



Press release

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Windows and the struggle against the low-interest image / Roto Trade Press Day with captivating panel discussion / Renowned experts from four countries (not always) in agreement / Image improvement campaign: not “whether” but “how” / Collective industry responsibility / Differences prevent generally applicable concept / Added value arguments and a problem with conveying them / Technology does not generate enthusiasm / Show enthusiasm – and train / Appropriate communication / Women making purchasing decisions / Industry needs basic consensus for joint campaign / “Bathrooms” as an example

Making windows “attractive”

Leinfelden-Echterdingen – (rp) Is the struggle against the low-interest image of windows futile? This question, which is intended to be somewhat “provocative” according to the organiser of the event, was the subject of a panel discussion as part of the 14th International Roto Trade Press Day. The panel made up of renowned experts from four countries didn’t want to hear this question answered with a “yes” at end of the discussion in mid-November in the German town of Bad Mergentheim. The experts were ultimately able to agree on this response: “Although the struggle is difficult, it must be waged intensively to make windows as ‘attractive’ as possible for people.” This does not mean that the industry should simply accept that people will only invest in new windows once or twice in their lifetime.

Representing manufacturers in the discussion were Marc Bonjour, Director of International Activities of the French Liebot Group, and Dr Heinz Scharl, Member of Strategic Management at Internorm International GmbH and Head of Markets and Products at IFN-Holding AG from Austria. Andreas Hartleif, Chairman of Veka AG, and Dr



Eckhard Keill, Sole Director of Roto Frank Holding AG, put forward the positions of the industry based in Germany. Hanspeter Gasser, Owner of Swiss company HP Gasser AG, shed light on the central topic from the point of view of a roof window specialist. The panel was chaired by Agency Owner Frank Linnig.

As was stated in a summary, it quickly became apparent that long-term image improvement is not a question of “whether” but rather one of “how” to make this feasible. There is no dispute that this is a “shared responsibility” of the individual market levels. On the other hand, these individual market levels each have their own entirely different interests and realities which render generally applicable concepts impossible. For instance, the profiling of room-specific windows, while is useful due to expertise-related aspects, often lacks impact because it would lead to smaller batch sizes and would therefore have no place in production systems, which are usually driven by quantity. The same applies in principle to the acceptance of innovations, which, in Bonjour’s opinion, must not demand too much of end customers, including when it comes to pricing. Hartleif summarised this as follows: “What use are the best arguments for added value if the resources for implementation are lacking on site? The key concept here is a shortage of skilled labour.”

Scharl also referenced the market awareness of end consumers, which differs in each country. While in Austria, for example, there are window brands with high double-digit awareness levels without the need for additional measures, the situation in Germany, for instance, is completely different, particularly because of the variety of different providers. The principle of an “improved window image through a good brand image” therefore has to take a country-specific form.

Boost thanks to joint campaign?

The event organiser reports that the panel was in complete agreement on defining important factors. One cornerstone is that the industry will



not succeed in making private customers more enthusiastic about windows through a love of technology. This is only possible with positive emotions, appropriate communication, truly conveying the added values and, as Hartleif stated, “a lot of our own enthusiasm.” To achieve this, it is essential to systematically train the advisors, salespeople and fitters in the companies for the new requirements and therefore to make them ready. Gasser added a specific recommendation from his practical experience with regard to the “target group”: “At our company, we find that it is usually women who make the decision to purchase a roof window. They are particularly interested in advantages such as extra space, appearance, light source and an unimpeded view. This counts for more than any technical attribute.”

The panel was not able to agree on the chair’s question regarding whether a potential joint campaign by all market levels could improve the image as required. The spectrum ranged from scepticism, due to extremely homogenous company structures for example, through to a possible alternative with certain conditions. “There will be no basis for this kind of project as long as the industry fails to agree on a basic consensus,” warned Keill. With a view to his earlier activity in the sanitation industry, the Director of Roto recalls the recipe for success of the joint campaign from his time: “Industry, retail and trade wanted to transform the image of bathrooms from a purely functional unit into a personal wellness oasis. They managed to achieve this, at least in Germany.” If the window industry could also agree on a cross-sector objective, that in itself would be a tangible step on the way to an image improvement campaign. With the panel discussion to round off the 14th International Trade Press Day, “we wanted to play our part in encouraging people to consider this possibility more closely.”



Captions

“The struggle against the low-interest image of windows is difficult, but not futile. It must be waged intensively to make windows as ‘attractive’ as possible for people.” This summary was something that the participants of a panel discussion as part of 14th International Roto Trade Press Day could agree on. Renowned industry representatives from four countries provided a varied exchange of opinions in mid-November.

Photo: Roto **panel discussion.jpg**

For Andreas Hartleif (centre), Chairman of Veka, “enthusiasm” is a crucial requirement for increasing private customers’ interest in (new) windows. Marc Bonjour (right), Director of International Activities of the French Liebot Group, and Chair Frank Linnig listened to this insight with great interest.

Photo: Roto **participants_1.jpg**

In the opinion of Dr Eckhard Keill (centre), Sole Director of Roto Frank Holding AG, deliberations on a possible joint campaign for each window only make sense if “the industry has agreed on a basic consensus.” In the discussion, Dr Heinz Scharl (right), Strategic Management at Internorm International GmbH and Head of Markets and Products at IFN-Holding AG from Austria, and Swiss roof window specialist Hanspeter Gasser, Owner of HP Gasser AG, called for windows to be positioned as individual problem-solvers.

Photo: Roto **participants_2.jpg**



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Publisher: Roto Frank Holding AG • Wilhelm-Frank-Platz 1 • 70771 Leinfelden-Echterdingen • Germany • Tel. +49 711 7598 0 • Fax +49 711 7598 253 • info@roto-frank.com

Editor: Linnigpublic Agentur für Öffentlichkeitsarbeit GmbH • Koblenz office • Fritz-von-Unruh-Straße 1 • 56077 Koblenz • Germany • Tel. +49 261 303839 0 • Fax +49 261 303839 1 • koblenz@linnigpublic.de; Hamburg office • Flottbeker Drift 4 • 22607 Hamburg • Germany • Tel. +49 40 82278216 • hamburg@linnigpublic.de