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IntraNews Editorial

Robert Appleby, Chairman Titus Group



2022/23 has turned out to be difficult for Titus management. The high growth rates of the past two years have turned into rapid declines in demand in Europe, Asia and the USA. Growth is only being maintained in Australia. The rapid turnaround is the result of de-stocking in retail sectors which doubly impacts the manufacturing sector. Our connectors are running -50% on the prior year. Our raw material supplies caught up with our order book which has returned to a normal 3-4 weeks from 6-9 weeks during 2021/22. After a good performance financially in 2021, 2022/23 is expected to be substantially lower due to higher costs from inflation and lower demand.

Uncertainty is out there! As the effects of the disruption of the Ukraine war reduce consumer optimism, and high inflation on energy costs affect consumer spending, raw materials, en-

ergy, sub-components, outsourcing, labour and freight costs have all escalated significantly during 2021/22.

Titus must maintain profitability to support the high rates of investment in new products such as the toolless hinge, and continuing investment in new soft closures for drawer systems. Our objectives in 2022/23 remain to maintain our valuable resources in people and profitable operation on which we are dependent to finance the large investment in added capacity worldwide. This year, we have added 40% to the Group's operational floor area and invested in added capacity in all regions and in all products. New product launches must continue at the same pace to gain sales in the downturn. Pressure is returning to our financial team to maintain bank support for the Group Net Debt increases and the large increase in 2021/22 will continue to be absorbed into 2022/23-2023/24. •

Fast and Reliable T-type Hinge Installation Without Tools

Katja Manias, Marketing

The new T-type hinge with toolless hinge cup fixing system for easy and fast hinge mounting, paired with 3Way hinge-to-plate mounting, further facilitates and simplifies cabinet assembly.

Since the introduction of the T-type hinge in 2017, Titus has constantly grown sales and proudly observed that cabinet manufacturers worldwide are benefiting greatly by its use. During this period, we expanded the

T-type range with the T-type pie-cut corner hinge that offers full door opening at 70°, and T-type 95 hinge for reliable opening and closing of up to 40mm door thickness.

We are now introducing to the market the newest in line – T-type hinge cup for installation without tools. This quick and easy to mount hinge cup doesn't require any tools or screws for mounting and is simply inserted into the cup hole and snapped to the locked position. It provides simple, end-user friendly mounting and together with our 3Way hinge-to-plate mounting system, further shortens the time to assemble. This advantage makes it the perfect solution for home furniture assembly and professional fitters.



The locking of the hinge cup is easy and requires little effort to press. There is a distinctive closing action with an audible click, indicating a reliable hinge cup attachment to the door. The hinge cup rests tight to the door surface leaving no visual gap between the hinge and the door. •

"Since we first introduced to the market the T-type hinge with toolless fixing system, we have received very positive feedback and sales interest especially

where the customer recognises the mounting simplicity. It will be available for sale in next months."
Dean Kočevár, Category Director commented.

Push Latch RV

Igor Barinov, Product Manager

The latest developments in the RV range follow the trend of completely clean fronts without handles and push-to-open solutions.

The demand for push-to-open mechanisms is growing due to limited space inside the vehicle. To ensure safe travelling in recreational vehicles, boats and yachts, the Push Latch RV combines the functions of

push-to-open and secure locking, in one action. With a lifecycle of 20,000 cycles and a holding force of 25kg, all market requirements are fulfilled.

Compared to competitor products, the Push Latch RV is installed in the middle of the door giving the most intuitive and natural opening, whereas competitors require two mechanisms on each side of the cabinet. •



Tacto Touch Opening System for Tekform Slimline Drawer

Cristian Cagliani, Category Director

In 2021, Titus launched Tacto, the latest novelty part of the push-to-open category, designed for controlling and smoothing the Tekform Slimline drawer's opening action for handleless design, either for kitchen or vanity cabinets.

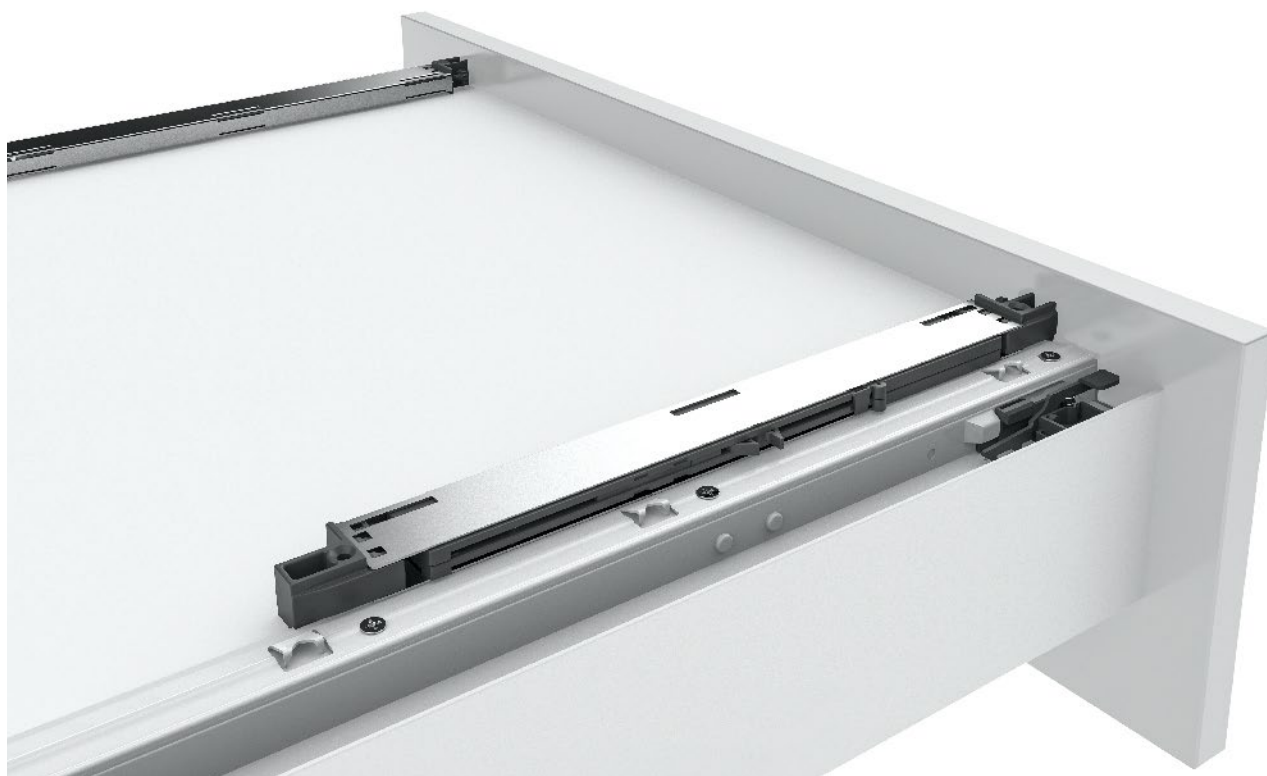
Tacto was designed around the concept of end-user friendliness, as an add-on solution. It can be integrated at any time together with the Tekform Slimline drawer without using any jigs, through a very intuitive procedure, giving the needed flexibility to any kind of user, from the industry to the furniture installer.

Tacto has a unique wide range of applications, crossing the traditional metal drawers used in the kitchen or the concealed runner for wooden drawers in the living room and bedroom. Reliable for a lifetime performance, Tacto is particularly appreciated in the seg-



ment of kitchen accessories, where the push-to-open system is combined with waste bin systems levelling up the overall experience of living the kitchen.

With the introduction of Tacto, the push-to-open category for Titus becomes a significant marker, leading the innovation in this specific segment. •



New Titusonic Vanity Machine with New Algorithm

Igor Slavec, R&D and Titusonic Manager Titus Technologies

Over the past four years, Titus has been continuously developing and researching the Titusonic process for bonding wood materials using ultrasonic technology, without the use of adhesives. The process is very efficient with a high level of production output and low costs. It is flexible and can be used to fasten most types of fittings to wood-based panels.



The roots of the project go back to 2018 when the prototype machine for kitchen cabinets assembly was made for the Titus Tekform subsidiary in Australia. This machine was designed for cabinets used in kitchens on the Australian market. Since day one of delivery, we started to test and develop at the same time gaining improved knowledge.

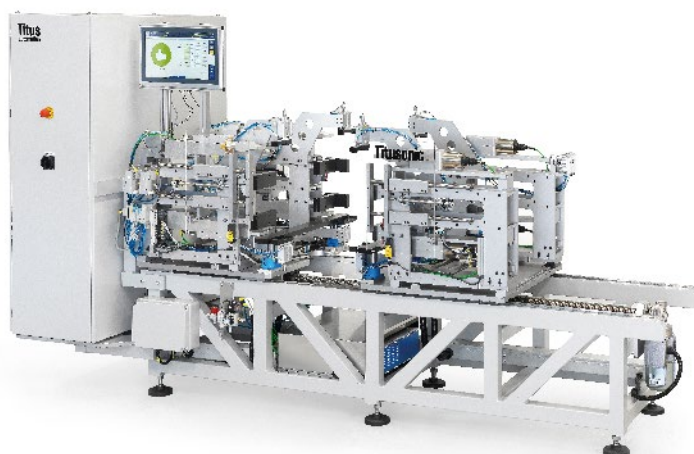
Titusonic features a clean, glue free process and requires less machinery. Using ultrasound energy, a thermo-plastic dowel is melted at precisely defined points over its surface and creates the bond in just a few seconds – more solid than can ever be achieved by a standard doweled and glued joint. The dowel isn't visible in the product however tight joints are critical to prevent moisture ingress and promote longevity of the final product. That's why we are working on Quality As-

surance - Statistical Process Control (SPC) and developing a new algorithm that can monitor performance and give feedback to the operator. This upgrade will allow us to predict the pull-out strength of each weld. Currently, we are also working on the development and upgrade of hidden dowel to use in the two-stage welding process. This means that it can also be used on FastFit machines where only one-stage welding is used.

This year, Titus Tekform finally started the regular production of kitchen cabinets with first deliveries to the market. Based on this first positive experience, we then progressed to work on a new machine for vanity cabinets, utilising all the previously gained knowledge and experience. The machine is designed with smaller sonotrodes that better fit

the new dowel, making the machine flexible, with automatically adjustable settings and positions according to the cabinet type. Also, as previously mentioned, the algorithm for quality control has received a further upgrade. Every weld can now be predicted to ensure even better quality of the bond. This is achieved by collecting data during the fast speed welding in no more than one second. The machine has already been delivered to Titus Tekform in Australia, so we continue with their team to test it and confirm the quality of cabinets and are looking forward to starting production of cabinets for the market.

I would like to thank the members of the team working on this project, especially Damjan Peternel from Titus Technologies and Jason McNulty and Anthony Brady from Titus Tekform Australia. •



Titusonic ultrasound technology for rigid panel bonding provides cleaner, faster and more stable assembly of rigid cabinets and drawers of various sizes. With Titusonic technology, the cabinet production process is clean and fast and results in cabinets with exceptional strength. Titusonic meets the needs of a very demanding furniture market with short lead times.

Interview with Michael Tiddy

Michael Tiddy, Marketing Director Titus Tekform Australia
Monika Pertot, Marketing

Mike, you have been with Titus Tekform company since day one. What thoughts and emotions do you have when looking back to the beginning? Was joining Titus a natural step for you with your background?

I was working with Titus in Australia prior to their taking Tekform over from the administrators. Titus and I had been partners in a company, TitusPlus Pty Ltd, providing support for our local distributors and looking to expand Titus' market share in AUS.

Prior to this, I had worked for Tekform and my father who was Titus' distributor in Australia. After my father's passing, I left Tekform to start TitusPlus. My relationship with Titus stretches back over 40 years. So, in short it was kind of natural to join Titus Tekform.

So, what were Titus Tekform beginnings in Australia and how has the company changed over the years? How has your role in the company changed?

The Titus story in Australia goes back to the '70s, my father John Tiddy and Robert Appleby were business friends, and they were always keen to work together out here. Dad always had a keen eye for innovative companies and products, Robert was always looking for new markets. For Titus, the development of System 5 back in the '80s gave Tekform a product that was relevant to our market and we quickly rivaled Häfele in the supply of fittings to manufacturers of flat packed furniture. Then, along came the adjustable leg programme and sales took off!

Looking back, what changes in the company business model can you see?

I'm not sure there has been a fundamental change in Tekform's business strategy. They were a distribution



company servicing the Australian Furniture Industry with a heavy emphasis on bringing new and innovative products to market, and there were many firsts! Hettich concealed hinges in the '60s, vinyl wrapped drawers in the '70s, Grass metal drawer systems in the '80s, double wall drawers in the '90s and of course pioneering the manufacture of postformed worktops and panels. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, *"Manufacturing wasn't our finest hour!"* We were much better at distribution than manufacturing.

Product development and marketing of innovation has always been in the company's DNA and this made it a good fit within the Titus Group, they wanted to learn about distribution and Tekform was available to learn from.

What Titus brought to the party was a manufacturing and engineering expertise that my dad and I could only have dreamed of back in the day. The advantages of selling products manufactured by the Group that owns you

has helped immensely with sourcing the innovations needed to sustain a distribution company. Being owned by Titus cuts out a margin in our competitive world it is fast becoming obvious that there is not a lot of room left for a middleman and having to share the margin with them.

Reviewing the 40 plus years of Titus in Australia, what has been the greatest achievement of the company?

Historically, there have been several achievements by Titus in Australia, we touched on a few earlier. But the most satisfying for me was the release of two drawer systems in Australia and New Zealand as well as following this up with a world class hinge system in T-type. The hinge/drawer combination makes Titus Tekform relevant to our customers. There's little doubt having customers with a hinge and drawer business establishes a firm base to acquire a greater share of the supporting products such as innerware, legs,

handles and you can even throw in the kitchen sink. It all starts with the hinge!

You said that Titus Tekform has established a stable position in the Australian furniture market. What makes you different from the others?

I don't think we are all that different to other distribution companies out here, we have two major European hardware manufacturers (Hettich and Blum) with their own distribution company. Then, there is Häfele while not strictly a manufacturer but certainly a global leader in the distribution of cabinet hardware. All three were well established out here, Hettich the longest, Blum with brand name and Häfele with a basket of goods that makes them a major player.

We then have the myriad of small and not so small players who also in many cases sell products like drawers from one of the two or three large Chinese drawer manufacturers and simply differentiate their product through badge engineering.

Yet despite the competition, Titus Tekform has been able to carve out a respectable share of the market since its inception in 2016, only six short years. Why? Because of the excellent product range we bring to the market, teamed with a group of individuals who run and work in our warehouses getting the goods to the customers on time and complete, admin staff who effectively and efficiently make it work from the back end, and the marketing team providing the collateral and developing the profile of the Titus brand. This allows the sales reps, the people at the coal face to present our products while developing strong and lasting relationships with the customer.

Mike, thank you for the interview and I wish you even more success at Titus Tekform!

Thank you, I am sure the company will continue to go from strength to strength. •

One minute with...

Jodie Day, Customer Service Manager, Titus Tool Co. Inc., USA

How did you first get involved with Titus?

I originally worked for our contracted supplier Ashland and managed the Titus account back in 2008. When our department was being reassigned to another location in 2012, I reached out to Matthew Hurley, CEO of Titus Tool Co. Inc. and we arranged a transition to the Titus team.

What three words would you use to describe your role?

Challenging.
Collaborative.
Supportive.

What does a typical day look like for you and what are you currently working on?

Each day is filled with new challenges. Training is ongoing with the Titus Precision members. I receive countless emails from both customers and colleagues assisting them with their needs, attend numerous daily Team Meetings. Current project I am working on is a price increase with the sales team and also working on getting weights & dimensions loaded into our system on our sku's (stock-keeping units).

What are your biggest professional challenges?

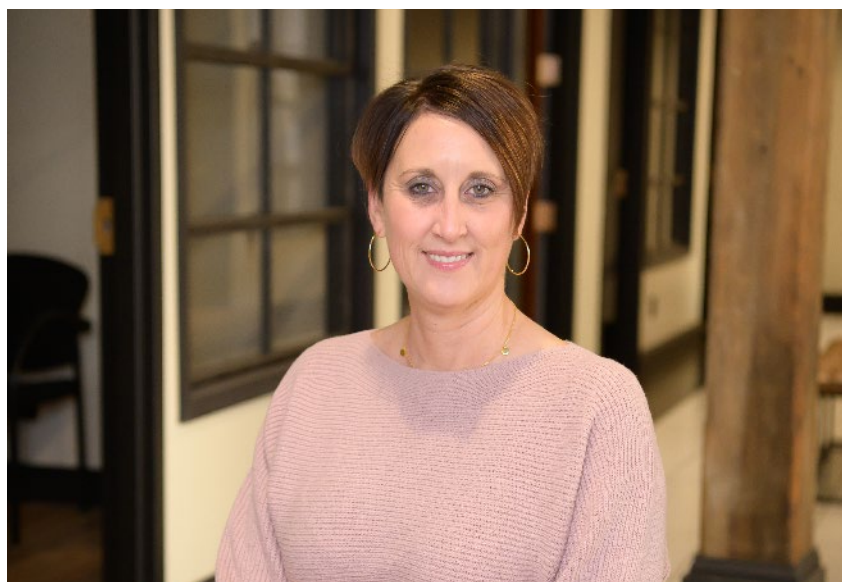
I like to understand many aspects of our business and not just my specific role in Customer Service. Now that we own our own factory again, I am just trying to expand my knowledge and understanding of how the business needs to run and look for ways to improve efficiency and streamline any work processes.

Given a chance, who would you like to be for a day?

The first thing that came to mind was a cat! I'd like to just roll up in a ball and sleep all day! Does that count?

What is on your wish list for your next five years here in Titus?

Constant growth. I am always trying to learn more today than I did yesterday. The more I understand the business and collaborate with other departments, the more I am able to help offer suggestions to continue to grow and improve Titus. With our recent acquisition, we have many opportunities to review and combine processes and produce an even more robust process that works for both custom and proprietary products. •



Wren Kitchens - The Story Behind the Brand

Monika Pertot, Marketing



Phil Beddoe, UK Managing Director

Founded in 2008, Wren Kitchens is a privately owned British designer, manufacturer and retailer of kitchens. Based in East Yorkshire, the Wren factories employ over 4,000 people and produce and distribute all their kitchen units at their three owned production plants and 109 stores across the UK and worldwide, as they continue to expand across the northeast coast of America.

"The history of business cooperation between Wren and Titus spans almost eight years. Since the start of this relationship, Wren has developed into a reliable and prosperous partner. Titus first started to supply S-type hinges with add-on soft close on their entry level kitchen range. We then went on to develop additional fittings via our long-standing bagging partner into Wren together with 3mm shelf support. Using ADS (Account Development Strategy) we were able to de-

velop the account further and today, Titus has successfully secured sole hinge supplier status to Wren with the T-type hinge range in the UK and USA. The owner, Mr. Malcolm Healey, appreciated its advantages and benefits including 3Way snap-on, considered as an important differentiating factor. There are several new projects in the pipeline, which I won't reveal

right now." explained **Phil Beddoe, UK Managing Director**. Wren kitchen cabinets are mainly fully assembled in their modern factories where quality control is managed to a very high standard. With its extensive range of designs spanning modern and classic styling, Wren can provide the kitchen that suits every lifestyle and budget. •



In 2019, Wren invested in a £120 million expansion of their manufacturing headquarters in Barton-upon-Humber, almost doubling manufacturing output to keep up with growing consumer demand. Wren is currently delivering more than 2,000 kitchens a week at its three production sites.

Strategic Partnership with Grupo Alvic

Monika Pertot, Marketing



Alvic distributor's branches, called the 'Alvic Centres', are designed to provide all the support from a large range of kitchens, bathrooms and cabinets, showcasing the latest trends in designs and finishes. Together with Titus, this keeps Alvic on top in the kitchen industry.



3

Industrial facilities in Spain.



1

International industrial facility.



930

Employees in the group.



98

Countries with a commercial presence.



30

Own distribution points in Spain.



3

International Distribution Points.

Grupo Alvic is Spain's largest producer and distributor of panels and furniture components and a global leader in the field of the furniture and decoration industry. The Group has more than 930 employees worldwide and has several factories based in Spain, France and the USA.

Alvic specialises in the manufacturing and distribution of components for kitchens, bathrooms, office furniture, and home decoration. Founded in 1975, it became the first factory in Southern Europe to produce furniture components. •

*"Our relationship with Alvic is very close and has been improved during the last years, especially in relation to the Kingfisher project. Titus products are very well presented mainly in the bathroom and office furniture lines", said **Jordi Barbé, Regional Sales Manager Iberia**. "The factory in La Carolina is using Titus connectors, mainly Wedgefix, on a daily basis and Titus Quickfit technology is an essential part*

*of the furniture manufacturing process worldwide. Now at Grupo Alvic, there are a great variety of products that satisfy different areas of the home and commercial projects, with which Titus reinforces its commitment to growth in the Spanish market. As with Titus, Alvic is also committed to innovation and Titus plays the role of strategic and trusted development partner focusing in the same direction", commented **Jordi**.*

DekaniZum – Distributor and Customer Product Training Events

Andrej Pavletič, Marketing

A dynamic and event-packed season is behind us. After a long break, we were thrilled to organise DekaniZum, a series of product training events for our distributors and customers.

On 21/22 June 2022, we hosted 30 Starwood representatives and many OEMs in their network. Starwood is our long-standing partner and distributor in Turkey. Their 30-and-growing distributor centres across Turkey ensure a strong and distinctive presence in the region, which contributes to strengthening the recognition of our brand in the Turkish market.



With the first event exceeding all our expectations, we followed up with two events in **September 2022**, which saw the visit of over 70 representatives of our customers from South East Eu-

rope and Slovenia. The guests were our long-standing business partners from the sectors of furniture manufacturing and distribution of furniture fittings.

Marko Korelc, Regional Sales Director for SE Europe, Middle East, and India

commented: *"I believe the event was a success, to the great satisfaction of both the participants and the event organisers. We reaffirmed to ourselves that maintaining a direct and genuine relationship is of utmost importance as it is the best way to strengthen the recognition of our brand in the region and beyond."*



During the event, our guests got the opportunity to learn more about our company, explore up-close our production processes and the products in our portfolio, and also to sneak peek the exciting new projects in the field of furniture fittings.

The events were an excellent opportunity to create and strengthen partnership ties and deepen cooperation. Of course, we didn't forget the moments for entertainment and socialising – from truffle hunting and a culinary excursion of the authentic Istrian outskirts to exploring karst cave systems and a picturesque maritime trip along the Slovenian coast accompanied by Slovenian fish cuisine.

Ertan Erden, Regional Sales Manager for Turkey

commented:

"At a time when our business partner in Turkey is strengthening its presence in the region, Titus must support its efforts with training and networking programmes. A varied, content-rich, and informative programme of activities certainly contributed to this goal. The professional and hospitable experience left an extremely positive impression on our guests."

Stjepan Grgić, Sales Manager for Titus Plus

Adria d.o.o. commented:

"A personal experience at our location in Dekani, such as the DekaniZum event, is of invaluable importance. An in-person factory tour or testing the performance of products with their own hands allows our guests to verify the quality of our products and gain adequate knowledge and confidence to efficiently integrate our products into their portfolio."

DekaniZum is an important event for us. Through it, we not only consolidate and strengthen awareness of the Titus values, vision, and mission among our partners, but it is also a unique opportunity to open our doors, share our knowledge and directly build trust with our partners. •

Würth. Persistence Pays off in USA.

Jim LeGacy, Sales and Marketing Vice President USA

Established in 1969, Würth USA is one of the leading suppliers of high-quality automotive parts, products, and services. Their extensive catalogue of hardware, chemicals, fasteners, hand tools and more provides their customers with everything they need to succeed.

The Titus team lead by Curtis Baugh, Sales Manager Hinges USA, has been on a mission for several years to secure the opportunity to sell T-type hinges through the Würth organisation. It has been a four-year process to get them on board for hinges. Würth

is one of the two largest distribution companies in North America and a key player in volume hinge sales.

Keys to the strategy

- **Product Awareness** – continued great marketing effort and presence at KBIS / IWF – creating product awareness for T-type
- **Product Capability** – the success of the Titus hinge line (function, quality + service) at Dakota Hardwoods, Würth Wood and Würth web knocked down any reservations of the two other divisions.

- **Leveraging Executive relationships** – Titus USA management was relentless in the courting of the top executives at Würth. A great lesson for all.

"It's not the size of the dog in the fight... it's the size of the fight in the dog." Effective January 2023 Würth Wood and Würth Lewis will begin programmes selling our T-type hinges. Congratulations to the entire Titus organisation for this success! •



Customer Highlight: Dana Incorporated

Jim LeGacy, Sales and Marketing Vice President USA

Dana Incorporated is an American supplier of axles, driveshafts, transmissions, and electrodynamic, thermal, sealing and digital equipment for conventional, hybrid and electric-powered vehicles.

The company's products and services are aimed at the light vehicle, commercial vehicle, and off-highway equipment markets. Founded in 1904 and based in Maumee, Ohio, the company employs nearly 36,000 people in 33 countries. In 2019, Dana generated sales of \$8.6 billion. The company is included in the Fortune 500 - Fortune Magazine's annual ranking of the United States' 500 largest corporations, ranked by revenue.

Titus Precision Plastics has been a partner with Dana since January of 1970. Dana manufactures axles and drive train components for every vehicle type. The high-volume precision production and assembly requires disposable components that hold all the critical parts in place during assembly and shipping. Titus Precision custom molding manufactures these components in our Columbia City, IN manufacturing facility. The parts that we manufacture are used primarily as Bearing Guides and Packaging Components.

Dana continues to be Titus Precision's top customer on the custom side of the business. •



Housing Nylon



Housing HDPE



End Cap made from High-Density Polyethylene



End Cap made from High-Density Polyethylene



Synthetic Busing made from PPS



Separator PPS

Exhibitions' Report 2022

Efi Nikolaidou, Group Communications Coordinator

Furniture hardware trade shows are a great opportunity for Titus Group to raise brand awareness and present our newest products to the industry and key decision makers.

We have participated with great success at most of the biggest trade shows around the globe, and with well-designed booths demonstrated live our latest product innovations highlighting their benefits to our partners, prospective customers and industry experts.

IWF Atlanta

In August 2022, the company participated at **IWF Atlanta**, USA. This year, the Show had more than 900 exhibitors presenting machinery, services and supplies in more than 540 product categories. More than 25,500 attendees from every U.S. state, the District of Columbia and 92 countries made IWF 2022 the wood products industry's most successful venue for big business and Titus' stand a great launch pad for the Group's latest product innovations.

"The North American team is happy to report that over 400 leads were generated at the show." **Jim LeGacy, Sales and Marketing Vice President**, commented.



Espacio Cocina-SICI Valencia



Espacio Cocina trade fair in Valencia, Spain is the fair for the latest market trends and new business models. The exhibition of furniture and equipment for the kitchen was held **on 20-23 September 2022** and brought together more than a thousand exhibiting firms and brands. The most optimistic forecasts were exceeded, as during the four days of the fair, the attendance was more than 48,000 professionals per day.

SICAM Pordenone

SICAM Pordenone 2022 in Italy was an especially memorable experience for everyone. The show was a real success as we had a very busy stand throughout the four days of the show,

from 18 to 21 October. Our partners and visitors were happy to finally be back at SICAM under normal conditions and they were very enthusiastic to see our products in person.



"We were pleased to talk to the most important Italian and French players in the furniture industry. We were able to reconfirm our 'savoir faire' in providing versatile custom-made damping solutions, such as 'slide and hide' folding doors. This perfectly completes our comprehensive range of push-to-open solutions for cabinets, sliding doors, and drawers. Let's not forget all the interest shown in our RV hardware range, which increases steadily every year."
Commented **Cesare Gattini, Sales Director, S.E. Division.**

Intermob Istanbul with distributor Starwood Yapi Market



On 22-26 October 2022, we participated at Intermob Istanbul, together with our distributor in Turkey, Starwood Yapi Market. Intermob Istanbul fair brings together the pioneers of the sector and world brands who exhibit their new products, designs and trends of the year. We were excited to welcome our customers from Turkey and other countries to our stand and present to them our latest product innovations.

"T-type thick door hinges, RV products and dampers were some of the niche products which received lots of interest from our customers and visitors." **Ertan Erden, Regional Sales Manager in Turkey** commented.

Learn How the Right Choice of Connectors Improves Productivity and Lowers the Installation Costs of Cabinets

Monika Pertot, Marketing



Hartwig Summer, Titus Hardware Application Manager, has been with the company for almost 30 years and in that time has worked at management level in sales, marketing and OEM development. One of his main focusses in all these roles has been to ensure Titus offers its customers a full service relating to product selection, marketing tools and products that are both fit for purpose and easy to use.

In this article, Katja Manias and Natalija Baljić from Titus Marketing interview

him about his wide experience in solving the challenges that furniture manufacturers face when selecting and working with connectors.

Katja: Are connectors actually more important than most people realise?

Hartwig: Once customers have chosen a connector, they will probably continue to use it for a long time in their furniture lines. After all, a carcass is a carcass, whatever the application. In theory, it is possible for a customer to switch to a new connector supplier

since the drillings for connectors are standardised. But in reality, they'll need a good reason – technical or commercial – to do so.

Natalija: It is our responsibility to know our customers and their way of manufacturing.

Hartwig: Yes, this means that we have to tailor our approach to suit the customer, remembering that Titus is not just another connector supplier – we are a solutions provider. When we at Titus start talking to a customer about

connectors' solutions, the first thing we need to know is how that customer works at present and what their manufacturing processes look like. If they have no drilling jigs, for example, that probably means that they're mostly working with adhesives rather than connectors. Next, we try to find out what the customer is capable of doing. What sort of drilling equipment and boring equipment do they have and if needed, if they are willing to invest in new equipment. Finally, we need to know what types of material they use – chipboard, MDF, solid wood, etc. This information helps us to decide on the most appropriate connector solutions to offer.

Katja: Is it a big challenge for the customer to make a change in his production process?

Hartwig: Even with customers who are in principle much more flexible and open to change, it can still be difficult to get them to make that final step. The usual requirement is that the new components must fit the current dimensions so that the drillings don't have to change. Sometimes things are a little easier if the customer is developing a new product line but even then, they will probably prefer not to have to reset all their drilling machines.

Natalija: Yet are there also inspiring cases when the customer went for a change?

Hartwig: Indeed, but changes are more or less connected to customer recognition of technical benefits that result in improved productivity and lower production costs..... like a large Titus customer in North America that switched from 34 mm to 24 mm edge-to-hole-centre fittings. This meant that the side drillings in the cabinet were 10mm shorter and, because of the volume of products this company produces, that reduced their wood waste by several tonnes per year. In other words: quicker drilling process, less cost of waste disposal, more environment friendly process.

It is always a summary of partial results that gives the whole picture, ir-

respective of the resistance we sometimes encounter when we're trying to persuade our customers to enjoy the benefits of our innovative connector technologies. The market for connectors is buoyant and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Everyone in the furniture business can or does use connectors, but their motivations vary according to the machinery they have, what they actually produce and how they market their products. A producer might react differently depending whether he produces and sells on his own or through a sales chain. If he sells through a sales chain, he is keener for innovative products, needs more support information and materials, products may be different. If he sells on his own, the price is more relevant

"One of our great strengths at Titus is that we are committed to listening to our customers, understanding their challenges and responding effectively."

at decision making. It would be easy to think that, when we start talking to a potential new customer about connectors, the first thing they would ask would be the price. In fact, this isn't what happens – in seven out of ten cases, technical considerations and benefits come first. And even when cost is a leading consideration, our customers quickly come to understand that it's not the component cost that's important, but the overall cost. If a new Titus component costs, say, 10 and they want it for 5, but it saves them 10 in assembly costs, they're actually doing very well!

A good example is with one of our European customers. By switching to Titus' products, this company was able to reduce the assembly time of their wardrobes from 6.5 hours to

just 2 hours, and that wasn't even the biggest benefit. The original book of assembly instructions had 40 pages – who reads 40 pages of instructions? – but, with Titus' components, this was reduced to just a few pages. The new instructions are intuitive, the assembly needs fewer components, takes less time and the risk of errors is greatly reduced. Big wins – and a big demonstration of why component cost isn't and shouldn't be the first consideration.

To be fair, we can't achieve results quite as impressive as this for every customer but, if they involve us early in their new designs, we can maximise the benefits that our CAF programme (Customer Assembly Friendliness) has to offer. Of course, when customers consult us about furniture that's already in production, our options are much more limited, although there's still much that we can do. That's the reason, why we always ask our customers not just what they're doing today, but also what they're planning to do tomorrow. Titus connector isn't just a product itself, it also carries a story either for the designers, quality management, marketing & sales or end user.

Katja: And that may also lead us to exciting new projects, right? Like the design of connectors automatic insertion machine FastFit, that is beneficiary to furniture manufacturer as it speeds up his production process and saves 50% of cabinet assembly time at home.

Hartwig: We designed such a machine for another European furniture manufacturer and it is yet another good example of how to use the same product and bring it to the market. There is no change in design and in production but allowed the company to gain more share over competitors by marketing their product in a cleverer way – with easier and quicker cabinet assembly at home. Especially important, nowadays, with the young generation that wants instant and easy solutions which brings quick and fast assembly furniture up-front. •

Titus TREE Story – Together We Create the Present for Tomorrow

Andreja Jesenko, Head of Management System and Compliance Management Titus EU

Titus' Sustainability Journey started over 30 years ago. Awareness of the impact that our operations may cause to the environment and future prospect of the Earth is constantly present. At Titus, we believe in creating a positive impact on people and the planet, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is good for business. That is why we have created a distinctive 'Titus' name – Titus TREE – to communicate our big sustainability commitments, inside and outside the company.

Titus is a global, multicultural and inclusive Group where ethical principles are part of the Group's policies, which are also conscientiously imple-

mented in the supply chain. Responsible sourcing of wooden and wood and paper base materials, reduction of the share of virgin fossil plastics in packaging materials, reduction of fossil fuels to the level of a reserve source, and use of green electricity are some of the decisions that support directions to reduce the environmental impact and ensure a sustainable future.

With the development of market requirements, an ever-growing number of customers support the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals), as announced by the UN in 2015. They request us to join them in their commitment to share the vision of ethical business that is positive for people

and the planet, also involving all partners within our supply chain. This is how, in 2021, the idea of Titus TREE was born.

Titus TREE is our system that combines EHSE (Environment, H&S, Energy management), social and ethical principles to which we commit and request also our business partners to commit.

Titus TREE logo expresses the spirit and style of Titus: clear, defined lines which represent precision and determination; a T-shaped trunk reminiscent of wide-open arms that symbolise openness, help, humanitarianism, care for others; a slogan for the solid ground upon which the tree is growing showing that we are realistic, concrete and with our feet on solid ground; symmetry in line with our Fit for Purpose principle; visual coherence represents identification and order.

Titus TREE is all about the concept and attitude, strategy and operation, and being an example to others. It goes beyond just summarising customer requirements and putting them into another format. It is about the "Titus way" and the impact of Titus on human rights and the environment as part of our mission. How? By raising consciousness of the importance of the impact of each decision we make to the legacy we are leaving to our children and generations who want to live in a safe and healthy world.

Embrace the world, be Titus TREE. •



Together we create the present for tomorrow.



Titus EU commits with objectives and targets to the SDGs [6,7,8,9,12,13]

Drive to Excellence Project

Veronika M. Dolenc, Process Engineering Manager

A curious mind never rests. And neither do we. Even more so as the path to excellence and improvements are a continuous process that never ends. That is why we decided to start the Drive to Excellence project [abbreviated D2E] to improve the ways we manage our Titus Dekani operations. How? By adopting new approaches to achieve better results with less effort thus better tackling everyday issues with greater confidence and ease. Ultimate goal? Increasing safety, productivity, quality, and efficiency while improving our company culture and its overall performance at all levels.

This is how our cooperation with Milliken began. Performance Solution by Milliken are a team of manufacturing experts who help transforming operations. Their aim is to help other companies evolve all levels of business culture, resulting in lasting sustainable changes that drive safety, productivity, quality, and efficiency.

The Phase one of the project lasted six months, from January to June 2022. The project model consisted of quick

win activities. We went through various steps such as assessment, loss analysis and process mapping with which we have defined nine replicable pilot projects with dedicated teams involving a total of approximately 90 employees.

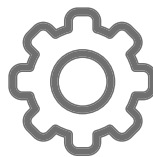
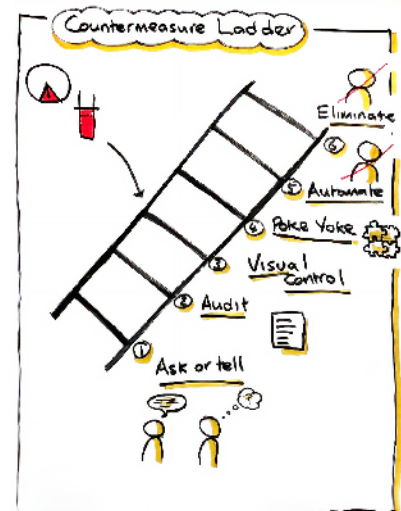
All the cost reduction projects followed the DIMAIC methodology which is a widely utilised approach that is the foundation of Lean Six Sigma. It's a five-phase method: Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control.

The quick win activities benefitted the business in several ways, including lowering costs, improving quality, enhancing efficiency, and improving interdepartmental cooperation and communication.

Phase one was successfully concluded and was just a taste of how a sustainable system should look like. That is why we continue with the second phase which will be a long-term cooperation during which Milliken's practitioners will mentor and help us build 'Basic and Advanced pillars' which will strengthen and sustain our system.

The aim is also to spread this model globally thus creating the holistic system that can be replicated across the Titus Group. This should be achieved by boosting the problem-solving capability, not only from managers' perspective, but the other way around. And we want to become the best at it. •

"Never let something important become urgent."
Quote by **Eliyah M. Goldratt**



NEW MINDSET NEW RESULTS



What to change – find and use the leverage point

What to change to – create the simple, practical solutions

How to cause the change – build a secure and stable improvement environment.

Two Silver Awards for Hydraulic Damping Innovation for Cold Environments

Nejc Stravnik, Product Designer

We are honoured to announce that our R&D team at Titus has been awarded two Silver Awards for our innovative hydraulic damper technology designed for use in cold environments.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Primorska (PGZ) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS) both recognized

our solution for addressing a major challenge faced by the white goods industry.

Our damper technology is unique in its ability to slow motion at temperatures as low as -30°C , a challenge that traditional damping technologies often struggle with. Using special materials, we have created a solution that offers consistent damping in both stable

low-temperature conditions and fluctuating temperatures, making it ideal for applications in refrigerators, freezers, and cars alike. We are proud to be recognized for our innovation and to be part of a community that values excellence and character. Our sincere congratulations to the members of our R&D team for their hard work and dedication. •



Promo Shop – Promo Materials Now Easier to Order

Špela Marinšek, Marketing

People enjoy receiving gifts and freebies and promotional items are an opportunity to create a positive association for a company and to increase brand recognition. In October 2022, we launched an on-line Promo shop platform for internal users to order promo materials.

Until now, the gifts have been ordered via an Excel form and the launch of Promo shop simplified essentially the whole ordering procedure. It works similarly to any other online shop where the user adds items to the cart and places an order through the system. With every placed order, the Marketing team receives an au-

tomatic message that the order has been placed.

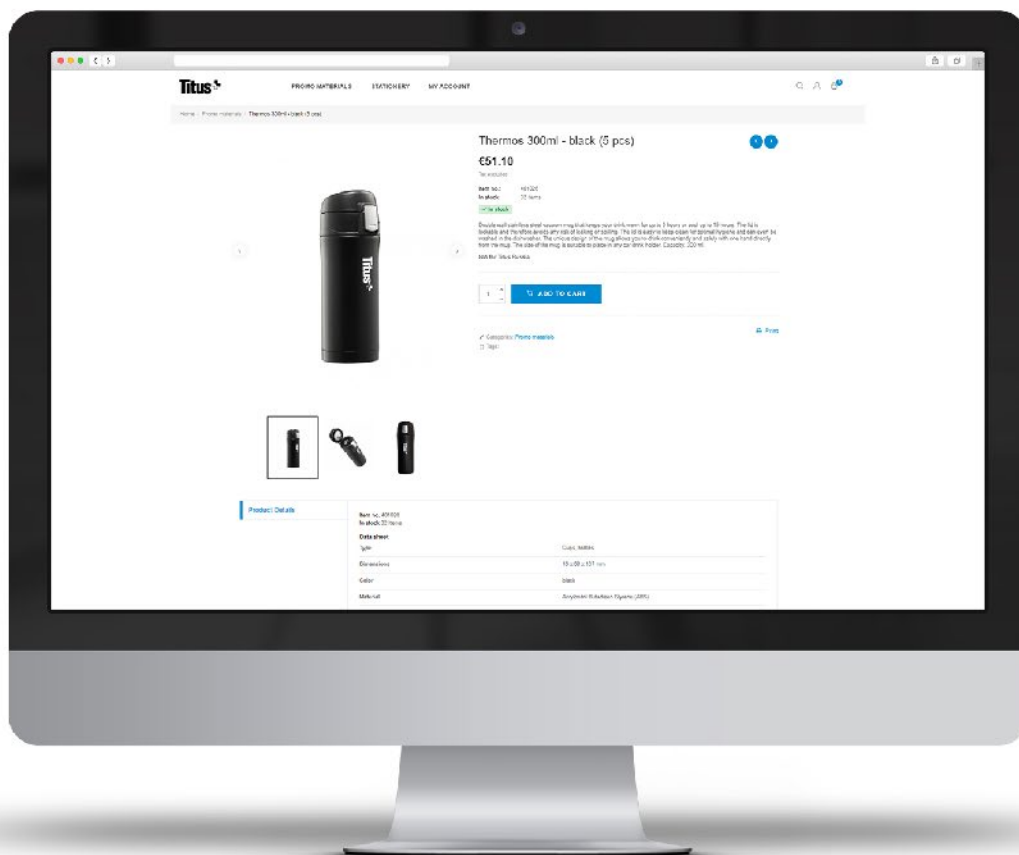
The intuitive interface makes it easy to use and browse the entire Titus promo collection where the customer receives information about the item in just one step. Every order includes all the details and has its own ID number so that the communication is clear and effective. The Promo shop is available to the whole global team where every user has his own account allowing to look at the history of orders or re-order items.

The new Promo shop brought in efficiencies and better utilised existing

resources, a direct cost implication. Automatic inventory monitoring saves time in obtaining information. Due to organised and customised data for each market, digitalisation has made decision-making faster and easier and frees up the time of employees, who can focus on innovation and driving business growth while automating mundane, repetitive tasks.

For more information about the Promo shop please visit:

<https://promo.titusplus.com/> •



Titus Welcomes...



Michael Bänsch

**Key Account Manager,
Titus Germany**

In July 2022, we welcomed Michael Bänsch to our Sales Team in Germany as Key Account Manager for the German speaking markets.

Michael has a considerable sales experience in the Furniture industry, both in Germany and internationally. He has worked for various suppliers in the past, including Titus Group, Häfele, Fennel, Agoform and D-Beschlag. Michael lives in Löhne, in the heart of the German furniture and kitchen industry and is based in the Herford office. With his experience, his extensive network and his understanding of products and applications, Michael is a highly valuable addition to the German team.



Tobias Wöhrle

**Sales Manager,
Titus Germany**

In April 2022, we welcomed Tobias Wöhrle to our Sales Team in Germany as Sales Manager for the South German markets, specifically for the soft close applications.

Tobias is based in the Aichhalden office and joined Titus with the Simon Kinetics team in 2021, previously as Supply Chain Manager in RV Applications. His previous experience was working on the opposite side of the table as Procurement Manager in the Automotive Sector. With his experience and his understanding of products on soft close applications, he strengthens our team and understanding in this business unit.



Katarzyna Stankiewicz

**Sales Manager,
Titus Polska**

In July 2022, Katarzyna Stankiewicz joined the Sales Team in Poland as Sales Manager for the Polish market.

Katarzyna finished her studies in the Management Engineering faculty in Poznan, Poland and her strong technical knowledge has been a big advantage in her career. She has 11 years of sales experience, also in the furniture industry, both in Poland and internationally. In her free time, she enjoys gardening.

Titus Welcomes...



Małgorzata Derezińska
Office Manager and Customer Service, Titus Polska

In July 2022, Małgorzata Derezińska joined Titus Group as Office Manager and Customer Service support.

Małgorzata has diverse business experience, working as a customer Customer Advisor in the banking sector and Sales Specialist in the real estate business. Her favourite leisure time activity is motorbiking.



Simon Mihelčič
Marketing Technician

In January 2023, Simon Mihelčič joined the Marketing Team in Dekani as Marketing Technician.

Simon will take over production and construction of exhibits and mock-ups, preparation of product demonstrators and samples, and will perform primary tests and product analysis. This will help to improve the process leading to the understanding of the competition and products and their representation by the buyer in the marketing and sales process.

Simon is a Metallurgical Engineer with more than 10 years of work experience in the field of setting up stages for concerts and theatres, participating in fairs, manufacturing showrooms, furniture and equipment. He has his own CNC machine and woodworking is his hobby.



Tanja Zakrajšek Pucelj
Strategic Purchasing Manager

In January 2023, Tanja Zakrajšek Pucelj joined the Purchasing Department in Dekani as Strategic Purchasing Manager.

As the Head of Strategic Purchasing, she will perform the function of Manager of Strategic purchasing for the areas of dampers, fittings, fixed assets and cooperations.

Tanja is a Management Specialist by education, with more than 25 years of experience in purchasing. She began her career in operational purchasing and for the last eight years took over the position of Head of Purchasing. Throughout this time, she was employed in a related industry and knows the metal industry well.

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