

2011 Robe International Distributors Conference

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Courtesy Louise Stickland

Robe lighting held its fourth International Distributor's Conference (IDC) in Frankfurt, Germany at the Kempinski Hotel in Gravenbruch.

This was a massive success, attended by nearly 200 people from over 60 companies representing 80 countries, and a major segment of Robe's International distributor and dealer network.

The timing was chosen to coincide with the 2011 Prolight+Sound Exhibition in Frankfurt, at which Robe launched 5 innovative and very exciting new products - the ROBIN 600 PureWhite, the ROBIN 300 LED Wash, the ROBIN MMX Spot - the first of a new generation of 1200 Series luminaires, the DigitalSpot 3500DT and the versatile CityFlex 48.

The fast moving format of the 2011 IDC included a full presentation and overview of all the new feature-packed products, giving the distributors a preview ahead of the exhibition.

Robe's Sales Director Harry von den Stemmen kicked off the Conference, updating everyone with developments since the last IDC in 2009. Robe's efficient and streamlined business model has been instrumental in its robust weathering of the global economic storm. This has also aided in the recovery that started building steadily from the middle of 2010 - culminating in March 2011 being Robe's highest ever turnover for that month of the year.

The predictions for this year are all on the upward trajectory, strongly reinforced by the expansion of the ROBIN range, which has been a phenomenal success story in its own right for the company.

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Some of the key events using Robe fixtures were highlighted, along with new and emerging markets, with Asia standing out as a particular area of growth.

Robe's MD Josef Valchar presented a brief company history – from their first Frankfurt exhibition in 1994 as an OEM manufacturer to today – where Robe is one of the highest profile and strongest moving light and LED technology brands in the world.

Expansion since the last IDC includes serious ongoing investment into Robe's 22,000 square metres of HQ and factory space in Valašské Meziříčí, ensuring that the latest manufacturing technology and techniques can be employed to maximise efficiency; the acquisition of their locally based PCB manufacturers Dioflex, and a spectacular new architectural installation for the exterior of the main factory building.

Valchar announced that Robe is to be the host and co-organiser of the 2013 Showlight international event, a premium quadrennial event and exhibition organised by and for lighting professionals, which will take place in beautiful Cesky Krumlov in the south Czech Republic.

Valchar also presented and gave an overview of the new products that were launched at Prolight.

Harry von den Stemmen expanded Robe's "Think of The Future – Consider Nature" green initiative and outlined the company's commitment to producing genuinely energy conscious, innovative technology for the future – smaller, brighter, lighter and consuming considerably less power than previous generation products.

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Marketing Manager Jiri Baros elucidated the latest communications and activity from this busy department, in the process, presenting two brand new highly visual corporate videos - one dedicated exclusively to the making of the ROBIN 600 LEDWash, and the other a fast paced company snapshot.

A whole section of the Conference was devoted to a report on the ROBIN 600 LEDWash, which has been such an incredible success for Robe - with over 2000 units delivered in 4 months and another 1500 on order!

ROBIN 600 LEDWash is Robe's fastest selling product since 1999, and their philosophy of waiting for the right technology to become available before producing a truly premium LED wash light has paid off, in that it's currently arguably the best such fixture on the market.

LEDWash 600 buzz points include its brightness, homogenized light source, ultra smooth colour mixing, versatile 15 - 60 degree zoom and ability to produce perfect whites in a variety of colour temperatures from 2700 - 8000 degrees K.

Key Account Manager for Europe Ingo Dombrowski presented a report about the ROBIN International Roadshows which have been taking place worldwide since PLASA 2010, getting the new products right out there in front of people in a calm, relaxed and close-up environment.

The afternoon Conference was followed by a dinner and the presentation of 28 Distributor Awards, celebrating the success, dedication and hard work of all in the Robe Family.

Says Josef Valchar, "The vibe was incredible ! The market is picking up and we believe we have

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the best range of products to date, which are really innovative and well targeted. It was fantastic to see everyone and feel their enthusiasm and energy. At Robe, teamwork and getting the right people onboard has always been vital.”

Harry von den Stemmen says, “This was a real motivator and was definitely the best IDC we have staged to date! While some economic aspects of the last 2 years have been like a roller-coaster, it was very good to be able to announce the latest sales figures at the Conference which I’m certain will be inspirational. The dealer network is now extremely stable and we are in a good position to consolidate the upward trend that we are noticing. “

He adds that the shorter/sharper format of the event this year really worked, and that it is also very gratifying to see so much synergy and communication between the diverse companies, cultures and personalities.