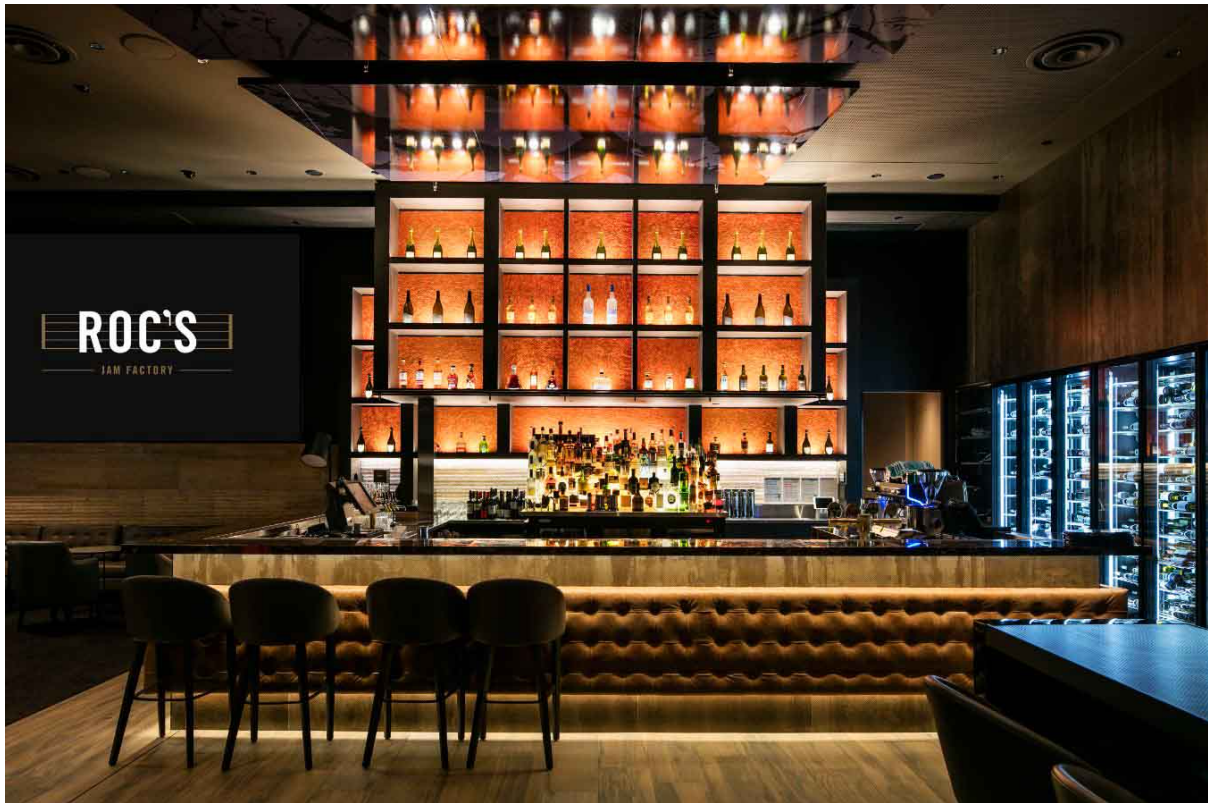


Three Coating Company CEOs Walk into a Bar...

By PCN Editor



Picture this: The CEOs of **AkzoNobel**, **Hempel**, and **PPG** stroll into a bar after a gruelling year of navigating inflation, continued supply chain mayhem, and a pinch of geopolitical tension. They don't need the bartender to ask what they're having – they're all after the same thing: something strong enough to wipe out the taste of 2024 but smooth enough to sip while talking growth strategies.

AkzoNobel CEO Starts Strong

AkzoNobel's CEO takes the lead. "2024 was like playing darts blindfolded," he muses. "But hey, we hit some bullseyes! Our volumes stabilized, pricing stayed resilient, and we even saw the first hints of raw material deflation." They take a victorious sip. "Powder Coatings? Boom. Deco in China? Navigated that rough pricing environment like a pro."

The bartender nods approvingly, not quite understanding, but impressed by the CEO's confident tone. "But what really got us through? Absorbing global inflation like a sponge. That's right, we squeezed out those currency effects and still beat our targets."

Hempel CEO Drops Some Wisdom

Hempel's CEO swirls his drink thoughtfully, taking a different tone. "You know, we've been navigating this storm with our **Double Impact strategy**. High inflation, low consumer confidence, supply chain disruptions – you name it, we saw it. But our tech game? On point. Cutting-edge solutions, sustainable brands, all while keeping our eyes on what really matters – making our customers happy."

The bartender raises an eyebrow. "Double Impact, huh? Sounds like a new cocktail."

"Yeah, it's a mix of resilience and innovation," the Hempel CEO grins. "Keeps you afloat, even in the Red Sea... which, by the way, has been giving us a hard time with those shipping lanes."

PPG CEO Toasts to a Comeback

The PPG CEO, not one to be outdone, raises his glass. "Sure, we had some bumps – slow home sales, soft industrial production, skilled labour shortages, you know, the usual. But did we crumble? Nope. Our **fifth consecutive quarter** of margin improvement? Cheers to that! We crushed it in China, Mexico's booming, and aerospace is flying high."

Everyone nods, appreciating the wordplay. "We might have taken a few hits, but we delivered record operating cash flow – over \$2.4 billion," PPG's CEO adds with a wink. "That's enough to buy this bar... twice."

The Future: Cheers to 2025!

The bartender, caught up in the energy, decides to join the conversation. "So, what's next for you folks? More challenges? More growth?"

AkzoNobel's CEO leans back, confidently. "We're all about the rebound. Positive volumes, share gains, and hey, our coatings business is just warming up. We're going to push those volumes past 2019 levels, mark my words."

Hempel's CEO chimes in, "We're going all in on **Marine, Infrastructure, and Energy** – the big trio. Our innovation pipeline is pumping, sustainability's the driver, and we're not slowing down."

Finally, PPG's CEO finishes their drink and declares, "2025 is the year of strategic growth. We're eyeing China, Mexico, and every infrastructure project

we can get our hands on. With our tech-advantaged products, we're going to be everywhere – from LNG to EVs.”

The Bartender's Take

The bartender, clearly amused, lines up another round. “Well, whatever happens, you three definitely know how to paint the town... literally and figuratively.”

The CEOs laugh, clinking their glasses. As they sip their drinks, it's clear that, despite the challenges, they're all in it for the long haul. After all, in the world of coatings, a little pressure just makes the finish that much shinier.

