

Tradition in globalised times

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While showing Menzel Elektromotoren's manufacturing plant at the corporate seat in Berlin, Mathis Menzel, managing director of Menzel Elektromotoren in the third generation, talks about the history of the company, a family business with a long tradition. Since 1927, it has specialised on one thing above all: the manufacture and short-term customising of motors in stock. Eventually, an in-house project-based production of motors became a logical step to take, for it is ultimately faster to build a custom motor yourself rather than communicating its design to a manufacturer who is familiar with serial production only.

The chronicle of Menzel Elektromotoren is a typical Berlin story: from the bomb damage to the company seat and the relocation outside the city, to a new beginning in spite of suffering dismantled plants and the Berlin blockade. From the difficulties of goods shipping through the Soviet occupation zone, through to successfully operating a worldwide business. An album, testifying to the founding years of the company before World War II and how it was rebuilt after, illustrates this international growth with envelopes from the 1950s from Argentina and Israel, from Zagreb and Lisbon, Cairo, and Sao Paulo.

Mathis Menzel, an electrical engineer just like his father Kurt Menzel, talks about one of the key aspects of the company's success: about the relationship between the customer and the staff, about the trust that takes years to grow. This may sound nostalgic in the fast-paced



Loading a Squirrel-cage motor from the Menzel stock in Berlin

times of globalisation, yet it is absolutely up-to-date and relevant.

of Menzel Elektromotoren is, above all, the quick replacement of large motors that have run for years or even decades and are virtually irreplaceable. Wherever months may pass before a new motor has been delivered, and downtimes account for tens of thousands of Euros per day, the right decision practically suggests itself.

Just how many surprises can globalisation have in store if your business has always had a major export share? Among the things that have changed are the marketing and the outsourcing of certain production lines. The brochures are available in the languages of the target markets, in German, English, French, Spanish and Polish, among others. During the tour of the premises, Mathis Menzel takes a call in Spanish. The company's internet pages have a similarly international setup, and a Google search

Then, as now, motors are being shipped to overseas destinations, (today via air cargo whenever time is pressing) because, say, an Egyptian cement plant is dependent on a certain motor and because the prohibitive costs of air freight are put into perspective by the costs of a single day of production lost. Among the core competencies



Slip Ring motor in the Menzel test bay

for electric motors will bring up Menzel Elektromotoren on the first page. Standard series motors are manufactured according to specifications in Germany and other European locations. Custom constructions of a performance of up to 10,000kW and a weight of up to 40t are built at the main plant. Meanwhile, the bulky custom engines have been supplemented by small low-voltage motors built in standard series, making Menzel an all-round supplier in the drive technology sector. The ISO 9001 certification acts like a globally accepted business card. These things are recent.

Other things are unchanged, perhaps due to the fact that the technology has principally remained the same, even if motor housings have been optimised, insulation materials have become more heat-resistant, direct-current motors increasingly rare. The Menzel catalogue of 1931 lists articles similar to the current inventory: High-voltage motors and direct-current motors, transformers, starters. The core business has changed no more than have the problems of wear and lifetime. Nor has the extensive stock-keeping (more than 20,000 motors of all types) in warehouses in and outside Berlin changed, with access even outside the usual business hours, or the short production times, and the availability of in-house test bays.

What also continues to be true is that Germany and Western Europe are still the world leaders in electric drive technology. Among hundreds of manufacturers of electric motors in Germany very few offer a comparable spectrum in terms of service, qualified engineering and inventory. Thus, the big names among the customers of Menzel come as no surprise: from BASF to BMW, from Thyssen Krupp to Siemens Kraftwerks-Union.

What remains then is that customers worldwide put their faith in the know-how Menzel has developed in 80 years of experience. Global success defines itself through local competence, in 1927 as in 2007. If you rate the historically verified qualification of the company as a constant in times of globalisation you could say: tradition itself has a great tradition. And thus a great future. Nice to know for Menzel Elektromotoren GmbH and its customers. |

Installation of a 3000rpm Squirrel-cage motor in northern Africa



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www.menzel-elektromotoren.com

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circuito hasta 8 MW
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