

An era of opportunity and growth for the Parkegate sales team

As a recent addition to the Parkegate sales team, Bob Hiscock, Sales Manager, has both the challenge and rewards of joining a progressive SME, with an eye on expansion of the business into new markets on a global scale.

Established in 1996, Parkegate has gained an international reputation and a loyal client base across the complete spectrum of metals industries. However, with the massive changes witnessed in the metals industries in the past five years, especially in the UK, the company is motivated to find new markets and clients.

Joining the sales team at this exciting time of change has presented the opportunity to participate in the regeneration of basic sales tools, the company's website, brochures and the rebirth of the company image, formulating a strategy to address this new era of opportunity and growth.

Global opportunities

The global major players in metals have been merging and evolving at a rate of change unprecedented in post-war history. My task and that of my colleagues in the sales team is to capitalise on those changes. New people, new companies and a resurgence of growth in the industry are opening up global opportunities, in particular in the dynamic markets of China, India and South America, where the focus of attention will be in the immediate future.

Joining Parkegate in August 2010 coincided with the company's push into China, with discussions already in progress with a prominent Chinese business partner. This has now crystallised into a formal agreement with JOC – Jiangsu Overseas Group Corp. Signed by Managing Director, Neil Winkley in Nanjing last October, the co-operation agreement will commence with an immediate China marketing programme. This is scheduled to swing into action in November with myself and Business Development Manager, Paul Osborne joining our new partner for a tour of the China market.

My own experience of the Chinese metals business spans more than 25 years. In that period, China has moved out of early domestic development to become the power house of metals and the largest steel producer in the world. In that same period, we have seen the major players in the Indian subcontinent taking control of the overseas metals markets. Led by Mr Mittal and the Arcelor Mittal giant, more recently we have seen the UK metals industries taken over by Indian producers. The Tata Steel acquisition of Corus has generated some closures and opportunities in the UK steel sector. Sadly, the aluminium and stainless steel sectors, however, have seen the almost complete closure of operations in the UK.

On a positive note, both the UK stainless steel and aluminium industries have been acquired by major Indian companies and Parkegate has been actively involved in transplanting the industry to India. Parkegate and affiliated partner 'cjm asset management' specialise in valuation, sale and re-engineering of metals processing plant. Having



Bob Hiscock joined the Parkegate sales team as Sales Manager in August 2010.

secured the sales rights for the complete stainless steel plant in Sheffield, formerly operated by British Steel and latterly by Outokumpu, the Parkegate/cjm partnership has sold the entire plant, which has been largely relocated to India.

For many years, Parkegate served the former owners of this, the largest stainless steel plant in the UK, with modernisations and upgrades of rolling mills and processing lines. Today, we have the potential to serve clients in the rapidly emerging Indian stainless market and to continue a relationship with quality UK-designed equipment that we have known for many years.

Similarly, the aluminium sector has seen a significant decline of operations in the UK. Most recently, the Alcan Rogerstone plant in South Wales, formerly operated by Alcan, has been acquired by the world's largest aluminium producer, Novelis. This organisation is wholly-owned by Hindalco India, part of the powerful Birla Group. Hindalco will reinstall the complete Rogerstone four stand hot

rolling mill at its Hirkund plant in Orissa, where it is planned to establish the first plant in India to roll aluminium beverage can stock for the massive drinks market. Against international competition, Parkegate won the contract and is main contractor for the uplift, modernisation and recommissioning of the plant at the Hirkund site. Approximately 15,000 tonnes of equipment will be relocated to India, with the complex task being project managed by Parkegate.

With over 40 years of experience in the global metals market, I am no stranger to the threats and benefits of doing business in China and India. Working for major blue chip European metallurgical plant suppliers (Davy, Voest Alpine and Siemens) has provided a solid background and understanding of the markets, business and social cultures of these diverse countries. The challenge for me and the Parkegate sales team remains as fresh and exciting as ever, however.

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