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supporting the pallet and case industry



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Cekamon Saws expands with Alliance partnership

Cekamon Saws (part of De With group) has finalised a partnership with Alliance Automation that will see the two businesses bring their technology to the European pallet market.

Cekamon Saws has installed its pallet dismantler PalletSAW throughout Europe for more than 30 years, and says the deal allows it to satisfy demands from clients for extension in further automation of the process of both repair and dismantling of pallets.

Alliance Automation is located in Ohio US, and has more than 15 years of experience in the automation of the pallet industry.

They are, like Cekamon Saws, a solution provider of sorting, repairing and automatically dismantling pallets.

Cekamon's Rick Dollekemp says the Alliance deal reflects the company's strategy of "making new partnerships with colleagues and partners, based on knowledge and expertise in the pallet industry and working together to offer a cohesive brand experience."

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"We share a common core value with Alliance Automation and that is to ensure the proper solution is in place to meet our clients' specific needs and reduce employee injury risks by improving the work environment," he says.

According to Dollekamp, Cekamon Saws and Alliance Automation will "work as a genuine partnership: seamlessly integrating the standout features of both companies to enhance the experience for their clients."

"When a potential customer contacts either Cekamon Saws or Alliance Automation about our automation solutions, the request will be reviewed and the Cekamon Saws team can conduct an on-site evaluation to ensure the best possible solution," says Dollekamp.

"When a customer purchases a solution, the Cekamon Saws team will work with the customer to ensure that the installation timeframe works. Cekamon Saws will also be the service contact for all installed solutions in Europe. Through this partnership, our customers can also benefit from Alliance Automation technology."

Cekamon Saws will focus on Alliance Automation's main product, the Robot Dismantling System (RDS, pictured). However, all other Alliance Automation equipment, such as the Urban Sawmill and the high-speed sort- and repair lines, can also be purchased by Cekamon Saws' European customers.

Dollekamp said: "With a joint focus to improve labour ergonomics, provide quality solutions and improve business, save on labour expenses and, most significantly, reducing the carbon footprint on a global scale, Cekamon Saws and Alliance Automation will be successful in introducing next generation pallet automation to the European pallet industry."

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TIMCON President highlights collaboration and data as key to timber industry success



Left to right: Jason Ortega, NWPCA; Marcus Kirschner, FEFPEB; Mary Walsh, TIMCON Executive; Darren Turner, TIMCON Executive; John Dye, TIMCON President; Jo Davidson, TIMCON Executive; Guy Watt of John Clegg Consulting; and Fergal Moran, TIMCON Executive.

Collaboration between different sector organisations is increasingly important to achieving shared targets for the timber industry, according to John Dye, President of the Timber Packaging & Pallet Confederation (TIMCON).

At the general meeting of TIMCON members, held in Manchester in January, Dye said strong relationships with international and domestic associations including European Federation of Pallet & Packaging Manufacturers (FEFPEB), National Wooden Pallet & Container Association (NWPCA), National Association of Pallet Distributors (NAPD), Timber Development UK (TDUK), Wood Panel Industries Federation (WPIF), and the Wood Recyclers Association (WRA) - which were all represented at the event - are vital to progressing the interests of timber-based businesses. This included cooperating on policy matters affecting the industry such as the PPWR and working together to source high quality data to inform better decision making for the business.

NWPCA Vice President of Public Affairs Jason Ortega, echoed the theme of international partnerships as he presented an update on his organisation's activities. This includes a new carbon calculator it has developed and from which it will share learnings as TIMCON embarks on a similar initiative to help its membership meet increasing sustainability obligations.

Marcus Kirschner of the German Wood Packaging Federation (HPE) and FEFPEB's PPWR Committee said working with national organisations across Europe is a central part in lobbying EU policymakers. This includes ensuring they understand that the wooden packaging and pallet industry is naturally sustainable and should be at the heart of its circular economy principles, and helping achieve acceptable results on PPWR.

Dye said: 'Over the past decade, TIMCON has fostered close productive partnerships with our pallet and packaging industry counterparts across the world and related wood-based sectors. These relationships help us establish and communicate shared positions and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. At a time of significant international tensions, this

spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and friendship helps strengthen us all, as individual businesses, as associations, and as a timber industry overall.'

He added that with TIMCON representing the UK and Ireland, its remit included members both inside and outside the EU, again highlighting the significance of working towards international solutions that benefitted all.

The need for quality data on the business from within the industry was also highlighted by Guy Watt of John Clegg Consulting, who presented the findings of the UK Wood Pallets & Packaging Market in 2022. The latest edition of this annual report, which is jointly commissioned by TIMCON and Forest Research (the research arm of the Forestry Commission), showed a 7 per cent drop in production of new pallets, to 45.3million, representing a fall of approximately 3.4m pallets.

This follows the 8.3 per cent increase in pallet manufacture shown in last year's report - and may be followed by a larger decrease for 2023. Pallet repairs, meanwhile, have risen to 48.9m, an increase of 1.7 per cent on 2021.

Watt said surveys for the market report's next edition would be issued to the membership much earlier, during February this year. This, said Dye, will allow it to be published earlier, reducing uncertainty around volumes, and helping inform discussions with Defra and other government departments.

The TIMCON meeting also featured presentations by Charlie Law, Sustainability Director for TDUK, and Nick Boulton, TDUK Head of Technical and Trade Policy. Law gave an update on the UK timber industry's net zero action plan and the specific ways in which the pallet and packaging sector can support it. Boulton presented latest UK market industry trends, including timber imports, demand, and forecasts.



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New appointment targets growth for UK pallet pooler

One of Europe's leading pallet poolers has invested in its UK senior management team as it prepares for growth.

One of Europe's leading pallet poolers has invested in its UK senior management team as it prepares for growth.

Coventry-based IPP, which is a pooler of sustainable wooden pallets, has appointed Paul Timbrell to the role of Head of Commercial Accounts.

Paul brings 20 years' experience in the FMCG sector to the role, including expertise in leadership, strategic planning and commercial management.

His role will involve growing IPP's existing

customers and seeking and securing new business opportunities while leading the company's team of account managers.

Paul said: "The opportunities for growth are huge; sustainability should be on every responsible business' agenda and IPP is well placed to support this.

"I'm delighted to be part of this fast-paced, dynamic and forward-thinking business, which takes a positive approach to sustainability while delivering our customers' products.

"I'm looking forward to working for a business that is actively working to reduce industry timber usage and CO2 emissions by embracing the circular economy."

Shelley Pierre, commercial director at IPP, said: "We have strengthened the team to support the business during this period of growth and are pleased to welcome a new head of commercial accounts with such extensive sector experience.

"Paul is an excellent addition to our team and his knowledge and experience will be invaluable as we look to strengthen relationships and grow our UK operation."

IPP, which is part of the Faber Group, provides reusable pallet and box pooling services across Europe for fast moving consumer goods and industrial supply chains, operating a pay-per-use model over ownership.

The company has set a target to become net-zero by 2045 following the publication of Faber Group's first sustainability report earlier this year.

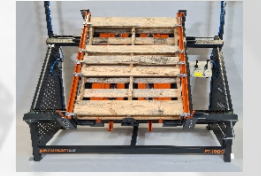


Paul Timbrell, IPP Head of Commercial Accounts



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A simple, sustainable step



It's a quick win. Promoting the use of wood pallets and packaging is a simple and quick way of stimulating growth in our faltering low-carbon economy.

The news this week that world global warming has exceeded 1.5C for an entire year for the first time highlights the increasing urgency with which we need to address climate change. Meanwhile, politicians are dialling down key climate pledges for economic reasons and missing the opportunity to commit to boost wood-based businesses, which naturally showcase best practice on sustainability.

Wood packaging material (WPM) businesses are already founded on principles of circularity. They manufacture products from sustainably managed trees, which means for every one that is harvested, more are grown in their place. They then repair and reuse pallets until they are ready to be recycled into other products - from chipboard to animal bedding. Their business model is sustainable from start to finish.

Government needs to do everything it can to encourage manufacturing and reuse of wooden pallets and packaging, and of wooden products in general. It is a straightforward and low-cost move, which would demonstrate that, in spite of the recent headwinds, they really are committed to fostering a sustainable future for industry and the economy.

In particular, the Timber Packaging & Pallet Confederation (TIMCON) is calling on the government to introduce a reuse incentive scheme as a matter of urgency. The annual independent Wood Pallets & Packaging Market Report - which is jointly commissioned by TIMCON and Forest Research UK - shows pallet repair and reuse is increasingly steadily; however, there are still too many being recycled or sent to biomass plants, before they have reached their end of life.. The reuse initiative will ensure that we maximise the use of wooden packaging materials and pallets. It will encourage businesses to make reuse a central part of their sustainability strategies, aligning with international ambitions to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change.

The trees that make pallets and other WPM absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as they grow - approximately 27.5kg for a single wooden pallet. Using them for as long as possible - so that carbon dioxide continues to be stored - makes sense and helps companies and governments reduce their carbon impacts.

Our message is this: if it possible to reuse a pallet or piece of packaging, then we should be reusing it, keeping it working and in circulation as a priority. It should only be recycled once it reaches the end of its useful life. This is a central tenet of a truly circular economy and why a 'single trip' pallet should be a thing of the past.

John Dye President

Timber Packaging & Pallet Confederation (TIMCON)

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Speculate to accumulate – it's time to invest in semi-automated pallet making machines



With an estimated 250 million wooden pallets in circulation in the UK, the pallet is recognised as a cornerstone to free-flowing trade, and has a positive impact on the economy. The invention of the pallet for the purpose of safely stacking and transporting goods and minimising loading and unloading times plays a key role in supply chain management and faster delivery times.

The wooden pallet has several key benefits which make them more popular compared to their plastic, corrugated and metal rivals.

Strength – They are robust and re-usable.

Cost – Wooden pallets are inexpensive to buy and are affordable to buy singularly or in bulk.

Sustainability – Pallets circulate in the market and can be repaired reducing waste and the demand on natural resources. Once no longer usable, they can be recycled minimising the impact to the environment.

Customisable – Pallets can be tailor made to meet the load, weight, width, and length of the required application.

With the industry outlook being bright, and forecasts predicting strong growth for the coming years, finding solutions to increase productivity and efficiency is critical to staying competitive.

When manufacturing pallets there are three ways to achieving this while also looking at the pros and cons for each method:

Fully Automated Production

The main benefits are the speed, safety, and volume of production, while importantly removing the costs and downtime associated with staff employment. The complete removal of manhandling pallets creates a safe working environment which is a big positive. However, this does not fit into most business models considering

the significant financial outlay, and it is no surprise that only a small percentage of businesses are able to invest in fully automated production lines.

Semi-Automated Production

Being significantly more affordable, most companies can afford to invest in this type of equipment, and existing staff can be utilised to operate the machines. Operator safety and working conditions are improved as pallet handling is reduced. The equipment will most importantly increase pallet production, and for many businesses, allow them to focus on other aspects of their business such as production runs and customised pallet manufacturing.

Manual Production

Most companies produce this way as it is the easiest and least expensive way of manufacturing. Other than the cost of raw materials, nail guns, a compressor and staff, there are minimal financial outlays. With manual production there is the flexibility to meet changing market demands, but upscaling production is only possible by increasing staff or working hours. Manual production is labour intensive and is therefore associated with a higher risk of injury.

To conclude, semi-automated production strikes a happy medium when it comes to manufacturing pallets. Without the eye watering price of an automated line, it can sit alone or alongside an automated line. It also solves the problem for companies looking to increase production without taking on more staff. With the consistent rise in pallet demand there is no better time to invest in semi-automated pallet manufacturing equipment.

For more information on Pneumatico Semi-Automated Pallet Assembly Tables please contact John Ichikawa at ATZ-Motion on 07908 175191, by email sales@atz-motion.co.uk or visit www.atz-motion.co.uk.



Offcuts

Archaeological dig finds evidence for oldest wood building tradition

Wooden logs that may have formed part of a stone-age shelter have been unearthed in Zambia.

Not to be outdone by the report of a 6,000 year-old piece of carved wood found in Britain (see Offcuts, PAC magazine, June 2023), the ancient wooden logs are believed to have been part of a structure that was built around half a million years ago.

The findings, published in the journal Nature and reported on by the BBC, have given researchers a new perspective on stone-age people and called into question current wisdom that ancient humans led nomadic lifestyles.

University of Liverpool scientist professor Larry Barham, part of the team that excavated the timber, said: "This find has changed how I think about our early ancestors. They made something new, and large, from wood. They used their intelligence, imagination and skills to create something they'd never seen before, something that had never previously existed."

While the researchers found ancient wooden tools such as digging sticks, the two pieces of wood were the most intriguing.

Team member Geoff Duller, professor of geography at the University of Aberystwyth said of the wood pieces: "One is lying over the other and both pieces of wood have notches cut into them. You can clearly see those notches have been cut by stone tools. It makes the two logs fit together to become structural objects."

The large logs were at right angles to each other, with notches cut into them with stone tools. The smallest log measures around 1.5 metres, meaning it was used to create something of significant size.

Analysis showed the logs were about 476,000 years old.

Perrice Nkombwe, director of the Moto Moto Museum in Zambia, said: "I was amazed to know that woodworking was such a deep-rooted tradition. It dawned on me that we had uncovered something extraordinary."

According to the report, the riverbanks at the Kalambo Falls, near the Zambia-Tanzania border, kept the logs waterlogged and therefore preserved for thousands of years.

The size of the two logs, the smaller of which is about 1.5m (5ft), suggests whoever fitted them together was building something substantial.

Nkombwe said: "With this discovery, we hope to enrich our collection and use the finds to inform the interpretation of the woodworking tradition in Zambia." She added that the find "has the potential to deepen our knowledge of ancient woodworking techniques, craftsmanship, and human interactions with the environment".

Photo by Joel & Jasmin Førestbird on Unsplash

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