

# Quality made by AB-COM

# ab-com

*High quality at a reasonable price – that’s the mission statement of Slovak receiver manufacturer AB-COM which entered the market in 2005 with its Linux-based set-top boxes. The SD receiver 200S was an instant success back then and is still being sold in large numbers today, since it is rated as one of the best and at the same time best-value Linux receivers available on the market. The company’s managing director Juraj Masaryk gave us a brief storyline of AB-COM’s past and an outlook of what the future may hold for the company.*



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■ AB-COM premises in Slovakia. One of the delivery trucks can be seen in front.

Strictly speaking, AB-COM already celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, but the company has gone through quite substantial changes in the past and in actual fact the year 1992 is considered as the starting point for AB-COM as a satellite company.

Up until that time AB-COM had been a PC distributor which had been founded by two partners. In 1992 Juraj Masaryk joined the team. He had been employed as a sales and purchasing manager by a satellite dealership before but decided to implement his own ideas at one stage.

Juraj Masaryk initially received a 25 percent shareholding from the existing AB-COM partners and began his career at the company with expanding the company's



■ Juraj Masaryk is a qualified engineer and runs AB-COM as managing director. In all modesty he calls himself sales and purchase manager and he is constantly identifying ways to optimise business processes. Here he is seen showing the organisation chart for 29 members of staff at AB-COM. "Some employees cover several areas of responsibility and the organisation chart details how much time they invest in the various tasks," Juraj explains. "Every week all activity reports are collected and evaluated." Thanks to this smart organisational structure AB-COM is well placed for future growth.





■ View of the AB-COM shop. Retail customer can buy satellite components right at the AB-COM premises. Sales manager Peter Hrnko is one of the five members of staff in the shop and is seen here presenting an AB-COM receiver. While satellite receiver production generates 70 percent of total turnover, AB-COM also supplies 3000 dealerships in Slovakia and the Czech Republic with all additional satellite components.

business to also include satellite components. To start with, AB-COM offered MMDS components for terrestrial television, which is a segment that still exists today, but with little or no significance for the overall market.

Today Juraj Masaryk owns 60 percent of AB-COM, with the two original partners having become dormant partners who leave the day-to-day business to Juraj. "AB-COM is now focussing on satellite receivers only," Juraj Masaryk tells us. This is where he sees future potential and this is where he can implement all his ideas.

At the beginning AB-COM imported receivers from various manufacturers, "but the performance was not up to my standards," Juraj Masaryk remembers. "I wanted to see my own visions become real."

But still, this was only one of several motivations to become a receiver manu-



■ Even with the most stringent quality checks in place you can never completely eliminate the need for repairs. René Hubinsky is one of the four software support engineers.

facturer. "I always believed that Linux would be a great match for satellite receivers," says Juraj Masaryk and so he went about using the advantages offered by Linux to put his ideas into practice. One of the tools to this end is the receivers' software that is developed in-house by AB-COM software engineers. "Software for SD receivers is already fully developed, and for the HD models it currently receives its final polishing." In the future, HD receivers from AB-COM will feature a dedicated Enigma HD AB version.

The third and – in the end – decisive argument for manufacturing AB-COM receivers is the famous Q word. "Quality is at the centre of our attention," Juraj states, but how can you guarantee that it remains high? Naturally, Juraj found a solution for that as well: The components are sourced from a Korean manufacturer as so called SKDs (semi knock down parts), assembled by AB-COM and individually tested.

Juraj shows us the label on the back of an AB-COM receiver: "You can read it right here: Tested in EU." This is AB-COM's way of guaranteeing that each single product operates to the company's exacting standards.

But it doesn't stop with production. Where are AB-COM receivers actually sold? Tomáš Kopecký is the sales manager for Europe and tells us that "in almost all European countries we cooperate with national distributors." With a glimpse at a map of the world Tomáš proudly adds " we are represented even in North America."

Of course there still are a few white spots on the map, such as France, Portugal, Turkey, Great Britain and North Africa. "We are still looking for distributors in those markets," Tomáš adds in flawless English and says "I look forward to getting in touch with distributors in those countries." Juraj explains that "of course we can also adapt our receivers to the requirements of individual markets. Right now we are working on such a project for the Ukrainian market."

"Currently some 30 percent of sales are generated with SD receivers, with the majority of 70 percent being HDTV boxes." Looking at the AB-COM 200S success model Tomáš explains that "from a strictly economic point of view this is our best product: It offers top quality with all required features at a reasonable price." Juraj seconds that "this is exactly why we

■ View of an area in the assembly shop: This is where externally sourced components are assembled by 16 employees until a finished AB-COM receiver can be individually tested for performance.



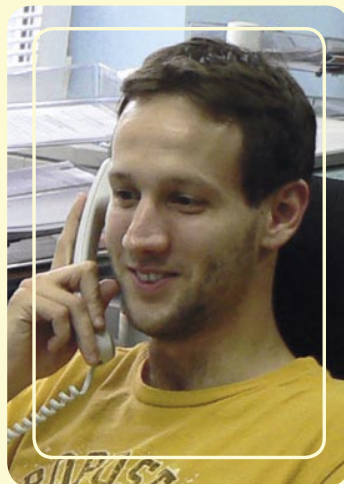
■ Warehouse manager Michal Valent is busy storing recently finished AB-COM receivers in the warehouse and preparing them for dispatch as orders roll in.



■ Sales manager Radovan Cifra cares about wholesale customers in Slovakia



■ Halo Juraj is the sales manager for wholesale customers in the Czech Republic.



■ Sales manager for Europe Tomáš Kopecký is the company's point of contact for distributors outside Slovakia and the Czech Republic. "We'd be more than happy to welcome new national distributors to our network!"



■ Juraj Bobula takes care of wholesale customers in Slovakia.

are working on launching a HD model following the same concept."

By the time you hold this issue in your hands the market launch should be just around the corner and the final product is expected to be very small, feature a smart card reader as well as the in-house Enigma HD AB operating system.

"For the 2009 financial year we envisage rising sales for our HD receivers to reach a share of 80 percent, with the year 2010 seeing a share of 90 percent," Tomáš interprets the sales projections for the years to come. "The AB-COM 350 Prime receiver, for example, comes with an interchangeable tuner and is a favourite of cable TV providers," Juraj highlights another development.

Yet, DVB-C is only one of several focuses at AB-COM. Juraj looks even farther into the future when he reveals that "as soon as the Enigma HD AB project is finished our software engineers will look at developing Enigma IPTV AB."

Juraj Masaryk can be more than happy with the way business has developed. "From 2007 to 2008 we were able to witness an almost 30 percent increase in turnover, and the rise for 2009 is expected to reach 20 percent," Juraj proudly states after a few clicks in the company's business software application.

"Total turnover almost reached ten million euros in 2008, and of course this level will be surpassed in 2009," Juraj continues with optimism and also informs us that new company premises are being



■ Juraj Masaryk is a genuine satellite enthusiast – even when he's not at work. Here he is seen on the balcony of his house next to a multi-LNB dish.

constructed as we speak. "This way there is enough room for future expansion!"

One thing is for sure: AB-COM likes to plan ahead. And this means that the future

is shaped actively. Innovation meets quality – all from one single source.

It sounds like an unbeatable recipe for even bigger success.



■ AB-COM attaches great importance to continued training: Once a year dealers are briefed on the latest development in a workshop. This 1-day event is sponsored by AB-COM and provides a welcome chance to dealers and AB-COM to get to know each other better.

Service engineer Martin Ďurinský ■ uses the workshop as a platform for demonstrating new features of AB-COM receivers



AB-COM will move into this new building on 1 October 2009 – the picture shows the architect's drawing. "We have outgrown the current building," Juraj explains. The construction crew is working to capacity so that the production shop with 6-metre ceiling and attached office wing will be ■ completed so soon as possible.

