

LAYERED WITH PRESTIGE

Gema Switzerland GmbH operates as a leader in electrostatic coating across a spectrum of industries, and utilises the insights gained in doing so to refine an approach that has already cemented its success in the eyes of countless leading business minds. Christian Gföhler, General Manager of Distribution Business, introduced the product range diversification and state-of-the-art laboratories that together, are shaping the course of the company. Tony White reports.

Architecture and aluminium profiles, job coaters, white goods, home appliances, electrical cabinets, general machinery and a roster of other multifarious and niche materials and products entrust their surfaces to Gema Switzerland. The business specialises in both portable handheld devices and fully automated powder coating lines, all capable of demonstrating the pinnacle of effective and robust electrostatic coating solutions.

“We have been an active player in this industry since its very inception,” noted Christian Gföhler, General Manager of Distribution Business for Gema Switzerland. “We take pride in being recognised as the benchmark and pioneer of this sector, with a long history of innovation and high-performance products.”

Beneath the surface

Gema operates headquarters in Switzerland, functioning as the partner of choice to an ever-expanding client base.

“There are over 3,500 of our automatic booth systems and well over a quarter of a million powder guns in operation worldwide today,” Mr Gföhler remarked. “Our Swiss headquarters is also where we conduct our research and development, undertake product management, coordinate our global marketing strategy, as well as engage in engineering works, and the manufacturing and assembly of core components.”

Gema sustains laboratories in key markets around the world where customers can validate their production, and test and verify their future systems.

“Customers can come to our labs, see how we work and can not only try out new equipment, but can see how their new line is going to perform. At Gema, our state-of-the-art laboratories are one of our greatest selling tools.”

Gema’s laboratories are located in Switzerland, the USA, China and Japan. In addition to a physical presence in these four countries, Gema has offices in Mexico, Germany, Italy, France and the UK. The rest of the world is covered by independent distributors.

“Our network of independent distributors are a crucial part of our success

and enable us to deal with clients in and around a given nation’s market much more directly,” acknowledged Mr Gföhler.

Empowering innovation

Gema’s penchant for pioneering is well regarded, and landmark innovations – such as being the first company to offer commercially available electrostatic powder coating guns with integrated high-voltage cascade, Gema’s OptiCenter powder management system or the EquiFlow booth technology for quick colour change applications – further highlight the company’s leading market position.

Furthermore, one of Gema’s more recent landmark products is the powder application technology OptiSpray AP01 with Smart-Inline-Technology (SIT) for constant powder output and gentle powder transport.

“Our latest endeavours hinge on the concept of automation and quick colour change,” Mr Gföhler commented. “With regards to automation, Gema has developed and launched individually controllable gun axes that are controlled by laser scanners that can detect an object’s contours. The benefits of this include reduced setup time, it optimises application results and delivers powder savings.”

Further enhancing Gema’s automation capabilities, the company has developed automatic powder guns that can be mounted on multi-axis robots. “This is one of Gema’s recent solutions to the growing demand for automation within our industry,” affirmed Mr Gföhler.

And in response to ever-increasing market requirements to maximise equipment utilisation, Gema has also launched MultiColor, a superfast colour change solution for automatic systems.

Gema also specialises in catering to niche interests from the market, such as MDF coating solutions, which nevertheless represent a large untapped market that the firm anticipates growing going forward.

Embracing the variety

A wide and expanding range of target demographics make up Gema’s focus today, with its solutions seeing implementation in everything from home appliances to aluminium facades on buildings and industrial machinery worldwide. ▀



“Staying ahead of the competition is vital to us, not least due to our positive reputation as a market leader to which other players often aspire,” Mr Gföhler said. “We can supply everything from components to manual equipment and fully integrated and automated solutions, all with a guarantee of best performance, reliability and longevity, backed up further by aftersales support.”

And Mr Gföhler was keen to highlight the crucial role Gema’s aftersales service plays in the company’s ongoing success.

“It is not only the product, but also the after sales support that we provide to our customers worldwide, which is important, be it spare parts, repair and maintenance services, application consultancy and so forth.”

That said, complacency never enters the collective mind of Gema, and the business is aware of the rising wave of competition that keeps a close eye on Gema’s innovate developments.

“Competition, especially from the East, is both expansive and highly aggressive in pricing,” Mr Gföhler stated. “Not only that, but such businesses copy products already on the market, rather than developing their own innovations, and they are doing this at an ever-increasing speed. But they have no chance to meet us on our performance, quality and service capabilities. We embrace the opportunities that thereby

arise to go one step further and continuously better ourselves as a market benchmark should.”

Gema is able to keep its worldwide presence both humble and nimble thanks to its closer relationships with clients and suppliers alike. As well as the communication avenues made possible by its international presence, the firm also attends industry events and seminars to keep the channels of information open at all times.

“That is why we continue to invest in automation and efficiency, as I alluded to beforehand,” Mr Gföhler highlighted. “Innovation cycles are becoming ever tighter, and Industry 4.0 makes smart solutions

a major factor in swaying market opinions towards a given product. The time from a new idea being formed to the launch of the resultant product has never before needed to be swifter – ours is the information age, and is why our investments in research and development are so consistently high.

“In terms of market trends, there is a constant drive at Gema to help our customers reduce their production costs and increase their production quality.”

Expanding ever further

As the company’s product portfolio grows ever more distinctive and its client base becomes increasingly broad in variety and



geographic positioning, Gema intends its future focus to display as much growth as its formative decades.

“Flexibility to sudden market shifts is critical in that respect,” Mr Gföhler said. “While we have some degree of knowledge in terms of the broad roadmap of the market, so to speak, unexpected shifts can and will occur, and we must stand ready. The right mindset, combined with the high talent of our staff within the organisation and the right equipment ready to meet the needs of the right geographic market at the right time, has always been the heart of our philosophy. We believe that remaining close to these tenets will further galvanise our progress for years to come.”