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EME

Diversify and Thrive

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Romanian retailer Profi continues to diversify and grow its business to the benefit of consumers

dpa lighting consultants

Professional project collaboration across the design industry

Wojciech Bajda, Head of Ericsson GCC, discusses the company's provision of 5G across the globe in a growing digital age



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Ready to Respond

Agility. Without it, companies struggle to survive.

In truth, few could have foreseen what 2020 had in store and the pandemic highlighted the importance of an agile and lean mentality in order to ensure disruptions to operations were mitigated.

Which leads me onto our cover feature – Profi. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, the Romanian retailer has continued to diversify and grow its business to the benefit of consumers. With this in mind, we chat exclusively to Pawel Musial, CEO and Chairman of Profi, to find out more.

"At Profi, we're different," explains Musial. "We're a Romanian network managed locally and despite our financial strength not being level with many international competitors, our key strength is that decisions can be made locally and very quickly."

Elsewhere in the magazine, we examine Iceland's passion for coffee. The people of Iceland love its coffee so much that they hold competitions which places baristas and roasters against the other in search of the country's best brew. Don't miss our interview with Gudmundur Halldorsson, CEO at Te & Kaffi, as he discusses what sets his familyowned coffee roastery apart.

Further, Wojciech Bajda, Head of Ericsson GCC, provides an insight into the company's adoption of 5G across the globe in a growing digital age. While, in our Topical Focus, we examine Dubai's rearranged World Expo and preview what to expect from the highly anticipated event.

And before you go, don't miss our in-depth features and reports with Gulf Extrusions, Korozo Group, Itema Group, Teknikum, LOGSTOR, Bateel, Lafarge Iraq, Plockmatic and more!

Enjoy the issue!

Sean Galea-Pace

Editor, Outlook Publishing

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NEWS

Around Europe & the Middle East in seven stories...



INTRODUCING ORANGE VENTURES

EARLIER THIS month saw the French communications corporation Orange strengthen its venture capital activity in digital innovation by creating a new entity -Orange Ventures - with an allocation of 350 million euros.

Orange Ventures is a separate legal entity, and with the allocated funding, is empowered to be an increasingly agile and competitive company aimed at seeking and supporting the most promising international start-up businesses. It will focus on a structured

process in order to create flexible and optional synergies between Orange and various global start-ups.

For the wider company, Orange Ventures is designed to promote the growth and fruition of future technological champions - those who will support the shift towards a innovative, digital, and responsible world.

COVID-19

UK Vaccine Manufacturing

THE UNITED Kingdom, that has the fifth highest number of COVID-related deaths in the world, is striving to be one of the first countries to vaccinate its population.

Despite impending delays - Pfizer stating a temporary reduction in vaccine delivery to Europe while it upgrades its production capacity - the UK is still on track to hit its vaccine rollout targets.

Amid this prospect, the UK aims to administer the first set of vaccination doses to approximately 15 million individuals within the highest priority groups by mid-February - a rough date up to which the UK is set to roll out two million vaccines a week from AstraZeneca.

Currently, the UK is vaccinating approximately 140 individuals every minute, and this form of massvaccination is considered the best way to protect the country and its people from COVID-19.



SUSTAINABILITY

Carbon Offset Programme

ABU DHABI'S Etihad Airways promotes a carbon offset programme to better drive its environmental sustainability aims.

The airline is working alongside New Zealand's CarbonClick in order to achieve this. CarbonClick has worked with over 650 businesses in the promotion and execution of environmentally beneficial practices,



and Etihad Airways is one of the first airlines to collaborate with the company to incorporate such practices.

Etihad is expanding its programme in collaboration with Shell, while simultaneously arranging a guest programme to provide them with extra voluntary offsets.

This programme stems from Etihad's purchase of approximately 80,000 tonnes of carbon offsets during November of 2020, with an aim to cease the total CO2 emissions of "Greenliner"; the flagship 787-10 aircraft, for an entire year in operation during 2021.

ENVIRONMENT

A European Plan

THE EU is to propose a carbon border charge before the end of June, aimed at lowering the emission levels of non-EU industry competitors, as deemed necessary to the survival of EU industries.

This proposition is to combat "carbon leakage" - something that would occur if companies were to leave the EU to sidestep the costly emissions-cutting policies.

The global pressure for industries to lower emissions comes with the climate action required ahead of the United Nations summit in November 2021, that is serving as a deadline for almost 200 countries that have each pledged larger emission cuts.



2021 will see Brussels reveal major plans and policies to reduce emissions at a faster rate by 2030. This will include increased carbon costs for industry across the board, and tough renewable energy aims.

TRANSPORT

Electric Vehicle Rollout

GERMAN MULTINATIONAL

automotive company BMW plans to double its sales of fully electrical vehicles and plug-in hybrids this year.

This aim arrives with the company's compliance to its own reduction of CO2 emission targets, as well as to chase the market leader Tesla Inc. BMW currently produces 13 different models of electric vehicle, and these are sold across 74 markets. By 2023, this number of models is aimed to be almost doubled to 25, and over half of these will be fully electric.

Despite not providing an exact goal for sales volume this year, 2020 saw BMW sell close to 193,000 electrified vehicles across the year – a number than provides speculation as to the company's aims for 2021.



ENERG

TOTAL SHIFTS FOCUS

French multinational oil and gas company Total SE increases speed of renewable energy push through a \$2.5 billion investment in Indian solar power.

Total is paying \$2.5 billion for a share in Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), including a portfolio of solar power assets, in a drive to lower its dependence on fossil fuels.

Total's 20 percent stake in AGEL will also include a seat on its board as well as a huge 50 percent share in the aforementioned solar power assets.

With this plan in action, Total has begun its journey away from a reliance on oil, and shifted its strategy towards electricity, among other renewable energy sources. The company's goal is to obtain the renewable energy generation capacity of 35 gigawatts by 2025, that at present sits at around 9 gigawatts.

HEALTHCARE

ALDI IMPLEMENTS VACCINE

German supermarket giant Aldi offers COVID-19 vaccine incentives to employees based in the US – the first of its kind in the supermarket sector.

With over 2,000 stores across 37 states, Aldi confirmed that it would cover the costs associated with vaccine, as well as organise onsite vaccination clinics at its own warehouse and office locations.

Aldi states that, working alongside US officials and other companies such as Amazon, and Uber Technologies, it is prioritising employee access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

EXPERT EYE



Navigating the digital future in the Middle East

Transaction banking in the Middle East is undergoing a digital transformation. How can banks effectively traverse this complex, fast moving landscape and embrace the digital age?

Written by: Bana Akkad Azhari, Head of Relationship Management MEA & CIS, BNY Mellon Treasury Services

Ver the past decade, digitisation has been changing the shape of the finance industry in the Middle East, acting as an enabler for banks to meet evolving client needs for transparency and speed. Now, the COVID-19 pandemic is further accelerating this trend, with the uptake of digital technology capabilities reaching new levels.

Indeed, although today's unprecedented environment, and the accompanying move to "working from home". has caused considerable disruption, it is also having the positive effect of bringing the digitalisation agenda to the fore. With paperbased methods of corresponding and transacting not only impractical but often simply impossible in the circumstances, banks in the region have reported significant increases in the adoption and use of digital solutions. And, in a recent PwC survey, half of the Middle East's CFOs indicated that they plan to accelerate automation and new ways of working.

COVID-19 is therefore helping to drive rapid change, paving the way for a more agile, digital future. Against this backdrop, banks need to support clients along their digital journeys and provide a holistic suite of solutions that meet the broad range of individual client needs. By delivering digital capabilities – through a combination of more traditional methods, cuttingedge technologies and strategic partnerships – banks in the Middle East can help clients optimise their position in the new digital era.

Enhancing traditional payment processes

Today's fast-paced digital lifestyle means improving the speed and efficiency of domestic and crossborder payments is a key priority. The adoption of initiatives such as real-time payments and SWIFT gpi, is therefore increasing substantially in the Middle East.

Within the GCC, Bahrain has made the most progress to date, with its domestic near real-time payments system – Electronic Fund Transfer System (EFTS) – now in place. A new report has highlighted how real-time payments in Bahrain have surged during the pandemic. In fact, volumes grew more than in any other country in the past year, increasing by 657 percent.

Jordan is well-advanced on its real-time payments journey, while Saudi Arabia and the UAE are also introducing instant payments. In April 2019, Saudi Arabia announced plans to launch a real-time payments system. The new system will be run by Saudi Payments, a subsidiary of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority. Meanwhile, the UAE introduced an interim real-time payments solution in 2019 called Immediate Payment Instruction (IPI).

With businesses in the region increasingly operating cross-border, effecting streamlined, efficient, cost-effective and transparent international payment processes is key. SWIFT gpi is one of the most powerful developments transaction banking in recent years, and continues to gain traction across the Middle East. It addresses the inefficiencies that previously encumbered crossborder payments and the lack of transparency that often surrounds fees and payment execution.

Investing in innovative technologies

As well as enhancing traditional processes, emerging technologies are helping banks to deliver entirely new capabilities.

Blockchain, for example, is continuing to be explored in the Middle East. MENA governments are creating strong legislative foundations for blockchain projects. With this support, banks and fintechs are developing blockchain-powered exchange systems to enhance existing processes in payments and trade. For example, Dubai Economy and Emirates NBD have announced launch of the UAE KYC blockchain platform that aims to facilitate secure digital customer onboarding, instant bank account functionality and sharing of verified KYC data. Elsewhere, the Central Bank of Bahrain has partnered with Fasset, a provider of blockchain-powered platforms, to test its blockchain-based sustainable infrastructure asset exchange solution.

Blockchain is, of course, just one emerging technology creating waves in the industry. Optical character recognition (OCR) technology providers are sharpening their focus on Middle Eastern markets. OCR enables images of typed or handwritten text to be digitally converted into machine-encoded text, with content auto-populated into the required fields. With the Middle East having one of the world's highest smartphone penetrations at 97%, significant growth is expected as many industries look for the ability to instantly scan and

digitalise information with a mobile device. With respect to trade, OCR technology could, for instance, be applied to internal operations to improve efficiencies and streamline transactions. By integrating OCR technology and custom-built APIs, it is possible for compliance reviews to be done automatically through machine learning.

Meanwhile, AI adoption is particularly strong in the Middle East. Fueled by Big Data, artificial intelligence (AI) applications can be taught to detect patterns and trends, gather insights and subsequently recommend required actions. With high engagement and solid returns on investments in the Middle East, AI adoption is projected to grow, with applications in areas such as customer service, logistics, and fraud prevention.

Strategic partnerships

With new innovations and industry initiatives emerging rapidly, deciding where to focus can be challenging. Correspondent banking can support digitisation strategies and enable innovative capabilities without significant investment for local banks.

Non-compete correspondent banking alliances can play a mutually beneficial role in the Middle East. where local banks can benefit from the technological capabilities and extended reach of global specialists, while global banks gain access to the inimitable countryspecific insights of local banks. It is not only bankbank partnerships that can add value. Bank-fintech partnerships can also be beneficial - especially with companies that specialise in a niche area, saving time and resources and potentially accelerating a bank's learning curve and time to market with new solutions. Spurred

on by a growing millennial population, the region is increasingly looking to leverage fintech developments for allround improvements to the financial sector.

Looking ahead, as the importance of progressing to digital capabilities increasingly becomes a shared goal, the industry is set to accelerate its digitisation journey – fine tuning existing technologies, as well as exploring how to leverage new, innovative developments. It is up to banks to provide the support, tools and service clients need to flourish in the new digital world.

The views expressed herein are those of the author only and may not reflect the views of BNY Mellon. This does not constitute Treasury Services advice, or any other business or legal advice, and it should not be relied upon as such.

ABOUT THE EXPERT

As BNY Mellon treasury services' head of relationship management for the Middle East and North Africa region, as well as a member of the treasury services' EMEA management team, Bana Akkad Azhari is at the core of the group's business development and growth ambitions in the MENA emerging markets. In her role, she is also regional executive for the Levant and North Africa, while also being responsible for business across Lebanon, Jordan, Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Iraq. She manages the overall coverage and delivery of BNY Mellon's products and services to existing and potential clients, in addition to market development and strategic growth opportunities. Before beginning her journey with BNY Mellon in 2006, Bana worked for Citigroup for over nine years and held the position of resident vice president as well as being a member of the credit committee.

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NON-STOP INNOVATION

O21 has given rise to a global digital sphere like never before. Following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the accessibility to online communication and services has become a necessity, not just an option.

Wojciech Bajda, Head of Ericsson GCC, is an ICT veteran with over 20 years of experience working across three continents in numerous executive roles. He joined Ericsson Poland in 2000 as a Sales Manager, during which Bajda took on varying account management positions, including the responsibility for the biggest Ericsson account in Poland at the time – T-Mobile.

Headquartered in Sweden, Ericsson was originally founded by Lars Magnus Ericsson in 1876. Alongside his wife Hilda, Ericsson became known as



We spoke to Wojciech Bajda, Head of Ericsson GCC, about the company's provision of 5G across the globe in a growing digital age

Writer: Marcus Kääpä

a firm that pioneered communications technology - what started as a small factory has evolved throughout its history into the renowned global company we see today.

Ericsson is one of the leading providers of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to service providers. The company enables the full value of connectivity by creating game-changing technology and services that are easy to use, adopt, and scale, making its customers successful in a fully connected world. Its comprehensive portfolio ranges across networks, digital services, managed services, and emerging business: powered by 5G and IoT platforms. Ericsson is also the first company to launch live commercial 5G networks on four continents.

EME Outlook: To start with, can you tell us about your career to date and explain how you became interested in the technology industry?

Wojciech Bajda (WB): In 2009, I started my international assignment with Ericsson and worked in Africa, where I managed Orange and Millicom Accounts across all the Sub-Saharan African region. In 2013, I moved to Ukraine and led Ericsson's business in Eurasia, which consisted of 11 countries from Belarus to Mongolia.

Following this, in 2017, I was appointed as the Head of Customer Unit Industry and Society within the Middle East region. In this role, I was responsible for driving business growth and capturing market opportunities within the Middle East and in new business areas, with a special focus on energy and utilities, public safety and security, intelligent transport systems, and smart cities. Later that same year, I assumed responsibilities as the Head of Gulf Council Countries at Ericsson Middle East and Africa, and Country Head of Ericsson UAE.

EME Outlook: What is your take on the industry in UAE at the moment?

WB: It is probably the most exciting time we have ever experienced due to phenomenal opportunities 5G brings to industries and society. 5G is expected to reach 130 million subscriptions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region by 2026, representing 15 percent of total mobile subscriptions. These forecasts are included in the November 2020 edition of the Ericsson Mobility Report, along with projections for data traffic growth, and regional subscriptions.

Commercial 5G deployments with leading service providers have taken place in the region during 2019 and 2020 with 5G subscriptions forecast reach close to 1.4 million by the end of 2020, mainly in the Gulf countries. The introduction of 5G will make it possible for communications service providers to improve their business in various ways and offer incredible opportunities for different industries to digitalise their operations. The challenge for service providers preparing for 5G is to keep up with the high expectations of early adopters and support enterprises with innovative use cases.

EME Outlook: What, for you, makes Ericsson stand out in the industry?

WB: Ericsson 5G platform enables service providers to embrace opportunities and challenges and offers new services for a whole range of new users and industries. And thanks to its ongoing interoperability engagements with six out of six chipset vendors, Ericsson's 5G technology is evolving continuously to support a variety of 5G devices. That way, it can cater to the wide-ranging 5G use cases of today and tomorrow. We deliver best performing networks and user experience to our customers.

While working strictly to local pandemic restrictions, Ericsson continued to deploy 5G globally, cemented its 5G leadership and completed the company turnaround. As the year 2020 closed, Ericsson had 122 unique commercial 5G agreements with communications service providers globally, including 77 live 5G networks in 40 countries.

EME Outlook: Can you tell us about the company's recent achievements?

WB: In the MENA region, Ericsson has achieved significant milestones with leading service providers on the road to making 5G a reality for consumers. Ericsson's publicly announced contracts with Etisalat UAE, Ooredoo Qatar, STC and Mobily in Saudi Arabia, Zain & Batelco in Bahrain are further proof of the commercial readiness of 5G, at scale.

EME Outlook: Can you tell us about any key investments you're working on that you'd like to pay special mention to? WB: The IT industry cannot survive without non-stop innovation, which is one of our strategic focus areas globally and locally, within our research and development (R&D) initiatives. Ericsson has established Research and Innovation Labs across the region to facilitate world-leading research and innovation of future technologies by attracting the right people and fostering cooperation across research areas.

Initiatives facilitated by our labs significantly contribute to the respective country's future in terms of scientific production and technological knowledge. New and innovative research topics enable researchers to contribute to international projects while providing great opportunities for producing new articles, papers and patents, as well as directly contributing to worldwide standards.

Ericsson has a fresh graduate programme that aims to employ local talent and create an open ecosystem for research and implementation of innovative projects enabled by 5G - the next generation of wireless technology. Designed to build IT leaders of the future, the graduate programme brings together the public sector, leading universities, research centres, local authorities, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to focus on the development of and test new services that use next generation 5G networks as an enabler.

We also conduct innovation competitions during which the students are invited to present use cases focused on the possibilities of 5G, artificial intelligence (AI) and industry digitalisation to ultimately capture their full business potential. The competition for universities allows students to unleash their potential in the technology domain and actively involve talented youth in the evolution towards next-generation connectivity. By engaging with students, we share our knowledge on the latest advanced

ERICSSON



technologies and capitalise on their innovative thinking towards a digital future.

EME Outlook: How important are partner and supplier relationships to the success of your business?

WB: Supply chain operations are an essential part of all network deployments. To minimise operational expenditures, reduce working capital, and generate revenue faster, service providers need to build a responsive supply chain to support network roll-out projects. Ericsson's offering optimises flow management to reduce inventory and accelerate the launch of new services. It ensures that material is delivered to the right place at the right time by mitigating potential risk and taking appropriate action.

Ericsson continues to follow the situation of the coronavirus and recommendations from the local authorities and WHO, as the company assesses its supply chain. This far, our supply chain has worked with limited interruption, and we will continue to work to further improve our resilience by, for example, increasing inventories of critical components. However, the longer the lockdown in many countries continues, the more disruptions we will likely see.

Ericsson has a global supply chain set up, which ensures the company works close to customers through its European, Asian and American operations. Our main production facilities are in Estonia, Poland, China, India, Brazil, Mexico, and the US.

Looking ahead to the future, we believe we have a resilient supply chain, with production capabilities in multiple regions. We also have access to components and other materials to keep production up and running.

EME Outlook: How influential have staff been during the pandemic? How do you try to empower them and recognise the contributions that they make?



WB: In this time of crisis, we are prouder than ever of our people who help us connect the world. We have the best people in the industry and a culture of being inclusive, empathetic and good-hearted. And we cannot succeed unless everyone working for Ericsson or doing business with us returns home safely to their families every day. Our five core leadership values are:

- Empathy and humanness
- Cooperation and collaboration
- Fact-based and courageous decisions
- Speedy executing
- Fostering a speak-up culture environment

We put a lot of effort supporting our leaders to implement empathetic leadership in everything we do.

As a global company with around 100,000 employees and presence in 180 countries, we are aware of our responsibilities towards the societies where we operate.

EME Outlook: Looking ahead, what are your key priorities for the coming year?

WB: Everyone at Ericsson, from our award-winning research teams who make key contributions to 5G development, to our field engineers who keep the networks running 24/7, remains committed to delivering new technologies that will shape tomorrow's world.

We will continue to research and develop products and services that support and reach for the accessibility and affordability of communication infrastructure by offering services that drive sustainable economic growth and innovative solutions across areas such as education, financial services, health and humanitarian response.

Our ultimate goal is to delight our customers, support societies, and make the world better with Ericsson technology.



WALKERS

A SUSTAINABLE SYMBIOSIS

eer and crisps are a classic combination.

Beer has been around for centuries and is ingrained into British culture as a staple alcohol for leisurely drinking. According to statista, beer remains one of the most popular forms of alcohol in the UK, making up an entire third of alcohol consumed.

Crisps too are equally as popular. In the UK alone, consumers buy six billion packets of crisps per year (averaging around 60 grams per week per person), with potato and carbohydrate snacks often eaten in place of a more substantial meal during the day.

One of the issues that arise from

UK-based crisps giant Walkers utilises technology alongside a brewery partnership to help the environment

Writer: Marcus Kaapa

crisp consumption in particular is the amount of waste that is produced from empty packets, not to mention the large amount of CO2 emissions created by crisp factories and the general production process.

However, crisps firm Walkers has not only pledged to make its packaging

100 percent recyclable by 2025, but has actively adopted a method of production that will cut a substantial amount of these emissions from the manufacturing process of making crisps.

On 7th December, the company stated that it is going to work alongside a brewery and utilise new technology that is going to take CO2 from the fermentation process in beer production, to mix with potato waste, and use this combination to fertilise the soil for the potato crop of following years across many areas of the UK. This is estimated to reduce Walker's potato-based CO2 emissions by a massive 70 percent.

The brilliance of this innovative production method is that the emissions created by beer breweries, that are usually expelled into the atmosphere, are instead repurposed to make fertiliser – a method that creates the benefits of both achieving the breweries' sustainability aims, that of Walkers' environmental and production benefits, and actually saves them money in the process.

The method was trialled in 2020 and Walkers is currently incorporating the technology into its factory in Leicester, intending to begin the symbiotic and sustainable process starting with its 2022 crop.

The idea and technology were developed by a start-up company called CCm, through a grant from the UK government. The new process is designed to bring sustainability efforts into the fore for Walkers and the yet undecided brewery.

Of the many benefits that this innovative method will bring to the companies and environment, the recycled CO2 emissions are estimated to be the equivalent worth of 22,000 cars off the road - a staggering level of emission reduction, and a business practice that could be effectively utilised across the UK and beyond.

The technology that Walkers will be implementing is designed to connect to the crisp factory's anaerobic digester – an element of the factory

that makes use of food waste to generate the majority of the electricity required by the plant.

This works via the potato waste producing methane, that is in turn burned to create electricity to be used

CCM TECHNOLOGIES AT A GLANCE

CCm Technologies, formally known as CCm Research, based in Swindon, near Oxford, is an award winning clean-tech company, focused on resource optimisation, including Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU).

CCm's technology converts captured carbon dioxide and other waste streams (such as ammonia and phosphate) into stable value-added materials with multiple uses across global priority sectors of food/ agriculture, advanced materials and energy storage.

CCm has developed a method of producing fertiliser and soil conditioner through the use of captured carbon dioxide from industrial power generators. The first full-scale fertiliser manufacturing plant has been successfully commissioned at CCm's Technology Centre in Swindon before its deployment to Viridor's multi-waste site in Somerset.



in the crisp-frying process, and so consequently saves on using wasteful fossil fuels. CCm's technology will utilise the by-product methane waste to generate electricity onward into the future.

This revolutionary process will remove the potato left post-digestion and apply the brewery CO2 to it. This will then form the rich fertiliser that will put carbon back in the soil for plant growth and therefore preventing CO2 emissions from escaping and reaching the atmosphere.

The cycle of CO2 use has the potential to be applied across a multitude of industries and across the globe. Pepsi-Co, the brand owner of Walkers, has set its sights on applying these benefits to European markets as well as alternative crops such as corn and oats.

The sustainable reuse of potato waste in addition to the capturing of carbon for reuse in the soil can be seen as a substantial progressive step towards a practical, efficient, and environmentally beneficial business practice.

The implementation of CCm's technology, and the estimated result of a 70 percent reduction in emissions, is a huge opportunity for Walkers to showcase and lead the sustainability effort in the UK, and it may pave the way for a multitude of other companies to become involved with similar business and environmentally beneficial investments.

TOPICAL FOCUS

CONNECTING MINDS, CREATING THE FUTURE

We look ahead to Dubai's rearranged World Expo and examine what to expect from the highly anticipated event

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace



ubai's Expo 2020. It's a once-in-a-lifetime celebration and set to be the largest event staged in the Arab world.

The disruption caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic meant that Dubai's showcase event will now be held from 1st October 2021, to 31st March 2022 instead of in its original titular name. With safety paramount, the delay will allow all participants to safely navigate the impact of COVID-19 and enable the World Expo to focus on a collective desire for new thinking to identify solutions to some of the greatest challenges of all-time. At the time, His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of Dubai Airports, President of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Chairman and CEO of Emirates Group, and Chairman of the Expo 2020 Dubai Higher Committee, commented:

"We welcome the decision of BIE Member States to support the delay Expo 2020 Dubai by one year. We're thankful to Member States for their continued commitment to contributing to a World Expo in Dubai that will play a pivotal role in shaping our post-pandemic world at a time when it will be most needed.

"Over the past 50 years, we have sought to build bridges, connections, and partnerships worldwide because we believe in genuine collaboration to safeguard the future of all. The swift and overwhelming vote reflects the strength of our international partnerships and truly reflects the positive role in the UAE and Dubai play

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Six months
- Seven days a week
- Over 15 hours of daily entertainment
- More than 190 country pavilions
- Over 200 restaurants
- 60 daily live shows



with all countries around the world.

"This affirmation by the international community of Dubai's offering and its ability to deliver, further strengthens our commitment to matching ambition with achievement to hosting an event that will capture the world's imagination, when the time is right."

WHAT IS THE EXPO 2020 DUBAI?

In the very first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia region, it's set to be a major international event in terms of size, scale, duration, and visitor numbers. The Expo 2020 site is around 4.38 square-kilometres and is located in the Dubai South district, which is ideal for visitors, with Al Maktoum International Airport, Dubai international Airport, Abu Dhabi International Airport, and Dubai and Abu Dhabi Cruise Terminals all nearby.

LOFTY SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Dubai's Expo aims to be the most sustainable World Expo of all time. In order to achieve this ambition, sustainability is integrated into all elements of Expo 2020, while also introducing a meaningful impact beyond the six months of the Expo and harnessing a greener approach long-term.

Its sustainability impact is based around four key objectives. These are:

- To leave a legacy of sustainable infrastructure and cutting-edge sustainability practices.
- To catalyse sustainability efforts in Dubai and the UAE.

- To increase public awareness about and engagement with sustainability principles and sustainable living.
- To develop sustainability answers that are scalable, extending benefits to the wider economy.

To do that, Expo 2020 is seeking to achieve its sustainability goals through generating cleaner energy, reducing water consumption, promoting natural solutions, minimising its carbon footprint, leveraging sustainable building materials, and decreasing waste.

ATTRACTIONS

With more than 200 food and beverage outlets, there is something for everyone. The Expo will play host to street food, haute cuisine, familyfriendly meals, sustainable dining, and

EXPO 2020'S SUBTHEMES

The subthemes of the Expo 2020 Dubai are centered around opportunity, mobility, and sustainability, and these are integral to the event's mission statement.

OPPORTUNITY - Expo 2020 aims to unlock the potential in numerous ways, such as supporting solutions to social problems through its Expo Live programme and introducing visitors to new ideas.

MOBILITY - Expo 2020 examines how mobility has helped explore new frontiers and how humanity is making greater strides through digital connectivity.

SUSTAINABILITY – Expo 2020 is embracing alternative sources of food, water, and clean and renewable energy to encourage everyone to reassess how to preserve the planet.











EXPO LIVE

'IT IS ALSO HOPED THAT THE EXPO WILL PROVIDE ATTENDEES WITH SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO FOLLOWING A CHALLENGING 2020 THAT TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN' unique culinary journeys to name a few. Arts and culture will also come to the fore at Dubai's Expo as Al Wasl Opera will offer a diverse range of installations, artistic creations, workshops, and performances.

At the heart is the UAE pavilion, with its breathtaking design inspired by a falcon in flight. The event will have exhibition areas, an auditorium and numerous VIP lounges. Elsewhere, there will be live performances from world-famous celebrities and comedians, poetry slams, fashion shows, and world-leading speakers in attendance.

Every day during the 173 days of the Expo, a different country will be featured in a cultural showcase which will offer parades and other festivities, in addition to fireworks displays and entertainment into the early hours. Ultimately, Dubai's Expo can't come at a better time from both a financial and personal point of view. As a result of a disruptive 2020, Dubai's tourism industry would significantly benefit from a boost with around 70 percent of visitors expected to come from outside the UAE. Whereas it is anticipated that around 111,000 new jobs will be created and enable the real-estate market to boom. It is also hoped that the Expo will provide attendees with something to look forward to following a challenging 2020 that turned the world upside down.



Keep an eye on the website https://www.expo2020dubai.com/en for the latest ticket details.

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PROFI



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Diversify and Thrive

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Romanian retailer Profi continues to diversify and grow its business to the benefit of consumers

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Ben Weaver

Profi is like the agile yacht that can easily change course when opportunities arise and, even more importantly, can sail to treasures in shallow waters that aren't accessible to large cruisers."

Those are the words of Pawel Musial, CEO and Chairman of Profi. His shipping analogy showcases how highly his organisation values operating with a flexible approach, particularly during challenging times such as those that the year 2020 has thrown at the world.

Profi is a chain of supermarkets and convenience stores with more than 1,000 locations in Romania owned by Mid Europa Partners.

"At Profi, we're different," explains Musial. "We're a Romanian network managed locally and despite our financial strength not being level with many international competitors, our key strength is that decisions can be made locally and very quickly."

Having worked in retail since the early 1990s, Musial has worked in several different organisations across numerous countries. Originally a native of Poland, Musial holds a degree in Technology of Nutrition Engineering from the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. Now in his second stint as CEO at Profi having left in 2017, Musial's passion for retail is evident.

"Retail is probably one of the most dynamic lines of work and this why I just love it," he explains. "There is certainly no time to become bored in retail, decisions must be clear, swift and pertinent."

At the start of his career, he created his own poultry wholesale firm

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Nature's Purest Water



One brand, two exceptional springs. Deep inside Romania's Carpathian Mountains - the source of more than 60 percent of Europe's natural mineral water reserves - lies the source of AQUA Carpatica, a mineral water of unrivalled purity.

PROFI

before moving onto work for modern retail networks across Poland, initially in marketing, before climbing the professional ladder to Tesco Polska as a Regional Director. In 2004, Musial moved out of Poland to become the Chief Operating Officer, then the CEO of Perekriostok chain in Russian Federation, which later became X5 Retail Group: Musial also became Vice-President and CCO for X5 Retail Group Holding until 2008, then remained a member of the supervisory X5 board until 2018. In 2008, he held the position of CEO of Eko-Market, Ukraine, becoming its Chairman in 2009 until 2010, when he joined Profi as CEO.

"There is a lot of room for experimenting with new ideas at Profi," says Musial. "In general, I love people and thoroughly enjoy working with them, meeting both employees and clients. I like visiting stores, talking to people as well as with top decision makers, continuously adapting the business to the sudden changes in people's tastes and purchasing

PROJECT SNAPSHOT: ICE STORE

In 2013, Profi realised that its brand wasn't widely known outside of central Romania so decided to innovate and introduce something special. Subsequently, the organisation launched an ice store. which was the first store made of ice. Built in the middle of Bucharest, the capital city of a temperate continental country, the project with sales at below zero temperatures quickly captured media attention not only locally but also received global coverage from China to the United States.

decisions can be very exciting."

Profi's journey has been significant. In 2002, the organisation operated just over 67 stores but its network has now become the widest geographically in Romania. Today, Profi counts more than 1,400 stores in around 600 localities, with over 21,000 employees making it one of the country's top private employers. To scale this further, Profi has set its sights on becoming the leader of the Romanian grocery retail market within the next few years.

At first, all its stores were in one standard format, however, as a result of successful trial and error experiments, the network has developed new formats.





he natural mineral water that is bottled under the brand name AQUA Carpatica owes its unrivalled purity to its source. Drawn from pure aquifers, nestled deep in the heart of the Carpathian Mountains, AQUA Carpatica is virtually nitrate-free and combines an exceptionally balanced mineral content of calcium and magnesium, a great choice for health-conscious consumers.

The range consists of an extensive portfolio, suiting all occasions: various formats in still and sparkling, packed in glass, and PET (BPA free). The awardwinning range is an opportunity to upgrade the water selection, attract more customers and increase sales by meeting the growing demand for health and premiumisation.

FROM A UNIQUE SOURCE

AQUA Carpatica comes from natural springs deep under the ancient Carpathian Mountains, within the last wild forest in Europe. This stunning mountain range is surrounded by the largest virgin forests in Europe which hosts more than 60% of Europe's natural springs – it's the finest possible natural source water on the planet.

THE BEST THINGS TAKE TIME

- Millions of years of volcanic activity in the region has enriched the water with valuable minerals
- The natural hydro-geological journey that the water takes as it filters underground through the mountain's rock strata takes between 20 - 40 years before it finally springs from its natural source

DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL TASTE

 This epic geological journey is responsible for imparting an equally epic taste, all thanks to the water's natural alkalinity and very low sodium content- one of the lowest of all the waters on the market

 These entire process leads to a natural mineral water that is renowned for its authenticity and integrity

HEALTHY LIFE CHOICES

- AQUA Carpatica's mission is to sustain healthier life choices and to offer consumers simply the best and purest water
- Healthy hydration is essential for everyone and high-quality mineral water helps to impart health and wellness

STYLE & SUSTAINABILITY

- AQUA Carpatica's pure water is responsibly bottled at source and packaged in beautifully designed bottles made with recyclable glass and BPA-free PET bottles
- Customers can benefit from the brand's underlying environmental credentials, whilst simultaneously delivering fantastic on-shelf standout with its elegant, eye-catching design

SPREADING THE WORD AND THE WATER

- Internationally, AQUA Carpatica is a huge success in more than 23 countries with dynamic growth since 2011
- AQUA Carpatica has developed a global presence in markets such as the UK, the USA, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Greece, Spain, Japan, and Australia due to its unique purity

AQUA Carpatica is sourced, bottled and distributed by Carpathian Springs, a Valvis Holding SA portfolio company. For questions, please contact: contact@aquacarpatica.com.

contact@aquacarpatica.com

PROFI

"The City format came along as a smaller urban store, right near one's home, where one would just slide into their slippers to go shopping to meet immediate needs," he explains. "A really bold move was the creation of the Loco format that serves people in rural areas which was previously considered a no-go zone for modern retail because the countryside was considered to be too poor to sustain consistent trade."

Indeed, Profi's bid to expand has shown no signs of slowing and along with opening new stores, it is even taking control of already-existing networks.

Back in January 2020, the organisation acquired 18 supermarkets from local peer Pram Maya. At the time, Daniel Cirstea, General Director of PROFI Rom Food, commented: "The acquisition is part of PROFI's integrated long-term strategy and we are thrilled that this is the most important move within our history. As per customer's expectations, at the beginning of next year, the new stores will be aligned within PROFI standards. These new supermakets will enter the network in the most appropriate formats for our clients from Prahova and Dambovita, bringing them closer to our interesting promotions and good-quality products."

A Profi store consists of over 5,000 food and non-food products at any given time. Musial believes that his firm's consistency makes them the supermarket of choice for consumers across the country: "Proximity, good promotions and particularly a consistent every-day-low-prices policy make the Profi stores count as one of the first options for the client with



PROJECT SNAPSHOT: THE MONACO

Profi's latest development is its first concept store. Internally known as the Monaco, it is regarded as a significant leap forward in the Profi evolution and also a test ground for assortment, services, internal communication, design, working processes, price policy, employees' conditions and uniforms. Offering a welcoming ambiance and relaxing colours, the store is organised by areas that respond to the purchasing missions taken into account by Profi: convenience, proximity and top-up. In response to the convenience mission, which targets the buyer who stops in a hurry on the way to and from work, a fiiGO area has been introduced at the new store.

"A healthy sheep marks this area which includes a module with prepackaged products and goods baked in the store, but also a coffee corner area with hot dogs, grills, sandwiches, pizza, fresh fruit, coffee, cakes and ice cream produced on site," explains Musial. "Of course, the new store also responds to proximity and top-up missions through the usual areas of bread, dairy, eggs, snacks, sweets, oil, preserves, wine and beer, detergents, home care products, vegetables and fruits, as well as with an assisted display case where meat and butchery products are put up for sale."





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PROFI

a low-to average income, a category that describes a vast majority of people in Romania."

However, despite all its success, the impact of COVID-19 added a different proposition to the usual day-to-day challenges that Profi faces.

"It's certainly been hard for us," admits Musial. "Days before the pandemic was officially recognised, we organised a task force to initiate emergency preparations with two priorities in mind: to protect clients and employees alike, and to keep the stores supplied for business as usual in order to prevent any outburst of panic. No-one had previously experienced such a situation; it was all unprecedented."

As stocks of masks became unavailable, Profi produced its own plastic protective visors. These were rolled out firstly for employees, and then donated to hospitals and police departments at the frontline of the COVID-19 battle. Profi also introduced protective gloves and plastic separators at the cash register in order to prevent the spread of the virus. These implementations cost Profi over \notin 4 million during the first two months alone.

"It was money that no-one ever dreamed of in terms of budgeting," Musial explains. "In order to ensure that no store or warehouse closed down if employees became infected with the virus, 12-hour shifts were organised so that people could work on a day on/ day off basis, with the stores preventively disinfected between shifts. These changes continue to be in operation at Profi today."



PROJECT SNAPSHOT: PROFI AGENTS

Musial points to another successful test project which allowed agents to have their own business under the Profi brand with only a minimum investment.

"Agents can enjoy a greater freedom of action than that of a regular Profi store manager, a wider choice of management options and the possibility to choose their own staff," he explains. "While continuing to rely on the Profi infrastructure, agents can increase store profitability and their own revenue by adapting their stores to local conditions, by ordering assortment slightly different than the standard. Results so far encourage us to consider increasing fast the number of agent stores."

JACOBS DOUWE EGBERTS

For more than 265 years, we have been inspired by the belief that it's amazing what can happen over a cup of coffee. Today our coffee & tea portfolio is available in over 100 countries around the world through iconic household brands including Jacobs, Tassimo, L'OR, Moccona, Senseo, Douwe Egberts, TiÓra, Super, Kenco, Pilao & Gevalia. We are driven by the vision that everyone deserves the coffee they love.

In Romania, JACOBS DOUWE EGBERTS is the leading coffee company in the retail market (based on Nielsen retail data from 2019), driving innovation and value creation through loved and appreciated coffee brands like Jacobs, Tassimo and L'OR.

Our purpose is to provide high quality coffee to Romanian consumers every day, while also addressing new ways of coffee consumption and offering elevated experiences.

Jacobs is the number one coffee brand in Romania in 2019. Alongside core Jacobs Kronung portfolio, we premiumize coffee experiences with Jacobs Selection range, we bring coffee shop quality at home with Jacobs Barista Editions, and more recently launched Jacobs capsules, compatible with Nespresso* machines.

We also offer blended for pleasure coffee experiences through L'OR and cover the affordable coffee segment through Nova Brasilia.

JDE Romania is a trusted and committed business partner for major retailers but also local distributors and Romanian retail shops across the country. Together, we work to create value for the Romanian coffee consumers and shoppers and offer a coffee for every cup.

*Third Party trademark not affiliated with Jacobs Douwe Egberts.

www.jacobsdouweegberts.com



THE MAGIC AROMA

NO.1 COFFEE BRAND IN ROMANIA*



*According to GfK Romania volume data for in-home consumption, in July 2019 – June 2020 period. Consumer panel type of research by GfK Romania, on a gross sample of 3000 households, representative on national level.



With Profi's stores covering the whole of Romania, Musial admits always keeping them supplied with fresh products can be particularly challenging.

"We address this issue with a network of our own warehouses located in a way that optimises routes for the approximately 600 trucks that carry goods to our stores on a daily basis," he explains.

"We encourage local suppliers to join us in offering shoppers more products with the local taste and flavours they prefer, while shorter routes to our warehouses is an incentive suppliers do appreciate. The picture is completed by a vast network of hubs scattered around the country, where products are transferred from large trucks to smaller ones that can easily access stores in crowded localities.

"In addition to that, last month we opened our first warehouse with below zero capabilities so now a larger number of frozen products can be added to our assortment. Gradually, all of our warehouses will have such capabilities."

However, during the pandemic, the demand for some products increased rapidly overnight. With consumers worried about items such as bread going out of stock, Musial confirms it was one of the hardest tasks to keep their stores fully stocked at all times.

"Wheat flour sales went up fivefold within days and our usual suppliers couldn't produce the required amounts of flour so we had to start looking abroad for extra quantities,"

Strauss Romania

Sharing our global passion for coffee with our partners

Strauss Coffee is part of Strauss Group, an international corporation with a portfolio of four companies 14.000 employee worldwide and operations in more than 20 countries.

Strauss Coffee is a pure play coffee company, among the top 10 coffee companies in the world. Strauss Coffee operates in 10 different countries around the world, has over 16 brands and over 6,000 employees.

Every one of our brands has its own heritage and distinctive local flavor. It is not surprising, therefore, that loyal consumers around the world have made our local Strauss Coffee brands leaders in their segments. Each brand has grown from a different coffeemaking tradition. Due to our unique approach, each brand remains locally authentic with its own distinctive flavor.

Strauss Coffee entered in Romania in 1994 as a green field operation; the initial activity included establishing a modern coffee factory, setting up the head office in Bucharest and building a national sales and distribution operation with export operations in the region.

Today, in Romania, we employee more than 250 employees and have significant presence operating in retail, away-from-home (AFH) & E-commerce channels leveraging our brands power portfolio: Doncafe, Amigo, Fort, Totti, Beanz.

Our collaboration with Profi, one of the most dynamic retailers on the Romanian market, has a extensive history along with our support for their purpose to modernize retail environment, to upgrade consumers experience or to sustain noble social causes. Their success is the main base for our success and for that we are thankful and challenged in the same time.

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PROFI





explains Musial. "In the meantime, transporters weren't initially allowed to cross international borders so new suppliers and new routes had to be found. However, with a considerable effort, we succeeded in keeping the stores supplied and after a couple of days people realised they could just continue shopping as usual and didn't need to panic."

Sustainability is another key pillar to Profi's strategy.

The organisation has LED lights to illuminate stores, warehouses, offices and exterior alleys while store-top solar panels and other proactive measures contribute to a more efficient use of the network's resources and have helped cut the electricity bill by 13 percent in 2019 versus the previous year.

The use of natural gas dropped by 25 percent, the cost of heating fell 34 percent and the water consumption was down by a considerable 56 percent.

"All in all, we curbed our greenhouse gas emissions by 13 percent," explains Musial. "Besides, we recycle 94 percent of the waste generated by the network and capitalise on 95 percent of all the used packaging, while the amount of food waste decreased by 17 percent."

Over the past 10 years, Profi has also invested millions of euros in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities with a particular focus on children.

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Top: Profi Superbrand 2019. Above: Profi - The best development strategy in retail award 2017

"WE WANT TO GROW THE NETWORK TO MORE THAN 2,000 STORES IN THE NEAR FUTURE. MEANWHILE, THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF OLD STORES THAT NEED FULL OR PARTIAL REFITTING FOR ALIGNMENT TO CURRENT STANDARDS"

Initially, the programmes were conducted by Profi alone, and donated hundreds of laptops to schools in the communities around its stores. However, as the network expanded, Profi started to enlarge both the geographical area and the domains of action by becoming associated with NGOs with a proven track record of success in supporting health, culture, education, sports and social causes.

Looking to the future, Musial is optimistic about what the next few years could hold for his organisation and is keen to put a challenging 2020 behind him.

"We have lots that we want to achieve," he notes. "We want to grow the network to more than 2,000 stores in the near future. Meanwhile, there are hundreds of old stores that need full or partial refitting for alignment to current standards." However, Musial affirms that despite challenging circumstances, his team have worked together well.

RFTAIL

"This year has been hard for us all," he says. "But, I have to merit our great team for getting through all the difficulties and managing the expansion and renewal of the network as planned. This year, we worked out our strategy for the next four years and with an important new vision in almost every department, 2021 is the first year of changing Profi for the even better."



PROFI contact@profi.ro www.profi.ro

Passionate about Coffee

In a country that is crazy about coffee, we chat with Gudmundur Halldorsson, CEO at Te & Kaffi, to examine what drives his organisation forward

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Josh Hyland

n a country as glacial as Iceland, keeping warm is essential. So, it is no wonder the people of Iceland are passionate about coffee.

In fact, Iceland takes its coffee so seriously that the country hosts competitions which place baristas and roasters against the other in a bid to find the country's highest quality brew.

Every year, the average Icelander consumes around nine kilograms of coffee beans which makes the country the world's third largest coffee consumers per capita after Finland (in first place) and Norway. In its capital city of Reykjavik, there isn't one corporate coffee chain in sight, instead Te & Kaffi is the major player amongst smaller, independent coffee shops scattered across the city.

Te & Kaffi is a family-owned coffee roastery and considered one of the leading coffee industry players in Iceland. From humble beginnings operating as a small tea shop in Reykjavik, Te & Kaffi has grown to become a major coffee brand in Iceland and possesses a 27 percent market share in supermarkets, nine coffeehouses in Reykjavik and has a partnership with well-established wholesale company working within the B2B market.

Initially founded in 1984 by Sigmundur Dýrfjörð and Berglind Guðbrandsdóttir, who is still the owner of the company, Te & Kaffi's primary focus is on coffee production and currently employs more than 100 people across nine outlets, aside from production and offices.

Guðmundur Halldórsson is the CEO at Te & Kaffi. Originally joining in 2004, he worked as a Salesman and a Sales Manager until he stepped into his current role as CEO in 2013. Having been with the organisation a number of years, Halldórsson acknowledges how challenging 2020 was but highlights how well Te & Kaffi overcame such difficult challenges.



100

Guðmundur Halldórsson, CEO, Te & Kaffi

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TE & KAFFI

BREAKING INTO NORTH AMERICA OR NORTH AMERICAN EXPANSION

In January 2020, Te & Kaffi announced that it was introducing its Icelandic taste of its cold brew to North America through Iceland's dairy product Skyr.

Having teamed with Icelandic Provisions, the firm is now primed to give America a sample of their cold brew in a cold-brew-flavoured Skyr. According to Halldór Guðmundsson, Managing Director at Te & Kaffi, it was essential to maintain their distinctive roasting profiles.

"It was important to us to provide a great-tasting product for this coffee-infused Skyr that is clean on the palate and represents its roasting profiles. Each small batch of coffee goes through a concentration process using Icelandic water and is submerged in the cold water for at least 24 hours, giving it a clean and unique taste."

Skyr, a thick cultured dairy product similar to yogurt, has become increasingly popular in the United States and now coffee and Skyr lovers alike can find Skyr flavoured with Te & Kaffi's cold brew across the US, exclusively at Whole Foods for the first three months and then throughout North America.

"The industry has been different this year because of COVID-19," says Halldórsson. "There's been difficult challenges but at the same time, it has also provided a lot of opportunities.

"This year has been about keeping your head above water from day to day but also keeping an eye on how the pandemic can create business opportunities for the future. A wise



person once said: 'Bad companies are destroyed by a crisis, good companies survive them, but great companies are improved by them.' We intend to be a great company."

Coffee production is an essential part of Te & Kaffi's operations. With the increased awareness of consumers about high-quality coffee, the organisation's opportunities have scaled dramatically over the years. Te & Kaffi's coffee shops provide a range of brewing methods as well as seasonal beverages. Following the introduction of new roasting technology, the quality of the organisation's coffee is fundamentally better. The organisation has complete control over how its ingredients taste in all its beverages, while its units is a hub of innovation.



BRAMBATI S.P.A.

oday, among our customers there are many leading Companies of the food industry: confectionery, biscuit, bakery, pasta, baby food, coffee and similar. We can say, from experience, that the key word for this segment is "unique": each company tends to develop exclusive recipes, differentiate themselves from the competition, to create products with "unique personality". This extreme differentiation marked the importance of another word, that is customization. The ability to "customize", that means to personalize the systems based on the needs of each individual customer, has become a strategic element for the success of the equipment manufacturers.

The Brambati Group was among the first in Europe to take advantage of these needs and to develop procedures for engineering and manufacturing at high flexibility. An ongoing challenge, because, today, Brambati exports 70% of its production, and among our customers there are the most prestigious Italian and multinational companies in the coffee, food & beverage industry. It is not a coincidence that we often hear talking about us, as one of the "Italian excellence".

This result was achieved in a very competitive developed area, which requires the highest technical level and where is very strong the demand for "unique" turnkey equipments. Thanking to our flexibility, the company has been brought to operate all over the world, from Latin America to the countries of Eastern Europe, Africa, Far and Middle East and Oceania. The high level of know-how is still the winning move, just because it allows to arrive earlier and to adapt more effectively to the specific requirements. Differently from many of our competitors that offer catalogs with pre-designed models to choose from, we design and produce "ad hoc". It is possible to understand this with a very simple example: it is the similar difference that there is between commercial dress and a tailor made dress, tailored and made in a specific way.

Besides all the above, in addition to the traditional level of automation, we developed an interface (industry 4.0 protocol), able to receive production orders, current stocks and further data from other sources, such as ERP, SAP, MES, etc. and deliver these data to the different areas of the plant and machines: in this way, the data entry request from the operator is minimized and errors are reduced.

The system collects the real time data from the production and stores them in a database: these data are made available to any kind of external system, to track in real time production planning, machines status, production reports or KPI.

The system is very flexible and able to fit any request of customisation: it is possible to connect it to the most widespread systems actually present on the market. It is possible to apply this solution to existing business accounting systems.

TE & KAFFI

Despite the success the organisation has achieved in recent years, Halldórsson is adamant he doesn't want to get carried away and remains focused on future achievements.

"It's very important not to rest on your laurels," he explains. "You constantly need to think ahead and see how the market needs are changing. Innovation and introducing new products have been the cornerstone of our success, especially during the last few years."

These days, companies place significant value on adopting a greener approach into operations. In the case of Te & Kaffi, the organisation is switching from propane gas to the use of cozane gas for energy source for its coffee roastery which is 100% renewable energy.

Subsequently, Halldórsson recognises how vital a more sustainable future is - not just for Te & Kaffi but for lceland and beyond.

"Almost all electricity in Iceland is produced using renewable energy sources," he says. "We use an afterburner which is a pollution control device that allows roasters to comply with environmental regulations and to reduce gases efficiently.

"Also, we're investing in a range of packaging options designed



to meet the needs of the current environmental issues whilst promoting a truly circular economy. For example, our newly launched Nespresso compatible capsules are made from plant starch and leave nothing but great taste."

Back in 2017, the organisation decided to carbon offset all its direct emisisons by the end of 2018. At the time, emissions measured at 504 tonnes, of which 90 percent lay in the roasting of coffee beans where cozane gas is used.

"It's a pleasure to announce we're already in the process of replacing cozane gas with environmentally friendly gas and using methane gas to roast our coffee from the beginning of 2021," Halldórsson adds.

At the start of 2020, Te & Kaffi set a target of becoming even more environmentally friendly. As such, it was decided that the firm would measure its carbon footprint every two years. In order to bring this vision to fruition, a team was assembled to manage reducing food











for coffee shops, roasting houses, gourmet stores and small pod and capsule producers. Up to 100 kg/h in compact size.

ang

waste - replacing packaging with environmentally friendly alternatives began the road to carbon offsetting.

Over the past few months, the organisation has begun to use biodegradable takeaway cups and lids which can be thrown in organic waste to break down in place of the waste produced by single-use plastic.

Indeed, during the course of 2021, all of Te & Kaffi's coffee on the grocery market will make use of environmentally friendly packaging, followed by B2B packaging and micro roast coffee and tea packaging too.

"It's our goal to continue the journey to making the company as environmentally friendly as possible and we hope that employees will take an active part in that journey," affirms Halldórsson.

Now with over 100 employees across its units, Halldórsson is adamant that staff are the key ingredient and are at the heart of operations. "Staff are the most important part of our success," he explains. "One of our core values is knowledge, and we take that very seriously. We have good training programmes in place on all levels.

"Having great baristas in the coffee shops is essential to the customer experience. We keep encouraging the whole team and tell them what a great job they are doing. We try to keep things light and personal. Staff morale is always very good and our internal studies show us that."

Establishing and maintaining a positive working relationship with partners is essential to long-term success and growth. In order to make this possible, Halldórsson believes that close collaboration with vendors is vital to sustained growth.

"Having great partnerships is very important," he tells us. "We work closely with our main suppliers in raw coffee beans and state of the art suppliers in all machinery; both for the coffee shops and even more importantly for the roastery."

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With future expansion on the horizon, Te & Kaffi's 10th coffee shop will open its doors in the coming months which Halldórsson believes will bring even more opportunities.

"We expect it to have massive potential," he explains, ending on an optimistic note. "We're also thinking about exporting opportunities, but time will tell whether we will pursue that. We have the capabilities to produce coffee for exporting but need to build a strategy to move forward through suitable partners and a product portfolio." ©

TE & KAFFI Tel: +354 5551910 teogkaffi@teogkaffi.is www.teogkaffi.is

Change Attention of the technology behind provided to technology behind provided to the technolo

Project Manager: Nicolas Kernan

ENERGY & UTILITIES



ur global climate is changing. For millennia, atmospheric carbon dioxide had remained below 300 parts per million, yet today that key indicator exceeds 400. And it is rising.

The affects are plain to see. Greenland lost 279 billion tonnes of ice a year between 1993 and 2019; global sea levels have risen eight inches in the past 100 years; the average surface temperature of the earth has increased by 1.14 degrees Celsius since the late 19th century; and the six warmest years on record have taken place since 2014.

Scientists claim that climate change could be irreversible by 2030, meaning companies and countries alike must act now. And, indeed, they are. From a political perspective, the European Union set tougher emission reduction targets at the end of 2020, outlined in a new 2030 Climate Target Plan. EU heads of states agreed on a 55 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 – an ambition that calls for drastic change across the continent.

PROTECTING THE FUTURE



IDDI

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LOGSTOR

In the corporate world, many companies like Danish energy solutions from LOGSTOR are similarly aligning their own efforts with these goals.

An organisation specialising in district heating solutions, LOGSTOR has helped to revolutionise the energy sector globally with its transformational, cutting-edge, energy-efficient pre-insulated pipe systems.



"THE CONTINUOUS AND GROWING PAN-EUROPEAN EXPANSION OF PRE-INSULTED PIPES FOR DISTRICT HEATING HAS ITS ORIGINS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S CLIMATE GOALS..."

- HENRIK BJERREGAARD, VICE PRESIDENT OF CORPORATE RELATIONS

LOGSTOR: THE BASICS

LOGSTOR is a leading supplier of pre-insulated pipe systems for the energy-efficiency transport of liquids and gases used in district heating, cooling and industrial purposes, as well as oil and gas pipelines.

LOGSTOR invented the technology behind pre-insulated pipes more than 60 years ago. It has since then supplied over 300,000 kilometres of preinsulated pipes globally.

The company is headquartered in Løgstør, Denmark, but has subsidiaries in Finland, Sweden, the UK, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Poland, Lithuania and Romania. Its network of sales agents span 20 countries.

The group's seven factories can be found in Denmark, Poland, Sweden and Finland, with additional mobile production facilities in Canada and India. It has more than 1,200 employees around the world.



"The continuous and growing pan-European expansion of pre-insulted pipes for district heating has its origins in the European Union's climate goals – reduce climate gases, increase the share of renewable energy, and increase energy efficiency," affirms Henrik Bjerregaard, the company's Vice President of Corporate Relations.

Designed to minimise heat loss, pre-insulated pipes are ideal for connecting buildings to renewable heat sources such as heat pumps, biomass and surplus heat from the industry. The reduced heat loss from these systems ensures hot water can be supplied whilst system water temperature is maintained, resulting in both staunch energy efficiency improvements and significantly lower costs.

"There are other climate benefits to this too," highlights Bjerregaard.

"The more expansive the use of preinsulated pipes in district heating systems, the lower the reliance on imported and domestic fossil fuels for domestic heating.

"Because of this, the EU has allocated some of its recovery fund towards district heating systems with sustainable pre-insulated pipes. State aid rules can be easily fulfilled in this way, as they are both work towards the EU's climate goals and act as a strong job creator locally."

VALUE-DRIVEN VISIONARY

LOGSTOR's role as a leading supplier of pre-insulated pipe systems is, therefore, helping to enhance environmental progress. Yet this is not the only way in which LOGSTOR contributes, the company abiding by equally environmentally conscious principles and values internally.







igh quality, safety and sustainability; the like-minded qualities that Seal For Life and LOGSTOR share in the decades they have worked together. This collaboration is founded on reliability of service, supply, goods, and a healthy cooperation for improvements.

In a market set to grow approximately 4% year on year over the next 5 years, protection of vital infrastructure for District Heating and Cooling (DHC) is essential to support its growth.

Rising urban energy needs creating demands in both residential and commercial sectors, changing climate conditions, the move to increase the use of renewable energy across the globe and the reorganization plans for DHC are some of the many challenges to be met.

Seal For Life Industries (SFL) is a solutions provider for the jointing and sealing technology used in DHC insulated pipe systems; protecting the valuable assets such critical infrastructure represents.

The primary brand is Covalence®: A product range comprising sealing heat-shrink sleeves (wrap-around and tubular), primary joint foam seal, end caps, foaming/venting hole closure and sealant adhesive strips.

Our proprietary polymer technologies ensure SFL Covalence® remains the leader in heat shrink solutions. The product backing layer is made from crosslinked high-density polyethylene and excels in robustness, shrink force and lifelong elasticity.

Being involved since the development days of DHC has allowed SFL to create tailor made sealing solutions which master the perfect match of sealing mastic and anchoring hotmelt adhesives, both specifically designed for the particular demands of this industry.

Covalence® solutions excel with their ease of insulation, robustness in the field, proven performance, and long term asset protection. As long-term (co-developing) key partner to LOGSTOR, SFL with its Covalence® brand solutions helps upgrade LOGSTOR's full pipe system offering.

Within the many LOGSTOR joint connection systems, either single-sealed or double-sealed, depending the joint system; Covalence S1113 & S1135* high temperature resistant adhesives act as peripheral bond & seal. Covalence RFS* low-heat fast-shrink patchless sleeve serves as a primary seal directly onto the insulation foam. Covalence tubular EasySeal TPSM-PE* with its special sealant and field packaging and Covalence wrap-around DualSeal RJS-E* with its unique concept of separate pure mastic and hotmelt adhesive zones, both exhibit optimum single and double sealing of LOGSTOR's joint casing ends or entire joint areas.

Whenever end sealing is needed (venting/draining valve arrangements, house entries, etc.), LOGSTOR fully trusts in tubular Covalence DHEC® and wraparound Covalence CCS-DHEC® water stop heatshrinkable end-caps, excelling by their flexibility, split resistance and safe longevity.

All Covalence® parts are fully compliant with the stringent EN489-1:2019 norm requirements.

A company with a deep history of innovation in the market leading technologies that we represent, Seal For Life Industries is the leading global provider of protective coating and sealing solutions for infrastructure markets. With a history of more than 60 years and a global reach of more than 80 countries we are committed to bringing the very best range of products to our customers.



Heat Shrinkable Technology

For more information please contact Laura Hall, Marketing and Communications Manager at SFL. Laura.hall@sealforlife.com www.sealforlife.com

LOGSTOR



"WE ALSO HAVE A HIGH FOCUS ON SOCIAL CONDITIONS, WHICH GOES BEYOND ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE AMBITIONS"

- MICHAEL HEEAGER NYSTRUP, VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES EXCELLENCE



As a manufacturer, its operations require heavy machinery that consume a lot of energy. Because of this, the company continually works to optimise its own efficiency and reduce its carbon footprint.

In a recent audit, the firm identified key risk areas as both its high-energy consumption and polyethylene (HDPE) pallet pollution. To rectify, it pursued numerous initiatives in 2019, optimising projects to reduce foam components and HDPE material consumption, reducing waste and eliminating HDPE pallets pollution during deliveries.

The outcome of these efforts? LOGSTOR saw a five percent reduction in its energy usage, reduced waste by 20 percent and met foam and granulates components reduction targets.

"We also have a high focus on

social conditions, which goes beyond environmental and climate ambitions," states Michael Heeager Nystrup, the company's Vice President of Sales Excellence, pointing to its human rights, anti-bribery and social and working conditions policies.

"These areas have become important focus points when planning and implementing our business strategies."

Corporate governance is not the only way in which the company excels, however. Nystrup also points to the holistic nature of LOGSTOR's offering, citing it as a key differentiator.

"LOGSTOR offers products with best-in-class insulation properties, optimum system design, easy installation and the most advanced service offerings," he adds. "Our strong performance comes from the

kuraray

Kuraray consists of more than 100 companies, employing about 11,115 people around the world. The group is committed to developing new fields of business, with focus on pioneering technologies that improve the environment and enhance the quality of life throughout the world.

Through intensive research and development Kuraray succeeded in building up extensive expertise and technological strength in the fields of polymer chemistry, synthetic chemistry and chemical engineering, with production sites in Japan, the USA, Europe and Singapore. As a leader in high gas barrier technology and development, Kuraray established fully owned subsidiary EVAL Europe N.V. in Antwerp, Belgium for the production and sales of its EVAL[™] EVOH resin.

Kuraray has been manufacturing and marketing ethylene vinyl-alcohol copolymers (EVOH) under the name EVAL[™] since 1972. EVAL[™] EVOH adds valuable function to everyday life applications. In packaging, it preserves the flavor and quality of food for an extended period, thus reducing the amount of food waste and the carbon footprint. For cars, it enables the production of lighter fuel tanks with very low evaporative emissions. Adding a thin EVAL[™] EVOH laver to pre-insulated pipe systems extends their insulation efficiency and service life, significantly reducing energy loss and operating costs of the overall network

www.evalevoh.com

EVAL Europe and LOGSTOR boost insulation efficiency of pre-insulated pipe systems

The use of pre-insulated pipe systems is widespread in district energy networks and other industrial applications, such as oil and gas pipelines. But there's a problem: the efficiency of the insulating polyurethane (PUR) foam around the pipe decreases over time. The resulting energy losses have a negative impact on operational costs and the environment. That's something both LOGSTOR and EVAL Europe, producer of EVAL[™] EVOH resin, wanted to fix.



What's the issue with pre-insulated pipes?

PUR foam combines good mechanical and structural properties with very low thermal conductivity (lambda). Insulation foam must withstand the high temperatures inside a service pipe for a minimum of 30 years and often longer. However, the insulation efficiency of these pre-insulated pipe systems is reduced over time by the diffusion of air (nitrogen, oxygen) into the foam cells. Air has a higher lambda than the cell gases (cyclopentane, carbon dioxide), so the lambda of the pre-insulated pipe system gradually increases. This impairs the efficiency of the insulation, resulting in ever-higher energy losses.

"A thin layer of EVAL™ EVOH maintains the insulation efficiency of LOGSTOR's FlextraPipe throughout its lifetime, reducing operating costs significantly."

Cynthia Teniers, Business Development Manager EVAL Europe

Why did LOGSTOR partner with EVAL Europe?

EVAL Europe/Kuraray and LOGSTOR partnered to develop a flexible plastic pipe, a first in preinsulated piping, in 2010. We wanted to add a high-barrier EVAL[™] EVOH layer to the outer pipe casing to prevent air diffusion into the PUR foam. EVAL[™] is a random copolymer of ethylene and vinyl alcohol (EVOH).

Does the EVAL™ EVOH layer improve insulation efficiency?

Accelerated ageing studies (based on an EN 253 lambda test and cell gas analysis) show that an EVAL™ barrier layer in LOGSTOR's FlextraPipe casing pipe prevents the diffusion of oxygen and nitrogen into the foam cells, maintaining the original cyclopentane and carbon dioxide gas atmosphere. This means the insulation efficiency of LOGSTOR's FlextraPipe is maintained throughout its lifetime, significantly reducing the operating costs of the overall network.

It shows that by working together closely and combining our expertise we can find solutions to important issues for the industry.



- A. Service pipe made of PEXa for heating purposes
- B. Polyurethane (PUR) foam insulation
- C. Corrugated outer casing of high density polyethylene (HDPE) with built-in diffusion barrier (EVAL™ EVOH). Outer casing and foam insulation are bonded together



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technical know-how of our people, the high quality of our products and services and continuous innovation."

PROVEN BY PROJECTS

Such performance is reflected in a plethora of the organisation's projects.

In Lund, Sweden, LOGSTOR has helped to deliver the world's largest low temperature districting heating network, utilising vast amounts of surplus low temperature heat made available from the cooling of MAX IV – the largest research facility focussed on synchrotron radiation globally.

Developed in collaboration with Lund University and Kraftringen and backed by funding from the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, the project recovers excess heat energy generated from heat pumps used to cool MAX IV, then transferring it to a low temperature district heating system that is used to heat part of the city. The result is lower heating production costs and reduced heat losses.

The Henningsdorf project in Germany is similarly impressive. A city that aims to be carbon neutral by 2025, part of this goal is set to be realised by achieving 100 percent renewable district heating.

Assisting Henningsdorf in this pursuit, LOGSTOR is integrating waste heat energy from local steelworks, large solar thermal collector fields and wind turbines into the district heating network. Biomass combined heat and power plants already contribute roughly 50 percent of the annual heat load necessary, but LOGSTOR's additional efforts should move the needle significantly closer towards the 100 percent target.

In the Danish firm's home country, meanwhile, it is delivering the largest district heating network made with recycled plastic casing in the world.

Here, LOGSTOR is laying 30 kilometres of piping for Aalborg Forsyning, where the outer casing

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LOGSTOR



Vexve Oy

Vexve is the globally leading supplier of valve solutions for district energy. We offer our customers a wide range of products and services specifically designed for district heating and cooling applications. Our valves together with our control and monitoring solutions are used in district energy networks, power plants, and heating and cooling systems around the world.

Our customers and partners know us for high quality, fast deliveries, and superior customer service. Together with LOGSTOR, we can provide a full portfolio of reliable and innovative underground valve solutions, combined with years of technical expertise.



"BY WORKING CLOSELY WITH OUR SUPPLIERS, WE LESSEN OUR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT AND POSITION OURSELVES FOR STRONG GROWTH"

- EWA CIEŚLIK, SUPPLY DIRECTOR

is made from 100 percent recycled plastic. In total, 100 tonnes of recycled material will be used, the project expected to reduce annual CO2 production by 160 tonnes upon completion.

POWERED BY PARTNERS

Critical to the success of such ground breaking projects are LOGSTOR's suppliers, LOGTOR's Supply Director Ewa Cieślik paying tribute to both these partners and the continual efforts made to ensure the company's supply chain comprehensively adheres to best practice at all stages. "Our supply base plays a vital role in achieving LOGSTOR's vision: To make global energy supply more efficient and reduce energy losses worldwide through the use of advanced insulation products, thus enhancing the environment for people in all parts of the world," she begins.

"By working closely with our suppliers, we lessen our environmental and social impact and position ourselves for strong growth. The creation of a sustainable supply chain requires many years of transformation to integrate environmentally and financially viable practices into the

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complete supply chain lifecycle, from product design and development, to material selection, manufacturing, packaging, transportation, warehousing, distribution, consumption, return and disposal."

Ensuring this chain is localised has been key, helping to keep travel and therefore excess CO2 emissions to a minimum and contributing to the company's wider social responsibility plan.

Cieślik continues: "Important to any sustainable strategy is a collaborative approach with partners regarding new and existing product development. We focus with our partners on recycled material, the circular economy, waste management, product optimisation, alternative raw materials, reduced usage of material – and, ultimately, a lower total carbon footprint."

The company demands that its suppliers uphold its own values, promoting suppliers such as Seal For Life that advocate energy-efficient





LOGSTOR

solutions, execute efficient waste management, and comply with environmental regulations.

Further, the company also analyses data provided by its main transportation partners, enabling it to identify improvement opportunities and introduce solutions that reduce the carbon footprint of its transit activities.

"Thanks to our dedicated supply partners who are focused on sustainability, we all are able to make a real change and lower total carbon footprint," Cieślik reiterates.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Looking ahead, beyond this stream of project successes and supply chain achievements, LOGSTOR has

LEADERSHIP FOCUS

KIM CHRISTENSEN, CEO

Kim Christensen has a background in the energy sector spanning 30 years. Much of his career has focussed on sustainability and energy efficiency, having previously worked for global players including Danfoss where he acted as the organisation's President for eight years.

He first became a member of the LOGSTOR Board of Directors in 2014, going on to become the company's CEO as of October 1, 2017.

"It's always been a passion for me to work with energy systems, particularly concerning the transformation away from fossil fuels," he states. "IT'S ALWAYS BEEN A PASSION FOR ME TO WORK WITH ENERGY SYSTEMS, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING THE TRANSFORMATION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS"

– KIM CHRISTENSEN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

numerous additional ambitions for 2021.

The organisation plans to continue using recycled materials. "We want to continue to supply the best products with the best insulation properties, but we recognise we can go beyond that to achieve simultaneous sustainability and recycling goals," says CEO Kim Christensen.

Digitalisation is also firmly at the forefront of LOGSTOR's mind, with new technologies offering the company the potential to monitor performance in relation to flow rates, pressure, temperature and ensuring the right amounts of water are circulated to homes.

"This industry is not currently well-digitalised," the CEO reveals. "It's a very tangible, practical, hardware-based industry where you connect the energy production with the energy consumption. That's the transmission lines, the distribution and the last mileage for the consumers.





"However, digitalisation can unlock great potential by allowing us to read important data. In Europe today, an average of 20 percent of all heat that is produced never reaches consumers. Not only is this costly, as the consumer pays for it, but more importantly the climate pays for it with the immense amount of CO2 that is completed wasted.

"By having both better insulation properties and a better way to control the systems, using advanced algorithms, we can make sure that system performance is substantially improved."

Geographic expansion is another area the company is targeting.

While uptake of district heating revisions has been welcomed in the Nordic countries, Central Europe has been less eager to acquire the benefits of such systems.

These plans to broaden LOGSTOR's reach are not simply motivated by sales opportunities, however. Raising awareness and continuing the climate debate is also hot on the company's agenda moving forward, indicated by Christensen's own comments as a staunch climate advocate.

He concludes, passionately outlining this discourse: "My dream here is to make sure that we increase our penetration rate of distributing throughout Europe by of course having superior products.

"But also furthering our role in the debate with politicians, research institutes, utilities companies and consumers, to argue for and to justify why district heating is the most affordable way of achieving successful green transformation. "Having a vision doesn't solve the problem. It is the collaboration between all parties, all stakeholders here that makes things happen. We must educate people to understand energy systems – how you can integrate different elements to create the best energy equation, and each stakeholder has a role to play in this.

"We are focusing on collaboration." •

LOGST

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GULF EXTRUSIONS

Auminum Everywhere

Gulf Extrusions has enacted a number of projects which are delivering a competitive advantage to the benefit of its customers, from state-of-the-art die simulation to several environmentally beneficial initiatives

Writer: Marcus Kääpä | Project Manager: Ryan Gray

CONSTRUCTION



Lightweight and silvery-white in appearance, it is the most abundant metallic element found in the earth's crust and the most widely used nonferrous metal in the world.

The name can be credited to British chemist Sir Humphry Davy, who in 1809 created an iron-aluminium alloy by electrolysing fused aluminium oxide before crude aluminium (1825) and aluminium powder (1827) were discovered respectively in Denmark and Germany. Required in all shapes and sizes, the production of aluminium is more complex than one may initially think.

Christian Witsch is the CEO of Dubai-based aluminium extrusion company Gulf Extrusions, an Emeriti mainstay since its foundation all the way back in 1976.

"I gradually got more involved in machine building and architectural solutions and was becoming a part of the solution," Witsch recalls. "From thinking at the beginning that it was a simple, routine process, my viewpoint changed completely and drastically - you learn a lot from aluminium extrusion.

"You master complex shapes and complex requirements. For example, you have to manage between decorative requirements to make the products look beautiful and at the same time accomplish tighter tolerance. It is a huge field full of learning, optimising and engagement, and you are developing thousands of new solutions per year." Today, Witsch leads a dynamic and increasingly extensive series of aluminium extrusion operations.

For instance, Gulf Extrusions recently acquired Abu Dhabi-based firm TALEX, which has brought mainstream activities into the emirate and delivered multiple strategic advantages. Not only is the newly acquired, state-of-the-art plant located in the Khalifa Industrial Zone (KIZAD) alongside key supplier EGA, it is ideally situated to export from KIZAD Port to the rest of the world, its network bolstered by warehouses in the UK, Netherlands and Saudi Arabia.

Its work can be seen globally, especially on prestigious regional hallmarks.

"We are very proud of having supplied the aluminium extrusions which were used to install the LED screen of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai. We did that, in the space of a month which is a very short period of time for that kind of project," Witsch comments.

ABOUT GULF EXTRUSIONS

Founded in 1976, Gulf Extrusions is a member of the Al Ghurair Group of Companies.

The company extrudes aluminium profiles for multiple industry applications such as architectural, industrial, automotive, transportation, aerospace, electrical bus bars, tents, and much more.

Gulf Extrusions' presence and resources are formidable. For example, it has seven presses (five in Dubai and two in Abu Dhabi), one of which is the largest in the entire region, as well as 750-plus highly skilled workers who annually produce around 50,000 tonnes of extruded aluminium that includes 31,500 tonnes of powder coating finishing and 15,000 tonnes of anodising finishing. Gulf Extrusions also has a library of more than 40,000 profile designs.

Witsch adds: "We take pride in our distinctive capability to produce high quality profiles well supported by our own state-of-the-art laboratories for chemical, microstructure, mechanical, metallographic, composition and optical analysis – which is internationally acknowledged.

"Gulf Extrusions has amazing capabilities to realise the most complex solutions in an efficient way. We are also a continuous leader in terms of service and quality. We have the capability to realise demanding and complex products which differentiates us from the market."



The world's tallest building - the Burj Khalifa - made using Jotun Powder Coatings UAE





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GULF EXTRUSIONS





Q: HOW IMPORTANT ARE PARTNER AND SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS TO THE SUCCESS OF YOUR BUSINESS?

CHRISTIAN WITSCH: "All our suppliers are invaluable. We work in close cooperation with many suppliers to deliver top class quality and services. For example, we work with the largest extrusion billet supplier in the world, EGA, that delivers us top quality raw material (billets) on time and in both locations – Dubai, and Abu Dhabi." This is one of many local examples, the CEO also expressing pride in the aluminium stars the firm produced for Abu Dhabi's Louvre Museum. In the automotive sphere, the company's specialist fabrication plant supply parts to global supply chains with products being built into automotive car bodies for companies including Jaguar, Range Rover, Jeep, and BMW.

BECOMING A SMARTER, GREENER ENTERPRISE

And Gulf Extrusions continues to pioneer and innovate.

For example, a key priority for 2021 is the upgrade of its Building System, a move which will enable the firm to deliver higher spec projects and better serve customers.

Alufinish

Established in 1972, Alufinish today stands as a leading producer and distributor of products for the surface treatment of metals.

The company started out specialising in aluminium, its anodic oxidation being the focus of its early activities. Over the course of the following 45-plus years, a large number of products for the surface refining of other metals became part of the Alufinish portfolio.

One constant throughout the decades has been the firm's dedication to customer service.

It pays special attention to ensuring the optimum balance between young and experienced recruits, with competent experts in all fields on hand to fulfil client needs.

Its major product and service lines include:

- Aluminium: The anodic oxidation as well as special anti-corrosion procedures prior to coating offer a variety of attractive design possibilities and guarantee an ideal adhesion and a lasting corrosion protection.
- Iron and steel: Phosphating is still considered to be the classic process for the pretreatment of iron and steel surfaces prior to coating. Apart from this corrosion protection procedure, the company also offers various cleaning systems and passivating agents which serve to improve the protective effect on iron and steel.
- Zinc: The process of hot dip galvanizing provides a complete and long-year lasting corrosion protection. For an optimal development of this, suitable pretreatment is required prior to the galvanizing process.
- **Coil refinement:** Alufinish offers the necessary alternatives for aluminium-surfaces as well.





Generation and vertrauen-build on trust

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Every surface has its own structure !

Rely on the right solution for the chemical surface refinement of metals.

Since 1972 we have been successfully dealing with development, production and distribution of chemical products and processes for surface refinement of metals.

Alufinish - a partner you can rely on

• Coating of aluminum, steel and zinc

• Anodizing of aluminium

No matter which pretreatment process is the most suitable for you is, the personal consultation and the identification with your tasks are the focus of our attention. Our competent employees take care of your special requirements, with an open ear for your wishes and an eye for the essential. Innovative and environmentally friendly solutions for the high demands of your customers are important to us.

We build on trust!

GULF EXTRUSIONS

"This represents the company building on four decades of experience in serving the regional construction industry," Witsch expands.

"The new system allows Gulf Extrusions to provide a one-stopshop for clients, in that it now can offer products beyond the aluminium component of a product or structure. It provides more accountability and transparency for customers, which is really important."

Customers are also being better served thanks to an ever-evolving Extrusion Management System (EMS), a tool which enables employees to monitor the progress of any customer order and its flow sequence at different stages of the production process.

First installed in 2015, EMS is custom-made software that covers the entire lifecycle of a project, from planning through die shop, extrusion, anodising, powder coating, fabrication and packing.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

As well as the switch to LNG at TALEX, Gulf Extrusions has initiated a number of other projects designed to enhance efficiency and reduce environmental impact.

For example, it has installed solar panels on its factory roof and offers green billets by making better use of its recycling plant.

The company has also reduced the amount of wastewater and aluminium hydroxide discharge across both of its plants by 90 percent, a process which has involved further cooperation with key supplier EGA, which makes use of some of this waste.

PRODUCTS > ARCHITECTURAL > SLIDING

Frame - Tubular with a width of 100m, a wide range of frames are available to suit most of the required applications in the building codes



PRODUCTS > ARCHITECTURAL > HINGED

- Features glass 6mm to 24mm
- The system can be inward and outward opening
- The system can be used for door and window
- The system covers arch shape, louvers and swing doors





PRODUCTS > ARCHITECTURAL > CURTAIN WALL

The "Vortex 70" system consists of 70mm width structure components allowing several external appearances. It is fast to manufacture and to install. With the wide range of profile selection, the system can provide the possibility of large glass panels, maintaining the stiffness and rigidity of the curtain wall structure. Mullions can be reinforced by Aluminium or Steel tubes to enhance the free span area, making it possible for the use in high structures











"There are more specific advantages of EMS as well," Witsch explains. "For example, in relation to extrusion, it captures and saves all essential process parameters billet by billet as a recipe, and thus furnishes the best one to the operator when the same die or product is extruded next time.

"This helps to optimise the process which in turn helps us improve productivity and ensure consistent product quality, which is also an important factor for customer satisfaction."

Another critical optimisation tool is die simulation. Dies are the moulds which cut aluminium during the extrusion process, products which Gulf Extrusions receives from specialised suppliers.

Such dies are often highly complex shapes and therefore require stringent testing before being used, a process which is carried out in-house by the Gulf Extrusions die shop – a key part of the overall operation.

Installed at the start of January 2018, die simulation predicts how a die will perform. It identifies issues and is used to inform modifications and corrections, saving time and considerable sums of money to put a die through a retesting process.

More recent innovations include the anodising of a new special range of

colours. Brought in midway through 2020, customers now benefit from a wider choice of finishes, which now include copper, diamond and stainless-steel.

"We previously had a limited range of colours which covered mostly silvers and bronzes," Witsch says. "Our new colouring tank and process now means we can produce a broader range of colours, including a variety of copper finishes. Feedback from customers has been excellent regarding the new choice and consistency of finish."

Gulf Extrusions is also going green. A major breakthrough is about to be enacted at the TALEX plant in Abu Dhabi, which will become the first customer in KIZAD to switch from LPG to a direct supply of natural gas. The project was initiated at the start of 2020 and is the result of meticulous planning and attention to detail regarding safety with key partners.

"We have been working on this transition ever since we acquired TALEX," Witsch adds. "This is a stepping-stone towards improving our operational efficiency and being more competitive in both local and global markets. It is very much a joint achievement with KIZAD and has further strengthened our longstanding relationship." Such recent progress is remarkable given the current backdrop the industry is up against. Over the past year, huge disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic have taken hold all over the world, the virus continuing to pose health, social and economic challenges that will last well into 2021.

But Witsch is an optimist, his concluding remarks pointing towards a future of sustained innovation and creativity.

"Aluminium is always a developing sphere," he says. "Due to the economic impact of COVID-19, it is developing faster because in time of crises, it is important to be innovative and come up with new solutions. It is a time of the highest innovation and the fastest development, and our team has become even more creative and innovative in terms of streamlining processes."



GULF EXTRUSIONS

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Light in Design

dpa lighting consultants



CONSTRUCTION

We spoke to Richard Bolt, Partner at dpa lighting consultants, about the company at the centre of the lighting design industry

Writer: Marcus Kääpä | Project Manager: Ryan Gray

t is accurate to say that for many global industries the COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in a period of uncertainty, instability, and necessary adaptation.

The lighting industry, like several others, has experienced this past year as one of turbulence and challenges, and businesses within the sector have had to evolve and develop new methods of working to sustain their trading positions. But several companies are optimistic.

"The industry is resilient and will continue to seek and explore new and exciting opportunities to maintain the progressive momentum that has built up over many years," says Richard Bolt, Partner at dpa lighting consultants.

"The medium of 'light' both natural and manufactured is so tangible and exciting to work, that it keeps us inspired and drives us forward."

Bolt has been with the company for over 24 years and joined after gaining an Urban Design Diploma from Oxford Brookes University in 1996.

That year the firm had advertised for a Junior Lighting Designer with architectural experience, and Bolt, fresh out of higher education with a willingness to learn and excel, took the opportunity that presented itself.

"It sounded like an interesting position, so I researched the industry, not knowing anything about it, and found an instant attraction," he tells us. "My architectural degree tutor had previously advised me to try and find a specialist design discipline within construction, and I quickly realised through the good fortune of discovering dpa, and my now business partner Nick Hoggett, that the lighting industry was it.

PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

Balanstrasse Haus 24, Munich

dpa were appointed by Allgemeine SÜDBODEN to design the lighting of Haus 24, part of the expansive Neuen Balan Campus in Munich, working in close collaboration with Weickenmeier, Kunz and Partner architects.

Haus 24 is a striking and futuristic looking penthouse office space, overlooking the campus. With extensive glazed surfaces, the building presents itself against the Munich nightscape as a warmly lit, largely transparent volume.

The firm designed a lighting scheme that integrates the architectural lighting equipment within the fabric of the building as much as possible, whilst retaining obvious decorative elements to complement the modern interiors and provide a homely, warm layer of ambient illumination. The lighting scheme is controlled by a sophisticated architectural lighting control system that enables the seamless selection of scenes according to the time of day and the ambient atmospheric conditions, in close cooperation with a shading system that controls the ingress of natural light.

The end result is a superbly flexible working space that can accommodate a wide range of functions, within an ever expanding business hub in the city of Munich.



"I stumbled into the industry and have never looked back."

From the outset dpa lighting consultants became an engaging and exciting career path for Bolt to follow. The company, that was originally set up by architect Derek Phillips in 1958, currently has studios in Japan, Dubai, London, Oxfordshire, and Edinburgh, and a team of over 50 individuals who focus on the design aspects of lighting – natural and artificial.

"Our client base spans developers,

hotel and spa operators, cruise ship companies, and retailers, to architects, interior designers, landscape architects, environmental consultants, as well as private building and residential clients and colleges," Bolt explains.

Within the industry, the firm primarily sets itself apart through its collective years of experience. From its beginnings, dpa now stands with an impressive 7,000 completed projects in 80 different countries, and this provides

Creation Gulf

Creation Gulf is a leading provider of architectural light fixtures and automation solutions since 1998. We specialise in the design, supply, testing and commissioning of a variety of turnkey lighting projects and guest room management systems.

We also offer Project Management services, in which engineers are deputed to continuously monitor, maintain, retrofit and refurbish the existing lighting, lighting controls, and automation systems at various projects around the region. Our customercentric approach that lays emphasis on delivering both - premium quality and consistent value, is the core reason for our continued success.

Creation represents leading brands from across the world such as Honeywell from USA; Mode Lighting, Pharos Controls, Danlers, and Enigma Lighting from UK; Ruco from Germany; Helvar from Finland; Lamp 83 from Turkey and K-Lite Industries from India just to name just a few.

Our distinctive line up of over 500 successful projects throughout the GCC and India features high profile names across a spectrum of built environments such as a luxurious hotels, palaces, designer homes, restaurants, office complexes, retail shops, commercial and industrial establishments. Our recent projects in the UAE include Qasr AI Hosn, The Opus by Omniyat Designed by Zaha Hadid, King's College Hospital London and the UAE Pavilion; In India, Hilton Residences; In Oman, Alila Resorts; and Sephora Stores across the GCC.

Our 22 year track record with all the leading design studios and contractors in the region depicts our reliability as we are known to provide a wide range of aesthetically pleasing and technically advanced solutions to meet the needs of a diverse range of customer requirements.

There's always a solution in sight once you reach **Creation.**

www.creationgulf.com
SUSTAINABLE LIGHTING SOLUTIONS

Either wait for the Sun to rise or let the experts do it for you!



LIGHTING • AUTOMATION • PROJECT MANAGEMENT



Light up your magination



PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

The Langley, Buckinghamshire, UK

dpa were commissioned with designing the lighting for all of the public front of house and guest areas as well as all external lighting to both the buildings and landscaping. Closely working alongside the interior designers: Dennis Irvine Studio, architects: Gibberd, and landscape designers: Colvin and Moggridge, to achieve a comprehensive and coherent scheme when moving throughout the property.

The Langley Spa, a state of the art subterranean 2,500 square-metre worldclass wellness centre, features an indoor pool, thermal areas, hammams, relaxation lounges, and five expansive treatment rooms. This comes together with a specially designed fitness suite by leading personal trainer and author, Matt Roberts with technologically advanced systems and equipment.

As a brand new facility, the spa did not have the same heritage listing restrictions as the other areas of the property do, and as such a considered approach creates a calming environment that pays homage to the adjacent Palladian mansion with a contemporary twist. As a subterranean space, the artificial lighting is more crucial than ever in creating a suitable environment. The use of concealed light sources, warm colour temperatures and a sophisticated lighting control system ensures the guest experience is second to none.



the company and its individuals with an incredible level of technical ability when serving clients' needs.

The firm's various teams consistently monitor and communicate all aspects of each project environment and the lighting technology used, be it LED light sources or digital controls, and shares this information to individuals in the practice.

What this achieves is an interconnected commitment to continuous research, debate, and innovation both internally and externally from the company. Combined with the



Lucent Lighting

Over the last 30 years working closely with the professional lighting design community Lucent has established itself as one of the foremost performance architectural lighting manufacturers in the World.

With offices in London and New York and supported by a specialist distributor and agency network in over 40 countries worldwide Lucent is ideally placed to be your global lighting partner.

Traditionally Lucent specialised in the design and manufacture of architectural downlights but recently have diversified into other sectors with outdoor, spotlights, linear profiles, surface, pendant and in wall fixtures now available.

www.lucent-lighting.com

CONSTRUCTION



ENHANCING LIGHTING AT THE LANGLEY

Rako's lighting controls offer luxury, comfort and sophistication in the hospitality sector by enhancing the atmosphere and client experience with smooth fading, reducing the impact and intrusion of cumbersome switching.

rakocontrols.com

Images courtesy of **dpa** lighting consultants, Dennis Irvine Studio and James Balston Photography





PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

Mandarin Oriental Jumeira, Dubai

This collaborative project is a newly constructed, five-star resort style hotel located on Dubai's Arabian Gulf shoreline.

Over a period of four years, dpa worked in close collaboration with the client, operator and design team WASL Group, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, Architects DAR, interior designers from Design Wilkes, and Silverfox to design the lighting solutions for all public front of house areas of the hotel, internally and externally.

As part of the design brief, dpa worked closely with all parties from initial conception stage, ensuring that the lighting design was cohesive throughout the hotel, and well-integrated within the interior design and architecture.

The main lobby is very important, forming the first impression of the hotel for arriving guests and visitors. At 12 metres tall, it provided a challenge to ensure that the lighting was sufficient to adequately illuminate the space during daylight hours, with the dimming range to provide subtlety and ambience after dark. A discreet, linear, ceiling recessed system was designed and specified, allowing high output linear LED luminaires to be installed in a way which matched the rhythm of the architecture and the ceiling.

At ground level, there is a colonnade of 14 Light Trees, designed by Design Wilkes and Preciosa, with technical and aesthetic input from dpa. The 'trees' feature approximately 900 individually addressed LED light points, illuminating hand blown glass leaves. The leaves are programmed to produce dynamic ripples of light, individually varying their brightness to create differing effects. The arrangement of the colonnades leads the eye along the central water feature, and through to the landscaped, beach adjacent courtyard and lap pool.

dpa implemented a series of suspended lighting truss rigs, upon which were mounted theatrical RGBW projectors, with variable beam angles and focussing. These projectors were used to provide warm white intensity at the points where food is displayed and served, and dramatic coloured accents around the space. RGBW linear floodlights were mounted on top of the rigs to provide a coloured wash of light to the MEP service at high level, accentuating the height and industrial aesthetic of the space.



Feilo Sylvania Dubai

The project's range of work includes the development of the Al Shindagha Museum project located in the Shindagha Area in Dubai Creek where is the first area opened to World with trade-in Emirati culture. Opening the museum made Dubai Creek the venue of one of the largest open-air museums in the world.

Sylvania Beacon LED Muse has been installed throughout the Al Shindagha Museum highlighting art pieces and architectural details with soft and accurate beams of light.

XYZ AV Consultants and DPA lighting consultants have specified and installed Beacon LED Muse in this project to its full potential, delivering accurate and soft amounts of light throughout the exhibition.

Beacon LED Muse, with its unique adjustability using the soft-touch ring, enables beam control from a spot to a flood, Ideal for a museum, gallery. Super high color rendering with CRI 97 typical; with R9 value at 90. Dimmable options - Trailing Edge, On-board dimming potentiometer also help to tailor light effects on site.

www.sylvania-lighting.com

professionalism of dpa's design team, this ensures that the company's clients receive the latest and best information and advice available.

"dpa has always been at the forefront of education regarding all aspects of the lighting environment, and this continues today," Bolt explains. "Our desire and appetite to continually learn and share information has always been important, but perhaps with the current changes in light source technology and environmental legislation it is more important than ever."

This technical ability and professionalism is showcased in dpa's many projects, of which the Opus by Omniyat is one. A collaborative project between dpa and world renowned Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA), the Opus was completed in 2020 and is home to the new ME Dubai hotel, in the Burj Khalifa district in Dubai (UAE).

"For dpa, the project spanned several years from concept to completion with various interesting



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ITG mbH is an owner-managed Engineering office that has been established on the market for 24 years. Our core competence is the electrical engineering, especially: • Media technology • Conveyor technology We always like to work with dpa lighting, e.g. in the following projects: • "neue Balan", Balanstraße 73, Munich • Allianz SE Conference Center, Munich

dpa lighting consultants



challenges to illuminate such a unique and complicated piece of architecture," Bolt continues.

"The design represents two towers that have converged as one, to a cube with the centre 'eroded' to create a stunning and contrasting void. This void is an important volume and canvas for the lighting intervention and solution to the internal 'skin' of the building's void."

The firm collaborated closely with ZHA and the other team members along with Vexica to develop a unique product to integrate seamlessly into the façade of the void. By day, the building's façade reflects its surroundings like a monumental, mirrored sculpture; whilst at night, the void is transformed using 5,000 individually



Richard Bolt, Partner at dpa lighting consultants

controllable 1.5-watt LED points of light providing a sophisticated and dynamic lighting installation. Using DMX lighting control enabled unique tailoring of the content with the LED 'pixels' as a creative tool to paint with light across the inner void façade.

In order to achieve the level of expertise that it provides its clients, dpa utilises a range of experienced professionals to broaden the potential of the company.

"The scale of our practice and close working relationship between our studios means we have been able to recruit from a wide variety of backgrounds such as architecture, urban design, interior design, product design, various engineering disciplines, the theatre and so on," Bolt explains.

"This broad skill base that focuses solely on architectural lighting design provides dpa with an unparalleled human resource and knowledge to deal with the varying challenges each

CONSTRUCTION



project demands,

"We have a team ethos and approach within our organisation, whereby our studios are fully supportive of each other which is immensely important to us."

This is what sets dpa lighting consultants apart from its competitors in the industry - the ability to utilise varied expertise, collaborative efforts, and communication to better enhanced the fluidity and overall process of client projects.

One factor that drives the success of dpa's lighting projects is the relationship between the company and its industry supply chain partners. Through positive collaborations with these external businesses, together with its design and wider project teams, dpa is able to achieve the best possible results for its clients.

"It is imperative that we enhance existing relationships as well as nurture potential new ones, as our clients and the projects they ask us to design are the vertebrae of our business simultaneously alongside the dedicated team we are fortunate to have at dpa," Bolt tells us.

"On top of this, we are reliant on lighting manufacturers to develop and design quality lighting products that act as tools of the trade to enable us to strive towards achieving lit excellence."

As for the upcoming year, dpa is focusing on both the retention of resource level that was previously established before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, in order to emerge from this period of uncertainty intact, which will be challenging but achievable through effective practice promotion, relationship building and continuing to contribute towards and deliver quality lighting projects.

"We continue to engage with innovative and creative projects particularly within the hospitality sector, whilst recognising a greater diversification into environmental type projects within the UK," Bolt adds. ©

dpa lighting consultants

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Middle East Transformation

On the back of a disruptive 2020, Tim Goodall, Partner at DSA Architects, discusses the challenge of navigating today's dynamic Middle Eastern market

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Ryan Gray



CONSTRUCTION

pportunity. It's everywhere in the Middle East. The region's market is currently undergoing a period of significant transformation - one which has demonstrated the importance of adopting an agile and lean approach in order to respond to the latest trends quickly and at scale.

It's a region that Tim Goodall, Partner at DSA Architects, believes is dynamic and exciting.

"The Middle Eastern market continues to provide an abundance of opportunities," explains Goodall.

"As in all regions and industries, we have seen economic cycles of greater and lesser demand, however what is uniquely interesting about this part of the world is that, as one country or area experiences a dip, others will tend to go the opposite way simultaneously.

"We appear to be rebounding with many new projects after COVID-19 created nervousness."

Having begun his own project management consultancy at the beginning of the Dubai boom period, Goodall first became involved with DSA Architects in 2005 in establishing a Lead Consultancy aspect to DSA, which

DSA ARCHITECTS

SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES

The organisation provides services and delivery models tailored to the client and project's specific requirements:

- Lead consultancy
- Design management
- Architect of Record
- Multi-Disciplinary design
- Concept design
- Design development
- Master planning and urban design
- BIM modelling
- International collaborations
- Design and Build
- Technical advisory and documentation
- Tender Management
- Site supervision services
- Contract administration
- Project management / Cost Consultancy

subsequently led to him becoming a partner a few years later in 2008.

"Coming from both a contractor and a client side, I was able to influence our lead consultancy role to be more inclusive and appreciative of all key stakeholders' requirements, whilst implementing a disciplined quality management approach to delivery," he says.

"What I saw was many of our lead Design Architects being involved in a lot of administrative and project management tasks which seemed to take away the real purpose and talent of architects, in being able to design.

"I learned how DSA's team of architects were detail-focused and driven by quality of design, we were determined to create a design management function which complemented the design team. This would allow them to do what they do best - designing buildings whilst the design management team would be there to lead the multi-disciplined consultant team in meeting all the client's needs."

DSA Architects is a leading architectural design practice with offices in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Europe, with around 175 staff spread across seven offices. Established over 30 years ago, DSA operates and possesses a proud portfolio of landmark projects across the world.



Tenable Fire Engineering Consultancy

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As a specialist fire and life safety consultancy, our sole focus is to ensure the preservation of life through the execution of our comprehensive suite of services.

We are able to work across all sectors, including hospitality, healthcare, aviation, retail, education, commercial and residential. There is no limit to the size or scale of a project for which we can provide our expertise, seamlessly blending international best practice with in-depth local know-how. We bring the same professionalism to individual villas or 300-metre towers, which is why our clients come to us time and time again.

We adapt the latest fire engineering techniques to ensure the architectural integrity of a project is never compromised. Using the latest code requirements, engineering expertise and fire modelling tools, we improve building safety performance, protect architectural design aspirations, optimise floor plans and reduce unnecessary construction costs.

Delivering services across a multisector project portfolio, we are able to work with architects, contractors and developers to ensure industry regulations and codes are adhered to without comprising on aesthetics or design. All design risks are evaluated against the relevant country code and industry standards and, whether we are engaged at the concept stage of a project or midway through, we always deliver unbiased, up-to-date advice to secure fire safety and preservation of life.

With offices in Muscat, Dubai and London, we execute regional and international projects of any size in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and Asia. We approach projects with leading talent and innovative technologies while adhering to international best practices, design codes and standards.

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CONSTRUCTION



The firm works with many types of clients, from multinational blue-chip companies to governments, hotel operators, and local investors. DSA is recognised as one of the leading hotel and resort architects in the world and is proud to have delivered over 200 properties and 30,000 keys worldwide, including brands Hilton, Marriott, Accor, Jumeirah, Hyatt, Kerzner, Four Seasons, Rosewood, Chedi, and Nikki Beach to name a few.

The company is renowned for delivering amazing luxury hospitality projects, and over time it can be seen how these hotels and resorts have inspired many other industry sectors such as hospitals, residential, airports and public facilities to have integrated hospitality aspects.

Having successfully delivered numerous projects over the years, Goodall is keen to stress that each project is delivered in the same consistent way to ultimately ensure that our clients aspirations are met and "WE BELIEVE WE HAVE A GREAT TEAM OF DESIGN PARTNERS, ALL CONSIDERED AS BEING PART OF THE DSA FAMILY. EACH DESIGN PARTNER RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN DEVELOPED AND ALIGNED WITH DSA'S DELIVERY APPROACH"

are satisfied with the finished project.

"We approach all of our projects with the same passion and enthusiasm," he affirms.

"Our experience and track record of success as a lead consultant, offering a 'one-stop shop' for design and management services, enables us to tailor our service to suit the particular needs, objectives, and dynamics of a project in a bespoke manner. All the while we maintain the high standards of quality and added-value that we are renowned for providing to all of our clients."

As Saudi Arabia seeks to reduce its reliance on oil and diversify its economy towards encouraging tourism and hospitality, Goodall believes Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman's Saudi Vision 2030 will bring exciting change to the country.

"These opportunities are great to see after our last few months of COVID-19 related stress," explains Goodall.

"We're already working with many clients, having been appointed on a number of projects throughout the Kingdom. It's clear that big changes are happening within the Kingdom and it's a very exciting time."

"We are hoping to be able to announce some significant news in relation to our new office in Saudi Arabia very soon - so watch this space!"

DSA ARCHITECTS

Due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, industries overnight have had to evolve and adapt to the everchanging market conditions. Goodall explains that the last few months have provided fresh impetus and ideas for developing the business and emerging stronger than ever post-COVID.

"Strengthening our many relationships and building new partnerships and collaborations is vital," he says.

"We are seeing more and more renowned International design practices coming into the Middle East and we see a future of many collaborations going forward. The synergy between ourselves and these overseas design consultants with our added local experience, know-how, and capability, is very much an area which our clients will benefit on."

Like many organisations, supplier relationships are critical to success at DSA Architects. Goodall points to the formation of several collaborations to meet the needs of its clients.

"We have established many strategic associations with International consultants overseas, local consultancies and business partners," he explains. "This enhances DSA's ability to offer an A-Z Lead Consultancy Service internationally, and to tailor the disciplines offered to meet the exact requirements of any specific project, both large and small, and provide complete flexibility to our clients.

As a team and organisation, we believe we are truly "Designed to Deliver", with our design partners in support, listening to and working closely with our clients, we have the capability to meet any project requirements, no matter how challenging.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

- A complete design and management service delivering highly disciplined and client-centric service
- Professionalism to the highest level
- Flexible approach, with tailored solutions and being very receptive to change whilst maintaining the main project objectives
- Very focused on client's objectives and project delivery – quality, design flair, time schedules, and financial budgets
- Team working and great working relationships with all partners and project stakeholders
- Extensive experience in collaborating with other international design partners
- Quality of design, with real thought going into every little detail which adds to the richness of the design
- Positive outlook and focus at all times, where perceived problems are merely challenges to be met and overcome

- Experienced Team of Design professionals- DSA's team consists of 70 percent with more than five years of service
- Multiple varied skillsets across many disciplines and projects – designers, project managers, contract administrators, site supervision professionals
- DSA's management organisation has a very flat structure, with our Directors having a very personal and direct involvement on all projects
- Experienced BIM modelling team. DSA was an early adopter of BIM, since 2008 all its projects have been produced in BIM, with resulting assurance of a coordinated design
- Every team member has a passion for the quality of our design documentation, which DSA strives to be unrivalled
- Balances this high quality of delivery with an affordable fee



"We believe we have a great team of design partners, all considered as being part of the DSA family. Each design partner relationship has been developed and aligned with DSA's delivery approach. We work very closely as a team with all team members supporting each other. The feedback from our design partners is very much the same, and how they very much enjoy being part of a very professional organised and talented team, which DSA provides. This team working ethic is very critical to the success of our delivery."

The importance of recruiting and retaining the right employees cannot be understated. With over 70 percent of its staff having been with DSA for over five years, and half of those for more than 10 years, Goodall affirms that developing talent is a key priority to DSA.

"We purposefully look to develop

and promote from within and to offer opportunity for growth and advancement," he says.

"The team ethic set from the directors onwards is of help and support of one another in a positive way. This sets the tone for a dynamic team working environment where ideas and knowledge are shared and passed on. This is reinforced with regular staff seminars and meetings to discuss projects, learn lessons, and debate ideas for providing further added value and innovation going forward."

With the future in mind, Goodall is keen to think ahead and avoid falling into a comfort zone. After a disruptive and challenging 2020, DSA is seeking to return to normality.

"DSA's overarching desire is to maintain more of the same success and achievement that the past 35 years have seen," he says. "What is important, however, is that we will never rest on our laurels and are always looking to find ways of developing and moving the business forward. Whether that be in terms of staff development, new technologies, exploring fresh markets, expanding our BIM Skillset or streamlining and improving our existing processes."

"We are very excited for this year, in creating new relationships, delivering more amazing projects for our clients and developing DSA to greater heights."

DSA ARCHITECTS Tel: +971 4 329 2288 dsa.dubai@dsa-arch.com www.dsa-arch.com

Building a Brighter Future

کردنی

ۆكەكان

Lafarge Iraq is driving diversification for both a more sustainable national economy and to improve the lives of local people

Project Manager: Joshua Mann

raq, like many nations, faced unprecedented challenges in 2020. Not only was the country confronted with the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, of which we are globally familiar, but pre-existing conditions such as an economic dependency on oil have

رۆژانى تەندروستى و

posed an alternative yet simultaneous challenge.

According to OPEC, Iraq has the fifth largest pool of proven oil reserves in the world, estimated to be roughly 140 billion barrels. With such copious resources, it is natural that such a dependency would materialise. But as the oil industry has boomed, others have faltered – a status quo that now, more than ever, needs revising.

CONSTRUCTION

Indeed, promoting private sector diversification to improve fiscal stability, economic governance and the country's business environment are all highlighted by the World Bank



as critical to Iraq achieving sustainable growth and stability.

In doing so, the country can turn hardship in to opportunity.

Enter Lafarge. A global enterprise that first arrived here in 2008, it has since established itself as one of Iraq's largest non-oil investors and a key contributor to national economic diversification efforts.

Heading up the operation in Iraq is Adham ElSharkawy, Country CEO, who jumped at the opportunity to move his career across borders from the UAE when it presented itself back in 2019.

"Iraq is a larger market than the UAE, which makes the scope of work quite different in terms of volume, cement plants, number of employees and the overall complexity of the business environment," he explains.

"The differing market conditions and segments add a lot to my experience. I am happy to be here after my time in the UAE. There is a lot we can adapt here from my experience there, and there is a lot to share with our team in the UAE as well.

"Iraq is a challenging market, but that only serves to make it an exciting working environment."

STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITIES

So, how does Lafarge Iraq contribute to the national economy?

The organisation focuses on two key business lines, cement and concrete, and operates out of various plants and manufacturing locations. On the cement side, it has two key plants - Bazian Cement Plant and Karbala Cement Plant.

The former can be found in the city of Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, having been built between 2007 and 2009. The plant currently produces OPC, salt and sulphate resistant cement (SRC), and karasta cement with an annual production capacity of 2.2 million tonnes, and features of a

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LAFARGE IRAQ





In concrete, the firm has three sites located in the northern, central and southern regions, of Iraq





CONSTRUCTION

state-of-the-art concrete laboratory which enables the company to provide its customers with the best technical services.

The latter, meanwhile, is situated approximately 80 kilometres southwest of the Karbala province (180 kilometres south of Baghdad). Rehabilitated between 2010 and 2016, this alternate facility now has an annual production capacity of 1.8 million tonnes, primarily serving Karbala and its neighbouring cities with SRC, karasta and Al-Jisr cement.

In concrete, the firm has three sites located in the northern, central and southern regions, enabling it to serve public and private organisations and the general public across the country's 437,072 square kilometre area.

"We meet the demands of the Iraq market through our wide network of distributors and direct retailers located in all Iraqi provinces, served by competent sales representatives," ElSharkawy affirms.

"Lafarge is a customer and end user-centric company seeking to offer high quality, innovative and differentiated building solutions and exceptional services to its customers. Our mission is to be a reliable supplier of high-quality, innovative cement products based on diversified usages and applications contributing to the improvement of peoples' lives."

CONTRIBUTING TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF PEOPLES' LIVES

This mission is being realised in multiple ways.

First, through projects, the company's efforts on Sharey Baban being one such notable contribution. The construction, led by Qaiwan Co., will see the creation of a critical new transport link for Iraq spanning





Gulan Tower Project, Erbil

146 kilometres once complete, with Lafarge providing the key materials for Stage 1 that comprises the first 32-kilometre stretch.

Funded by the Kurdistan regional government, the project is expected to cost IQD400 billion (\$270 million) and is earmarked for completion in July 2022 having been initiated mid-2020.

"It is a 100-mile circular road that will be constructed in three stages," ElSharkawy adds. "The first stage will start from Tasluja and end in Damrkan village in Arbat; the second stage will start in Damrkan and ends in Peshraw Tonnel in Sitak; and the third stage connects Peshraw Tonnel to Tasluja."

Other notable construction projects the company has been involved with include the Central Bank of Iraq (designed by the late Dame Zaha Mohammad Hadid DBE RA – the iconic Iraqi architect, artist and designer), Mall of Iraq, and Basmaya Project – some of the country's most renowned landmarks. However, it is not just



Adham ElSharkawy, CEO, Lafarge Iraq with his management team

through physical infrastructural contributions that Lafarge Iraq is adhering to its ethos of contributing to the improvement of peoples' lives.

Acting as a good corporate citizen is likewise vitally important to the company, a key reason behind its health and safety and environmental efforts. ElSharkawy explains: "As the only international cement player in market, we are proud of how transformative our health and safety policies, internal control and compliance, locally focused people development and stakeholder management efforts are, alongside our wide product range and services.

LEADERSHIP FOCUS

ADHAM ELSHARKAWY

Adham ElSharkawy is a graduate from the American University in Cairo, Egypt, majoring in economics. He has worked with several multinational companies including Cadbury, Procter and Gamble, PepsiCo and British American Tobacco.

After working in various fast moving consumer goods sectors, from snacks and soft drinks to tobacco, he wanted to try a new challenge and transitioned into the construction sector. This shift happened when ElSharkawy joined Lafarge Cement Emirates in 2009 as a Commercial Director.

Four years later he was promoted to General Manager of Lafarge Emirates, where he worked for five years before becoming CEO of UAE and Oman (Cement, RMX, and Geocycle). He then joined Lafarge Iraq in 2019 as Country CEO.



"We are also the only cement producer that has an environment department that is fully dedicated to monitoring environmental standards inside our plant, as well as supporting the community with activities such as tree plantation campaigns, celebrating earth hour, and awareness on different environmental topics."

Sustainability is also central to Lafarge Iraq, the company continually striving to futureproof. Of late, this has taken the form of a three-pronged approach comprising people, product and digital.

"We consider personal development to be essential and ensure diversity and clear succession for our employees," the CEO reveals. "In regard to our offering, competitors can always compete through the products, but if you continuously look for ways to meet customer demands then you will naturally sustain your business.

"During COVID we were also pushed towards a digital world, something that has helped us to find ways to make our customers' lives easier in reaching us, buying our cement and then delivering that cement to them in their desired locations.

"Right now we are the only player that sells cement on pallets through our Palletizer Project, and also offer a mobile app (4545 application) which our customers can use to order, pay, and follow their shipments 24-seven through their smart phones."

COMMUNITIES, CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS

Much of these efforts form the foundations upon which the company will target further operational improvements, sustainable growth and community care projects in a year that is hoped to be less challenging.

2021 promises of new projects, Lafarge itself focused on identifying new segments in the market that will support product diversification plans such as cements with smaller carbon footprints.

A CHAMPION FOR THE COMMUNITY

MASK PROJECT: Lafarge Iraq provided materials and training to 20 local women during the pandemic, explaining how to make surgical masks, which has both provided them with an income and helped to address mask shortages.

DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD BASKETS AND PPE: The

company delivered over 800 food baskets and 20,000 personal protection equipment (PPE) items to local authorities for less fortunate people. The Bazian Cement Plant also made hand sanitiser in the lab and distributed it to community clinics.

HAYASI IRRIGATION CHANNEL:

Lafarge Iraq is funding the cleaning of the Hayasi Irrigation Channel, providing job opportunities to local people and benefitting approximately 185 farmers with improved water flow.

LANGUAGE COURSES: English and Arabic language lessons are provided to over 200 students from local communities to improve their employment prospects.

CEMENT FOR HOUSING

PROJECTS: Cement is donated to local communities for housing and infrastructure projects including road repair.





On the topic of environmental standards, the company will also be working closely with local authorities on a new waste management project, the purpose of which is to ensure that potentially harmful pharmaceutical waste is processed safely and properly to protect the surrounding flora and fauna.

"We are proud to have a signed contract with Pharmaceutical Syndicate of Kurdistan, Iraq, where we will co-process all the medical waste in the region," adds ElSharkawy.

Much like its relationship with partners such as Pharmaceutical Syndicate, the CEO also identifies its suppliers to be similarly critical to the company achieving its ambitions for 2021.

He continues: "We've developed a strong supply chain model that is vital to our business, from sales and operations to procurement and contracting to warehouse management, and equally distribution and transport.

"Just like our customers, we put our suppliers at the centre of our operation by cultivating long lasting relationships, upholding trust and loyalty and ensuring the logical and strategic continuity of our business during the high and low seasons."



Indeed, between supporting people, excelling with its environmental ambitions, digitising operations and targeting new product launches, it is the relations that Lafarge Iraq maintains with communities, customers and suppliers that will continue to the bedrock of the operation's success for years to come.



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Advanced Aluminium Production

The Middle East's metal industry is substantial, we spoke to Suliman Al Oufi, CEO of Al Taiseer Aluminium Company, about the latest in Saudi Arabian metal production

Writer: Marcus Kääpä | Project Manager: Donovan Smith

nowledge and association of Saudi Arabian industry is dominated by the oil and gas production sector. However, behind the veil of the nation's fuel-production notoriety stands a multitude of sectors that are substantial factors to the contribution of the country's economy.

Metal production is one of these. Ranging from precious metals such as gold and silver, to those used in an industrial capacity like zinc and copper, the country continues to answer an international need for metals across the board. Take zinc and copper for example – according to statista, Saudi Arabia produced 45.8 tonnes of zinc, and 121,000 tonnes of copper in 2017.

One such widely demanded metal resource is aluminium, which boasts an extensive range of industrial uses due to its lightweight and flexible properties, and ability to be cast, melted, formed, machined, and extruded with ease (allowing it to take on a variety of shapes for many uses). "It is a necessity for the development of modern societies," begins Suliman Al Oufi, CEO of Al

Taiseer Aluminium Company. "Life as we know it would not be possible without metals. We see them all around us, from fashion jewellery to skyscrapers they are part of our daily life. Today, the aluminium industry is a vibrant sector in the Gulf and a major contributor to the economies of the region."

Aluminium production is also an important source of employment and a key contributor to a number of small and medium-sized industries in the region.

Al Taiseer, also known by its acronym TALCO, itself produces aluminium extrusion profiles with various types of coatings and surfaces finishes for multiple industries in 40 countries around the globe, including GCC countries, Asia, Australia, the US, Europe, and North Africa.

MANUFACTURING



COMPANY HISTORY AT A GLANCE

Al Taiseer Aluminium Company (TALCO) was established in 1976 as a fabricator to manufacture doors, windows and kitchen cabinets. From its humble beginnings, the company continued to diversify, and it expanded to manufacture worldclass façade and architectural aluminium works in 1983. With this progress, it was able to move to a larger space in the second industrial area of Riyadh.

The company did not cease to innovate and strengthen its abilities to develop its strategies and techniques. As a result, it achieved its first milestone in 1989 - to commence the processing of powder coating, the first ever commercial powder coating line in Saudi Arabia. The company continued its progress and diversity in the field by commencing production of aluminium extrusion in 1994. Today, the firm has over 450 employees.

"Currently, we have six extrusion presses from Germany, and we have the production capacity of 60,000 metric tonnes per annum," Al Oufi informs us.

"In addition, the company processes surface decorative finishes, four vertical powder coating lines, two horizontal conventional powder coating lines, flash anodize powder coating, anodizing lines, polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) three coat, and other surface finishes." Suliman Al Oufi has proudly worked for the company for the best part of three years. He started his career with chemical manufacturing company SABIC in 1997, progressing through various positions in the firm that ranged from administrative roles, to quality management, and ending in planning and studies.

In 2008 this changed. Al Oufi left SABIC and entered other industrial companies, beginning as a human resources Director, Group Manager of human resources, and finally Vice President of Human Resources and Administrative Affairs. Each company Al Oufi worked for previously has revolved around industrial manufacturing - a natural path that led him to Al Taiseer.

"Working in the manufacturing industry is an extension of my career in the industrial sector. As for the manufacturing of metallurgy, the first job I worked in was the manufacture of steel pipes, and the second being the aluminium industry – the career I lead to this day," AI Oufi tells us.

VALUES AND OPERATIONS

As a company competing in a large metal production industry, AI Taiseer's key qualities help it to stand out in the market. As well as the quality of its products, competitive prices, and timely deliveries, there are additional aspects that allow it to stand out from the crowd.

The most important of these is the various contributing operations within Al Taiseer as a company that make the firm what it is. Al Taiseer maintains a critical relationship with each of these - its commitment to endure any situation, even to the extent of covering additional costs of pre & post sales technical support during the recent adverse market fluctuations.

"The strength of Al Taiseer Aluminium Company is the quality of our products - we always prioritise our efforts in providing products that are in accordance with the requirements

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of international standards - and the competent services offered from our operations," says Al Oufi.

"TALCO develops a special packing system to facilitate the loading and handling and unloading of containers which reduce handling damages and protect the product during ocean freight. The success of the company lies in the relationship and satisfaction of or operations."

And alongside the quality of products, AI Taiseer invests in developing these operations to best serve its customer base.

The introduction of a unique extrusion finish aimed to support the architectural industry has given the company yet another edge in the market. Imported from Europe, the (Flash Anodize and Power Coating) line guarantees industrial aluminium performance and consistency for its varying uses.

"It is the first of its kind in the Gulf and MENA region," Al Oufi informs us.



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TALCO AT A GLANCE

Al Taiseer Aluminium Company (TALCO) is like many industrial companies that strive for profitability while also maintaining the highest levels of quality. But TALCO is more than that. It always seeks to participate in preserving the environment as much as possible, and to contribute to many projects that will benefit the local communities in which it operates.

While preserving the highest levels of quality, it uses a re-melt facility to re-use many of the aluminum residues that are disposed of during the demolition of old buildings, as well as close communication with the smelters to utilise the best practices of environmental systems.

Aluminium can be high in recycled content. TALCO uses an aluminium billet consisting of the recycled content of pre-consumer and post-consumer materials. This meets the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) requirement (MR Credit 4) for using materials with recycled content.

The use of aluminium extrusions in commercial buildings can contribute to LEED points (and

certification) in several areas, including energy efficiency, selection of sustainable materials, and indoor environmental quality. TALCO uses the higher end of the recycled content percentage. Our operations can achieve the LEED credit points on this scale.

TALCO has made a companywide commitment to sustainable environmental solutions that keeps its communities environmentally beneficial and allows our operations to use our aluminium extrusion to help achieve their LEED ratings for a green building.



SERVICES AT A GLANCE

POWDER COATING

Surface decorative finishes are supported by highly sophisticated state of the art power coating lines: four vertical lines and two horizontal lines. All powder coating lines are following the specifications of Qualicoat. The standard length is seven meters, however, the lines can be processed upon request with a premium up to 9.5 meter length. The powder coating lines are capable of processing polyester powder, super durable powder, hyper durable kynar, metallic finishes. The production capacity is over 40,000 metric-tonnes per annum. The polyester powder performance warranty reaches 12 years and follows AAMA 2603 standards the super durable powder coating guarantee in accordance to AAMA 2604. The powder's based on Kynar Hyper guarantees a 30 year period in accordance to AAMA 2605.



FLASH ANODISING

Al Taiseer Aluminium Company TALCO has introduced a unique finish to support the architectural aluminium industry. The technology imported from Europe to guarantee the performance and consistency. The product's surface finish which is "Flash Anodise and Powder Coating" is the first of this kind in Gulf and MENA Region. It is guaranteed and more economical for the finishes of its kind. All the aluminium extrusions are processing on line anodising (five to eight) microns providing the anodising layer for complete surface inside and outside. Next to the anodising, the materials have been transferred to powder coating line without manual interference.

The above process has been tested in Europe and confirm to (AAMA 2605-17) standard. Our standard performance guarantees up to 35 years. The above finish is recommended for harsh weather conditions and humid weather seaside.

ANODISING

Al Taiseer has anodising facilities as well as electrocolouring. This process is consistent due to the highquality equipment and technology used, originally imported from Germany. The plant is capable of producing different finishes: silver, champagne, light bronze, medium bronze, dark bronze, and gold colours.

The gloss finish anodise extrusion can be supplied using mechanical polishing. Anodising is one of the proven processes for protection of aluminium surface, and Al Taiseer's anodising process follows the quality standards of QUALANOD (Quality Label for Sulphuric Acid-based Anodising of Aluminium) and is certified by QUALANOD. The anodising is following European standards (EN 12373) and American standard (AAMA 611).





"The company has made many partnerships with the relevant authorities to open to new markets that would contribute to the increasing of Saudi exports in the near future" – Suliman Al Oufi, CEO

"It is guaranteed and more economical option than other finishes of its kind. All the aluminium extrusions profile are processing with on-line anodizing (five to eight) microns, providing the anodizing layer for all surfaces, inside and out."

And Al Oufi assures us that Al Taiseer's place as a key player in the aluminium production industry is not only down to the business relationships and latest production methods.

"We believe employees act only as empowered as their employers make them feel," he tells us.

"When employees do not feel empowered in the workplace, they are unlikely to take initiative or be the top performers. It is therefore incredibly important to keep everyone in the company on same page – we ensure that employee's individual work goals are aligned with those of the company.

"This then allows for recognition of the individual, their efforts, and encourages them to continue their excellent level of work to better the prospects of the company for all."

Al Taiseer welcomes employee feedback as individual opinions matter. Voices are heard, thoughts are taken into account, and the company applies a systematic approach to provide each employee with the tools they need to work, lead, and succeed. On top of this, training, mentorships, and quality feedback is an opportunity provided to each employee to help them to maximise their talent and prospects.

INTO 2021

The various operations that make up Al Taiseer are a substantial factor towards the operation and successes of TALCO as a company. Supply chain operations are fully integrated with the organisations overall strategy to efficiently prioritise value chains and minimise the risks while maximising business opportunity.

"Being a just-in-time manufacturer with reliable operations and strong relationships with customers is critical to maintaining a smooth flow of supply. This allows us to never compromise the quality of our products and improve our business to ensure dedicated service, preferential pricing, and special terms," Al Oufi explains. Logistics management is a primary factor in the success of TALCO's operations and has a direct positive impact on its bottom line and how it benefits the company. TALCO manages its logistics through a network of reputable providers to support its domestic and worldwide supply chain. This maintains the reputation of both companies ingrained in industry operations.

As for the future of this decade, Al Taiseer is aiming for an expansion and investments with a focus on exports, while also maintaining its quality standards of production and utilising innovative methods as they arise.

"The company currently has physical presence in the whole Middle East, Asia, and North Africa," Al Oufi tells us.

"In addition to its local market share, and working to be aligned with the Kingdom's vision 2030, which its priority is to support local industries, including many industries related to aluminium, there are new investments that the company is working on to contribute to the localisation of some similar industries to also develop exports.

"The company has made many partnerships with the relevant authorities to open to new markets that would contribute to the increasing of Saudi exports in the near future."

Al Taiseer Aluminium Company remains an industry leader in metal production in the Middle East. The company's aims make it one to watch throughout the coming years.



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KOROZO GROUP

Sustainability at the Fore

Filip Lens, CEO at Korozo Group, discusses the importance of harnessing a greener approach in day-to-day operations as well as in the product design

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Matthew Taylor



urkey is a truly unique country. Acting as a bridge between Asia and Europe, its geographic location has led to close ties with both continents.

"There is a strong entrepreneurial culture in Turkey and companies are prepared to take risks and invest. There are many well educated and ambitious people in Turkey and as we know, people always make the difference."

'People always make the difference'. Those are the words of Filip Lens, CEO at Korozo Group. Korozo has become one of Turkey's most renowned industrial organisations, exporting flexible packaging and film products to 88 countries globally.

Headquartered in Istanbul, there are over 2,700 people working across the entire company. As a result of its investments in research and development, new technology and infrastructure, Korozo is the largest flexible packaging producer in Turkey, and one of the largest packaging



manufacturers in Europe with an annual production capacity exceeding 123,000 tonnes. Operating out of nine factories in Turkey and one in Belgium, the organisation strives to expand and has become a world recognised brand with sales and distribution offices in the UK, Germany and France, as well as in Russia

Lens himself has a strong backaround in Flexible Packaging with prior roles in sales and marketing, operations, research and development, procurement, finance and people management. He is well acquainted with the Turkish packaging industry, having observed it first-hand prior to joining Korozo in late 2019 while working as a competitor in roles with Amcor and Bemis. "Over the last 20 years, I've seen Turkish packaging companies grow from strength to strength," he explains. "Now that I personally work here, I can see why Turkish companies have been so successful."

Lens believes that Turkey's position is a considerable strategic advantage to operating; "Turkey is geographically located where Asia, Europe and Africa converge and it also has historical ties with Middle East, Russia, North Africa and the Balkans. These two advantages turn Turkey into a centre of attraction for companies operating internationally. Turkey also has a very sizeable and growing internal market which makes it attractive for international raw material suppliers to be present here, either with manufacturing and/or with large scale distribution. This is vitally important in our industry."

Sustainability is at the heart of Korozo's growth.

The company is committed to harnessing a greener approach and is set on reducing its impact on the environment, both in its own operations as well with respect to the products that are developed, sold and ultimately disposed off.

"Sustainability is an essential part of our corporate culture and values," says Lens. "With this vision, we use our production experience of over 45 years to add value to our planet, economy, society, business partners and employees. We are committed to ensure that all our plastic packaging will be fully recyclable and thus being a solid contribution to developing circular economies.

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For many years, Henkel has been an key supplier of Korozo Group for lamination adhesives and also a major customer of Korozo Group for the detergent packages.

We at Henkel value the trust and strong relationship that we have with Korozo Group and hope to continue our strive together in creating innovative solutions.

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Partner with us to [be more] sustainable. Join us at: www.be-more-sustainable.com



KOROZO'S ACTIVITIES AND BRANDS

The firm is active in a number of different business activities which also trade under different brand and company names. These are:

KOROZO FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

Korozo Flexibles offers a comprehensive product range in food and non-food packaging products.

It supplies a broad spectrum of food packaging products ranging from meat, poultry, seafood to cheese and dairy, bakery, confectionery, tea and coffee and frozen food, beverages as well as pet food. Its product portfolio in non-food packaging includes nappies, home care, personal care, beauty and health care, as well as medical products.

Korozo Flexibles is also active in secondary packaging with a large scale operation in stretch films. In addition, Korozo non food flexibles also supplies laminates for disposables used in healthcare as well as high-tech industrial films such as protective films and silage films for agricultural use.

VITRAPACK FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

Vitrapack was acquired in 2019 and is specialised primarily in film conversion for packaging applications mainly in food but also in non-food. Vitrapack produces high quality packaging materials for a number of end use markets including bakery, confectionery, snacks, protein and beverages in its modern manufacturing facility in Antwerp (Belgium) equipped with both flexographic and rotogravure technologies, as well as with a high end in house prepress service trading as Creavit/Rask.

Together Korozo Flexibles and Vitrapack cover all Korozo activities in Flexible Packaging.

SAREKS HYGIENE COMPONENTS

Sareks Hygiene Components have been developed during the 2000s. The business has grown rapidly with large manufacturers of baby nappies as well as incontinence and female care products in Turkey and the Middle East. Sareks has a complete one-stop shop offering, with its products including both back sheets as well as frontal and side tapes. Sareks is expanding in Europe as well as in Africa from 2 dedicated manufacturing facilities north of Istanbul where Korozo has invested heavily.

KOROPLAST HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Koroplast is a truly unique business. The consumer brand was launched in 1981 by Korozo and created its own category in the retail space with the launch of the first garbage and freezer bags. Since then, Koroplast has been the market leader and driver with 49 percent market share. Koroplast is the 'go to' brand for its popular range of aroma reducing garbage bags, aluminium foils, freezer bags, storage bags, cooking bags for disposing of waste and the storing of food and non-food items. Koroplast is the most trustable, high quality brand making life easier, according to nine out of ten consumers. Koroplast has the best interaction and the most viewed channels on social media, not only in its own category but in the total household cleaning category.

KORSINI IN-MOULD LABELS

With Korsini, Korozo is also active in In-Mold-Labeling. Korsini is currently the global number two in-mould label manufacturing company. Committed to high quality, innovation and sustainable business practices, Korsini offers products and services to the world's biggest brands in more than 40 countries. Korsini has been growing very aggressively adding a full production line every year.

"While developing new products and solutions to enhance our competitiveness, we make sure that these are environmentally friendly. We simplified film structures that are difficult to recycle, we increasingly use both recycled production waste as well as PCR (post consumer waste) in our product formulations. Our aim is to develop easy-to-recycle structures for all food and non food packaging applications including low, medium and high barrier films and laminates, for automated packaging lines as well as for pre-made bags and stand-up pouches. Korozo focuses on product design to help decrease the loss of food and other packed products.

We also invest in new technology to lower the impact on our environment. In this regard, one of our most recent investments was in our Çorlu plan where we capture solvents with hightech air filters and recycle for re-use. This way we reduce solvent-based emission by 2,200 tonnes every year." Further, Korozo generates its own energy efficiently and sufficiently with two tri-generation units. Through this, the company decreased its CO2 emissions by about 1800 tonnes in 2020.

Over the next five years, we will constantly update our sustainability strategy in line with the demands and requirements of the day and taking into account the regulatory restrictions imposed in all the countries where we are present." Supply chain is another area where Lens and the company is constantly evaluating.

Korozo draws on a range of supply chain solutions ranging from direct supply from Turkey or offering a localised service via sales and distribution offices in Germany, France, the UK and Russia. The CEO explains that Korozo has a network of distributors which are located across the globe to market and supply products. The company also carefully selects raw materials and suppliers to ensure end to end availability of its products.

"Supply chain is a very important function within our industry," Lens says. "Customer production output typically depends on the availability of packaging products, on time and in good quality. This also applies to hygiene components which are an integral part of the product. Our customers need to be able to react to volatile demand from retailers, which is difficult to forecast. Lead times vary between two and six weeks depending on the packed products, the season and other factors which can influence demand such as COVID-19 in 2020." Indeed, the coronavirus pandemic disrupted industries the world over as businesses had to adapt day-to-day operations almost overnight. Lens believes that despite the pandemic, his organisation has been fortunate. "It's shown how vital resilience is. Despite the pandemic, demand has continued for basic products such as







AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Ranked 160th in the Istanbul Chamber of Industry's (ISO) list of top 500 industrial enterprises in Turkey category.
- Korozo Recyclable Packaging was awarded with "ÇEVKO-Foundation of Environmental Protection and Recycling Packaging Waste Green Dot Industry Award", for its contributions to a sustainable life among companies that use the Green Dot brand in Turkey.
- One of the largest online recruitment companies and an HR Platform Kariyer.Net gave Korozo the award for "Respect for the Human" for quick response to job applications and providing rapid feedback following interviews with candidates.
- Crescents and Stars for Packaging Competition, organised by the Turkish Packaging Manufacturers Association, is one of the most prestigious awards in Turkey and rewards unique designs, innovative applications, production quality, sustainability. Korozo, among 113 finalists, received the Golden Packaging Award for the Spouted Pouch with Paper Feel and Silver Packaging Award for the 51 percent Green PE Personal Care Bags and Recycle Ready KoroRCY Stand-Up Pouch in the Competition accredited by the World Packaging Organisation (WPO) and the Asian Packaging Federation (AFP).
- Korozo was billed the "Most Admired Company" in the plastics industry by Capital, Turkey's most prestigious economics magazine, in a survey of representatives from 55 industries, 600 companies, 1,480 managers, containing 23 performance criteria.
- Korozo was also awarded first prize award in Istanbul Chemicals and Chemical Products Association's (IKMIB) Stars of Export Awards six times in a row.



food and personal care products so we're still enjoying a good year," he explains. "That said, COVID-19 has still exposed the historic ways of executing projects need to be re-examined by introducing technology enabled remote trialling and project management processes. We need to ensure we develop these so that we are ahead of the curb when the next pandemic or any other event which will restrict the movement of people hits the globe."

Lens values the importance of longterm relationships both with customers as well as with suppliers. "Depending on the size and the complexity of the customers, our relationships need to vary," he explains. "For smaller customers, we are the one stop shop offering a full service to make sure customers have their products on time. With larger customers, our relations are more multifunctional and multidisciplinary and include joint development projects as well as supply chain relations."

Suppliers also have a very important role to play in meeting the customer demands. Korozo has established strong relations over the years with suppliers in all raw material categories. Some raw materials are used in relatively small quantities, but they are nevertheless of strategic importance. Such is the case of adhesives and speciality resins where we work closely with Mitsui.

"Henkel has supplied lamination adhesives and cold seal to Korozo for over 20 years. Both companies have cooperated closely in the development of new products.

In addition to our cooperation in product development, procurement and post-supply service areas, Henkel also supports Korozo employees by organising trainings. These trainings are also important in terms of sharing professional knowledge and improving company employees."

As well as engaging with key partners in the supply chain, growth is driven both organically and via acquisitions, with investments into existing and new plants central to the company's rise over the years.

"We have invested extremely heavily in our plants in Çorlu and Izmir to support the growth of food and non-food packaging, as well as IML and hygiene components," explains Lens. "In hygiene components, we have historically primarily supplied the baby nappies and incontinence markets, but we will also enter the feminine care market in 2021 in a very substantial way. We also plan to become a larger supplier to global players while sustaining our share in the Middle East and Africa."



VITRAPACK FLEXIBLE PACKAGING & RASK PREPRESS

Suitable for pet foods, bags, flowpack films, labels on reel, mock-up services



"We have recently conducted a fiveyear plan review, where we have made some deliberate choices with respect to end use categories where we want to focus," he continues. "We are not planning to stop any activity abruptly, but rather increase specialisation and gain market share in certain chosen categories where we believe we can generate sustainable above average returns. These end uses typically require more sophisticated packaging involving all our key processes, especially multi-layer extrusion and/or high-end printing."

In terms of its inorganic growth plans, Lens explains that Korozo will only target assets that will fit into the group's overall strategic framework and that are complementary to its footprint.

Among its priorities are the



development of the Vitrapack brand, known for its quality and currently serving the Benelux markets. Lens wants to use this footprint as a platform into neighbouring France and Germany, a move which will also involve transferring technologies from Turkey in order to provide the full value proposition to customers in the region.

Looking ahead, the CEO is optimistic about the future and is working towards maximising efficiency and growing at scale. "We don't really plan to diversify because instead we'd rather increase our focus," he explains. "It's important that we develop the right products which add value to our customers. Sustainability is key, without losing sight of the basic functionalities of packaging which is to protect products."

And as we bring our conversation to a close, Lens reaffirms the importance of workplace culture and developing its most critical assets – its employees.

"We've developed several initiatives to increase training via our Korozo Academy," he states. "We must ensure there is a healthy mix of internal promotions and new talent from outside the company to create the necessary mix of skills needed for the



ITEMA GROUP

ITALIAN Industry Leaders

STAZ. 10


MANUFACTURING

We spoke to Ugo Ghilardi, Principal CEO of Itema Group, about the textile machinery manufacturing industry, and how the company stays ahead of its competition amid the repercussions of COVID-19

Writer: Marcus Kääpä | Project Manager: Matthew Taylor

The manufacturing industry has been both a personal interest and passion that has accompanied me throughout my entire life."

For Ugo Ghilardi, Principal CEO of the Italian-based textiles company Itema Group, and author of the opening statement, manufacturing was always on the table.

With family roots in the industry, Ghilardi was introduced to Itema at an early age through his father – a production manager of the company for over 30 years. The machinery and workplace became a key source of interest to the young Ghilardi, and would lead him to following in, and surpassing, the footsteps of his father.

"From a personal perspective, I have always been interested in technology, automation, precision mechanics and digitisation, and I guess being born and raised around the company has something to do with it," Ghilardi tells us, and adds positively.

"I look back and like to define it as a kind of ante-litteram form of schoolwork alternation."

Ghilardi graduated his Organisation and Management course at the University of Trento, to soon after dive into the manufacturing industry. Across his career, Ghilardi has worked for machinery production companies in capacities ranging from Sales Engineering Manager, Managing Director, CEO, COO, and Divisional Board Member. It would be March of 2020 when Ghilardi joined Itema Group as CEO.



A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1988 EffeDi Meccanotek Srl opened as a small familiy business in the heart of the Orobian Pre-Alps. Born in the field of Precision Machining, in the following years it has developed widely in the Textile Sector with the production and international distribution of Heald Frames and Warp Stop Motions.

In 2011, EffeDi Meccanotek renewed itself by doubling the factory and by setting an innovative photovoltaic system with a mindset aimed at the future and the intent to reduce energy consumption, become autonomous and help to protect the environment. The company has made its way into the textile machinery sector thanks to the excellent quality of the materials used, the precision, the attention in processing its products and the constant communication between management and employees who, in unison, collaborate with passion for the satisfaction of clients.

After 30 years, EffeDi Meccanotek is today recognized as a large and solid reality boasting a latest generation fleet of machines and a smart R&D office that collaborates with the University of Bergamo and customer's technical departments.







HEALD FRAME

Integral and basic part of the Loom, the Heald Frame is made of extruded aluminium alloy profile and equipped with the highest quality material made in Italy.

With the support of the internal R&D Department, EffeDi Meccanotek is able to realize customized solutions and to create a unique and special product.

WARP STOP MOTION

In stardard or electronic version, the warp stop motion is an essential accessory for the Loom.

The planning and the production of this device are focused on extreme weaving conditions in order to guarantee a functional and compact warp stop motion which would be able to work under the hardest conditions.

LASER WARP STOP MOTION

New and innovative version of the LED controlled warp stop motion equipped with a smart Laser device.

This version makes possible the finding of the thread in few centimeters and consequently saves precious time in weaving.

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ITEMA GROUP

"I saw this as a sort of natural evolution of my personal interests and of my working life," he explains.

"My mission at Itema is to maintain the traditional excellent level of quality in the solutions provided to our existing customers and to guide the Group towards new business expansion, while focusing on digitisation, training, and sustainability." The company's headquarters is based in Northern Italy's Seriana Valley – an area that has always played a pivotal role in the Italian textiles industry. Itema itself is one of the leading global suppliers of quality and high-performance weaving machinery, and the supporting services that go alongside this, in the industry.

"In addition to weaving

solutions, Itema is diversifying into complementary, high-growth markets through stakes in innovation-driven companies, such as Lamiflex, leading supplier of technical composite products," Ghilardi informs us.

2019 saw Itema launch the new technical textiles division Itematech, born from the merger of Itema and PTMT (ex Panter), mixing the companies

ITEMA AT A GLANCE

Itema is a leading global provider of advanced weaving solutions, including best-in-class weaving machines, spare parts and integrated services.

The company is the only manufacturer in the world to provide the top three weft insertion technologies: rapier, airjet and projectile, with an ample product portfolio and a commitment to continuous innovation and technological advancement of its weaving machines.

Itema guarantees the right weaving machine for any

type of woven fabric: from commodity to high-end fashion or industrial fabrics and offers the right weaving machine for any application.

Weaving machines with our well-known brand name Itema leaves world-class manufacturing sites in Italy and Switzerland, and the assembly line in China every day.

Itema has a tradition of almost 200 years with an installed base of over 300,000 weaving machines in operation, while boasting a global presence in more than 100 countries while ensuring a fast and reliable service.

"IN ADDITION TO WEAVING SOLUTIONS, ITEMA IS DIVERSIFYING INTO COMPLEMENTARY, HIGH-GROWTH MARKETS THROUGH STAKES IN INNOVATION-DRIVEN COMPANIES, SUCH AS LAMIFLEX, LEADING SUPPLIER OF TECHNICAL COMPOSITE PRODUCTS"

FD EffeDi Meccanotek

ffeDi Meccanotek is a renowned Italian company operating in the textile machinery sector since many years and today recognized in the Market for the high quality of the materials used and for the careful manufacture of its products. Currently, the society provides with satisfaction Heald Frames & Warp Stop Motions to the biggest OEM, collaborates with agents on foreign territories and has a Worldwide Sales Network extended from USA to China.

As a competent mechanical parts provider, EffeDi Meccanotek boasts the best range of accessories for the weaving process. Optimized quality, innovative details, and long useful lives set EffeDi Meccanotek heald frames and warp stop motions apart from all competitors. The Italian quality of the products is recognized worldwide and the addition of careful processing guaranteed by decades of experience, makes the company recognized as a leader in its sector. That's why all customers can confidently expect their EffeDi Meccanotek product to continue working reliably long after the warranty period has expired.

The quality and precision of the products rests not only on high-quality materials and process reliability, but on in-depth analysis and the longstanding experience of the Research & Development internal division. EffeDi Meccanotek offers this expertise to outside clients and partners in order to jointly find optimization approaches, exhaust and leverage even tiny potentials.

The R&D department, managed by highly experienced engineers and technicians, follows the market needs with special attention, with the aim of improving production processes and, above all, the functionality and reliability of the products that are daily sold all over the world. Everything is always realized closed with the Quality and Design department for the effective compliance verification of all materials and all processes in order to steadily ensure to customers the delivery of the best products. First purpose of the Management has always been Customer Satisfaction. With special attention to the After Sales, EffeDi Meccanotek places always the client in the foreground by constantly solving and proposing targeted solutions. The main objective of Management is to establish a relationship of absolute confidence with customers and to be considered no longer as a simple supplier but as a Reliable Partner.

Our partnership in service begins with client's purchase decision. Our Service Center in Vilminore di Scalve (Italy), including technical and mechanical customer service, training and spare parts supply, is our guarantee of successful cooperation with our clients. It is backed up by a service network of contact partners and representations in all major markets i.e. US, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Poland, France and Germany. Thanks to the help of our agents in foreign territories, EffeDi Meccanotek can reach and assist customers wherever they are.

Reliability, quality and innovation. EffeDi Meccanotek is all this.



www.effedimeccanotek.it

ITEMA GROUP



know-how and expertise. In the same year, Itema acquired majority stakes in Schoch, leading producer of weaving accessories, including reeds and other components.

With more than 1,100 employees worldwide, two world-class production sites in Italy, one in Switzerland and an assembly line in China, Itema has a worldwide presence with commercial, after-sales and training centres in Italy, Switzerland, China, India, Japan, USA, Hong Kong and Dubai.

And in the face of the global effects cause by the coronavirus pandemic, Itema continues to function with optimism and forward planning.

"Despite the current obstacles the global economy is faced with due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, Itema is not halting investments," Ghilardi assures us. "We are convinced that the only way to overcome this critical period is to believe in a future made prosperous by long-term strategic choices."

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Itema sets itself apart from its industry competition in multiple ways, but most notably by its provision of all three top weft insertion technologies: rapier, airjet, and projectile – elements of company production that allow it to stand above competitors.

"Moreover, thanks to our brandnew technical textiles dedicated division, Itematech, we offer the most complete technological portfolio available on the market to weave these special fabrics adding even more value to our company's traditional product portfolio," Ghilardi tells us.

On top of this, it is the organisation's increasing investment in the latest technology and increased digitisation that gives it an edge in the industry.

"Innovation is, ever-since, our main driver and one of the founding elements of the whole Itema Group.

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Additional activities of P.PLAST are the moulding of PVC carpets, the coupling between PVC and soundproofing materials, and the management of the industrial and artisan upholstery departments.

The operational headquarters are in Pradalunga, Bergamo. P.PLAST works in an area of over 16,500 square meters and uses advanced machines, for small and large formats. Professionalism, expertise, and experience, allow P.PLAST to stand out in a continuous process of innovation, Made in Italy product quality, in pursuit of service, commitment to research, and environmental sensitivity.

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TOP WEFT INSERTION TECHNOLOGIES

RAPIER

Itema offers a comprehensive portfolio of rapier weaving machines, including the absolute best-seller the R9500.

Our rapier weaving machines offer our customers a number of unbeatable advantages, such as: high versatility of fabric and patterns and best-in-class technological advancements.

Moreover, Itema's rapier looms offer by far the widest application range, perfect fabric quality, sturdy and high-precision machine frame, lowest vibration patterns at highest speeds, a powerful NCP electronic platform and reduced number of parts.

Last but not least, Itema specifically developed two of its rapier looms to weave terry and denim fabrics: R9500terry and R9500-2denim.

Discover for yourself the unique value propositions of each of our rapier looms and contact an Itema Sales Team representative today to



become part of the overwhelmingly positive success story of Itema's rapier weaving machines.

AIRJET

Itema is proud to present the latest technological breakthroughs in airjet weaving which now complete our range of airjet weaving machines, providing the right weaving machine to fit perfectly every need of our valuable customers.

Distinguished from the competition and unique in concept, Itema's A9500 new airjet portfolio excels through its simple yet efficient design. We listened to our customers to deliver the maximum in user friendliness, versatility, reliability, efficiency, and performance.

Based on the already successful A9500, Itema launched in 2019 a

new airjet model designed for maximum performance in weaving bed sheeting fabrics: the A9500-2bedsheeting.

A9500-2 complete defines a new benchmark in airjet technology with dependable, high speed performance, consistent fabric quality and the versatility to change with market expectations. Moreover, a significant percentage of mechanical and electronic parts are fully interchangeable with our rapier models, thus reducing spare parts cost for Customers with both technologies.

Whether you are looking for enhanced usability and userfriendliness, increased versatility, reduced consumption or superior performance and top speed weaving, Itema has got the right airjet weaving machine for you.



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PROJECTILE

The mature projectile weft insertion technology is suitable for any weft material: spun yarns made of natural and manmade fibres, filaments, or tapes. Technical fabrics are the specialty of the legendary and unique P7300HP Projectile Weaving Machine due to the unparalleled versatility and reliability of its weft insertion system. The unmatchable uniqueness of the positive weft transfer consists in the single insertion driven by the projectile, which catches the weft and carries it directly with no exchanges, providing unmatched efficiency.

UNIRAP

Unirap is the Itematech Single Positive Rapier Machine, it embodies versatility and provides endless weaving possibilities. Combining the advantages of a positive rapier weft insertion with the gentle yarns treatment ensured by the



free fight transfer system, UniRap enables complex and creative fabrics weaving with practically no limitations and maximum textile efficiency. Ranging from refined lamè to high tenacity monofilament yarns, passing through bouclé yarns up to carbon, polyester and polypropylene tape, UniRap provides the possibility to weave sophisticated technical fabrics and innovative fashion styles.

HERCULES

Hercules is a Positive and Negative Rapier Weaving Machine designed to excel in technical textiles weaving. Offering both negative and positive rapier transfer systems, Hercules is said to represent the perfect combination of mechanical sturdiness and textile efficiency ensuring greater profitability in the market for applications such as agrotextile, heavy and standard coating fabrics, conveyor belts and filter fabrics, fiberglass, geotextile, mesh fabrics and more.



ITEMA GROUP

COMPANY HISTORY: AN OVERVIEW

Itema is an historic brand of the Italian weaving industry, born from the successful merger and acquisitions over the years of legendary brands in the textile machinery industry, such as Somet, Sulzer and Vamatex.

The roots of Itema trace back to the entrepreneurial impulse and vision of the Radici family - one of the most successful Italian business dynasties - in the person of Mr. Gianni Radici (declared a Knight of Labor for his lifelong career) who built up, through key partnerships and acquisitions, a solid Company, since 1967 at the pinnacles of the worldwide textile engineering industry.

Today, Itema is the world's largest privately held manufacturer of weaving machines, part of the Radici world of companies with 60 percent shares belonging to the heirs of the founder, the Radici family, and the remainder 40 percent held by the Arizzi and Torri families of entrepreneurs. And today, it goes hand in hand with digitisation," Ghilardi continues.

"When I talk about digitisation, I am not only referring to the goal of making our processes and production sites smarter, but I also refer to products and services, to make the life of our customers easier. By means of our advanced R&D twin centres, Itemalab[®], we aim at reaching increasingly higher levels of process and product digitisation in the short time."

Within the manufacturing sphere, supply chain partners are a crucial element to the success of a business. The reliability and trust between suppliers are fundamental for companies in the industry, and especially at a volatile period such as that caused by the coronavirus pandemic, as Ghilardi explains. "The COVID-19 outbreak made it clear that we need to find new ways to create value for our final customers. This is to ensure that we reply to these questions we are working together with our suppliers and partners to find an answer to this issue that can benefit all of us," he adds.

"Among the other topic, a very important one is sustainability: our suppliers and partners' cooperation, indeed, is essential to identify all the opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of our activities, in order to make weaving industry and textile sector greener."

PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Itema's key position in the textile industry does not keep it away from incorporating people-centric and

MANUFACTURING



community-based work into its operation.

The end of January 2020 saw the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in China, and Itema's Chinese branch required the necessary equipment to deal with limiting the spread of the virus in the workplace. Itema's immediate response was to send equipment to protect the 200 employees of Itema China in Shanghai.

"The Bergamo area, where our headquarters is based, was the most heavily affected area here in Italy, so we decided to provide help to local institutions and communities by donating a part of the masks we received from China," Ghilardi informs us.

And in the face of how the industry has changed since the inception and global spread of the coronavirus pandemic, Itema has developed a focus for the next few years to help maintain and expand its current position.

"One of the main focus for the next vear will be Itemalab[®], our R&D centre," Ghilardi tells us. "We are planning important investments to transform it in an incubator of ideas and innovations that are not only related to the weaving sector."

2021 will also see a special focus on training with the new Itema Academy Digital Edition starting up. Born in 2014, Itema Academy is a 24-month apprenticeship programme that provides the best of Itema's expertise and resources to young araduates who wants to start their career in an international and dynamic multinational company.

"To better prepare young students to the working life, we decided for this year to pair up the traditional courses

to transform it in an incubator of ideas and innovations that are not only related to the

with specific digital pillars to make them aware of the way digitisation is shaping that traditional way of doing business worldwide," Ghilardi explains, and ends regarding further company plans.

"We are also working on training from the external point of view, namely new ways to reach our customers and their employees through some innovation related to our Itema Campus." 😳



TEKNIKUM

Versatility and Durability

For over a century, Teknikum has been at the forefront of the rubber industry, manufacturing quality products with a commitment to sustainability

Writer: Dani Redd | Project Manager: Matthew Taylor

he first recorded use of rubber - the natural latex that comes from the gum of the Hevea tree - was by indigenous South American cultures, who made rubber balls used in a ceremonial Aztec game, ollama, as well as footwear and bottles. Christopher Columbus and other European explorers became fascinated by the process – in the 18th century, Charles-Marie de La Condamine, first sent samples back to Europe.

Initially a subject of scientific curiosity, it wasn't long before chemists and inventors discovered the useful properties of the compound, including its ability to rub out pencil marks (hence its popular name, 'rubber') and its ability to function as a waterproofing agent for clothes when combined with naptha.

Fast forward to the present day and rubber compounds – which can be manufactured synthetically – are used in a vast array of products, from car tyres to firehoses, gloves to parts to radio sets.

"The European general rubber goods market (GRG) is an interesting playing field," explains Jani Hämäläinen, Group CEO at Teknikum. "There are more than 6,000 small and medium-sized players on the market, in addition to a few large ones.

"The GRG market continues to grow, and rubber is an excellent material to supply quality and durable products. Today, due to its versatile properties, it is used in all walks of life from households to space rockets."

MADE IN FINLAND

Teknikum is a company of Finnish origin that specialises in the design and manufacture of demanding polymer products and related services. Its history stretches all the way back to 1898, when it was known as the Finnish Rubber Factory, later merging with the Nokia Group. It has been trading under the name Teknikum since 1989.

In its current incarnation, Teknikum has four production plants in Finland and one in Hungary, alongside a sales company in Germany and a sales office in Russia. It employs around 600 people across these sites and has an annual turnover of 65 million euros.

TEKNIKUM

"Our areas of expertise are product and service solutions for wear and corrosion protection, industrial hoses and hose assemblies for handling liquids and other materials, and customer-tailored and manufactured polymer products," explains the CEO.

TEKNIKUM'S BUSINESS UNITS

Teknikum operates as six business units across two countries:

FINLAND

LINING BU - Rubber lining services for pipes, containers or tanks at industrial plants. Mill lining components for grinding mills.

MOULDED PRODUCTS BU -

Produces moulded products from respiratory mask components to rubber railway level crossings

INDUSTRIAL HOSES BU -

Designs and develops rubber hoses for a wide variety of industries

COMPOUNDS BU -

Manufactures high-quality rubber compounds for different product applications and industrial processes.

HUNGARY

FOAM BU - Offers custom foam supplies for the automotive, packaging and furniture industries

PLASTIC BU - Produces durable multi-use plastic products, for industries such as automotive

MOULDED PRODUCTS BU -Serves various Central-European OEM's and brands

Teknikum serves various industries internationally, such as industrial plants and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). It consists of six different business units, and has a strong background in wear protection, respiratory mask components and polymer components for railways. The group is also renowned for its largescale rubber hoses, used in industries such as mining and construction, and is continually researching and developing new products for the market.

"With our own rubber compounds production, we have excellent opportunities to meet the needs of our customers, and with a wide range of products, we are able to offer comprehensive customised solutions to our customers," Hämäläinen says.

"Thanks to our long history, the organisation has accumulated a huge amount of know-how, which we are able to offer to our customers both as products and related services," he adds.

The company was recently awarded a 'Made in Finland' Key Flag symbol for its industrial hoses and custom polymer products. This symbol indicates that a product has been designed and manufactured in Finland - it is associated with positive images of a product being safe, responsible, reliable, and creating local jobs.

"We are indeed proud of having the right to use the Finnish "Key flag brand" on our packaging and in our communication material, this has usually a high value, especially, for our domestic customers," explains Cebastian Doepel, Director of the Compounds BU.

"We Finns love our nature and we have a high standard of environmental responsibility. We are proud of our strong industrial roots and knowledge, which helps us to show up as an interesting counterpart not only for our customers but also for suppliers, employees and investors," adds Timo Kokkonen, Director of the Lining BU.

Teknikum's CEO stresses the emphasis that the group places on local production and sustainable principles.

"Sustainable development is a cornerstone of our renewed strategy, both in terms of the environmental, social and economic perspective. We have implemented numerous projects in recent years and in the Sustainability Roadmap just published, we will





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TEKNIKUM

FOCUS ON: TEKNIKUM'S INDUSTRIAL HOSES BUSINESS UNIT

"Our goal is to become the most modern hose manufacturer in Europe," explains Jere Olkkonen, Director of the Industrial Hoses Business Unit. "One part of this is investing in production lines - in November 2020, Teknikum decided to buy new machinery for large scale rubber connection hoses and bends."

Teknikum is constantly developing new hoses. The material handling hose with a ceramic inner layer was initially launched by the group a decade ago. With competitors beginning to catch up and release similar products, Teknikum has continued to innovate, producing hoses with a steel inner layer for more demanding applications. It has also created the Teknikum ALER-TEK system to control the wear of the hoses – it alerts end-users when hoses should be replaced, to avoid any additional repair costs.

The unit has just launched a new extra-light version of Teknikum's working hose, Teknikum Carbon Extra Light S Antistatic, which is designed for manual handling on



suction or tank trunks. Another of its products soon to enter the market is the Teknikum Fluor-Tek SD PTFE; its inner PTFE layer means it can be used with the most aggressive chemicals.

"Teknikum is also the only industrial hose manufacturer in the whole of northern Europe. That makes our position even stronger and we are therefore willing to share the philosophy of creating more jobs for local people," Olkkonen says.

"All people working at Teknikum are the reason for us being a successful hose manufacturer in Europe. And naturally we are very proud of having Made in Finland status with us also in the future."

Jani Hämäläinen, Teknikum Group CEO

MANUFACTURING





Above: Teknicross rubber level crossing elements Left: Teknikum's production line. Top right: Teknikum's industrial hoses

continue to sharpen our operations and set, for example, science-based targets for cutting emissions," he explains.

The group is heavily independent when it comes to raw materials, as it has its own compound factory. However, critical components such as reinforcements and packaging materials are handled by its suppliers.

"Choosing right partners is extremely important and Teknikum has a policy in sustainable and environmentally friendly solutions and subcontractors," explains Olkkonen.

The Compound BU also has a longterm relationship with nearby Tampere University. Many of the staff in its R&D department have studied engineering and chemistry at the university, and have completed their thesis work at Teknikum, continuing to work with the company after.

Teknikum values research and development. It is expanding towards smart solutions and IoT, for which new partners are necessary. Its goal: to be a forerunner in developing innovative solutions that create value for its customers.

CONTINUING TO DEVELOP

Each of Teknikum's business units has ambitious goals for the upcoming year. Hoses BU aims to increase sales, preferably with 10 percent organic growth, in Nordic countries, Russia and Germany.

"Creating more efficient sales channel is the key to success. We must become more known for Teknikum's high quality offering, especially within material handling and petrochemical solutions," adds Olkkonen.

The Lining BU will also focus on profitability, making investments into its products and services. Meanwhile, the Moulded Products BU will be embarking on some important OEM projects next year.

All units have a commitment to developing new products and doing so in a sustainable manner.

"We will continue even more to focus on developing new compounds with recycled and sustainable raw materials and changing the ingredients of existing compound recipes with more environmental ingredients With some customers we are exploring the possibility of grinding their compound material waste into pulverised form - we would re-use it as much as possible in the new compound we would produce for them," explains the Director of Compounds BU.

All in all, Hämäläinen and his management team are optimistic about what 2021 and beyond has in store for Teknikum.

The CEO concludes the conversation by reiterating his desire to continue modernising the company.

"I believe that biggest trends impacting general rubber goods industry are Industry 4.0 through automation, 3D Printing and Big Data, as well as sustainability through developing new and improved materials and use of secondary raw materials," he says.

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MELECS GROUP

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Manufacturing Melecs

Bernhard Pulferer, CEO at Melecs Group, discusses the introduction of new technology to harness efficiency at his organisation

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Matthew Taylor

he Fourth Industrial Revolution is here.

And with it comes technological innovation like never before. Artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and robotics are being leveraged by manufacturers across the world in a bid to scale up efficiency previously unseen.

"The manufacturing industry is becoming increasingly exciting, especially with all the recent trends coming up, such as automation, robot technologies, and digitalisation," says Bernhard Pulferer, CEO at Melecs Group.

"From my perspective, this industry is an important sector of every modern, successful economy - in emerging countries as well as in highly developed countries. Looking at 2020 and the impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the manufacturing industry was standing strong and remained a pillar of the economy despite the circumstances."

Indeed, the pandemic has largely accelerated digital transformation journeys for some companies. Almost overnight, organisations had to rethink day-to-day operations and find safer, COVID-secure ways of working. This was only amplified in a recent McKinsey survey which found that 93 percent of manufacturing and supply chain professionals plan to focus on resilience of their supply chain, with 90 percent planning to invest in talent for digitalisation.

Today, manufacturers can deploy digital solutions beyond the manufacturing plant that can reach across the end-to-end value chain to address planning challenges related to disruptions at suppliers, production plants, operational challenges in managing workplace health risks, and delivery challenges posed at transportation modes or in warehouses.

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For Pulferer, he felt the pull of the manufacturing industry from the beginning.

"It still hasn't let go of me," he muses. "I have degrees in electrical engineering and business administration. After holding several positions in the Rolling Stock business in Austria and United States, I became COO of Melecs in 2009 as well as being CEO a few years later." Melecs is a major electronics engineering and manufacturing service provider and is a reliable and flexible partner who responds quickly and with first-class quality. Melecs provides everything from a single source: from development, engineering, and project management through industrialisation, production, and logistics.

In 2018, Melecs unveiled a \$25

million factory in Mexico and became a 70 percent majority shareholder of Prettl Electronics Queretaro in a bid to grow into US markets. Pulferer believes that this launch has allowed Melecs to provide even more intensive support to the market and local customers, with this majority stake representing a key step in the strategic global positioning of the company.

A CLOSER LOOK INTO **MELECS**

MELECS IS ACTIVE IN FOUR BUSINESS SECTORS: Automotive Control Systems, Automotive Lighting Systems, Home Appliance Systems, and Industrial Electronics. The organisation provides services in development and validation of electronics products as well as industrialisation, manufacturing and logistics services. Melecs relies on innovative solutions tailored specifically to its customers.

Melecs serves its international customers locally in the Americas, Europe, and Asia. In addition, it has four

state-of-the-art electronic manufacturing locations in Austria, Hungary, China, and Mexico, while possessing sales and engineering offices in Austria and the United States. There is also a research and development facility in Vienna, Austria, and a validation centre in Hungary.

The organisation's customers hold strong positions in their respective markets. Its components are encountered in everyday life in the form of electronic controllers in cars, from high-end international manufacturers, or in household appliances across the European markets.

Over the years, Melecs has attained over 90 percent of its sales with customers outside of Austria.





Testing Commercial Vehicle Powertrains According to the Latest Standards

Electrified commercial vehicles are picking up speed – either with a battery-electric powertrain or a hybrid drive system. Mooser EMC Technik GmbH in Ludwigsburg is already carrying out the necessary tests for electromagnetic compatibility (EMC) in commercial vehicle powertrains on the component level – reliably and with a high level of expertise.

However, as their power output and torque are higher than those of a passenger car, electrified commercial vehicle powertrains have high demands with regard to electromagnetic compatibility. In addition, the increased size of the drive components requires new testing concepts. Mooser EMC Technik GmbH in Ludwigsburg provides the best solution to these challenges. The company has developed the eCHAMBER* for EMC tests on the powerful electric motors, transmissions, inverters, clutches, drive shafts and axles used in commercial vehicles.

The size and performance of the measuring chamber are designed specifically for the dimensions of powertrains in buses and trucks. This means that it can easily handle drive power and braking power of several hundred kilowatts, voltages of up to 1000 volts and currents of up to 500 amps. Successful customer tests on hybrid transmissions with a power output of several hundred kilowatts and several thousand Nm of torque for trucks with an overall weight of more than 7.5 tonnes have confirmed the concept of the test chamber.

The chamber has successfully tested all components of commercial vehicle electric drive systems with regard to their electromagnetic compatibility. One speciality of Mooser is the measurement of the coupling of EMC interference through the drive train – from the electric motor through the mechanical transmission and right through to the axles. The eCHAMBER® is not only designed specifically for commercial vehicle dimensions, it has also been developed according to the very latest technical standards. For example, it meets the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17025, as is the case with all testing equipment supplied by Mooser. This standard focuses above all on the reliability and quality of the methods used. This guarantees that Mooser obtains its laboratory results for all measurements relating to commercial vehicle EMC in a technically competent manner, thus ensuring their international acceptance.

Mooser - a global EMC specialist

Mooser EMC Technik GmbH in Ludwigsburg and its sister company Jakob Mooser GmbH in Egling near Munich are specialists for all aspects of electromagnetic compatibility. Their range of services extends from studies, performance specifications and advance consulting to the development of EMC together with their customers and the qualification of the products on the test stand. Mooser carries out tests according to all common international standards as well as the factory standards of companies from the automotive and aviation sectors. In addition, Mooser is authorised to carry out type-approval tests in accordance with the EU Motor Vehicles Directive.

Image: The eCHAMBER® from Mooser is suitable for electric powertrain components of commercial vehicles. Shown here is a hybrid transmission.



www.mooser-emctechnik.de | www.mooser-consulting.de



If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you.

Fred DeVito



FROM IDEA TO SERIES

CEFEG understands itself as a partner of industry in the field of efficient stamping and bending processes. We deliver single parts as well as assemblies, especially of complex forming degree. CEFEG is located very centrally in the southwest of Saxony, in Chemnitz, the culture capital of Europe in 2025. With a 200 year long industrial tradition, Chemnitz has developed into a modern technology and R&D hub with a focus on automotive and automotive suppliers, information technology as well as machine and plant engineering and construction. Hence, CEFEG is in a good neighbourhood.

CEFEG has a strong focus on further development and process innovations. Our philosophy is to fo-

Benchmark technology, innovation, people, and continuous development are some of the key words of our mindset and our philosophy.

We search for sophisticated projects with high-level requirements which give us the opportunity to further increase our know-how.

The development and building of individual tooling concepts and accompaniment all the way to series production is the core of our services and offers flexibility and adaptability for quick changing conditions. cus on strategic partnerships marked by respect, flexibility, and a high customer emphasis. This also applies to our suppliers and partners. We enjoy working with benchmark technology like Bihler Maschinenfabrik for stamping and bending machines or Wafios for wire bending machines.

Continuously, we face new challenges to implement new technologies which extend our portfolio. We are open to learn, innovate and improve our processes and therefore offer our customers highly efficient processes.



Furthermore, our customers benefit from one of the most modern stamping and bending technologies which enables us to produce small and large series cost-efficiently and with fast reaction times. Investments in new technologies like a blister machine, winding technology, take-up reels and new press technology with welding station and Otto Vision optical measuring system show our ability to adapt to the current demands of the market in the electronics sector or the automotive industry.



TECHNOLOGY, RESPONSIBILITY & INNOVATION

Common course towards the future

Like many SMEs, CEFEG is undertaking the process of company succession. Founder, visionary and shareholder Hans-Georg Reichel (CEO, 71 years old) built the company into what it is today, after an insolvency in 2005. Since that time the connection with people has played an important role. Without the contact with Torsten Kerl (also shareholder of CEFEG), the purchase of the company and the idea to make it fit for the future would not have come about.

Since 1st January 2020 Dr. Denise Klinger (39 years old, daughter of Hans-Georg Reichel) is member of the management board of CEFEG. Now, great technical experience and the spirit of entrepreneurship meet new ideas regarding leadership, digitalization, and innovation. Coming from completely different backgrounds, father and daughter love to discuss strategies and are both of the opinion that continuous development, flexibility, uncommon ways and curiosity will lead to sustainable company growth. This can only be realized by teamwork and open-minded employees with a high level of commitment



Social responsibility

to the company.

We understand entrepreneurship as responsibility. Responsibility for our employees, for our customers, for our suppliers as well as for society and our nature.

We value engaging in sports, education, and culture to support and develop our region and to contribute to social activities. Our fascination for this engagement stems from the stories behind the institutions or associations – there are always inspiring stories of people or about the relationships between them. It is worthwhile to support them and we are proud of the things they make and create.

Development & Challenges for 2021+

Also, in 2021 and beyond CEFEG plans to go forward and face challenging projects like the introduction of a new and sustainable ERPsystem to push forward the digitalization of the company and make processes more efficient. We also plan to build a new production site in Chemnitz in preparation for future orders and new customers. A project concerning leadership culture is still underway and provides new perspectives for our employees.

Since the end of 2019 we have been participating in the Scandinavian market by opening a sales office named CEFEG Noridc ApS in Herning Denmark. This year were are going to convert promising contacts into orders.







"We wanted to develop our international manufacturing footprint," explains Pulferer.

"We investigated different approaches - greenfield and acquisition - as well as locations such as Canada, the US, and Mexico to determine the best approach. Ultimately, for competitive reasons we decided Mexico was the best outcome.

"Since then, we've integrated this site into the Melecs Production System, introduced additional necessary technologies, and already placed some programmes of our existing global customers in the area of home appliances and automotive there."

Indeed, Melecs is used to expansion. Following on from the acquisitions of the electronics production sites in Austria, Hungary and now Mexico, Melecs launched a new electronics plant in Wuxi, China, in 2016. The production plant supplies the Asian market in the automotive, white goods, lighting, communication, and industry sector and was primarily chosen due to its geographical proximity to major customers, offering an area of 3,500 metre-squared to serve the Asian market.

Recruiting and retaining the right talent is an essential component to success at any business. In terms of Melecs Group, Pulferer is adamant that staff remain the heartbeat of the company.

"Our employees are the most valuable assets in the company, besides the excellent relationship with our customers and the partners in the supply chain," he says.

DID YOU KNOW?

Melecs stands for "Making Electronics Smart."

In 2018, Melecs was the overall winner of the "Factory Award", which is considered the toughest production competition in Europe. The jurors were particularly impressed by the in-house development and implementation of a production control system and the use of collaborative robots.







The biggest praise for a supplier is trust and satisfaction expressed by their customer.

In 2012 we acquired a large company acting in the electronics industries. Through our competence and close cooperation, we are pleased to have maintained this relationship for many years and we are proud that this customer recommended CEFEG to Melecs. This has enabled us to build a new sustainable partnership in which we can invest the same level of trust and caring.

Both partners obtain a special kind of crimp from CEFEG which is used for automotive interior. The development and the manufacturing of this part required many hours of development effort and a great deal of technical know-how. CEFEG would like to prove itself to Melecs as a competent supplier for complex and complicated projects.

We are searching for challenges to improve our processes and knowledge and to develop further together with our customer. In view of this the future partnership between Melecs and CEFEG is important to us because we value Melecs as a successful player in the electronical industry and look forward to joint progression. It is our claim to create added value to Melecs and to accompany and support it on its exciting journey.

Choosing CEFEG as a supplier shows to us that Melecs is also willing to put significant trust in our company. We are proud to be a partner of Melecs and look forward to a long-term partnership.



www.cefeg.de

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MELECS GROUP



"OUR PRODUCTS HELP TO MAKE DRIVING SAFER; THEY ILLUMINATE STREETS BETTER AND HELP IN THE TRANSFER OF THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY TO MORE ENVIRONMENTAL-FRIENDLY DRIVE TECHNOLOGIES"

"Management provides frameworks to departments and individual employees. These frameworks describe the specific operational results a department or an individual employee should bring.

"How to achieve the required results is the responsibility of the department or the individual employee. This leadership method promotes independent and responsible actions. Positive feedback of our staff encourages us to follow this path further. We guide our employees from the first steps in our company throughout their career with Melecs and encourage them to release their full potential."

The importance of developing key, strategic partnerships holds the key to success for most companies. In order to harvest successful, long-term relationships with suppliers, the partnerships must be mutually beneficial.

"Partnerships and good supplier relationships play an important role," says Pulferer. "We work with reliable, competitive, and ethically suitable partners. Close partnership in the development phase of a program, especially on the drawing parts, is key to meet the tight project schedules. Especially in difficult times, for example if there is a shortage situation in the supply chain, good partnerships with our suppliers pay off."

Further, sustainability is a key pillar at Melecs. The company's products help save energy and other resources, while also make life easier for consumers.

Innovativ Group

Innovativ Group has an origin of 20 years. It is a hungarian family owned Itd working in the field of logistics in the industry park of Győr, Hungary.

Innovativ Special Transport Ltd provides service for Melecs since 2013, which cooperation widened since then also in the volume of partnership and also in the depth of the partnership.

Alltogether we have 157 employees, and provide warehousing, commissioning and transporting, JIT services with all the certifications needed.



www.innovativgroup.hu

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"Our products help to make driving safer; they illuminate streets better and help in the transfer of the automotive industry to more environmentalfriendly drive technologies," explains Pulferer.

"We are striving for optimising our CO2 footprint, using smart logistics concepts, utilising digital media, adding more electric driven vehicles to our fleet, and having installed a huge PV-system on the roof at our facility in Siegendorf. Finally, we're taking our share of responsibility in the communities where we are operating our facilities. A comprehensive CSR report about all our activities in this field is put together on a yearly basis."

In recent years, Melecs has been recognised for its achievements in the industry. The firm was recently honoured with the AAM Supplier Excellence Award for innovation performance at its annual Supplier Day. During 2019, Melecs was previously awarded with awards such as the Burgenland Innovation Award, EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award as well as being awarded silver at the 2019 Export Award.

Pulferer believes that what sets his organisation apart is Melecs' ability to continuously place the customer at the forefront of decisionmaking. According to Pulferer, it is this customer-centric approach that differentiates Melecs from competitors.

"It's important to build a strong and stable team with the right mindset and a customer-orientated focus in the entire organisation to bring success," he says.

"Strong R&D capabilities in hard and software as well as Mechanics enable a focus on innovative solutions. Our strong international footprint allows us to serve our global acting customers locally. All of our manufacturing locations operate at the same high level of the Melecs Production System standard, striving for operational excellence."

Looking to the future, Pulferer is optimistic about the upcoming years.

"We're looking forward to overcoming the COVID-19 crisis, being able to travel and meet partners in person again to further strengthen our relationships, and to visit our international sites again," he says.

"Customer focus and operational excellence will be the key priorities over the coming year. As a result of our high performance, we will also see volume growth again also in 2021."

⊗ melecs

MELECS GROUP

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Finland's Dynamic Manufacturing Sector

Executives from Ouneva Group discuss the organisation's transformation journey and its position in Finland's manufacturing industry today

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Matthew Taylor

The manufacturing industry in Finland is in an exciting phase right now, we are witnessing a new era of interesting technologies and the amount of new tech start-ups is unforeseen."

Those are the words of Mika Kosunen, Chief Marketing Officer at Ouneva Group.

Having worked in manufacturing his whole adult life, Kosunen has witnessed the evolution the sector has undergone, particularly as digital transformation has come to the fore in the last decade.

"My interest towards technology began very early, as I was surrounded by figures and companies who were creating amazing and interesting products and projects. Technology and manufacturing have been the joys of my life, so for that reason I have always gravitated towards tasks and companies which operate in that field."

Kosunen has served in his current role at Ouneva Group as its CMO since January 2020. As an international contract manufacturer and R&D partner in a number of industries, Ouneva Group operates with a wide technology portfolio that covers the entire manufacturing process of metal, plastic, electronics, and plating in contract manufacturing.

Indeed, the company's journey is interesting. Having initially been founded as Ouneva Oy by Heikki Nevalainen in 1972, the organisation was born with a mindset of developing high-quality connectors for the fastgrowing electrical industry of that period. In the years that followed, the Group has grown exponentially as a result of rising demand for its products. Today, Ouneva Group is a financially robust and renowned partner within the industry, while still being owned by the Nevalainen family. Since first being established. Ouneva's guiding principles remain reliability, quality assurance, and constant development.

Ouneva Group consists of a portfolio of companies, each serving

OUNEVA GROUP'S COMPANIES

ALSIVA OY – Die-casting of aluminum and zinc.

ESWIRE OÜ – Electronic and electrical systems assembly.

JOTWIRE OY – Contract manufacturing of electronic and electrical systems.

OUNEVA OY - Contract manufacturing of electrical connectors and sheet metal parts.

TOP SPEED Oy – Powder coating.

VALUKUMPU OY – Precision injection moulding and contract manufacturing of plastic parts.

ASE UTRA Oy – Manufacturing of rifle suppressors.





"The Ouneva Group way of thinking and operating guarantees top-quality, efficiency, and reliability" – Mika Kosunen

a distinctively unique purpose. These are Alsiva Oy, Eswire Oü, Jotwire Oy, Ouneva Oy, Top Speed Oy, Valukumpu Oy, and Ase Utra Oy.

Kosunen believes that what sets Ouneva Group apart is its ability to provide a range of technologies for different applications while also operating as one organisation.

"The Ouneva Group way of thinking and operating guarantees topquality, efficiency, and reliability," he continues.

"As a partner we can offer the latest manufacturing technologies and a strong R&D know-how to ensure our customers' products are top-quality and stand out from the crowd. With our strong attitude and fast decision making, we enable the fastest route from product design to market without compromises.

"Ouneva Group handles everything concerning manufacturing and quality thus giving our customers the ability to focus on innovation, marketing and selling. Our flexibility and vast technology portfolio enable and showcase the best manufacturing processes and materials for each phase of the products lifecycle. We care about the environment and it shows from our energy efficiency projects in our factories, and in the investments on new efficient machinery and materials. Our location enables low emissions regarding logistics, and investments on energy efficiency ensures sustainable development."

Over the past few years, the manufacturing sector has experienced significant digital transformation as companies around the globe begin to digitalise operations, and Finland has been a frontrunner in hat technological revolution. The Finnish manufacturing space is considered dynamic as the introduction of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation is felt country-wide and greater efficiency is harnessed like never before.

In 2018, Ouneva Group established its own automation team. Now consisting of 10 employees that oversees the design and manufacture of automation equipment - considered a vital investment for the company.

"We're currently working on multiple automation projects where volume and quality demands are at stake and where automation is the only efficient solution," says Kosunen.

Luvata Pori

Copper - the answer for many applications in the electrical engineering industry

Luvata is a world leader in metal solutions manufacturing and related engineering services to industries such as renewable energy, automotive, healthcare, and power generation and distribution. The company's continued success is attributed to its longevity, technological excellence and strategy of building partnerships beyond metals. **Employing approximately 1,400** staff in 7 countries, Luvata works in partnership with its customers and is a group company of Mitsubishi Materials Corporation.

The experience of Luvata Pori Oy dates back over 80 years when Outokumpu built its first factory in Pori, Finland. Luvata's long and strong skills in copper fabrication and metallurgy are leading the way in designing and manufacturing custom specialty products developed in cooperation with customers including the Ouneva Group.

The high electrical and thermal conductivity of Luvata's oxygen free copper is the foundation for many new developments that support a sustainable modern world. In addition to new products and innovations, Luvata is continuously improving its production processes to enable custom-made products - in the specific quantity required -delivered on-time to customers' door.

Luvata's vision is to use its unique technology know-how and highly efficient processes to help its customers overcome the challenges in new product development.

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OUNEVA GROUP

"Our team has made dozens of automation projects since starting in 2018. Our know-how on different applications from machine vision, robotics and servo enables practically unlimited possibilities. We can offer automated manufacturing processes for each of our technologies to produce products from metals, electronics, plastics, plating, and assemblies and so forth."

In recent years, there has been a shift in mindset at Ouneva as the company has begun to heavily invest in the expansion of operations as manufacturers seek to leverage local suppliers rather than use suppliers based in the east.

"For the last few decades, Finnish companies had a trend to outsource product manufacturing to remote locations in Asia." explains Kosunen.

"We're now seeing waves of companies which are bringing manufacturing closer to themselves.

TALENT MANAGEMENT AT OUNEVA



Mika Käyhkö is the Plant Manager at Valukumpu Oy. He recognises the value in talent management and believes that recruiting and re-training the right employees is a key component to success, particularly in Finland. "We are able to offer larger entities compared to other local competitors. Compared to global contract manufacturers. I believe we are more flexible and

agile. As well, we offer domestic customers a local option. Cleanroom production expansion and development are the main focus," explains Käyhkö. "Without forgetting other areas of activity. In terms of sales, the biggest challenge is to expand the customer base to neighbouring countries."

"Finland's level of education has also been honoured globally and is reflected in the fact that the level of education and competence is also very high at all employee levels. Through very small and day-to-day things, employees can be satisfied and motivated to achieve a common goal."

"We offer a wide field of possibilities to our staff," adds Kosunen. "Despite automation being vital to ensure we remain competitive, we wouldn't be able to operate at such a high level without our talented and diligent employees. In order to keep our position strong in our industry, we need to educate and support our employees. We offer different training from in-house to outsourced depending on the needs and interests."








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Organisations are now more aware of the risks on quality, logistics and schedules by operating with complex and long-distance supplier networks. As climate awareness is increasing so are the demands on sustainable development."

Keijo Kurki is the CEO of Jotwire Oy, a renowned contract manufacturer of electronic and electrical system assemblies and has been with the Ouneva Group since 2002. Kurki believes that manufacturing in Asia only makes sense if you sell the products to the Asian market.

"Many of our customers have taken one step back from globalisation," says Kurki.

"Importing of semi-finished goods is not always financially reasonable. Specifically, slow sea cargo is the problem. Nowadays, it doesn't make sense to carry big value of inventories in the supply chain. Short lead time throughout the whole supply chain is beneficial for all parties. The high-level automated process ensures also quality and short lead time from local suppliers."

"We're currently working with multiple companies that are about to withdraw their manufacturing from Asia," adds Kosunen.

"Among these are companies with products that are manufactured by die-casting or plastic injection moulding and are assembled with electronics. We are also having the discussions whether it is reasonable for our customers to continue investing on their own assembly production or outsource the whole systems from Ouneva Group.

"As we have been investing on the facilities and technologies, we can offer more competitive and up to date manufacturing equipment. Our product testing knowledge know-how enables us to deliver our customers' electronic products or systems directly to their customer if needed."

Asia is currently the biggest

continental emission producer. Kosunen also acknowledges that by using suppliers from relatively shorter distances reduces the emissions from logistics.

"As a result of the global environmental situation beginning to deteriorate due largely to emissions, responsible companies are reacting to this evolvement by demanding more environmentally friendly ways to produce goods, while optimising logistics and focusing on efficient and clean manufacturing methods and materials."

Despite sustainability and a greener approach being considered a priority to manufacturers over the course of 2020, another considerable challenge has been the impact caused by the coronavirus pandemic which has impacted individuals and businesses to all in its path. Almost overnight, it caused operations to cease and prompted most companies to rethink operations in order to prioritise safety.















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However, Pekka Heikkinen, CFO at Ouneva Group, believes that Finland's manufacturing sector has responded well.

"Industrial manufacturing in Finland has bounced back from the COVID-19 pandemic because of increasing costs and delays of supply from emerging Asian countries," Heikkinen continues.

"Increasing levels of highclass automation in industrial manufacturing will guide the productivity development in Finland and provide more opportunities."

"The Finnish industry has increased slower than other sectors over the past few years," adds Kurki.

"Finland will get through the pandemic with its punctual way of following instructions. When demand recovers across the world, the strongest companies will take the market share and it will create significant potential for us."

With 2021 in mind, Kurki believes that his organisation can build on the progress made so far and scale automation to new levels.





Ouneva Group's automation team consists of 10 employees that oversees the design and manufacture of automation equipment - considered a vital investment for the company

"Our highly skilled and capable automation team designs and executes solutions for customer specific projects," he says.

"Our strategy is also to substantially increase automation level by investments to our production and put new production technologies to use. During 2020, we have set up a new fully automated potting line and a high-tech parylene coating process to serve our customers with products where PCBAs need extremely good protection against circumstances."

Meanwhile, Kosunen has a clear vision of the direction he wants Ouneva to grow over the next couple of years with an eye on harnessing greater efficiency into operations.

"Our goal for the next year is to



grow with our current and new customers," says Kosunen, bringing our conversation to a close.

"We want to grow our customer base in the electrotechnical, mechanical, electronics, medical and energy efficiency. These sectors have brought us stable business through economic fluctuations when some sectors are at the bottom, and others are in the midst of a flux. We will continue to increase automation in our facilities and add more low emission materials for our customers selection."



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PLOCKMATIC

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Sweden's Manufacturing Drive

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Jan Marstorp, CEO of Plockmatic International Group, discusses the evolution of manufacturing in Sweden

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Matthew Taylor

In Sweden, we're quite traditional," affirms Jan Marstorp, CEO of Plockmatic Group.

"Although, like many other countries, we underwent a trend in the late 1990s and early 2000s where operations were outsourced. However, in the last few years, we're beginning to see a new trend of operations beginning to come back to Sweden. Generally, Swedish people are highly-educated so people are very familiar with the culture of manufacturing."

Sweden operates with a robust manufacturing sector, which accounts for around 20 percent of the country's total GDP. Overall, manufacturing consists of approximately 70 percent of Swedish exports and creates more than one million jobs. Swedish manufacturers were among the first to leverage 3D printing techniques into operations. Both component and tool manufacturers have been introduced to test new manufacturing methods and materials, in addition to traditional tooling and Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) machining.

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PLOCKMATIC



Headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, Plockmatic is a global supplier of finishing solutions for the print and mailing industry. Possessing more than 40 years of experience, Plockmatic has become renowned for being efficient and flexible, with

INLINE SOLUTIONS

- Booklet Makers (Canon, Konica Minolta, Ricoh, Sharp, Xerox/Fuji Xerox)
- Long Sheet Feeding Solutions (Long Sheet Feeder for Ricoh, Long Sheet Interposer for Ricoh)
- Long Sheet Stacking Solutions (Canon, Konica Monolta, Ricoh)

its technologies connecting inline to a digital printing system or process applications offline. The firm operates under both the Plockmatic and Morgana brand name and is now active in over 50 countries.

Marstorp has been CEO of Plockmatic since 2005. In this role, he is responsible for leading the organisation through three business areas as well as contract manufacturing. During his tenure, Marstorp has delivered profitable growth through both organically and acquisition. Prior to joining the firm, he served as both a Managing Director and a Production Director with the organisation since initially joining in 1998. A native of Sweden, Marstorp graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1987 from the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Plockmatic is a company that refuses to stand still. Over the past few years, it has sought to grow through acquisition and purchased Morgana

Deluxe Stitcher International

Deluxe Stitcher traces its lineage back to Bostitch and Thomas Briggs, who invented wire stitching in 1896. A specialist in the wire stitching business for over a century, Deluxe Stitcher offers partners both a wealth of experience and a comprehensive range of services and products, ensuring optimum results for manufacturers, printing companies, dealers and engineers. From automated machines to specialist stitchers, inline stitching to book and box production and other industrial applications: Deluxe Stitcher continues to serve them all.

Manufactured in the USA and distributed worldwide, the quality of our precision-made parts, heads and machines is, as our clients agree, second to none. Deluxe Stitcher International is based in the Republic of Ireland, ideally placed to support and facilitate customers, engineers and manufacturers located in the UK. Europe. Africa. Middle East and Indian sub-continent. The supply of products, technical assistance and logistical support from this Irish office provides a faster turnaround for customers and partners located in these regions. The quality of our products and services is reflected in our continued professional relationships with reputable partners, such as Plockmatic.

Our product range includes original or alternative parts for the following familiar trade names:

Bostitch, ISP, Deluxe, Muller Martini(TM), Osako, Monotype, M2000, Magnatek, Interlake, Bliss, etc.

In short, the range of products, services, customer support and technical knowledge offered by Deluxe Stitcher International should make it your first, and only, stop for all and any wire stitching requirements.

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PLOCKMATIC

Systems in 2013, followed by KGS srl of Mestrino in 2016 and the purchase of Watkiss Automation two years later. Now in 2021, Plockmatic is launching a new range of products in a bid to diversify. Having been involved in the manufacturing space his entire working life, Marstorp has witnessed the evolution of the manufacturing industry in Sweden first-hand over

eets into beautifully

the years and understand today's necessity to diversify.

"We try to provide complete portfolio of products. One thing we work hard is to get the benchmark price performance. We try for cost efficient units to bring features from high-end segments to the midsegments at affordable prices — it's unique to us. "You must have a broad solution offering because companies these days can't afford to rely on one solution."

In particular, Marstorp points to the Plockmatic PBM5000 Series for Ricoh as one of his company's most important projects over the past few years.

"We're very strong in providing binding for books," says Marstorp.

"When you staple a book, you tend to get a back that is bulky. However, with our patent technology, we bind it well and you can print the spine and distribute very efficiently. We've launched a new range of products which has taken us further to expand application within this market. Our acquisition of Watkiss Automation meant that this technology was introduced into the high-end sector and accelerated our crease and folds technology."

"We turn flat We turn flat heets into beautifully finished documents" into heautifully

"HAVING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS MEANS THAT WE CAN ENGAGE THEM IN THE ENGINEERING PHASE TO ENSURE WE DON'T MAKE PARTS THAT ARE VERY EXPENSIVE TO PRODUCE"

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A PLOCKMATIC SUBSIDIARY

MORGANA SYSTEMS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Plockmatic International. The firm supplies a comprehensive range of innovative and market-leading offline post-press equipment for customers involved in the numerous activities of the printing industry worldwide. Based in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (UK), Morgana is closely linked to Watkiss Automation, another innovative supplier of post-press equipment owned by Plockmatic Group.

Having started by introducing the AutoCreaser at the turn of the century in 2000, Morgana Systems has been a pioneer in developing cuttingedge solutions to cope with the special requirements of the digital printer. Morgana Systems is primarily the preferred offline finishing partner for all of the leading manufacturers of digital print engines, while Plockmatic manufactures a range of innovative inline finishing solutions. With the future in mind, Marstorp is keen to stress that despite the challenges of 2020, he is optimistic that the market will rebound strongly.

"COVID-19 has meant we've had a set-back unlike we could have imagined," he says. "Despite the struggles of the second quarter, we did experience a recovery in Q3 and Q4.

"People expect that 2021 will be a year of major recovery but that might take until 2022 because the situation is still ongoing. I do anticipate a tough

Plockmatic outsource the majority of its sales by leveraging benchmark suppliers. Marstorp is clear that by utilising outside vendors, it significantly scales efficiency for his organisation.

"We have ownership over all our engineering and make the electronics and the software ourselves," he explains.

"However, we think it's best to get outside vendors to produce parts for us otherwise it would cost us many hours that are better spent elsewhere. In this industry, we get a lower breakeven level, but the demand can vary which makes it unstable. "Outsourcing allows us to focus on building a strong and stable workforce to ensure we deliver high-quality products."

The importance of establishing key, strategic relationships is at the heart of long-term success. In order to harvest such positive collaborations with suppliers, Marstorp believes it's important to be as cost-efficient as possible.

"Having long-term relationships means that we can engage them in the engineering phase to ensure we don't make parts that are very expensive to produce," he says. year as we don't know the full impact it will have on the printing industry with people changing their behaviour and things becoming more online. This only showcases just how important diversifying product portfolios are in order to retain success. Despite that, the overall market is still seismic, so I do feel like we're still in a good position moving forward."

// Plockmatic Group

PLOCKMATIC

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Italian Manufacturing Innovation

We spoke to Luigi Costa, CEO of Mista spa, about the opportunities and obstacles presented to the firm in the wake of the past year, and its goals set for 2021

Writer: Marcus Kääpä | Project Manager: Matthew Taylor

he Italian automotive industry is home to some of the largest and most renowned companies in the world. From those that produce cars for the international market, such as Fiat and Alfa Romeo, to the more specialist and luxury brands such as Maserati, Ferrari, and Lamborghini, Italy boasts a multitude of companies that are key players in the automotive market.

But a closer look under the bonnet of the industry reveals a long and rich history of family-run companies and SMEs that form the backbone of the automotive sector. Production and assembly lines bring together the best of Italian automotive innovation utilising a wide array of parts mainly supplied by thirdparty businesses.

Mista SpA is one such firm with headquarters and manufacturing in Piedmont, as well as a further manufacturing plant in Tunisia. In the last decade Mista has consistently sought to

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improve and expand their Italian based research and development department (including an analysis laboratory), injection moulding and metal stamping facilities, and assembly and automatic lines.

Mista's primary services include stamping and welding of small metal parts, the injection moulding and finishing of thermoplastics, insert moulding, and the qualification and production of complex electromechanical assemblies.

For Luigi Costa, CEO of the company, the manufacturing of automotive parts for the wider industry is a privilege. He followed in his father's and uncles' footsteps and joined the company almost 20 years ago. In 2015, alongside his brothers Mario and Guido, he purchased the remaining 75 percent of Mista shares thus committing to the company, the locality, and to Italy.

Costa graduated in mechanical engineering from the Polytechnic of

MANUFACTURING

"At Mista there is a strong collaborative relationship between its people," – Luigi Costa, CEO

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Turin in 1995, before going on to be a Project Manager at Comau (now FCA Group – a part of Fiat Group), where he worked in the design and construction of automated production lines. He joined Mista in 2001 as manager of both

SERVICES AT A GLANCE

Mista produces small metal parts for household appliances, the automotive industry, and aim to satisfy all customers' requests. The company produces small metal parts from metal strips: blanked, riveted, threaded, deep drawn, and electro-welded parts. Products can be processed with surface treatment such as tumbling, cleaning, and oiling.

TREATMENTS:

These include tin plating, silver, gold, nickel plating, copper plating (substrate), white or yellow galvanic treatment, Geomet, and chromium plating. Steel parts can be processed internally with hardening and annealing treatments. Mista performs multiple services as well as manufacture rivets and micro profiles to be electro welded and coined, such as:

- Cutting
- Single electro welding
- Double electro welding
- Riveting
- Crimping
- Threading
- Bending
- Deep drawing
- Heat-treating
- Mono and bi-metallic rivets

the technical and commercial office of the company until 2015 – the year he took on the role of CEO. He continues to maintain the family-run ethos of the company.

"At Mista there is a strong collaborative relationship between its people," Costa begins.

"To this end we constantly try to add more technical and management skills in order to offer our customers co-engineering and co-design solutions. We strongly believe in our business, and the goals we have set for ourselves."

70 percent of Mista's operations are in the automotive sector, with another 15 percent dedicated to the electrical appliances industry, and the last portion is focused on providing an array of services to the manufacturing industry. Its main customers are Valeo, Marelli, Denso, Magna, Johnson Electric, Plastic Omnium, Danfoss, Themowatt, TE Connectivity, and Riello.

INNOVATION AND EDUCATION

Mista continues to innovate and invest as it develops its services, to this end it strives to forge and participate in working and research partnerships with national and international entities such as the Polytechnic of Turin.

It is through this alliance that Mista is participating to the construction of a car dashboard with significantly less wiring than the standard model. This reduction simplifies the use of the dashboard as well as making it much easier to assemble and produce, reducing complexity and increasing cost effectiveness. Mista's contribution is the supply of the connectors that link the dashboard and its electrical devices. This kind of innovation is an aspect of the firm that Costa is very proud of.

"The investment in the 3D printer was important and significant to allow our research and development department to have a prototype of the finished piece quickly and before the construction of the mould. Equally significant are the continuous investments in

CVL Macchine Speciali

CVL Macchine Speciali has two important areas for mechanical processing equipped with over 14 numerical controls, and on a software department, which is also able to customize each solution.

"Our thorough control of manufacturing processes allows us to be flexible and responsive when it comes to timelines".

To meet the needs of increasingly demanding and time-sensitive customers and to be competitive on the market, we have developed after sales assistance and manufacturing local service points, located in Mexico, Morocco, Brazil, East Europe.



www.cvlmacchinespeciali.it

software for mould design, moulding simulation process, and metrology applications," he tells us.

However, innovation is not the only aspect of the firm Costa deems important. Mista's employees are the life blood of the firm, and it is through their efforts that it continues to serve quality products and services to its many clientele.

"The investments which are the most important are those made in our workforce, the young, the qualified, and driven personnel," he informs us.

Once again in collaboration with the Polytechnic of Turin, Mista, among others, provides work experience placements for a master's programme that permits graduate engineers and technicians avail of a one day a week research-study placement through an apprenticeship contract.

"There is high demand for young engineers and technicians," Costa elaborates.



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We are a Company specialized in the Engineering, Manufacturing and Software development of machines and systems for the automation of production processes for the Automotive, White Industry, Medical and Food & Beverage sectors.

CVL S.r.I. manufactures automatic and semi-automatic lines for the assembly and testing of products as wipers, glow plugs, box compressors, brakes, airbags, headlamps and rear-lamps, mechanical systems, dashboards, control units, medical products, food and beverage products and in general all the products that need an automated system and process for the assembly and the testing.



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"It is fundamental that Mista stay in tune with technological and theoretical advances, our cooperation with the university allows young graduates to have a real and meaningful work experience before setting out on their desired career path, but at the same time provides Mista with a fresh point of view.

"We believe that Mista is an attractive

THERMOPLASTICS MOULDING, ASSEMBLING, AND TAMPO PRINTING

Mista produces more than 100 million pieces of thermoplastics per year in its moulding and over-moulding workshops in Cortiglione and Menzel Bouzelfa.

All together in the plants there are around 65 vertical and horizontal presses that range from 50 to 320 tonnes, as well as bi-injection presses ranging from 75 to 110 tonnes.

TUNISIA

Mista has dedicated manual and automatic assembling lines for the production of electromechanical components in Italy and in Tunisia.

In its plant in Menzel Bouzelfa a whole section dedicated to tampo printing is available where five pad painting machines are in use: three of them print with two colours, one with four colours, and one is dedicated to print bigger parts (up to 500 millimetres).

Additionally, its department is provided with heated ovens to warm-up the painted components.

opportunity for young engineers because of the projects and objectives that the company has set itself."

However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused obstacles that the firm has had to, and to some extent still has to, overcome. As well as operating in Tunisia. Mista's main HQ is based in rural Cortiglione in the heart of the Monferrato region (more widely known for its wine than its cars) where transport already faces certain infrastructural challenges. The pandemic presented a whole host of unimaginable hurdles from logistics to health and safety across every industry including that of automotive production. This challenge not only presented managerial migraines but also laid bare previously unperceived weaknesses, such as broadband infrastructure.

"Italian business activity throughout 2020 was certainly a very stimulating challenge," Costa tells us.

"There are many aspects that could be improved in terms of the organisation of the country (tax rules, access to credit for technological advancements, labour market rules, the justice system).





Mario Costa

MANUFACTURING

"Every year, Mista produces over 100 million pieces of thermplastics in its moulding and over-moulding workshops in Cortiglione and Menzel Bouzelfa"

Competition from industries in other countries is very strong, but the determination of the majority of entrepreneurs and workers to continue to keep Italian industry alive is always strong."

2021

For Mista, the industry challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Italy being the worst effected EU country) came in the form of a complete overhaul of health and safety procedures within the company, reduced demand for products, interruption of its graduate programme, weak broadband infrastructure, and logistical difficulties. "But the strength of business ties and partnerships has greatly benefitted and aided the firm in overcoming these obstacles", Costa explains.



"The close cooperation relationship with suppliers is, and has especially been in the past year, extremely important," he says.

"In particular, Mista works with suppliers of specific and specialist activities, such as plating, to increase performance in terms of quality and punctuality. What makes these partnerships even stronger is the increased level of communication so as to educate each other on our respective



as to avoid hiccups, foresee potential problems, iron out any issues, and to develop better solutions and future projects."

In the light of the negative effects on the automotive industry last year, and now that 2021 has come around, Mista's first goal is to become increasingly capable of offering co-engineering and co-design solutions to its customers – an ambition the firm is pursuing with great resolve.

Mista

MISTA SPA Tel: +39 0141 766827 Mario.costa@mista.it www.mista.it

MORAVIA CANS

MANUFACTURING

SETING THE STANDARD

We take a dive into Moravia Cans and explore the role it plays as a key component in the Czech Republic's manufacturing space

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Thomas Arnold

MORAVIA CANS

he manufacturing sector in the Czech Republic is unparalleled. Despite not being the cheapest country to supply the manufacturing industry, it is regarded as the most robust in Europe due to its high level of security, relative political stability, and its possession of economic and corporate strength.

As the Czech Republic's most important industry, manufacturing plays an influential role not only within the nation but also in Europe too. Over half of all Czech exports are automotive products, with the largest producer of automotive in the region being Volkswagen Group, the Toyota/ PSA joint venture, and Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Czech.



MORAVIA CANS' COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

EMBOSSING AND DEBOSSING

Moravia Cans operates patented technology that delivers true 360 allround embossing and debossing. This provides a unique and unrivaled appearance that protects valuable products from counterfeiting.

CAN BODY SHAPING

When it comes to full body shaping, Moravia Cans has been an innovator and is regarded as the first-choice supplier for complex shaping. Moravia Cans brings shape and design specification to reality and delivers something unique from its own expert design team.

HIGH PERFORMANCE, PRODUCTION LINES

Throughout the years, Moravia Cans has always pushed the boundaries to provide more and be the best. This means that seeking out the most advanced and fastest manufacturing lines and equipment to produce the best and highest quality products in the most efficient way.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is at the heart of operations at Moravia Cans. Its aims are to eliminate waste wherever possible, and the production of its cans is optimised to meet specification while being as lean as possible through ironing and alloys.

As a member of the Carbon Disclosure Project, the firm takes a holistic approach to the entire supply chain. Its sustainable business model includes the target of zero waste to landfill, the re-fit of low energy lighting throughout the facility, re-use of water, the use of low temperature curing lacquers and more. And when it comes to the manufacture of aluminum aerosol cans, Moravia Cans set the standard. Having consistently grown over the past 25 years, Moravia Cans is renowned as a major player in the development and supply of the highest quality and most innovative, lightweight, shaped aerosol cans. Today, the organisation holds 15 percent of the world aluminum aerosol can market share, with around 98 percent of production exported outside of Czech Republic.

Throughout the years, the company has continually invested in best-inclass equipment, systems, processes, and people. This has allowed Moravia Cans to improve efficiency of operations, reduce costs, waste, and scale customers' competitiveness. The company has a dedicated research and development group that is responsible for the leading customer focused innovations in the industry. The firm leads the way with the lightest products on the market through its class-leading Impact Extrusion manufacturing processes, supported by Patented Super Alloys.

Every year, Moravia Cans produce around half a billion cans. At its headquarters in Bojkovice, the organisation

MANUFACTURING



"Our vision at **ALUMAN S.A.** is to be a WORLD LEADER in the aluminium slugs sector. We aim to produce top quality products while maintaining safe and hygienic working conditions. This, in turn, will ensure continued growth and harmony within the company and the society as a whole. We strive for customer satisfaction at all levels, by producing top quality products and ensuring prompt deliveries and efficient and personalized customer service."

«Άμες δε γεσόμεθα πολλώ κάρρονες», (We will be much better than the ones before us)

This is a promise the young Spartans gave to the older ones. This is our promise too!

HEAD OFFICE: Address: 3, Merlin st., Athens 10671, GR Tel: +30 210 3609435 Fax: +30 210 3614161 E-mail: info@aluman.gr

operates 10 production lines through both the Impact Extrusion process and the DWI (Draw and Wall Ironing) process, more often associated with beverage cans. Moravia Cans operates a continuous process, operating with an aluminum coil at the beginning which runs throughout the line and finishes as a complete can.

Dove is just one of several global brands that the firm produces cans for. Through its DWI production process, the Dove can is around 20 percent lighter than its counterparts and has won several awards, such as The Canmaker Magazine 2017 Can of the Year and award for the Most Sustainable Can innovation. Moravia Cans offers 20 percent more cans per pallet while also operating 20 percent less trucks and pallet movements at the same time.

Sustainability is considered a key pillar to Moravia Cans. All its products are considered 100 percent reusable and the company operates with an aim to produce the most shaped, brand identified cans possible and at the lowest cost. In order to make this possible, it requires the best printing and shaping machinery and processes to allow for complex products to be produced as quickly and affordably as more standard products. This enables Moravia Cans to subsequently form complex cans at the same speed as standard cans while optimsing the weight, making them lighter and more sustainable.

In August 2020, Moravia Cans unveiled its latest innovation. By optimising transport through layer wide palletisation, decreasing packaging material and using increased levels of recycled material, the organisation is supporting the industry's and customer's drive to improve sustainability in aerosol packaging.

Following on from previous innovations on recycled content in impact extruded aluminum aerosols,

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Moravia Cans can now provide further optimised DWI aerosols delivering a Carbon Footprint reduction of up to 75 percent.

Another important area of Moravia Cans' DNA is innovation. The organisation is continuously seeking new ways to explore how best to apply its expertise, experience and knowledge to better support customers' business success.

Today, Moravia Cans is in a positive place. The firm has over 450 employees and places significant importance on training and development, while boasting an excellent graduate programme. In comparison to 2014, it is supplying more than 50 percent more products, with further growth targeted. In terms of the future, Moravia Cans has highlighted its intention to develop answers to the aerosol markets needs and together with its customers drive innovation and sustainability in its industry.

UTIL GROUP

Automotive Adaptation

We spoke to automotive parts manufacturer UTIL Group about the shift in supply and demand in the automotive industry in Europe and beyond

Writer: Marcus Kääpä Project Manager: Matthew Taylor

MANUFACTURING

he European manufacturing industry has faced incredible challenges as a result of a shocking 2020.

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With the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping the globe and causing disruption to logistics and services within almost every sector, Italian automotive manufacturing was not saved the brunt of the impact. For the industry, the pandemic spelt problems with transport as well as sales.

However, the human capacity for endurance and adaptation is truly admirable. COVID-19 spurred forward the necessity for maximised digital communication - a element of work that companies embodied and ensured. The restrictions on travel and person-to-person proximity, as well as the requirement for high standards of safety, were met by most with immediate importance, with a focus on tackling this challenge for the best of their employees.

But it isn't just the pandemic that has changed the industry.

MECHANICAL INDUSTRY

– SINCE 1950 —

Background

Ferrari & Carena was established on May 1950 by Giuseppe Ferrari and Antonio Carena with the purpose to satisfy the requirements of the companies located in and closed to Turin, who needed mechanical parts, spare parts for tooling machines, presses and any other parts available in the market with difficulty. It has always thought to assure in the short possible time the production of mechanical spare parts, especially for presses, in order to reduce the loss of the final user, speeding up the delivery and maintaining the quality to the first place.

NOW

At the moment, Adriano Carena, administrator of **Ferrari & Carena** continues with the work started to Giuseppe and Antonio, using the best technology on the market, technicians with hight level of skill and qualified people for all processing phases. **The company is specialized in the construction of hydraulic fine blanking presses** and large-sized components.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- 1. Feasibility and study for complete line in fine blanking (turnkey)
- 2. Construction fine blanking line (presses, stock reel with straightener, lubrification unit, fine blanking tool)
- 3. Compatibles spare parts for fineblanking hydraulic presses
- 4. Compatibles spare parts for mechanical / hydraulic presses
- 5. Tool manufacturing servey and reproduction of mechanical parts
- 6. 3D printing & reverse engineering service (print functional & prototyping)

Over the years we have created mechanical machining for companies operating in different sectors, accumulating a strong and varied experience in the production of mechanical parts, especially in the following sectors:

Hydraulic Machine tools Naval Automotive Aeronautic Agricultural Shipbuilding Mining Petroleum



UTIL GROUP

In recent years there has been shift of an ideological nature. The growth and movement of automotive manufacturers to invest in the research, design, and production of electrical or hybrid vehicles has risen tremendously, as a result of both the demand and necessity of greater environmental efforts.

Many automotive parts manufacturers have followed suit to provide automotive companies with the various bits and pieces to bring about the production of such electric vehicles – it is these parts manufacturers, adapting to the rise in demand to supply electric vehicles, that keep the industry's wheels turning.

Fernando Bertoni is the President and CEO of one of such company -UTIL Group.



PRODUCT AND SERVICE PORTFOLIO AT A GLANCE

UTIL started production of backing plates and brake shoes in 1959.

With the increasing requirement for high strength and low tolerance parts, the company pioneered the use of fine blanking for the production of backing plates and brake shoes in 1968.

Due to its long history in fine blanking, UTIL has built industry leading expertise in high strength and performances, narrow tolerance, flat parts, which can be leveraged outside its core backing plate and brake shoe products.

UTIL Group is the leading manufacturer of integrally moulded backing plates for disc brake pads, shoes for drum brakes, parking brake levers and actuators, piston clips, springs, wear sensor indicators and, NVH (Noise, Vibration and Harshness) shims for brake pads.

The expansive product offering features coverage for almost all types of vehicle applications and is the broadest in the industry, including passenger cars, light trucks, and medium vehicles for European, North American, South American, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Australian markets.

"We have full engineering and production capabilities in all three of our sites. We are opening a new site in Mexico in the second quarter of this year, where we will be establishing our operations in Monterrey," Bertoni tells us.

Util has also been developing its expertise in parts such as rotors for electrical motors, exhaust flanges, safety belt components, clutch discs and other automotive and non-automotive components that require fine blanking technology.







MANUFACTURING



UTIL GROUP

"UTIL IS NOW SUPPLYING BRAKE SUPPORT FOR THREE OF THE LARGEST ELECTRICAL VEHICLE BUSINESSES: VOLKSWAGEN MEB, TESLA AND PORSCHE"

"This is a unique time," he begins. "COVID-19 has changed the industry. In the automotive space there is already a big transition. This transition has shifted from a total fossil fuel-based industry to one encompassing the necessary sustainability sphere.

"Look at history, some of the biggest, best, and more innovative and sustainable ideas in the industrial space and beyond have come out of people working through times of crisis. We are living in the midst of a great crisis, yet the chance to better industry and business practices comes from this."



Fernando Bertoni, President & CEO

Bertoni started his career as a corporate lawyer in New York in the 1990s, then went to work in the energy sector for General Electric. Here, he spent a successful 18 years in multiple positions (functional and operational roles) and had the opportunity to learn from some of the "best in the class" professionals in the global industrial space. After GE. Bertoni moved into the operational side of private equity where he ran multiple companies as a result. Bertoni's career path has seen him spend an impressive 25 years in the industry

MANUFACTURING



space, covering a number of countries including France, the US, Brazil, Argentina, and Italy - the latter where he currently works and resides.

UTIL Group manufactures parts for automotive companies and - among other products - designs, produces, and sells metallic brake pads that support the braking systems of vehicles - a service that it has been providing since 1959. The organisation provides quality premium fine blanking backing plates for vehicle braking systems and is expanding into a range of diversified products. By this, UTIL means to produce an array of products and components for a wider range of applications within and beyond the automotive industry.

EXPANDING THE PORTFOLIO

UTIL has approximately 900 employees worldwide, and sells to a large number of customers globally, including some of the largest companies in the automotive and engineering space, such as Continental, ZF Group, CBI Hitachi, Honda, Bosch, and Driv/Tenneco.

"We like to define UTIL as a pocketsized multinational company," Bertoni muses. UTIL's project portfolio is one aspect that truly shows the company's ability to achieve quality results in the manufacturing industry.

Not only does it produce brake pads and other parts to the newest and biggest platforms: BMW, Volkswagen, Tesla and Porsche, or contribute towards the completion of new electrical Maserati models, UTIL is a key provider to other leading players in the industry and beyond.

"UTIL is now supplying brake support for three of the largest electrical vehicle businesses: Volkswagen MEB, Tesla and Porsche," Bertoni elaborates.

UTIL GROUP

ABOUT UTIL'S SUPPLY CHAIN

FERNANDO BERTONI:

About a year ago we reorganised our supply chain into a global supply chain and created four fundamental pillars within our operation: production, global sourcing, quality, and logistics.

We then upgraded our local talent pool in each of these areas across our various sites and put in place a global management team to work alongside the local leaders – in this way the global leadership team can efficiently manage the supply chain, obtaining high and equivalent level of quality and services across plants..

What this achieved was the consistency of supply chain production and logistics simultaneously with each other, no matter where in the world the company branches were. Whether in China, Canada, or here in Italy, the best and more fluid practices are being carried out at the same time all over the globe. We will replicate the same structure in our Mexico site when ready.

Fundamentally from a customer standpoint, this allows us to produce and deliver the same type of product with the same quality no matter the location. The products receive the design support from the various site locations across the globe to best efficiency and quality.

The pandemic has made us rethink our supply chain, and fundamentally how we work with our suppliers. Partnerships are key to the production and international distribution of automotive parts.





"The former is for the Tesla Model Y, a mid-size SUV launched in China about a month ago. We won the project last year and that model is utilising our technology - something we are very proud of. The second is again in the e-car sphere, for an electrical series of Porshe that also utilises our brake pad technology. Yet on top of this we are also diversifying our products." UTIL is reaching into alternative areas of automotive parts manufacturing such as the production of exhaust system components, while also exploring beyond supplying the automotive sphere into the construction and energy markets.

"We are incredibly proud of this because construction a very difficult market to enter into," Bertoni continues.

2021 AND BEYOND

UTIL Group remains a strong and driven company heading through 2021.Today, the firm remains ahead of its competition through its three major advantages: technical depth of knowledge and know-how - utilising the most experienced professionals of the industry to work with the various products they offer. Global footprint allowing the consistency of quality and service all across the world through its various sites and localised logistics and supply chain leadership. And lastly its application of innovative methods and adaptation, helping the company stay at the fore of manufacturing, within the automotive industry or beyond.



For the future, UTIL is geared towards steady expansion, and answering the increasing complexity in the automotive industry and beyond. Bertoni ends on a cautiously optimistic note.

"There is going to be a big transition in the combination of traditional energy and renewable sources. Hybrids and electrical vehicles will dominate the automotive space in the decade to come, and we are here looking forward to being a significant part of that change."



UTIL GROUP Tel: +39 0141944300 info@utilgroup.com www.utilgroup.com

COMPANY MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

To provide value to our customers and to the entire supply chain through excellence in quality, innovation capabilities and global presence in key countries. We achieve these goals through the excellence of people, organisation, technologies, techniques and methodologies, working and managing all processes in full control, while complying with safety and environmental regulations.

VISION

To consolidate global market leadership to become the preferred supplier of our customers and entire supply chain, and to be recognised for undisputed worldwide service, co-design capabilities and consolidated know-how. To achieve customer satisfaction, ensuring work quality standards, full compliance with our products and services, and the optimisation of business processes.



"We produce a component that

during construction, so UTIL is now a

part of helping build new houses and

incorporation of multiple services

in a variety of markets that keeps

competition in the manufacturing

industry. Internal investments have

the improvement of the company's

largest investment that the Group

time to embark upon a significant

million euros in new high tonnage

equipment that would allow us to

This equipment has radically

its industry customers and clients,

production and the maintenance of

improved UTIL's ability to serve

through the improved fluidity of

in Europe and North America."

improve our industrial efficiency here

investment, so we invested over 5.2

"During 2020, we made the single

has made in the last 15 years or more,"

"We decided that it was the right

also been a major factor towards

products and services.

Bertoni tells us.

quality control.

UTIL Group above and apart from its

It is this innovative exploration and

goes into the scaffolding system

repair buildings."

GLOBAL TECHNICAL GROUP

Advantage Through **Experience**

We spoke to Fadi Rida, Founder and Managing Partner of Global Technical Group, about Romania's up-and-coming tech industry and his company's position within it

Writer: Marcus Kääpä | Project Manager: Ryan Gray



TECHNOLOGY

he European technology space is dominated by giants of the industry, from telecommunications companies such as Vodafone, to audio streaming platforms like Spotify, and video conferencing services such as Skype. These companies provide their products and services globally and pave the way for innovation and advancement in each of their respective sectors.

Fadi Rida, Managing Partner of the Romanian technology company Global Technical Group, believes that this constant innovation is the key to adaptation and success.

"We are development-oriented and believe that no matter what problems arise, the world keeps moving," he begins.

"The pandemic left its mark on the work environment, but only for a few months when investments in future projects were put on hold. We acted on the basis of an emergency plan adapted to the current situation and we would continue our activities in the projects we had in progress.

"There are other industries that have been affected, but we hope to recover soon. In business, everything depends on the speed of adaptation to new conditions and the tech industry has shaped us to have speed and movement as part of us."

Rida created Global Technical 14 years ago and has watched it develop throughout the growing digital age. Motivated by the notion of carving out a career path in an industry that he was both interested and passionate about, Rida now stands at the head of a successful Europeanbased technology company that provides a variety of services to a multitude of industry clients.

"I am very proud to have created this company as well grow alongside it - I have always been impressed by the timing and speed of the industry. Working and dreaming at the same time is a pleasure, and technology has

CORE BUSINESS AT A GLANCE

BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES

- Project Design & Development
- Energy Efficiency & Green
 Buildings
- Electrical Installations
- HVAC & Sanitary Installations
- Building Management Systems

IT & DATACENTRE

- Design, Development
- Maintenance
- Network Planning
- Consulting and more

ADVANCED IOT SOLUTIONS

- IOT Platform CAVI Smart Monitoring
- Cloud Smart House Technologies, SMART CITY GPS Systems, Fleet Management, Smart Monitoring, Traffic Management, Urban Surveillance, Hospitality Systems.

TECHNICAL MAINTENANCE

- Safety & Security Systems
- Video Surveillance Systems
- Control Access Systems
- Fire Detection Systems
- Fire Extinguishing Systems
- Intrusion Detection Systems
- Alarm & Public Address Systems
- Parking Systems
- Software Integration

SECURITY ANALYSIS & CONSULTING

- Security Audit
- Identify, Quantify & Mitigate Risks
- Risk Management & Consulting
- Security Policies & Procedures
- Project Management
- Financing & Budget Planning

given me the opportunity to create and remain one step ahead at all times," Rida tells us.

Global Technical is one of the leading technology and security integrators in Romania, ensuring that the company's services are incorporated with design and value engineering in mind. The firm has the capability of assisting its clients with a broad range of services and industry expertise, from the development phase all the way to the completion of a project, and the critical maintenance services thereafter.

"Our clients enjoy a single point of contact, thereby ensuring maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and exceedingly successful project results," Rida adds.

STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

Global Technical covers a large variety of services in the technology industry, yet what gives the company its edge in the field is combination of employeecentric trust, and the unique and customised experience it provides each and every client in the sector.

"We believe that our values differentiate us from the competition," Rida elaborates.

"The trust we give to employees to participate in personal and professional development is very important. We have a team of young aspirants who learn from the most experienced employees and who challenge us daily with their energy and ideas.

"We have also always adapted to the needs of our clients and we have specialised our services so that we can respond to any challenge. The profile of Global Technical allows us to take an idea and turn it into reality. Our great advantage is this adaptation of service provided."

This breadth of service is no better exemplified than Global Technical's array of projects, each of which holds a special significance to the founder,

SCHRACK SECONET

Schrack Seconet is an Austrian high-tech company and one of the international leaders in the field of fire alarm and hospital communication systems. On top of multiple global subsidiaries, we have local partners in over 50 Countries: from central and Eastern Europe, to the Far East.

The company was founded as 'Schrack AG' in 1920 by Eduard Schrack. In 1994, the security and communication system division were separated and became an independent Global Technical Groupd Schrack Seconet AG due to a management buyout.

A leader in high-tech top performance systems

We have always been at the forefront with our solutions – with the first microprocessor-controlled fire alarm panel as well as with the first IP-based communication system for hospitals.

Schrack Seconet is responsible for the development of fire alarm, hospital communication, and billing systems. We offer tailored, efficient solutions with customers in mind.

Fire alarms:

Our products are easy to operate. All Integral IP control panels are equipped with an IP interface, thus supporting the Internet Protocol. The control panels can also be monitored via remote access by software applications in various devices.

Health care:

Visocall IP by Schrack Seconet is the leading common technology platform for communication, information, organisation, service, and care in health care facilities.

Digitalisation:

The IP applications of Schrack Seconet in fire alarm enable the retrieval of information or the operation of systems via smartphone, tablet or PC. From various fire alarm systems to nurse call systems.

www.schrack-seconet.com



We protect people and assets.

- Fire Alarm
- Health Care
- Digitalisation

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GLOBAL TECHNICAL GROUP







Promelek XXI

With over 24 years of experience in the field of electrical equipment distribution, PROMELEK XXI provides its partners with comprehensive solutions and highquality products from the most important and well-known global manufacturers, together with a complete range of consultancy services. Our clients are both professionals and end users, to whom we offer the optimal and complete solution in the field of electrical equipment.

In September 2011 PROMELEK XXI joined the Elektra Group (Spain), an important player in the international electrical equipment market. Thanks to the experience and know-how of the 'mother-company', Elektra Group (Spain), PROMELEK XXI extended its service offering with the design and installation of electrical control panels for industrial automation. Over the years our company has provided the electrical equipment solutions to many remarkable construction projects in Romania. These projects serve as proof of the high-quality of our solutions and our experience in this field.

professionals, and employees of the company. One such project is Central - a luxury residential complex in the centre of Bucharest - a highly accessible and well-developed area, with various facilities surrounding the local space, Rida comments.

"Thanks to our full-service concept, our client benefitted from our expertise during every phase of this project. A young team worked on this project and we are very satisfied with their involvement and the results," he tells us proudly.

"We are delighted that in 2020 our expertise in building installations has expanded beyond the electrical and

includes heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), as well as sanitary installations for large scale projects.

"In keeping with our full service, turnkey delivery concept, our engineers design and develop the best possible systems for our clients' projects, including integration with



building management systems (BMS), that lower operating costs, simplify maintenance, offer better response times, and at the same time improve comfort and climate conditions. Throughout this year, we will continue to work on projects with this execution profile."

2021 promises to be a year that spurs forward global digital services in the wake of the challenges caused by 2020's COVID-19 pandemic. The technology sector is the centre of this progressive attitude and necessity each individual company based in this sphere has both great opportunity and competition to provide customers with the latest and best products and services.

For the rest of 2021 and the years following, Global Technical plans to maintain its services in the light of a challenging 2020. On top of this, it plans to undergo the gradual growth of company operations necessary to answer the growing Romanian

GLOBAL TECHNICAL GROUP'S **SUPPLY CHAIN**



FADI RIDA: "We have a classic supply chain, and we are constantly trying to improve it. Most

likely in 2021 we will automate some supply processes. We believe that our partners and suppliers are an important part of our business. We rely on their support in risky situations, like last year's caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We choose our partners carefully and we trust in their professionalism." demand for services. Alongside the international movement to promote an increasingly digitalised environment, it is safe to say that Global Technical is one firm worth keeping an eye for the near future.

Rida ends on an optimistic note. "We want to continue our development and offer our customers the best services - we focus on services that make their daily work easier. We have structured our services to cover all the needs of our clients, and this year we will focus

on expanding building and technical maintenance services."

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Authentic Culinary Temptations

Ata Atmar, CEO at Bateel, discusses his organisation's innovative approach in the Middle Eastern gourmet food market

Writer: Sean Galea-Pace | Project Manager: Ben Weaver

Bateel is the brand of choice for connoisseurs of fine foods around the world." This is a statement Bateel are certainly proud of.

The company has become renowned for reinventing and elevating the date to the position of a gourmet product. Today, Bateel is a well-established brand in the international gourmet food space and offers a range of authentic culinary temptations.

Headquartered in Dubai, Bateel possesses a global presence and is active in 16 countries across Asia, Europe and the United States. Its business is spread across 17 countries and consists of 32 boutiques and 19 cafes in premium commercial and residential districts in major cities, from Detroit to Jakarta.

Spearheading operations is Ata Atmar, CEO at Bateel. Having begun his career as an academic economist in the United States, he transitioned into an economic and financial consultancy career in the Middle East. This subsequently led to a career in management that centered around brand development in the holding company that owned Bateel - Atmar has been with the organisation since 1999.

Bateel is the world's only gourmet organic date grower, producer and seller led by its mission to serve its customers throughout the globe. The organisation is also the largest producer of fine chocolates in the Middle East and has its own factory that specialises in the production of these gourmet chocolates.

"Date is a traditional and important commodity," explains Atmar.

"At Bateel we decided to transform this commodity to a high value branded product. This involved significant innovation in farming and processing methods to create exceptional quality product. To achieve the price point needed to support the business, we created a new and luxury retailing system.





"It has been a long and professionally rewarding journey to create an entire new industry, production and retailing of the gourmet date. Over the years, we are happy that others have entered but we remain the industry leader at the farming, manufacturing, and retailing level."

Over the past few years, Bateel has played an influential role in the production and luxury retailing of gourmet food in the Middle East and possesses a significant international presence. However, retail was one of the industries hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, and while the sector and Bateel haven't fully recovered, Atmar assures us that good progress has been made.

"The retail, travel retail, and the food and beverage industries, of which are our core business, were hit hard by COVID-19," he says. "We have partially recovered, largely due to the depth and breadth of our product range and strength of the Bateel brand, anchored on our brand values that resonate with consumers.

"While we have made progress, the strength of the recovery of our business, along with the travel and retail industry in general, will depend on how the world economy recovers from the crisis. We're not out of the

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BATEEL

Bateel's date groves have a rich heritage, going back almost 100 years when the date palms were first planted in 1932. Since then, Bateel has evolved from its origins as a pioneer in the gourmet date market to become a powerful force in the international luxury food market.

State-of-the-art sustainable farming methods, employing proprietary cultivation and processing technology, enable Bateel to produce exceptional quality organic dates. The premium dates produced are the foundation for developing Bateel's world-renowned gourmet range of products, offered in Bateel luxury boutiques and other premium retail channels.

Dates are the core product of the Bateel brand within the extensive gourmet range, offering over 20 varieties, including Sokari, Kholas, Segai, Khidri, Ajwa, Madjool, and Bateel's exclusive Wanan.

Bateel were the first to introduce the delights of the date chocolate to an international audience, the luxury range of single origin chocolates include a delicious array of truffles, pralines and ganaches, encased and enrobed in the finest milk, dark and white varieties. Bateel master chocolatiers scan the world to source premium ingredients to produce the most deluxe and sumptuous chocolate. Bateel's market leadership position as a purveyor of fine food is anchored on its strategy of developing innovative high-quality products. An ethos supported by research, production assets and collaborations with other fine food innovators. These investments enable Bateel to continuously enhance the existing range and add new products to the portfolio, which include date inspired creations, such as date-balsamic vinegar, flavoured date dhibs and sparkling date juice.

Bateel luxury boutiques, with exquisite interior architecture and elegant retail displays, are designed to showcase the full range of Bateel gourmet products and luxury packaging. Bateel boutiques, located in premium malls and retail destinations, delight consumers of fine food in major cities, spanning three continents, from the US to India and key commercial hubs in the Middle East.

Bateel gourmet products are available to jet-setting travellers in duty free locations around the world, including every airport in the GCC and key hubs in India and South East Asia. Bateel is consistently ranked as a top-performing confectionery brand in every airport featuring Bateel products. Favoured by travellers seeking a healthy alternative, savouring treats that do not compromise on taste and quality.





woods yet but, with the successful development of several vaccines, I see a clear light at the end of the tunnel."

During Ramadan, Bateel helped support frontline workers in the UAE and KSA by offering meals and gifts to hospitals during the pandemic. In tandem with offering their support to those that needed it most, Bateel were returned the favour in kind as its customers stuck by the organisation.

"Our customers backed us as soon as they found it safe and feasible, which we are very grateful for," Atmar adds.

"I am especially proud of how the staff rose to the occasion and met the challenge with resilience and innovative approaches."

Today, the importance of adopting a more sustainable approach into operations is of key importance to companies. Now more than ever before, organisations are increasingly aware of their carbon footprints and are beginning to seek ways to leverage greener alternatives.

To Atmar, sustainability is a key pillar to Bateel's overall strategy. "Our attention to environmentally friendly practices in all aspects of our production, and distribution, despite the higher cost, is our biggest investment in corporate social responsibilities. We are part of the community and try to support the community when we can make a positive impact."

Bateel's groves produce around 2,000 tonnes of organic waste annually, all of which is returned to the farm as nutrient-rich compost. Bateel takes pride in its organic and sustainable mindset and is continuously seeking to innovate.

Using the best farming practices, the company's cultivation techniques are kept as close to nature as possible. Date palm trees can live for 100 years and produce up to 150 kilogrammes of fruit every year.

WHAT SETS BATEEL APART?

- Quality Unwavering commitment to produce the highest quality gourmet organic date.
- Innovation Distinctly differentiated offering.
- Authenticity Bateel are innovative and has created the industry with Arabian heritage inspired offerings.
- Integrity Ensuring only the best experience for its customers.

In fact, every date palm is watered from naturally occurring desert wadi, which transforms the landscape into a fertile reserve. Bateel's strategically

BATEEL'S SEVEN TYPES OF DATES

AJWA – It is known as the holy date and is associated with centuries-old Islamic faith. Having originated in the Saudi Arabian city of Madinah, the dates feature a mildly sweet flesh with a raisin-like texture and dark brown to black skin.

KHIDRI – The most recognisable variety, the Khidri date offers a chewy texture and sweet taste. Having originally been created in Egypt, the variety is also renowned for its larger size and dark maroon-red skin.

KHOLAS - Often served with Arabic coffee as a sign of traditional hospitality, the Kholas date has a mildly sweet, toffee flavour.

MEDJOOL – Medjool dates are also known as California-style dates. The large dates are deep brown on the outside with thick, amber-coloured flesh. It presents a distinctive caramel flavour with a creamy, lingering aftertaste.

SEGAI – Native to Saudi Arabia, Segai dates are easily distinguishable. The variety features a firm yellow rim on the top that is similar to warm brown sugar, while the brown base is soft and mildly sweet.

SOKARI - Sokari is known as the royal date. It's available in both soft and hard varieties, with the latter featuring crystallised sugars for a crisp, caramel bite that is complemented by the mild sugary flesh.

WANAN - The Wanan's appearance is both long and cone-shaped with dark, wrinkled skin. It is similar in taste to the classic Khidri but is slightly sweeter and deliciously satisfying. The variety is completely unique to Bateel.





placed irrigation system is used across the farm to allow farmers to recycle and preserve the readily available water of the land.

Bateel also places considerable value on its partnerships and how they link together to form a successful supply chain.

"No company can operate in isolation," explains Atmar.

"While we are customer-focused enterprise, we interface with all our stakeholders with integrity and transparency to gain trust and cooperation. This was particularly helpful during this difficult period where supplier cooperation was critical in restructuring our business to meet the unforeseen challenges



arising from COVID-19."

Indeed, helping to steer Bateel through challenging times are its employees. The pandemic has only amplified the importance of attracting and retaining the right talent and it is an essential component to any successful organisation. In the case of Bateel, Atmar recognises how vital it is that staff are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed at the company.

"This learning journey continues with regular training and development related to our brand and product standards. This ensures that our team members are equipped with the skills required to consistently deliver service excellence," he continues. "We know that a career path is important for our team members, and therefore aim to prioritise the internal growth and progression of our high performing colleagues who have the right skills, knowledge and experience to progress. In line with our core values, we actively engage with our team and encourage everyone at all levels to share their innovative ideas and suggestions."

Looking ahead to the upcoming years, Atmar affirms the priority is to fully recover from the effects of the pandemic while targeting a brighter future internationally.

"While we have made a healthy recovery, our priority is to ensure that the company is effectively positioned to meet the COVID-19 challenges that remain," he says.

"This means continued improvement in efficiency across the production and distribution network. In terms of markets, we have a good coverage of the Gulf market and are focused on expanding our international presence in cooperation with strong franchise and distribution partners."

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THE FINAL WORD

To round off each issue, we ask our contributing business leaders for their views on the same question

WHAT WILL BE THE BIGGEST TREND IMPACTING YOUR INDUSTRY IN 2021?



Bernhard Pulferer (EO, Melecs Group

"Post-COVID-19 I expect the electronics industry will be facing strong demand again which after a challenging year is a situation we definitely appreciate.

"On the other hand, there are dark clouds in terms of bottlenecks of specific electronic semiconductor components coming up again. It has previously been a challenge we've been able to cope with in the past and will be able to cope with in the future."



Ata Atmar

Managing Director, Bateel "The rise of e-commerce

has been significant in our industry and we think this development will continue, although at a slower rate than what we witnessed in 2020.

"We also saw a clear focus by the consumer on quality and safety, and we were fortunate to have been well-positioned to meet this demand. Our focus on quality and innovation will help capitalise on this trend."



Mika Kosunen CMO. Ouneva Group

"It's hard to mention

any specific technology that has or will change our industry. Steady and economic evolvement on every aspect is the key to our success. We have



steadily updated our manufacturing equipment with short and long-term investments.

"Energy efficiency is one key aspect to push the industry towards environmentally friendly and efficient way to operate. I think that renewable materials will grow their share in future. Automation and strong knowhow on multiple manufacturing technologies will be the key tools for development in the future."



Ugo Ghilardi

Principal CEO, Itema Group

"This pandemic changed our traditional ways of doing business and taught us that, despite being already a multinational company with branches worldwide, we must find new ways to be close to our customers, able to transcend any geographical boundary.

"It's not easy to make predictions about 2021, but COVID-19 has represented an important challenge for companies on a global scale. Medical and technical textiles will continue to gather a central and more important role in our everyday life." ©

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