35 Years OF SETTING TRENDS FOR MEASURING SYSTEMS

The Path To Becoming A World Market Leader - A Corporate Story
Innovation: Made in Germany - Greatest Precision And Accuracy For The Highest Demands
Dear Reader,

You cannot survive the competition of the market over years and years if you don’t stand for values like efficiency, reliability and trust. IMS measuring systems have set the global standard for measuring technology in rolling mills for the steel and non-ferrous metal industries for 35 years now.

We as a company often look back with pride. We have learnt a lot on our road to success – things we must not forget. People need memories and that is also true for us at IMS. We need memories to form an identity, which in turn creates strong ties between us as a company and our customers and staff. We can only face new challenges if we know where we have come from and what we have already achieved. We know very well that it is only our achievements of the past 35 years that make it possible for us to work as we do in the present. We know what the market demands and are in a position to respond to these demands quickly. Of course also because we draw the right conclusions from our experiences. One thing we should not do is stand still. The English composer Benjamin Britten once said: “Learning is like rowing against the current. You go backwards as soon as you stop.” If we don’t learn something new every day and follow new ideas, we will go backwards. Our company is therefore like an orchestra that rehearses new music like pieces from Benjamin Britten every day in order to master them perfectly. This is how you create harmony.

As the world leader for measuring systems, we use our experience to secure our place in the future. We are not averse to learning something new in every second and are willing to face every challenge. As your reliable partner for innovative measuring technology, we look forward to another 35 years full of progress and experiences. In this sense I would like to thank our customers and staff for their many years of trust and look forward to a new successful age with our customers, partners and employees.
CONTENTS

8  Cover Story
   The Path to Becoming a World Market Leader – A Company Story

20  On Course for Expansion
    In Demand Worldwide: Measuring Systems from IMS

22  The IMS Group and Representatives

30  Technical Progress
    A World of Firsts

32  Service at IMS

42  Innovation: Made in Germany

44  Never Rest on Your Laurels

46  FIRSTS: IMS as Pioneer

50  Around the World in 35 Years

56  The IMS Corporate Culture

68  Thank You!
The headquarters of IMS Messsysteme GmbH in Heiligenhaus

The company has spread continuously in 35 years of steady growth.
(The buildings belonging to IMS are shown in blue)
THE PATH TO BECOMING A WORLD MARKET LEADER

A company story

THE ORIGIN AT AEG AND H&B

“At the start everything was a bit of an adventure,” remembers founder member Hans Schneider with a grin. In the early days the engineers did truly everything on their own in the workshop. It all started with the development of radiometric measurement techniques and these took on speed rapidly. Radiometric level measurement was developed at AEG-Telefunken in the late fifties; this was followed by radiometric density measurement in the sixties and then radiometric area density and thickness measurement. And then the later IMS had the luck that Hartmann & Braun AG (H&B) decided to get out of radiometry. But this is telling the story too fast. First of all, all the activities in the area of radiometric measurement technology were passed from AEG-Telefunken to H&B because there was already a participation agreement. With this corporate co-operation agreement the foundation stone was laid for the type of “radiometric measurement systems” that are used today in the production of hot- and cold-rolled tubular and flat products. In 1965 the first tube wall thickness measurement system was developed for the firm of Mannesmann. Four years later H&B equipped the then August-Thyssen steelworks with the first radiometric thickness measurement system.

FOUNDATION OF "IMS ISOTOPEN-MESSSYSTEME GMBH" IN 1980

In September, 1979 H&B gave up the complete “Radiometry” product area. “It was simply an unloved child for Hartmann und Braun,” says founder member Hans Schneider. And Rainier Fackert, Technical Managing Director of IMS, adds: “All the developments were there but they simply did not see the future.” The reasons for getting out of the field were of a business economics type which made slimming down the range of products at H&B appear necessary. Jobs were at stake. Among those affected were Paul Flormann and Bernhard Mengelkamp. The two H&B employees knew everything there was to know about radiometric measurement technology. As early as the middle of the sixties Bernhard Mengelkamp had published a textbook on the theme of “Radioscopy in Measurement and Control Technology”. Not to mention the fact that Mengelkamp and Flormann had been centrally involved in the trailblazing developments in the field of radiometry. And this as early as the middle of the fifties. Now that their jobs were at risk they got together. The decision was reached quickly: “We’ll go it alone.” They wanted to set up their own firm.

THE FOUNDATION WAS TRUST

The two development engineers brought in Hans Schneider. He had worked at H&B for many years in operations scheduling and would take over the commercial side in the new firm. Schneider: “Actually my job at H&B was not at risk.” At H&B he had 40 employees under him. And he was annoyed. For example he promised salary increases to individual employees which he was first able to realize one and a half years later: “I didn’t want to be just a front man any longer,” he says and one can still see his dissatisfaction today. In the future he wanted to work with people he trusted. The three men had known each other from the fifties and trusted each other. Not a bad starting point for the foundation of a company. Although the contract negotiations with H&B on the taking over of the radiometry business had still not been concluded, the new firm was registered on 15th January, 1980 under the name “IMS Isotopen Messsysteme GmbH”.

After hard negotiations a contract was signed with H&B on 1st April, 1980. The firm of IMS could now make a start with production. The contract regulated the taking over of all the relevant technical documents and proprietary rights. Naturally these alone were not enough. IMS also needed the customers. The founders agreed the taking over of the customers and directly afterwards personal contact was taken up with these to confirm the carrying on of the radiometric measurement technology work with them by IMS.

WHAT ELSE WAS NEEDED?

A bank. On the basis of a recommendation a contact was made quickly and thereby the founders found a receptive partner for financial bottlenecks in the form of the Sparkasse Kettwig bank. Schneider: “The bankers knew us and trusted us.” He remembered for example simply ringing the bank when a big order was coming up and saying: “We need money.” The necessary insurance policies were concluded with AEG’s own agency “EAS”. And then there were the costs for the take-over and also the start of production. The price for taking over the H&B radiometry department was DM 500,000. Hans Schneider explains that H&B were also helpful, agreeing to an immediate payment of DM 100,000 with the balance to be paid in five annual instalments of DM 80,000. “They knew they could not demand so much at the start otherwise we would have been bankrupt directly having got founded.” All the founders believed in the firm. They took out mortgages on their houses and also put in their redundancy payments for the start-up capital.

Paul Flormann, Bernhard Mengelkamp and Hans Schneider now had everything that they needed. With the additional help of a setting-up loan from the state the start must succeed. By the way: Hans Schneider could not enter the firm officially until 1st July, 1980 – he had to wait until his period of notice time at H&B had expired.

AND SOMEWHERE HAD TO BE FOUND FOR THE PRODUCTION

IMS started production in an old building of the old weaving firm of Scheidt which had been shut down. The building was located on the north side of the Kettwig reservoir. The rooms and the way they were equipped in the initial years were more makeshift than appropriate. There was not enough space and no modern offices. Thus it occasionally came about that one or other measuring frame had to be assembled outdoors or even in front of the building. Just a small canopy provided protection from rain and wind and a simple chain hoist had to serve for loading. But everything turned out very well. IMS grew in the first year to having a total of 7 employees. All former H&B employees. ▶
ENORMOUS QUANTITIES OF DATA HAD TO BE PROCESSED
Right from the time of its founding IMS started with the computer-supported processing of signals. The firm backed the development of suitable hardware components and purchased these. Computer-supported signal processing was at that time a precondition for multi-channel measuring systems measuring simultaneously. Otherwise it would not have been possible to cope with the large quantities of data rapidly and reliably. The best known multi-channel measuring system was the profile measuring system of the first generation for hot-rolled flat products from the year 1983. In the following year IMS extended its range of products to include optical measuring systems. At the end of the eighties X-ray technology, was introduced, followed by rapid and highly precise detectors matched to this technology. Without these different development steps that were passed through and without the present-day high-performance computers today’s state of the art multi-channel measuring systems could not be conceived. Often these have many more than 100 channels and can reliably measure centre-thickness, thickness cross profile, non-parallelism, edge drop, contour and flatness as well as longitudinal and transverse temperature profiles in each case in the rolling mills.

CRAMPED SPACE
Slowly things got very cramped. The initially rented space soon became inadequate. So the firm extended year by year in the old building of the former weaving mill. First of all a wall was moved; then came the move into the larger ground floor. Before production could be started here there was an “important” event: First of all the employees celebrated Bernhard Menegkamp’s 50th birthday in the empty rooms.

WORKING RESOURCES
One of the first relatively large purchases was a second-hand blue printer. The old darling is still around today in the IMS headquarters in Hellingenhaus. In the commercial area a revolution was taking place in the eighties: The first IBM computers were installed. Nevertheless the commercial staff didn’t want to take any risks in the early days of the computer age. “In case of emergencies” they wanted to be able to carry out each operation by hand if necessary.

“DO WITHOUT” IN THE BAD TIMES AND “MEATBALLS” WHEN THINGS WERE GOING WELL
The trend was not always upwards. Some two years after the firm had been founded short-time working had to be introduced for the first time. During a later crisis the managers did without 10% of their salaries. All the crises were overcome without damage. The founder trio acted in accordance with the motto: “When times are bad, a big pot will be put in the middle of the table and then we will all eat together therefrom.” This worked. When the order book was very full work was carried on sometimes for 72 hours without a break. The employees lay down to sleep on the bare floor next to their desks. Sometimes when the work went on and on someone would go out and bring back a basket with meatballs and potato salad. Employees felt themselves to be members of a family rather than small anonymous cogs in a large corporate machine. An important precondition for effective co-operation from which all profited.

LITTLE ANECDOTES
But sometimes luck also played a role. One time the delayed delivery of a system saved the company from financial loss. If the system had been delivered – as initially planned – one day earlier, it would have gone into the customer’s bankruptcy assets. Another time there was the threat of a contractual penalty for late delivery. Luckily a rescue mode was found based on the very good personal contact with the customer. It was quickly agreed that the system should be accepted by the customer at IMS prior to delivery. But “unfortunately” the responsible person at the customer’s suddenly had no time for the acceptance at IMS and this for two complete weeks. Accordingly the delivery was delayed but now the blame for this lay with the customer and not with IMS.

On another occasion a customer was dissatisfied with the measurement results from the system as delivered and held back DM 10,000 from the invoice total. The reason: From time to time the measurements were incorrect. No one at IMS could find the reason for this. No agreement was reached and with great grinding of teeth the DM 10,000 was written off. Five years later the customer made contact again and paid the outstanding DM 10,000. It had been found that from time to time water got into a pipe and falsified the measurement results. IMS’s measuring system had functioned properly all the time.

In the early days the contact with customers was more at a personal level than today. In difficult times too one could rely on another. Joint responsibility was held to be very important. If there was a “fire” somewhere, then one helped each other – even in the middle of the night. And after successful co-operation one sat down together for a beer or two.

SMALL BUT SMART
As a small firm IMS was able to perform better than when its members had been part of HSB. The paths within the firm were short – everything functioned without formality. A new development could be stopped halfway through if it became clear that the wrong direction had been taken. A priceless advantage compared to a large firm with a huge hierarchy. Luckily there were no really severe crises which might have driven the firm to the edge of ruin. Resignation never came about. Every employee was aware of what was important for the company and everyone pulled together. And the banks played along too when there were bottlenecks. They trusted the trust in IMS and have been prepared to provide short-term bridging capital with non-bureaucratic methods from time to time.
Die Stadt lockte Firma aus Kettwig den Berg hoch nach Hatterscheidt


Die Firma entwickelt Meßsysteme für die chemische Industrie, für die Medizin, für die Forschung und für die Luft- und Raumfahrt. Die Firma produziert moderne Meßgeräte, die allen, die es genau wissen wollen, es auch genau ausmessen und sagen können.

Die Firma hat rund 50 Mitarbeiter, Auslandsaktivität in Erwartung. Die Firma baut in Hatterscheidt, wo es auf präpariertem Boden eine Firma mit modernsten Anlagen und hochentwickelten Methoden von der Firma IMS produziert.

TAGES-THEMA: zwei Geräte mit radioaktiver Strahlung steckte in die Endmontage. Das Geräte der IMS liefen in der Endmontage wieder auf, wurden für die Firma technisch, wissenschaftlich und technisch aufbereitet.

Die Geschichte der IMS beginnt mit der Entwicklung von radioaktiven Meßgeräten. Die Firma hat rund 50 Mitarbeiter, die sich auf die Firma IMS konzentrieren. Die Firma produziert Meßgeräte, die allen, die es genau wissen wollen, es auch genau ausmessen und sagen können.

Die Firma entwickelt Meßsysteme für die chemische Industrie, für die Medizin, für die Forschung und für die Luft- und Raumfahrt. Die Firma produziert moderne Meßgeräte, die allen, die es genau wissen wollen, es auch genau ausmessen und sagen können.

Die Firma hat rund 50 Mitarbeiter, Auslandsaktivität in Erwartung. Die Firma baut in Hatterscheidt, wo es auf präpariertem Boden eine Firma mit modernsten Anlagen und hochentwickelten Methoden von der Firma IMS produziert.

Die Geschichte der IMS beginnt mit der Entwicklung von radioaktiven Meßgeräten. Die Firma hat rund 50 Mitarbeiter, die sich auf die Firma IMS konzentrieren. Die Firma produziert Meßgeräte, die allen, die es genau wissen wollen, es auch genau ausmessen und sagen können.
Dieselstraße in Heiligenhaus in 1986

The first building of IMS Messysteme GmbH in

THE MOVE TO HEILIGENHAUS

Each year IMS needed more space. The measuring frames manufactured became ever larger and it became increasingly difficult to lift the heavy loads. Thereby loading became ever more "exciting". Further expansions to the building, which was protected as a historic monument, were not possible. So after six years the Kettwig time drew to an end. IMS manufactured its first profile measuring system in the old premises: an aluminium profile measuring system that was shipped to the U.S.A. In addition the increasing size of the order book and continuous increases to the team of employees meant that a move could not be put off any longer.

In 1986 IMS moved to Heiligenhaus and into its own tailor-made headquarters. Heiligenhaus offered itself as a location because practically all the former H&B employees lived there. Furthermore the location between the industrial conurbation of the Ruhrgebiet and the city of Duesseldorf appeared to be particularly favourable. The number of personnel had now risen to 31. The city of Heiligenhaus was delighted with the location decision of such a well-known firm. This was also reflected in articles in the Rheinische Post, Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung and Neue Ruhr/Rhein Zeitung newspapers.

FURTHER TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In 1987 IMS made a start with the development of advanced tube wall thickness measuring systems. At the end of the eighties the X-ray technology was introduced. For this field IMS had developed special detectors and high-voltage generators. These form the heart of this technology. Today X-ray technology is dominant in the area of measuring thicknesses and coatings. For the development and manufacturing of the X-ray components a stand-alone firm was founded in the year 2000, namely the "IMS-Röntgensysteme" under the management of Michael Aldenhövel. "IMS-Röntgensysteme" naturally supplies "IMS Messsysteme" with the X-ray components for the latter's radiometric measuring systems. But the free market is also supplied with X-ray components for non-competitive applications. In the mid nineties the third generation of the multi-channel profile measuring system was introduced, this then being itself replaced in 2005 by the fourth generation. In the area of optical measuring systems IMS developed the "TopPlan®" strip flatness measuring system in 2001. The following year the "IMSpect" optical coating gauge was put into operation for the first time. In 2005 IMS developed an ultrasonic multi-channel profile measuring system that a move could not be put off any longer.

IMS employs around 420 persons around the world. In the following year the "IMSpect" optical coating gauge was put into operation for the first time. In 2005 IMS developed an ultrasonic multi-channel profile measuring system that a move could not be put off any longer.

IMS SYSTEMS ABROAD AND THE GUITAR

IMS soon became the market leader on the German market. The enquiries were received from abroad. Manufacturers of large plants, who are IMS customers, supplied their plants equipped with IMS products around the world. In this way IMS systems became export articles. The first IMS systems sold worldwide since inception
The size which we have now reached we were really not able to imagine then.

- Hans Schneider, one of the founders of IMS

MARKET ORIENTED PRODUCTS

In the initial years the budget for promotion was very limited. From the very beginning and certainly in the future too it is positive word-of-mouth propaganda as well as naturally the good quality of the IMS products that bring in the necessary orders. Up to the present time no products have been developed at IMS which then had to be introduced on to the market with a lot of effort. Instead the company orients itself on the problems of the customers and takes these on. New developments are aligned on the demands of the customers. In this way IMS has always been able to react to the market appropriately and rapidly – something the customers appreciate greatly.

RESUMÉ & INTERIM APPRAISAL

“The size which we have now reached,” states Hans Schneider, and pauses for a moment deep in thought: “This size we were really not able to imagine then.” When today one looks back on the development of IMS, then one finds hardly any measures or decisions which today with hindsight one would regret. The entry into X-ray technology and the development of the optical measurement technology were appropriate and necessary steps. The changeover to X-ray technology at an early stage resulted from the consequence that ever faster measuring systems were needed – the intensity of the radioisotopes was no longer adequate.

INTERNAL RESTRUCTURING

In the middle of the nineties IMS restructured its internal organization. The “Project Planning”, “Design” and “System Software” departments were each divided up and placed in the areas “Hot Strip” and “Cold Strip”. The idea here was to achieve a situation in which one could go into the special questions arising with these individual areas better. The customers now had opposite numbers who were specialized in their precise problems. Founder Hans Schneider confirms the correctness of the decisions for the customers. That had always been their aim: “Products should not just be produced cheaply.” Attention had always been paid to quality.

WE ALWAYS WANTED TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT

A sure instinct for the right products had helped to get the company ahead. The right products were backed. Over the course of the years there were from time to time interested parties who wanted to take over the firm. General Manager for Global Sales & Projects, Jörg Busch: “The founders always had the firm in mind. There was never any doubt about this.” Even when a profit distribution for the founders had to be dispensed with in order that capital was there for new developments. In all their tasks as managing directors of IMS the founder team was always aware how important the internal harmony in a company is, how important it is that people feel well and at home in their firm. Here it is not important who holds what position. One can chat for a few minutes about football or the bad weather. The customers sense the good atmosphere within the firm and not least for this reason feel themselves in good hands with IMS.

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

Even though this was difficult for the founders. But they too had to retire. However they can’t really totally let go. Thus since retiring Hans Schneider comes into the firm every day to have lunch in the canteen. Bernhard Mengekamp was the first managing director to retire on 20th March, 1998, followed by Hans Schneider on 14th August, 2001. Still today Hans Schneider remains amazed about how big the enterprise, that once started in an old weaving mill, has grown. When he speaks about this one can hear the pride in his voice. On his retirement IMS was put in the hands of Paul Flormann und Rainer Fackert as joint managing directors. On 31.12.2008 Flormann – the last founder member of IMS Isotopen Messsysteme GmbH – retired. On 01.01.2007 Hendrik Schultes was brought into the management as commercial managing director. From 1994 until this time he was Prokurist or authorized signatory at IMS.

As with many companies in Germany a change of generations is also taking place slowly at IMS. Jörg Busch: “We still talk about one thing or another with the founders. But we do this today on little walking tours.”

1981

establishment of the first agency abroad
IMS collaborates with representatives spread around the world strategically. Its broad and individual product range is making IMS a Global Player in demand. After 35 years of history, our measuring systems are operating in 95% of the 40 key steel-producing countries and in the rolling lines of all of the 20 biggest steel producers worldwide. It is state-of-the-art technology, which convinces sustainably through durability and quality.

On Course for Expansion

In Demand Worldwide: Measuring Systems from IMS

ON COURSE FOR EXPANSION

over 3,500 measuring systems sold and in operation worldwide
by more than 600 satisfied customers
in over 60 countries
with 70 service engineers on constant standby worldwide
at 27 locations all form company
IMS collaborates with representatives spread around the world strategically.
IMS RÖNTGENSYSTEME GMBH – MATERIAL TESTING AND MORE

Customers from around the world trust in the innovative x-ray systems from IMS. Fifteen years ago, the management of IMS Messsysteme GmbH decided to separate the company’s complete x-ray department and form a new company, resulting in the establishment of IMS Röntgensysteme GmbH in 2001. The aim was clear: to capture new markets in the field of non-destructive materials testing. This decision has proven right. Today, the company is a global leader in the field of non-destructive testing.

The company’s main field of activity is still IMS’s core business: measuring instruments for the steel and non-ferrous metal industry. High-voltage generators from 40 kV to 450 kV with power ratings up to 1000 kW cover almost all the needs of the branch.

IMS Röntgensysteme GmbH – innovative x-ray systems to customer needs.

However, new applications have also been developed for other trendsetting fields. For example:

- mobile solutions for on-site inspection, e.g. in power stations
- micro-focus technology to check the finest of structures, e.g. semiconductor components
- measuring instruments for the field of medical technology
- generators for electron beam radiators, e.g. in the food industry

The x-ray systems can be operated with both analogue and digital controls. Specially developed software solutions enable simple operation. Additional products such as high-voltage adapters, dividers as well as testing and safety modules round off the product portfolio. A comprehensive range of services is naturally also offered.

Today, IMS Röntgensysteme GmbH has a workforce of more than 30 employees. All are committed to fulfilling very special customer demands. The company runs a certified quality management system (according to DIN EN ISO 9001:2008) to maintain the highest standards. A laboratory management system (according to DIN EN 17025) has also been introduced. This is clear proof of IMS’s dedication to raising quality to beyond the norm.

Apart from IMS Messsysteme GmbH, more and more well-known international customers are turning to the know-how of IMS Röntgensysteme GmbH, for example the companies COMET, YXLON and General Electric and the Fraunhofer Institute to name just a few.

IMS Röntgensysteme GmbH supplies x-ray systems of the highest order, always with the interests of its customers in mind.

SURCON GMBH

Surcon GmbH was founded in December 2008 as a joint venture between SMS Siemag AG (Hilchenbach/Düsseldorf) and IMS Messsysteme GmbH and pools the know-how of both companies. These synergies give surcon projects a significant edge when it comes to competition with other suppliers.

The name of the company is derived from the words “surface control”. Surcon GmbH sells slab inspection systems on the basis of 3D measuring methods as well as hot strip and cold strip inspection systems using 2D methods of measurement.

Appropriate technological processes make it possible to use the measurement results to derive measures to avoid surface defects along whole production lines. This means considerable cost savings for mill operators. The detection and documentation of surface defects during production has a decisive influence on the quality of rolled materials. It also allows direct optimisation of the production processes as it provides information on where and why defects have arisen.

All leading steel and aluminium producers have been using surface inspection systems (SIS) in various stages of their production processes for many years. Today, they are a firm fixture to monitor surface quality in cold and hot rolling mills and contribute considerably to quality assurance.

Customer-specific measurement configurations are recreated in darkened areas of our laboratories and measurement procedures copied. Measurement and evaluation with original material samples from our customers make it possible for us to simulate the real conditions on site and to optimise the surface inspection systems precisely and individually for our customers.

»surcon – optimally adapted surface inspection systems. Precise and customised.«

Our optical measuring systems are used in a variety of production lines (e.g. tandem mills, picking, coating, inspection and recoiling lines as well as in sitting and cut-to-length lines) to measure parameters such as width, side shift, strip contour, cross crown, strip position and flatness. In sitting lines, for example, IMS measuring systems are able to measure every single slit strip. In other applications, the systems detect and categorise edge cracks and holes, and in thin strip applications even pinholes.

In its search for components IMS learnt of the very innovative technology of camera clusters. Our company has been working closely with the firm Xapt GmbH since September 2013. Xapt GmbH is a spin-off of the Westphalian University of Applied Sciences in Gelsenkirchen and is located there. Xapt specialises in intelligent camera clusters and has acquired years of experience in the technology, making it unquestionably an industry leader in the field.

Other fields of industry are served by Xapt directly.

»Xapt – very innovative technology of camera clusters.«

The IMS Group and Representatives

26

COMPETENCE AT OUR SITE

27
January 16, 2013 marked the start of manufacturing of the XR series gauges at IMS Systems, Inc. It is the first time that IMS gauges are being built outside Germany.

The new XR measuring systems for cold applications are becoming smaller and smaller and much more economical, giving IMS a real competitive edge. On 16th January 2013 Penn Metal Fabricators from Ebensburg in Pennsylvania delivered the first three C-frame prototypes to IMS Systems, Inc., sounding the starting gun for the manufacture of IMS measuring frames in the XR series. This is the first time that IMS gauges are being built outside Germany. XR gauges have been commissioned successfully and are in use at, among other IMS customers, Nucor, Steel Dynamics Industries, Worthington Steel and Galvtech.

Based on tried-and-tested IMS technology, IMS engineers on both sides of the Atlantic developed the new XR measuring systems. This has made IMS more competitive particularly on the North American market because the dependency on exchange rate fluctuations has dropped and shipping costs are lower. This means the IMS measuring systems have also become affordable for service centres and treatment plants which have so far not counted among the customers of IMS. The systems are also interesting for companies with older equipment or units from manufacturers who no longer offer support as a result of takeovers or restructuring. IMS is convinced that the XR series is an important step in consolidating its position on the world market.
For the first time, IMS developed a width gauging system based on radar technology for operation in Hot Rolling Mills.

With the new contour measuring system IMS provides a capable product. It reduces the safety margins on target weights and increases there-with the output.

Located in the exit area of a continuous casting line, optical systems provide exact information of the cross-section and the outer contour of slabs. The measuring results are utilized for precise control of the continuous casting line.

IMS considers itself a self-learning organisation, our business concept is knowledge- and innovation-oriented, so change goes without saying for us.

From that perspective, we are always open to new problems and challenges. The company’s structure allows us to respond quickly and flexibly to such demands.

Through constant, close communication with our customers, we try to grasp and understand their problems and challenges and to find ideas for solutions from them. That also includes our knowledge of existing measuring processes, methods and applications, as well as those still undergoing development worldwide. It is important for us that we are not only our customers’ supplier, but also their partner.

Our employees’ “thinking out of the box” is important to us. Taking part in courses, conferences and trade fairs, and our work on various industry federation committees goes without saying.

We are especially proud of our top class development team, which is strongly staffed for our size of company. They have state-of-the-art resources and equipment at their disposal in spacious laboratories.

One thing is clear to us: only technical progress coupled with well-trained personnel will secure the survival and success of IMS.

One key building block alongside the cooperation with our customers is alliances with universities, industry federations and research institutes, such as various Max Planck and Fraunhofer institutes, as well as the Betriebsforschungsinstitut (BFI).

Many successful products have already emerged from these alliances, among them the optical flatness measuring system “TopPlan®”, the radar width measuring system, etc.

At this point we cannot disclose which new measuring processes and applications we are presently examining. There are a large number of unsolved or poorly solved measuring tasks, which we are focusing on and where we are certain that we can find useful solutions.

But we do promise one thing: our customers will be the first to learn of new solutions.

”Stagnation is the beginning of the end.”
- Sokrates
SERVICE IS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR US

To meet the requirements of modern production systems, an extensive service offering supplements our measuring systems to create complete business solutions and has contributed significantly to the company’s success for 35 years now. Whereas products were still being sold a few years ago, the global market today is tending to sell solutions, i.e. products and services combined in one package. IMS has realised this and believes in the principle of “Service Engineering”, because good service creates a full-service, worry-free package for our customers.

Downtime in your production means financial losses, so we take care of maintenance, repairs and spare parts and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Through strategic, globally distributed IMS Service Centers we guarantee maximum operational readiness and allow you maximum plant availability, no matter where in the world you operate your rolling mills.

To permit rapid diagnosis in the event of a fault, simple support for your personnel or regular updates of the system components, we rely on remote maintenance and thus combine the knowledge of our specialists with the rapid response of your personnel on site.

Regular maintenance, upgrades and care by our specialists lengthens the life expectancy, whilst the systems continue meeting the fast-growing technical demands. This prevents unscheduled downtimes and unnecessary capital reserves.

We know the problems you are facing – high competitive pressure results in high production pressure with few maintenance personnel. To take that burden off your hands, we offer various types of maintenance and service contracts.

As a rule, however, our service already begins before delivery of the system. We offer your employees comprehensive training in our own Competence and Training Center (CTC). That saves time in the commissioning and ensures that your employees can operate the system safely and reliably.

Always one step ahead!

Besides developing new measuring systems, we also deal intensively with new service solutions and concepts. Preventive maintenance and complete, central monitoring of the operating parameters and sensors (Industry 4.0) are aspects that are already in implementation and being constantly expanded.

IMS has a lot of experience as a provider of complete solutions and “turn-key projects” and proves that the transformation from system supplier to full service provider has succeeded, i.e. engineering, disassembly, assembly and commissioning, as well as coordination of different suppliers, are no secret to us.
It can be catastrophic if a line goes down, says Claus-Peter Antoine, the process and measurement technology manager at Salzgitter-Flachstahl GmbH, in respect of fault-caused breaks in production.

Unfortunately many measuring systems have got rather long in the tooth and from today’s perspective are no longer state of the art and – not least because of new requirements – should be brought up to date.

It is not absolutely essential for a complete measuring system or device to be replaced. Frequently modernization represents a more cost-favourable alternative.

Since the company was founded the measuring systems supplied by IMS have been developed and realized for its customers under the aspects of high quality and availability. Accordingly it is not surprising that also systems that are now quite old are still functioning to the full satisfaction of the customers but no longer meet all the demands set today.

For this reason IMS attaches great importance to the high availability of its measuring systems. For modernizations we prepare a comprehensive package matched to the particular customer. This starts with the assessment and evaluation of the as-is state of the systems, proceeds via the joint conceptual planning of the desired design state and the supporting of the project and finally ends with the realization and recommissioning of the modernized system.

Jointly with our customers we prepare concepts which – by way of example – make it possible for the latest electronic devices and measurement components to be inserted while retaining the mechanical systems and enabling further utilization of beam sources and detectors. The latest visualization systems and user interfaces ensure an easily overviewed display of the measurement results and convenient operating of the systems.

System modernizations can be carried out in stages in accordance with the budget and permissible duration of production downtimes. If required the existing interfaces can be retained. IMS also possesses a lot of experience in replacing the systems of other manufacturers. Thus existing mounting points are made use of mechanically and the existing interfaces are realized electrically and in the software.

IMS is also in a position to carry out “turn-key” projects. The high availability restored through a modernization process ensures the high process stability essential in a production plant that is in continuous operation.

Every year IMS carries out dozens of modernization processes around the world.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE OR LONG IN THE TOOTH?

IMS HAS BEEN BUILDING AND SUPPLYING MEASURING SYSTEMS FOR THE STEEL AND NON-FERROUS METAL INDUSTRIES SINCE THE EARLY EIGHTIES. DECADES OF EXPERIENCE WITH RADIMETRIC AND OPTICAL MEASURING TECHNOLOGY IN COLD-STRIP AND HOT-STRIP ROLLING MILLS HAVE MADE POSSIBLE THE CONTINUOUS OPTIMIZATION OF OUR SYSTEMS.
TIME TO IMS.
It was very cold and snowing in winter 2004 when Mr. Busch and I visited Hyundai Steel the first time in order to determine the current status of installed equipment and stored spare parts. Many lines had not been erected completely, so we had to look for the crates with our gauges. This was the first time, Mr. Sang-Pyo Kim (Hyundai Steel) and we met personally. A long partnership started, joint freezing and working welds together.” remembers Sang-Hoon Jin, General Manager, IMS Korea.

After very short time Hyundai started the production. With an unbelievable consequence Hyundai has enhanced its steel facility in Dangjin to one of the most modern locations of steel worldwide. Continuous improvement and optimization is Hyundai’s commitment. Therefore a new x-ray thickness gauge for its B-Hot Strip Mill was ordered from IMS. It replaced the last third-party gauge in this line. From then on all major gauges used in the hot rolling mill B were from IMS.

In the first week of May seven of Hyundai’s engineers enjoyed training at IMS’ CTC (Competence & Training Center). Beside classroom training, practical exercises on the new x-ray gauge took place. Very interesting for both parties was the exchange of ideas and probable solutions for upcoming measuring tasks respectively non-solved challenges.

Finally the Factory Acceptance Test was completed successfully. The visit was rounded down by a joint dinner.

“We trust in IMS. They provide excellent service in Korea. This combined with their very reliable and accurate gauging systems guarantees Hyundai’s success.” says Mr. Sang-Pyo Kim, Deputy General Manager, HSM, Hyundai Steel.

“We trust in IMS. They provide excellent service in Korea. This combined with their very reliable and accurate gauging systems guarantees Hyundai’s success.”

- Sang-Pyo Kim, deputy general manager, HSM, Hyundai Steel

»We trust in IMS. They provide excellent service in Korea. This combined with their very reliable and accurate gauging systems guarantees Hyundai’s success.«

- Sang-Pyo Kim, deputy general manager, HSM, Hyundai Steel
“In a way it is a matter of giving and taking,” confirms Paul Michels. He is the assistant works manager of the ThyssenKrupp Rasselstein works in Andernach. He has known IMS for more than 30 years and finds the enterprise to be very innovative. “There are not so many firms like IMS on the market,” goes on Michels. He noticed this very quickly, above all with very special problems or tricky tasks. Thus strip breaks often led to production stops when manufacturing tinplate. And this at an enterprise that is one of the three largest suppliers of tinplate in Europe. It was especially important for Paul Michels to detect holes and edge cracks in the tinplate strips. Michels: “That was a big problem for us and caused enormous costs.” Holes and cracks in fine tinplate are the most frequent causes of strip breaks during continuous annealing. A strip break costs an enormous amount of time. The continuous furnace must be switched off, scrap removed from it and the furnace then heated up again and put back into operation. All that can extend over a number of shifts. And that costs a lot of money. So a solution had to be found to stop the strip breaks. ThyssenKrupp Rasselstein turned to IMS to see if there was not a way of detecting a hole or a crack at an early stage. From this close co-operation came about between Rasselstein and IMS. The developers decided in favour of a new optical system. The optical measuring device detects and processes light pulses which are transmitted from a light source located beneath the strip to one of the cameras located above the strip. The data collected describe the exact position and shape of the hole. The rolling line personnel can then decide with the aid of a matrix how the strip should then be treated. “We are truly very satisfied with the solution,” says Michels. Above all the employees at Rasselstein confirm that the cost of the measuring system has been very much more than covered by the savings from the strip break situations that are now avoided. Today strip, that is at risk of breaking, can be detected in good time and appropriately treated. Overall the development work covers a wide field. Thus the experts are also working all the time on new developments to and the optimization of materials, products and production processes. Michels: “Over the many years we have learnt that IMS is simply very innovative.” But in addition to these professional arguments the co-operation also has a very personal component: “I have known Mr. Fackert for good 30 years.” Rainer Fackert is IMS’s managing director. Thereby a high level of mutual trust has been built up over the decades. “IMS is very innovative,” with a wink Michels adds, “but our problems also help IMS to progress further.”

»Over the many years we have learnt that IMS is simply very innovative.«

- Paul Michels, assistant works manager
ThyssenKrupp Rasselstein GmbH, Andernach
**Innovation: Made in Germany**

**Maximum precision for highest demands**

**Made in Germany**

You come home and your fridge has found out that you don’t have enough milk. No problem, really, because your fridge has already ordered more. You open the fridge and see there is enough to enjoy your muesli. All pie in the sky? No. Technology, structures and markets are well into a phase of dramatic change. The networked factory, or Smart Factory, presents us with new possibilities. A new industrial revolution has long since started. The “Internet of Things” and “Industry 4.0” will affect every aspect of our lives. However, things will become easier, especially for the approximately 12 million people who work in industrial production in Germany. Industry and industry-orientated service providers account for more than a third of the more than 2.9 trillion euros earned in Germany every year. “Made in Germany” is still a seal of quality that is valued by customers around the world. This seal of quality stands for durability and reliability, and is something IMS is committed to.

We have sold more than 3500 measuring systems, two thirds of which have only left our assembly halls in the last 15 years. Overall, more than 600 different customers rely on products from the house of IMS. Important key components are also developed and made in Germany. Our x-ray components, for example, have been supplied by IMS Röntgen since our inception.

**Ready for the Smart Factory**

Our collaboration with industry-leading companies such as Comet AG and Beckhoff Automation GmbH guarantee state-of-the-art products of the highest quality. In addition to this, we use flexible interfaces, which ensure long-term compatibility of IMS products with the systems of most third-party manufacturers. These interfaces are developed further on a continuous basis, always with future demands in mind.

Industry 4.0 is well underway, resulting in increasing automation of industrial production processes with the aim of automatic optimisation and configuration. These self-diagnostic functions make the processes more “intelligent”, thereby supporting people much more strongly in their work. The Internet is incorporated for communication purposes. Measuring systems have an important and decisive role in all this. The aim of these sequential procedures is for the systems to make decisions on their own and to adjust to the respective situation. The decisions for this are made on the basis of data – data that the measuring systems supply along the complete production cycle and whose validity and reliability decide about the quality of the production process.

According to a study by CSC*, many companies are still sceptical about the chances of Industry 4.0. Not so we at IMS. We see the Smart Factory as a big opportunity.

Our foresight means we are already working on the questions and challenges of the fourth industrial revolution to secure our place at the top of the market after 35 years of existence. We are ready for the world of tomorrow.

---

*Computer Sciences Corporation

**Industry 4.0 – Tomorrow’s World**

Generally speaking, Industry 4.0 means less a condition than a method of intelligent and decentralised regulation and control of processes based on the information gleaned through communication via the Internet of Things and services. Which ultimately leads to a Smart World, in which the Smart Factory will find its place as part of the Industry 4.0 concept. But the attempts to define it undertaken so far on the official side have never been normative but descriptive in nature, which is hampering the implementation of this concept.
“I finally found time on my holiday to read a book,” says Rainer Fackert, Technical MD at IMS. Many holidaymakers probably say the same thing, but the book they read will seldom have an influence on the complete production process of a whole company. The book Rainer Fackert was so fascinated by was written by the manager Wendelin Wiedeking: “It spoke about wonderful engineers.” And they came from Porsche and optimised processes that helped make other people work more effectively. The result: reductions in costs. For Fackert it became clear that it is necessary to operate more efficiently if one wants to survive international competition today. The requirements for this: extremely well-organised internal procedures.

WE HAVE OUR BUSINESS PROCESSES UNDER CONTROL
As a global leader, IMS sets high standards when it comes to the quality of its business processes. The product-creation, order-processing and spare-part processes need to be optimised on an ongoing basis, as do repair processes in the company. A company can only meet the challenges of the world market over the long term if all this is working properly. IMS has managed to do this for 35 years now and supplies its customers with measurement technology of the highest order. Rainer Fackert wanted to see if it was possible to optimise more: “My holiday book mentioned Porsche Consulting. I phoned them.” Sounds very simple, but that is exactly what it was like. To meet its high quality demands, IMS collaborated with Porsche Consulting GmbH to optimise its business processes further to elevate its information and resource management systems to the highest level.

PROCESS OPTIMISATION IN CO-OPTION WITH PORSCHE CONSULTING GMBH
“We used the experience of Porsche Consulting GmbH for the optimisation process,” says Rainer Fackert and the success has proved him right. Essentially, existing processes were analysed and new target processes implemented. Interdepartmental interfaces were optimised, and every wastage of resources was identified and reduced to a minimum. In this way it was possible to reduce lead times and cut costs significantly. The flow and transformation of material, information, operations and decisions in the business processes were virtually perfected by the optimisation.

“Thanks to the hard work of our staff, we have managed in the end to introduce a maximum of efficiency to our business processes.” - Rainer Fackert, chief technical officer, IMS

35 years of measuring technology at the highest level

THE FUTURE COMES FROM THE FRONT.
FIRSTs: IMS AS PIONEER

IMS has launched many innovative products on to the market as first manufacturer worldwide.

THERE ARE MANY MEASUREMENT TASKS TO BE PERFORMED IN ROLLING MILLS AND CONSEQUENTLY MANY MEASURING SYSTEMS. EVER SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1980 – 35 YEARS AGO IN OTHER WORDS – IMS HAS SUCCESSFULLY FACED THE CHALLENGE OF THE STEADY RISE IN THE DEMANDS OF THE ROLLING MILL INDUSTRY.

Whoever wants to stand their ground on the market successfully needs to develop their measuring technology further on an ongoing basis. Using new methods of measurement and a combination of different measuring processes, it is possible to achieve higher measuring accuracy and faster sampling times to optimise production processes. IMS has set new standards here again and again over the course of the last decades.

IMS has long since established itself as a global leader with its products. Using improved methods of measurement, the company has managed repeatedly to introduce innovative new developments successfully on to the market as the first manufacturer worldwide to do so. IMS has therefore been able to present itself as a pioneer many more times than once since it was founded.
WE WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT OUR NEW DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST YEARS, SOME OF WHICH IMS WAS THE FIRST TO LAUNCH ON TO THE MARKET WORLDWIDE. YOU CAN SEE HERE WHY IMS HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS GLOBAL LEADER ON THE MARKET:

1981 – 1983

1984
1ST GENERATION
MULTI-CHANNEL
PROFILE MEASURING SYSTEM
MARKET INTRODUCTION OF A MONOCURVE MEASURING SYSTEM WITH GAMMA RADIATION FOR FLAT PRODUCTS

1988
2ND GENERATION
MULTI-CHANNEL
PROFILE MEASURING SYSTEM
MARKET INTRODUCTION OF THE 2ND GENERATION WITH STEREOSCOPIC MEASUREMENT WITH GAMMA RADIATION FOR FLAT PRODUCTS

1990
NON-CONTACT
TUBE MEASURING SYSTEM
HIGH-PERFORMANCE MEASURING SYSTEM FOR CONTINUOUS NON-CONTACT DETECTION OF TUBE THICKNESS AND GEOMETRY, CONTOUR AND POSITION

1994
FIRST OPTICAL WI
ME
TEC

1995
1ST GENERATION
MULTI-CHANNEL
PROFILE MEASURING SYSTEM
MULTI-CHANNEL
PROFILE MEASURING SYSTEM WITH X-RADIATION

1996
MODERN
X-RAY SYSTEMS
DEVELOPMENT OF X-RAY HIGH-VOLTAGE TECHNOLOGY AND INTRODUCTION OF A CERTIFIED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

1997
EDGE DROP MEASURING SYSTEM
INTRODUCTION OF A HIGH-RESOLUTION X-RAY MULTI-FUNCTION SYSTEM FOR MEASUREMENT OF EDGE DROP WEDGE, STRIP THICKNESS AND CROSS PROFILE

1999
AUTOMATIC DATA
ARCHIVING SYSTEM
FIRST USE OF贏INET DATA ARCHIVING SYSTEM WITH SCALABLE SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE FOR EVALUATION AND VISUALISATION OF MEASUREMENT DATA,

2000
FIRST
STREET FLATNESS
MEASURING SYSTEM –
TOPPLANT®
IMS PRESENTS THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL, NON-CONTACT OPTICAL, STRIP FLATNESS MEASURING SYSTEM TOPPLANT®

2001
STREET FLATNESS
MEASURING SYSTEM –
TOPPLANT®

2008
AUTOMATIC INTERNAL STRIP
DEFECT DETECTION (IDD)
IMS PRESENTS A NON-CONTACT AND AUTOMATIC ULTRASOUNDE
MEASURING SYSTEM THAT DETECTS INTERNAL STRIP DEFECTS AND DEFECTS IN THE STRIP SURFACE

2010
BILLETT CONTOUR GAUGES

2013
X-RAY THICKNESS GAUGE
THE US SUBSIDIARY OF IMS, IMS SYSTEMS, INC., STARTS PRODUCTION OF X-RAY MEASURING SYSTEMS - A MODIFIED, COMPACT, INDEPENDENT AND MODULAR SOLUTION FOR MEASUREMENT OF STRIP THICKNESS IN COLD ROLLING MILLS AND FINISHING LINES

2015
WIDTH MEASUREMENT BY RADAR
IMS DEVELOPS A WIDTH MEASURING SYSTEM BASED ON RADAR TECHNOLOGY FOR USE IN HOT ROLLING MILLS FOR THE FIRST TIME
What sounds like a classic in the history of literature is in fact the history of IMS. With a specialised product range geared to customer requirements, the scale of which permits complete equipment of rolling mills, it has taken no less than 35 years to be able to call ourselves the world market leader for measuring systems in rolling mills. Through innovation and quality, IMS has been convincing over 600 customers worldwide for 35 years.

Today, with customers in over 60 countries in Europe, Africa, North, Central and South America, Asia and Oceania, IMS is operating globally and supplying measuring systems for the entire rolling process. With subsidiaries and agents worldwide we meet the needs for fast service. Specialised engineers install, calibrate and test the measuring systems on site. For customer-specific needs, our engineers study the actual situation on site and develop individual solutions for optimum operation from those data.

High-tech requirements and 35 years of experience allow us to adapt our products precisely to customer needs. Firmly integrated in the project, close communication with the customer from the planning phase until final assembly, the service while the product is in use and modernisation of old systems ensure a smooth course of the project.

It is December 2010. CEO Dr Ekkehard Schulz is officially opening ThyssenKrupp’s new hot and cold strip mill in the US state of Alabama. He calls it a “cornerstone of our new transatlantic growth strategy.” The purpose of the plant: to supply the North American market with high-quality steels. One central challenge is the ultra-modern production process, which means fulfilling the highest quality demands while simultaneously making efficient use of the necessary resources. To meet them, ThyssenKrupp already turned to IMS during the planning phase, thus laying the foundation stone for the collaboration to install a standard quality data management system. A necessity because more than 3.6 billion of the total of five billion dollars invested in the whole project were spent on high-quality flat steel. CEO Dr Schulz describes the demands and expectations made on the quality of the product as being of the “highest international level.” IMS delivered MEVInet-Q and MEVInet-QDS and thus a high-performance system for data management.

Apart from the comprehensive storage and evaluation of quality data, the MEVInet-Q system now also offers a set of rules to monitor required properties. The new extension module MEVInet-QDS ensures a standard and reproducible evaluation of the quality steels manufactured throughout the plant. The quality of a product is determined not only by its features and properties, but also by fulfillment of the demands placed on it. To evaluate quality, it is necessary to acquire information on the product properties and to compare them with the respective requirements. This work is performed by a multitude of different systems, which, however, are usually standalone solutions only. As a result the quality data is usually stored in separate databases that are not compatible with each other. Various tools are used for evaluation and the data is not analysed according to standard rules. MEVInet-Q approaches the issue differently. The system implemented at ThyssenKrupp Steel is a holistic quality data management system that pools the various production parameters from several production lines in one central database. IMS supplied most of the measurement technology for the whole project, including gauges to measure thickness and thickness profile, flatness, coating, width and temperature. A full package, in other words.

The data is captured, managed, evaluated and returned to the control loop. And all that in real time. The quality data management system is used to track and evaluate material flows, which are then adjusted individually for the customer, evaluated and returned to the control loop.

The current operator ArcelorMittal, Nippon Steel have quickly noticed that the MEVInet-Q quality data management system and the extension module MEVInet-QDS were developed by IMS quite specifically for the steel processing industry.■
“It can be catastrophic if we are down,” says Claus-Peter Antoine. He is the Process and Measurement Technology manager at Salzgitter-Flachstahl GmbH. To express what he means in other words: Cars would have to be produced without a bodywork. Because the sheet metal would not be there. The most important customer group for the flat rolled steel is the automobile industry. “And if our lines are down, then this means big problems and not just for us.” Very often the problems are related to the thickness of the steel strip. And this must be measured exactly in order above all else to maintain uniform quality. As early as 25 years ago Claus-Peter Antoine got to know the firm of IMS Messsysteme: “At that time IMS did not have its market leader position on the market.” But then came the meeting with the founders and managing directors of the firm. And Antoine still remembers very well that the discussion then was absolutely convincing. Claus-Peter Antoine: “They never wanted to sell us something at all cost but instead convinced us with their technical solutions.” In the discussions too it was very quickly clear how well versed the IMS people were. At that time it was a matter above all of the measurement of thickness in the running process in the production of the flat rolled steel. Highest quality was required and the thickness had to be always exactly the same. This all starts at a thickness of 0.4 mm. It was found that the IMS measuring systems were very reliable. Antoine still rhapsodizes when he recalls the first thickness measurements of the flat rolled steel and hits the nail on the head: “There was no botching.” And this is still the situation today: “Absolutely reliable.” In this way the trust in IMS has grown ever greater. In the meantime IMS also works closely together with Salzgitter-Flachstahl. The two enterprises have become development partners. This is how things have to be, explains Antoine because the plant is running 24 hours a day. Everything has to be totally reliable, day in, day out. The IMS measuring systems fulfill this requirement. Thus, for example, the high-strength isotropic steels for the automobile industry possess very good forming and converting properties but at the same time place extremely stringent demands on the measuring systems. Their higher strength makes possible the production of components with reduced sheet metal thicknesses which at the same time meet the required crash properties. There is also another large project on which IMS is co-operating with Salzgitter, namely the so-called hot-rolled wide strip. Here the manager of the Process and Measurement Technology department at Salzgitter-Flachstahl, Claus-Peter Antoine: “Here we are at the upper limit physically in respect of quality demands.” Since 2003 the two firms have been working together on radar width measurement systems and are shortly before a breakthrough. Antoine continues: “If we succeed that will be a real quantum jump.” The tens of years of co-operation with IMS have been very successful. Antoine: “If I should say something negative …” he pauses for a moment, “then I would have to say nothing.” Praise could hardly be warmer.
HAPPY AND HEALTHY EMPLOYEES ARE OUR CAPITAL

People who are fit and feel good take less time off sick. That is certainly nothing new. But if a company constantly takes care of the welfare of its employees, that does not go without saying either. The talk is about the culture in a company, which – as studies have shown – can strongly influence its business success. Since IMS was founded 35 years ago, the welfare of its employees has always been a key aspect. Without a friendly, almost family, atmosphere, the success of IMS would hardly have been possible. The management regards a positive corporate culture as the foundation for business success: “Satisfied employees are the capital of any company.”

THE ISOPOE’S INN – IMS’ POPULAR STAFF RESTAURANT

The new IMS canteen, the Isotope’s Inn, was opened in mid-2012. The employees chose the name for “their restaurant” themselves. There was a competition and a prize for the winning name “Isotope’s Inn”. But the best thing for all employees came just after the opening. In the first few days, they could savour the food and drinks at the expense of the company. The IMS canteen today is available to employees for breakfast, snacks and lunch. They enjoy sitsitling there together, simply to talk to one another. The rooms are modern and friendly and the large windows offer a view of the landscape. It almost allows employees to forget that they’re taking their lunch break on company premises. Especially in the summer, when they can spend their lunch break under a parasol on the terrace. In addition, the meals are subsidised by IMS. And the freshly brewed, aromatic coffee is for free. One press on the button of the coffee machine is enough.

KEEPING FIT, FITNESS CENTRE, SAUNA, RAMBLING DAY

The ideal, naturally, is when employees not only feel good, but are fit too. The IMS management is devoted to keeping employees healthy. The company’s own fitness studio has been available since 2007. With no membership fees, belonging to the company suffices. The fitness studio is well equipped with various training machines and different exercise rooms. Fitness improves the quality of life and improves physical and mental wellbeing. Performance and resilience in everyday work are increased and people can cope with stressful situations better. IMS offers its employees various fitness courses as part of the training programme “IMS AKTIV!” That also includes a health check and diet advice. Only if the employee wants that, of course. The programme is extensive: it offers heart, abdomen and back training, weightlifting workouts and stretching. And that regularly and under the expert auspices of a certified fitness trainer. As a rule, the health insurance fund pays up to 80% of the costs and IMS picks up the remaining 20%. Also in the fitness centre is a sauna with chill-out room and outdoor area. Here too, use is free of charge.

The company also bears the costs for an annual rambling day. This event has a long tradition, starting back in the 80’s. Paul Flormann, one of the three founders of IMS, went out for a walk with the two secretaries, Evelin Herrmuth and Claudia Stahr. This “short” walk ended up becoming a two-hour ramble. The management decided to make the ramble a regular event. Every year in the summer, employees put on comfortable shoes and to go on a pre-planned afternoon in order to ramble through the countryside together. A sumptuous closing with a barbecue at the expense of IMS rounds the day off.

TREATMENTS OFFERED AND STOPPING SMOKING

But there is still more offered for the “satisfied employee”. Besides regular profit-based bonuses, which the company pays as appreciation for their work, there are numerous programmes offered for preventive healthcare, such as, for example, the annual flu vaccinations and an eye test. Anyone who has still not managed to stop smoking, but would like to, can also get support. The company offers non-smoking seminars based on the “Allen Carr method” and assumes the lion’s share of the costs.

Employees receive financial support for occasions such as their wedding or the birth of a child. IMS also rewards long service with the company.

Altogether, these financial benefits are certainly not a matter of course in every company. At IMS, the management tries to create a positive corporate culture and to improve employee satisfaction. In the end that is good for everybody, as a study from Harvard shows. Professors at the American university spent eleven years comparing successful and less successful companies with one another. The study proves that companies with a positive culture were able to increase their profit by 756 percent on average; the companies with less distinct cultures, however, only by one percent. •

WHAT WE DO FOR OUR EMPLOYEES:
You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs – but you don’t have to get hurt in the process.

Occupational safety is a major priority in our company. At the forefront are the efforts of the IMS management to reduce risks of accidents to an absolute minimum and the number of accidents at work to zero. Regular briefings and “zero accident campaigns” run alongside the workflow and result in employees taking more responsibility for themselves.

Those with ideas will also be heard. The company’s suggestions scheme is a key instrument in exploiting the potential ideas of all employees. Experience has shown that employees’ ideas can produce substantial savings for the company. So an ideas management regime has existed at IMS since 2005. As a result, our performance, and not least also our quality, have steadily improved. The customers of IMS also benefit from that and from the improved workflows. Obviously, employees are proud when their ideas are recognised and implemented by the management. That motivates and at the end of the day pays off for everyone. Every employee can submit suggestions for improvement and receive a bonus if their suggestion is accepted. The bonuses are graded depending on the resulting saving. As well as the bonuses being paid, every suggestion takes part in a quarterly prize draw regardless of whether the suggestion was accepted or rejected.

Dissatisfaction among employees can have various causes and cannot be eliminated by financial and social components alone. A dissatisfied employee cannot be consoled by the offer of a free drink or a fitness centre, so the issues of employees are always met with an open ear and taken seriously by those responsible. Social engagement goes without saying at IMS. Not only inside the company. IMS supports charitable organisations through donations and supports a project in the Third World as well.

It is well known that a balanced mix of younger and older employees produces major advantages for the company. At IMS, too, we know that mixed-age teams will be the norm again in the future. In addition, the productivity both of older employees and of their younger colleagues improves in such mixed groups. Both sides gain especially through the mix of innovative, new approaches of younger colleagues and the experience of the older ones. The corporate culture of IMS promotes that collaboration and acknowledges the performance and competence of all ages.

We build on experience – space for older employees too
At the IMS Christmas party at the end of last year we honoured a long-serving employee and despatched her into her well-earned retirement. The lady was already 80 years of age! She joined IMS in 1982 as a clerk in Accounting, where she was employed full-time until 1999. From then on she worked less hours and was able to enrich the team with her experience into old age. Another colleague, who is already over 70 and has still not been put to grass, is also employed by IMS and supports our Purchasing department one to two days a week. When it’s about coping with the growing requirements, employer and employees alike are called upon. In doing so, the workforce at IMS delivers an above-average contribution with their commitment. Employees also create a pleasant working climate. The engagement of the management in the sense of a positive corporate culture will help to secure the success of IMS and its employees in the long term.

Any employee who has the feeling he is working for the right employer will also communicate that to the outside world as well. High identification of the employee with the company has a positive effect that is not to be underestimated. Customers feel that too.

We regard social engagement as part of our corporate culture.

- Hendrik Schultes, chief financial officer IMS
When I started, the planning engineers still drew the circuit diagrams by hand. They were then traced with ink by draughtsmen – mostly women. That took about four to six weeks – something unimaginable today.

- Gerhard Knospe

That our products are reliable and durable is well-known in the branch and has made us the global leader. But there are also small anecdotes that deserve mention because they tell of the people that make our products what they are. Here is one of them:

"Of course I’m also a little bit proud of it," says Gerhard Knospe modestly. And yet he has every reason to celebrate, because he has just finished his 250th system as project manager, after working for IMS in this field for 29 years. "I simply feel at home in the company."

This number of systems means he worked on around nine per year on average. His anniversary project was a thickness measuring system delivered to China in July. He knows exactly how many projects he has worked on because he keeps a list of them. "I started with the list shortly before I was due to leave on my first trip abroad so that I could remember all the projects later on," says Knospe, "otherwise I wouldn’t even know now that I’m working on my anniversary project."

His memories of the exciting beginnings have remained. When he supervised his first projects, the circuit diagrams were still drawn by hand by the engineers and then put to paper with ink by draughtsmen. That took about four to six weeks. Says Knospe: "That is completely unimaginable today." Gerhard Knospe is a qualified radio and TV technician and state-certified electronics technician. He joined us in 1986 and can still remember his first systems well: "They were two fixed gauges for VAW Born (today Hydro Aluminium)."

At the moment the Knospes are beginning to establish a family tradition. Gerhard’s son, Felix, joined IMS as an apprentice industrial mechanic in 2007. In 2011 he was employed on a full-time basis. Felix has not disclosed whether he is also keeping a list.

Gerhard Knospe still enjoys his work: "I like the many different sides of the job." - Gerhard Knospe
Corporate Culture

62

Editorial

63

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT IMS – A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Young people in our society need a perspective, and that begins with their schooling and afterwards with vocational education. Giving young people a perspective is also a social task. Because IMS has recognized one thing: Young talent is also the future of the company. Besides business interests, the IMS management sees the training of young people as a major responsibility vis-à-vis society. So IMS has presented itself for many years now as a training operation for technical and commercial professions. “Qualifications”, insists Christina Theisz from IMS Human Resources, “are for us quite clearly the A & O.” After completing their training, the best apprentices can hope for a permanent job. Jörg Busch, General Manager Global Sales & Projects, adds: “Only well-trained employees develop new ideas for innovative measuring systems or further development of existing systems.” In the end, we need employees who can be deployed flexibly.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

AT ALL LEVELS

Working and studying at the same time is one interesting option to get acquainted with the profession. Ever more prospective students today are choosing this combination. They enjoy hearing things not only theoretically during lectures, but also practically in the company. From the very outset, IMS offers students a solid foundation for further career development.

In addition, the company has its own academy, the CTC (Competence Training Center). The CTC offers training for both employees and customers. Customers from across the world are our guests at head office. Christina Theisz: “They take part above all in technical training.” Besides theory, IMS also offers the possibility in the test fields in Heiligenhaus to train them on their own measuring systems. “Well-trained customers,” says Jörg Busch, “know how to operate our complex systems and can use them correctly.” Above all, that increases customer satisfaction and frees up IMS employees for other tasks. Customers can then solve problems and faults quickly and easily themselves. This, too, shows what high priority training and development has at IMS. IMS quickly realised that customers’ problems lead to innovations. New ideas and improvements are captured immediately and flow into the various processes, such as development, engineering, application software, design and service.
The IMS Academy CTC (Competence Training Center) offers both our customers and our staff a wide range of courses.

External training for our customers
We constantly have guests from around the world at our headquarter who take part in specific training courses. Apart from the theoretical side, we offer them the opportunity to train on their own measuring systems in our test bays – even before they have officially been accepted.

Internal training for employees
How do you become the world’s best? The company relies on its greatest asset: its people. They enjoy outstanding training, have excellent knowhow and over the last 35 years have been able to place IMS products among the world’s best. “If there’s a knowledge gap between the requirements for a new technology,” explains Christina Theisz, “then the employees are of course trained further.” The employee seminars are tailored specifically for our specialists and the needs of the company. That also applies to employees in the branch offices and service staff. They too are regularly trained in Heiligenhaus. Busch: “Technology and system life-cycles are becoming ever shorter.” And the steadily growing product portfolio also requires constant training. In that way, IMS guarantees high quality at all levels.

IMS as a learning organisation
Gutenberg changed the world by inventing the printing press. But by doing so, he also introduced something revolutionary to the world; he changed the way we share knowledge. These days, the internet stands for the way we share knowledge. One thing is clear: Sharing knowledge is much more productive for everyone than gathering knowledge. “We are going down quite different routes there too, because people who think out of the box are important for us,” says Theisz. She grins as she talks about the importance of those that think outside the box: Without the open-minded, we as the human race would still be pulling the ox-cart today.” The company understands the transfer of knowledge as a continuous process and a building block for success. In this way ideas for changes can be developed, which highly specialised people can realise in processes and programs. No wonder then that IMS keeps adapting itself to suit the changing market conditions. Customers above all benefit from that. “For us, people are simply our greatest asset,” concludes Managing Director Rainer Fackert. We even set up our own fitness centre run by a trainer so that our people feel good. IMS has more than 30 apprentices every year. Some 300 young people have already applied to IMS this year. That too reflects the company’s good image.

Competence and Training Center (CTC)
The newly built Competence and Training Center (CTC) offers multi-faceted training with professional trainers and involvement of experienced service engineers. It convinces through state-of-the-art training media and a calm atmosphere. Training systems using the original components permit close-to-practice training.
BRING ON THE GOOD LIFE! BUT WHAT PRECISELY MAKES US HAPPY? THERE ARE PLENTY OF EXAMPLES FOR THE “GOOD LIFE” AND HOW WE REALISE IT HERE IN PARTICULAR.

In the midst of the “Niederbergischen Land”, surrounded by meadows and woods, we rely on renewable energy here in beautiful Heiligenhaus. All our roofs are equipped with solar panels that cover a major share of our need for electricity. State-of-the-art heat pump technology provides for comfortable warmth in our new buildings, whereby we use solar panels and geothermal heat.

As world market leader, it goes without saying that we take a critical look at new technologies even outside the rolling mills. Active environmental protection has top priority: reducing residues and scrap, frugal use of resources, environmentally friendly materials and recycling are the order of the day for us. We regard sustainability as a significant driver of innovation and a continuous improvement process for the company. That is reflected in our measuring systems.

WE PUT OUR MONEY WHERE OUR MOUTH IS!

Savings of almost 250,000 kilograms of O2 per year
THANK YOU TO OUR TEAM!

»You have made us to what we are today.«

Dipl.-Betriebswirt Hendrik Schultes
chief financial officer
IMS Messsysteme GmbH

Dipl.-Ing. Rainer Fackert
chief technical officer
IMS Messsysteme GmbH
MORE THAN 3500 MEASURING SYSTEMS IN USE WORLDWIDE

WITH OVER 600 CUSTOMERS IN MORE THAN 60 COUNTRIES

35 YEARS IN BUSINESS 27 LOCATIONS

ALL OVER THE WORLD

www.ims-gmbh.de