, which provides access to markets in Europe and the Middle East.

While the company is keen to expand its international presence further,

Heynes points out that Africa remains an integral part of the company's future aspirations. "A lot of the technologies used by Axis House were developed on African ore and implemented in African mines. We are growing our global footprint on the back of exceptional service to our multinational companies in Africa who now want to use our technology in other regions," he states.

Looking ahead

While the company places a lot of emphasis on developing new reagent technologies, Oostendorp points out that the adaptation of new technology is a process that is perfected in the laboratory before it can be implemented on site. "It all comes down to how it was developed and tested, how convincing the data is and

whether it can be upscaled to plant scale," he adds.

With two decades of success behind it, what does the future hold for Axis House? Oostendorp explains that 18 months ago, the company decided to focus its efforts on expanding their existing flocculant offering by establishing a dedicated division which specialises in solid-liquid separation. The flocculant and coagulant range now cover most mineral processes, ranging from flotation, Hydrometallurgical processes and the Alumina process "We have also expanded our range to cover everything related to solid liquid separation. This is where we have seen a big spike in terms of success," he adds. "If you look at Africa, in the DRC and Zambia, we have done extensive testing in our labs and on site. We have



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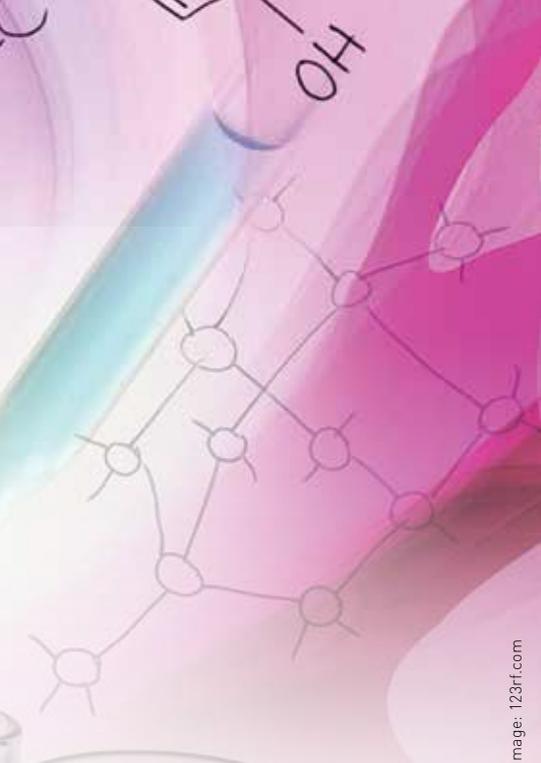


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several plant trials scheduled for the remainder of the year. On the flocculant side, this is definitely a big success story for us.”

Meanwhile, on the collector’s side, Axis House has done a lot of copper flotation development work. “If you look at the more general issue that our customers have in terms of copper flotation, it is the sulphide gangue that is recovered with the copper. A lot of our focus has been on how we can selectively float copper from an iron sulphide. Our new collector range is currently being tested in Zambia and Turkey and is already seeing some success,” states Oostendorp.

Another focus for Axis House is looking at separation techniques for polymetallic ores. Already, the company has made big strides in Turkey where it is currently running plant trials. It is also implementing this new technology in South Africa and South America. The final outcome product will be implemented across the spectrum.

Furthermore, Axis House is working towards creating safer alternatives for amongst others, the depression of pyrite and the elimination of cyanide in the leaching and flotation processes. “We want Axis House to be known as a provider of safer and better reagent alternatives,” says Oostendorp.

In addition, Oostendorp points out that the DRC remains a key area of focus for the company. “Historically, Axis House had a large footprint in terms of oxide flotation in the country. We would like to consider ourselves as the first point of contact when it comes to oxide



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flotation reagents. This is a big focus going forward and is part of our short-term goal to implement oxide flotation reagents to aid mining in the rest of Africa as well as globally – be it copper, cobalt, zinc or lead oxides.”

Company culture drives success

Furthermore, Heynes states that Axis House is keenly focussed on R&D in order that it moves away from commodities to develop specialised reagents for a wide range of ore types.

“Moreover, we keep to global trends and in Africa, water is a key issue and this is where we have focused the development of our reagents,” he adds.

Closer to home, Heynes adds that it is a culture of inclusivity that has borne success for the company. “We are implementing a culture where more people outside of the commercial and technical departments are starting to understand the products and applications and this goes a long way to developing internal skills and creating a shared skill set,” he concludes. **MRA**

PARTNERSHIP TAKES MINERALS PROCESSING TO A NEW LEVEL

In February, Axis House announced a partnership with engineering firm, Maelgwyn Mineral Services. According to Oostendorp, the partnership will benefit clients with Maelgwyn on the engineering side with having new technology in terms of flotation cells and high-shear conditioners while Axis House will be bringing its chemical expertise to the partnership.

Each company has its own areas of expertise. Maelgwyn is efficient in plant and equipment design and the mechanical aspect of minerals processing while Axis House will specialise in chemistry and reagents.

Both companies are already collaborating on projects with a focus on fines fraction particles flotation because a lot of minerals losses are incurred because they are sitting in the fines and are not recoverable by conventional flotation technologies. “Now, with the use of Maelgwyn’s technology, it will be possible to recover these fines while Axis House will boost the efficiency of fines flotation. The partnership will cover all metal types from copper and gold to PGMs and chromites,” explains Oostendorp.

In addition, the two companies will work on R&D to better understand why certain chemical reagents behave in a certain way and its effect on the hydrodynamics of the system. “Based on this information, we can develop better chemistry and improve on equipment design that can make the process more efficient,” explains Oostendorp.