



Ewald Braith

Ewald Braith is a non executive director of Cambridge Nanotherm. He started his career as an electronic design engineer with Zytec, which merged with Computer Products to become Artesyn and was then acquired by Emerson Network Power.

He was vp of engineering for Artesyn and president of Emerson Network Power's communication infrastructure group.

Bringing a touch of 'strategic nous'

Having recently joined the board of Cambridge Nanotherm, **Ewald Braith** talks to **Neil Tyler** about the company's next crucial steps

The appointment of Ewald Braith – who has worked in a variety of high profile organisations over the past 30 years – as a non executive director of Cambridge Nanotherm looks like a canny move on the part of this Cambridge based company.

At a time when Cambridge's innovative nano-ceramic thermal solutions are starting to make inroads into the LED market, Braith's high level 'strategic nous' makes this a logical and significant appointment, according to the company's CEO Ralph Weir.

"He's a big hitter in terms of his achievements in the power electronics and telecoms markets and has been exposed to semiconductor technologies and some important vertical markets," Weir said.

Chief among Braith's skills has been his ability to grow businesses aggressively and to take companies into new overseas markets. In some instances, Braith has added hundreds of millions of dollars to company revenues.

"There is a real passion at Cambridge Nanotherm when it comes to growing the business and in further innovation," Braith suggested. "The markets for LED technologies are growing rapidly and manufacturers are keen to differentiate their products. The company is well positioned to exploit this."

Cambridge Nanotherm has developed an innovative electrochemical process for forming nanoceramic dielectric layers of any shape directly onto an aluminium base, enabling the development of a new class of electronic substrates with better thermal conductivity and dielectric strength.

Braith started as an electronic design engineer with Zytec, which then merged in a \$500million deal with Computer Products to become Artesyn Technologies, which was acquired by Emerson Network Power (ENP) in 2006.

"That brought embedded power conversion technologies to ENP's portfolio and included advanced power conversion equipment and hardware and software subsystems for a range of communication applications," explained Braith.

"Emerson was a \$25billion business. I took over responsibility for the

company's embedded power solutions and worked on developing mobile phone chargers."

Braith was appointed vp of engineering when Artesyn was formed and then became president of its communications infrastructure group.

"In that position, I had responsibility for supplying power solutions to the wireline and wireless market space. Over a four year period, we doubled turnover to \$120m, extended our product portfolio and focused on developing commercial and research relationships with key players – such as Cisco and Ericsson," Braith said. "These companies had specific power requirements and we became their key technology partner."

According to Braith, Artesyn's success was driven by its determination to develop new competitive technologies, target the right customers, offer 'outstanding levels of service' and to only address the needs of key strategic markets.

"If you're going to work with global businesses, you need a global footprint and the creation of Artesyn achieved that. We focused on developing middle to high end servers, data storage devices, routers, hubs, high speed modems, RF amplification systems, base station controllers and transceivers."

At ENP, following the 2006 acquisition, Braith engaged with highly competitive markets, which saw him working with high volume consumer manufacturers and leading an aggressive expansion into overseas markets.

Braith left ENP in 2011 to set up his own consultancy – 'the constant travelling was taking its toll on me'. He then became CEO of Detego, a RFID software solutions and services provider, before joining Cambridge Nanotherm's board in March 2015.

His appointment comes as the company plans a strategy for growth. The technology has been developed for various applications and, as Braith explained, 'now is the time to bring this technology to the wider market, where we can bring significant added value to our customers'.

According to Braith his years of experience have taught him the importance of focus. "You can't do everything for everyone, so focus."

Secondly, he believes it's crucial that companies identify a few key markets where there is a real demand for a technology. "For Cambridge NanoTherm, that is LEDs and wireless telecoms."

Cambridge NanoTherm is getting traction among LED companies and recently won a significant design in with Lumichip.

"Some 70% of the LED market is based in Asia," said Braith. "That means we need to be able to serve that market and that requires a manufacturing presence. Whether that is a factory of our own or a working relationship with a manufacturing partner has yet to be decided."

"I've spent my career dealing with companies based in the Far East and can bring considerable experience when it comes to dealing with OEMs. I know the supply chain well and know how to deal with big suppliers like STMicroelectronics, Vishay and Infineon."

Apart from the fast growing LED market Cambridge Nanotherm will also focus on the wireless market. "More efficient power amplifiers will help cut capital and operating costs for operators. Through better thermal management, we will be able to raise the efficiency of these amplifiers and cut costs significantly. The demand for more data means operators will have to invest heavily in new equipment and expand their networks. It's crucial that we get involved earlier in the design cycle and that requires us to build the right relationships with the right customers at the right time."

The coming months are going to be crucial but, as Braith concluded: "The company has real momentum, a new UK factory, an enthusiastic team and, crucially, an excellent product."