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REPORTER

February 2019 • ₹ 250 • INDIA
Published on 1st February 2019

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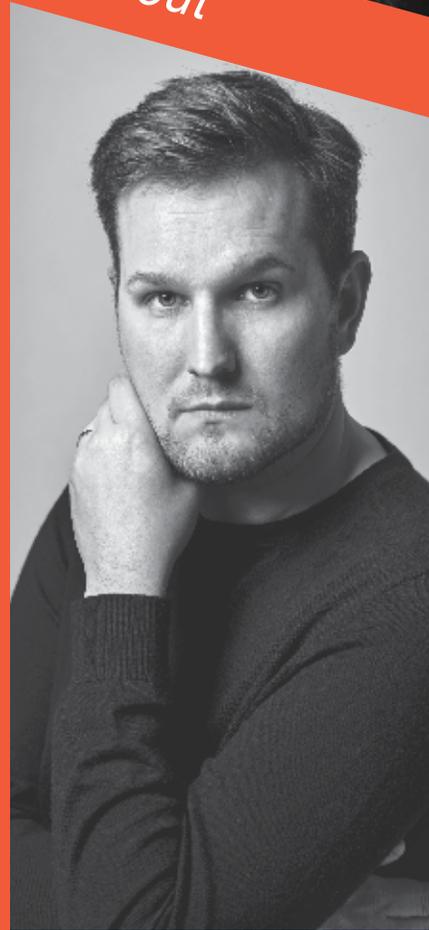


SR DESIGN JOURNEY Pallavi Dean, Dubai



SR RISING STARS Amit & Ashmi Shah Hyderabad

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SURFACES REPORTER IN CONVERSATION WITH
PANKAJ CHANDAK
MD & CEO - PRAVEEDH DECOR PVT LTD



Pankaj Chandak
MD & CEO - Praveedh Decor Pvt Ltd

There is a very fine line between quality and class. With so many players in the current board and panel industry, it is tough to differentiate between their products. **Praveedh Décor**, previously known as *Prestige Interio Concepts*, has been operating as one of the leading manufacturers of premium prelaminated boards. Known for their quality and durability, their products like **OpuLux**, **Nivesa** and **Zooper** this company have been making waves since the day they launched.

#SURFACESREPORTER spoke to **Pankaj Chandak, MD & CEO** of Praveedh Decor about their journey, milestones, products and more. Sharing excerpts from the chat.

S To start with, tell us a bit about your background and journey?

After completing Masters in the US, I worked in Wall Street for 13 years. When I returned to Mumbai after a gap of 15 years, I realized that the furniture industry was still nascent and using conventional materials and processes. It was then I realized that it's an excellent opportunity to create something revolutionary in this industry. After doing extensive research in terms of the new materials and processes available we zeroed-in on providing acrylic laminated high gloss panels using flat lamination technology. So in 2012, we launched our flagship brand – **OpuLux**. It is the first high gloss acrylic product produced in India using flat lamination technology. Today, in addition to OpuLux we have two other products – **Nivesa** is ready to use panels made using PP/PVC/PETG foils laminated on plywood and MDF. **Zooper** is a ready-to-use range of panels for cabinets. Our unit is located at Vapi, Gujarat and our headquarters are in Mumbai. We have a pan-India distribution

network. All the leading furniture brands across India are our customers. This year in May, we will be the only acrylic panel manufacturer company to exhibit at **Interzum Cologne**. **TODAY, WE ARE THE LARGEST FLAT LAMINATED PANEL MANUFACTURER IN INDIA AND WE ARE RECOGNIZED FOR OUR QUALITY, SERVICE AND INNOVATION.**

S You are very passionate about the products you sell. What kind of research, technological knowledge and staff training goes into your work?

As an organization, we truly believe that the difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little 'extra'! If a product is made by machine, then sooner or later you will have somebody who will try to replicate your product. A machine may blend the raw materials together, but can never incorporate the passion, dedication, and excitement which goes in making

“ I would like to stress that time is of essence and quality is paramount. Ready to use flat laminated panels are superior in terms of finish, durability, and quality compared to hand pasted panels, and it substantially reduce the site completion time. ”



Panels used in a Shop's Display

the product. This is what we offer to our customers. Regarding the technical competency – again that is very much ingrained in the DNA of our company. When a person joins Praveedh Décor family, he or she undergoes an extensive training which includes both the technical and the cultural aspects. I have an undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Masters in Industrial Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta USA. I get extremely excited about the technical challenges posed by a material or a process. It kind of becomes a mission for us as an organization to find an engineering solution of the ‘unsurmountable’ problems. When we started work in this industry – there was no suitable line to produce acrylic panels on plywood. Therefore, we designed our own flat lamination line to overcome this challenge. We have had a lot of FIRST’s in our kitty – we are the **FIRST** company to introduce flat laminated acrylic panels in 2012, we are the **FIRST** company to provide ABS backers for our acrylic panels, **FIRST** company to provide Scratch Proof Acrylic panels on plywood in India and a lot of other products. All this has been only possible because of our unwavering focus to keep finding solutions to help our customers.

“ Unlike appliances which require maintenance or after sales service during use, our range of panel products do not require maintenance. In fact, they are very easy to ‘maintain’ during use. One just needs to clean the top surface with a micro fiber cloth – that’s it. ”



3 POINTS THAT PEOPLE OFTEN TEND TO BELIEVE ABOUT POLYMER PRODUCTS:

1. To bond any polymer material to a wood surface one has to use a flat lamination process using PUR glue. This will result in excellent bonding which will be heat and water proof. If a polymer is bonded using an adhesive which is NOT PUR, then the bonding will be temporary
2. As high gloss surfaces require clean and mirror finish without undulations or dust – which cannot be achieved by hand, therefore Acrylic or PVC or PP laminates should be laminated on plywood or MDF using PUR in a flat lamination facility.
3. Polymer surfaces like Acrylic offer the best glossiness which cannot be matched with a mica or PU.

How has the response been for the OpuLux Panels so far?

OpuLux Scratch Proof panels are the leading acrylic panels in India and around the world. These days, when I travel overseas and when people come to know that we are the manufacturers of OpuLux – we can feel a sense of awe on their face. It's a matter of pride for us that OpuLux is setting the bar in the industry for a good and consistent quality product.

All the leading furniture manufacturers, architects and interior designer in the industry know our company because of OpuLux. OpuLux has become synonymous with scratch proof acrylic panels. Not only OpuLux, our other 2 brands – **Nivesa and Zooper** are also being accepted and recognized for their range, and quality.

With so many imported paneling materials available today, how do you deal with the competition?

Running a business is like driving a car. To be successful (or alive!) one has to always look ahead and drive. Competition is amongst other vehicles who are behind or adjacent to you. For that, once in a while we have to look in the rear or side view mirror.



High Gloss Panels used in a Kitchen

5 IMPORTANT PARAMETERS ONE MUST KEEP IN MIND WHILE SELECTING THE RIGHT PANEL MATERIAL

- 1. Application:** Where will the material be used. Whether it's a horizontal application or vertical application. For horizontal application – OpuLux Scratch Proof is an excellent product. For vertical applications Nivesa or OpuLux can be used.
- 2. Expected Life:** If the expected life of the furniture is long, then plywood or birch plywood is a good material. For short to medium life expectancy, MDF can be used. OpuLux and Nivesa panels are available on all core materials like plywood, Birch or MDF.
- 3. Cost:** Budget is also an important part which has to be taken into consideration while designing. For medium budget Nivesa can be used. For mid to above medium OpuLux Scratch Proof high gloss and supermatt can be used. For premium projects OpuLux Acryl Glass can be used.
- 4. Turnaround time:** How soon the sight has to be completed is also an important criteria. As all our products are ready to use panels – there is no onsite work of lamination, curing, trimming etc is required. This reduces the site completion time exponentially.
- 5. Quality:** All our products are laminated in a state of the art flat lamination facility using advanced hot melt adhesive. Because of this, the surface finish of all our panels is top notch with no waves or undulations. Further, as the bonding is done using PUR glue, it's heat and water proof. All these features are not possible if the laminates are pasted by hand.

Like I said before, in flat laminated products – we are setting the benchmarks in terms of quality, service and innovation in the industry which is being followed by the rest. We have the widest range of high gloss and scratch proof acrylic panels in India. In foils, we have a total of 31 decors to choose from and on a variety of core material like plywood and MDF.

India is a very big country where there is scope for a lot of players. So more players coming in the market implies that the market is getting matured and the awareness about the product is increasing. We believe that a competitive environment is good because it always keeps us alert and encourages us to keep improving our products and services.

Throw some light on the 'Special products' that you customize for people.

We always listen very keenly to our client's needs and current pain points. Because of this, we are able to offer customized solutions to specific problems for our customers. For example – lot of our customers used to ask if we can offer multi color panels in acrylic for wardrobes. To make a multi-colored panel in flat lamination is not easy. But we took upon this challenge and developed OpuLux Fantasy – the first multi colored acrylic panel in India. Some of our customers liked our

“We truly believe that the difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little 'extra'!”

decors in Nivesa range – but they wanted it on plywood. As Nivesa range is produced using polymer foils. Foils are very challenging to laminate because they are very thin. Because of this, they can be laminated only on MDF. It took us almost an year of research to develop the plywood, and to modify our production process. The end result is that again we are the **FIRST** company in India to provide foils laminated on plywood. There are numerous such other instances where we heard the requirements of our customers and then developed solutions for them as 'special products'.