

Q&A: Bradly Larkan and Marnus Ferreira-Netto discuss adhesives

Kleiberit, the family-owned German industrial adhesives specialist at the forefront of the global industry for over 75 years, was introduced in South Africa 25 years ago and quickly gained traction in the woodworking and sawmilling industries. Its product range recently extended to cross-laminated timber (CLT) applications.

By Joy Crane

The company has three divisions: woodworking, FAST (filter, automotive, sandwich and textile) and the innovative surface-finishing-technology HotCoating for furniture-, flooring- and facade-elements. It includes digital printing and protective layers on a roll-to-roll basis as well as flat panels. Wanting to better understand the company, *WoodBiz Africa* spoke with Bradly Larkan and Marnus Ferreira-Netto during brief respites at the Kleiberit stand at WoodEX for Africa in June.

Bradly's home base is Ireland, and his business card reveals his expansive role at the company. He is Kleiberit's general manager for South Africa, the UK, and Ireland and vice president of North America. Marnus is based in South Africa and is Kleiberit's Sales Manager and technical expert in Southern Africa.

TELL US A BIT ABOUT KLEIBERIT. HAS IT ALWAYS BEEN A GLUE MANUFACTURER?

BRADLY: Kleiberit was founded in 1948 as a family-owned business making white glues for small joinery companies in Germany. It expanded and developed more sophisticated adhesive technologies like one and two component polyurethanes, hotmelt PU, PU dispersions, EVAs, and polyolefin systems over time.

Today, we have an entire basket of adhesive technologies and a global footprint. Kleiberit employs over 670 people, of which nearly 80 technical salespeople support our customers worldwide.



Marnus Ferreira-Netto and Bradly Larkan of Kleiberit.

WHEN DID KLEIBERIT ENTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN MARKET?

BRADLY: Hüster Machinetool Company was appointed to distribute our woodworking ranges in South Africa 25 years ago and is still doing so. We directly supply our FAST, HotCoating and structural timber customers.

The finger jointing lines Nukor supplies to sawmills include the Oest Group closed system glue applicator. We also have working knowledge of Mixon and Apquip applicator systems.

It is important to note that all Kleiberit products released in South Africa comply with the national standards (SANS) and are SABS and SATAS certified.

WHAT MAKES KLEIBERIT SUCH AN ENDURING BRAND?

MARNUS: Besides our joinery and cabinetmaking glues and hot melts, Kleiberit is known for its structural

timber adhesives. South African sawmills have used PU glues since the early 2000s.

I believe what differentiates us, is our commitment. We are not just a point of sale. Although sales are necessary, we try to build a partnership. We support customers with technical assistance, provide guidance on using the products properly, and train machine operators and workers to handle and apply adhesives safely. We also ensure they understand the material safety sheets and environmental controls for disposing of packaging safely.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CUSTOMERS?

MARNUS: Let me give you a personal example of how we work. I've supplied PU adhesives in the woodworking and sawmilling industries for 17 years. A lot of that time was spent learning and

getting a deep understanding of finger jointing. Although they all do the same thing, there are so many variables, that every finger-jointing system is unique.

Despite being primarily a glue supplier, I am hands-on in the sawmills, watching, talking and listening to the operators. I know how to operate the machines and understand customers' production challenges.

BRADLY: Our involvement extends beyond adhesives, enabling us to guide customers toward cost-effective product and process enhancements.

MARNUS: This knowledge is invaluable for problem-solving and customer relationships. It is a partnership. Often, there's no need to physically inspect a machine to identify an issue. With an insight into the process and the machinery, problems can be solved over the phone by discussing the symptoms with the customer and pinpointing the issue remotely.

WHAT DRIVES KLEIBERIT'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY?

BRADLY: Kleiberit's ethos is that we don't just supply adhesives; we provide a comprehensive value package. Remember, behind every good salesperson is a team of skilled chemists.

By listening to and working closely with every customer, we assist our chemists in Weingarten in tweaking and improving our products and systems. You can respond to needs and market shifts when you are close to your customers and have a short decision and approval process within the organisation.

At the same time, our R&D teams are continually innovating to make our adhesives safer, "greener", and leaders in the global circular supply chain. For instance, we have formaldehyde-free and biobased offerings that reduce the petrochemical content of adhesives and micro emission offerings in PU hot melts, which contribute to improving the health and occupational safety environment in workplaces.



Bradly Larkan and Marnus Ferreira-Netto in blue discussing the Oest PU glue applicator with Andreas Maier and members of the Nukor Team.

Recent developments also focus on recycled materials utilised in certain raw materials as well as our packaging, known as cradle to cradle approach in the renewable materials industry.

Plantation timber is the only sustainable, carbon-sequestering building material that can contribute to mitigating climate change. Kleiberit believes it is essential that adhesives used in CLT and laminated engineered wood products are durable, contribute to the strength properties of the products, perform well in fire tests and contribute to the circular economy and its supply chains.

THERE IS GROWING INTEREST IN CLT AND PREFABRICATED BUILDING SYSTEMS IN SOUTH AFRICA. IS KLEIBERIT INVOLVED?

MARNUS: We have done some work with Dr Brand Wessels and Stellenbosch University's Wood Science department to test adhesives, CLT, and engineered wood products. We partner with customers, academics, standards and certification bodies to improve our products and adhesive systems.

Let's look at a finger jointing or CLT manufacturing line. There are several factors to consider, such as the health and safety of staff and the environment and organising operations to run as efficiently as possible.

We developed our Kleiberit 510.3 adhesive for structural timber into a single-component adhesive. This eliminates the need for mixing, effectively reducing additional handling and chemical exposure. The product is precisely applied by a closed-system applicator, like the Oest, systems, making it a hands-off process with minimal operator contact.

The 510.3 is a moisture-curing PU which, when cured, becomes inert and does not emit toxins. It ensures a safer environment for manufacturing staff and the end-users.

DOES KLEIBERIT SHARE ITS KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE?

BRADLY: We realise that timber engineering is not adequately covered at tertiary institutions in South Africa. Where it is included, there is little emphasis on the application and performance of structural adhesives.

Interestingly, we were approached today by a representative from one of the engineering universities. They discussed the structural performance levels of our adhesives. They expressed interest in incorporating this knowledge into their university programme.

The interview ended on an upbeat note with Bradly emphatically stating, "the future is bright". 🌱

Certified PUR Adhesive for load bearing wood construction

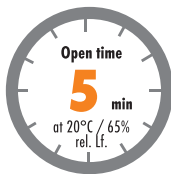
KLEIBERIT 510.3

KLEIBERIT 510.3 range of structural adhesives was launched in South Africa in 2018. Fully SABS tested and SATAS certified according to SANS 10183-2, and also approved by MPA Stuttgart for EU standards regulating fingerjointing, glulam and CLT manufacturing.



THE RIGHT TIMING FOR EVERYONE

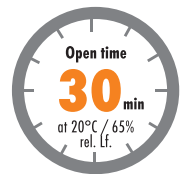
KLEIBERIT 510.3.05
10 minute curing time
preferably FJ lines



KLEIBERIT 510.3.17
40 minute curing time
FJ lines and fast glulam
manufacturing



KLEIBERIT 510.3.30
90 minute curing time
preferred for CLT and glulam,
also suitable for slow FJ lines



Full technical support at no additional cost is offered in Southern Africa for our adhesive range. KLEIBERIT has local representation specifically for structural timber. This includes:

- full product training on correct use
- calibrations and optimisation of automated applicator systems
- trouble shooting / faultfinding on applicator systems

Please contact us via email sales.safrica@kleiberit.com or call us.

ADVANTAGES

- warehousing facilities in Gauteng and ample stock ready on hand for our customers
- delivery from placement of order within 5 working days from the warehouse
- storage quantity and various packsizes can easily be adjusted within 2 months of specific customer requests
- products mainly available in 1100 kg IBC containers but can be supplied in smaller packsizes