

STAR

SPECIALTY TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH



SUPERIOR SEALCOATING SOLUTIONS



In the business of developing and delivering highly innovative products and solutions, Specialty Technology and Research, best known to its customers as STAR, Inc., has remained at the forefront of the sealcoating and pavement maintenance industry for over 30 years through superior performance, consistent service, and dedication to its customers. Founded on innovation, integrity, and teamwork, STAR's products consistently outperform the competition, and are rigorously tested for quality, explains company President Girish Dubey.

Written by Robert Hoshowsky

Earning his Master's Degree in Inorganic Chemistry from Gorakhpur University (India) and his Master's Degree in Polymer Chemistry from Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio, Dubey worked in the pavement maintenance industry for a number of years before moving on to a well-known manufacturer Hempel's, acknowledged worldwide for its coatings products used by the marine, yacht, decorative, protective, and container markets. "Hempel's is where I got my major experience in many types of coatings: water-based, solvent-based, maintenance and decorative coatings," he says.

Unlike his earlier experience in the pavement maintenance sector, which he describes as "secretive about sharing any information", the coatings and paint industry was very open and mature, featuring technical symposia and conventions where papers were presented about materials and emerging technologies. "Having my degree in polymer chemistry, I was looking for that kind of information sharing," says Dubey. "So my major training was working for the paint company, and that opened a lot of avenues for me in terms of thinking and designing new products."

Sixteen advanced locations

Becoming President of STAR, Inc. in November of 1987, Dubey put his earlier experience in coatings and pavement maintenance to work immediately. Working in Saudi Arabia until the summer of that year, he was known in the industry from his days in pavement maintenance, was approached about taking STAR in a new direction, and has successfully been running the company ever since.

The Columbus, Ohio-headquartered company is today a major manufacturer of pavement maintenance products including sealcoatings, crack fillers, additives, specialty coatings, traffic paints, and more. Highly respected in the industry for its technical expertise, quality assurance and control, and innovation, STAR, Inc. has grown from a membership of seven companies to 16 advanced locations in the United States, and licensee plants in Australia, India, China, and full-line distributors in Mexico and Chile.

Working closely with material suppliers is one of the many ways STAR sets itself apart from the competition, says company President Girish Dubey. Dubey values the relationships STAR has fostered with its vendors. Working in collaboration to develop products, vendors not only provide standard lines, but are also extremely cooperative when it comes to customizing products for the company, which sets STAR apart from others. One example, says Dubey, is clay, a major component in products. If there is a need for tweaking to get a formulation just right, vendors will work with the company's technical team, supply samples, and keep working until the final desired result is achieved. "It may involve five or six different clays in there, and that becomes our proprietary blend which the clay companies will not sell to anybody else, and they have been extremely cooperative and honest with us," he says of his suppliers, working with many of them for the past 30 years. ▶▶

▶ STAR products

As the company is one of the most prominent providers of sealcoating and a large range of products used by the pavement maintenance industry, STAR's quality sealcoating materials are known for their durability and longevity. Its products are used to protect and preserve asphalt surfaces such as those seen at airports, fast food restaurants, schools, homes, gas stations and commercial parking lots, and STAR has created lines used by customers in the U.S. and internationally. These include STAR-Triton Next Generation Sealcoatings, STAR SEAL, STAR MICRO-PAVE, specialty performance-boosting additives like STAR Macro-Flex, concrete products such as the STAR Macro-Deck, crack fillers like the STAR Sta-Flex Cold Pour Crack Filler, the STAR Brite line of traffic paint, and a range of primers and specialty products.

"All our products are water-based; we don't have any solvent-based products," explains Dubey. "We have not manufactured anything other than water-based. Sealcoatings, traffic paints, crack fillers – all products are water-based."

"STAR's quality materials are known for their durability and longevity."

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Licensing technology

Unlike some others in the industry, STAR is not a franchising company. Instead, the company licenses technology, a key point of difference, with STAR serving to support its members and their customers. "We serve as a full-support technical arm of our licensee plants," states Dubey. "That means quality control, quality assurance, formulation, manufacturing setups – everything that is technical, we do that for our plants." All STAR Licensee plants are independently owned, covering a business radius of about 200 miles. STAR's corporate office handles all national marketing and advertising campaigns while the licensee plants are responsible for running their own marketing programs and advertising in their regions.

With a program aimed at all areas needed to successfully set up and operate a plant, STAR, Inc. is the sole company in the industry offering a Technology Licensing Program, "which is highly cost-effective when compared with a standard franchising program," states STAR. The company provides all the necessary technical expertise, education, quality control, quality assurance, national marketing, promotion and more for licensee plants to be successful. Additionally, plants have the freedom to expand their business in any way they want. ▶▶

▶ As a licensor, STAR's licensing model means that for licensee plants, costs are a fraction of those found in ordinary franchise programs. Whereas a typical franchising program imposes a fee of six to seven percent of the gross revenue, STAR charges a royalty based strictly on the production of the sealcoating the plants produce. "In comparison, therefore, our cost runs about one to one and a half percent." Another key point of difference is that STAR does not dictate that plants purchase all products from them. Instead, the company will negotiate the best possible price for equipment, raw materials and more, and put licensee plants in contact with suppliers who deal with them directly. STAR itself does not make sealcoatings, but provides its licensee plants with formulations and lists of major suppliers of approved materials, and negotiates prices. The only restriction STAR has is that the plants have to use approved raw materials; otherwise, plants are free to purchase product of the same quality elsewhere.

There is a great deal of camaraderie amongst the licensee plants. In case of any issues plants are more than willing to jump in and help out each other. "This is a very unique model which has worked extremely well for us," says Dubey. "The relationships we have are very deep-rooted. What we have is a very stable group of companies and are very pleased with the kind

of services we provide as a group, and how good we all feel for each other. We plan our growth meticulously and execute it methodically in a manner where the interests of all the plants are preserved. We are mindful of who we bring in the STAR family of plants."

The overall atmosphere is friendly, which is another of STAR's greatest assets; in fact, President Dubey addresses every email to plants starting with the line, "Dear STAR Family Members". "We are all part of a big family and as such we watch out for each other," he states, proudly. "All the STAR companies are honest, highly dedicated to their customers whom they serve with an impeccable degree of integrity."

Dubey says STAR is focusing international licensing program for countries in the regions where sealcoatings are relatively unknown as an invaluable tool for the protection and preservation of pavements

Dubey strongly believes that, "An educated customer is a dedicated customer. We tell them to know the facts, and based on those facts, judge our products against others. These are scientific facts which have been picked up from paint and coatings industries. These principles apply to sealcoatings as



"We deliver quality control, quality assurance, formulation, manufacturing setups – everything that is technical, we do that for our plants."

well as to paints, so we do not hesitate in sharing the pertinent information.”

A founding member of the Pavement Coatings Technology Council (PCTC) and a member of the Asphalt Sealcoating Manufacturers Association (ASMA), STAR, Inc. continues its mission of educating all customers by sharing knowledge, which enables them to make strategic, informed decisions. Regularly publishing technical articles in respected trade journals, STAR staff often speak at seminars and attend industry conventions.

“At STAR, Inc., we dedicate ourselves to providing a superior product with consistent performance, excellent value and the highest quality in the pavement maintenance and specialty coatings industry,” states the company’s Mission. “We are committed to providing our licensees and customers the best technical support in the pavement maintenance and specialty coatings industry. We promise to remain focused on providing the most innovative products and we will always be relentless in making our services second to none. At STAR, Inc. we will constantly strive to implement the critical initiatives required to achieve our vision to stay the industry leader.” ■



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1150 Milestone Drive, Columbus, OH 43228 | P: 800.759.1912 | F: 614.870.0598 | E: Info@StarSeal.com

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