

Continued innovation

Matthias Lohe on the driving force of waterborne epoxies



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Imagine today's world, with epoxy technology from 25 years ago... For the last decades, innovations have been flourishing in the epoxies market, and in particular for waterborne epoxies. Producers have been able to improve products with the constant objective to make their products safer and friendlier to the users and the environment while adding higher performance.

Safer products mean no solvents or plasticizers and low free amines. They clearly benefit the person who is applying the coating, or the people who will move back to their working places after refurbishment.

Today's waterborne epoxy systems not only provide an answer to European VOC regulations but also provide solutions that meet the performance challenges demanded by the industry. Permeable epoxy coatings provide a new concept to solve osmotic blistering problems - a painful and expensive issue in the industry. High aesthetics and transparency widens application scope, moving the use of waterborne epoxy into decorative application areas while maintaining good adhesion and chemical resistance. Exceptional adhesion and penetration allow fresh concrete to be over coated within a few days rather than weeks.

These are just a few examples of how waterborne epoxy systems bring value to the market and form an integral part of a contemporary product portfolio. Differentiation through innovation while adding value to customers and applicators positions waterborne epoxy applications in particular for above average growth.

But it's not only performance that matters. Reliability and robustness of products during formulation and application are essential for widespread use and technology acceptance. Be it application at the extremes of low temperature or high humidity environments.

Key to success is continued innovation through technology advancement and understanding of market needs by the leading producers. This requires people with expertise and who have witnessed technology evolution over the last decades. Companies with strong R&D teams to 'magic' innovations, who can translate customer issues into technical solutions. People who have an understanding of the global market, with its local characteristics and who have a track record of long term commitment.

Who, most importantly, have the vision to look beyond what has already been offered to their customers and who have the passion to discover today's issues which will become tomorrow's product characteristic. ■

THE AUTHOR

- Matthias Lohe received his Ph.D. in chemistry from Justus-Liebig University Giessen in 1996, and has since held positions in Technology and Marketing at Air Products in the UK, The Netherlands and Germany. He is currently a Marketing Manger of Air Products Epoxy Additives business.