

REFRIGERATION AND AIR CONDITIONING MAGAZINE

rac

Epta strengthens UK offering with purchase of Cold Service

BUSINESS

Epta has bought Ringwood-based Cold Service for an undisclosed amount to expand its contracting services in the UK, giving it a broader base to serve national customers.

The contractor will be run as a separate subsidiary alongside fellow Epta subsidiary, Bradford-based George Barker.

Given the two contractors' regional strengths in the south and north, they provide complimentary coverage with which to serve major national retail customers.

Epta said in a statement: "This is a significant strategic transaction for the group, which perfectly positions Epta as national service provider, in line with the retail industry increasing demand of national coverage."

Epta becomes the second major manufacturing group this year to make a serious investment in the UK service and installation sector, following Hillphoenix's substantial minority stake in Space Engineering in April.

Epta said Cold Service has been providing retailers and other commercial refrigeration customers with "excellently designed, highly efficient systems for over 65 years", supported by more than



Peter Grimes: Epta represents "an important commercial advantage"

'This is a significant strategic transition for the group'

100 refrigeration technicians located throughout the south of the UK.

A well-established business with strong local roots, Cold Service is

organised in four divisions – Commercial, Local, Central and Distribution – and has contracts with clients such as Harrods, Fortnum & Mason, Greggs, Morrisons, One-Stop and Pret A Manger.

Epta – already established in the UK with George Barker, a leading supplier in the design and production of refrigerated cabinets, together with an established

contracting and service/maintenance business – has entered into this agreement with the intent to encourage "important synergies between the two British brands, with growth opportunities for the entire group".

Epta chairman and managing director Sergio Chiostrì said: "One year after the merging of Iarp with the group, we are delighted to announce the acquisition of Cold Service. This agreement expands our portfolio and aims to optimise the resources used, in the frame of an expansion plan that will integrate the skills and technological know-how of our two companies".

Cold Service chairman Peter Grimes added: "Both parties strongly sought this merger, built on a common value system centred on people, high-quality service and long-term development plans. The strength of a company like Epta represents an important competitive advantage for us, complementing our range and expanding our market share."

Epta's quest for a UK contractor hit the buffers last summer when negotiations over the purchase of WR Refrigeration were halted at the eleventh hour due to discovery of the extent of WR's financial problems.

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