Enhancing Customer Value

Inspired by our Group vision, we follow a Customer Charter that comprises a set of guiding principles to lead us on the path to be a customer-centric organisation. Three fundamental commitments ensure that we remain focused on the customer in everything we do:

- We are easy to do business with
- We keep our promises
- We create value

The main customers we serve are end consumers - individual home builders, industrial, infrastructure and commercial projects and those who use our cement as raw material. But we also serve many others who in turn assist us in reaching and servicing our end consumers - our vast network of channel and supply chain partners, masons, contractors, architects, and engineers.

Foremost in the charter is the demand that we provide a safe and secure environment which ensures zero harm to customers and the communities we deal with, beyond the boundaries of our plants and establishments.

Our customer-centric approach is designed to enrich the customer experience and enhance customer value.
A Customer Centric Approach

In adopting a customer-centric approach we mean simply to demonstrate value in everything we do for our customers. We endeavour to give our customers three valuable offerings:

Superior products: This translates into Quality Products and Quality Packaging that are designed to far exceed minimum statutory standards or meet the specifications agreed with the customer. We assure the customer the best in cement and ready mixed concrete.

Superior Logistics: We promise to deliver on-time and in full. We continue to make steady progress with our on-going logistics management plan to achieve best-in-class performance in terms of cost-to-serve and time-to-serve, reducing lead distances and eliminating multiple handling through a focus on safety, people, vehicles and processes. A logistics strategy blueprint tool is in place that maps every plant on critical key performance indicators. GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Device) modules have been successfully deployed at eleven and nine plants respectively which is helping improve overall turn-around time.

Superior Query & Complaint Handling: Customer relationship management systems help us manage interactions and transactions with customers. A multi-nodal system is now in place for complaint logging and handling and targeted cycle closure. We track the resolution of issues and complaints through Loop closures for complaint through the Customer Complaint System. In addition, our frontline sales force now interacts increasingly with end-consumers to understand their expectations through the unique 5Ps survey for feedback on product, packaging, pricing, promotion and placement.
Enriching Customer Experience
Our vision requires that we work to ensure that the customer perceives value in all that we do to fulfil his needs in every interface with us. It is this that creates a special customer experience which we strive to enhance. Again, our customer denotes every partner in our supply chain right up to the end user.

Our Clean Bag project is based on the belief that cement bags create an enduring impression in the customer’s mind. We define a “Clean” bag as one that not only looks appealing but also carries the correct weight, is dust free and sturdy enough to withstand multiple handling without any unseemly damage in the journey to the end user. It is a tough task that involves a host of improvements from the plant to the customer. A clean bag signifies concern for all stakeholders.

Every frontline sales personnel spends a day at a retail counter to observe in-store consumer behavior from the moment a customer enters till the actual purchase is concluded. This helps us understand the buying process, what a consumer is looking for and the drivers that lead to final purchase.

We engage with each group of customers, supply chain members and influencers to impart product knowledge and appropriate skill development.

Individual Home Builders are offered Technical Services by our Customer Service teams from basic visits to give knowledge to more customized and fee-based services like site mix concrete design, concrete testing at site and site supervision. We conduct regular Consumer Camps and family level meets for the customers in addition to distributing product literature and informative pamphlets on good construction practices. In 2014, our sales offices interacted with 3000 individuals in family meets while 30,000 attended our consumer camps.

Our Customer Service teams also connect with construction engineers and contractors through a mix of engagements such as technical training programmes, seminars and plant visits. In 2014, we conducted such training for 8000 persons while 500 persons made visits to our cement plants.
Our Channel Partners
ACC’s vast network of dealers and retailers, our channel partners, plays a fundamental role in reaching out to customers - in making our cement available and providing them primary service. Channel partners play a vital role in the successful sale of our products. They are central to the continued success of our brand equity. Through their effort and attentiveness, channel partners are responsible for contributing over three-fourths of our business.

On our part, we endeavour to team up with channel partners who have the required mind-set that makes them responsive to customers. Channel partners work in tandem with our sales teams. We provide them with a range of our quality products and assure them of the marketing, customer service and logistics support they need to succeed in serving the market and delivering value to satisfied customers. We offer them opportunities for skill development and training in product knowledge. We measure our responsiveness to them with tools like Easy ACCess. And we gauge their satisfaction with us through regular structured surveys. Channel partners act as our valuable ambassadors.

Our latest initiative of Green Building Centres being established in semi-urban and rural markets as a hub for affordable cement based products, other building materials and housing components has unfurled a whole new kind of opportunity in creating a different kind of channel partnership.
Cementing Relationships

Going well beyond being a mere tagline, this means so much more to us. Cementing relationships represents the core of our philosophy in the manner we engage with our stakeholders beginning with the customer and all others in our supply chain - our channel and logistics partners, engineers, contractors, masons and other influencers.

We reach out to customers through promotion campaigns in print and electronic media as well as through social media to create continuous visibility that makes a strong brand impact. We track our brand equity regularly to get insights that help us assess how we are perceived and identify areas of improvement.

Our sales force and customer service personnel regularly connect with customers to meet their needs, thus creating enduring relationships. In addition, other employees are also encouraged to spend a day with customers on a regular basis so that the whole organization is engaged around what the customer needs and values in our products and service. As our network and products reach out to touch the lives of millions of Indians, it is a privilege to receive the customers’ vote of confidence that recognizes ACC as being one of the country’s most trusted brands.
Embracing Tomorrow

As the national economy follows a revival path amid countrywide housing, commercial and infrastructure development, new growth prospects open up for cement and concrete. We are taking necessary steps to make the organisation future ready to enjoy these opportunities as they unfold.

In the past few years we have been busy building the requisite capability and people skills in the organization. A vital component of this journey has been the continuous pursuit of improvements in the key functions of manufacturing, sales & marketing, logistics and procurement.

A major growth initiative is the Jamul expansion project, comprising new clinkering and cement lines, which will be completed in mid 2015. Work on the Sindri grinding station, a part of this project, is also advancing on schedule.

Through all this we are keeping a sharp focus on our safety vision of Zero Harm to anyone associated with ACC.

On the sustainable development front, there is an ongoing thrust on pursuing our commitment to reduce the overall carbon footprint of our operations through the five levers of
(a) manufacturing blended cements that consume less clinker,
(b) pursuing continuous improvements in thermal and electrical energy efficiency,
(c) adopting waste heat recovery systems
(d) improving the usage of alternative fuels and raw materials
and (e) adopting clean and green technologies.

We are equally committed to continue to engage and partner with local communities in our neighbourhood through our efforts in promoting basic community development initiatives and in creating sustainable livelihoods.
In 2014, ACC was ranked as No. 1 in “India’s Most Admired Companies” in cement sector for the second consecutive year in the Fortune Hay Group India survey. Another distinction was receiving Gold Shield in the prestigious ICAI Awards for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2013-14. There were several awards in other categories - each recognizing excellence in core functional areas that went on to help us better serve our customers.

ACC wins EPC World Award 2014 for "Outstanding Company in the Cement sector", in the Construction category

CII-ITC Sustainability award for Excellence in Environment Management to ACC Thondebhavi

15th National Award for Excellence in Energy Management by Confederation of Indian Industry to ACC Kudithini - Excellent Energy Efficient Unit and to ACC Jamul, Bargarh, Lakheri and Thondebhavi for Energy Efficient Units

ACC ranked as No. 1 in “India’s Most Admired Companies” in cement sector for the second consecutive year in the Fortune Hay Group India survey

Greentech Environment Management award 2014 by Greentech Foundation to ACC Bargarh and in Gold category to ACC Tikaria

India Manufacturing Excellence award 2014, Platinum category to ACC Lakheri, Gold to ACC Gagal by Frost & Sullivan and Economic Times

National Safety Council, India, Safety award for 2013 to ACC Damodhar

Golden Peacock Environment Management award 2014 to ACC Gagal from Institute of Directors

ACC wins 5th CII National HR Excellence award 2014, Commendation Certificate

National Energy Conservation award 2014, Certificate of Merit in Cement Sector to ACC Thondebhavi from Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Govt. of India

CSR Impact award 2014 to ACC Lakheri by Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs

CII GreenCo Rating Gold to ACC Kymore and Silver to Kudithini by Confederation of Indian Industry

ACC wins Trusted Brand award from Reader’s Digest

Safety award from Directorate of Industrial Safety & Health & National Safety Council, Tamilnadu chapter to ACC Madukkarai

First Prize in Energy Conservation and Innovation in Energy Conservation to ACC Jamul by New Management Association and National Institute of Technology

ACC wins Smart Green Initiative award at Green Cities Forum 2014
Of course there can be no greater reward or honour than earning the customer’s trust to give us new business or repeat business. But we do also draw inspiration from any recognition we get from professional bodies and associations. That serves as indicators that we are doing things right. It kindles a competitive spirit which motivates us to pursue continuous improvements and innovations in what we do.