



PLANS IN THE PIPELINE: RADIUS SYSTEMS

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In the face of a decade of challenging conditions in gas and water industries in the UK and worldwide, pipeline specialists have had to adapt and innovate in order to thrive in recent years. Radius Systems is a resilient UK provider with global reach that has clearly succeeded, thanks to its track record of innovation, breadth of products and services, and underlying financial stability. Today it is a key player within POLYPLASTIC Group, Europe's leader in thermoplastic compounds and the largest volume producer of polyethylene pipes and fittings.

Offering a full range of end-to-end capabilities is one way in which Radius Systems stands apart from others in a highly competitive market. Subsidiary company acquisitions have bolstered the Radius portfolio and today the company not only manufactures and installs new lines, it also offers a portfolio that includes specialist connectors, valves, commissioning services and rehabilitation solutions for line repair. Radius Systems CEO, Andy Taylor explains: "We look after the whole pipe life cycle: we can manufacture and supply all pipeline components, and install, repair and rehabilitate pipes all within one group of companies. This unique 'joined-up' approach gives us a competitive edge whereby we can look at a particular pipeline infrastructure project and provide a comprehensive offering."

Radius Systems has also succeeded in finding new ways to meet industry demands for more cost-effective solutions to complex problems. A prime example is the issue of aging infrastructure. Replacing underperforming pipelines can be prohibitively expensive however Radius offers an alternative solution that is cheaper and faster to deliver and meets modern safety guidelines. But saving money is not the only driver. As both the manufacturer and installer, Radius effectively cuts out a step in the supply chain and unlocks new benefits with its unique approach:

"Our understanding of both the products and the installation allows us to be innovative in both areas and to find the best value solution without some artificial barrier about where value sits in this area of the supply chain. That allows us to think differently, hence the idea around some of the off-site processing of the pipe being devolved to a factory environment before being delivered and installed. Equally as a large enterprise we have the resources to invest in this business area, covering the liner technology, related fittings and installation processes," explains Andy Taylor.

Innovation is part of the Radius Systems DNA. From the development of the first ProFuse peelable pipes drinking water and gas back in the late 90s to the recent rehabilitation of the

legs of the Alpha Fortis oil rig using polyethylene pipe inserts: the company continues to break new ground across the utility, oil and energy industries.

One of the latest innovations to be launched is the recently developed 'Anaconda' system which is designed to resolve service connection issues in the gas market.

Andy Taylor says this new solution will make a real difference. "The fitting comprises an electrofusion tapping tee (or tapping saddle) with a factory welded flexible pipe on the outlet of the tapping tee. The flexible pipe can be bent to avoid obstacles within the trench, allowing for a connection to be effected when the position of the tapping tee is off-line with the service pipe. This removes the number of joints required within the system which in turn brings installation costs savings."

It is clear that gas utilities continue to seek material savings. Radius is well-placed to respond to the particular challenges facing this industry in the UK and Europe where vast swathes of old metal underground pipelines are in urgent need of repair or replacement. Radius subsidiary company, Subterra, specialises in polyethylene relining of existing steel pipelines and is a credible alternative to expensive new super duplex steel pipe systems. In a climate where cost is still very much a deciding factor, this is a solution that delivers better value outcomes too. Andy Taylor says this is exactly the kind of sensible thinking that Radius System is renowned for.

"We are challenging the use of super duplex stainless steel pipes as a default assumption. Value engineering the pipeline element by using systems such as PE liners in steel pipes is ideal for those searching for efficiencies when earnings are feeling the pinch and the outlook is for no major recovery in the near term."

From a long term perspective, Andy Taylor remains steadfastly positive. "Yes, the UK market for pipes has suffered in recent years as a reflection of the difficulties of the construction sector, delays in investment in the utilities and reduced expenditure on publicly funded projects. However, the longer term prospects are for a period of sustained growth with a re-start within the construction industry and significant infrastructure projects within the energy, transport, water and waste sectors."

The big picture is a positive one too. Although headquartered in the UK, Radius Systems has achieved significant global reach, supporting clients in Asia including Hong Kong and Singapore; Europe (East and West) including Russia, Germany, France, Latvia, Poland, Sweden and Czech Republic; Africa and the Middle East with clients in Egypt, Cameroon and UAE; as well as an active presence in Australia and New Zealand. As part of the company's ongoing global growth strategy, it will soon be opening a new WOFE (Wholly Owned Foreign Enterprise) in China to manage existing activities in the region as well as sourcing key components and products, identifying new core product manufacturing opportunities, and sales of pipe re-lining consumables.

With a period of sustained growth predicted, the future looks positive for Radius Systems as it continues to find the best possible solutions for its customers through innovation and acquisition. "The immediate priority for Radius is to consolidate and grow the new additions to our company. We will continue to look for new 'bolt-on' opportunities which add to our technology portfolio and give us wider geographical presence," Andy Taylor concludes.

