

Clark Electronics 70 Years Old and Full of Ideas

Clark Electronics in southern Holland right at the entrance to the Rotterdam harbor has been around since 1938. This year they are celebrating their 70th anniversary. What better reason for us to pay them a visit and find out what such a long-standing company is all about.

And wouldn't you know it: in their stockroom we found a large supply of vacuum tubes as they were used in broadcasting equipment 70 years ago. That's how Clark Electronics got started: with the production of AM radios. Later on came two-way radios for private and military applications. When it was no longer profitable to do their own manufacturing, Clark Electronics shifted over to wholesale electronic component suppliers – that was in the early 1960's.

In 1993 it was time: the satellite age started at Clark Electronics. The company, in a close relationship with manufacturers in Taiwan and China, began to develop and market receivers for the Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg) region. In 2000 they entered into a cooperation with Top-field and finally with Arion. "Now we are in the process of developing our own brand name", revealed John Kamp, Director of Clark Electronics.

He doesn't think much of low prices: "If someone wants a satellite receiver, they'll buy one, price is not always the deciding factor", believes John Kamp, although, "this assumes of course that the receiver can do what the customer wants and above all without any errors or crashes!"

John Kamp

believes that the current weak order situation with satellite dealers in Europe has less to do with price and more to do with incorrect product choice.

"The HD market is not quite ready yet; right now it's much better to offer customers SD receivers with upscalers." They also seem to have a similar grip on the available channels. "You're not going to be watching Discovery HD 24 hours-a-day", comments John Kamp, "but rather normal channels that are not yet available in HD." He believes the breakthrough in HD will occur in 2012.

His vision of the future is more towards multimedia anyway. "One day, everyone will have a network server with a very high storage capacity on which TV channels, MP3 files, pictures, etc. can be stored and accessed in any room in the house via the network connection." Clark has already taken a step in that direction: their own receiver will include a universal remote control.

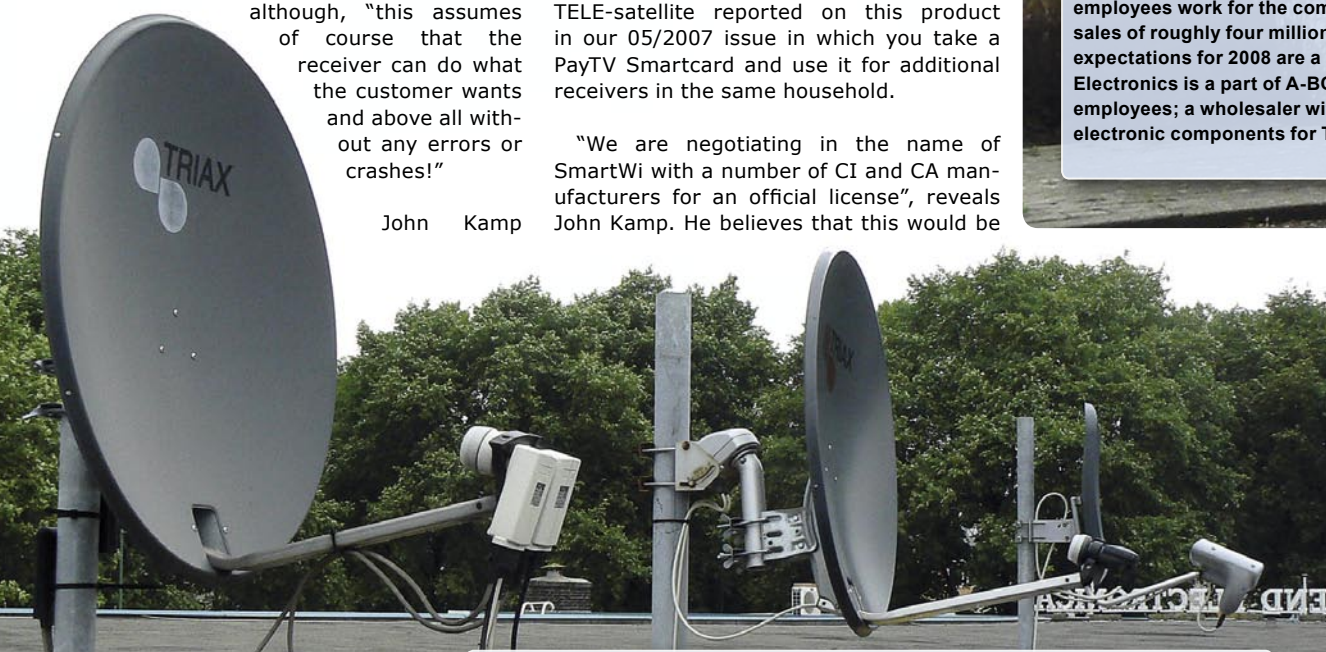
Until that time, John Kamp is focusing on an equally interesting product: SmartWi. TELE-satellite reported on this product in our 05/2007 issue in which you take a PayTV Smartcard and use it for additional receivers in the same household.

"We are negotiating in the name of SmartWi with a number of CI and CA manufacturers for an official license", reveals John Kamp. He believes that this would be



A look in the stockroom in which you will find not only SmartWi products waiting to be delivered to the Benelux countries, but also their own Clark satellite receivers.

The flag gives away the location of Clark Electronics: here in this industrial park where Clark Electronics has its headquarters, 11 employees work for the company and manage sales of roughly four million Euros in 2007 – the expectations for 2008 are a little less. Clark Electronics is a part of A-BC Group with 35 employees; a wholesaler with electronics and electronic components for The Netherlands.

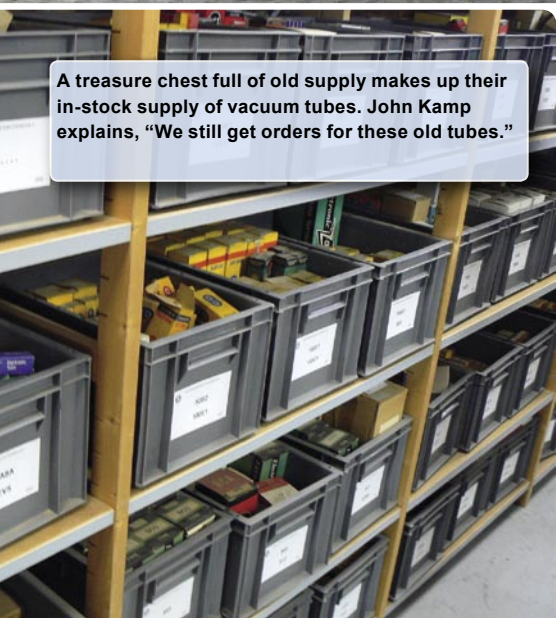


Where does Clark Electronics have its satellite dishes? Right here on their flat roof: a 100cm dish, a 90cm antenna with STAB motor and a 78cm dish. Two in-house technicians handle the repairs, "but most of the repair work has been out-sourced to a service company", explains John Kamp.





John Kamp is Director and COO of Clark Electronics. The map on the wall shows Japan and China. "I usually visit South Korea and China 10 times a year to work with our cooperative partners", explained John Kamp about his business trips.



A treasure chest full of old supply makes up their in-stock supply of vacuum tubes. John Kamp explains, "We still get orders for these old tubes."

an interesting market for PayTV providers. "How often does a second Smartcard ordered from a PayTV provider end up with a neighbor?"

enlightening; something we did not expect from a company celebrating their 70th year!

In his view, the solution is quite simple: if you no longer give out a second Smartcard, it could never come to this. Customers with multiple receivers can instead be offered SmartWi. A simple and truly "smart" solution.

Clark

SmartWi is already preparing for the day when their products are officially licensed: the company is now incorporated and working on completing their corporate design.



Our visit to Clark Electronics was very