



Pioneering solar solutions with roof flashing expertise

As the solar energy sector continues to flourish, the demand for reliable, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing installation solutions has never been higher. Enter DEKS Industries Europe Limited, a company with a rich heritage in innovative roof flashing technology that has seamlessly transitioned its expertise into the solar market. Established in 1946, DEKS has become a trusted name in providing high-quality products for the roofing, heating, and plumbing industries. Today, we take a closer look at its solar solutions with Oliver Janes, Managing Director for Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA), to understand how the business is shaping the future of solar installations.

PES: Oliver, thank you for joining us. DEKS has a strong reputation in the roofing industry. Can you tell us about how this expertise translates into your solar solutions?

Oliver Janes: It's a pleasure to be here. Our journey into solar solutions is a natural evolution of our core competencies. At DEKS, we've been perfecting the art of creating watertight, durable roof penetrations for decades. This experience is invaluable when it comes to solar installations, where protecting the integrity of the roof while facilitating the efficient installation of solar panels is paramount.

Our deep understanding of diverse roofing materials and structures allows us to design solar solutions that not only perform exceptionally, but also integrate seamlessly with existing roof systems. We recognise that a solar installation is only as good as its weakest link, and often, that link is where the system interfaces with the roof. This is where our expertise truly shines.

PES: Could you elaborate on some of the specific challenges in solar installations that your products address?

OJ: One of the primary challenges in solar installations is ensuring a watertight seal where cables and pipes penetrate the roof. Traditional methods often rely on makeshift solutions that can lead to leaks, energy loss, and even potential fire hazards. Our SolarDek range of products is specifically designed to overcome these issues.

For example, our Cable Flashings provide a safe, watertight entry point for cables, eliminating the risky practice of pushing cables under tiles. Similarly, our Solar Pipe Flashings ensure that any pipe penetrations, such as those for solar thermal systems, are completely sealed against the elements.

Another significant challenge is the aesthetic integration of solar panels with the existing roofline, particularly in residential installations. The DEKS FastFlash product addresses this by providing a sleek, low profile flashing solution for the abutment between panel mounting modules and roof tiles. The result is a visually appealing installation where all you see is the panel, the roof tiles, and our discreet flashing.

PES: The UK has seen a significant uptake in domestic solar installations. How have you adapted to meet this growing demand?

OJ: The growth in the domestic solar market has indeed been remarkable, and we've been proactive in scaling our operations to meet this surge in demand. We've invested heavily in our manufacturing capabilities and strengthened our supply chain to ensure we can deliver products quickly and efficiently.

But beyond just meeting volume requirements, we've also focused on product diversification. We understand

that the domestic market encompasses various installation types; on-roof, in-roof, and solar thermal. Each of these requires specific solutions, and we've developed products tailored to each scenario.

For on-roof installations, our Dek TileFlash Replacements have been particularly popular. They replace existing roof tiles and provide a sturdy, watertight foundation for mounting solar panel brackets. In the case of in-roof systems, where aesthetics are crucial, our Fast Flash product has been a game changer, allowing for seamless integration with the roofline.

PES: Let's dive deeper into some of your flagship products. Can you tell us more about SolarDek TileFlash and Bird Brush?

OJ: Absolutely. TileFlash is a product we're particularly proud of. It's an innovative solution for flat tile roofs that facilitates the passage of up to four cables through a rubber tile, while providing a cushion for solar hooks, reducing tile cracks and maintenance. Its low profile design minimises tile lift when used with solar hooks, making it a dual purpose mounting solution for solar PV arrays.

Bird Brush, meanwhile, is a flexible polypropylene brush designed to prevent birds from nesting under roof mounted solar panels. It features dense bristles and a stainless steel spine, forming a barrier around the solar array. The brush conforms to various roof shapes and maintains a low profile under the solar array and roofline, and can be installed before or after panel mounting.

PES: These products sound impressive. But in a competitive market, what would you say sets DEKS apart?

OJ: I believe our differentiator lies in our holistic approach to solar installations. We don't just provide individual components; we offer comprehensive solutions that address every aspect of the installation process. This starts with our product design philosophy; every DEKS product is engineered for ease of installation, longevity, and optimal performance.



Oliver Janes

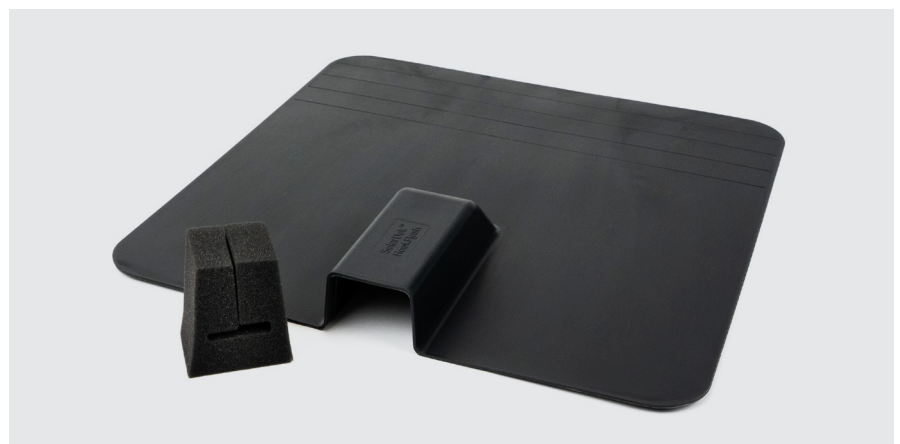
Take our Fast Flash, for example. It's not just a flashing; it's a fully adhesive flashing that looks aesthetically pleasing when installed, saving the installer time and money on installations; we love fit and forget solutions. This level of detail extends to our installation guides and support materials, which are designed to make the installer's job as straightforward as possible.

Furthermore, we have an unwavering commitment to quality. We back this up with robust warranties and dedicated customer support. When you choose DEKS, you're not just buying a product; you're investing in peace of mind.

PES: I understand DEKS is also making strides in the commercial solar sector, particularly with flat roof installations. Can you tell us more about that?

OJ: Our venture into flat roof installations for commercial buildings is an exciting development for us. We've partnered with a pioneering Scandinavian firm to bring a revolutionary non-ballast, waterproof solar panel mounting system to the UK market.

Traditional flat roof solar installations often rely on ballast systems; essentially, weighted structures that hold the solar





panels in place. While effective, these systems add significant weight to the roof, which can be problematic for buildings not initially designed to bear such loads. Our new system eliminates this issue entirely.

The system we're introducing is completely self-sealing. It integrates directly with the roof's waterproof membrane, as we match the membrane, creating a symbiotic relationship where the solar installation actually enhances the roof's waterproofing rather than compromising it by fixing directly to the building roof structure to create a solid base for mounting solutions.

What's more, by removing the need for ballast, we're able to maximise the available roof space for active solar generation. Every square

meter of the roof can potentially be utilised for energy production, significantly increasing the return on investment for commercial clients.

PES: As we look to the future, what do you believe are the key trends that will shape the solar industry, and how is DEKS preparing for them?

OJ: I believe we're on the cusp of a new era in solar energy. The integration of solar with other technologies, such as electric vehicles, home automation, and the Internet of Things, will become increasingly seamless. This convergence will drive demand for more sophisticated, interconnected solar solutions.

Energy storage will also play a pivotal role. As battery technology advances and costs decrease, we'll see a growing number of

installations paired with storage systems. This shift will require solar components that can easily interface with these storage solutions.

Aesthetics will continue to be a major factor, especially in the residential market. Solar installations will need to be less obtrusive and more customisable to suit individual preferences. This is where our expertise in creating low profile, visually appealing products will be crucial.

In terms of installation practices, I foresee a move towards more standardised, modular approaches. This will help improve installation speed and quality while reducing costs. We're already designing our products with this modularity in mind.

Sustainability will remain at the forefront, with increasing scrutiny on the entire lifecycle of solar products. We're committed to not only making our products more environmentally friendly but also ensuring that our manufacturing and distribution processes are as sustainable as possible.

Lastly, I believe that community and commercial scale solar projects will see significant growth. These larger installations bring their own set of challenges, from planning and permissions to maintenance and monitoring. We're gearing up to provide comprehensive solutions for these larger scale projects.

To prepare for these trends, we're fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation within DEKS. We're actively engaging with research institutions, participating in industry forums, and most importantly, listening to our customers. Their experiences and insights are invaluable in shaping our future strategies.

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