

Sweden's BJS Group rolls out Becker Acroma LED curing from Sherwin-Williams

LED curing improves product quality and consistency, cuts energy and maintenance costs and improves work environment says industry leader

Currently used in production at the company's plant in Humpolec, Czech Republic, BJS is among the first to use this technology that was recently launched under the Becker Acroma brand. LED cure coatings offer a number of advantages over traditional UV curing solutions. In particular, they produce an even and consistent cure across the whole width of a board, while avoiding high heat and ozone emissions. This both enhances product quality and improves the manufacturing environment. Low curing temperatures make it possible to cure materials such as pine and other resinous woods with significantly lower reject rates. In addition, LED technology also saves energy and reduces maintenance costs.

Based in Sweden, BJS was formed in 1917 in Smålandsstenar, Sweden and also has a factory in Czech Republic. With clients that include a major European furniture retailer, the company is expert in manufacturing processes such as milling, drilling and painting materials such as MDF and places a heavy emphasis on product quality.

BJS Production Director Kaj Johansson, says "LED curing means that the guys on the line have a more stable process to work with. They don't have to keep checking the efficiency of the lamps which is more efficient and the working environment is better there is no ozone and its cooler in the summer.' He adds that, 'we have worked with Becker Acroma [now a brand of Sherwin-Williams] for more than 20 years, and they have helped us improve a number of processes and we were immediately interested when they announced LED curing.'

BJS's Humpolec factory has seven roller coating machines and three areas for curing the flat surfaces of the boards which are mainly coated with white lacquer. The LEDs have a lifespan of 15,000 hours, five times that of conventional lamps. They also perform consistently across the entire 1.3 metre width of the production lines where the old system would vary as lamps lost their efficacy and radiation levels varied. Compared to the older technology, which was used over 25 years, Becker Acroma™ LED cure coatings harness narrow peaks of UV energy.

Johansson explains that when LEDs reach the end of their life they tend to fail simultaneously which makes replacement easier to predict and to react to, while also reducing the need for frequent inspections, which had previously been required weekly. Lower operating and curing temperatures (20oC, compared to 70-80oC) help to reduce maintenance while improving the working environment. Coupled with consistent curing this translates into a better end product since there is less temperature stress on the boards and there no longer any areas of uncured board.

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