

European News

NORD-LOCK
GROUP

Expander Evolves from Supplier to Global Expert

Nord-Lock Group has made a large investment in its pivot business, Expander, to better serve the needs of its global customer base. The newly expanded facility in Åtvidaberg, Sweden, has increased by 130 percent to 3,500m² - making room for modern manufacturing, a premium technical centre, as well as high-volume order handling.

Expander is the original solution for expanding pivot axles – supplying the aftermarket. The innovative pivot solutions are installed directly into the existing machine mounting without the need for welding or line boring, providing a permanent solution to lug wear. The company's production flow is completely digitised, enabling high quantities of customer-unique orders to leave the factory within 48 hours. Expander System has over 35 years of knowledge and experience as the original inventor of pivot pins with expanded sleeves. These pivot pioneers have now delivered over 1.5 million Expander Systems worldwide.

The factory expansion will allow Expander to increase its order volume by eight and the new Pivot Performance Technical Centre will further accelerate product development and support customer needs. The site will also become more sustainable due to the factory's reduced energy consumption, improved worker environment and lower carbon footprint.



In-house Wood Construction Screws by Eurotec

Eurotec GmbH is able to supply a wide range of wood construction screws that can be used for a number of different applications including load-bearing timber frame joints, timber engineering, multiple hall constructions or renovation of ceilings. The company points out its range of wood construction screws feature high corrosion resistance; applicability in service classes 1 to 3; as well as a good resistance to mechanical loading. The screws can also be utilised for carpentry work.

Eurotec's range of wood construction screws includes the Paneltwistec range, which Eurotec mentions is known for being an 'all rounder' among screws. It is available in different steel grades, head shapes, and screw tips, and each screw has special properties that are suitable and necessary according to the application.

In load-bearing timber constructions, for connecting timber wood or steel wood joints, Eurotec offers its KonstruX screws. They are characterised by a full thread that increases thread extraction resistance in the components.



Snap Instead of Screw

The patented DIRAK-SNAP-Technology (DST) creates high strength connections that are absolutely equal to screw-based solutions, but achieved with no tools at all, with installation in just seconds.

The idea behind DIRAK-SNAP-Technology is incredibly simple. It uses the operating principle of a slam-latch, which is commonly found in doors for houses or rooms. It is based on a guide with tapered clamping jaws and a spring positioned in a window inside the guide. If this fastener is then pressed through a cutout, the angled insert of the clamping jaws pushes the SNAP element back like a latch bolt in the guide channel and the spring is tensioned. As soon as the height of the clamping jaws is surpassed during the insertion process, the tensioned spring presses the SNAP elements back out of the guide channel. A distinctive SNAP sound can be heard as this happens. The result is a fastener now wedged in the cutout and holds the elements to be joined together with great strength.

DST withstands high strains and guarantees high strength and pull forces equal to screw connections in every regard. In addition, DST products are rattle, vibration and shock-proof. Numerous DST solutions have been tested for vibration and shock (DIN EN 61373) as well as earthquakes (GR-63-CORE, Issue 4).





Howmet's Huck® Range Force™ Battery Tool

Howmet Fastening Systems has developed the Huck® Range Force™ battery Tool, which it states is a portable powerhouse for multiple applications and industries including aerospace, solar, transportation, and construction.

The Huck® Range Force™ battery tool has an electronically adjustable pull force and long stroke of 1.18 inch (30mm) to enable installation of structural and non-structural blind rivets, as well as two piece lockbolts up to ¼ inch (6.4mm) in diameter.

With a quick nosepiece change and a simple one finger pull force adjustment, the tool is ready for the next style of fastener. Using a 18V lithium-ion 5.0Ah battery, the Huck Range Force industrial strength tool is highly portable, reliable and versatile. The tool is also lightweight weighing between 4.8lbs - 5.5lbs depending on battery used, as well as being ergonomic. Battery recharge time is approximately 45 minutes.



SFS Shows a Distinct Recovery in the Second Half Year

SFS Group achieved organic growth of 3.7% in the second half of 2020, driven by a distinct recovery in demand and seasonal effects. Sales for the 2020 financial year amounted to CHF 1.705 billion (€1.57 billion). SFS reports that higher production capacity utilisation and strict cost management as well as mixed effects supported profitability in the second half of the year. For the 2020 financial year an operating profit of approximately CHF 227 million was realised, which corresponds to an EBIT margin of 13.3%.

While demand in the first half of the year fell sharply in some areas due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a clear and sustained recovery in demand in various end markets and regions from the summer months onward. For instance, the automotive-related business areas, which had been heavily impacted by the collapse in demand and factory shutdowns at key customers during the first half of the year, showed a strong recovery. In the second half of the year, sales momentum also profited from successful product launches with customers from the electronics industry. Sales grew organically by 3.7% in the second half of the year compared to the previous year period. In the first half of the year, sales showed a decline of -10.4% in organic terms. For the full year, organic sales growth was -3.2%. Gross sales for the 2020 financial year amounted to CHF 1.7 billion. Sales in the Fastening Systems segment for the period under review amounted to CHF 489.7 million, which corresponds to a decline of -1.7% compared to 2019.

Despite signs of a recovery, Hilti Group's 2020 sales of CHF5.3 billion were 9.6% below the level of the previous year. In local currencies the decline amounted to 4.3%. CEO Christoph Loos commented: "The signs of recovery further solidified over the last four months of 2020 and our sales figures have stabilised. Total sales are below the previous year's level, to the extent expected, which means that the downturn has been less severe than initially feared."

Developments in the regions varied greatly, strongly influenced by the duration and extent of local lockdowns. In local currencies this resulted in only a slight overall decline in sales of 2.7% in Europe. There was a clear north-south divide, with growth in Scandinavia and Central Europe and upper single-digit declines in Southern Europe. North America was also pleasingly robust, with a local decrease of only 4.3%. Significant reductions were recorded in the Eastern Europe / Middle East / Africa region (-8.2%), Latin America (-8.1%) and Asia/Pacific (-7%), with major differences from country to country. For example, while encouraging growth was achieved in China and Russia, there was a larger slump in Southeast Asia and the Gulf States in particular. The Hilti Group expects a moderate economic recovery for the current year which will vary from region to region and depend heavily on the course of the coronavirus pandemic in the coming months. ■

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