

From partnership to family

IN THE PAST, US-BASED READING BAKERY SYSTEMS WAS PREDOMINANTLY A SUPPLIER OF MAKE-UP TECHNOLOGY FOR THE PRODUCTION OF SNACKS, SOFT PRETZELS, CRACKERS AND BISCUITS. FOR YEARS, THE COMPANY FROM ROBESONIA, PENNSYLVANIA CLOSELY COOPERATED WITH THE MIXER MANUFACTURER EXACT OF MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. RECENTLY READING ACQUIRED EXACT. BAKING+BISCUIT INTERNATIONAL ASKED **TERRY GROFF**, CEO OF READING BAKERY SYSTEMS ABOUT THE REASONS BEHIND THE ACQUISITION AND THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



++ Terry Groff



++ figure 1

++ figure 1
Reading Fried Snack Extruder

+ bbi: Reading operates internationally, whereas ExACT predominantly works on the American market. Are there any intentions to include ExACT Mixing Systems for your export activities?

+ Terry Groff: Actually, there is nothing new here as we are already working with ExACT in international markets. Both our international customers and domestic customers are looking for the same solutions that we can bring. In recent years, we have applied continuous mixing to projects involving fried fabricated potato chips, baked fabricated potato chips, baked snacks, and other installations.

+ bbi: Reading will be exhibiting at interpack, in Düsseldorf, in April. Will ExACT be part of your presentation?

+ Groff: Yes they will. We will have a small continuous mixer in the booth which will help to illustrate what the larger production machines consist of.

+ bbi: What equipment and new developments will Reading present at interpack?

+ Groff: There is a lot of interest in sheeted fabricated snacks such as baked potato chips, something that we have been developing for some time. We will have a portable 2-roll sheeter in the booth to help illustrate the technique. As I mentioned, we will also show a continuous mixer, which will certainly lead to discussions about our automated dough feed solutions. These will include automatic proofing systems for crackers, dough delivery to extruders, sheeters, and so on. We will also have a low pressure extruder which is used for pretzels, potato rings, sticks, etc. We will also focus some attention on our new filled stick extrusion system, which is installed and already generating some interest. Finally, our Reading Thermal Division will display the latest work on oven data loggers. This topic always leads to lots of debate about baking and with our latest ovens; there will be much more to talk about!

+ bbi: Which markets are the most important ones in the next five years for Reading and ExACT, both geographically and for products?

+ Groff: The export portion of our business averages from between 30-50% of our annual sales, with the distribution of international orders being quite diverse. As an illustration, some of our installations are in Brazil, South Africa, Thailand, Romania, Korea, Germany, England, and India. The product mix on these projects has also been diverse, with about half of the projects related to biscuit and cracker projects, and the rest related to snacks. I'm pleased

with the balance of the business.

+ bbi: The next iba will take place in 2009. Can we expect Reading/ExACT to present new solutions for industries that Reading is involved with now?

+ Groff: Certainly. Our new equipment innovations dovetail nicely with some of the emerging needs of our customers. Some of these innovations include ultrasonic cutting applications for diverse products such as brownies, biscotti, filled bars and churros. Another example would be pizza applications, for both central commissary operations and industrial frozen plants. As customers grasp the opportunities of making a step change to continuous mixing, automatic dough feed, and more efficient baking, we will continue to meet their needs of improving the process.

+ bbi: ExACT has its manufacturing site in Memphis, while Reading is located in Robesonia, and Indianapolis. Will there be any changes as a result of the acquisition?

+ Groff: Our main manufacturing plants are in Pennsylvania and Indiana. The Memphis plant really wasn't that large and most of the part manufacturing was out-sourced. So the ExACT mixers will be manufactured and supported from Robesonia and Indianapolis where we have the greater resources. After this summer, the Memphis plant will no longer be used to make continuous mixers.

+ bbi: Do you have any plans to combine the re-

search and development departments, service and maintenance, sales forces or other departments of both companies?

+ Groff: Again, we have worked closely with ExACT for 18 years. ExACT really did not have a test facility for customer demonstrations and development. We've had one for 20 years, and it includes more of the processes such as sheeting, extrusion and baking. This gives a customer a much better view of the process. So for many years now, we have had several styles of

continuous mixers here in our Technical Center for more complete demonstrations. Our friend Jim Warren, who was the President of ExACT, is very well known in the industry. Although, he will remain in Memphis, Jim has already joined our team here and will continue to work closely with our engineering and sales staff on both the development and sales of the product line.

+ bbi: Mr. Groff, thank you for the interview. +++

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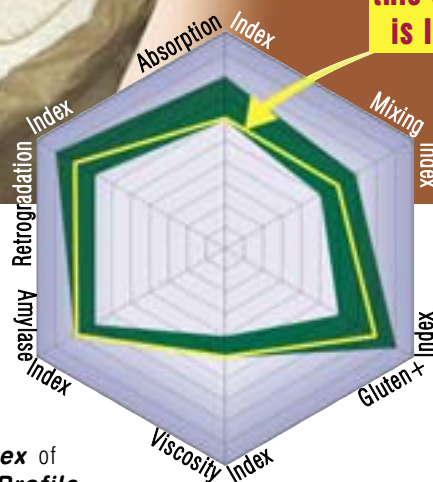


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