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the pendants are lighter weight, they are easier to handle, save time during erection, installation, and decommissioning, and are easier to transport. Faster crane operations mean faster jobs which can lead to more jobs with a crane in the same amount of time. Safer crane operations mean less risk at sudden load release and less risk of falling backwards at maximum height.

The lightweight cables and pendants make possible the downsizing of constructions, which save on construction and manufacturing time, purchase, installation time, and provide less total weight of the crane. Since they are maintenance free, there is no greasing or painting necessary which in turn saves money. There is also no risk of loose strands as with steel wire ropes and no risk of injury to crane operators.

Winding from the past to the future

The voyage that led to FibreMax's founding started with FibreMax president Rinze van der Schuit. He had a business making yacht rigging. They produced bigger and bigger cables (up to 800 to 900 tonne breaking loads) and eventually he realized that the technique they were using for sailing yachts could also be used in the lifting industry.



Besides heavy lifting, FibreMax has also become interested in the offshore industry, particularly the production of mooring cables, some of which can have a break load of 1,000 to 1,200 tonnes and be two miles long.

In a recent interview with International Cranes and Specialized Transport magazine, van der Schuit said that overall, the potential in the offshore market is considerably higher than heavy lift, and they have plans to build a 5 km long manufacturing plant to make mooring cables.

A factory of that size is a bit hard to picture, but will have only enough room for the endless winding machine. Human activity will take place in the administrative hall at the end. "Our plans for the factory are still alive and active," says van Zonneveld. "It takes time to develop all the necessary steps. There has to be sufficient interest and support from the offshore industry, but we're working hard on this and based

on the feedback we get from the industry, the factory seems to be realized in a not too distant future."

Besides mooring cables, with their technology they could also produce big cables for suspension bridges in their ultra-long factory, which will be located near the sea for easy access to shipping. FibreMax's current factory in Joure can produce pendants up to 80 m long. It will be joined by a second unit, producing cables up to 150 m, later this year. Their current factory will be expanded to produce the longer pendants.

FibreMax's lightweight precision tension members are available in any break load, diameter and length. With their highly automated endless winding production process it is possible to produce pendants that are fully customized and adapted to their customer's requirements, which could literally "take the load off" of the crane, heavy lifting, structural, and oil and gas industries. **WRN**

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