

As the name suggests, RAS-International is read in many countries, we will therefore be including a few stories from around the globe.

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Bosch Thermotechnology

Growth prospects for eco-friendly technologies

Bosch's Thermotechnology division had a good start to the year 2010. While the effects of the economic crisis can still be felt, there have been clear signs of a recovery. Sales revenues in the Asian emerging markets and the key Western European markets picked up in the first three months of the year. Moreover, the drop in demand in Central and Eastern Europe has been halted since the beginning of the year. "Our performance in the difficult year 2009 shows that our fundamental positioning is right," Uwe Glock, President of the Board of Management of the Thermotechnology Division, said at the press conference in Stuttgart.

Positive result generated

At EUR 2.87 billion, sales revenues in 2009 were down by approx. 4% (2% in exchange rate-adjusted terms) on the record level of the previous year. As Bosch Thermotechnology anticipated the economic downturn at an early stage, the division initiated a number of counter-measures and therefore generated a positive result in spite of the moderate decline in sales. At over 13 000, the headcount slightly exceeded the prior year level at the end of the year as a result of the acquisitions made in 2009. Demand in Eastern Europe and North America declined markedly in the past year. Business in Bosch Thermotechnology's key markets, i.e. the UK, the Nether-



lands, Spain and France, also fell short of the prior year level, albeit only slightly. Sales revenues in Germany were moderately higher than in the previous year, as the government's market incentive programme and, in particular, the bonus for heating replacements helped to stabilise total demand.

Although house owners invested less money in energy-efficient heating technology last year in view of lower energy prices, Bosch Thermotechnology reported strong growth in solar thermal systems. The renewable energy business accounts for 15% of total sales. In the coming years, the division will con-

tinue to expand its activities surrounding systems for the use of renewable energies and energy-efficient solutions. The focus will be not only on private users but increasingly also on commercial and industrial customers. The acquisitions of Loos, a leading European supplier of highly efficient steam and hot water boilers, and Köhler&Ziegler, a manufacturer of combined heat and power plants, have added new eco-friendly technologies to the portfolio of Bosch Thermotechnology and helped the division to expand its market position in the commercial and industrial segment significantly.

Investments in technologies of the future remain a top priority

Bosch Thermotechnology is cautiously optimistic about the year 2010. "Cutting CO2 emissions is a key issue across the globe, and there is certainly a need for action as regards environmental protection. Bosch Thermotechnology has the systems and solutions that are required to tackle these problems in the building sector. This means that the long-term growth prospects for our business remain good," said Uwe Glock. Investments in technologies of the future will remain a top priority. At EUR 131 million, investments in the future held steady at the prior year level even in the crisis year 2009. Research and development accounted for EUR 94 million, while an amount of EUR 37 million was invested in property, plant and equipment.

burgbad

New-look brand now live on the internet

The extensive new design and relaunch of www.burgbad.com takes burgbad to a new level with its internet presence. Since April 2010, the international designer and supplier of luxury bathrooms has also revamped its online range with a redesigned homepage featuring user-friendly service functions. Highlights of the updated look include easy-to-use search functions for products and specialist retailers. The website presents a full range of attractive offers for building contractors, modernizers, bathroom planners, business partners and media representatives, associations and investors. "Focusing on the ease, with which the user can access a manufacturer's website, we have achieved a new dimension within our industry," Jörg Loew, director of sales and marketing, comments.

The homepage takes visitors straight into the product world of the Bad Fredeburg-based company, which is currently made up of seven main sectors: "Solitaire Ranges", "Guest bathrooms", "System Range", "Bath-tubs and Shower Trays", "Mirrors and Mirrored Cabinets" and "RC 40" as well as "Masterpiece". The clear menu overview is made up of a combination of top and side navigation bars that allow direct access to typical articles on quality, design, innovation and other magazine topics. The navigational links also lead to generic, target-group specific

content such as "company", "press", "contact" or "international site". As well as displaying the product range, www.burgbad.com also puts particular emphasis on providing quick but detailed results, especially to builders and modernizers searching for burgbad bathroom fittings and the relevant outlet. To do this, a technically innovative "Find products" function was set up: by inputting specific features such as category & series, product group, front and style, the complete product range can be filtered by means of pre-configured fields as per the user's preferences. Even new users, who are unfamiliar with the range, can find a rapid solution in this way. This also applies to integrated searches for specialist retailers: with just a few clicks, the user can immediately find the nearest showroom, and can display the location directly in Google Maps or have the route calculated. Large format photos of lifestyle bathrooms are typical of the calm design of each page, highlighting the full impact of individual design possibilities for the living space of the bathroom. The high-contrast structure and easy-to-read font enhance the clarity and accessibility of the overall image. "With the relaunch of www.burgbad.com, we are now positioned online in a way that reflects the brand's current range of services and its defining values of interiors, innovation and individuality," explains Jörg Loew, adding, "Anyone who works with sophisticated bathroom installation will find their bathroom on this website".

EC Power

CHP Producer increases Market Share

The Danish CHP supplier EC-Power has managed to secure a foothold in the German market and is expanding its position further. Together with others, various municipal electricity utilities are among their customers. Through the contracting offer, the public utility and related companies become both producers and operators with the combined heat plant type XRG I. The performance data, 15 kW electric and 30 kW thermal (natural gas), ensure that the devices are predestined to be installed as a supplier base for municipal objects, such as schools, retirement homes, administrative and commercial complexes, as well as hotels and apartment blocks. The public utility companies see working with this system as an opportunity to win back turnover that has been decreasing in the deregulated utilities market. Due to the demand in Germany, the company has founded the EC Power GmbH in Göppingen as its

German subsidiary for sales/distribution, technical support and service. Although, service requirements are rather minimal: the Toyota natural gas motors are renowned for having maintenance intervals of 8500 operating hours. With around 6000 to 7000 operating hours per year, the XRG I modules can run 14 to 15 months without any servicing whatsoever.

An overall efficiency level of 92% is reported by the company which is the absolute market leader in the abovementioned power range in both Great Britain and Denmark. The expected working life of the machine is reported as being not less than 40 000 operating hours, the modulation range depending on the type 30 or 40 or 100 %. The aggregates can be combined in cascade. They are then able to fulfil the base load in the most varied of objects. The integrated control unit acts an energy manager to automatically fit in with

XRG I cascade in a recreational centre
(Photo: EC-Power)

current demand. Further components are the syntonized distributor and storage module.

EC Power is, naturally, always online. The server in the headquarters is constantly connected with the XRG I systems. Its processors collect and evaluate any malfunctions and contact the appropriate service partner of the operator by SMS or e-mail. In addition, the CHP company supplies a programme which allows planners, operators or system assemblers to set up their own remote setting and control network.

About the company

EC Power A/S was founded in 1996 by Danish engineers with many years of experience in the field of combined heat and power. They brought their sub-



stantial experience in the industry into their own company. The large number of pieces in demand in the 15 kW electric and 30 kW thermal (all types of gas) range allows an efficient industrial production and thus a price / performance ratio that is acceptable to the market. The components and systems are designed in this way - even more efficient, yet inexpensive. For this reason, an extension of the series will only be produced in performance spectra where a highly attractive serial production is possible. The modular construction, which is even to be found in the system intelligence, supports this strategy.

Duravit

EXPO 2010 in Shanghai: "Better City, Better Life"



Shanghai is the venue for Expo 2010, which starts on 1 May and runs until 31 October. Preparations for this superlative event have been underway for years and Shanghai's infrastructure has been developed extensively. The organisers of EXPO 2010 Shanghai have chosen the theme "Better City, Better Life" for the world exposition in China. This is to pick up on the desire for a better life in the cities of the future and promote concepts for sustainable, integrated urban development. Expo 2010 will take place in the centre of the metropolis of Shanghai on showgrounds spanning 5.28 km². With 70 million visitors expected and more than 240 participants, it promises to break all the records.

Duravit products create added value

Bathroom manufacturer Duravit with headquarters in Hornberg in the Black Forest is a local supplier with its own sales office and showroom in Shanghai. It has been involved with Expo 2010 from the early planning stages and, in its capacity as outfitter of a total of four pavilions and with a remit covering everything from the washbasin to the shower and the bathtub, it supplied the sanitary products for a wide variety of different areas: showroom, visitor WCs, facilities suitable for disabled access and



employee areas. Attractive designer products from Duravit enhance the quality of the EXPO exhibition since they enable visitors and staff to experience and learn to value the practicality and comfort of the products by actually using them. All Duravit products are designed to offer added value and boast high quality and a long service life, however, in conjunction with the Expo theme, "Better City, Better Life", the spotlight is also on sustainability. Duravit demonstrates responsibility for the environment in its use of materials, recycling and production, as well as in workplace design, and thus also highlights how important all of this is in everyday products.

German Pavilion: "balancity"

The German contribution to EXPO 2010 stands under the motto

"balancity" – a city in balance between regeneration and preservation, innovation and tradition, urbanity and nature, community and individual development, work and leisure, globalisation and national identity.

The German Pavilion was created by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Pavillon Shanghai (ARGE), which consists of the companies Schmidhuber + Kaindl (architecture and general planning), Milla und Partner (showroom and media design) and NÜSSLI Deutschland (construction work and project management).

Hamburg House: "Better Building"

Hamburg is the only German city to have been chosen by the International Selection Committee to participate in Expo 2010 with its own building project. Furthermore, it will be the only German contribution to have a



permanent building that can also be used after Expo. Hamburg's contribution is in line with the maxim of the sustainability of urban life. An exemplary building providing the highest-possible level of environmental technology was built on a total floor space of 2,300 m²; this combines living and working under one roof.

The project was executed by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Spengler · Wieschöck / Dittert & Reumerschüssel (building concept) and Kontrapunkt – Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH, in collaboration with Design Factory International and AHL Büro für Ausstellungskonzepte (exhibition concept).

Austrian Pavilion: "Austria – Feel the Harmony"

Austria's pavilion is dedicated to the sub-theme "Interaction between the rural and urban environment". The project is called "Austria – Feel the Harmony" and, over an area of 2,000 m², reflects the harmonious interaction of city, landscape, nature, urban habitats and urban cultural landscapes in a pavilion design that addresses all senses and that is innovative with regard to both architecture and realisation. Responsible for realisation: Vienna architecture office SPAN & Zeytinoglu Architects, who chose products from the Happy D., Vero, Ciottolo, Starck1, Starck3,

Katya and D-Code ranges for the sanitary fittings.

Swiss Pavilion: Yin and Yang in Equilibrium

Over an area of 4000 m², Switzerland will showcase an exhibition on the Expo sub-theme, "Interaction between the rural and urban environment". The official Swiss pavilion embodies the symbiosis of urban and rural architecture. It presents itself as a hybrid image of nature and technology, which incorporates and balances rural

and urban interaction. The concept for the Swiss Pavilion and the themed exhibition was developed by ARGE Buchner Bründler Architekten und Element GmbH. With rectangular products from the Vero range and rounded products from the Starck3 range, the sanitary facilities also play with complementary contradictions.

Swedish Pavilion: Spirit of Innovation

The Swedish Pavilion spans a total surface area of 3000

m² and takes the form of four large cube-like structures arranged so that they create a cross-like space through which visitors can move freely. Its motto is "Spirit of Innovation". Project manager Carin Lembre explains that the idea is that visitors will go home with the understanding that Sweden is characterised by this spirit. "They will be given a message that is communicated in five different exhibition halls, where they will develop a feeling for what has made Sweden what it

is today. Sweden likes to present itself as pioneer in the field of climate protection – an aspect that will play a major role in Shanghai: "We shall focus of five practical examples. It's all about energy, water, waste management and forest management."

The concept for the Swedish Pavilion was developed by the Swedish technology and design company SWECO, which chose Duravit products from the Vero and Starck3 ranges for the sanitary area.

VGH International

European Expansion Continued

The Vereinigung von Großhändlern für Haustechnik, Marketing und Vertrieb (VGH) [Association of Wholesalers for Household Technology, Marketing and Sales] is continuing its strong expansion course in the European house technology market.

No fewer than three new members in Belgium, Poland and Romania joined the Association at the beginning of the year. RAS spoke to the Chairman of the VGH Advisory Board Peter Peek.

"Due to the membership of the new associates, all of whom are major players in their own national markets, the VGH finds itself in an even better position to face the challenges of the European market", says VGH Advisory Board Chairman Knut Dick. "In addition, the operative cooperation of all of the members plays a big role in our positioning as a European association", stresses Dick.

The mutually rewarding cooperation with partners from within the industry at a European level should be strengthened through VGH International's expansion towards becoming a European Association group", the Managing Director explains.

The VGH currently consists of 10 medium sized specialist wholesalers. With a total of 148 branches in Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Poland,



VGH Managing Director Knut Dick (left) and VGH Advisory Board Chairman Peter Peek

the Netherlands and Romania, the member companies have a turnover of around 1 billion Euros. The companies' main line of business focuses on heating and sanitary.

However, the member companies also have a great deal of knowledge and expertise in the fields of air-conditioning and renewable energies and are able to advise their customers in these areas. One of the main aims of the VGH is to be able to supply the tradesperson with products from the industry's leading manufacturers.

New branches 2010

Partner Sanpol Sp. z o.o. (PL)

Sanpol, founded in 1992, the company is still privately owned. The company currently has 20 branches throughout Poland. Six of these branches have high-quality sanitary showrooms. Sanpol has 420 employees and is one of Poland's leading wholesalers in the house technology sector. The whole company has been using SAP software since 2006. Logistics possibilities associated with this offer the customers of Sanpol ideal conditions for successful cooperation. Further investments in branches and logistics are planned.

Partner Van Oirschot NV (B)

Van Oirschot founded the company of the same name in 1967. The company is still privately owned. Van Oirschot is one of the leading heating wholesalers in the Flanders region and focuses on the

distribution of materials from heating/installation and climate control/air-conditioning sectors to professional tradespeople. Optimal distribution and supply to customers are guaranteed due to the company's investment in a new distribution centre (8500 m² Herentals). The company's six branches have all the products the customer requires for day-to-day business.

Partner Uniprest S.R.L. (RO)

The long-standing VGH partner Rensa bv, Didam (NL) has invested in the newly founded company Uniprest Instal which was founded in 2009. Uniprest is therefore part of the Rensa Group and has the best precondition for continuous development. The headquarters are in Targu Mures.

The company has a total of nine branches in Romania and employs 72 people. Uniprest sells mainly heating and installation material to professional tradespeople. The main aim for the future is to extend the product range and the delivery concepts associated with them.