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Beaver Quality Becomes International Standard



B. SCHWARZLI

NEWMARKET, ON, Canada — Amid a faltering economy and weakened bulk industry in the U.S., Beaver Machine Corp. is expanding its reach into the growing European market and beyond. The Canadian company is leveraging its well-earned reputation for quality vending machine design and innovation to position its brand internationally.

“I would say that right now, the European market is growing. Perhaps it isn’t growing as fast as it was three or four years ago, but there is still growth,” explained Beaver’s Bernie Schwarzli. “For example, in the past we would always launch a new product in Canada and then the U.S., in that order. But Europe is now our primary test market. When we come out with a new product, we’ll try to launch it globally first, whether it is to Europe, South Africa or the Middle East.”

Schwarzli also pointed to Eastern Europe as a growing market for bulk equipment, as well as Russia. “The former Eastern Bloc countries are slowly coming on, and Russia is coming on stream for us pretty good,” he said. “A lot of the countries that were previously economically unsound are now coming around.”

According to Schwarzli, going global has required some adjustments in the way his firm does business. For instance, in sharp contrast with the North American custom,

many international customers require long-term “personal” relationships prior to receiving a major purchasing commitment. This requires everything from multiple business meetings to attending family dinners and other informal functions.

Sales strategies aside, bulk vending equipment is uniquely positioned for the global marketplace. Unlike other products, which may require significant design modifications to fit cultural norms, “gumball machines” are universally understood and accepted around the world.

However, that is not to say catering to a global market doesn’t require some equipment modifications. Coin mechs, of course, have to be adjusted for local currencies. And in countries where bulk vending is a relatively new industry, the majority of routes are run by small operators catering to mom-and-pop locations. In these places, bulk vending resembles the industry as it was many decades ago in North America.

This has required Beaver to make small but significant modifications to some of its equipment, many of which also benefit its North American customers. For example, smaller locations require a smaller machine footprint. This meant adapting Beaver’s popular BS-250 with a new look that fits additional bulk heads into a compact stand. And many locations are outside, so Beaver offers more weather-resistant powder-coated bases as an alternative to chrome. “We also developed a moisture sealing kit for our RB ma-

chines,” said Schwarzli. “We came up with that about 10 years ago when we first started getting into Europe.”

New global markets are helping to boost Beaver’s bottom line, Schwarzli confirmed, but he also sees them as holding the potential to generate new ideas that will move the industry to the next level of innovation.

“We may see a new breed of bulk vending operator that will move this industry forward, and that new breed may come from Europe or Asia,” Schwarzli said. “Maybe some guys in America will see something happen in Asia or Europe, and they’ll start that ball rolling. We need someone to think outside the box, get away from the traditional bulk vending mentality. Is the industry in transition? Yes, I believe it is, and that transition may just come from another country.”



STRAIGHT UP: Assembly specialist aligns framework on run of Single Tower venders at Beaver Machine Corp. factory in Newmarket, ON, Canada.

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