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DANUBE

LE SAVOIR-FAIRE DU CONSTRUCTEUR

A WORLD MARKET LEADER

**A package that adds
up to a great deal**

Making the sums add-up to profitability

QUIET EFFICIENCY: Danube tumble dryers are claimed to produce 30% less noise than other machines. They have stainless-steel reverse-action drums and beltless direct drive



Danube UK is expanding in a difficult market, proving that good machines plus technical and marketing support adds up to profitable business for itself, its partner-dealers and their customers

In contrast to a commonly-held, negative view of the current UK market, the outlook at Danube UK is optimistic. The French commercial laundry manufacturer set up its UK operation in the spring and is successfully making headway, even against the backdrop of a shrinking marketplace.

Although well established in Europe, Danube, which is based in Lamotte Beuvron, near Orleans, in the Loire Valley, has never been actively marketed in the UK until this year. But since its entry, Danube UK has steadily expanded its network of partner-dealers throughout the country and continues to grow. It has even been actively increasing levels of stock at the Gloucester-based distribution centre rather than running them down.

Danube UK's head of sales Spencer Wallace says that the company's success is "all about strategy, preparation and organisation and having the right product.

"Obviously we had no idea of what was going to happen to the economy when we launched," says Wallace, whose industry experience spans two decades.

"But I firmly believe that even given the dramatic events of the last few months, we have succeeded

mainly because we have a truly terrific product, and because we started with everything in place and did our homework in the run up to the launch.

"When we introduced the range earlier in the year I said it was the most exciting development in the commercial laundry sector that I have seen in my 18 years in the industry. I still firmly believe that to be the case. All Danube products offer unrivalled levels of build quality, reliability and value for money.

"All our machines come with 12 months' warranty, and nearly one year on, I know that this confidence in



A GOOD RESULT: Danube's dryer-ironers process linen direct from the washers and give a high quality finish

the product has been totally vindicated. Machine failure with Danube is extremely rare.” The company produces the WED range of six commercial front-loading washers with sizes to suit all types of operations. Capacities start at 8kg, which is suitable for a small guest house and go up to 55kg, which will suit hotels and hospitals. The range is available with either electric or steam heating and is fully WRAS approved.

Although not yet a legal requirement in NHS hospitals, barrier washers are seen as an important breakthrough in fighting infections such as MRSA. Large hospitals are beginning to understand that expecting their nurses to wash uniforms at home is a false economy. MRSA not only survives a 40C degree cycle in a domestic washer but also breeds in it.

Uniforms should be processed in a commercial machine on a cycle that washes clothes at 65C for 10 minutes or more to ensure the bacteria are killed.

Additionally, barrier machines separate clean clothes from soiled ones, so avoiding cross-contamination or re-contamination. Each of Danube’s six barrier washers, from the 16kg MED16 model to the 89kg ASEP 89, is ideal for hospitals, large nursing homes, pharmaceutical and nuclear industries and food producers. The machines have become an industry standard in the countries where barrier washers have become a legal requirement.

The tumble dryer range includes three 8kg models and seven larger machines covering capacities from 10 – 84kg. All the larger models have stainless-steel reverse-action drums as standard and feature a beltless direct drive. They are claimed to produce up to 30% less noise than many competing models.

Danube’s extensive range of finishing equipment includes rotary ironers, ironing tables and flatwork dryer-ironers. Danube dryer-ironers are suitable for larger operations, meeting the needs of healthcare institutions and large hotels. They save time and space and give a high quality finish as the linen is pressed from wet.

Danube’s success in the UK has also prompted Gillman’s, its UK distributor, to launch a range of commercial laundry chemicals including high performance liquid detergent, fragrant fabric conditioner, high-strength peroxide de-stainer and starch. These are all available in 10 and 20 litre packs. The range has already overtaken sales targets by 300% and is popular both with Danube customers and owners of other machines.

“We are importing Danube to the UK through Gillman’s of Gloucester, which has a team of experienced

service engineers, a large and efficient distribution network and transport fleet and the capacity to store a comprehensive stock of spare parts,” adds Wallace.

“We also have a wide range of products, which gives us a flexibility and depth that few others can match. We can meet our customers’ needs, whatever they are.

“Before a single appliance came into the country, we did extensive research into all aspects of the potential sales market, which we see as including hotels and guest houses, boarding schools, care homes, hospitals, penal institutions, equestrian stables, veterinary surgeries – anywhere that might need a laundry in house. We realised that many of these establishments such as equestrian stables will only have a single-phase electrical supply and so many of our appliances are available in both single- and three-phase versions.

“Since the launch we have held three, two-day training courses for the service engineers from our growing network of partner dealers. These courses, which have been attended by more than 30 people, provide a comprehensive introduction to Danube machines for experienced service engineers.

“And unlike other manufacturers, we provide them completely free, even paying for the cost of overnight accommodation when required. These have proved very popular and we plan to continue them for new partner-dealers and existing dealers.

“Here at our Gloucester headquarters we have comprehensive stores of spare parts with a guaranteed 48 hour delivery service to our partner-dealers using our own fleet of vehicles. We provide technical support around the clock, ensuring that downtime is kept to a minimum in the unlikely event of a machine fault.

“So far we have attracted more than 20 new partner-dealers from as far afield as Sheffield, Liverpool, The Midlands, Kent, London, the South Coast, Cornwall, Devon, Wales and Scotland. From our conversations with them, the attraction is a combination of the product and the service and back-up we provide. They have all been impressed with the sheer quality of the product and the broad range of models and with the back-up from us, which includes help with marketing, brochures POS material and even letters to potential customers.”

2008 has certainly been a bit of a roller coaster ride for Danube UK but the company is looking forward to 2009 when it hopes to consolidate what it has achieved in such a short time this year and take it on to the next level. “In the meantime I am just looking forward to Christmas,” says Wallace. **LCN**



GOOD DISTRIBUTION: Danube has its own branded distribution fleet



SIZES TO SUIT ALL: The WED commercial washers come in capacities from 8 – 55kg to suit varying types of business from hotel to small care home



SINGLE-PHASE: Danube provides machines in versions to suit businesses, such as stables that only have a single-phase power supply