



ABMI goes on the offensive regarding transparency

Common recommendations for the installation of filling machines facilitate the cooperation between machine suppliers and the beverage industry

In the event of a purchase of machines and installations for filling and packing of beverages, the representatives of the beverage industry normally invite several different producers to make offers. These offers are not always easily comparable, because there are no uniform labels and recommendations for an objective comparison of performance. Thus, the offers need to be interpreted.

In a voluntary concerted action, several well-known European supplier companies have founded a common association in 2007, which aims to develop generally accepted recommendations relating to quality, security, sustainability and efficiency of filling machines and, thus, to create more transparency for the filling industry. After several years of groundwork, the Association of the Beverage Machinery Industry (ABMI), domiciled in Zurich, goes on the offensive in order to intensify the cooperation with the beverage industry and to concentrate and accelerate the progresses with regard to standardizations and recommendations. A visible expression of this initiative for more transparency for the beverage producers is a newly designed website, which ABMI will present on the occasion of drinktec (www.abm-industry.org).

Rendering comparisons of performance more transparent

Georg Michels, president of ABMI and senior executive of Salzgitter AG, shareholder of KHS, thinks that a major goal of ABMI is to render the complex range of products of the machinery industry more transparent for the filling industry: "Given the highly technical configuration of the machines, the performance and the potential of performance of a machine or an entire filling line can be interpreted in many different ways. Therefore, it is, from our point of view, necessary and helpful to create a platform with recommendations, in order to render the offers more comparable and transparent for the beverage industry. The description of each part, the definition of a filling line, the structure of the process, the acceptance and the efficiency test show that there are many different factors to take into consideration in the event of a new installation of machines. Sometimes, the clients also help creating the definitions. It is conceivable that it leads to confusion when people talk about the same topics but using different definitions and terms. The actual topic, i.e. installing a performing machine, loses its importance."

Information meetings every second year

In the past few years, ABMI has consistently included the representatives of the beverage industry into the development of the recommendations and definitions. To this end, ABMI organized technical information meetings in 2008 and 2012. Whereas during the first meeting, the representatives of the filling industry were not really enthusiastic about the topic, they started recognizing the advantages of a common language for all the market participants at the second meeting. Due to the growing interest, ABMI organized individual workshops with respect to each technical area with the representatives of the filling industry in order to talk more about the different technical uses. The next information meeting will take place in the second quarter of 2014.

“We emphasize a policy of transparency and intend to contribute by rendering the operation of the machines in every respect as economic and efficient as possible”, says Georg Michels.

Newly designed website of ABMI

The newly designed website of ABMI, which will be online on the occasion of drinktec 2013, presents each of the technical areas in a clearer and more intelligible way. Further, the use of the website, including the download area, has become easier and more user-friendly. The structure of the website is geared to the essential pillars of the work of ABMI:

- Quality
- Security and safety
- Sustainability
- Efficiency

“We illustrate how to reach a higher level of quality through the recommendations of ABMI”, explains Georg Michels. “Furthermore, the topic of security is very important for the users of the machine, because the installations are partly run by the personnel who have not internalized the entire complexity of the machines yet. To this end, we will organize correspondent seminars in the future. The topic of security also relates to the products. The one thing presupposes the other. The third pillar, sustainability, is put forward more and more by the users of the machines. Sustainability is important with respect to the production method with reduced consumption of energy and water as well as to the use of environment-friendly packaging material. All of the above contribute to a more efficient operational business for the filling industry.”

In particular with regard to sustainability, ABMI has already developed a series of parameters, which can create more transparency when comparing offers through the recommended values. This provides a basis for an easier comparison of machines

from different producers. "These recommendations are an incentive for our members to reach higher ecological standards. We confront this topic as an association and have been proactive in creating these recommendations, which serve as guidelines for our members and, thus, also for their clients", emphasizes Georg Micheis.

Intensive cooperation for common international recommendations

Up to now, ABMI has been a European association given the origin of its members. At present, the German, French and Italian companies KHS GmbH, Krones AG, SIDEL, GEA Procomac, SACMI FILLING S.P.A., Serac Group, SIPA S.p.A. and ACMI SPA are members of ABMI. Due to the relatively high international concentration of suppliers of the beverage filling industry, the aforementioned companies represent together a market share of about two thirds of the worldwide supplier companies. "ABMI is currently considering to open up in future for more members, for instance for companies working with members and for American and Asian companies", Georg Michels explains. "We are already now in close contact with international associations. Furthermore, we also reflect on international treaties, which could provide a general basis for companies worldwide and increase the transparency even more. In addition, I would not like to exclude the possibility that producers of industrial process technology join the association, because this topic becomes more and more important in the filling factories."

Win-Win Situation through technical recommendations

According to Georg Michels, the big benefit for the beverage industry lies within the technical recommendation with respect to the four mentioned areas: "Uniform definitions create a win-win situation for

all market participants, because all the technical details, which are relevant when purchasing a machine, are specified in these recommendations. With regard to the elaboration of a contract, it is important for the client as well as the supplier, that they can fall back on the developed recommendations without having to reinvent the wheel every time. I am sure that the recommendations regarding the acceptance or the operating of a machine for example of an aseptic machine are very important with regard to a uniform approach. That way the client can define a clear expectancy and the supplier can comply with the expectancy. Due to these recommendations, the contractual partners can concentrate more on the actual transaction, i.e. the installation of an efficient machine.”

Active participation of the beverage industry is welcome

Increasingly, ABMI intends to present its work at international exhibitions and symposia and create more publicity: “Our clearly defined goal is to provide for more transparency. We expect feedback from our clients and members, which are welcome to participate in the discussion. We call on the beverage industry to actively participate in its own interest. Up to now, this has been the right path to follow. Nothing is better than to adopt a recommendation together in the end”, Georg Michels says, convinced of the idea.

The active role ABMI wants to play in the future is also expressed through a new structure. ABMI has created three new Committees, the Technical Committee, the Education and Training Committee, which deals with the schooling of members and clients, and the Communication Committee. These new Committees are responsible for the coordination and supporting of the current seven Technical Committees.

“ABMI has made progress with regard to the Technical Committees. The tasks of the committees have in large part already been fulfilled. We have created for example a new Technical Committee on the topic of Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), which will start working on the subject in the third quarter of 2013. We also want to reflect more on some topics by cooperating with universities and inform about them in publications. We have come to the point where we expect and appreciate the input of the clients. We would like to present ourselves as ABMI through an easier access to our website in a more transparent way and we want to develop the technical recommendations further”, summarizes Georg Michels the direction of ABMI: Transparency for the very important cooperation between the filling industry and the machine supplier industry in order to create highly efficient filling machines.

Figures

Fig.: Georg Michels, president of ABMI, thinks that a major goal of ABMI is to render the complex range of products of the machinery industry more transparent for the filling industry.

Fig.: The newly designed website of ABMI will be online on the occasion of drinktec.

Mr. Georg Michels

President of the ABMI

