

Shamrock's one-stop shop: Base oils, additives, and Lubricants Supply Chain Management

Lubezine had an interview with Jean-Baptiste Belloy, the Commercial Director and Co-Owner at Shamrock who shared at length Shamrock's operations in supply chain management while highlighting some of its biggest wins and challenges so far while marking the 15th anniversary.

1 Who is Jean-Baptiste Belloy? What does your role at Shamrock entail?

I started working with Shamrock in 2011 when I relocated from France to Cyprus. My first role was as a Sales and Marketing Trainee and despite not having any technical or chemical background, coming from one of the leading trading nations helped boost my desire for knowledge and overachievement. After completing the 6-month traineeship, I understood how exciting, stimulating, and rewarding trading can be and I decided to stay. I worked my way up, and today I occupy the position of Commercial Director, being responsible for sourcing and sales, ensuring only the best products from around the globe are purchased and excellent customer service permeates every stage of Shamrock's transactions. Looking back at the last decade of my life, I can see a lot of hard work, many victories but also defeats, all taken gracefully, as well as many valuable lessons which have been significant in shaping my personality.

2 Shamrock is celebrating its 15th anniversary. What achievements are you proud of in these years?

We are all very proud of achieving this new milestone, and we are thankful to all the people who have been contributing to our success, from our team members to our customers & suppliers. We have been maintaining in all these years the goal to be a leading company in the industry and the One-Stop Shop in the lubricants sector. In such a fast-changing business environment and with all the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic brought in the past two years, I am proud of all the efforts and work put into maintaining this leading position and for the growth of Shamrock on all levels: volumes, market presence and products portfolio. Another achievement I am proud of is being able to identify and safeguard



EXPERT INTERVIEW

Professional interview with Jean-Baptiste Belloy, Commercial Director and Co-Owner, Shamrock

our core partners who share the same values and who understand the importance of working transparently and honestly with the sole purpose of serving the end-user. This way, we have been working for the past 15 years as a purchasing arm for our customers and a reliable distributor and marketer for refineries all over the world.

3 Organizations inherently metamorphose with time, what changes has your organization gone

through as pertains to the Brand and Management?

Indeed, the organization's people change and so do the organizations themselves. We have seen huge technological advances in the world and their use in our everyday life and of course in our work life. Sustainability, quick decisions, new trends, niche markets, environmental sensitivity and blockchain requirements are some of the new challenges that we all face and deal with. We are also currently dealing with COVID-19, so we are talking of a complete turn on thinking and

working, in everyday life. Shamrock likes changes in general, we like to experiment with new ideas and ways of moving forward. Our customers like this also as we clearly show the industry we are not stagnated, and we like to evolve. At the same time though, the main cores remain unchanged. This year, while marking our 15th Anniversary, we decided to have a makeover, to further emphasise our mission and the expansion of our team & business. Along with Sergey Galin, the Founder and Managing Director of Shamrock, I have been working on the brand identity, and since October we have had new visuals, a new logo & a new website, all with the aim of creating a new experience for our existing and new business partners. This change was very much noticed and congratulated by our partners all around the world.

4 What are the main challenges facing importers of Base oil, additives, and finished lubricants?

I wish the main cause of the current challenges faced by the importers was different, but unfortunately, the global pandemic is still having a strong impact on our industry. The Supply Chain is disrupted everywhere around the world. In 2020 and 2021 the imposed lockdowns, the surging COVID-19 cases in Ports and on board of vessels, and the change in buying behaviour brought with it extremely high freight rates, limited space for containerized cargo, and days of delay in arrivals. This doesn't only stop at the maritime sector, but inland too; the lack of trucks and drivers along with the reduced number of free days to return the empty containers has brought additional costs for the importers of base oils, additives, and finished lubricants.

Other challenges, of equal importance, that the lubricants producers face are caused on one side by the impossibility of securing the raw materials as refineries' utilization rate has been low for many months now, higher prices for these raw materials, and a decrease of lubricants sales on the other side.

5 As Shamrock, how are you addressing or mitigating these challenges to your current and potential clients?

In Shamrock as a Team, we always try to predict the unpredictable. We help our customers so that their business remains

unaffected by random events that form the global reality through resilient efforts. Lubricant production can never stop, and its manufacturers should only focus on the receipt of their raw materials, either oils, additives or anything needed in their formulation. Shamrock is to arrange the best solutions for an undisrupted supply chain in both sourcing of the materials and all the related logistics. Shopping locally to avoid congestions cannot be possible in our business. Nevertheless, our team can make the global market look local with terminals and associates all around the world that can assist with prompt deliveries.

6 What are the key distinguishable characteristics in the one-stop Supply Chain Management model that Shamrock prides itself in?

As a partner of choice for our customers, we want to make sure that our actions and efforts help them achieve high performance across all areas of their business. The customers rely on us to be able to provide them with the best solutions when it comes to the Supply Chain Management and, in return for their loyalty, a team of experts is always checking the best sourcing options combined with the most cost-effective logistics. At the

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same time, our trade finance department is looking for the optimal financing option for every new transaction. We understand how important it is for every business to free up cash flow and, besides the usual payment methods & instruments, we provide to our customers trade credit allowing them to benefit from an extended payment period. Besides the continuity of the business for us, we cherish moments such as being awarded the Supplier of the Year Title that we received in 2018 from one of our customers in South Africa.

Trading globally allows us a bigger picture of the industry and we take pride in the fact that we combine market intelligence & data analysis to further share our expertise with our customers when a decision is to be made.

7 During this pandemic, what solutions has Shamrock provided to clients in crisis?

We normally have a more individualistic approach to each customer. This proved to be extremely helpful in times when the customers needed to know that they are not facing these unprecedented times alone. We worked together in planning their stocks, considering the base oils and additives scarcities, planning the routes to avoid additional delays, or securing the finished lubricants according to their specifications and quantities required.

We changed the packaging and transportation methods when needed. In the backdrop of high freight rates and lack of containers, we shipped more cargo in bulk by chemical tankers in this past year.

In the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak, products, such as hand sanitizers, faced big shortages worldwide. Shamrock reacted in the quickest way possible and to the lubricants manufacturers who were able to re-purpose their factories to produce essential products in the fight against the virus, we were able to offer IPA (Isopropyl alcohol), Ethanol & other raw materials used to produce antibacterial substances.

These are just a few examples of the steps taken towards assisting our customers. Value-added relationships are at the core of who we are. We don't want to over-promise and under-deliver, what we want is to reach new levels of growth and development together with our business partners. ■