



## #013 Anton Vorek DESOI Koester Waterproofing Mabi on COVID, market situation, and the future of the injection industry

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### SPEAKERS

Sonia Mocová, [Anton Vorek](#)

Dirk Klug, [DESOI](#)

Paul Osselmann, [Koester Waterproofing](#)

Romain Cottet, [Mabi](#)

Mateusz Furs, [Inblock](#); [Concrete Injection Made Easy podcast](#)

### Mateusz Furs

This is a Concrete Injection Made Easy, session number 13! Let's do it!

### Sonia Mocová, Anton Vorek

Hello Mateusz, and Hello all listeners of this podcast. My name is Sonia Mocová I work for Anton Vorek company which is manufacturer and supplier of complete assortment of grounding equipment, packers, pumps, injection hoses and the other accessories. Our company is located in Czech Republic and has satisfied customers from all over the world. And now I would like to tell you something special about us through the question Mateusz, asked us. I think that it's a great idea from him. And I hope that this short audio record will be interested for you.

### Mateusz Furs

I hope just the same. I can just assure you that what you will listen to is a piece of great positive energy and open-mindedness that is capable to overcome every single obstacle. It reminds me of stoicism.

Before we start listening to the recorded responses, I would like to thank all those of you who suggested who to send the invitation to.

Do you remember a month ago I posted on LinkedIn this short question: "[Injection packer manufacturers needed](#)".

You have commented on by giving me your trusted suppliers', company names. Here I'd like to send my special thanks to Stephan Delarue from Germany, Emad Elewa from Egypt, To company Sultec Engenharia e Geotecnia from Brazil, Anthony Bennett from Australia, Paul Green from the UK, URI back from Israel.

You are simply amazing. Thank you very much for this huge contribution.

So, without any further ado let's meet today's guests. It's Sonia from Anton Vorek, we already heard her introduction which was great, Paul from Koester Waterproofing, Germany, Dirk from Desoi, also from Germany, and Romain from Mabi, France. And I'm Mateusz, Concrete Injection Made Easy host, Poland.

I think I'll ask Paul to remind us what's the first question, Paul?

## **Question 1**

### **Paul Osselmann, Koester Waterproofing**

Yeah, hello, my name is Paul Osselmann and I'm consulting engineer for Koester Waterproofing. As your questions, every crisis is also an opportunity. What opportunity Do you see despite the crisis?

Well, I have to say our company has fared pretty well. During this covid crisis. We had no layoffs, no shortened work hours, downsizing anything whatsoever. However, much of our technical staff did do home office for quite a few months. And we did utilize this time for internal further education of our sales persons and technical support staff, we greatly upscaled our online seminar schedule for our partners and customers. I think we therefore came out of this crisis with a much larger arsenal of technical presentations and supporting documentation. Also, our production was changed into multi shift schedule. To minimize worker contact, and this has helped us to streamline some of our production processes.

### **Mateusz Furs**

For starters, let me say that it's great to hear that the company has fared well, that you had no layoffs, and that the arrangements you made have kept staff and their families safe amid the pandemic. From what you say I can also see the benefit for clients, business, and the whole industry:

clients > they will be able to find info no matter the time, even in the middle of the night, online, waiting for them to be consumed, this is a value to customers.

business > staff will spend less time in the future responding to customer queries; It builds up the profile of the business as a thought leader and expert in the area; shows that the company is prepared for an uncertain future.

And finally for the industry > construction industry is always a synonym for something that is backward, primitive, dealing with dirty concrete etc, it doesn't conjure up the image of sophistication or high tech;

And suddenly, the COVID situation has proven that this industry of injection and remedial work is becoming modern because it uses existing tools, like online seminars and digitalization to improve our knowledge, and the way we communicate;

I'd like to highlight here that the definition of innovation isn't inventing something new, but taking proven processes used in other industries and applying them to a different field and changing the game completely.

And what about Desoi, Dirk?

### **Dirk Klug, DESOI**

COVID-19 was and is still a big challenge for us. At the early beginning, we don't know exactly what we should expect. We don't know how long does it take until today. We don't know what happened with the markets worldwide. So we have had shutdowns all over the world. But we see a chance for us as well. There is a chance to introduce the digitalization, that means we are working with video conferences. We are working with video introductions, and we develop our website *our web shop*. And we use the time to improve our internal organization as well *as the relationships to our partners and customers*.

### **Mateusz Furs**

Dirk mentioned a web-shop. It's a very good idea. If you can't meet someone in person, at least have a call or Skype and you can direct them to your online offering and adjust your business to rely more on online sales. Other industries like cosmetics, years ago introduced the option to buy online and offline, they call it Omnichannel. Until now, it was unthinkable to buy packers online, a product that you need to touch, examine, evaluate, and then buy from a sales rep. Now that trend is shifting. Imagine 75 people on a webinar. And now imagine the same 75 people in 1 room. Such a crowded place. Maybe a webinar is not as interactive as a physical seminar, where you have the opportunity for informal interaction during a coffee break, etc, but in many ways, it's as good. Especially if you can conduct the webinars in an interactive way and encourage people to comment and contribute while you do it.

**Sonia Mocová, Anton Vorek**

At this time of crisis over the COVID pandemic, which is affected all sectors of business including our company, we are trying support and help our customers. Crisis exists and will exist and affect our company the same like another companies. We wish everyone that the situation get stabilized, and will be better again.

**Mateusz Furs**

yeah, absolutely, all businesses have been impacted so we can say we all are in the same boat.

The first month of not knowing what to do has passed and we need to find a way to move forward.

And how about Mabi? Romain? It's your turn.

**Romain Cottet, Mabi**

Good morning, Mateusz. I hope you and all the listeners are in good health. It is the most important today. Since Mabi, invented the first plastic injection packers in 1969, we have seen many crises. Sometimes affecting only one country for political or economic reasons. There are so a few international economic crisis. If we look back at this past crisis, the building renovation industry were always one of the less affected sectors. Why? Because as you know, Mateusz, it costs less to repair a small concrete cracks today than to wait and get a bigger problem later on. In civil engineering, for example, such as water dam or bridges, we know that to postpone remedial works could be very dangerous. And besides to stimulate and improve the economy, governments use a building industry with big projects. Even at a smaller scale individuals tend to renovate the house instead of building or buying new ones. So they will call our customers to fix rising damp issues. For example.

**Mateusz Furs**

Ok, so you reinforce the message that experiencing crises help you survive future ones. I guess it's true that if you can weather a storm, you learn how to cope with a much bigger hurricane down the road. Another interesting idea is that with big government investment in major projects as a way to stimulate the economy, and we see this everywhere, gov'ts are investing in new infrastructure and in upgrading old ones, this could be a huge opportunity.

So concrete repair businesses can consider hiring a consultant to help them liaise with the government to see if there are contracts to be won. Also, consider expanding your sales and business development resources to capture this new business. Very good point, Romain, thank you.

And what about most unusual injection packer?

## **Question 2**

### **Romain Cottet, Mabi**

Mabi produces a large range of plastic injection packers. Very, versatile packers for many applications with low pressure and high pressure injections. With a non-return check valve or with free passage with different kinds of connections. They're fitting flathead, pneumatic connection and so on. But, of course, we sell it in 40 different countries, we still deal with a lot of special request from end users or distributors, private labels, specific colors, any possible sizes of packers. So we are used to have unusual injection beggars request is why is the most memorable orders are mainly regarding the places where the packers will be used. Our customers don't only perform injections in concrete structures, but also in old and prestigious places, such as old castles, or churches and so on. It's always a great pride to know that our packers were used in Notre-Dame of Paris for example.

### **Mateusz Furs**

It must be a sense of pride to know that your injection packers are used on famous structures. For instance, every time I take the subway in Warsaw, at Świętokrzyska or Politechnika station, I know that back a couple of years ago, we did a repair jobs there and our work keeps the structure together. Imagine how many passengers have passed by and benefited from the work I did. Makes me feel that the business has scaled up. Because it's one job, but it has impacted the lives of such a huge number of people, who pass by this station every day. Gives me a sense of pride so I totally understand yours.

### **Sonia Mocová, Anton Vorek**

Every week we meet with new challenges from our customers in the form of custom packers. We currently have over 400 different types of packers, of which 80% of packers are for specific customer and for specific use.

Recently, a customer approached us because he was unable to drill precise holes to supply him OPD mechanical packers with a diameter which would seal a hole from 40 to 45 millimeters. Deadline was 10 days. We managed to meet both the deadline and the requirement with the OPD packer which can seal a 40 to 48 millimeter hole. And one more unusual request. A few years ago, we were approached by a customer who wanted to produce OPD mechanical Packers up to a 150 millimeter hole. We also managed to fulfill this task to the complete satisfaction of the customer. And that is what we love about his job.

### **Mateusz Furs**

Wow, the variety of packers you produce shows the power of being prepared ahead of time. By already producing a large variety, you're ready to cope with unusual requests. It seems to me that something unusual is a standard for you. And loving what you do is always a good thing, it makes your job easier.

### **Paul Osselmann, Koester Waterproofing**

Question two, what's the strangest or most unusual requests from clients for packers? Well, since we design and manufacture a wide variety of packers for all sorts of injection materials, we don't really get inquiries for non standard packers. However, it said is an all waterproofing products that we manufacture and deliver. Our research and development is often driven by customer demand. Yeah, very often very good ideas are just a passing thought on the construction site. This could be driving

aids or pre determined snap off points or extended next for impact packers, which eases in speeds up post injection finishing. So extra requests are rare. When we do have them, they're usually for extra long packer barrels to inject into hard to reach areas like under-stairs or between pipe assemblies. Since we manufacture ourselves, we can easily fulfill these extra requirements.

Another question is whether one can reuse Packers? The answer is generally no and it wouldn't make economic sense to do so. Only in the case of perhaps custom made distributor Lance's with the reuse of certain Packer parts be feasible.

### **Mateusz Furs**

What we just heard shows the power of doing good market research and experience allowing you to forecast whatever clients need. They don't produce what they think customers need, but the research and really probe what customers need and adjust their product offering accordingly. I guess this is a very similar approach Sonia described just a moment ago.

### **Dirk Klug, DESOI**

We are designer, producer and supplier of injection equipment and injection packers since more than 40 years. The most curious one I can remember, was a packer we designed, produced and supplied within 24 hours. It was a special packer and a length of 22 meter and a diameter of 98. We supplied this to side in Canada to the Niagara Falls. It was a great great job from the team. And it was divided in two meter single lengths. We prepared introduction how to use the packer at the same time and we supplied this pecker in time and they used it in time successful.

### **Mateusz Furs**

After I heard this answer I literally checked on Google if Niagara falls still exists, because if you use such a huge packer, it seems possible you could easily seal Niagara falls!

OK now seriously!

I was very impressed that they managed to build and deliver this injection packer in such an ultra-short time. No wonder why an instruction manual on how to use it was needed, I would need one for sure. So it's obvious that DESOI plays in the champion's league every day and if needed, they're always ready to compete for the world cup. This is a great example of combining passion and engineering experience.

### **Question 3**

### **Sonia Mocová, Anton Vorek**

If we could go back when we just started our business, what would we say to our younger self? What would be the advice? This is not a completely simple question for us. Let's start with a little bit of history. Mr. Vorek started the production of packers in 1994. In 2013, he handed the company over to his daughter Mrs. Stupkova, and son in law Mr. Stupka, who have been in company since its establishment and continue and develop the company in the same spirit and idea.

**Mateusz Furs**

I totally understand that. When Jobs couldn't run Apple anymore, there would be one chosen successor, whose main goal would be to continue along the developmental track of the company established by the original visionary, the founder, and that seems to be the case with Anton.

**Romain Cottet , Mabi**

My advice to young contractors and applicators will be to contact more often with suppliers, resins manufacturers, packer manufacturers, or distributors, because even if every job is specific, the experience of your contacts in these companies can help you find a solution. Our company Mabi started as an applicator on the field 50 years ago, and we still meet customers on the field to understand the needs. If we have the solutions, we will be glad to provide it. If we need to develop a new product for it, we will do it. But if we feel that the request is not adapted to the job, we don't hesitate to tell them.

**Mateusz Furs**

Gain insights, collect intelligence, expose yourself to many different approaches and ways of doing things in your chosen industry.

Then, at one point, after your experience grows to a certain tipping point, you'll be able to have the confidence to offer guidance and advice to your customers who may have misconceptions about how a job can be done and you can confidently set them straight.

In this way, the time of life will come full circle.

**Dirk Klug, DESOI**

The most important thing is the expectation and from the customer, so, I mean, you have to listen to the customer, what do they expect? Exactly. And you have to find for him the most economical and technical solution. It's not to supply just the product. You have to provide a certain service around this and out of our experience all around the world.

**Mateusz Furs**

I can see that you are stressing the importance of putting the customer's needs first and understanding the customer's needs. Because this translates into better delivery of products and services. This is a lesson that many businesses, including myself, had to learn. And the sooner you make this realization and incorporate it into your operations, the more likely your business will become great. To make asking questions easier, I recommend the book titled „Ask” by Ryan Levesque.

**Paul Osselmann, Koester Waterproofing**

Question three. If you could go back to your first day in business, what advice would you give your younger self? Well, a lot of things! About that there's a solution to every problem. So you just have to find it and you have to whittle it down, make it executable and economical. Knocking ideas around with your colleagues always helps. Customers will always try to find a cheaper solution with the same guarantee of success. Don't be pressured into offering a cheaper, lower likelihood of success, the

solution that you can really stand behind. There's the quote, the bitterness of poor quality remains long after the sweetness of a low price is forgotten. And I would remind myself of that.

#### **Mateusz Furs**

There is a solution to every problem. I like it very much! There is one book by a famous man in Silicon Valley, Peter Thiel titled ZERO to ONE. He says no other option than planning the future in a positive way, to find these solutions.

Almost nothing is impossible, it's just hard to do. So we need to be persistent and probe.

And there is one more quote: it's not true that the customer is always right. This is exactly what Paul mentions. The challenge is to communicate with customers in a way that makes them aware, guide them, balance truthfulness with compassion.

#### **Question 4**

And question 4. Where do you see concrete injection in the future? 5 years from now.

#### **Dirk Klug, DESOI**

Of course, there is already a trend existing with the digitalization of all injection processes. That means the customer has to document all injection information. Means injection quantity, injection pressure and so on and so on. But this is one thing and the other thing is that we currently recognize that in the past five years and it comes more and more are really individual solutions. That means the customer does not take only the standard ones, he tried to find a special solution which brings him a certain advantages and reference to the technic to the economic. And finally, of course, the time which saves him costs and DESOI is a great partner for all this.

#### **Mateusz Furs**

I can see these two trends in what you say: digitalization and personalization meaning individualized solutions.

One is to set up processes that make it easier to respond to the individual needs.

The other is to anticipate customer needs by gathering intelligence and listening to customers and expand your offering so that you have whatever customers need by having a very broad product range. It seems that both approaches might get you where you want to go, namely, to meet evolving customer needs most effectively and grow your reputation and business.

#### **Paul Osselmann, Koester Waterproofing**

Question four, where do you see concrete injection in the future five years from now?

Well, in many ways, exactly where we are right now. Concrete like materials are eight and a half thousand years old. Portland cement was developed almost 200 years ago. Modern reinforced concrete design came in soon after that. So it's not a broken system. It's actually incredibly successful. And so it's not likely to be changed. Concrete however, it does have its limitation. So repair and rehabilitation is also going to be an ongoing market. If anything that's changing it's the move towards environmentally friendly products. We at Koester have been a pioneer in green, environmentally



friendly products since the company was founded. This development is constant, constantly ongoing. So I imagine in five years, we'll have better products, but with similar installation methods and requirements.

### **Mateusz Furs**

The future is here. I agree. There's a saying "the more things change, the more they stay the same". Remember that innovation isn't about reinventing the wheel, but about bringing modern tech and insights to enhance your processes and products to make them best adapted to modern needs and that adapt to trends, like being environmentally friendly.

I not only agree with it, but I like it because I'm an applicator myself and if the market is going to need my service, it means there's a future for my business and for growth. Best is to use modern and improved injection products, which I love. So I like the future being that way.

### **Romain Cottet, Mabi**

I think industry will be stronger in the future. With the knowledge improvement and sharing we have now, thanks to the Internet and to podcasts like yours Mateusz. There will be new chemicals and new Mabi packers. Everything to make the job easier, faster and more efficient.

### **Mateusz Furs**

Your answer to this question is very much an encapsulation of the core comments. Importance of planning for the future in a positive way, development of products and processes that will enhance our business, but there will always be a need for remedial services around the world because concrete will always break. It's really up to us if we're able to take advantage of what the future holds.

### **Sonia Mocová, Anton Vorek**

We know that the grouting technology is still a relatively young field and there is still space for improvement. In almost 25 years since its establishment, our company has gradually developed into one of the best packer producers in Europe. We are constantly working to improve the packers and accessories for their installation. In the future, we would like to expand our offer with another interesting products that will facilitate the work of our customers.

### **Mateusz Furs**

I like the way you are being optimistic about the future, aware of the imperative to grow and expand and look for new solutions. If you improve the offer your business will expand for sure. I wish you such a path of development.

Thank you all for finding time to prepare and sent these answers.

I appreciate you.

I will just add here that all the links to company webpages of our guests will be available in the notes of this episode.

The main message is the need to plan for the future in a positive way. One thing we know for sure is that there will be future crises. So we need to be flexible and prepared for that.

All our guests say remedial services will be needed, some say the future is here. All of them also say their product will be improved, focus on constant improvement and enhancement. All highlight the need to stay close to clients, gain insight into client needs. Also to deliver more content, use tech and digitalization to be there for customers 24 hrs per day.

They are very optimistic about the future.

It means to me, as being their client, that they will be closer to help me. it also means I need to be closer to my own clients.

So that's a good note to end on. So now I feel even more committed to this podcast to provide industry insights and products and solutions. The more we know, the better we can take advantage of the trends that are unfolding in front of our eyes, and with the podcast, I'll be bringing all this to your attention.

So thanks for tuning in and see you next time.