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Movers & Shakers Interview with Sara Kissing, VP and COO of Concept by US Corporation.

Vishal Sapru (VS), Research Manager for Energy & Power Systems Group had an opportunity to conduct a Movers & Shakers interview with Sara Kissing (SK), VP and COO of Concept by US Corporation.

VS: Can you provide our readers a brief overview of Concept by US?

SK: Concept by US was established in 2012 in Florida and is an engineering corporation that is involved in the development and delivery of clean, renewable solar energy to the average US household. Mr. Corbach the founder of the company has an engineering degree and is a visionary and entrepreneur, who wanted to revolutionize the way the consumer, uses solar power and give the end consumer back energy autonomy and independence.

VS: Please describe your product/technology/solution for our readers?

SK: The POWERSTATION 247 is a multifunctional all-in-one solar energy usage and storage system. The system is UL certified for the US market, and all functional units are designed and manufactured by only one company, concept by US, with the exception of the lithium-iron batteries. With the POWERSTATION 247 solar generated energy is available day and night, 24/7. It is a fully integrated, complete system with built-in hybrid-inverters, solar MPP-trackers, battery chargers, anti-island Protection, battery storage, and BMS. It also includes all necessary field wiring terminals and disconnect switches. Absolutely no additional external components are needed. The system is truly “plug and play”.

The POWERSTATION 247 has 3 product variations 5 kW, 10 kW or 15kW, and all have the same battery storage capacity of 17.28 kWh. Its free standing cabinet is easy to install and easy to use.

The unit resembles a refrigerator in both size and appearance. Out of the box, it can be installed in just a few hours, which is faster than most competitors' systems. It is the only 96-volt system on the market, and also the only one that allows you to simultaneously charge your batteries as well as power your house at the same time. Our latest product, the POWERSTATION 247 PLUS, is capable of connecting to a wind turbine or fossil fuel generator.

VS: What is Concept by US's greatest challenge and what strategy is in place to overcome it?

SK: The greatest challenge is educating our customers about our system. Our market research suggests that when the end consumer wants to go solar and add a new PV system to their house, they have the desire to actually use the energy that their solar system is generating. There is great disappointment when they find out that the solar harvested energy is only fed back into the public grid and that the electricity they use in their everyday lives is still generated by polluting fossil fuels. The most asked question a solar installer has to answer when discussing a solar/ PV system is: “Can I use the green energy my solar system is generating directly in my house?” Almost always the answer is “no”.

With the POWERSTATION 247 we have the right answer for the end-user. “Yes”, now you can use the energy your solar/PV system is generating in your house. 24/7.

The POWERSTATION 247 was developed for the new or existing solar/PV customer who choose not to be dependent on traditional energy supplies generated by polluting fossil fuels. Our customers are energy conscious and want to contribute to a clean and environmentally sound future. They are the home-owners or small business owners who wish to take control of their proprietary energy consumption. With the POWERSTATION 247 they have an alternative source of electricity and total autonomy.

Educating the public, our customers, wholesalers and resellers is a key strategy. We have to overcome the lack of information most people have these days when it comes to solar.

VS: What is the unique value proposition of the Powerstation 247 and what are your key competitive differentiators?

SK: The POWERSTATION 247 is a multifunctional all-in-one solar energy usage and storage system. It can be used on-and-off grid and it is a turnkey autonomous solution that allows customers to fully access their solar power. This means the end user can actually use the energy that their solar PV system is generating. Our market research suggest that most people who own a solar PV system do not realize that they aren't using solar energy in their house, even though they have a PV system and an inverter in their garage.

Many people are not aware that they cannot use the green solar energy their PV panels are generating. With a traditional solar PV system the solar energy that is generated is fed into an inverter that transforms the DC energy into AC energy, which is then transferred directly to the utility grid and not into the house of the user. If the user needs energy in their house or business they have to buy it from the utility company, and the electricity that they are using is actually fossil fuel generated energy from the grid.

If the grid goes down the end user who has a solar PV system installed does not have power. Because of that, some end users buy an additional battery pack that needs to be installed together with a huge bundle of various components from different manufacturers all installed in their garage. Usually an entire wall will be needed to assemble all components, from MPPtrackers, battery chargers, disconnect switches and many more just to have a little bit of electricity in case of a power outage.

With the POWERSTATION 247 solar generated energy is available day and night, 24/7. Solar generated energy is fed directly into the POWERSTATION 247. The system intelligently transforms the DC energy into AC energy and distributes it to the places of need in your house or business. At the same time depending on your current usage of electricity in your house the POWERSTATION 247 charges the battery storage that is integrated in the system. That means with the POWERSTATION 247 the solar energy from the PV system is directly fed into the house and the user's applications. When a power outage occurs the system automatically switches to emergency power mode and you can use the stored electricity in your house.

The POWERSTATION 247 is a fully integrated, complete system with built-in hybrid-inverters, solar MPP-trackers, battery chargers, anti-island Protection, battery storage, and BMS. It also includes all necessary field wiring terminals, disconnect switches and the software for remote monitoring. Absolutely no additional external components are needed.

Out of the box, it can be installed in around two hours, providing efficient solar energy from a new or existing solar array. It is also the only 96-volt system on the market, which allows you to run your A/C, washer/dryer, and other large appliances. No other system on the US market is as powerful as the POWERSTATION 247.

The POWERSTATION 247 supplies electricity into your house or business day and night and gives our customers complete control and autonomy of their energy consumption.

VS: What is your strategy in regards to offering best value to customer for the price, compared to similar offerings from competitors?

SK: Today there are no direct competitors on the US market because the POWERSTATION 247 is so unique in the features it offers. Most systems offered are for emergency backup purposes only. For example the TESLA Powerwall is a small battery system with a DC-DC-converter. It can't be connected to PV-arrays or to the mains without extensive additional circuitry (inverters, solar controllers, installation equipment, etc). For the power demand of an average

American household, the capacity is just too small and needs paralleling of 3-4 Powerwalls, which in turn would result in a 20% higher cost. However, in order to actually power an entire house or small business it is necessary to leverage on a 96 V system like the POWERSTATION 247. All competitors on the US market only offer 48 V systems, which in turn are not capable of powering an entire house. There is just not enough power. Also the competitors do not offer any plug and play solutions. There are always additional components needed to actually achieve what a POWERSTATION 247 can do.

The POWERSTATION247 is a “plug-and-play” system incorporating all necessary components for a full size solar power system that gives the user solar generated energy 24/7.

VS: Continued innovation is the key to success in this growing industry. How is the process of innovation managed at Concept by US?

SK: Innovation is essential. However, it is more important to have a solid ground to improve upon before looking to constantly create something new. That is why Concept by US took the time and effort to introduce a fully certified, functional, all-in-one product. The UL certification alone took several years and thousands of various tests. No short cuts were taken. You can have a revolutionary, innovative idea, but it will bring no value unless executed properly. Some competitors are seeing huge backorders in the magnitude of several years. They introduced the idea of a product that wasn't ready for market.

Due to the huge demand we are experiencing at the moment we are now working on a 50 hz POWERSTATION 247 system that we can distribute to other countries around the world.

VS: What do you want the company to accomplish in the next couple of years and how would you define success for Concept by US?

SK: We want to see this product installed in homes and small scale commercial applications across the globe. Success for our company can be measured by the success for our customers. A successful, happy customer is one that is seeing real dollar savings on their monthly electric bill. Equally important to the cost benefit, however, is the fact that when they save money, they're saving the environment. These savings can be translated into an overall reduction in energy consumption from fossil fuel sources which most utility companies provide. We are a green company aimed at changing the way our planet accesses electricity. When this all happens simultaneously is where we define true success.

VS: What is your key value proposition that provides your company a major competitive advantage over other players in the industry?

SK: Key value proposition include –

- Autonomy
- All-in-one solution
- On or off grid applications
- Higher voltage system
- Plug and play
- Low installation time
- Competitive pricing
- International safety standards such as UL
- Elegant design.

VS: Could you elaborate on the acceptance or adoption of your product/technology/solution in the marketplace and are there any positive client testimonials that can be shared with us?

SK: The POWERSTATION 247 just recently came to market. Almost overnight it drew global interest from some very large players - a testament to the capabilities of our product vs top competitors. Our competitors introduced their products before they were actually ready for market and able to fulfill orders. There is a reason no one was anxiously awaiting the POWERSTATION 247 years before it came to market. We strategically waited until we passed all of our

UL certifications, incorporated every necessary component into one streamlined system and were approved to sell on the US market using entirely our own IP. No other company has been able to offer this, and are now struggling to fulfill promises they made years ago.

VS: Do you foresee the acceptance of your product/technology/solution in the marketplace to have an influence on the direction of the overall market going forward?

SK: We do. Just after we released the product, we attended the InterSolar convention in San Francisco. The reaction was overwhelmingly positive, and we expect to see our product in countries across the globe. The design of our product will likely allow us to tap into a luxury market. A solar battery storage and usage system no longer needs to be hidden, or installed erratically across the garage wall. Everything needed is now contained in one beautifully designed refrigerator-sized unit. We've created something customers want to show off, and we wouldn't be surprised if competitors follow the idea and look of our system.

VS: As a general conclusion, what do you think the future holds for such solutions and, more specifically, what role can we expect Concept by US to play in shaping the future of the industry?

SK: Concept by US is involved in the development and delivery of clean, renewable solar energy to the average US household and small business. The mission of concept by US is to contribute to a clean and environmentally sound global future, while providing autonomy and independence through the innovative design of the POWERSTATION 247.

Electricity consumption is currently at its peak, not only because of the increased population growth, but also due to the development of new home appliances and electrical gadgets. Fortunately, renewable energy sources such as solar and wind turbines are now playing a significant role in the global energy mix. As a result the demand for energy storage and usage systems is also a growing necessity. With the POWERSTATION 247 we deliver the missing part to becoming eco-friendly, and self-sufficient in residential and commercial applications.

Our goal is to make clean renewable solar energy accessible and easy to use for the end consumer. We have developed an innovative, vertically integrated renewable energy system for projects, large and small, for homeowners and businesses - offering energy autonomy and efficiency without dependence on outside sources.

VS: What are your company's marketing and product positioning strategies? Do you plan to form any strategic alliances with other client companies?

SK: Concept by US has made several key partnerships, including a strategic alliance with Fortis Groep, a leading developer of sustainable structures. Right now, Concept by US is working strictly with solar installers, distributors and small-scale commercial applications. We are not focused on marketing directly to the end consumer.

VS: What is unique about your company in regards to offering the best and differentiated service experience to customers?

SK: While we do not deal directly to the end-consumer, we have secured financing to help customers afford the investment. We also offer the industry standard 10-year warranty for the Powerstation 247.

VS: Please describe the importance and focus of your company towards building and strengthening the brand equity of your offering?

SK: Brand equity and marketing as a whole are very important divisions in our company. Our marketing and advertising professionals have created a easily recognizable brand for our system. The corporate identity and our corporate design all signify quality, precision and professionalism. A strong brand name such as the POWERSTATION 247 works as a credible signal of product quality and is easily recognizable. In order to keep the quality of our brand we have produced an entire package of marketing material for our customers, the resellers and wholesalers, so they can market the POWERSTATION 247 to their customers without compromise.

VS: What kind of customer feedback mechanism do you have in place to ensure that the product development and innovation matches market and customer needs?

SK: End consumer feedback is given to us through our wholesalers and resellers. However, some satisfied end consumers have sent e-mails to us telling us about their experience with the POWERSTATION 247. To monitor the market and customer needs we only look to our purchase orders and see that the growth is currently exponential.

VS: How do you compare yourself with top competitors in regards to offering Best-in-Class solution, with a full complement of features and functionality?

SK: Many of our top competitors offer a similar solution to the problem we are solving, however their systems lack true plug-and-play capabilities. The installer will have to source perhaps inverters, batteries, software or disconnect switches from another company to complete the system. The POWERSTATION 247 has everything built inside – and it's all our own IP so each component is specifically designed to work together. We are also the only company to put a strong focus on aesthetics.

VS: What is/are unique features of your product/technology that address unmet customer needs and competitors are unable to replicate and replace?

SK: The POWERSTATION 247 is a “plug and play” solution. This is very unique. In order to actually use solar generated energy you only need one POWERSTATION 247. The heart of the POWERSTATION 247 is the POWERMODULE which integrates a hybrid inverter, MPP-trackers, battery charger and anti-islanding component. When the system was tested at Intertek, Germany we were setting new standards because a POWERMODUL like that had not been tested before. The system is patent patenting and we are very proud of all our UL certifications for the US market.

If you have any further questions/comments please contact: vishal.sapru@frost.com