

Günter Lauber about the SIPLACE sale:

“Our strategic position has improved considerably, which will benefit our customers.”

Siemens is selling its SIPLACE placement machine business. The buyer is Hong Kong–based ASM Pacific Technology Ltd., one of the world’s leading machine and system manufacturers in the semiconductor and LED field. Günter Lauber, CEO of the SIPLACE team, views this change of ownership as a great opportunity for customers, employees and the brand itself. As an industrial investor from the same industry that is innovation-driven and quality-oriented with a well-developed distribution network in Asia, ASMPT is a good strategic fit for SIPLACE and the candidate of choice for the acquisition, says Lauber.

Mr. Lauber, how do you view the sale of SIPLACE by Siemens?

In a nutshell: consistent, well-prepared and full of opportunities. Consistent, because developing and selling placement equipment is no longer part of Siemens's core business. Selling SIPLACE is therefore the right step to take. Well-prepared, because the SIPLACE team has groomed itself for this step for months with the carve-out, its Excellence program and its cluster-based global organization to turn itself into an agile, globally operating and customer-oriented medium-sized company with great success in terms of management, organizational and cost structures. And full of opportunities, because ASM Pacific Technology is an industrial investor that is at home in the highly dynamic electronics manufacturing market and views itself as a technology and innovation partner for its customers with a global position that complements ours. The chances are excellent that all parties will benefit from this sale: Siemens and ASM, along with our customers, our employees and the SIPLACE brand.

Was ASM Pacific Technology also your personal buyer of choice?

Yes, it was. One main question during the negotiations was whether the buyer had a strategy that would guarantee a future for the jobs and locations. ASMPT had such a strategy. Like we, ASMPT focuses on technological innovations and high-quality solutions. The company already invests 10 percent of its revenues in R&D, which fits in very nicely with our global technological leadership position. And in terms of their product portfolio, their regional focus areas and their strategic goals, ASMPT and SIPLACE complement each other perfectly.

What will the future structure look like?

The plan calls for running the SIPLACE team as a separate division within ASMPT. ASMPT views our new structures and our new, global cluster organization very positively. There are no plans for making any major changes in terms of people,

locations and structures. This is important, because especially in the current situation our customers need a partner that is focused on their needs. If they want to maximize their benefit from the global recovery, they need a partner that delivers good support and customized, innovative solutions. The fact that ASMPT appreciates this demonstrates to me how well its management knows the electronics manufacturing market. ASMPT's distribution network in Asia will also introduce our solutions to many new customers, and our production will benefit over the medium term from new supply and material sourcing opportunities.

Munich will remain the global SIPLACE Center of Competence, and the global cluster organization will remain in place. In addition, we will support backend assembly and packaging solutions from Munich. This makes sense for many of our customers' production processes, for example when it comes to placing die components or LEDs.

How did the employees take the decision to sell the business?

I would describe them as an "attentive audience". Naturally, and especially after a global financial crisis, many people are unsettled by such changes. On the other hand, the employees see the great strategic opportunities which ASMPT opens up to us. We have gained an industrial investor who focuses all of its substantial resources on electronics manufacturing, which means that the work of our people will be much more appreciated in such a constellation. In addition, Siemens supported us very well in these negotiations. The ASMPT financial position is strong, and the negotiations were characterized at all times by great respect and the willingness to cooperate. I believe that we have a very solid foundation in which our employees can place their trust.

Have you already received responses from the customers?

Our communication activities have only just begun. The top management of ASM Pacific Technology and SIPLACE will be involved in this very actively and personally. The entire management team and I will visit customers all over the world very soon. I am confident that the customers will monitor these changes very carefully and quickly recognize the resulting potentials and opportunities for themselves. Our support will remain unchanged, and our account managers will continue to be committed to provide service with the highest standards. With our innovation offensive and our strong solutions – such as the new SIPLACE SX platform – we have been demonstrating for several months now the strength and flexibility we gained with our new structure. We will continue to move in this direction, because, just like SIPLACE, ASMPT is a company that is driven by quality, service and innovation. Our existing customers and many new ones will appreciate this.

What can people expect from SIPLACE in terms of innovations?

ASMPT and SIPLACE currently serve adjacent, but separate production processes. We will introduce many innovations already this fall. For example, we have the

SIPLACE SX4, which is just as interesting as a line solution with unmatched floor space performance for high-speed applications as it is as a flexibly configurable standalone solution in small, high-mix production environments. As is tradition with SIPLACE, however, our innovations go far beyond the hardware. With our new software and service solutions, we will further enhance the efficiency of electronics manufacturing and generate competitive advantages for our customers. And our build-to-order initiative with its new demand- and usage-oriented rental and financing options will generate a lot of interest in the market.

As far as our SIPLACE CA solution and the placement of flip-chip and die components are concerned, there are already some initial points of contact with the ASMPT portfolio. In LED production, for example, the market demands the integration of previously separate processes and products into efficient solutions. This is a considerably technical challenge, which we can and will master together with ASMPT. As you can see: our strategic position has improved considerably, and our customers will benefit from this.

One last question: Can this deal still fail? Is it tied to certain conditions?

I don't expect it to fail. We are operating on the assumption that the deal will close early next year at the latest. Like with all of such transactions, we need the approval of the cartel authorities and of the shareholders of ASM. In light of the global economic recovery and the rapidly growing demand in the electronics manufacturing field we don't foresee any negative surprises from the market either. Here, too, everything has been well-prepared, which enables us to focus fully on our work and on the needs of our customers.