

WAXMATTERS

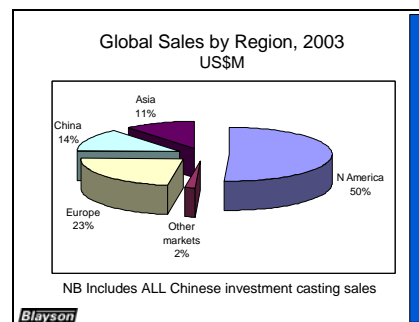
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World Markets Reviewed

Blayson believes in supporting the development of the investment casting industry and the recent World Investment Casting Conference provided the setting for Ron Williams, Managing Director of 'The Blayson Group Ltd', to provide the industry with his regular insight into the global market for this important sector of the foundry industry.

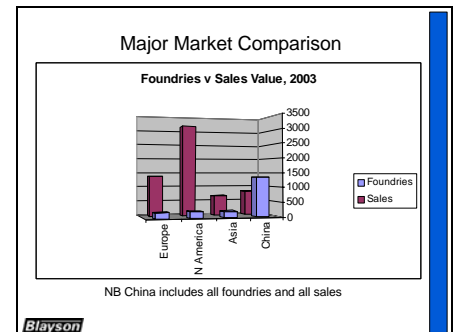
This was presented as an overview of world investment casting markets, with particular emphasis on sales in the key sectors and illustrated the changing dynamics and shifts in production and sales. Ron Williams' overview was supported by individual regional market presentations by Mike Perry, North America; Nevill Swanson, Europe; and Katsuhisa Ishikawa, Asia.



Clearly North America continues to dominate as the largest value market with 50% of sales value. Europe contributes 23%, Asia 11%, and China, the only country to increase sales in 2003 rising to 14%.

For the first time it was possible to look at the distribution of investment casting foundries across the world. It is here that the potential effect of China can be seen with a staggering 66% of foundries located here when all categories of quality are included.

As can be seen below however, Chinese production consists of low value parts and consequently sales do not compare with N America, Europe and the developed Asian markets of Japan, Taiwan, and Korea.



The ability of western manufacturers to produce large complex castings in the high added value sectors of aerospace and industrial gas turbines etc provides a considerable protection for the moment against significant erosion of their production and sales value. Commercial castings however will continue their drift to the low cost based countries.

In summary Ron Williams concluded that the reduction in engineering capacity in western markets will maintain pressures on volumes and prices. At the same time globalisation is increasing competition. However opportunities for growth do exist with the challenge for the investment casting industry to develop new markets for investment castings.

Full details of the World Market Review are available from ronwilliams@blayson.com

Watch out for Colin!



With the departure of Kenny Griggs and his vehicle from the roads Blayson has signed an agreement with Welch's Transport for a dedicated vehicle for wax transport.

Colin Stock is our new driver and has already found his way to most of Blayson's UK customers. We expect that Colin and the Blayson lorry will become a familiar sight in the coming months.

Long Service Awards

Technical Director Dave Bond and John Evans, Administration Manager, both celebrate long service awards this year.

Dave Bond reaches the 20-year mark, having commenced his service with Blayson when the company first expanded onto the Cambridge site. Blayson has benefited from Dave's extensive knowledge of wax and expertise in the investment casting process. As such he has been a major contributor to the company's success and continued growth.

John Evans celebrates 10 years with the company having arrived on the scene to introduce and inaugurate the initial computer bookkeeping system for Blayson.

Having completed that initial task

John stayed to take on the administration tasks running the office functions covering ordering, invoicing, accounts and stock control.

Now John has added some further special duties to his role to help Blayson's senior management with their development plans for the company's continued growth over the coming years.

Bright New Wax

One of the trickiest problems with wax manufacture is how to achieve a good and consistent colour.

Variation of colour is always very emotive with batch-to-batch differences in colour often being confused with a change in wax quality.

The fundamental problem is instability of the traditional organic dyes at wax melting temperatures, with many colours degrading or separating to their component parts. After much searching the Blayson technical team has located a source of stable organic dyes that avoid the normal difficulties.

The result is a bright new range of colours that are being introduced to the market shortly. It is felt that the introduction of these will enhance the perceived quality of Blayson products and give customers confidence - with the consistency of the wax appearance matching the consistency of the critical properties. Green is the first of the bright new colours to make its appearance and many customers wax rooms will already be familiar with the enhanced wax pellets by the time this newsletter is published.

Injection facilities at Blayson

With state of the art MPI injection presses installed in its Cambridge Technical Centre, Blayson is able to offer investment casting manufacturers the facility of on-site injection trials. This allows development of wax products and proving trials using customer's own tooling without the need to interrupt production schedules.

With the installation of the MPI presses Blayson has introduced the injection and supply of **runner bars** to the product range. These complement the billets that were introduced last year and complete a full range of wax product forms available to the market. For the future injected patterns are a possibility together with soluble cores.

Japan/UK Technical Liaison

The inaugural technical liaison meeting between the technical development staff of Blayson Olefines Ltd and Blayson Japan Co Ltd was held at Cambridge during September.

Koji Nishikawa and Dr Misao Igarashi attended from Blayson Japan with Dave Bond and the technical team representing Blayson Olefines.

The purpose of the meetings, which will take place twice yearly, is to bring the 2 development arms of the company closer together. It is felt that this will generate new groundbreaking and exciting ideas for wax materials and improved wax reclamation techniques. The regular technical group meetings will facilitate the development of these new materials and processes and speed their delivery to market.