

Full order books

KÖNIG MASCHINEN GMBH HAS SURVIVED THE WEAK ECONOMICAL SITUATION OF THE PAST FEW YEARS AS A RESULT OF AN EXPORT SHARE OF 80 PER CENT



Managing director Richard Häusler is happy that his order books are full. The KÖNIG Group comprises the production facilities König Maschinen GmbH, Graz, Austria, König Kft., Celldömök, Hungary, and König Laminiertechnik, Dinkelsbühl, Germany as well as the sales subsidiaries Koenig Technology Inc., Richmond, USA, and König Nederland BV, Gorinchem, Netherlands. New to the Group is the König Technology Project Management GmbH, Graz, founded in December 2006 and mainly concerned with the implementation of turn-key projects.

The Group designs and builds amongst others, plants for the production of small baked goods as well as mixers and ovens. However, as Richard Häusler explained during a press conference “Our core competency is dough make-up.” With about 400 employees, the Group generates an annual turnover of above 40m Euro. “Our profits are above the industry’s average”, stresses Häusler and points out the consistently high equity-to-assets ratio of more than 40 per cent. The expenditure for research and development continues to amount to 8 per cent. The order placement situation for the current business year (March 2007 to February 2008) is excellent. Significant increases have been posted in the standard component business as well as in the project business. When compared to the same period in the previous business year, the order placements have increased by 20 per cent. In total, König is expecting an increase in turnover for the entire business year 2007/2008 of at least 15 per cent. Following the departure of Dr. Peter Kuchner from the company after two years, Dr.-Ing. Richard Häusler became the sole general manager. He emphasizes that for his management duties he is supported by an experienced team, comprising amongst others financial manager Klaus Gasser, technical manager Peter Lambauer, production manager Hannes Stelzer, customer service manager Dietmar Aichhorn, sales manager Franz Sommerauer and marketing manager Klaus Bernhard. Häusler, who has been with König for 22 years, will “retire in



a few years”. He stresses that new members (external and internal) will be appointed to join the management team in due course.

Laminating technology and vacuum cooling

At the beginning of 2006, König Laminiertechnik GmbH was founded in Dinkelsbühl, Germany. A modular equipment concept has been developed which is marketed under the name “Menes”. The modules can be combined into all common types of dough band plants for the production of puff and Danish pastries, ciabatta, baguettes and pizza. “Because of the elaborate development and construction of this line, intended for large bakeries and industrial production alike, our time schedule was delayed”, explained Häusler. Therefore, the line demonstrated at iba, last October, could not be operated with dough at that point. “We are still trying to catch up with the 6 month delay”, admits Häusler. The breakthrough is in sight as the first plant has been sold. The opportunities for more orders in the near future are good. Due to the wealth of possibilities and variants, it is difficult to get references. The management team had decided to design the first plant for the production of ciabatta and baguettes. However, the enquiries ranged from traditional puff pastry to regional specialties and pizza.

König entered the vacuum technology business field six years ago. At that time they were breaking new ground and consequently gained a lot of experience. “We have gained knowledge with each application”, says Häusler. At the start they believed that there were only a few applications suitable for vacuum technology and that there would only be precisely defined processes. However, it soon became clear that there were many imaginable applications. A lot of careful consideration and know-how is needed in the consultation with the customer in order to find out why and how this technology makes sense. “The operating parameters are clearly limited,”

says Häusler, referring to experience with customers and cooperation with scientific institutes. The technology – batch-wise or continuous operation – is mature and has been used many times successfully all over the world. However, the customers in Germany are hesitating to apply this technology due to their preference for frozen storage.

Markets: US and Europe

In 2005, König established with its second attempt (the first one was made in the 1990s) a sales subsidiary in the US. The team in Richmond, Virginia, had a long and difficult road ahead. New structures had to be set up, ranging from the agent network to spare parts distribution and after sales services.

The company is very pleased with the Hungarian subsidiary in Celldömölk. A new assembly hall will be inaugurated at the end of September 2007. 30 new jobs will be created as a result, in Celldömölk.

As a new development, König introduced the Laurin rolls' plant for small and very small bakeries. The plant is designed for the pro-

duction of round rolls (buns, donuts), moulded rolls (Kaiser rolls), long-moulded, stamped products (Styrian-type oblong rolls) and long-moulded hard rolls. If a winding unit is attached, the production of crescent rolls or "Kornspitz"-rolls is possible. The entire plant has a length of 3.26 m and is completely mobile. The dough divider is a Mini Rex. The plant has a capacity for up to 3,000 pieces per hour. Depending on the type, the dough pieces are deposited on trays or proofing boards via an automatic retraction unit. It is also possible at a later stage to equip the Laurin plant with a final proofer. It is not located at the side of the plant but sits on top of it in order to save space.

The project business, predominately turnkey installations, is becoming more and more important for König. The consistently high prices for steel are however a matter for concern at König. In particular, the prices for stainless steel have more than doubled within a year. Therefore, the company is considering offering machines such as the lacquered or powder-coated basic versions in order to be able to offer cost-efficient alternatives to some markets. +++



++ Richard Häusler
Managing director

++ figures 1+2

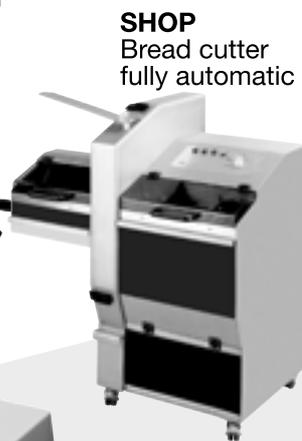
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