Material world

Innovation is key to the success of Makevale, the award-winning company that provides industry with materials to touch everyone's lives

Although Makevale operates within what CEO Dr Samit Ahir describes as "a niche within a niche", the company has had an outsized impact on the world of organic chemistry, thanks to the high performing polymers it provides to the dental, cosmetics and orthopaedic industries, as well as to industrial, manufacturing and engineering firms.

Makevale's success has earned the company recognition in the form of two prestigious Queen's Awards for Enterprise in the innovation category, most recently in 2021 after Makevale developed a polymer that enables replacement hips to last longer in the body. "The first Queen's Award in 2010 was for our dental materials being cadmium free," says Dr Ahir. "The 2021 award was for a specific product that took us six years to develop. Receiving it was a great moment for the team and has given us huge confidence." And as Makevale continues to push the boundaries in polymer innovations, "some team members are already thinking in terms of the next Queen's Award".

A global team of experts work from sites including purpose-built factories in Blackpool and India – the latter due to the growth of biomedical technology markets in Asia and Australia – while the company's headquarters is based in Ware, Hertfordshire. There are also distribution centres in the US and China. "Our exports are strong, so we are very good ambassadors for UK chemistry, which has opened doors for research at Imperial College London and the University of Cambridge," says Dr Ahir.

The company's mission is "to touch the lives of everyone". With this in mind, Makevale produces highly specialised powders and solutions that manufacturers can use to make everything from acrylic nails to superglue.

The focus is now on creating 3D printing materials and making products and processing more sustainable. "We are involved in cutting-edge research down to the molecular level and are looking at new 3D printing resins, tougher polymers that can operate at extreme temperatures, new composite materials to replace knee cartilage – specialised key ingredients we think will add huge value to manufacturers.

"In addition, we continue to develop our dental and cosmetic products and are excited to be investing in the chemistry on the industrial side. We are also making an impact by offering customers more sustainable and recyclable products," says Dr Ahir. "Sometimes it seems like science fiction, but that's what good chemistry does."

www.makevale.com