

# Better baking in existing premises

FactoryXperts, baking industry consultants from Switzerland, uphold this motto in the sustainability sense as well. According to the advisers, although new building is an option, a meticulous analysis of the business is needed first of all.

**+** The company has been in the business of upstream planning for redeveloped and new buildings for large, medium and small bakery businesses throughout Europe for many years. According to CEO Roger Bless, who is himself a professionally trained baker and has decades of experience in the baking industry, the consultants' expertise in this situation starts at the planning stage and is by no means finished when building starts.

## A salutary look at the big picture

According to Bless, an expert knowledge of the trade, product range, working conditions, lines and logistics is what decides success. In an ideal case, even before an architect begins planning, experts undertake an in-depth study of the existing business situation – across the board, over every operating area. Explaining the normal rationale, Bless says: "Our aim in the first place is to understand what a client does, why he does it and where he wants to go with it. Only then do we begin the drawings." Not infrequently, the end result is a jointly developed objective to increase efficiency that necessitates a package of measures quite different to the new building originally envisaged. He says the core of consultancy is a profound analysis leading to a written formulation of the target definition. The analysis reveals what optimum solutions might look like, to clear away inefficiencies and planning mistakes ahead of the actual master plan.

## No fear of redevelopment

Bless says: "In most cases, the wish to grow is what drives the decision in favor of a new build." But, as he also says, an in-depth analysis at the outset helps to recognize that closing down inefficient processes and introducing innovative ideas into the existing business can, in most cases, develop just as much potential for growth and financial success. Often, simply questioning the product range or the existing plant technology

## Three tips from the experts

How to make a new build and a building redevelopment efficient, sustainable and successful.

1. Formulate a definition of the goal! In writing! Not just verbally. Anyone who fails to make an in-depth analysis, and just thinks "what do I want to achieve with the new/rebuilt structure?" will remain aimless and will run the risk of creating for himself a medium-term financial problem.
2. Never lose sight of the specific features of the market! Be aware of the market in which you are operating, exactly why your customers come to you, and how much growth potential is at all realistically possible. You must also ask yourself the question as to what influence growth will have on the product price and production costs.
3. Select the team carefully based on competences and experience! The chemistry must be right. Anyone who intends to collaborate successfully over a long period of time must also be a likeable person. That's worth more in the long run than a 3% cheaper offer at the outset. +++

and production processes is sufficient to realign a business to future needs. Redevelopment in the existing premises? It's an approach that terrifies many developers. After all, safeguarding the ongoing business during building work is a big challenge. But, according to Bless, with the right planning, time and experience, this is an entirely feasible way forward.

According to Bless, the classical comprehensive product range is often what stands in the way of growth. "One can expand with a full product range, but it doesn't always make sense." From the business management point of view, it may be better to buy in certain products from other specialists, particularly if these are difficult to surpass in price and quality terms.

## Automation; yes, but only when it makes sense

According to Bless: "Our approach to process automation is to let everything depend on a single question: what added value arises for me and my business?" Trends and movements back to classical artisan operation are a recurring subject of critical discussion. Pushing rack trolleys from the freezer to the cold store, and doing it hundreds of times a day, doesn't improve product quality. Quite the contrary. This is a situation where machines could ensure more hygiene and better traceability, and thus ensuring process reliability. But if it involves

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refining a recipe, or testing a special dough processing method, the human factor may certainly be what brings about the desired added value.

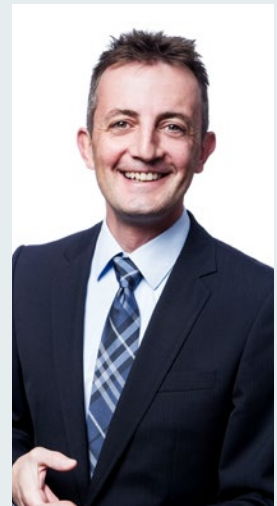
**Time well spent**

Based on a knowledge of the individual stages of the supply chain and the various processes necessary for the operation, a consultancy contract finally leads to the development of a master plan, whereupon the optimum dimensions of a building can be defined. An approach from the opposite direction forces the operating facilities to be subordinate to the existing space. Permanent inefficiency may then already arise in the planning phase, which in turn costs the client hard cash. Bless is confident that approx. three months of intensive analysis beforehand is well worth while. Based on a few key figures (not including the typical business management figures), the consultants clearly show where fine tuning is needed.

After the analysis, work on the master plan starts with a meaningful final report containing costs, layout, functionalities and deadline dates. This gives the developers certainty and the decision criteria on which to base the following planning phases. Since early in 2019, FactoryXperts can rely for this task on the ATP architects engineers and its workforce of more than 900 staff. Beforehand, FactoryXperts undertakes the building planning, analysis and process technology planning and develops a master plan, with building know-how support from ATP (Available to Promise). FactoryXperts operations

**FactoryXperts**

The FactoryXperts team based in Eschlikon/Switzerland comprises around 35 specialists from all the baking sector disciplines: from logistics and operational engineering, architecture, construction planning and overall project management to controlling, change management and strategic corporate development. The integrated design company ATP architects engineers has been a FactoryXperts shareholder since early 2019. Web site: <https://factoryxperts.com> +++



++ Roger Bless, CEO of FactoryXperts

planners assist in planning the material flow, machinery layout, logistics and production technology, and supervise the installation and commissioning. Integrated building design then takes place based on digital planning technology (BIM; Building Information Modelling) and with the experience of ATP gained from decades of working for the food industry. +++

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# Fortisa: Rebuilding during ongoing production



**+** Fortisa AG is the market leader in Switzerland for buns and small breads for the convenience segment. During the company's development, together with FactoryXperts, the management developed various expansion options, and finally decided in favor of extending and redeveloping the existing location in Zuchwil.

In an in-depth operating concept, FactoryXperts planned a complete modernization of the production lines. In the past five years, all the plant components were replaced, enlarged or improved. Project implementation, including all the building activities, took place in parallel with ongoing production, and was achievable without interrupting production for a single day, thanks to meticulous planning.

A completely new internal production flow was designed for the operation. This involved inserting an intermediate floor into the ground floor of the existing building to create space for a new, fully automatic reusable containers handling robot for McDonald's trays. The operation was also expanded by adding cooling spirals and a packing line (for pillow-packs)

## Fortisa AG

Fortisa AG, Zuchwil/Switzerland, produces burger buns, hot dog buns and sandwich breads that are offered as fresh goods or frozen products. The company has produced the entire bun portfolio for McDonald's Switzerland for more than 30 years. Other customers include the retail trade, branded article producers, the sandwich industry and food service distributors. The company operates a six-day week around the clock. According to the company's web site, the proportion exported is 20%. Fortisa is privately-owned, and maintains a partnership with Grupo Bimbo, the world's biggest bakery group. +++

on the ground floor, and two tubular bag packing lines (flowpacks) for frozen baked products on the intermediate floor.

In the new production flow, burger buns are now taken from the basement floor (existing production lines), via the newly-



++ Cooling spirals

installed cooling spirals, for packing either on the intermediate floor or on the ground floor. Thus the buns, produced under hygienic conditions, can be fully automatically cooled and conveyed to the packing lines by means of cooling spirals. After packing, the buns packed in bags are automatically placed in distribution containers. A shock-freezer was installed as an additional option, allowing the packaged products to be frozen for delivery as frozen products. The entire new

process comprises goods reception for the containers, the crate washing plant, and storage and transport of the newly-filled containers for outgoing delivery to customers. A consistent hygiene zones concept completes the new procedure. Since the work took place during ongoing operations, implementation of the project was carried out stepwise during two years. Commissioning was achieved on schedule in the fall of 2019. +++



++ Fortisa's head office in Zuchwil/Switzerland



++ Packing buns in pillow-packs



++ The tray washing line



++ Tray storage

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