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THE Ashok Minda Group has been renamed as SPARK MINDA to portray itself as an identity which is filled with passion, innovation and vitality.

Talking to Autoguide, Mr Ashok Minda GCEO, Spark Minda, explained how transition to SPARK MINDA took

be unmatched as before.

Excerpts from the interview :

Why go in for a new identity?

Could this not have worked under the old regime?

Let me remind you here, the world around us is changing at a fast pace, and to keep up with its changing

the best of next generation customers.

We have changed not just because we want to change, but because they want us to change.

And yes, the ownership remains the same. The fact that Minda now has two distinct groups with two distinct identities should give you even more

Ashok Minda Group

renamed **SPARK MINDA**

independent identity needed, says Mr Minda

place. He said that the transition was very gradual and not an overnight decision.

Until now, Minda was an umbrella brand for both the groups -Ashok Minda group and NK Minda group. Ever since their inception, both the groups functioned under a common logo. But with the times changing, both the groups have a sizeable turnover now and have their definitive identities and emerged as separate identities.

The group has a different product range and client base, own vision and aspirations. There is immense growth potential and with it come the complexities involved vis-a-vis vast product range. Therefore it was thought apt to project the groups as independent identities. But at the core of things it is the same Ashok Minda Group though the respective goals have become sharper and path well defined. The group's product line will be the same and continue to expand and quality will



Mr Ashok Minda, GCEO, Spark Minda.

demands, one needs to keep reinventing the wheel. The world is on the lookout for new ideas and people feel more assured when those ideas come from a platform that understands the need of transforming to lead. The new identity of Minda responds to this need. We remain what we were in spirit, but we do want to expand our realms of thought to accommodate the most modern of technologies and ideas. We do want to be the best that delivers to

confidence – because now we have decided to focus our energies on specialised sectors with distinct product lines. It's a functional split with no conflict of interest between the two groups. We are just concentrating on areas we like and understand best. This focused approach, we believe, will help us better our quality and diversify even more in our chosen sectors.

How do you plan to project this new identity? What will be the role of the brand positioning in this case?

That is the great task ahead. We have brand equity but it will be like building it all over again. The goodwill that we have earned over the years will come in handy no doubt but a lot needs to be done. We have to place Brand, not just as a Brand but as an enterprise for investors, employees, suppliers and associates; as an honest and transparent institution for media, Government and the public and place the brand as a

perfect product for the customers, end-users and trade meaning thereby all stakeholders. Our core corporate and brand team is already on the job and in the near future you will see lots of activities. It started with the Auto Expo in January 2012, which is the base for all our activities.

At the Expo, our brand was presented and highlighted well. We received the same patronage as before. For the external brand promotion, we will participate at various forums like tech shows and expos both at the national and international levels where the customers will be introduced to the new logo. We also plan to enhance the spectrum of our CSR activities when we go to the people and are able to convince them that we are one and the same group.

Apart from this, our interaction with the media, the financial institutions, trade associations, embassies and government bodies under the new name will also help in branding. For internal branding, we will be circulating mailers, newsletters and posters.

We have posters on our vision and mission statement displayed in all our units so that the employees are aware of the new identity. Other brand promotion activities undertaken by the group include melodious signature tune, corporate film, corporate brochure, participation in trade fairs, tech shows, industry exhibitions, direct mailers, newsletters, plant visits, awards and recognition, AGM and other meets, quality certification and events and sponsorship.

We are constantly interacting with our customers and we will be able to

enhance our brand equity soon.

Does the new identity also bring with it new vision, new goals or you plan to develop upon the earlier goals?

Our vision "To be a dynamic, innovative, and profitable, global automotive organisation for emerging as the preferred supplier and employer, to create value for all stakeholders" remains the same.

Our mission is to be an automotive system solution provider and to build a brand recognised by vehicle manufacturers progressively all over the world, as an organisation providing products and systems unparalleled in quality and price.

The new logo and the new identity brings with it greater responsibilities and new dreams of the future. For me, the group in one word is aggressive. Let us be aggressive in setting our goals and equally aggressive in attaining them. Leadership according to me is passion, vision, fearlessness and empowerment and friends if we aspire to be at the top let these virtues be our guiding light. According to me, our contribution to the industry over the years has been the pool of professionals who never fail to surprise me with their talents. For me Spark stands for spontaneity, vibrancy, energy, passion and speed.

How would you define the philosophy of your vision statement?

The vision statement is the very essence of our being and to reach that goal we have to follow a well defined path. The philosophy of our vision statement leads us to that path. These

guiding lights are :

Dynamic : As a player, the group is sensitive to the rapidly changing business environment. The actions of all our business group companies are and will be geared towards meeting stringent benchmarks and norms that are required and will be required.

Innovative: As a group we have been at the forefront of innovation. We intend to increase our focus on innovation in products and technologies, organisational structure, and optimising efficiencies. We also are committed to change management as a way of life to enable us to meet the emerging challenges of the industry.

Profitable: We want to emerge in the global arena as a leading automotive player and realise profitability in business so as to sustain and enhance our efforts towards emerging as a leader in the industry.

Global: We are already global and will continue to expand to meet the global requirements of OEMs and be a significant player globally, in our own domain. In spreading globally, we will not focus on any specific country or region, but take decisions based on our core interests in the automotive sector.

Automotive: We will stick to being a significant player in the automotive domain and emerge as a systems supplier. We will not deviate from our core sector but will expand to include different components and systems that align and have synergy with our products and technologies.

Emerge as preferred supplier and employer: We will be focused towards meeting the two essential areas of endeavour- become a preferred supplier to global OEMs and also brand

as a perfect product for the customers, end-users emerge as the preferred employer in our industry. For this, we plan to undertake several initiatives such as closely monitoring every aspect to offer world-class products to our ever-increasing clientele.

On the employee front, we intend to continue with our people-sensitive initiatives so as to realise a rich and vibrant work culture and also continue to nurture employees towards greater efficiency, through training and development. As a group, we consider that our employees are equal owners and stakeholders and the group belongs to them all. We will continue to offer participation in the growth of our group to all our employees.

Create value for all stakeholders: As an organisation, we are sensitive towards all stakeholders including our clients, our employees and their families, our suppliers, and the society within which we operate. Our core focus is on developing

confidence and generating greater thrust towards undertaking active role in building

Customer Trust and Confidence: Generating greater returns and trust for our investors, undertaking corporate social responsibility for wider interests of the society and the needs of our suppliers, as well as addressing the holistic needs and concerns of our employees and their families. Apart from this, we would also like our employees to be courteous, compassionate, caring, humane and humble in all our interpersonal dealings. Take ownership for the consequences of one's decisions and actions. And last but not the least build a vibrant workforce with different ethnicity, cultural orientation with no prejudice due to sex / caste / creed / colour and to cherish our unity in diversity.

What are the core values and core purpose of the Group?

Passion for excellence: Relent-

lessly improving and continuously raising the bar in everything we do.

Nurture talent, competency and willingness: Create challenging opportunities and provide support for development of self and team members. Encourage experimentation and willingness to accept challenges.

Respect and Humility: Must be courteous, compassionate, caring, humane and humble in all our interpersonal dealings.

Our core purpose is to be a happy, inspiring and proud place to work, setting benchmarks and delivering products that give customers an edge in their businesses.

We are also committed to creating and deliveries value to employees: We will treat our employees as family members and would provide them a safe, healthy, stimulating and rewarding work environment and will make customers for lifetime and always strive to exceed their expectations, and also will ensure that our enterprise grows aggressively and earns adequate returns.

We will develop long term relationships with our partners based on mutual benefit, trust, support and transparency and will always be conscious of our responsibilities towards the society at large and undertake welfare activities for the community.

How will Spark Minda be different? Well, now that we have a new identity we have to establish it. We now have well defined goals and of course a brand new canvas and we would like to paint it with the most motivating stories and achievements.

Ashok Minda Group is one of the leading manufacturers of automotive components for the OEM's. The US \$555 million group is catering to the leading two and four-wheeler vehicle manufacturers in India and overseas markets including Europe, CIS and ASEAN countries. The group has a significant presence with 19 plants in India and 9 plants in overseas locations including Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Indonesia, Vietnam, Uzbekistan and offices in The Netherlands and Japan.

The group is engaged in the manufacture of three major systems:

- (1) Safety, security and restraint system (ignition locks / door locks / immobilisers / latches / door handles / power closer systems and window regulators along with zinc / aluminum and gravity die-casting, stamping and surface coating.)
- (2) Driver information and telematics system (instrument clusters / digital clocks / sensors / gauges / tank units / dash board assemblies / wiring harness, couplers / terminals / junction boxes / relay boxes / steer roll connectors and battery cables).
- (3) Interiors system (consoles / ashtrays / cup holders / seat headrest / side arms / door trims / oil housing / tank closure modules / back panels / glove box / air ducts / fans and NVH and components).