

VIZA Valves: engineering valve package solution provider for global projects



VIZA Valves, with its headquarters in Kunshan, Jiangsu Province, is one of China's leading manufacturers of industrial valves, recognized as a preferred supplier for quality and innovation. The group, Suzhou Viza Valve Co., Ltd., also headquartered in Kunshan, has subsidiary facilities in Kunshan City, Tianjin City, and in Dallas, Texas, USA, plus a foundry in Taixing City. VIZA's wide range of products are used worldwide in a variety of applications and the company has maintained a steady business growth, at the same time, continually investing in design and R&D in order to provide new products and optimize their product profile.

Valve World visited the VIZA Valves' headquarters and production facility in Kunshan, where we spoke to Sales Director Zhu Xi to learn about the company's business, future strategy, and the valve market.

By Zhu Yuxing and Gillian Gane



Actuated ball valve at job site.

Company background

VIZA Valves was founded in 1998, today employing around 400 people and boasting sales of over US\$40 million. The company has earned its position in the medium and high end markets by serving large EPC businesses and users in Europe and the Americas amongst others. Sales Director Zhu Xi explains: "VIZA Valves specializes in engineered products offering a wide range of high and low pressure valves for a wide variety of applications. We focus on high quality products and



Motor actuated metal seated ball valve.

a good customer service and define ourselves as a complete valve project package solution provider serving global engineering projects."

Mr. Zhu tells us that the VIZA family of products includes a complete series of ball, gate, globe and check valves, butterfly valves. He proudly informs us that these valves are installed worldwide handling diverse applications in industries such as oil & gas, pipeline transmission, LNG, chemical, petrochemical, refining, power generation, water and wastewater, marine, mining and, to a lesser extent, food & beverage and pulp & paper.

One subsidiary, Kunshan Viza Valve Co., Ltd, located in Jinxi Town, Kunshan City, is one of the group's manufacturing plants for high and middle pressure valves with workshops covering 20,000m² on a site of 25,000m². The main valves produced here are trunnion mounted and floating ball valves, butterfly valves, steel gate and globe valves and check valves in carbon steel, alloy steel, stainless steel, special alloy steel and super duplex stainless steel. Tianjing Viza Valve Co., Ltd, another subsidiary located in Tianjin City, comprises



AUMA electrical actuated gate valves.

6000m² of workshops on a total site area of 12,000m². Here are made concentric and eccentric butterfly valves and resilient seal gate valves, amongst others. Jiangsu Taibo Castings Co., Ltd is the foundry facility in Yuanzhu Town, Taixing City. Casting is carried out here in carbon, alloy and stainless steels, duplex and super duplex. This facility has the capability of producing investment castings up to 250kg unit weight and over this for sand castings. The product capacity is around 8,000 tonnes.

International projects

We ask Mr. Zhu about VIZA's core competencies and what he sees as their biggest advantage over other local Chinese valve manufacturers. He says: "As far as our core competencies go, we concentrate on engineering products for medium and high pressure applications. We consider ourselves as a complete project package solution provider to global engineering projects. Our understanding of customer needs and the flexibility of our production system means that we can cope with special demands from different end users and EPCs for a project package solution and an added value service."



Casting from VIZA foundry.

“As to why we are different to other manufacturers, there are various reasons for this. Firstly, our broad product offering which covers a wide range of valve types and materials, not only for standard applications, but also for special applications, critical service and so on. We are continuously developing this range so we can keep up with ever changing customer demand and expectation.”

Mr. Zhu explains that another advantage they enjoy is in having a vertical integrated supply chain management system in place, both internally and external resources. This, combined with VIZA’s extensive know-how and experience of handling international projects for major industry players in, for example, the oil & gas, petro-chemical and power and energy fields, gives them a leading edge. “We have well trained and experienced teams, world class manufacturing equipment and facilities so customers know they can rely on us to provide good quality products with fast delivery times and with all the relevant documentation.”

VIZA holds various international certifications, including ISO 9001: 2008, API Q1, API 6D, API600, CE/PED, API607/6FA, API 591, API 624, TA-LUFT, ATEX, SIL-3, ABS and NSF.

The company has been approved for the last 18 years by many international end users and EPCs such as BP, Repsol, Petrobras, Ecopetrol, NIGC, Pertamina, PDVSA, amongst others.

Customer oriented R&D

When asked about VIZA’s main focus on product development Mr. Zhu elucidates:

“As mentioned, VIZA Valve is developing and producing industry valve products, providing service and engineering consultation and solutions to all the major end users and EPCs from various industries. We have put a lot into our R&D and this is oriented towards our customers. We need to make sure we grow with our customer requirements and market trends, in consultation with customers and in the shortest possible time. Our main priority is in engineering valve products for special service and in putting together project package solutions. For example, metallic seated ball valve for abrasive or high temperature service, cryogenic ball valve for LNG industry processing, sub-sea ball valve for nearshore oil & gas transporting systems, special clad gate valve for geothermal power plants, high performance butterfly valve for sea-water desalination, and so on. VIZA maintains a professional approach to valve automation which means we are able to optimize a valve plus actuator package. We have been continuously investing heavily in our R&D program in order to develop new product ranges or to improve on our existing products so that we are able to exactly meet what our customers are asking for. We are looking at products that give added value and we are targeting high end markets but only for stable and sustainable business opportunities. We want to avoid the homogeneous-oriented or cost-only driven competition.”

Targeted industries and projects

The company’s largest markets currently are in North America, Asia Pacific and

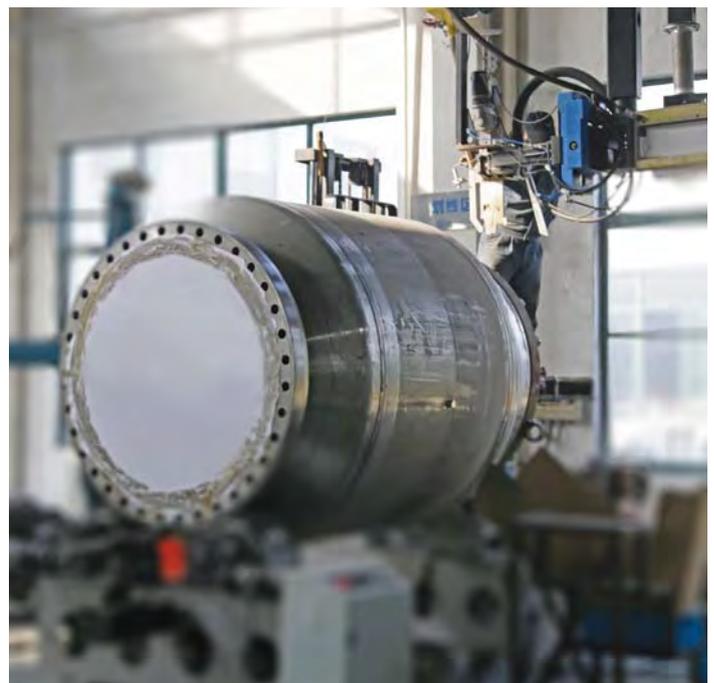
Europe. We ask whether any particular industries or project types are likely to be specifically more heavily targeted in the coming time. Mr. Zhu reiterates that special application and critical service valves and projects will be number one on their list of priorities, for example offshore platforms, cryogenic service, supercritical main steam line, sub-sea etc. “These are areas where the customer is not only looking at obtaining products for the most economical price but is also taking into account project execution experience, engineering capability, good project service and reputable branding. By providing optimized valve package solutions to different process units in the oil & gas and petrochemical industries and special or critical service valve solutions to other market segments, VIZA is able to meet the leading end user and EPC requirements for all major international projects.”

Integration of the supply chain

In order for VIZA to serve more and more project-based business, getting and maintaining the right support from all their business partners and sub-suppliers is another key factor of the company’s competence. Mr. Zhu says that, in a competitive situation, it’s a case of one whole supply chain against another whole supply chain. It is essential, therefore, that a system is in place to ensure their entire supply chain, from raw material supplier, machining services, special test labs, painting, overseas partners, before-



Top entry ball valve for Singapore LNG plant.



42 inch, fully welded ball valve.



Cryogenic testing.

sales and through to after-sales service is managed so that the whole works together in one smooth-running operation. "We understand this from our years of experience in the global valve industry market," says Mr. Zhu, continuing, "VIZA has a highly efficient management system in place which begins at the supplier selection stage. Detailed procedures and dedicated people ensure that all those forming part of the supply chain who eventually receive approval from VIZA have been through, and passed, a rigorous set of audits and tests." He tells us that for all external suppliers this includes site audits and sample/pilot checks at least once a year, depending on the different type of parts or service provided. For all major or key suppliers VIZA insist on an agreement of strategy cooperation which allows them to build up a highly uniform, integrated, optimized production and service chain with the right criteria and establish a sincere



API6D through conduit slab gate valve.



Sales team building.

relationship not purely based on price. Also, since a key part of the supply chain involves overseas agents and distribution networks who are often the first point of contact with a potential customer, VIZA have in place an annual training program for these representatives and send their own valve experts abroad to carry this out, or invite engineers from overseas distributors to come to their factory in China. In this way they can learn about the whole valve manufacturing procedure including design, operational principles, the making, assembly, testing and documentation. For some major markets there is even a student exchange program which Mr. Zhu believes is a very efficient way of building mutual understanding.

Into the future

The next two to three years will continue to be a very difficult time for businesses, even more so for the manufacturing



INCONEL alloy ball valve.

industry, according to Mr. Zhu who says that "because of this our target for the future is to optimize our strategy so that we can change from being a traditional manufacturer to becoming an advanced and compact solution provider." He goes on to tell us that they intend to achieve this through four main areas. "The first of these four points will be to invest further in a R&D program with the aim of developing and manufacturing even more value added valve products. The second will be to focus on improving the customer experience for all our products and services from both the VIZA team and agent/distribution partners. Thirdly to provide regular training to all our employees to improve their working skills, to give them a better understanding of customer requirements, quality control etc. This will not only improve the customer experience, but also instill a sense of belonging to everyone working at, or with, VIZA Valve. Our corporate philosophy is also to be very open and communication is key, whether you are a customer, a distributor, agent or employee. Last, but not least, to continue with our traditional company culture of remaining a professional manufacturer dedicated to delivering quality products and offering a great service to all our customers. We must excel and distinguish ourselves." Mr. Zhu concludes by saying "Discovery, selection and training of bright people has been the cornerstone of VIZA's development since the foundation of the company and this will continue. Such people would be welcomed into the VIZA family to share their valuable experience, new ideas and capabilities and to grow together with us, helping to turn our value into great products and service to customers."