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Meet the Business Unit Director: Laura Sala, Quadpack Germany

In the second of our new series of interviews, Laura Sala describes the cosmetics packaging markets in Germany, Benelux, Austria and Switzerland and reveals the business strategy of Quadpack Germany.

Question: Please describe your markets.

Laura Sala: Germany is one of our longest-standing markets and we have a very loyal customer base here. In fact, I have been working in the market since 1997, 10 years before we officially established Quadpack Germany. It has the biggest cosmetics market in Europe, its retail value totalling some €12.8 billion in 2010. Big players like Henkel, Schwartzkopf, Beiersdorf and Unilever are all based here, as are several important packaging manufacturers.

Austria and Switzerland have a similar profile, while Benelux is mainly home to contract fillers.

Q: How has the economic crisis affected your markets?

LS: When the crisis hit, the prestige market was worst affected, but the very high end remained largely the same, particularly luxury skin care. What we saw was a widening of the gap between prestige and masstige. However, the prestige market has been picking up again and we have been seeing a lot more activity for a while now.

Q: What kind of solutions are your customers asking for?

LS: Our customers are very keen on innovation. They also want a wide choice in decoration options. A big trend in our region is increasing demand for eco-friendly packaging solutions. Brand owners are being pressured not only by consumers, but also by regulators, to offer greener products, using recyclable materials, with a lower packaging volume-to-content ratio.

German companies pay a premium for recycling, depending on materials used: the more polluting the pack, the higher the tax. So, in fact, environmentally-friendly packaging works out to be the more economical option.

Q: What plans do you have to take Quadpack Germany forward?

LS: Quadpack Germany is actively recruiting customer-facing staff to help increase our market share. We are still considered by many to be only an airless provider and that is something else we need to address. We offer competitive solutions in many other areas, such as glass and atmospheric pumps.

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Also, Armand Rasch joined us last November to push into Benelux. Benelux is interesting as it has a very high concentration of contract fillers. These companies are important decision influencers for big brands and a key focus of our international sales strategy. With regulators becoming stricter, we predict that more brand owners will turn to contract fillers to ensure compliance. Quadpack is targeting this segment ahead of time. We already have contract fillers among our top clients in Spain, Israel and the UK.

Q: What is it like to work at Quadpack Germany?

LS: Very nice. The German team is young and dynamic, with lots of energy. We have a great office in a beautiful area in Cologne. There is constant contact with international colleagues within the Quadpack Group, with regular meetings. Everyone gets on very well.

Q: You are a director, a shareholder and mother of two small children. How do you manage it all?

LS: I think juggling the different roles helps you to become more efficient in managing resources. You become more disciplined in structuring your time. I work around the children's school timetable and take work home when I need to. It was difficult at first but I am starting to delegate more, which actually empowers the team to operate more autonomously. Everyone is happier as a result!

--- ENDS ---

About Quadpack Industries SA

Quadpack Industries is an international manufacturer and a provider of enhanced packaging solutions for beauty brand owners and contract fillers. With offices and production facilities in Europe, North America, and the Asia Pacific region and a strategic network of manufacturing partners, Quadpack develops bespoke and customised packs for prestige, masstige and mass market customers. For more information, please visit www.quadpack.com.

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