

INTEGRATION OF BIESHEUVEL TECHNIEK AND BRAMMER WELL UNDER WAY

STRONGER TOGETHER

In September of last year, Biesheuvel Techniek's parent company IHP Group got a new owner, Advent International. Advent then delisted the UK technical wholesaler Brammer, clearing the way for a merger with Biesheuvel Techniek. With the integration of the two companies well under way, the new name has also already been decided on: BT Brammer

BY JOS CORTENRAAD

That can't be a simple operation, merging two companies with annual turnovers of about one billion euros each. 'That's right,' acknowledges Meino Noordenbos, director Benelux of Biesheuvel Techniek Brammer and responsible for the integration in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. 'One day you wake up and your turnover has increased by 40% to EUR 270 million, you have 900 people on the payroll instead of 550, and the number of business locations has grown from 45 to 70. It's not that we haven't had our share of developments in recent years, and growth from takeovers is part and parcel of our corporate strategy, but this was and still is quite a challenge. There are two business locations in various cities as well as overlapping positions. The ICT systems differ, Brammer still had some branches with minority shareholders and there are many accounting issues as well. And in addition it's still business as usual every day.'

PRODUCT RANGE

And then we're not even talking about the product range, which all of a sudden is extended by some 170,000 products. It may take a while before these have all been entered into the systems. Meino Noordenbos: 'True, but that's what it was all about in the first place. Biesheuvel Techniek did not have a very strong drive technology portfolio. The merger with Brammer enables us to cover a larger part of the industrial market, with both products and knowledge. Like us, Brammer has invested heavily in professionals and training. I am impressed by their expertise and enthusiasm. They know all about drives and the market and monitor developments. And they have to, because OEMs demand

added value from their suppliers. It's no longer enough just to supply materials, parts, components and equipment. Service, installation and training are all part of the package. Brammer recognised the importance of this. We're a very good match.'

STRUCTURE

The integration is due to be completed by the end of 2018. That has to and will work, says Meino Noordenbos. 'We started off a bit too fast initially, putting too much emphasis on a new structure. That created unrest. So after Christmas we decided to allow the process more time. The people are keen to work together, but we shouldn't want to force the issue. We are looking carefully at where business locations can be combined and how positions can be allocated. I'm not expecting any lay-offs. We will continue to grow, also because we now have more to offer our buyers. This cooperation paves the way towards more sectors in the manufacturing industry.'

CUSTOMERS

For the integration, Meino Noordenbos uses the outcome of a survey among 300 key customers. 'Reactions are positive. Our customers consider it important that their contact will remain the same and that logistics won't change. They also expect competitive prices, especially because our increased size enables us to demand better conditions from our suppliers. However, service and technical



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know-how remain paramount. We will not compromise on that.'

PARTNERSHIPS

The acquisition of Brammer is, for now, the last in a series of take-overs. 'We want to offer as broad a package as possible. With the added products from Brammer, we now have a range of almost one million different products, including tools, lubricants, bearings, hydraulics, pneumatics, personal protective equipment and measurement equipment. But partnerships are essential as well. We have concluded special contracts with OEMs in the manufacturing industry, such as Canon Océ, ITM, KMWE and Zehnder. We manage the warehouses of some 300 large and small companies. We have climbed up in the chain, sit around the table with R&D departments and provide input for innovations and logistics. This is where the investments in product knowledge and training pay off. Brammer's expertise has made us even stronger.' ●

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