



When "leading glass" meets "best in glass processing"

July 28, 2016 - At sedak GmbH & Co.KG in Gersthofen (Bavaria), approximately 150 employees are processing glass into high-quality and unique oversized insulating and safety glasses. Everything is premium in Gersthofen: the employees, the machinery and, of course, the delivered quality. sedak masters the art of making large-format dreams made of glass come true and enables an exciting architecture, exceptional designs and visionary buildings. "There is no such word as 'impossible' in our dictionary", is a popular saying in the sedak halls – not unusual if you are committed to your claim "leading glass".

sedak's principle of success: ahead of time, close to the customer

Large-format insulating and safety glasses are on the rise. sedak is also aware of this fact and this is why the company is systematically investing in order to secure and expand its niche position. Thus, the company put the largest digital printer for ceramic colors into operation in 2014. Since 2015, the glass finishers are also operating the worldwide largest insulating glass line. This line is 145 meters long and it fully automatically processes insulating glasses of up to 3.2 m x 15 m and a maximum element thickness of 102 mm. With the putting into operation of the LiSEC insulating glass line, sedak became the only glass finisher worldwide and full supplier who is able to realize all finishing processes for glass formats of up to 15 m.

The largest insulating glass line in the world – not simply upscaled

The insulating glass line of LiSEC for the production of oversized glasses is a high end special-purpose machine construction. Othmar Sailer, CEO of the LiSEC Group: "In this case, the requirements were particularly high: sedak processes elements of up to 15 meters with a running meter weight of up to 450 kg and the spacer is applied with an accuracy of 0.5 mm. The positioning of glass sheets to each other here amounts to 1 mm. In order to meet those requirements we have developed an own concept which is filed in several patents." The upscaling of an existing insulating glass line does no longer work in this league. The same applies to the required logistics instruments. In this case, LiSEC developed a fully automatic removal station for large-format insulating glass elements. It ensures that the elements do not have to be handled manually until the final stability of the secondary sealing material, which enables an extremely gentle handling of the glass sheets having a weight of up to 6,750 kg. Sailer continues: "This success was only made possible due to the combination of our experience in the own glass processing factory and the absolute focus on the customer.

Interview with Bernhard Veh, CEO sedak GmbH & Co.KG

Since when are you cooperating with LiSEC and how did this cooperation come about?

Veh: After having completed a major project in the USA for which we produced oversized façade glasses we developed a strategy in order to further utilize and operate the factory. Our objective was to offer all finishing steps for glasses of up to 15 m. For this purpose, we already had all plants in the factory except for an insulating glass line which met our requirements. We got in touch with several machine manufacturers but LiSEC was the only company that dared to agree to walk the way together with us.

For which problem did LiSEC offer the suitable solution?

Veh: We were looking for a solution for the fully automatic production of oversized, i.e. also very heavy insulating glass sheets in case of which also the handling is sophisticated and the quality meets our requirements. This plant is able to apply flexible spaces with high precision. We are accomplishing tolerances that are not accomplished by many manufacturers of 6 meter sheets. The spacer sits perfectly. It was also important to us to get a press solution for gas-filled insulating glass units which is able to realize also 700 mm step bottom edge. For the handling of glass during and after the sealing, LiSEC offered us a solution which is, as a removal station, fully integrated in the production process.

How would you describe the cooperation with LiSEC?

Veh: There is no off-the shelf solution for a project like this. We knew that we have charged LiSEC with the construction of a special machine and that it is impossible to forecast and plan everything. In case of projects like those, it depends on the people. And the LiSEC engineers have done an excellent job – they made sure that the communication to their sedak contact persons is working. It is important that the partner responds to an input and changes are felt. And LiSEC is also offering the required size, experience and stability in the industry – the company has a lot of staying power and provides safety over decades. This conveys the feeling: there, I feel in good hands – I'm getting help also off the record.

What are the most frequent queries regarding large-format insulating glass panes?

Veh: What we always have to explain again and again is the fact that basic glass in excess length is not on stock. In Europe, there is only one glass factory which is able to produce float glass in excess length. If you are not included in the campaign schedule you will have to wait for the next campaign. The same applies to coatings: they are offered by only a few companies – and slots are assigned well in advance. Thirdly, we are again and again confronted with inquiries regarding logistics. Many are wondering how we are able to deliver the heavyweights worldwide. But for us, this is daily business and finally, so far not a single sedak product got broken during transport.

What are your plans for the future and which role does LiSEC play in them?

Veh: I can't say how the industry will develop. But due to the good cooperation so far, all doors are open to LiSEC. Our customers want services from a single source – that means that they also want to buy smaller insulating glass units from sedak. This is why we are considering the investment in a smaller insulating glass line.

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