

Foam Is A Constant Effort



Relaxsan UK manager, Alessandro Conti, reveals how the company's determination to remain at the forefront of the foam bed market requires an endless drive for advancement.



Relaxsan offers both quality and prices that will have consumers lining up

French literary heavyweight Jules Renard once famously commented that; 'fame was a constant effort'. Now while this concept was almost certainly true in 19th century France, in our modern society of trashy reality TV shows, social media and video sharing websites, it seems as though achieving fame can be accomplished for as little as having a willingness to humiliate yourself publically or simply owning a slightly unusual looking pet.

But while it may be easier than ever to achieve some hollow sense of fame, achieving international recognition for high quality foam in the international bed sector,

requires more skill and effort than ever before. In fact, it is this very concept that drives Relaxsan to strive for constant advancements in its products.

Since its establishment some 50-years ago, Tuscany-based bed expert Relaxsan has been pioneering advancements on bringing its considerable insight and expertise in memory foam to greater numbers of UK retailers. So to find out just how much Relaxsan's foam worthy of international fame, Cabinet Maker spoke with the company's UK manager, Alessandro Conti.

The use of foam in mattresses is becoming increasingly prevalent in the industry. How does Relaxsan ensure that it stays at the forefront of design and development?

Relaxsan has always been focused on foam mattresses, so we play what you might call 'a home game'. But since the very beginning of the company, all our efforts have been concentrated on the development of new technologies and comfort for foam mattresses and we intend to continue to follow this line as we work towards the future.

There seems to be a significant amount of scope for advancement in foam, with many prominent businesses introducing new products in the past couple of years. Does Relaxsan have any significant developments on the horizon at the moment that you are able to

tell us about?

Relaxsan was the first company to introduce the water-latex technology. But we did this some time ago, and now we are pioneering new high technology memory foam that we think will be highly appreciated by UK customers. In terms of the company's next technological advancement however, we would like to expand upon our gel technology, especially for UK market.

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the subtleties of memory foam and the effects certain aspects such as density can have upon comfort levels. How much does the business vary the density of the foam used within its products? And do any currently or will any in the future utilise multiple levels of varying density foam?

To respect and adhere to the UK's high quality standards, bed companies - especially those from overseas - are forced to use



The Memotouch by Relaxsan

high-density foam and this is in itself a synonym of high quality. In the new line that we will be introducing at the beginning of 2015, we will be using multiple levels of foams of different densities.

One of the most frequent topics of debate relating to foam mattresses is their thermo-regulatory performance. How does Relaxsan ensure its products do not heat up to excessive levels?

Our memory foam is already thermo regulating, and has been so for many years. Relaxsan foam is made with an open cell structure which means it is highly breathable and therefore there is no chance of it suffering from the inconvenience of excess heat retention.

Since we last spoke the UK has played host to the NBF Bed Show, which enables NBF members to access the entire UK market in an incredibly effective manner. Would Relaxsan welcome/ support a similarly focused bed event for companies ineligible to exhibit at the NBF show?

The Relaxsan approach is really

more about going directly to the customer through our network of agents rather than exhibiting at large-scale trade events. So at the moment we are not concerned about the absence of a similar event.

As a global business Relaxsan must see different demands from different markets. What has been your main impression of the UK market thus far in terms of the products that perform the best and how do they compare with other international markets? (For example does the UK market prefer firmer/softer beds than say France or Italy?)

Because the UK market is still very much spring mattress orientated, we have found that there is generally a greater appreciation for firmer comfort levels. Nevertheless, Relaxsan is still able to offer the same firmness with foam mattresses as offered by springs, but in a way that it is absolutely better.

When we last spoke, you outlined the company's goal to establish itself as a market-

We are actually considering offering our stockists a fully branded rack structure to showcase our vacuum-packed models. We see this as an opportunity to emphasise their benefits. The new website also highlights the importance of Relaxsan's vacuum-packed products and our skill in packing them.

Many bed retailers in the UK feel threatened by being undercut by internet traders offering the same products at discounted prices. Does Relaxsan take any particular measures to protect its stockists from losing sales to online competitors?

Before becoming a Relaxsan stockist, we ask all new customers to sign a gentlemen's agreement with our headline concerning price policy. I think that it has been very helpful to avoid unpleasant situations with both our customers and end consumers as well.

Will the business be exhibiting at any UK trade shows in 2015 to allow retailers to see the products for themselves?

In our experience, exhibitions and trade fairs in recent years have not been as successful as they once were. For this reason Relaxsan has elected that it would rather invest more in marketing and advertising and in increasing our agent network. I am sure that stockists will appreciate the extra level of focus this will enable us to provide them with.

What do you feel sets Relaxsan apart from other foam bed suppliers in the UK marketplace?

I think that Relaxsan foam mattresses really represent the best combination of quality and price in the market. This level of appeal is then complemented by a solid structure of management and a broad reaching agent network that we are building. I think when considered together it's a perfect reason for retailers to try us. ■

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