

CEO Sharp Europe: “LED technology is a quantum leap for LCD TVs and is revolutionising the future of the television market”

It was with these words that Hiroshi Sasaoka, CEO of Sharp Electronics Europe, opened the Sharp press conference at this year’s IFA. Now that the technological race to make larger and thinner devices is over, LED backlight technology is bringing both image brilliance and energy consumption to new levels. LEDs are sure to dominate the future television market, and this is the reason that the Japanese electronics company sets great store on its decades of experience in LCD and LED technology, as well as the market edge it holds on account of Sakai, the most modern LCD TV factory in the world.

Berlin, IFA 2009. LED technology is causing a stir like never before in the consumer electronics industry. It is also revolutionising the LCD TV market. According to Sharp’s forecast, starting in 2010, LCD TVs with LED backlight technology will become firmly established on the market - especially in western Europe - and will replace conventional LCD technology completely in the mid-term. DisplaySearch predicts that 81 million LED LCD TVs will be sold around the globe in 2013 and in 2010, Europe will be the largest market for televisions with LED technology, with a market share of around 45 per cent.

“The success of LED technology clearly shows that if you want to be a part of shaping the future of the television market, you need to not only have the latest know-how in terms of producing LCDs, but also in terms of LEDs. Sharp has over three decades of LCD know-how and nearly forty years of experience in LED technology. We consider this new technology to be the next level for LCD TVs, and our product line-up with our AQUOS LCD TVs, featuring LED backlight technology, reflects this” says Hiroshi Sasaoka, CEO of Sharp Electronics Europe. “We predict that in 2009 the LCD TV market in Europe will grow to over 40 million units. Sharp plans to sell two million LCD TVs in Europe this year, most of which already have the LED backlight technology” Sasaoka continued.

When the AQUOS XS1 was made available for purchase last year, it meant that this pioneer in LCD technology was one of the first to have an LCD TV with RGB LED backlight technology on the market. Sharp is setting new standards in picture quality. The latest devices in the AQUOS LE series with full LED backlight are state-of-the-art LCD TVs that set themselves apart from the rest on account of their excellent picture quality. Furthermore, they have the least energy consumption of all LCD TVs around. The power consumption of these power consumption world champions is roughly 50 per cent less during standard mode than conventional LCD TVs on the market, and they even undercut other LED TVs by an additional 15 per cent.

The new AQUOS LED TVs will use new generation LCD panel, which will be manufactured at the new Sharp Factory in Sakai, Japan. The company has invested nearly three billion euros during the past two years to establish a manufacturing park

comprising of 1.3 million square metres and houses not only the most modern LCD and solar plant in the world but also numerous subcontractors.

“The world’s very first 10th generation LCD plant and largest thin-film solar module factory is currently being built in Sakai right now. Our LCD production will begin in October, five months ahead of schedule. We are responding to the high demand for high-quality panels and televisions that feature the latest LCD technology,” Sasaoka explained. “In Sakai, mother glasses that are nearly ten square metres in size with measurements of 2.88 X 3.13 metres are processed into so-called X-Gen LCDs, which are the heart of our latest AQUOS LED TVs. Our maximum production capacity in Sakai is 72,000 mother glasses per month, which, for instance, means that Sharp is in a position to manufacture 13 million 40" LCD TV panels each year. In 2010 alone this implies that nearly every tenth LCD TV panel in the world will be manufactured in our plant in Sakai,” Sasaoka continued.

Sakai is also the most ecologically developed industrial complex in the world. It has a 28 megawatt solar power facility, which is the biggest in the world, consisting of an 18 megawatt solar roof installation on the buildings and a ten megawatt free field installation in front of the manufacturing complex of Sakai. Lighting at Sakai is provided by over 100,000 LEDs, saving 17,750 tonnes of CO2 emissions every year, which also means that this plant has the largest LED installation in the world. The production of thin film solar modules is scheduled to begin in March 2010.

Ten years ago, the television market underwent a radical change with the introduction of LCD TVs. Sharp was the very first company to focus entirely on LCD TVs, and by doing research and developing new technologies, the company was able to move the market forward. LCD has become the most widely used TV technology. LED technology has now managed to achieve yet another quantum leap and sets new standards in both the picture quality and the eco-performance of flatscreen televisions. Sharp has been a part of developing this technology, and its very first products made it a global leader. Having decades of experience in both LCD and LED technology, as well as the means to further this technology of the future at its 10th generation LCD TV plant in Sakai, Sharp will continue to shape the future of the LCD TV market for a long time to come.

Reprint free, copy requested.

For more information, please visit www.sharp.eu.

For movies, please see www.youtube.com/user/SharpEurope

For press pictures please see www.flickr.com/photos/sharpelectronics

Visit Sharp during IFA also at www.twitter.com/Sharp_IFA

With its global environment strategy, Sharp has made environmental protection an integral part of its corporate culture. What we call the Sharp Super Green Strategy covers the production of energy-saving and energy-generating products in ecologically advanced plants, along with responsible recycling. One of the company's main aims on the road to becoming an "environmentally advanced company" is to significantly reduce both direct and indirect CO₂ emissions in our operations and products. Throughout the world, Sharp has defined environmental standards that apply to all our plants and products, and these are being continuously revised and dynamically improved.

You can find more information about Sharp's environmental activities on http://www.sharp.eu/sharp/apps/eu/green_site/green_site.html.