

Thickeners developed for solids recovery

JACQUELINE HOLMAN | SENIOR FEATURES WRITER

South African process equipment sales and manufacturing company MIP Process Technologies (MIP) has introduced thickeners with overflow devices to recover additional solids in the coal-mining industry, says MIP Process MD **Philip Hoff**.

He explains that MIP thickeners improve water clarity through attachments that fit onto the thickeners and ensure a cleaner overflow than that achieved by standard thickeners.

The company supplies four products used in the coal-mining industry, namely thickeners, flocculant plants, flocculant optimisers as well as mixers.

Hoff explains that the flocculant optimiser increases the efficiency of a mine's flocculant consumption. The optimiser measures the settling rate of a thickener by testing a sample and then adjusts the flocculant to the correct flocculant level. The product is easily retrofitted on a plant and, he says, the product payback is achieved in a few months, as mines can save thousands of rands a day by installing this system.

Hoff says that the coal industry demand for coal mixers is not as big as that of the base metals industry, but the company does supply a small portable agitator especially for flocculant make-up to the coal industry, as well as static mixers for the dilution of flocculant.

Meanwhile, he says that the global financial crisis has affected the company in that many projects have been halted, but MIP still has projects in execution.

Projects in the gold industry have also kept the company busy.

Hoff points out that the coal-mining



PHILIP HOFF

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industry should be mindful of controlling costs in an effort to reduce the cost of coal. Many companies are suffering now, as they did not watch their costs before. Mines should be innovative when employing new technologies to contain costs.

He says that, in the short time that MIP has been in business, the company has managed to increase its product range substantially.

It is also considering expanding its range to include products with spares components, as many of the current products are capital in nature, which is a challenge in these economic times when there are not many capi-



FLOCCULANT PLANT

The flocculant plant optimiser increases the efficiency of a mine's flocculant consumption by measuring the settling rate of a thickener

tal projects taking place.

Hoff comments that the main challenge for a new company is breaking into the mining industry, as South African companies do not always support other South African companies, instead favouring international suppliers.

He adds that the company's black economic-empowerment status has provided minimal advantages and the company carries out more international work than local work.

MIP Process supplies equipment to countries in Africa, such as Ghana, Tanzania, Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as to Australia and countries in South America.

Meanwhile, Hoff says that there will always be a direct need for coal in the generation of electricity and the manufacturing of steel. He adds that, although Chinese steel manufacturers have reduced demand, it will start increasing by the end of the year.

He concludes that MIP Process would like to expand its business by establishing offices in South America and Australia.

The company will look at increasing its product range and focus on being successful in its current execution of projects.

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