

Top 100, 2008

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Sustainability is top of agenda

10

Epwin Group

Building services

Turnover: £197 million

Founder and chairman: Jim Rawson

Total workforce: 2,200 (120 in Cheltenham)

Innovation: Achieved world first by manufacturing a new PVC-U window, solely from recycled material.

THE Cheltenham-based Epwin Group has put sustainability and innovation as top priority in the production and supply of low maintenance PVC-U products to the home improvement, social and new build markets,

Founded in 1976 by group chairman Jim Rawson the Epwin Group has grown from a modest business start-up to boast more than 30 separate brands.

With 1.2 million sq ft of production and warehousing facilities, the group today employs more than 2,200 people nationwide with an annual turnover in excess of £197 million last year.

Floated on the Stock Exchange in 1987, the Epwin Group was brought back into private ownership after more than a decade of success as a public company to give the management team greater opportunity to focus on the business and customers.

With ongoing investment in a major research and development programme, Epwin Group companies claim to be at the forefront of technical advancement, delivering a new generation of energy efficient, recyclable, sustainable and low maintenance products to the new build, refurbishment and social housing sectors. This includes a complete package of low-maintenance building products from cladding to conservatories, doors and panels to cavity closers, curtain walling and rainwater goods. As part of its ongoing commitment to sustainable modes of manufacture, the group recently recorded a world first by manufacturing a new PVC-U window, solely from recycled material. This follows multi-million pound investment in its national recycling facility and network operated by group company Dekura.

It means the building materials leader is now uniquely placed to collect and recycle 'old' first generation PVC-U products that have reached the end of their natural lifecycle and are being replaced with more energy efficient and aesthetically stronger products.

Mr Rawson, said: "Sustainability is today a fundamental part of doing business. From the high street to high rise development, no company can afford to ignore the 'green' agenda.

"And the PVC-U window and building products industries are no exception. It's made and is making massive in-roads to minimise its impact on the environment and to give the end user products that can help them to cut their carbon footprint, cut their fuel bills and make their homes warmer and more secure.

"At the Epwin Group we're not merely paying lip service to our environmental responsibilities but acting on them to drive forward technical development throughout our business to ensure that we deliver the most sustainable and high performance products to our customers."



NEW PRODUCT: an Epwin employer with the PVC-U windows



FOUNDER: Jim Rawson

Highlights for the group's year included the £6.5million re-launch of the Swiss brand, alongside a new window system and other product innovations, and the acquisition of KB Plastics. Mr Rawson said: "In common with other manufacturing sectors, the window and door industry and by implication the group, has felt the

pinch of rising energy prices and increases in the cost of raw materials. "But change is inevitable – we simply have to move with it. We are investing in our products, services and each and every aspect of our operation but most importantly I am confident that we have the right people to ensure our success, now and for many years to come."



INNOVATION: the production process, top, and above, the factory in Cheltenham