

THE BIG EVENT

CONSTRUCTION WEEK CONTINUES ITS PREVIEW OF THE INDUSTRY'S LARGEST EXHIBITION IN THE REGION AND ASKS: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE BIG 5?

By Alison Luke

The Big 5 is undoubtedly the largest construction industry event held in the Middle East. So with the sector feeling the full effects of the global recession, how has the exhibition been affected and what does this mean for its future?

The region's construction industry has undergone major changes since the previous Big 5 in 2008 and it seems certain that evidence of this is likely to be seen at the 2009 event both in terms of footfall and the types of products being exhibited. However industry opinion leading up to the event remains positive. In addition to the returning exhibitors, numerous firms have booked exhibition spaces for the first time in order to enter the region's market and there is a widely held view that the Big 5 can only become more successful if it adapts to meet the changing market needs.

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Among the new entrants to the Big 5 this year are Porcellan and Newell Rubbermaid. The two firms offer very different product ranges and demonstrate the diversity of products that will be showcased at the exhibition.



PORCELLAN AMBIENCE WILL BE SHOWN AT BIG 5.

“Porcellan is the latest venture of the Jamal Al Ghurair Group and will produce 18 million m² of glazed, polished, unpolished and technical porcelain tiles per year,” explains Porcellan marketing consultant Sara Al Ghurair. The firm offers a wide range of porcelain tiles with a high aesthetic standard and quality, in different sizes.

It showcased its products for the first time at the Cersaie trade show in Italy during September 2009 and is using the Big 5 as the launch pad for its portfolio in the Middle East. “We consider Big 5 as an appropriate platform to launch our products in the local and regional markets. We believe that this will give us a big boost in terms of our product exposure and brand visibility,” explains Al Ghurair.

Newell Rubbermaid has also deemed the Big 5 as the most suitable platform from which to showcase its products to the wider construction market in the region. The firm will be exhibiting its Rhino industrial labeling solutions and handheld label printers. Aimed at professional installers, the printers include features such as ‘hot keys’ which format commonly used labels, plus a built-in library of industry symbols and terms in order to reduce time on site.

Newell Rubbermaid will also be officially launching the Rhino 5200 to the Gulf region



ALI IHSAN CETINER, GM, EMIRATES INDUSTRIAL PANEL.

“THE PANELS PRODUCED ON EIP'S CONTINUOUS LINE ARE PRODUCED FROM RAW MATERIALS WITH ZERO ODP”

during the event. “The successor to the Rhino 5000, with this newest addition to our industrial grade hand-held label printer line professional installers can now enjoy advanced features such as more ‘hot keys’, an improved ergonomic design and a larger graphical display,” explains Newell Rubbermaid trade marketing manager MEA Leslie Konrad.



EMIRATES INDUSTRIAL PANELS CAN HELP TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND FIRE SAFETY.



JENS SCHUELL, MARKETING MANAGER, UPONOR.

EXPANDING SERVICES

Of the returning exhibitors to Big 5 in 2009, many are taking the opportunity to introduce new products and services to the region that are more in line with the changing construction market. Fire safety, sustainability, improved client service and new construction methods are all factors cited as reasons for new product lines.

Concrete cooling specialist KTI Emirates will be introducing its 4th generation of ice water and cold water plants and 3rd generation of flake ice plants to the market at the Big 5. The firm will also be launching new service packages and contracts reports KTI Emirates' Tobias Graf.

Emirates Industrial Panel (EIP) is planning to take the opportunity to address two of the top considerations in the region: sustainable building and fire safety. The firm will be showcasing its insulated metal panels for industrial and commercial investments and demonstrating how the products can assist in these issues.

"The panels are widely used for covering the roof and façade of industrial and commercial buildings as well as creating cold



NEWELL R5200 LCD CAN BE FOUND AT THE BIG 5.

"WE SEE HUGE POTENTIAL STILL IN THE ARABIAN GULF COUNTRIES"

stores inside buildings that are used by food and pharmaceutical industries," reports EIP general manager Ali Ihsan Cetiner. "Although insulated metal panels have been present in the UAE for some years, the industrial types that are produced on the latest technology continuous lines were not present," explains Cetiner.

EIP is a supplier of PIR fire-resistant panels that are certified to withstand fire and preserve their insulation and integrity features up to certain time limits as will be outlined in detail at the Big 5.

Their contribution to sustainable building will also be in focus. "The panels produced on EIP's continuous line have much improved properties that increase their contribution to preserving the environment: they are produced from raw materials with zero ODP; and they have superior insulation capabilities, hence decrease the consumption of fossil fuels," adds Cetiner.



UPONOR PROVIDED ITS SOLUTIONS IN BANGKOK.

Foamglas and Uponor will also be taking the opportunity to highlight the sustainable nature of their products when used in the region's construction projects. "Foamglas is a thermal insulation that is produced from recycled glass, which has properties such as, it is fully impervious to water and humidity, absolutely non-combustible and is very eco friendly," explains Marco Thomas Vincenz, general manager Middle East, Foamglas.

The firm will be using mock-ups to demonstrate the use of Foamglas in buildings. It will also be launching its new website and

WHAT'S THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF THE BIG 5 FOLLOWING THE RECESSION?

"It might be likely that smaller exhibitions find it difficult to 'survive' in the future and the interest might be concentrated on bigger shows where you can meet everyone." **Leslie Konrad, trade marketing manager MEA, Newell Rubbermaid**

"[The Big 5] will still increase as it is the construction exhibition for the Middle East." **Tobias Graf, KTI Emirates**

"A big exhibition covering all components of interest for the visitor will be more successful [in the future]." **Marco Thomas Vincenz, general manager Middle East, Foamglas**

"Smaller new exhibitions focusing on green building and sustainability are coming up

and the future will show if the Big 5 can incorporate that." **Jens Schuell, marketing manager, Uponor international**

"The global downturn in the construction sector is not here to stay. I think next year the Big 5 may have to be organised on an even larger scale. Of course, bringing in elements of focus on specialised areas of construction will surely add value to it." **Sara Al Ghurair, marketing consultant, Porcellan**

"We believe that investors and professionals could reap more benefits from more focused versions of Big 5, targeted at a more specific parts of the construction sector." **Ali Ihsan Cetiner, general manager, Emirates Industrial Panel**



KTI EMIRATES WILL LAUNCH A NEW RANGE AT BIG 5.

a new product, Foamglas W+F (wall and facade), which has been specially designed for wall applications and has an improved thermal conductivity rating.

Uponor International's product portfolio includes a wide range of underfloor cooling, heating, and installation solutions: multi-layer and PE-Xa pipes, pipe-fixation, manifolds and control devices. At the Big 5 it will demonstrate its new underfloor cooling concept and outline the special project services it offers in this field for consultants, architects and contractors. These include simulation of buildings, calculations including bill of quantity, installation plans and supervision of the installation. In addition,

the firm will show how its system can be applied with the new riser system being used in the region, particularly for high-rise construction.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

Despite the fall in construction activity in certain parts of the region over the past year, the Big 5 exhibitors remain confident about future sales potential of the exhibition and the Middle East region in general.


"The economic downturn has affected us more in Europe and North America; outside of these areas the situation is quite stable," reports Uponor International marketing manager Jens Schuell. "But in general we see huge potential still in the Arabian Gulf countries," adds Schuell.

"In the Middle East the downturn was obvious, but not in each country," reminds Graf. "The demand will increase for sure; it was just a temporary uncertainty at the beginning of the year and the growth in the years 2007 and 2008 was over-proportional," he adds. He cites the previous planning for

mega-projects and ongoing demand for new applications and products as aspects that are set to provide a positive future in the region. "The growth in countries that were not affected much by the crisis will be on a high level," predicts Graf.




EIP is hoping that the Big 5 will provide it both with new business and a true indication of the future of the market. "In the very recent months we have seen signals of an upturn and are very much looking forward to Big 5 to get a validation of those signals," states Cetiner. "Big 5 will play an important role in assessing the situation of the markets in relation to the economic crisis," he adds.

Despite being a recently established company, EIP has already exceeded its growth expectations and expects its presence at Big 5 to contribute to further growth. "We did not have too high expectations and we were focusing our strategy on being a sustainable and reliable supplier that would still be in the market for its clients during and after the downturn," explains Cetiner.




CONSTRUCTION FASTENER DIVISION


"BOLTING THROUGHOUT THE GULF"


Ph : +971 4883 1747
 Fax: +971 4883 2436
 Email: constructiondivision@triplefast-me.com
 Web: www.triplefast-me.com




Asm A325M HDG Hex bolt



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“This has paid off sooner than we thought: the growth experienced within the last one year period was almost 1.5 times the projected rate,” he adds.

Newell Rubbermaid also reports a positive upturn in business: “We have increased our distribution this year and have grown our business by 35% in the Gulf against last year,” reports Konrad. “We have big business expectations in this region and see a lot of potential,” she adds. After examining the development potential of the Rhino products in the region the firm believes that this is the right time to increase its activities, hence its participation in Big 5. “Apart from a small phase of hesitation in Q1, we experienced tremendous growth rates against the previous year,” reminds Konrad. Rather than simply seeking new clients and agreeing sales at the Big 5, Foamglas is viewing the event as an opportunity to educate and present its solutions to professionals that are aware of typical thermal insulation problems in the region. “Planners know exactly the high risk related to

Middle East humidity or fire in building applications,” states Vincenz. “Also consultants looking for sustainable and green solutions are very welcome and appreciate our green product, which will contribute Leed credits [to projects].

THE FUTURE OF BIG 5?

With the future of the Big 5 intrinsically linked to the health of the construction sector in the region, what can we expect from 2010 and onwards?

An increased focus on certain areas of the construction sector is one suggestion put forward by exhibitors in order to ensure its future effectiveness. “We are not expecting any reduction in the size of Big 5, but we

believe that investors and professionals could reap more benefits from more focused versions of it that target specific parts of the construction sector,” states Cetiner.

Al Ghurair agrees: “Bringing in elements of focus on specialised areas of construction will surely add value to Big 5,” she states. “Smaller, new exhibitions focussing on green building and sustainability are coming up and the future will show if Big 5 can incorporate that,” adds Schuell.

However, Al Ghurair stresses that changing worldwide economics will play a large part in future developments.

The sheer scale of the event may prove to be one of its most positive attributes according to Konrad. This increased focus has already spread to the exhibitors themselves. Schuell explains: “Many exhibitors that were present in 2008 are not participating in 2009, only the companies with long-term interests in the market are present.”

Good news for time-strapped firms that rely on the event as a major source of contacts and product information. ☺

“WE HAVE INCREASED OUR DISTRIBUTION THIS YEAR AND HAVE GROWN OUR BUSINESS BY 35% IN THE GULF AGAINST LAST YEAR”



PRODUCTS

Wall Form work

- 1) Double sided Wall formwork
- 2) Single sided Wall formwork

Column Form work

- 1) Circular Column formwork
- 2) Rectangular column formwork

Slab formwork

- 1) Formo flex system
- 2) Formo Panel system
- 3) Forma Decking Systems

Access and load bearing Scaffolding

- 1) F1 Scaffolding system
- 2) Fi shoring System
- 3) Steel prop

Superstructure formwork



FORMO INDUSTRIES LLC
P.O. BOX 35112
WAREHOUSE #3 23-32 IND. ZONE, AL JAZEERA

RAS AL KHAIMAH, UAE
TEL# 07-2434404
FAX# 07-2434406

DUBAI OFFICE:
TEL# 04-2959010
FAX# 04-2959905

EMAIL: info@formouae.com
Website: www.formouae.com