Umicore Electroplating excels in metal-plating industry

Umicore Electroplating's building in Schwaebisch Gmuend, Germany

Umicore Electroplating of Germany has been at the forefront of developing innovative plating solutions for precious and non-precious metals in the global jewellery industry. In an interview with *JNA*, Martin Stegmaier, company division manager of decorative precious metals, talked about Umicore Electroplating's metal-plating expertise and its business strategy in the coming years.

JNA: How long have you been in the electroplating solutions industry?

Martin Stegmaier: Umicore Electroplating is one of the leading suppliers of precious metal electrolytes and special electroplating processes worldwide. We develop, manufacture and sell on a global scale precious metal and base metal electrolytes, precious metal components, dimensionally stable anodes and platinum coatings. The international Umicore Electroplating sales and service network – present in over 60 countries – guarantees worldwide support to our valued partners. Founded in 1888, Umicore Electroplating offers a legacy of excellence in the metal-plating industry. Since 2003, the company has been a part of the Belgian Umicore group, a material technology specialist with 15,000 employees worldwide.

JNA: What are your competitive strengths?

Stegmaier: Our clients profit from our products and services, which adhere to world-class standards of "Made in Germany." This means that Umicore Electroplating ensures a homogenous high-quality standard across its global customer base. We keep abreast of upcoming trends, particularly concerning health and environmental regulations; as such, we offer our clients nickel-free products. For the jewellery industry, our clients have at their disposal a full range of precious metal, pre- and post-treatment products as well as dimensionally stable anodes.

JNA: What is your business strategy in Asia?

Stegmaier: Umicore Electroplating has carved out a niche in the Asian market particularly in China, Hong Kong, Thailand, India and Malaysia. In addition, we operate several analytical laboratories and warehouses in the Far East region. Clients may seek assistance from local technical experts, who have a broad experience in process optimisation. We put a premium on expertise. For instance, we have about 200 plating experts and other staff members stationed at Umicore Electroplating´s office in Schwaebisch Gmuend, Germany.

Diamond ring plated with RHODUNA Diamond Bright

JNA: What products have you recently introduced in the market and what was the response?

Stegmaier: As testament to our strength in innovation, we have recently introduced the following products: RHODUNA Diamond Bright, Umicore Anti-tarnish 616 PLUS and other products for electroformed hollow jewellery.

The RHODUNA Diamond Bright guarantees brightness with unprecedented brilliance and luminosity. With high-plating speed and throwing power, it allows the deposit of low-pore and crack-free rhodium coatings with a thickness of up to 5 micrometre. Umicore Anti-tarnish 616 PLUS, meanwhile, is a nanobiotechnology-based product used for protecting silver and other metal surfaces against tarnishing. The new organic anti-tarnish process is easy to use and provides long-term sealing and permanently preserves the brightness of silver. It is safe for the health and the environment. We also offer cutting-edge AuAg and fine gold electrolytes for electroformed hollow jewellery. They are suitable for wax cores as well as metal cores.

JNA: What is next for Umicore Electroplating?

Stegmaier: We are gearing up for international jewellery exhibitions in 2016. In particular, we are presenting new and innovative cutting-edge products at Jewellery & Gem Fair – Europe, which is scheduled for March 19 to 22 in Freiburg, Germany. **JNA**