

StellarSP setting new benchmarks with all-new 'Deneb' seating range

The Bengaluru-based company is bullish about its new seating range keeping in mind the amount of market study, engineering effort and efficiency improvements that have gone into its design and development, writes **N. Balasubramanian**

StellarSP Private Ltd. (StellarSP), the newest brand of seating systems and related components in the Indian market has launched an entirely new range of bus seats catering to multiple segments and applications. The home-grown start-up, an associate company of Prakash Seating, has set its sights on revolutionizing the bus seating landscape in the country with its highly engineered modular seating solutions which it is confident would set new benchmarks in terms of reliability, comfort, light-weighting and cost.

Talking exclusively to MOTORINDIA, Rengarajan Srinivasan, Director, StellarSP, says: "We are launching our new seat range called 'Deneb' which will cater to all segments in our bus market. Owing to the modularity of the products, the range has seats for standard city bus, school bus, staff bus, mofussil bus, inter-city coaches and long-distance coaches. We have carefully identified the needs of each and every segment and designed seats specifically for each segment and application."

'Engineering' the difference

According to Stellar, the AIS 023 specification that defines standards pertaining to seat systems has helped improve the levels of safety and comfort in bus seats. As far as StellarSP is concerned, its attention to detail when it comes to 'engineering' the seats the right way is what makes it stand out from competition.

"Quality engineering is a must to produce reliable seats with trouble-free performance over a longer warranty period than what competition offers. We have set new benchmarks in terms of light-weighting and reliability with our new range. Our customers need not worry about the seat structure throughout the life cycle of the bus; foam and other wear & tear parts will also last longer than before and what competition offers. All plastic parts are made through injection moulding and thanks to our modular design, the part count is reduced, and weight is considerably reduced", explains Rengarajan.

Pradeep Ambavaram, Director, StellarSP, adds: "We have achieved significant weight reduction and reduction in number of components in our new range. The idea is quite simple – lesser components, lesser problems, longer life. But what stands out in our case is that we have used the usual products and raw materials and still achieved such weight and cost reduction purely through design, engineering and lean manufacturing."

Collaborative effort

The new seat range from StellarSP has been designed and developed after intense market study to understand the existing products and unfulfilled requirements of customers and passengers. In addition to going all out on in-house engineering, the company has col-



Rengarajan Srinivasan, (seated), Pradeep Ambavaram, (left), Directors, and Karthikeyan M, Manager-Engineering, StellarSP

laborated with 10 key suppliers of which 7 account for over 90 per cent of the parts thanks to its 'basket' approach where each supplier makes multiple parts.

Rengarajan shares: "We have selected our supply chain in such a way that they are able to meet our expectations and are capable to deliver our kind of quality and efficiency. We have gone for a quality- and capability-based approach and have made them upgrade their capabilities. As a result, we have achieved target cost results and will be passing on the benefits to our customers through our new range."

Stellar FY20 performance

In FY20, StellarSP's focus has been on foam and foam components, and to support Prakash Seating for all their sub-assembly requirements including structural parts and components.

Further, StellarSP has launched five products in the bus seating segment and serviced bulk orders of STU tenders through sales agencies and private institutional customers.

With regard to its standalone seating products, these new products were launched for different applications, all of which have been well received in the market, thus achieving good business turnover in the first year of

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manufacturing operations, as per plan. “We have serviced major share of Tamil Nadu STU business through our business associates and bus body fabricators in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. We have also catered to bus seating requirements from private operators and other bus body builders in the region. Next year, we are setting business objectives for 40 per cent growth”, he reveals with confidence.

Ready to serve OEMs

Having completed its IATF certification process, StellarSP is all set to approach bus OEMs for new business. The company’s strategic location in South Bengaluru, bordering Hosur makes it accessible to almost all major bus OEMs in the country which it considers a big advantage.

“We are offering products that are highly engineered in terms of warranty and product life cycle than what OEMs expect. Our modular approach will help tackle the logistics challenge in transporting the seats. There is minimal welding in our new seats; it’s all nuts and bolts, so we can dismantle the seat, pack and ship them in no time. This will be one of our major USPs”, says the veteran.

Looking beyond the country’s boundaries, StellarSP is planning to reach out to potential customers in the SAARC region in the near future while it is also planning to ‘E’-mark its seats to be qualified to cater to customers in Africa, Middle East and Asia Pacific in the long run.

Potential in adjacencies

The name StellarSP holds far more significance than one might think. SP stands for Seats & Products, meaning, the company is primarily into seats but will also focus on supplying other products, albeit most of them related to seating systems.

Pradeep affirms: “The main reason for launching Stellar Seats & Products is to expand our vision. We can cater to a broader set of products – seats, foams, foam components, sub systems and adjacencies – that would appeal to a broader vision. Foaming, fabrication and manufacturing are our three major areas of expertise with flexible capacity, design & engineering capability and quality orientation.”

StellarSP has made a small start in this direction by supply-



The dedicated StellarSP team

ing foam to bus body builders for sleeper coach berths, sleeper seats, back rest, etc. The company is exploring further options like folding sleeper berths and components for other applications and by FY22, it plans to foray into non-automotive applications such as seats for Rail coaches, boats and ships, Auditoriums and even public seating segments.

Future plans

In the coming financial year, StellarSP’s major focus will be on consolidating its new product launches and expanding its customer base and geographic presence. “Come FY21, our full focus will be on promoting our new products, adding new customers, expanding our reach and penetration. The next 3 years will be a phase of consolidation, growth and expansion for our organization and we are looking forward to it with excitement”, shares Rengarajan.

During the next financial year, StellarSP plans to enter the niche CV driver seating space. “We will enter the driver seat space starting with driver seats for buses and also target the replacement market. This will be followed by driver seats for trucks and tractors. In the subsequent financial year, we will go for the next phase of expansion that would include supplying seats for metro and railways”, adds the Director.

StellarSP currently has a total capacity of nearly 1,200 bus set seats per month which is among the highest in the country. With its new product range, the company will be ramping up production based on new orders and also plans to appoint 5-6 franchise partners to expand into different regions within the country. It is also targeting orders from 3-4 more STUs during the year.

Over the medium- to long-term, StellarSP has interesting targets in terms of where its revenue should come from. In Rengarajan’s own words: “Business from our regular customers should not exceed 40 per cent of our total revenue, at least 20 per cent should come from foams and foaming components, another 20 per cent from new products and additional capabilities and the rest from new adjacencies and new segments. We would like to have at least four to five verticals so that cyclicity and market fluctuations do not impact our business.”



The all-new Deneb range