



Company Cameo

A Rising Phoenix

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Phoenix Fabrikations bv, Cuijk, The Netherlands, is one of the major distributors of nonwoven fabrics in Europe. The company was founded in 1968 as a subsidiary of U.S.-based Nu-Tex Corporation and, according to executives, was the first company to introduce nonwovens for industrial wipes in Europe.

From the beginning, Phoenix concentrated on servicing nonwovens producers by purchasing all their available non-standard, obsolete and discontinued products. "To many European manufacturers, Phoenix is a reliable and solid partner. Proprietary products are carefully distributed by Phoenix in geographic or industry areas that do not conflict with the target markets of the original manufacturer," explained Edwin de Koning, the company's sales director and qualified export manager. "Due to our wide network and expertise, we are able to move and control fabrics around the world without disturbing producers' customers and markets," he said.

In 1996, the company underwent a management buy-out and founder and former owner Laurence Urdang handed his 'baby' to Wilfred and Edwin de Koning, whose father, Ed de Koning, was involved as general manager of Phoenix since its inception.

In 1999, a large investment was made; the company moved to a new, state-of-the-art plant with warehousing and converting facilities. "At this moment our warehouse measures 7500 square meters (81,000 square feet)," commented managing director Wilfred de Koning. "In order to service our suppliers we must accept their shipments when it is convenient for them to ship and invoice. At times we can have thousands of tons of a specific product in our warehouses," he said.

With customers in more than 40 countries worldwide, Phoenix offers a wide range of fabrics, varying from drylaid to

spunlace, from polypropylene thermal bonded to airlaid as well as a brand new technology involving microfilament nonwovens. "We can offer flexibility to customers," said Edwin de Koning. "Shipments can be made within 24 hours after order receipt, and this gives many of our customers the advantage of keeping their stocks low by 'just-in-time' deliveries. Furthermore, we can offer large quantities of nonwovens on a continuing basis below market prices," he said.

In addition, Phoenix has the advanced equipment and machinery required for slitting, folding and packaging. "This part of our company is a special service to our customers," remarked Wilfred de Koning. "Many companies require specific roll widths for their production. For them, we can convert rolls into the desired widths. In addition, we can help them with the production and customized packing of wipes to their specifications."

Phoenix markets include hygiene, medical, industrial, specialty and consumer. As one of the first nonwoven traders, Phoenix achieved ISO 9002 status in 1998, followed by ISO 9001 in 2004.

Phoenix thoroughly tracks important changes in the market and the development of new products. This innovative way of working and continuously investigating new possibilities has led to the creation of a highly sophisticated nonwoven. "We now offer a microfilament nonwoven product, Micro-Zorb, which is a unique and high quality product. It can be implemented in a wide range of applications; from filtration to lint-free wipes and from anti-allergic fabric to sound barrier surface. Micro-Zorb allows us to go into niche markets where quality is the key issue," Edwin de Koning commented. "This means that for the coming years, we will focus more and more on technical and specialty applications." ❖