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Interview with Mr. Joan Samuel,
Innovative Customer Solutions
Manager of Winoa

Turning Knowledge And Expertise Into
Customers Benefits Through Innovative
Turnkey Solutions



W Abrasives®

Winoa

528 Avenue de Savoie
38570 Le Cheylas, France
Tel. +33.4.76 92 91 57
Fax +33.4.76 92 92 49

E-mail: joan.samuel@winoagroup.com
www.winoagroup.com, www.wabrasives.com

Turning Knowledge And Expertise Into Customers Benefits Through Innovative Turnkey Solutions

MFN was able to get an interview with Mr. Joan Samuel, who is the Innovative Customer Solutions Manager of Winoa.

(?) MFN: Mr. Samuel, thank you for taking the time for this interview. Would you, first of all, introduce yourself to our readers?

(!) J.S.: My name is Joan Samuel and I have been working for the Winoa group for more than 7 years. As head of customers' solutions development team, my everyday mission is to meet today's and tomorrow's customer needs by providing them with innovative products, and leading-edge technologies and customized services, taking into account the specificity of their applications. As you know, there are multiple uses of steel abrasives (desanding, descaling, surface preparation, shot peening, stone cutting... and much more!) and, far from just being a commodity supplier, we have the constant wish to team-up with our customers in order to bring added-value to their blasting process. This goal can only be achieved by developing customized solutions.

(?) MFN: What do you mean by customized solutions?

(!) J.S.: A customized solution simply consists of a product, in our case steel abrasives, which takes into account the specific needs linked with a specific activity. Let's consider an example in a totally different sector: bicycles. At the beginning of the modern era, we could only find one type of bicycle, whatever our need and the final use. Nowadays, we can find on the market a large range of bicycle types, each one dedicated to a defined application: racing bikes, mountain bikes, touring bikes, and so on... At Winoa, we call it the Premium approach. Formally initiated in the early noughts by launching our first

premium product dedicated to foundry market, HPG, we have pursued this approach year after year, in order to bring to the market a full range of exclusive premium products (Profilium, Stainium, Granitium, Surfium...), covering the large majority of steel abrasives applications and bringing unique benefits to our customers corresponding to the expectations of each activity.

(?) MFN: This approach seems quite interesting, but how can you be sure that these customized products are really answering customers' needs?

(!) J.S.: Good question! Actually, identification of customers' needs is a really tricky job, and this is also one of the main key success factors. Doing customer surveys and listening to the voice of the customer is a good start, but this is far from being enough. First reason for that: if you ask 100 customers "What do you expect from a supplier like Winoa?", you have a large chance of getting 100 different answers, which will not help you at all. You can spend hours and hours trying to synthesize

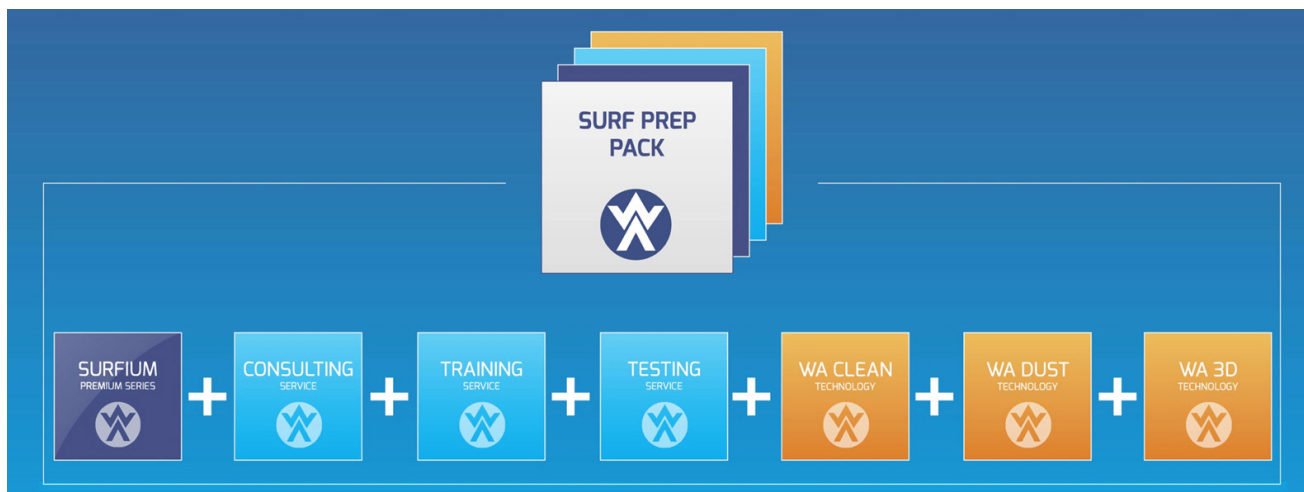


Mr. Joan Samuel, Innovative Customer Solutions Manager of Winoa

those 100 answers; it will not be so easy to find a common denominator. Secondly, customers are not always clearly aware about their needs. This statement can seem quite patronizing, but this is truly a business reality, not only in the steel abrasives industry. Remember the famous Henry Ford saying: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses". Indeed, identification of customers' unmet needs is not so easy. To achieve this goal at Winoa, we can rely on an extensive commercial network covering more than 100 countries and a recognized team of 26 application experts ("WALUE team") visiting customers every day, all over the world. These unique attributes (nobody has such a worldwide coverage in

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the steel abrasive business) allows us to be very close to our customers and to build strong relationships with them. I personally think that having such a network of committed people, always willing to collaborate with customers to progress toward process excellence, is extremely precious to properly identify customer's needs.

(?) MFN: As you said before, your Premium products range is now covering the large majority of steel abrasives applications. What will be your next moves to keep your innovation momentum?

(!) J.S.: First, we will continue to develop and launch on the market new Premium products, because customers' needs are continuously changing and we have to adapt our product offer to these changes. Our premium approach is a real success and, in such a competitive environment, the biggest mistake would be to rest on these laurels. As a worldwide leader, it is our duty to pull the market upward by reinventing ourselves every day. And that is why, in 2014, we are moving one step beyond by proposing to our customers not only Premium products dedicated to their activities, but also global turnkey solutions called Packs. Basically, a Pack consists of 3 types of items: Premium products, exclusive services and leading-edge technologies. To make it clearer, let me illustrate this new approach by depicting our new Surf Prep Pack. As it is named, this pack

is dedicated to the surface preparation application. It contains:

- A Premium product: Profilium, Prowheelium or Surfium, depending if you are working by air-blasting or wheel-blasting, and depending on your production needs.
- A full range of services: trainings (in-house or not) for operators and line managers, a consulting service for process improvement, and testing solutions through our worldwide network of Test Centers.
- An exclusive range of technological tools: WA CLEAN for cleanliness checking (Sa level), WA DUST for dust evaluation, and WA 3D for accurate surface profile analysis.

Moreover, our application experts have recently been equipped with two new tools: a thermal camera WA CAM for fast hot-spot checking (visualization and tuning) and a conductivity measurement device to evaluate soluble salts contamination of blasted surfaces. As you can see, this Surf Prep Pack is really a turnkey solution, providing high performances abrasives, deep technical assistance, state-of-the-art trainings, and exclusive technologies for quality controls.

(?) MFN: Your core business is to produce steel abrasives, which is quite far from developing measurement devices. What is the reason for developing those new technologies?

(!) J.S.: Our core business is steel abrasives production, of course. In ad-

dition, as I told you at the beginning of this interview, at Wino, we have the constant wish to team-up with our customers in order to bring added value to their blasting process. This statement reflects our willingness to build long-term partnerships based on sustainable benefits. Since improvements have to be measured to be tangible, we have developed new technologies for process control and quality checks: WA CLEAN, WA DUST and WA 3D. Indeed, bringing immediate benefits is one thing, but making them sustainable is another story! With these new technologies, customers are now able to evaluate, day after day, the benefits linked to our premium products.

(?) MFN: Can you give me more details about these three new technologies?

(!) J.S.: WA CLEAN is an electronic device, which allows the user to check the cleanliness level of a blasted surface (Sa level or other). In surface preparation, the most common specification for cleanliness level is the ISO 8501. This specification asks to visually check the blasted surface (with the naked eye) and compare this observation with reference pictures given in the specification's booklet. Actually, this method is not really suitable because it calls for personal interpretation (the operator or the quality controller has to decide by himself if what he sees is similar to the picture Sa2.5 given in the booklet). In other words, this method is subjective, and depends on many external factors



WA CLEAN kit

such as the surrounding light, the orientation of the blasted surface, the dust level... and so on.

WA CLEAN device is able to memorize the visual aspect of a reference blasted part, and compare it with other ones. It tells the user if the measured parts are showing the same cleanliness level than the reference one, without any doubts or risk of interpretation. With WA CLEAN, you can be very confident about the reliability and the consistency of your quality checks! You can of course save the data and generate automatic reports, which can be precious to avoid endless discussions with quality inspectors. Moreover, it is the perfect tool to immediately identify blasting process deviations. For now, WA CLEAN is at the prototype stage, which means that pilot customers are using it on their production line till the end of 2014. In early 2015, it will be available for sale.

WA DUST is a quite similar tool, used to evaluate the dust level of a blasted surface. In this case, we have to consider the specification ISO 8502 (often called "dust-tape test"), which asks to visually evaluate (with x10 magnification) the size and the concentration of dust particles stuck on a tape strip. Once again, this specification asks for visual observation, which is subjective. WA DUST is able to "read" the tape strip obtained according to ISO 8502, and

directly tell you the size class and the concentration level of the dust. It will be available for sale in 2015.

WA 3D technology consists in 3D scanning of surface replica in order to access 3D roughness parameters. Since surface topography is 3-dimensional in nature, only 3D analyses can accurately represent the natural characteristics of the surface topography. For example, we can measure the exact contact surface between a blasted surface and a coating, and the real dead volume (useful for paint consumption optimization). As this technology has already been presented in MFN (cover page article of May 2014 issue), I encourage your readers to have a look at this article for more information.

(?) MFN: And what about Surfium, your new Premium product for surface preparation?

(!) J.S.: Surfium has been developed in partnership with some of the biggest actors of the pipe coating industry. Compared to standard grit GL (the most common product in this application), it shows 10% less consumption for the same efficiency, and reduces the dust level on blasted parts. Thanks to its specific production process, Surfium has very narrow hardness range, which guarantees the consistency of blasted part profiles all along its usage. Three



WA CLEAN device in use

sizes are available, depending on the profile depth you are looking for. Of course, it can be used in all types of industries such as pipe coating, steel construction, power generation (wind-mills...), ship building... and much more!

(?) MFN: Thanks Mr. Samuel, for this interview. Would you have a last word for our readers?

(!) J.S.: Thank you for giving me the opportunity for this interview. As a last word, I would like to share with your readers a nice saying I heard a few weeks ago: "Grass doesn't grow any faster if you pull on it". In other words, growth does not come with artificial levers, but has to be based on strong and reliable bases. That is why, at Winoag, we are working all the year to team-up with our customers in order to provide long-term added value.

MFN would like to thank Joan Samuel for the interview!

For Information:
Winoag
528 Avenue de Savoie
38570 Le Cheylas, France
Tel. +33.4.76 92 91 57
Fax +33.4.76 92 92 49
E-mail: joan.samuel@winoagroup.com
www.winoagroup.com
www.wabrasives.com