

Asia

Revenue fell by 12.5%, the result of legacy issues including the cancellation of the Hong Kong government contract and weaker government business in China (including the non-repeat of the Olympics pest control contracts). Excluding these items revenue fell by 0.2%. There has also been a severe decline in the fumigation business in Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia as a result of slower international trade in 2009. This decline was marginally offset by growth in Indonesia, India and Korea.

Profit declined by £4.7 million largely due to the impact of charges related to the clean up of prior year control and acquisition issues as well as lower revenue noted above.

Pacific

In the Pacific region revenue was 1.7% below the prior year due to weaker residential jobbing in the Pest business and loss of portfolio in the Ambius business. Profit grew by 4.3%, led by a strong turnaround in Australian Pest, a steady Washrooms performance and aggressive cost-savings programmes.

Service levels in the Australian Pest Control business reached a record 98.9% during 2009. Contract turnover rose by 2.8%. However, job revenue declined due to reduced demand for pre-construction termite barriers due to a downturn in building construction. DSO improved by 10 days to 42 days.

Washrooms service has continued to improve and is now at 97.1% but contract portfolio declined by 7.1%, revenue by 1.3%. Service staff retention increased year on year from 14.3% to 53.3%. This has led to improved service levels which in turn have led to an improved contract retention rate of 78.8%.

Cash performance has been strong and debtor days have decreased from 55 days to 42 days year on year.

During the year the Asia Pacific management team was significantly strengthened by the appointments of a new Managing Director, Finance Director and other senior country heads.

2010 preview

Market conditions in some of our Asian and Pacific markets are expected to improve in 2010. Against this backdrop we expect to achieve a modest overall improvement across the region through improved retention, focusing on high levels of service and implementing a continuing series of cost reduction measures.

Ambius

Market conditions

Growth declined in 2009 as demand for products and services softened in the major markets, especially in the US, UK, France and Belgium and principally the result of challenging economic conditions. All markets are highly fragmented with a large number of small operators, although the larger companies have a competitive advantage in terms of route density and product offering. Ambius currently has approximately 55,000 customers over 13 countries.

£m	Fourth quarter 2009	2008	change	Full year 2009	2008	change
At 2008 constant exchange rates:						
Revenue	30.5	35.2	(13.4%)	106.8	119.3	(10.5%)
APBITA*	4.3	4.9	(12.2%)	7.6	9.9	(23.2%)
At actual exchange rates:						
APBITA*	4.9	5.0	(2.0%)	8.8	9.9	(11.1%)

*Adjusted profit before interest, one-off items and amortisation and impairment of intangible assets, other than computer software.

Ambius has experienced exceptionally difficult market conditions in 2009. Revenue fell 10.5% as a result of increasing contract terminations and a 22.3% decline in job sales. Although overall customer retention fell from 81.9% in 2008 to 77.3%, it improved in the second half to 79.8% (H1 2009: 75.2%).

Adjusted operating profit fell 23.2%. In addition to adjusting service head count in line with portfolio movement, the business has been pursuing a number of cost savings initiatives to mitigate revenue decline.

North America has been weak with a 12.3% decline in revenue. Portfolio has been impacted by the difficult economy and customer retention fell by five percentage points to 75.0% but improved as the year progressed. Job sales declined 21.0% year on year, but showed greater resilience in Q4 with Holiday sales only falling by 11.2% year on year.

Revenue in Europe declined 8.1% with most countries experiencing difficult economic conditions. Customer retention declined from 83.8% in 2008 to 79.9% but, as with the US, improved towards the end of the year. Profit was adversely impacted by increased redundancy costs, an increase in bad debts and a 24.6% reduction in job sales year on year.

Sales of brand extension services, including ambient scenting and fresh fruit delivery, have continued to rise during the period and now account for 11.8% of total contract sales compared to 7.2% in 2008.

Operating cash flow has been a key focus for 2009 with conversion of 165% compared to 81% in 2008. This has been achieved through a focus on working capital and tight control over capital expenditure. DSO at 37 days improved by two days year on year.

2010 preview

Trading for Ambius in 2010 is anticipated to remain challenging in all markets, at least for the first half of the year. The implementation of cost savings initiatives in 2009 will show a full year impact in 2010 as we attempt to maintain our current levels of profitability.

City Link

Market conditions

2009 saw unprecedented declines within the domestic parcel market. In the 12 months to the end of Q4 2009 the value of the market fell by some 8% (£170 million) year on year. Severe pressure on price has accounted for almost all of this decline. Volumes in the final quarter of 2009 were 6% higher than in 2008, resulting in full year volumes remaining broadly similar to the previous year.

£m	Fourth quarter 2009	2008	change	Full year 2009	2008	change
At 2008 constant exchange rates:						
Revenue	100.9	97.2	3.8%	353.1	381.9	(7.5%)
APBITA*	2.7	(4.0)	-	(5.6)	(43.5)	87.1%

*Adjusted profit before interest, one-off items and amortisation and impairment of intangible assets, other than computer software.

City Link's operating loss of £5.6 million is £37.9 million better than the corresponding loss in 2008 despite a £28.8 million reduction in reported revenue to £353.1 million. The business returned to profitability in Q4 2009 posting a profit of £2.7 million – £6.7 million better than the corresponding period in 2008. Revenue declined by 7.5%, impacted by difficult economic conditions, pricing competition and the full year effect of poor service in 2008. Q4 revenue was £15.8 million (19%) higher than Q3 reflecting the seasonal sales uplift, and £3.7 million (3.8%) ahead of Q4 2008, with particularly strong growth in the B2C business.

Volumes were down 3.1% on 2008 and revenue per consignment (RPC) weakened by 4.5% on the prior year.

City Link's customer base has been broadly consistent throughout the year although many are trading at lower levels. The market has been extremely competitive during 2009 with severe price cutting by competitors in order to drive volumes through their networks.

City Link's improved loss performance has been driven by cost savings of £54 million in 2009. This was achieved through depot closures (97 to 84 by year end) and reductions in vehicles and headcount. Vehicle fleet numbers are a third lower than this time last year and total employee numbers have fallen below 5,500, a 16% reduction since December 2008. Plans to migrate from two hubs to one will be implemented by the end of H1 2010.

Apart from periods of heavy snow in early February and early December 2009, customer service has remained consistently above our 98.5% target. The restoration of customer call handling at depots was completed early in the year and has been met with very positive customer feedback.

The successful roll-out of new hand-held scanners and an upgraded route scheduling tool has underpinned improved productivity and customer service. The functionality of the new scanners has been expanded to allow delivery drivers to capture real-time customers' door and parcel images. This latter feature, which we believe is industry-leading, will further aid electronic, real-time proof of delivery. Additional improvements include the recently relaunched City Link website which has been very positively received by customers.

DSO at the end of the year was 34 days, an improvement of 10 days on 2008.

2010 preview

There have been signs of recovery within the market recently, with forecasts suggesting the parcel market will return to positive growth by the latter stages of 2010. Even so the market is expected to remain very competitive throughout the coming year as excess capacity in the industry still remains the predominant feature.

Facilities Services

Market conditions

Market conditions deteriorated during 2009 with customers continuing to look for cost reductions. However, the number of administrations/closures has slowed considerably.

£m	Fourth quarter 2009	2008	change	Full year 2009	2008	change
At 2008 constant exchange rates:						
Revenue	150.6	164.4	(8.4%)	608.6	653.0	(6.8%)
APBITA*	11.6	9.2	26.1%	26.3	18.4	42.9%
At actual exchange rates:						
APBITA*	11.6	9.2	26.1%	26.6	18.4	44.6%

*Adjusted profit before interest, one-off items and amortisation and impairment of intangible assets, other than computer software.