

# Press release

D-Weil am Rhein, 25. Januar 2010

## + + + + + + + + "The New Challenge: Quality and Price" + + + + + + + +

*After a difficult business year 2009 with heavy declines in the solar market in the first half of the year and a noticeable relaxation in the second half, many experts predict a revival of the industry for 2010 and beyond. The Multi-Contact Deutschland GmbH (MC) also expects positive developments in the PV market, and anticipates new challenges. An interview with the Key Account Manager for photovoltaics, Matthias Mack.*



### **As a pioneer in the field of PV connectors, Multi-Contact looks back on many years of experience in the solar industry. What are your predictions for 2010?**

We are expecting a strong growth again for 2010. PV installations are becoming increasingly profitable thanks to higher degrees of effectiveness and dropping initial costs. However, such extreme increases as in the past are unlikely. Next to a very strong local market in Germany, global markets such as China, the USA and the Mediterranean countries are getting more and more important. Those are the the growth markets of the future.

### **What do you consider your main challenges?**

The environmental conditions of photovoltaic installations are extreme, and put high demands on all components. Both customers and installers attach great importance to safety aspects. Today, PV plants are not only set up for ecological reasons, but to make money. Economic calculations are made for 20 years or more, and the installation must run safely and reliably throughout its entire lifespan. At the same time, the number of suppliers is growing, and the price pressure increases. In order to stay in the lead, one needs to stand out from the crowd. Everything must add up: experience, quality, price.

### **What are the characteristics of an outstanding product in your opinion?**

Take connectors, for example: UV resistance, IP67 protection and according touch protection are standard, a TÜV certification is absolutely required for a proper installation. If you want to stand out, you need to provide additional advantages. In the case of Multi-Contact, the decisive factor is the quality of the electrical contacts. The basis is the unique MC Multilam Technology.

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It provides for a high contact quality with little dissipation in the power transmission, which increases the efficiency and the output of the installation. Moreover, our contacts have a particularly long lifespan. Another aspect is that the product meets different international standards; our PV connectors are certified by both TÜV and UL - a great competitive advantage in times of global markets.

### **You are talking about quality, but what about the price?**

In order to offer high quality at a competitive price, one must not save on technology and materials. An efficient, reasonable production is the key. Multi-Contact has taken this fact into account and opened the new production facility in Essen (Germany) in 2009. Despite the difficult economic environment, we invested in automatic and semi-automatic production lines in order to remain competitive.

### **You mentioned global markets. Is it not possible that a boom e.g. in the USA leads to bottlenecks in the supply?**

We manufacture in Germany and Europe mainly for the European Market. For supply of the growth market overseas, we started with additional local production in China and the USA in 2009. This allows us to respond flexibly to local developments by assigning each order to the respective production site.

### **Production in China is not particularly associated with quality. Can you guarantee that the local production meets your quality standards?**

All our production facilities work in accordance with European standards and quality criteria. The machines and materials used are identical in all our production sites. Our local employees undergo intensive training, and we keep a continuous transnational knowledge-transfer, so that the quality level is ensured on a long-term basis.

### **What are Multi-Contact's plans for the future?**

The development of the PV connector is not finished yet - there are still many possibilities to increase the efficiency or to simplify the installation. The technological progress in the PV-industry defines new requirements, such as the automated assembly of junction boxes. With connectors in particular, Multi-Contact draws from a long-term experience. In 1996, we were the first to introduce a PV connector to the market, the MC3, followed by the MC4 in 2002.

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The concept proved successful; our connectors set the trend and served as basis for the standardization of PV connectors in general. But we do not only make connectors; our product line also includes solar cables and junction boxes. With the panel boxes in particular, we offer customized solutions in addition to our standard product range for crystalline and thin-film panels.

### **Can we look forward to new Multi-Contact products in 2010 then?**

Of course we have something in the pipeline that we are planning to put on the market in 2010, but it is still too early to reveal any details. We take our time to test the products thoroughly. For nearly 15 years we have been running a test installation on our roof. Moreover, we have an excellent test laboratory which runs even more demanding tests than the TÜV. When our products have successfully undergone these examinations, they are fit for the market.