

Making it in Leeds

News release from Leeds Manufacturing

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STICKABILITY BUILDS £60M LEADING BRAND

A Leeds manufacturing company that has built a £60 million operation through a combination of innovative product development and aggressive marketing is poised for continued growth with £1 million invested in improved production lines and an additional seven-figure sum earmarked for expanded manufacturing capacity.

In 17 short years from launch Everbuild has become the UK's largest independent manufacturer of sealants, adhesives and building chemicals for the construction industry and DIY market and fulfilled the marketing promise of: "The No. 1 Builders' Brand."

Sales to February 2011 topped £54 million, following year on year growth of 17% and this year's target is turnover of £60 million.

Managing director David Seymour and two colleagues started the company in Dewsbury with just one mixing machine in 1994 and moved to the massive 250,000 sq ft headquarters on the Cross

Green Industrial Estate in Leeds in 2003. Here, over 250 employees now work on a bewildering range of more than 900 product lines and further expansion is planned.

The business is healthily self-funding and invests at the rate of £1m annually in new production plant to stay ahead of the game. With a minimum of four new product launches a year, research and development also has a substantial budget. David Seymour credits his technical director and staff with "constantly breaking new barriers in product development."

While the construction downturn of 2008 caused a blip in progress, Everbuild recovered strongly the following year, partially aided by a weakened pound and a strong export market, which currently represents 7% of total sales with more than 60 overseas destinations. UK customers number well over 5,000 and, while the company delivers on its one-stop shop promise for the builders merchant & DIY store, buyers have the choice of a second DIY brand, Feb, thanks to the successful acquisition of the smaller company two years ago.

UK sales are split 70\30 in favour of the construction market, and not surprisingly, the recession has seen the DIY sector expanding at a faster rate.

Improved Production

Recent years have concentrated on improving production efficiency, working closely with the Manufacturing Advisory Service and consultants including White Young Green, the latter helping to achieve £30,000 annual savings in energy consumption costs alone.

David Seymour says: "While we have established a reputation as innovators, efficient production must be maximised to ensure continued growth – particularly in the face of punitive increases in the cost of raw materials we're currently experiencing.

"Our operations manager Lisa Broadhead, who joined us from the food industry, has achieved a step change in output standards, with new plant and skills doubling production- led manufacturing and reducing down-time to keep pace with sales demands. We have invested substantially in improved IT systems, with bar-coding throughout the production and packaging processes, making any errors immediately traceable.

"With these strategies, we're displacing foreign competition with outstanding British-made products and planning to maintain our growth."

Paul Stephens, Leeds City Council chief economic development officer said: "The success of Everbuild shows that it's possible for British manufacturing to compete in a fiercely competitive global economy and create employment, rather than sending jobs overseas. Continued investment and product innovation are vital for manufacturers in building and sustaining competitive advantage."

Ends

Photography: Everbuild managing director David Seymour