

# Petrol PLAZA

## Interview with Bever Innovations: “LED screens are a game-changer”

**PetrolPlaza travelled to the Southwest of the Netherlands to speak to Bever Innovations at their new headquarters. We discussed the fuel price display market, LED screens and how to increase sales through lighting.**



In the province of Zeeland, an area of the Netherlands consisting of islands and peninsulas, lays the headquarters of a highly innovative company, Bever Innovations. Founded in 1996, the Dutch provider of LED systems for petrol stations has recently inaugurated its brand new headquarters in Zierikzee.

“Bever Innovations is the one-stop-shop for LED technology: Price displays, canopy lights, contour illumination, parking lights, screens,” explains Erwin Dingemanse, Commercial Director, as he sips on an espresso and tackles a typical Dutch pastry.

Present in 86 countries, Bever Innovations’ intelligent LED lighting products are used by clients such as Shell, BP and Q8. They have become one of the biggest suppliers of LED lighting and price signs for petrol stations around the world with subdivisions in Germany, Finland and the United Kingdom.

With the implementation of EOS Technology – an IoT-based smart technology – they have connected all their devices allowing for the collection of data, improving efficiency and providing remote access.

Fuel price signs have come a long way since the rollerblind displays Bever Innovations installed in 1999. After deciding to make its own display systems in 2005, the company introduced multi segment LED price displays in 2006.

So what’s new in the sector? “A game-changer for the industry is the deployment of LED screens,

allowing operators to show the newest sales, products or announcements at the totem, along with fuel prices,” says Erwin.

The increasing importance of convenience and in-store sales has had an effect on the forecourt industry as a whole. For Bever Innovations it’s been about how to allow retailers to take their offering from the store to the first visible point of a station, the totem.



This is the case for a newly redeveloped Kuster Energy site in Groenlo, the Netherlands. Jan Pieter de Wilde, Commercial Director at Kuster Energy, discussed the station in a case study: “A big LED screen is located on the site, which we use to communicate with our customers. Apart from the current fuel prices, promotions and activities, customers who regularly fill up here are invited for a free cup of coffee in our shop, for example. For this purpose, we implemented a new feature from camera supplier BigBrother.”

When discussing growth in the fuel pricing segment, both Erwin and Bart Engels, Business Development Manager, agree that network refurbishments and the opening of new markets are major honeypots. In that sense, the liberalization of fuel prices in Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Malaysia make them very promising markets.

“For retailers that still don’t have modern displays because there due to fixed fuel prices, there is more than one reason to change that. It is great opportunity to increase your brand awareness,” says Erwin.

### **The LED revolution still awaits**

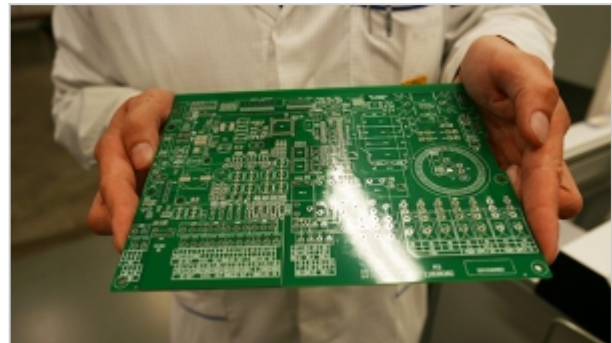
Despite the first production of light-emitting diode (LED) dating back to 1962, still today the majority

of gas stations in Europe and around the world use traditional HPS lighting. In the Netherlands, only 50% of sites currently use LED lights.

“Lighting is the second largest cost for a gas station, and LED technology offers savings of up to 90%,” according to Erwin.

For Bever Innovations, their focus has been set on harmonizing light around the site, using sensors to optimize energy consumption, and increasing site sales by providing a safer and friendlier environment.

“The next step is to play with the lighting of a site to offer a unique experience to the customer. You can do a lot of different things. As a client reaches the pumps, the illumination over the correct pump can intensify; in the store, you can drive the customer through the sections by having different light colours and intensities. The goal is to provide the retailer with the tools to increase their sales and give the customer a better experience.”



### **Production takes place at “social factories”**

Forty-five minutes away, driving South over the Zeeland Bridge – the longest in the Netherlands – are located Bever Innovation’s two production and assembly plants. Nearly 200 people work in the two “social factories” of Orionis in Vlissingen and Dethon in Terneuzen.

Both facilities make semi-finished products and end-products. The work is carried out by people who have difficulties entering the regular labour market. Some of the workers stay for one year and move one while others have been working there for 20 years. In the case of Dethon, Bever Innovations is their biggest client.

“If we move the production process to China there are many complications. We have a strong relationship with these factories and are happy here,” says Bart Engels as the tour of the Dethon facility comes to an end.

Although 90% of their market is based around petrol stations, Bever Innovations is now working with two new sectors: lighting for warehouses and industrial facilities, and innovative systems that allow for new techniques of vertical farming – an opportunity for convenience stores to grow their own vegetables on-site.