

MIDDLE EAST CONCRETE INTERVIEW: DOKA MIDDLE EAST**Headline:** Leading by example**Stand first:**

Doka Gulf's managing director, Michael Arnold tells us more about the regions' preferred formwork provider and how it is saving clients' money by investing in both innovation and whole-of project consulting.

**Body Copy:**

Doka has placed an emphasis on innovation - could you tell us why this is such an intrinsic part of your corporate philosophy, and can you give us an example of your most recent and innovative ideas?

For a long time, Doka has been focused on material systems and solutions however in the last few years we've developed an open understanding that has focused on the importance of services, and how they will continue to grow and play a far stronger role in the future.

When it comes to the topic of innovation, it all begins with asking the question; "What are the concerns of our clients?" If you fail to understand the needs or expectations of your clients, you will be unable to create a functional solution. In being the indisputable leader in the Middle Eastern market, Doka has adapted to offer a level of internal flexibility that is unrivalled. As a result of this, we've introduced a series of products and services, including Concremote, the first internet connected device that measures the early age strength of fresh concrete, that support the requirements of our clients to optimise their performance, and provide the best possible value from our services.

One of your recent press statements confirms your acquisition of B|A|S in the Netherlands - could you expand on the benefits of purchasing such a company, and highlight some of the benefits you believe your collaboration will yield?

Since Doka was established we have always supported the concrete construction business so with the acquisition of B|A|S we've now acquired a highly sophisticated concrete laboratory which stands to enhance our service offering. By having an in-house team that is specialised in the primary material with which we work, we will be able to further innovate and push the boundaries of making the projects on which we work more durable and environmentally friendly. Everyone talks about concrete quality, whereas we can now prove not only the quality of our material, but also illustrate our knowledge by using our resources to continuously improving it.

Some of the major issues to have occurred in the region include the price correction of oil and its subsequent effect on various sectors in the Middle East. What in your opinion has been the effect on the construction market, and more specifically how has it affected Doka's performance?

In our case, only minor. We have a broad establishment across the UAE which allows us to be omnipresent throughout the country. With a product and service portfolio which can accommodate all concrete related structures ranging from civil works, affordable housing projects, social infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, through to high-rise our service provision directly supports the visionary leadership that is helping to diversify the UAE's economy away from oil. In fact, we've witnessed some of our strongest periods of growth in the past few months so we continue to remain optimistic about the future.

Doka celebrates 20 years in Dubai next month - looking back over this period, what do you believe have been the most valuable contributions from Doka to the UAE?

I like to think of Doka's journey in Dubai in similar terms to that of the Emirate itself. Dubai's growth over the past 20 years remains one of the most rapid transformations of any metropolis in human history, with tremendous developments occurring on an annual basis. As a company, it has been our privilege to have worked on some of the buildings and structures that are now synonymous with Dubai, including but not limited to the Burj Al Arab and the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa.

Dubai has also been a positive enabler and a consistent supporter of our own ethical philosophies, the most recent example being Green Concrete, as endorsed by the Municipality. As a contribution, this will help to significantly improve the environmental implications of construction and help to reduce the waste of both material and energy.

What positive lessons has Doka learned from doing business in the U.A.E?

The U.A.E is unlike any other market when it comes to its development – arguably the most valuable lesson we've learned and implemented, which has subsequently been integrated with our global model is the ability to be internally flexible. Today's market requires a round-

the-clock level of sophisticated support and has required us as an organisation to expand our skills beyond just formwork. Effectively, the U.A.E has been a prominent catalyst to Doka evolving its services to include consultancy and concrete technology, two virtues that help us to better service the market.

As managing director, what is your expectation for the company in the run up to Expo2020 and beyond?

It is my expectation that Doka continues to evolve inline with market demand and that our investment in innovation continues to pay dividend, not just for the company, but also for supporting Dubai's reputation as a pioneering destination for construction.

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ABOUT DOKA GROUP (GmbH) – “The formwork experts”

Founded in 1958, the Doka Group was established in Amstetten, Austria where it supplied formwork and engineering solutions to the numerous infrastructure projects.

In 1961, the company expanded its operations to Germany and further to Brazil and Kuwait in 1977. With more than 160 sales and logistics facilities in over 70 countries, the Doka Group has a highly efficient distribution network which ensures that equipment and technical support are provided swiftly and professionally.

Supplying a range of products, systems and design services, including formwork panels, slab formwork, wall formwork, one-sided wall formwork, climbing formwork, tunnel formwork, dam formwork, bridge formwork, shoring/false work, tie systems and filed support, software and training, Doka's business includes production, equipment sale & rental, engineering and maintenance.

An enterprise forming part of the Umdasch Group, the Doka Group employs a worldwide workforce of more than 6000.