

Acar launches the Arwey collection

Turkish manufacturer Acar used Paperworld 2009 as a platform to showcase its newly launched Arwey collection of notebooks. As one of Turkey's leading printing companies and diary manufacturer, Arwey is an exciting new edition to the Acar catalogue. Savaş Acar and Faruk Acar explain why they are confident that Arwey will help the company obtain its target of over 50% sales growth in 2009.



The Arwey collection contains 10 different kinds of notebooks and 60 colour combinations.

ISG Visions & Trends: What differentiates Arwey notebooks from other brands?

Savaş Acar: When developing the Arwey collection we placed a lot of emphasis on design and functionality. There are ten different kinds of notebooks available in the range, with 60 possible colour combinations. This gives our customers the choice of having something classic or modern and trendy. Functionality is also a key distinguishing feature, and the notebooks have several useful features. There is a back pocket to store documents and a host of information pages, including a world map, conversion tables and a list of emergency numbers. The collection is really unique and its design and functionality makes it a distinctive accessory.

ISG Visions & Trends: What has been the feedback so far?

Savaş Acar: During Paperworld we had very good feedback and the collection generated a lot of interest. We heavily promoted its launch with display cabinets showcasing the notebooks situated around the exhibition halls in walkways. Its success is very important for us because Arwey has been a key focus for the company and has involved extensive research and development. This began one year before its launch, and included extensive market studies to make sure the brand was well-positioned in the market. We also gave a lot of thought to the name of the brand. Arwey, as well as being an appealing name, also has the benefit of being pronounced the same way in all of our key markets.

"The global economic slowdown will affect us all, but by good market positioning and offering quality at the right price, we are confident about the future," says Export Manager Savaş Acar.

A history of innovative designs

ISG Visions & Trends: Is Arwey your first notebook collection?

Faruk Acar: No, we started back in 2000 when the expertise we had in producing diaries was used to manufacture notepads. Arwey is our latest brand, launched at the end of 2008. We also have other product ranges like Lavorte, which has helped Acar become recognised as a producer of original designs. It is the only notebook collection in the world that uses crystallized Swarovski gems to decorate its leather covers. The result is a striking design that makes a perfect gift.

ISG Visions & Trends: How are exports performing?

Faruk Acar: We started exports 15 years ago, with Russia and some of the CIS states. In 1998 we had our first major overseas order, which was from an Israeli governmental organisation. Since then exports have increased dramatically



and now account for more than 50% of our production. We export to 24 countries, including the USA, Australia and most European countries. We have overseas offices in Moscow, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

ISG Visions & Trends: What markets are you currently focusing on?

Faruk Acar: We are focusing on the USA and Europe for the Arvey collection. In the USA, people tend not to use diaries, preferring undated journals. We believe that the style and functionality of Arvey will make it especially successful in the USA and Europe.

ISG Visions & Trends: Is the economic slowdown making price an even more important issue for your product ranges?

Faruk Acar: Price is not the first item we discuss. The first issue is showing that we provide high-quality products and good customer service, including keeping delivery terms. Once this is established, then we speak about price.

Certification becomes a key issue

ISG Visions & Trends: How important is environmental certification for Acar?

Savaş Acar: The Arvey range will be FSC-certified in June. People are now looking for ecological products, especially in Europe and the USA, and there is demand for products carrying FSC certification coming from distributors. Acar is actually a pioneer in this regard because we were the first Turkish company to obtain FSC in the printing sector. Having FSC shows that we take our environmental responsibility seriously and that we are responding to the demands of our clients.

ISG Visions & Trends: Does private label account for a high percentage of your sales?

Savaş Acar: Private label is very important for Acar. For diaries, it accounts for around 60% of our production. Our success in this field is based on offering excellent service to private label companies to satisfy their requirements. Our clients are distributors, advertising agencies and large corporates, such as insurance companies and banks.

ISG Visions & Trends: What image does 'made in Turkey' have in Western Europe?

Faruk Acar: Turkey in the past didn't have such a good reputation for quality, but now that has changed. Turkish companies have modernised their production lines and focused on improving the quality of manufactured products to western levels. This is not just the case for stationery products, but for manufacturing in general. For example, in the textile industry Turkey produces many well-known brands that have excellent reputations. Acar has always made quality a key issue and our production facilities are modern – they are only ten years old. We also have ISO 9001 accreditation, showing that we have an effective quality management system.



Area Sales Manager Faruk Acar with a notebook from the Lavorte range. Lavorte is the only notebook collection in the world that uses crystallized Swarovski gems to decorate its leather covers

Growth of 55% predicted for 2009

ISG Visions & Trends: How is the global downturn affecting the market for high-end products?

Savaş Acar: I believe that in our business the crisis is hitting the middle and lower-end product ranges harder than it is luxury items. If you produce luxury products like we do that have high functionality, then there is still market demand. Even top-of-the-range notebooks are affordable items. Of course, the global economic slowdown will affect us all, but by good market positioning and offering quality at the right price, we are confident about the future. Our growth in 2008 was 7%, with export growth 15%. This year, with the launch of the Arvey brand and the contracts we have from some major European distributors, we predict growth of 55%. We expect sales in the Turkish market to remain stable due to our already strong presence there. However, exports to Europe will be helped by the strength of the euro and the decline of the Turkish lira. Previously Russia was our most important market, but the falling rouble and lower demand due to the crisis mean that we are looking further west to expand our business.

Acar's latest production facilities were built in 1998. They employ 150 people.

