



Rapid Rex: A world record!

The new Rapid Rex only weighs in at 89 kg and is currently the lightest hydrostatic mountain mower in the world. The first fifty mowers to be released were snapped up in no time. The next production series is scheduled to be delivered from April 2010.

FSW welding technology increases fabrication volume

Rapid has offered its customers the option of friction-stir welding (or FSW) since February 2009. This process enables thin lightweight metal parts such as aluminium profiles to be welded, practically without distortion. High-quality radiators and heat exchangers, amongst other things, can consequently be manufactured. Rapid has already been successful in securing fabrication orders to the value of several million francs over the next three years with this technology. You can find out more about FSW technology at www.rapid.ch.

Real Estate Division: Limmatfeld project progresses to plan

We have had a successful outcome in Dietikon: building plots A and B have now been sold. The old Rapid fabrication and administration building have been demolished and the start of construction is now imminent. The proceeds from the sale of a quarter of its real estate reserves have allowed Rapid to reduce its indebtedness towards third parties and again considerably raise its strategic scope for manoeuvre.

Capacity adjustment in production orders

Whilst our internally-manufactured Rapid products and the sales of public works vehicles remain on track, we have experienced a considerable fall in component manufacture which, in spite of counter measures, we have only been able to offset in part. As a result of the decline in orders and the low prospect of a recovery in the short term, we have had to reduce the number of jobs in the fabrication division by 7.5.

Rapid Group

In the first six months of the year we were unable to repeat the record operating result of 2008. As notified in the 2009 half-yearly report, our turnover has fallen by 11% in comparison to the record value in 2008 (CHF 29 million, +26%). EBIT and cash flow fell more markedly, by 64% and 42% respectively; this disproportionately high drop can be attributed to the higher fixed costs at the new site.

Lots of news from Killwangen

In the last edition of Rapid News, we reported here on the impending relocation of Rapid Technic AG from Dietikon to Killwangen. This relocation has in the meantime become history, and we have now moved into our new site. My sincere thanks go out to all our employees who had to tackle numerous challenges associated with this in the past months.

The relocation was accompanied by the changeover to a new enterprise planning software. A stylistic update to the Rapid lettering was also completed as part of the move. All this has brought about a modernisation of the entire image of the company to the outside world. Even the present newsletter has been given a facelift.



Apart from these structural changes, we also have news to report from our core business: In September the Rapid Rex, the world's lightest mountain mower, was launched successfully onto the market. From the production order division, we can proudly report that we are the first company in Switzerland to offer our customers the option of friction-stir welding technology. And as far as third-party products are concerned, the Egholm 2200 equipment carrier, which is enjoying widespread popularity in the public works sector, is contributing well to our sales figures.

Nevertheless, the current economic situation will not pass us by without leaving its legacy. However I remain convinced that our three strategic business fields complement one another admirably and will also help to flatten out cyclical fluctuations in future. And because not moving forwards, as is well-known, equates to moving backwards, we are also continually appraising new markets. This approach has, for example, allowed us to gain a foothold in the fabrication of parts for therapeutic equipment in the medical sector.

Since the founding of our company over 80 years ago, a tremendous degree of development has taken place. We still successfully manufacture our single-axle machinery, but have also grown in the interim to become a high-tech company.

I very much hope that you enjoy reading this edition of Rapid News.

Rolf Schaffner
Managing Director

Rapid

The new logo is well received.

The subtle, contemporary re-styling of the Rapid logo has met with widespread positive responses. The lettering on the new Rapid building can be seen both from passing trains as well as from the motorway. Visibility and recognisability on flags, on exhibition stands and products will be improved markedly with the updated lettering style.

Rapid Rex – the king of extremely steep slopes

The new mountain mower is significantly lighter again than the Rapid Swiss. This makes it even better suited for extremely steep slopes. The low centre of gravity, the compact design and the hydrostatic drive allow for easy and safe mowing, even on difficult sites. The location of the motor close to the axle permits a large angle of incline and improves the bar support. The mower which weighs just 89 kg is powered by a Subaru-Robin single-cylinder engine rated at 5.1kW/7HP. The 54/52-mm attachment support can accept middle-cutting bars from 1.3 to 1.6m in width and public works bars of 1.22 and 1.42m. The travel speed is controlled by the rotary handle. A hydraulically-assisted, active steering bar eases turning and movement along contour lines.



Rapid adopts new FSW welding technology

In addition to conventional welding methods, the production division of Rapid Technic AG has started to make use of FSW technology, or friction-stir welding, since this year. In Switzerland, Rapid is the first company to also make successful use of this technique for customer orders.

Friction-stir welding is a process that is related to friction rotation welding, where two concentric cylinders are pressed against one another and the heat resulting from their differing rota-

tional speeds leads to a weld formation. Friction-stir welding has the added advantage that it is suitable for joining workpieces of any shape, as well as sheet and plate metals and cuboids. The workpieces to be joined remain clamped together tightly during friction-stir welding. Special shaping of the weld seam prior to welding is not necessary.

A rotating pin continues to grind at an end point along the intended weld seam until the material (usually aluminium, brass or another soft metal alloy) reaches a viscous state. The rotating pin now traverses along the specified weld line through the two workpieces and 'stirs' the plastified material (between the liquidus and solidus temperature of the metal) of both workpieces. Friction-stir welding (FSW) was invented by Wayne Thomas in 1991 and the process is patent protected by the TWI (The Welding Institute) in Great Britain. The parameters for the successful use

of the FSW process will depend on the material, shape and thickness of the workpieces. A mastery of the process places high demands on the specialists who operate the FSW system.

The weld seams produced using the FSW process are characterised by a high degree of evenness and compactness. A decisive advantage of the FSW process is that it produces no deformations (distortions), which are a common trait of conventional welding processes. This feature can be attributed to the fact that the melting temperature is not reached.

In addition to technical expertise and trained specialists, Rapid Technic also has the necessary infrastructure to complete demanding friction-stir welding orders. Should you have any questions about FSW or wish to personally inspect our fabrication plant, then please get in touch with us at kundenfertigung@rapid.ch



ERZ opts for the EGHOLM 2200

After five equipment carriers of the Egholm 2200 type were delivered to Zurich Waste Disposal and Recycling (ERZ) in spring, a further five vehicles followed in September. The machines will be used for street cleaning as well as for snow clearing and de-icing. As the exclusive distribution partner of Egholm in Switzerland, Rapid is proud of the decision taken by ERZ. According to product manager Hansueli Dubach, ERZ ultimately opted for Rapid and Egholm after having carried out intensive tests over several weeks with various competing products.

Our sincere thanks, Hans Treyer

Having just completed his training as a mechanic, Hans Treyer started his career with Rapid in 1966 as a vehicle fitter. Two years later, he was promoted to foreman/master mechanic stand-in on account of his technical skills and ability to get on well with people. In 1979 he gained further vocational qualifications and skills at the Master Craftman's School in Winterthur. In 1982 he headed the assembly department for a period. Thomas Wirth (Head of Marketing) asked Hans Treyer about his unique career.

«Our sincere congratulations on your 43 years of service at Rapid! You evidently enjoyed working for your employer all these years?»

«It was the size of the company that attracted me. Everyone knew everybody else. And new products were also being released on a regular basis. I worked on the 4-wheel vehicles; here too, there was always something new. Then, in the 1970s, the road sweeper was introduced. It was the hydraulics that especially interested me here.»

«Perhaps you'd like to share an illuminating experience from your younger years...»

«In my childhood there weren't many motor mowers at all. Either horses or cows were harnessed to carry out work. I was around 10 years old. We had to harvest our grain crop on a Sunday because the weather forecast wasn't at all good. We were travelling on our grandfather's hay cart which was being drawn by four cows. A neighbouring farmer teased us that we should take care not to become stuck in the mud. In the end it was he who approached us and begged us to help him, as he had become stuck, and we then managed to pull his tractor out of the mire with our four cows.

«What words of advice would you give to a new employee, if he was starting work today in the assembly department at Rapid?»

«It's extremely important to be able to get on with one's work colleagues. Apart from that, there are always interesting products at Rapid which will make your work appealing and varied. One keeps on learning new things.»

«Now that you will have lots of time on your hands, what are your plans?»

«I have a house and a large vegetable garden that gives me lots of work to do. I'd also like to take the occasional trip. And maybe also a leisurely tour of some of the towns and cities in Switzerland. We didn't travel much earlier when we had small children. My son is a pilot with Swiss; maybe I'll be allowed to take the occasional flight with him. I also have friends with a vineyard who have already asked me whether I would like to help out sometimes.»

Mr Treyer, thank you very much for talking to me. We wish you all the best!



Rolf Schaffner, Managing Director of Rapid Technic AG, with Hans Treyer at the farewell aperitif.

Contributors to this edition

Peter Lustenberger/CEO Rapid Group,
Rolf Schaffner/CEO Rapid Technic AG,
Emil Soller/Head of the Real Estate Division,
Thomas Wirth/Head of Marketing,
Rapid Technic AG

Rapid Technic AG

Industriestrasse 7
CH-8956 Killwangen

T +41 44 743 11 11
www.rapid.ch