

keeping ahead flexible growth

“Growth is vital in any high technology, capital intensive business” says Brian Shorrock, Managing Director of Chichester-based Teknoflex, manufacturer of flexible circuits for the aerospace, defence, medical, automotive sectors. So Teknoflex has set its sights on doubling its turnover through a combination of organic growth, product diversification and possible acquisition.



Flexible circuits

If you are flying in a commercial or executive jet powered by Rolls Royce Aerospace engines or driving a Mercedes E Class you are probably benefiting from Teknoflex technology. The company has annual sales in excess of £10 million and is by far the largest UK supplier of flexible circuitry and ranks 3rd or 4th largest in Europe. Internationally recognised groups such as Cobham, Thales, defence supplier MBDA, BAE Systems, Goodrich (a major systems supplier to Rolls Royce), Siemens Diagnostic, Hewlett Packard Medical, McLaren Motorsport are just some of the company's clients.

consolidation

In mid 2007 all operations were consolidated onto one site with the construction of a 20,000 sq ft purpose built unit alongside the company's main production facility. Before, the company operated from two facilities a mile apart. “The efficiency and productivity gains arising from this consolidation have been very considerable,” says Brian.

Not only is the new factory lean, but it is green too, winning a £25,000 grant from Chichester District Council, a £30,000 interest free loan from the Carbon Trust and a Chichester District Council Sustainable Business Award. Low energy lighting with automatic controls, heat recovery systems, climate responsive intelligent heating and ventilation, as well as enhancements to waste water treatment facilities, will deliver long term environmental benefits.

Relocating much of the high technology manufacturing equipment into the new facility was expensive and complex. This included the total relocation of the UK's only £1.7M photo imangible reel to reel Flexible Circuit manufacturing facility. Brian knows the company must grow to justify the investment. “Overall, the relocation has put Teknoflex right where we need to be as we set out on the path

of achieving our ambitious growth plan.” And the company has stayed in West Sussex, despite inducements to re-locate its operations to other regions of the UK. The main reason for staying was the capability and commitment of the company's 150 employees, as well as the considerable support provided by Chichester District Council, including assistance with planning consent for the new facility.

evolution

Teknoflex extends its product and technological capabilities largely by developing evolutionary solutions with customers. The sophistication and extent of the company's technology mean many of its customers sign collaborative agreements to design and develop customised and cost effective technical solutions.

One recent product development relates to its Surface Mount Interconnects (SMIs), used to electrically connect electronic circuitry. These are supplied in “tape and reel” form to allow automatic placement and assembly. These products have been sold in very large quantities to companies such as Mercedes, and to geographical regions extending from the USA to China.

new markets

Expanding exports from the present ten per cent is a key objective of the growth plan. France, Germany, Italy and the USA, all existing export markets, are the main targets for a concerted sales drive, while SEEDA and UKTI are helping to identify other industry sectors, including some closer to home, such as motorsport and maritime. Teknoflex expects that areas

where it has exclusive technologies to help customers develop product or technological diversification will offer the best opportunities.

Given the high technology of the company's products and markets obtaining internationally recognised quality standards is vital. Apart from holding all the necessary product approvals, Teknoflex is heavily engaged in performance-improvement-initiatives, such as the SC21 Supply Chain improvement programme, adopted by all the major UK Aerospace and Defence companies. The company is well advanced in terms of its progress under SC21, a fact recognised recently when the company was invited to make a presentation to the SC21 Steering Group.

Success in achieving indigenous growth, product and market diversification does not just happen. Teknoflex has a focused, well researched and driven process to keep it at the forefront of flexible circuit manufacture in the UK and Europe and is committed to expanding its high technology capability through substantial capital investment.

best

“West Sussex is strong in advanced manufacture but many companies, Teknoflex included, tend to hide their light under a bushel,” says Brian. “It is easy to underestimate the importance of local companies to major national and international projects and, quite sobering, when one considers that a company based in Chichester could influence the successful production and delivery of major aircraft, like Airbus, or impact on the supply and cost of Mercedes vehicles.”

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) Chairman, Jim Brathwaite, who visited Teknoflex in September, praises the Company's vision: “British manufacturing is as good as anybody's in the world and Teknoflex is a typical example of the best. Even in the present tough economic times, the Company is taking just the right kind of positive, innovative approach that will bring results.”

With Brian Shorrock's determination at the helm, this forecast for Teknoflex will probably be pretty accurate.

www.flexiblecircuits.co.uk

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*Jim Brathwaite
SEEDA Chairman*

Flexible circuits from Teknoflex

