

Altrad Extends Network to Asia

Altrad's steel products are number one. It sells and rents the most concrete mixers in the world, including skip-fed, professional, agricultural and DIY models and wheelbarrows.

Also makes stadium seating and stages for thousands of different municipalities across Europe.

France is the most important market, followed by Germany and Poland. With a sales presence in sixty countries, and teams that customize R&D in each location, the European market is stable. The firm is looking east toward Asia for

growth hoping to double in size over the next five years.

"We need an efficient marketing and sales network all over the world," said Mohamed Altrad, chief executive of Altrad. His company has been investigating new partnerships, relationships and possible acquisitions in Japan, which it plans to enter next.

Altrad, which has grown since 1984 through acquisitions, is currently taking over a concrete mixer factory in China. Transporting its products is expensive, so factories need to be located as near the clients as possible. In its expansion, the firm enjoys several advantages over other



Mohamed Altrad, CEO

European or Asian competitors: size, resources for research, the international sales force, and purchasing efficiencies.

The French manufacturer plans to transfer technology, information, capital and management techniques to its

Asian operations. In China, for instance, it will help family businesses use international standard management techniques for bookkeeping and accounting.

While knowledge exchanges are valuable, Altrad respects the Asian cultures, and appreciates the styles of its host countries. Japan and China are ancient civilizations, with extensive cultural histories. It will take time to create the foundations for a long-term commitment there.

"Your own lifespan is short," said Mr. Altrad. "Don't think in such a brief time period. Think in terms of the whole life of your company."