

> DOUBLE INTERVIEW

TBWB (Netherlands) / NEPTEK (South Africa)

In unity, there is strength

by Franz Schöpf



In a globalized, interconnected and fast-paced world, collaborations and partnerships are becoming increasingly important. We see them happening in all industries but project-based collaborations between companies often leave the one or other partner unsatisfied. A rather unique example of two relatively small companies – both international Rolling On Interroll partners of the Interroll Group – teaming up and winning a significant project occurred earlier this year in South Africa. To learn more about their successful collaboration, *moving* spoke with the leaders of both companies.



Bart Friederichs, CEO



Technisch Buro West-Brabant (TBWB) is a family-owned company, based in the Netherlands, with over 40 years of experience in industrial automation, specializing in internal logistics. TBWB focuses on customized automation solutions with proven technology and operates in various industries, with over 400 successfully implemented projects.

www.tbwb.nl



Richard Neppen, Managing Partner



Neptek is a specialist in the design, supply and integration of material handling systems. The company's range of equipment covers solutions for most industries with a primary focus on food, beverage, packaging and other fast-moving consumer goods markets. Neptek has supplied systems throughout South Africa as well as into Africa and the Middle East.

www.neptek.com

Q: What would you say makes your company special?

BF TBWB is a family-owned company and we are all passionate about helping our customers with the best solution, but we also want to have fun in the process. We have a genuine interest in the personal development of our people.

RN We are a small yet highly specialized company, with a clear focus on providing innovative and reliable material handling solutions. I would say we are absolutely customer-service driven and our core competence is value-added integration engineering.

Q: How did you meet each other and how did the collaboration get started?

BF I met Richard at the ROI Summit in September 2017. Shortly after, a concrete business opportunity in South Africa came up and Interroll worked as a “matchmaker” and managed this TBWB-Neptek-Interroll triangle throughout the process. We had some face-to-face meetings and conference calls to get aligned and prepare our quotations. In the end, we won this project by joining forces and competencies.

RN We met at the ROI Summit last year and in my initial talks with Bart, I understood that our offerings were complementary. When this new automation project came up, I really thought we could win this together. The client was looking for a warehouse management software to work with the conveyor system we are integrating from Interroll. We made contact and introduced TBWB to the client to close the loop.

Q: Which were the biggest challenges in this collaboration across two continents?

BF The distance, of course. The hardest part is making sure that all parties involved are on the same page and have the same understanding about the requirements and the specifications we elaborated for our part of the solution.

RN As local player in South Africa, we also had the role of convincing the client that all involved partners would meet their expectations: TBWB in terms of the software solution, Interroll in terms of conveyor technology and Neptek as responsible system integrator.

Q: Which were the key success factors in this partnership?

BF For me, the key in this collaboration has been allowing one another to do what each party is good at.

RN I guess the fact of being able to offer the client a full turnkey solution together with Interroll and TBWB.

Q: What has been the role of Rolling On Interroll as a platform in this project?

BF We met at the ROI Summit, so that's a big one. Interroll has been a great help in getting everything going and managing it efficiently. When you are endorsed by a large company, clients are more willing to choose you over other companies.

RN Introducing our two companies to each other at the ROI Summit was the key. Plus, understanding where our shortfall was in terms of being able to offer the client the full package and referring TBWB to us as trusted ROI partner who can offer the services we required.

Q: Do you consider this a one-time project or do you see an opportunity for further collaborations?

BF After this successful first project, I certainly see chances for further collaborations. South Africa can be an interesting market for an Interroll-TBWB-Neptek combination and the mutual trust we created will be the foundation for future projects.

RN This is definitely not a one-time project as we see further possibilities to work with TBWB in the future. I'm excited to be working with Interroll and TBWB and that they feel confident working with Neptek as the principle contractor in managing this project.