



The complete cold end solution provided by the WENSPECT alliance.

Commercial alliance focuses on complete inspection solutions

In recent months, two important players in the glass container inspection market have created a commercial alliance to offer complete and intelligent inspection lines. Jean-Luc Logel explains the background to the WENSPECT initiative and the expected benefits.

IRIS Inspection machines and Heye International are established, independent suppliers to the international glass container industry. Leaders in their respective area of activity, they have worked together for many years, supplying inspection lines that feature IRIS camera inspection equipment and Heye check inspection machines. A great deal has been learnt from this successful collaboration, leading the management teams to bring the two companies even closer together via the creation of WENSPECT. This cold end commercial alliance delivers intelligent technology, combined with robust mechanics and brings collective expertise to the cold end.

From headquarters on the outskirts of Lyon, France, IRIS has designed, developed and manufactured intelligent inspection solutions since 2002, offering precise and innovative machines with reduced dependence on the human factor for increased productivity, quality and efficiency. The company brings together a team of skilled engineers, mastering the entire production of machines, from ideas and concepts to the production of CPU boards and on-site installation.

Based in Oberkirchen, Germany, Heye International is one of the foremost suppliers of production technology, high performance equipment and knowhow for the glass

container industry worldwide. The company's mechanical engineering has set standards in the industry for more than five decades, while the expertise, attitude and enthusiasm of Heye employees conforms to their corporate motto 'We are glass people'.

The WENSPECT brand represents the next stage in co-operation between the two organisations, with many projects already equipped with Heye SmartLine check detection and IRIS EVOLUTION NEO camera inspection machines. "Now it's time to go to the next level" Jean-Luc Logel, Chief Executive Officer at IRIS explains. "Larger greenfield and rebuild projects often want to see complete solutions, a single face, one order and one start-up and

installation team, with no visible interfaces."

The delivery of complete inspection lines is covered by this agreement, involving a shared approach to sales, service and wherever possible, research and development. In many markets around the world, both companies are already represented by the same partners. The two companies continue to be run independently of each other, maintaining their individual brands and identities.



The cold end inspection solution at Bastürk Cam in Turkey.

Shared solutions

The alliance was officially announced to the international glass container industry at the glasstec exhibition last October and subsequently, a positive reaction has been received from existing and prospective customers.

Jean-Luc Logel and his counterpart at Heye, Dirk Pörtner meet frequently to assess the project's progress and consider all situations their commercial and service personnel may encounter, providing answers that are compatible with their agreed template. Separately, the marketing teams of both organisations are regularly in contact to implement strategic policies, while joint steering, technical and service committees have been created to deliver consistent and customer-driven guidelines. The technical committee calls on the proven development expertise of teams managed by Majd Rahmani, Technical Director at IRIS in France and Gerd Schütz, Cold End Product Development Manager at Heye in Germany.

A dedicated WENSPECT email address and website have been created, where all sales and service enquiries are shared with the most relevant personnel and are responded to quickly.

In the first few months, a positive team spirit has already been generated within the Heye and IRIS organisations. According to Jean-Luc Logel, complete transparency exists in areas of common interest. And where both companies have previously developed and sold competitive products, eg mould number readers, it has been agreed that the best features of both designs will be employed to create a single product. As a result, a better solution will become available to customers, while both companies will improve their costs by adopting this shared approach.

Positive customer reaction

The immediate reaction received from the marketplace has been very positive. Both companies enjoy a loyal customer base, many of which choose to select their preferred inspection technology providers and will continue to do so in the future. "We don't want to change their preferred approach and will continue to serve them as we have in the past" Mr Logel suggests. "In addition, however, there is a substantial part of the market that IRIS cannot serve adequately alone because some elements of a complete line cannot be delivered."

This includes greenfield projects and complete factory refurbishments, where the customer prefers to deal with one contractor only for the entire project. In these situations, the company has previously been unable to tender for business. "The customer is looking for a single contractor to take sole responsibility, together with a common-sense approach and exploiting important synergies that exist. We realised that without working more closely together, Heye and IRIS would be unable to provide that synergy." Consequently, significant potential business expansion has been estimated for both parties working together in the WENSPECT alliance.

In the past 14 years, the commercial relationship between the two companies has already led to the installation of almost 100 production lines throughout the world. This includes major projects in Thailand, Vietnam, Brazil, Mexico and Turkey. And in this respect, Jean-Luc Logel sees tremendous potential for the WENSPECT alliance in such markets as North and Latin America, the Middle East and Asia.

The latest greenfield glass container factory to enter production in Turkey, for example, calls on inspection expertise from Heye and IRIS. Located at the heart of the Malatya agricultural region of eastern Anatolia, Bastürk Cam features a 300 tonnes/day glass melting furnace. Three production lines have been set up to make flint bottles and food jars. Flexibility is provided at the cold end, where Heye and IRIS have provided a complete, integrated solution. This involves EVOLUTION 12 inspection machines for sidewall and stress, EVOLUTION 5 equipment for the base, finish and stress and SmartLine starwheel inspection machines. Full data connectivity is assured between machines via an information management system. ►



The WENSPECT alliance was officially unveiled at glasstec 2018.

All necessary information is provided to improve the performance of different lines.

Equipment portfolio

EVOLUTION 12 NEO is an intelligent sidewall inspection machine with 12 HD cameras. Thanks to its special optical design, this IRIS equipment provides full body coverage. Equipped with a 21.5in touchscreen, the machine offers full display of 12-16 images. The latest generation cameras take sharper and more accurate images, improving discrimination between different defect types (eg small stones and blisters). A powerful processing unit with an innovative design and reduced maintenance costs offers a platform for greater inspection intelligence.

Separately, EVOLUTION 5 NEO is a fully automatic machine for base, finish, base stress inspection and mould number reading. It is totally modular and can be equipped with between one and five HD cameras to match individual inspection needs. An improved mechanical design provides better access to all inspection stations and saves set-up time. The latest generation LED ensures lighting from several angles to obtain a better image for inspection. Equipped with a 21.5in deported touch screen with a user-friendly interface, EVOLUTION NEO offers quick and easy job changes and the inspection of round and non-round ware.

The third key equipment element is Heye SmartLine 2, the latest generation of Heye's starwheel inspection machine series. The SmartLine series sets the

standard in reliability and robustness. The user interface has been improved and makes job changes as easy as possible. Both the mechanical design and control unit are extremely reliable and easy to operate. The large hood gives maximum access to the working space, reducing job change times to a minimum. Furthermore, the latest non-contact inspection features are integrated, as well as a self-learning system for camera-based check detection.

Supporting glass plant needs

Under the terms of the WENSPECT alliance, each company will continue to maintain separate regional sales management responsibilities, in recognition of the importance of retaining regular, direct customer relationships at glass plant level. "This helps us to understand and support the requirements of plant managers" Jean-Luc Logel comments.

Importantly, however, the alliance will help Heye and IRIS to deliver meaningful technical solutions to the challenges posed by Industry 4.0 that can be integrated successfully and consistently across the entire production line, both hot and cold end. "Having a technical alliance with an IS machine manufacturer widens the IRIS perspective, allowing us to consider not only the valuable information that our EVOLUTION machines supply but also to communicate with equivalent intelligent production equipment at the hot end to optimise performance and identify inconsistencies" Mr Logel adds. "Keeping our technical

leadership in camera inspection technology by continuing to innovate, while collaborating with Heye can only strengthen our position."

Of particular importance during the initial stage of this embryonic alliance's existence has been the exchange of valuable data, leading to the current development of a web tool at IRIS, where the performance of EVOLUTION NEO machines and their success in the rejection of faulty glass containers will be viewed on a computer or smart device to quickly modify settings as necessary. "We are working closely with Heye to integrate their data on this tool and create valuable trend analysis information for the benefit of customers in the management of their hot end processes" Jean-Luc Logel explains. This tool is still under development and is expected to be made available to customers when benefits have been proved.

The alliance is still in its infancy but Mr Logel is very pleased with the progress made so far. "It can take years to create a successful brand but because we are starting with two successful businesses, we are confident of the project's success. Now, we need an opportunity to demonstrate what we are able to do!"

Employees at both companies have reacted positively to the WENSPECT concept, thanks largely to the fact that Heye and IRIS have already worked together successfully over such a long period. There is a strong belief that together, they can generate significant improvements to the performance of existing equipment, while also developing further important advances for the benefit of customers. ●

Further information:

Heye International, Obernkirchen, Germany
tel: +49 5724 26-0
web: www.hey-international.com

IRIS Inspection machines, Bron, France
tel: +33 4 72 78 35 27
web: www.iris-im.com

WENSPECT
email: contact@we-nspect.com
web: www.we-nspect.com