

AkzoNobel to Realign Units, Shift Directors

Global coating and chemical maker AkzoNobel (Amsterdam, the Netherlands) has announced plans to introduce more balance to its Performance Coatings and Specialty Chemicals portfolios as part of a realignment that will see the launch of two new business units and the merger of two others.

Due to come into effect on January 1, 2010, the planned changes include the creation of a stand-alone Wood Finishes and Adhesives business and a restyled Industrial Coatings business, while the company's Polymer Chemicals activities will be merged into the Functional Chemicals organization.

Wood Finishes and Adhesives will comprise the company's current wood finishes and wood adhesives activities, while Industrial Coatings will be made up of the present Packaging Coatings, Coil Coatings, and Specialty Plastics operations, creating a more logical combination of AkzoNobel's industrial OEM businesses. In addition, to benefit more from its inherent technology and supply chain synergies, AkzoNobel Aerospace Coatings will transfer from Marine and Protective Coatings to Car Refinishes.

In the new structure, Bob Taylor (currently managing director of Industrial Finishes) will become managing director of Marine and Protective Coatings, succeeding Bill McPherson, who is due to retire in April, 2010. John Wolff (currently general manager of the Coil Coatings business) will become managing director of the new Wood Finishes and Adhesives business, while Conrad Keijzer (currently managing director of Packaging Coatings) will become managing director of the new Industrial Coatings business.

The merger of Polymer Chemicals into Functional Chemicals is designed to create a stronger, more cost-efficient business better equipped to sustain future growth, according to AkzoNobel. Bob Margevich will continue in his role as managing director of Functional Chemicals and will lead the new business once the activities are combined. Alan Kwek, managing director of Polymer Chemicals, will continue to be responsible for the Polymer Chemicals business until the end of 2009. Kwek, who has been with the company for more than 20 years, has announced that he will then leave AkzoNobel to return to Singapore.