Interview with Stephan Kreutz, Managing Director of HELIMA GmbH

Warming up a competitive edge

Market leaders in any industry generally have one attribute in common: courage. The courage to innovate and take risks to launch new products on the market, and to get up and try again when, occasionally, success does not materialize, is a vital attribute. German company HELIMA GmbH is a perfect example. The manufacturer of spacers for the glazing sector is a pioneer of new technologies and, despite a setback, is one of the leading market players.

HELIMA leads the way in glazing spacer bars of all kinds

Founded in 1949 and headquartered in Wuppertal in western Germany, in the 1990s HELIMA led the way in developing stainless steel glazing spacer bars; with its advanced and innovative solutions, the firm very quickly became the clear market leader in this sector. In 2008, the company recognized the potential of warm edge profiles enabling thermal separation, and developed its first product with state-of-the-art design and technologically advanced materials – a combination of biopolymers and stainless steel foil. “This was a difficult material to work with, and the planned turnover was, unfortunately, not achieved,” admits Managing Director Stephan Kreutz.

In 2015, HELIMA was taken over by Solvesta AG, but the concept of warm edge profiles as a key product for the future remained at the forefront. In 2016, HELIMA launched its newest range for this market, NOVITEC, with three different material blends, each offering exciting design solutions for the premium market segment. In addition, the company has two other key ranges: ALUTECH is its classic range of spacer bars made from aluminium, and NIROTEC spacers are made from stainless steel. “We are at the forefront of this technology. Our spacers are three times as strong as those made by our competitors,” underlines Mr. Kreutz. “70% of the highest buildings in the world incorporate our profiles. They ensure that windows are more stable, and they are also designed to cope well with moisture.” As a second pillar, HELIMA also produces radiator tubes for car radiators and heat exchangers.

In 2008, HELIMA was, without a doubt, ahead of its time, and the market is now catching up. “Glass as a construction material is fashionable, and the current trend is towards warm edge profiles and the new material blends; I think this will continue,” says Mr. Kreutz. “However, warm edge is expensive, and aluminium spacers are still in huge demand.” With its diverse range of products, HELIMA’s goal is to regain its position as the clear market leader for window spacers and profiles. “We didn’t lose a single customer during our insolvency and takeover,” notes the Managing Director proudly. “Our aim now is to develop into the one-stop supplier in this sector, and to take advantage of developments in e-mobility to increase our activities in the automotive sector.”

Managing Director Stephan Kreutz joined HELIMA in 2016, and fosters an open work culture, encouraging employees to contribute their ideas for positive change

Our spacers are three times as strong as those made by our competitors.