

ISO Annual General Meeting in Haarlem, Holland, April 25-26, 2014

A brief report of the event.

The International Shopfitting Organisation ISO, held in April it's 57th annual meeting in the home-town since 10 years, Haarlem, site of the Dutch CBM furniture and interior contracting member association.

The first day was dedicated a visit to INTOS BV, a modern and successful interior contracting company with two factories in Holland, and specialty in high quality design interiors emphasizing among other on airports, but also banks, museums, universities, department stores, shops, hotels and healthcare. The managing director Mr. Theo Spanjaart presented the company's organisation and project management system over a light lunch. The over 100 employees, in 8500 m2 factory space, are split into individual "Teams", where responsibility of quality and economy, is always kept within a group of about 20 people, knowing each other well, working together without undue bureaucracy, and thus maintaining the enthusiasm of a small "company". A system which may have developed from a positive family experience during the latest twenty years of constant growth and healthy profitability, as Intos is owned by 8 persons. One of them is the present managing director, but of the management today ISO was also met and welcomed by his son, Jan Willem Spanjaart, in charge of the sales office in Dubai, and his daughter Charlotte Spanjaart in the reception and administration area. www.intos.nl

The ISO group of professional colleagues and competitors were duly impressed with the company and products. Much is in Corian, which is usually considered expensive, but compared to the quality needed for airport check-in and luggage handling counters, together with stainless steel, it is necessary to obtain the needed quality and resistance to tear and wear through an economical life-length of the interiors.

After a sightseeing visit to the Keukenhof flower park with more than 7 Million tulips and other beautiful flowers in full bloom, in lovely weather, the highlight of the day, the Gala Evening Dinner took place in Van der Valk Hotel Haarlem, attended by former members, and old friends of the Dutch shopfitting industry. A great evening where - again - the whole point of international cooperation was proved: Meeting face to face, eye to eye, talking shop, and having a nice time together.

The next day's general meeting however, was somewhat of an anticlimax, as the main question, seeking continuation of the ISO administration after 2014, was not answered. Notwithstanding many contacts and considerations in the past 2 years, no successor has appeared. The conclusion is unavoidable: If before the final Management Committee Meeting in Copenhagen October 20, 2014, there are no offers to "carry on the torch" and take over and continue the ISO Secretariat function in 2015 and on, the organisation will dissolve according to the statutes, and the remaining assets be donated to charity. Everybody present was deeply sorry, but the gradual reduction in mainly National Member Associations and participants in the events, such as Holland and the present General Assembly, has made continuation economically difficult. The Secretariat will make sure that a slow, orderly closing takes place during the beginning of 2015, no new membership fees are to be invoiced, and new officers of ISO are not elected. The hope is of course, that a way of continuation is found before end of October this year, and the Secretariat, Thornberg-Bailey AB in Sweden, is in that case ready to assist, pass on all files, archives, systems, and remaining assets. ab@thbailey.com.

For more information of the development, please keep an eye on the Stores + Shops' June issue ISO column, and the ISO web-site www.iso-shopfitting.com, under "Past events", "ISO AGM 2014".

Or you are welcome to contact the ISO Secretary General, Preben Bailey, on info@iso-shopfitting.com

As usual, a very interesting end to the otherwise disappointing AGM was the reports of the economic activities within the shopfitting business in the member countries. And again, as usual, a heated discussion, interesting information and viewpoints were exchanged, resulting in a general surprisingly positive situation for the international shopfitting industry. All the reports follow on this website.

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