

TBMA continuity guaranteed under Belgian management

After more than half a century as a family business, TBMA Europe continues under Belgian management. For Bart Houben, until recently director/owner and son of the founder, continuity was key in the search for a suitable successor. He found the solution close to home with Wim van Parijs and Stefan Schumann of TBMA België.

HOW IT STARTED

On November 1, 1967, Bart Houben's father founded the Technical Bureau for Mechanisation and Automation (TBMA), with the aim of importing the English Westinghouse Derion rotary valves and supplying pneumatic conveying systems. From the start, the focus was on two areas: components and systems. This turned out to be a strong combination, because the knowledge gained from designing and supplying systems comes in handy when offering and deploying the right rotary valves, diverter valves and other components.

COMPONENTS AND SYSTEMS

In the beginning, the rotary valves were created together with fellow villager DMN, with TBMA doing the sales and marketing and DMN assembling the valves. "That collaboration ended in the early 70s, after which TBMA started its own development and production of rotary valves," says Bart Houben. "Later, diverter valves and samplers were added and we became the exclusive dealer and service point for the Moduflex loading chutes. The systems were also expanded, with mechanical conveying, big bag unloaders and fillers, dosing systems, silo storage systems and the Galahad bag cutting and emptying machine. Some of the Galahad machines are still in full use even 40 years



*Bart Houben (TBMA Europe),
Wim van Parijs and Stefan Schumann
(TBMA België).*

after delivery."

RESPONSIBILITY

In 1992, Bart and his brother Frits unexpectedly took the helm due to the sudden death of their father. "I already worked at TBMA but suddenly the two of us were responsible for the company and for the livelihood of more than 20 employees. I was in my early thirties, so that was quite a bit. I've always carried that responsibility, even now. After a few years, Frits left the company to turn his hobby photography into his work. He then did the graphic design and product photography for TBMA for many years."

TBMA BELGIË

On June 7, 2000, Bart, Wim van Parijs and Stefan Schumann started TBMA België, initially to sell the TBMA Europe products and systems in the Belgian market. Stefan Schumann explains: "Wim and I started as a 2-man company in a rented office, which

soon became too small. From 2004 onwards, the first own building in Wondelgem had room to expand the engineering department and a small workshop and storage space were set up. The success continued and in 2016 the move to the current building in Evergem followed, with room for future growth and a complete test set-up. Here we also have separate workshops for stainless steel and steel structures and for the assembly of machines."

CONTINUITY

"Two years ago, I figured it was time to think about my future and that of TBMA," Bart resumes. "After almost 55 years of TBMA Europe under the leadership of a Houben, there was no interest in my family to succeed me. So I considered different scenarios and sought advice here and there. For me, the continuity of TBMA Europe was key, both for the staff and for our customers. Wim and Stefan were

already co-owners of TBMA België, so the continuation of the Belgian company was covered. In the past 22 years, they have built up a great company in Belgium with a lot of knowledge and experience in the bulk goods industry. That is why it was only logical to talk to them about the future of TBMA Europe.”

PERSPECTIVE

Wim van Parijs continues: “Of course we really appreciated that Bart came to us. It gives us the opportunity to look beyond the national borders of Belgium and to further grow the TBMA group. Stefan and I now fully own TBMA België and we have a majority stake in TBMA Europe. At the end of 2025, we will acquire the remaining shares of Bart. We are now together with more than 50 colleagues, so that offers a great perspective for the future.” “Last December we all visited the Light Festival in an old saloon boat in the Amsterdam canals and then had a pleasant evening in the old REM island,” Bart adds. “It was nice to see that everyone also enjoyed seeing

and speaking to each other - often for the first time - in person. An excellent basis for the coming years.”

SETTING COURSE

Stefan: “We are very pleased that Bart will stay on as managing director for the day-to-day management of TBMA Europe for a while. In the meantime, we are already looking for a successor for this position. That also gives us enough time for the transfer. The two TBMA's differ somewhat in focus: TBMA Europe clearly focuses on two areas, namely (separate) components and systems. Of course, there is also overlap: the components are regularly used in our own systems. TBMA België is now especially strong in systems, but we can always contact our colleagues in Noordwijkerhout for rotary valves, diverters, etc.” Wim continues: “The transition period gives us time to look at the strength of each company and how we can optimize the synergy in order to become even stronger. We will use this to set the course for the next 5 to 10 years.”

LEISURE

Leaving ‘your company’ behind after more than 45 years will not be easy. “Oh no, definitely not,” Bart laughs. “Fortunately, I still have some time to wind down. Or maybe I should say ‘kick off’. It feels really good that this way Stefan and Wim will continue the story of TBMA. And I certainly won't get bored: I plan to make long trips and lots of nautical miles with my sailing boat. Towards the horizon!”

ABOUT TBMA

TBMA are specialists in the design and supply of components and systems for bulk solids handling. Its extensive range of high quality processing equipment is suitable for handling powders and granules with proven reliability in practice in a variety of processing industries. The highly qualified and experienced TBMA staff are well able to translate customer requirements into the right execution and application of our components.