

Interview with Piotr Pantoł, Owner and Commercial Director of Wende Recyclingtech s.c. Ewa | Piotr Pantoł

Anticipating the future of recycling

A willingness to work extremely hard and a well-developed instinct for future trends: These are two of the most important qualities of a successful entrepreneur and are characteristics that Piotr Pantoł, Owner and Commercial Director of Wende Recyclingtech s.c. Ewa | Piotr Pantoł, possesses in bucketloads. The Polish company, which he founded with his wife Ewa in 1998, is a renowned supplier and installer of recycling machinery and was established at a time when environmental concerns were in their infancy in Eastern Europe.

“Back in those days, Poland was not yet a member of the EU, and recycling wasn’t a subject of discussion,” Mr. Pantoł explains. “We have grown the company from nothing. I guess I just had a feeling about it; somehow, I knew that, at some point, it would become a hot topic.” Showing true entrepreneurial spirit, Mr. Pantoł acted on his instincts and created the firm together with his wife. Today she takes care of the finance, human resources and replacement parts side of the business, while Mr. Pantoł looks after the sales and commercial aspects. With Poland’s entry into the EU, there

Wende is headquartered in Kościerzycze, with offices in Brzeg and Lodz, where the machines are reconditioned and sold to Germany, among others



Nihot Recycling Technology is a leading brand of waste separation technology, which uses controlled air

was an enormous upturn in the recycling sector, and Mr. Pantoł’s foresight ensured that Wende was well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities. In addition to the increase in work in Poland, relaxation of restrictions in other

Eastern European countries also generated new business. “We have just delivered a machine to Minsk in Belarus,” Mr. Pantoł points out. “The legislative situation there has changed dramatically, and the financial and bureaucratic

processes have also become more straightforward. In the past, customs was a huge barrier; now it is much quicker and more simple.”

Today, Wende’s comprehensive portfolio includes machines, complete plants and conveyor belts for recycling activities involving a wide range of different materials. “We have installed about 16 large plants with a value of around two million EUR,” says Mr. Pantoł. “One of our current projects is the supply and installation of an EBS machine for alternative fuels for building materials manufacturer Lafarge Holcim at its premises in Kuyavia in central Poland.” Wende also supplies air cutters, presses and robotic sorters. With a com-



Melting filters for plastic materials is an important element of Wende's portfolio



Sliders open bags of waste automatically, eliminating the need for human contact with potentially hazardous materials



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pany motto of 'Modern recycling technology: we sell only the best', quality and reliability underpin the company's service. "We have built the company based on this philosophy, and it spans everything from the machines we supply and the installation service to the uniforms that our engineers wear when they are in the field," underlines the Commercial Director. "I place huge value on this approach, and we have learnt a great deal through our work with our partners around Europe."

With three sites in Poland, Wende serves local authorities, private disposal companies, central warehouses, the packaging industry

and RDF manufacturers. Although Poland is the main focus, the company has also supplied machines to Ukraine, Romania, Lithuania and Belarus. "Exports are not our main focus right now because we have so much still to do in Poland," Mr. Pantof admits. "On the order books for the next few weeks are the delivery of a large plant and the installation of an air cutter. We have also signed contracts to supply three 40 t shredders, a press at the central warehouse of a large Polish supermarket chain, and a number of projects for various local authorities. In total, we have sold over 1,000 machines, and our customer base has also reached 1,000. I attribute our success to

hard work, honesty, and the fact that we take the trouble to ensure our customers are 100% satisfied. Customers have to be supported whether their machines are under guarantee or not." Wende also takes good care of its 25 employees, and the Pantofs have created a positive organizational culture, where staff feel valued.

Just as he predicted the advent of the recycling industry in Poland, Mr. Pantof is convinced that certain new trends will dominate the market over the coming years.

"Optical separators and robotic sorters are amazing," he says. "The MAX-AI made by BHS is the latter while ZEN Robotics is the former. Automation is the future and comes with many advantages, such as three shift, 24/7 operations, and it eliminates human contact with dangerous materials." Alongside new innovation, great service will remain Wende's focus. "We never sign any contract that we can't deliver. We have a great reputation for keeping our promises, and we want to maintain that," Mr. Pantof sums up. █



Large presses compress and bale materials as part of the recycling process



Shredders reduce waste materials to a manageable size ready for recycling