

Hexonic: Innovative solutions for

With a recently expanded production hall of 4500 square metres, an employee base boosted by almost 20% in 2022 alone, and a fast-growing global presence, Hexonic is a heat exchanger manufacturer intent on achieving big ambitions. I was invited to Hexonic HQ to speak with Mr Artur Grajewski (Business Unit Director of Industrial Heat Exchangers), Mr Andrzej Otta (Sales Director), and Mr Christian Huhn (Managing Director of Hexonic Deutschland) about the company's success, its bold decisions, and the excitement of future opportunities.



↗ Hexonic's JAG plate design features a unique corrugated pattern to increase heat transfer efficiency.

By Ellie Pritchard, Heat Exchanger World

Hexonic focuses production at its HQ in Nowy Dwór Gdański, Poland. An impressive modern office building houses roughly 120 office staff, including sales teams, product development experts, commercial and marketing teams, and more. At the same location, the recently expanded production space spans 20000 square metres across 5 halls, where the engineering and assembly team produces a full range of standard heat exchangers as well as custom industrial units. Hexonic's standard range includes brazed plate, plate and frame, shell and coil, and shell and tube heat exchangers, whereas the business unit led by Artur Grajewski handles the larger, industrial-scale custom units, benefitting from high-capacity cranes which enable the build of units exceeding 120 tonnes in weight.

Bold decisions and increasing visibility

"Our company has been around for over 35 years; we are family owned," says Andrzej Otta, who supports all customers and subsidiaries from the Head Office. "This is the heart of our operations and company; we

manufacture some heat exchanger components in Prague, Czech Republic, and we have entities and representatives in 17 countries around the world – but the centre of our operations is here in Poland; it's our control centre." At the beginning of 2022, the company undertook a huge transformation, changing from its original name 'SECESPOL' and rebranding as Hexonic. Andrzej explains that whilst it was a difficult decision, it was one that reaped clear rewards immediately. "We wanted a name that was a better reflection of who we are now and what we do, and which also felt more appropriate to our global presence," says Andrzej. "We decided to totally change our corporate identity, complete with a new name, logo, and branding – we chose the colour orange because it was unconventional for the heat exchange market, and we wanted to stand out."

As was to be expected, there were initial concerns, but the company admits that the pandemic period provided a relatively quiet time with no exhibitions, and they were able to dedicate much-needed time to work on the rebranding. Hexonic had its official premier at a trade event

a global market



≈ Industrial heat exchangers; Hexonic designs and manufactures specialised heat exchangers for different industry sectors.

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Supporting customers

Hexonic released its new JAG product line shortly before its rebranding, signifying the company’s forward-looking vision. The JAG plate design features a unique corrugated pattern to increase flow turbulence, giving high thermal performance and heat exchange capabilities, but with decreased fouling build-up. As well as the plate heat exchanger JAG product, versions of the plate have been



≈ Hexonic’s JAG plate heat exchanger.

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in the US in February 2022. “The whole process ran very smoothly,” Andrzej says. “These big changes were accepted by our customers very quickly. We had an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from customers who felt that the new name and image was more dynamic and a better representation of our company.” The risk clearly paid off as Hexonic’s business in the US alone has grown by almost 1000% since its rebranding.

But this wasn’t just about a new logo and name. Hexonic was making a commitment to be a reliable, professional partner providing top-quality products and outstanding service, ready for expansion. “We wanted people to see that we were taking those years of experience as SECESPOL and now producing to an even higher quality as Hexonic,” Andrzej affirms. “Our



➤ Andrzej Otta (Sales Director) explains the company's impressive manufacturing process to the Heat Exchanger World team.

designed for plate and shell, the JAG Shield. Another distinguishing feature is the use of vacuum brazing rather than laser circumferential welding, as this ensures a very high level of dependability and outstanding fatigue strength. "In order to provide the best support for our customers, we completed a huge investment project in our JAG plate heat exchangers," says Andrzej. "This required several years of research and development to design a unique plate and build entirely new production lines. It's a product group we'll find ourselves really focusing on, as plate heat exchangers make up a majority of the market share."

As well as the full new range of JAG heat exchangers, Hexonic also developed its online selection software, CAIRO. The software is accessible via a standard web browser and gives current and prospective customers an overview of Hexonic's complete standard product range, relevant to HVAC, refrigeration, oils, dairy, pool applications, and beyond. Also reinforced by the company's R&D department, CAIRO offers a complete service, for example in the event of a sizing issue. CAIRO is a way for Hexonic to share a lot of technical data with its customers, something which Artur feels sets them apart from the competition. "Our customers really value this because they can have the full details of a calculation," Artur states. "They don't need to wait for an offer, they can already see the many options for their specific needs, price, size, etc."

A company of experts

The word 'solution' is at the core of Hexonic's approach and Christian Huhn (Managing Director - Hexonic Deutschland) explains that, in his eyes, the company is far more than just a product manufacturer. "We have the right people with the right expertise to think along with every customer to find the best fit for them," says Christian. "For example, does a customer need a space-saving option? No problem, we'll build a smaller, more efficient unit with higher number of passes."

Artur Grajewski asserts that, first and foremost, Hexonic is an engineering company with expertise in thermal calculation and

an ability to provide well-engineered solutions for a wide range of applications. "We try to produce all components in-house, and this gives us one of the most important things: time. At the moment, there is a lot of pressure to reduce lead times for heat exchanger manufacturers, so we need to ensure we can keep up with that," Artur says. "Producing components in our Nowy Dwór Gdański facility means we can produce nozzles, front and end plates, process tubes, and so on – if a customer requires a specific attachment, then we make a custom part for them. Having this flexibility is one of our big advantages."

Adapting to future trends

The energy transition and latest focus on decarbonisation technology are of great interest to the entire heat exchanger industry, but Hexonic claims an advantage with its extensive product portfolio and an ability to adapt to the requirements of individual customers, even within its stock range. Christian explains that, with these products and the certifications they attain, Hexonic is ready to play its part in the energy transition and sustainable solutions.

"For the German market in particular, we are focused on the renewable energy sector; we see an increase in demand for waste heat recovery applications and district heating networks," Christian explains.

Christian predicts a huge potential in the industrial heat pump market, anticipating growing demand as countries move further away from reliance on gas. "We're able to deliver for the single domestic installations all the way up to district heating and industrial heating systems. For



➤ Hexonic's brazed plate heat exchanger has been redesigned to be compatible with new refrigerants.



➤ Artur Grajewski (Business Unit Director of Industrial Heat Exchangers), Andrzej Otta (Sales Director), and Christian Huhn (Managing Director of Hexonic Deutschland) with the Heat Exchanger World team at the Nowy Dwór Gdański production facility, Poland.

those larger units, Artur's division is ready to approach this market as soon as it matures. We have the right product for applications on both ends of the spectrum." To demonstrate the company's readiness for the developing heat pump market, Andrzej explains the redesign of Hexonic's brazed plate heat exchangers to be compatible with new refrigerants. "Propane, for example, is becoming more popular, as well as A2L (a refrigerant with low global warming potential, low flammability, and lower toxicity). We redesigned our products to be more durable to these media." Always adapting to new market trends, the company aims to secure many new OEM producers.

Certifications

"With these new applications, we also ensure that we are totally compliant to important certifications such as F-Gas, UL, and AHRI," confirms Christian. "P-Fas is also an

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important one which we anticipate will impact the whole refrigeration industry, even the valve industry in fact. We are constantly monitoring these situations and preparing for future scenarios."

Hexonic received its UL certification at the end of 2022, which Andrzej feels is vital for entering the heat pump sector, and the JAG range qualified for AHRI in September 2022. "The AHRI guarantees that a heat exchanger's proper performance is supported and proven by external lab tests," he states. "And the UL certificate means that our units can withstand above and beyond the required number of cycles. Many customers often specify the minimum number of cycles that the device must endure. Thanks to the UL certification awarded to us, we can assure our customers of the appropriate durability of our heat exchangers. The team is proud to share that all cyclic testing was carried out

in-house at the Nowy Dwór Gdański facility under constant supervision of the UL inspector.

Global growth

Beyond the physical growth of the company's Nowy Dwór Gdański production facility, Hexonic has also opened two new entities in India and Kazakhstan, and is in the process of opening another in Dubai. Due to the distance from Poland, local warehouses will be created in these three locations to assist with smooth delivery and service for customers. Identifying big potential in Asia and other growing economies, Hexonic wastes no time in seizing such opportunities. "We believe that, with our wide portfolio, we can establish ourselves as key players in many new regions. Our goal is to be present in 50 countries within the next 5 years," Andrzej confirms. Hexonic is intent on maintaining its high standard of quality no matter of how large it grows. Christian thinks of this as a red thread running through the centre of the whole company. "It's in our DNA; that high quality should follow through a customer's entire experience with us. Beginning from the first consultation and initial contact, through the production process, until the final product delivery, and even after that."

"We want to be a reference point in this industry, which we believe means more than being a leader. Industry leaders focus on volume, but a reference point shows quality." Christian refers to the company's experienced and expert team: "What we are interested in is maintaining a high standard with our products, our service, and our knowledge. Thermodynamics is in our blood. All of our team members fully understand heat exchangers, application-specific requirements, how to interpret data etc. We are able to look at the whole picture."

Andrzej concludes with an optimistic look to the future, the company heading towards even greater growth and global ambitions: "We are working to be one of the world's leading players, globally recognised for our products and service. And we will succeed because we have the right people to do it." ■