



source: Ragn-Sells

The fine distinction

One could think that balers are all about force, but this is completely wrong. It takes much more to be successful in this market. Swedish manufacturer Presona convinces its customers with fine distinctions.

From a Bavarian point of view, everything north of the river Main is often classified as Southern Sweden. That says a lot about Bavarian identity, but definitely sells Southern Sweden short. In addition to its beautiful landscape, it is also the home of Presona, a leading baler manufacturer. The company's headquarters, including its design, development, sales and aftersales departments, are based in Tomelilla, about an hour's drive from Malmö. "Having all of our core functions in-house gives us total control of our products," Presona CEO Stefan Ekström explains. Core functions of the balers, such as the controls, hydraulics and electrics, are all developed directly in Tomelilla.

The company's core business is fully automatic balers with pressing capacities of 50 to 140 tonnes. Presona also supplies waste extraction systems for the printing industry and bookbinders, but also for the packaging industry. A really important point for customers is also the aftersales support, which keeps downtime to a minimum.

Presona specialises in large, fully automated balers. In this area of the market, competition is rather small. Nevertheless, business is anything but simple. "It is a highly competitive market with many good manufacturers," Ekström explains. "But we take it as an incentive and a challenge to improve. No one can afford to rest on their laurels."

Presona has more than 50 years of experience in manufacturing balers. Of course, the technology has evolved since the first wooden presses with three tonnes of pressing force. One of the main reasons for this was the invention of pre-press technology, which the people at Presona are very proud of, as it is an important factor in the company's success.

Unlike shear baler presses, the overlapping material is not cut in the Presona balers, but pre-pressed into the pressing chamber to fill it in the most efficient way. Since the superfluous material is not cut, almost all of

the power can be used for the actual pressing process, which reduces energy consumption by up to 50 per cent compared with shear baler presses. Furthermore, wear and tear is reduced significantly, making the entire machine much more cost-efficient.

Big competition in the baler market

Moreover, baler presses are about fine distinctions. The binding system is a good example of this. What seems pretty simple at first sight, can actually make a big difference. Presona offers a closed system that is less exposed to pollution, which makes it more reliable. The knots can be placed very precisely, making the bales more stable and reducing the use of wire. Most interesting are the ends of the wire, which overlap at the knots. In Presona's baler presses, they are about five to six centimetres long – but up to 25 centimetres long in other manufacturers' machines. "That can add up to a difference of four meters for a single bale," Ulla Billing points out. One does not need to be a maths

genius to figure out that at a throughput of 30 bales per hour and a machine time of 10 hours a day, a lot of wire is wasted – and therefore a lot of money.

Presona's machines can press almost everything, whether cardboard, newsprint, mixed paper, PET bottles, aluminium cans, plastic foil, municipal waste or RDF. Only the processing of metal scrap is not possible, since during the pressing process the material is not pressed against a wall, so there is not enough power for pressing metal scrap. Of course, the same machine can be used to process all of the materials. The software included can run up to 50 different programmes.

A good example for one of Presona's customers is another Swedish company, Ragn-Sells, which is currently expanding its operations by adding new capacity to its recycling plants in Karlstad, Norrköping and Örebro. Two new Presona LP 85 VH2 balers will enable the company to sort and bale all the wastepaper for its customer Pressretur in Värmland, Östergötland and Närke. They will also be able to process more corrugated cardboard, plastic and other waste materials.

It started way back in 2006, when Ragn-Sells won a contract from Pressretur in Värmland. This was when the company bought its first Presona baler for the plant in Karlstad. "When we were due to start baling wastepaper in Karlstad, we of course looked at solutions from various suppliers. The result was that we decided on a baling press from Presona, an LP 80 VH1, and it has been working really well ever since. The company eventually grew with larger quantities of wastepaper, but also corrugated cardboard and plastic. As a result, we have had to run three shifts in recent years," says Lars Nordström, Ragn-Sell's department manager for Värmland/Örebro.

When Ragn-Sells decided to buy new machines, they needed higher capacity balers. As a result of the company's previous experiences from Karlstad, where the Presona baler had proved to be industrious, stable and reliable, another Presona machine was a clear choice.

The baler in Karlstad had been running reliably for almost 10 years, but it is far from worn out, so now it continues to operate in Örebro. "Currently we do not require as much capacity in Örebro as in Karlstad, so the simplest and best solution was to move the old baler there. It has been properly serviced and parts have been replaced as they wore out, so it works really well and has many years of service life left in it. And, of course, re-using is the most efficient form of recycling, which is something we are specialists in," says Lars Nordström.

The new balers are supplied with Presona's sorting systems, where

More efficiency thanks to pre-press technology

all material that is not to be included in the process is manually removed. Paper mills that manufacture new paper from wastepaper require high standards in terms of material purity. However, since this also means that the waste material is worth more, sorting is profitable.

Presona is a Swedish company, but of course it conducts business worldwide. The company is represented in some 40 countries, the export rate exceeds 80 and in some years even 90 per cent. Apart from Germany and Russia, where Presona has its own sales offices, the company works with distributors and sales agents. Germany, Russia and Sweden are the most important countries for Presona in terms of sales. But the order is changing and some markets are showing significant differences. Germany and Western Europe are saturated markets and machines are mainly replaced, Ekström explains. Rus-

sia, however, is from his company's point of view an up-and-coming market with a lot of potential, despite a lack of money and infrastructure. Besides, it is not easy to export to Russia, Ekström points out, since a lot of documents are needed and the administrative work involved is considerable. Furthermore, he has high expectations concerning the new EU members and sees attractive markets developing in the Balkan and Baltic States over the next few years. Presona is also successful in the Middle East. However, the company has not been too active in the Asian market. Being a small company, Ekström stresses the need to focus.

So far, the company has delivered over 1,000 baler presses to more than 60 different countries. On average, one baler press is delivered from the site in Tomelilla per week. Of course, the calculation is not quite as simple as that. It is true that construction, including testing, takes about one week, Ulla Billing agrees, but there are big differences depending on the size and features of the machine. Once at the customer site, it is crucial to install the machine properly. Including instruction and training, this takes another week.

Although competition is tough, its success has proven Presona right. For example, in Sweden all PET bottles and aluminium cans are processed using Presona balers, a total of approximately 1.6 million bottles and cans per year. A great many customers worldwide already rely on the balers from Sweden. Therefore, nothing is likely to stand in the way of the next 1,000 baler presses.

Michael Brunn

