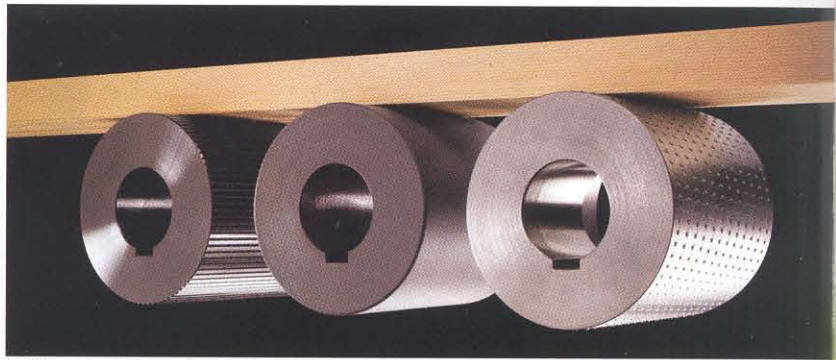


Harnessing Technology

Against the industrial might of China, South-East Asian companies can no longer compete head-on.



Weinig

The South-East Asian woodworking industry is feeling the squeeze – no longer being able to compete solely on price. Realising the need to take the fight into a different arena, some companies are focusing on improving other aspects such as design and quality. German technology provides a means to circumvent the rising dragon, in the tussle to remain profitable.

Q: How can the SEA woodworking industry compete with China?

The days of cheap labour and mass production with cheap, stand-alone machines that do not provide the necessary capabilities and flexibility are over.

The woodworking industry in SEA finds itself in a battle against competitive price pressures, rising raw material prices and labor costs, lumber shortage; lack of experienced manpower, exchange rate developments and a continued trend of losing market share to low-cost producers in China, Vietnam and other emerging global woodworking players.

This problem will become more severe unless there are efficient machinery and systems in place to achieve the necessary yields. Furthermore, management needs to have the transparency throughout their manufacturing processes (ie: how much was produced, what was produced, downtimes, etc.) as well as keeping constant control 'at their finger tips'.



Gero Bauer, MD,
Weinig Asia

Q: How can German technology play a role in helping SEA furniture manufacturers compete?

German technology can play an important role in helping the ASEAN industry compete with China by providing high-end precision machinery which can help to upgrade design, innovation, quality, and productivity. Another main sector for German technology would be to implement more innovative software support in optimisation and product design. In Germany and Italy, many high-end lifestyle furniture products are taking advantage of lucrative niche markets and even penetrating into the Asia Pacific, Japan and China.

ASEAN woodworking and furniture industries can do the same by creating similar designer lifestyle products with a sense of their own cultural designs (eg: Malaysian, Thai, Bali design). Quality machinery with integrated software solutions may be the German answer to ASEAN's woodworking and furniture industries for competing with China.

Dieffenbacher

Q: Besides improving on the speed and efficiency of machinery, how can German manufacturers innovate to differentiate themselves from their competitors?

With machines and systems, the main focus is no longer on the delivery and installation of single machines. Rather, it is on providing a solution to meet requirements. This covers not only the design of the plant, and customisation but also providing customer service.

Instead of standalone systems, complete production plants and in our case, databases and system integrations to customer networks need to be supplied.



Marcus Flügel,
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Company Profile

GreCon is a private company located in Alfeld in Germany (near Hanover) and has almost 400 employees worldwide. The headquarters in Alfeld manufacture all kinds of measurement systems for the wood-based panels industry as well as spark extinguishing systems to prevent dust explosions and fires in silos. Besides a research and development division, GreCon has a service department that caters to customers worldwide. The managing directors are Ernst Greten and Kai Greten.

Latest Innovation - Grecon Mat Scanner Dieffensor

The GreCon mat scanner Dieffensor differentiates between harmless small foreign bodies and those which may damage the steel belt. Dieffensor recognises metallic and non-metallic foreign bodies of high density located in fibre,

chip or OSB mats, such as glue lumps, super-dense fibre lumps; it even detects plastic or aluminium articles which cannot be recognised with standard metal detectors or magnets. Foreign bodies may cause irreversible damage to the

steel belts of a continuous press, especially when thin panels are produced. The scanner recognises the shape and mass of foreign bodies, stores 3D pictures and trends for later evaluation.

Dieffensor determines, with high resolution and over the entire mat width, the weight per unit area as well as the material distribution of the fibre, chip or OSB mat. Exact graphical and numeric representations enable the operator to adjust the forming process to achieve consistent panel quality while optimising material and energy.

Monitoring of the mat distribution prior to the main press ensures an optimum production flow, preventing belt tracking which can be caused by imbalances in the mat. Recorded data measurements make it possible to log and trace production processes.

ENQUIRY NO. 6903



GreCon Extends Production Plant

Alfield, Germany: GreCon is extending its existing production plant. It is building a manufacturing hall for the production of on-line measurement systems, as well as

fire protection systems. This hall is catered to the manufacturing of Dieffensor and SuperScan products. It is scheduled to commence operations in August.



Siempelkamp To Ship 200th Continuous Press

Agudos, Brazil: A 77m long ContiRoll continuous MDF press has been sold to Duratex. Siempelkamp claims it to be the longest continuous press in the world.

The press is supported by 93 frames and allows a mat with a thickness ranging from 2.5 to 37.3 mm to run at a maximum speed of 1400 mm/minute (4.6 ft/minute). The longest ContiRoll press built so far measured 70.3 m and was sold to Tolko in US.

A cooling and stacking line as well as the complete finishing line consists of an intermediate storage system, a sanding, a cut-to-size, and a packing line. These will be supplied by Siempelkamp Handling Systems. The plant is scheduled to start operation in early 2009.

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