

# 'There is a need to recognise ventilation as an industry in itself'

VENTILATION IS A SUBJECT ON ITS OWN, SAY BRUNO LACROIX AND GAETAN PIERREFEU OF ALDES, IN THIS INTERVIEW WITH *CLIMATE CONTROL MIDDLE EAST*

## **Apart from downturn-related factors, what challenges does the ventilation industry face in this region?**

Outside of the downturn, the challenge that the ventilation industry faces is the overall lack of awareness about the purpose of the ventilation industry, and about the importance of indoor air quality.

The construction industry needs to recognise ventilation as an industry in itself, separate from the air conditioning industry. Consultants think of the two as part of the same industry, but they are not! Air conditioning is to cool; ventilation is to ventilate. Ventilation is a subject on its own. The importance of indoor air quality is a real concern.

Evian water has a tag line in its advertisement that says, "The water you drink is as important as the air you breathe," but we would like to reverse this statement in the case of ventilation and say: "The air you breathe is as important as the water you drink." People are so careful, for example, about the water their children drink. They boil it or install water filters. But what about the air they are breathing in their rooms all the time? They need to realise how important the quality of air in their rooms is.

## **American ALDES recently announced Ventzone IAQ – the company's new technology that makes it possible to turn a whole house IAQ system into a central bathroom ventilation system and vice versa. Is the Ventzone IAQ system a feasible option for this region?**

Unfortunately, the market here is not ready for this product, as yet. This product needs a perfect level of construction. It is not feasible in the GCC, or even China, for example, as yet. It needs to be used in a high-level quality of development. It could be introduced at a later date for the new green buildings to be built, but for now, the market is not ready for such a product. There are many other different solutions. The solutions for each respective market are according to the needs of the consultants for buildings in that market.

## **What do you see as different in terms of green building goals, when you compare the UAE with other parts of the world?**

The difference between here and Europe, for example, is in the building habits. The way things have worked here in the past is for a building to have an average life of, say, 20 years or so. The habit is to destroy and make a new

**PRODUCTS THAT MEET ONE STANDARD USUALLY WILL MEET THE OTHER, AS WELL. HOWEVER, IN TERMS OF EFFICIENCY, IF YOU WANT TO SET TARGETS FOR NEW BUILDINGS, THERE NEEDS TO BE A COMMON PLATFORM TO COMPARE THEM.**

one in the same place, every 20 years or so. On the other hand, in Europe, we preserve old structures and focus efforts towards renewing them.

## **How is ventilation related to sustainability? How do your products contribute to a green building?**

While there is much more 'green building-speak' in this region now, it is important to understand that there are two parts or aspects to consider when discussing green building: the first is a 'Greener' way to build a building, and the second is to build a 'low-energy-consumption building'. What we do helps get the second part – that is, products that are used to build low-energy-consumption buildings.

A low-energy-consumption building is one with good insulation that ensures a tight envelope. There, we see a need for our ventilation products, to make sure that the quality of air within the building envelope – the indoor air quality – is maintained and improved.

IAQ is of a lower quality than the outdoor air, owing to the pollutants inside (through the products we use, cooking and so forth). Other than when it is a dusty, windy day in this region, generally, the



