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ProLeiT AG: 30 Years of Process Control Technology

www.proleit.com

It started with a dream. Two Siemens engineers, Wolfgang Ebster and Manfred Czepl, first met in 1983 while carrying out commissioning activities at a brewery in Spain. And this was also where their shared dream of establishing a business was born. 30 years ago on the 1th of June 1986, was the day when the ProLeiT Gesellschaft für technologieorientierte Prozessleit- und Steuerungssoftware mbH was established in Erlangen, Germany by Wolfgang Ebster and Manfred Czepl.

The first contracts — e.g. helping to develop the PLC-based process control systems Braumat and Nahmat — were acquired from Siemens. Two years later, the company started developing its own process control system called ProLeiT OS 155 (based on Siemens control platform S5-155U). This system was unveiled at the automation industry fair Interkama in Düsseldorf in 1989. ProLeiT was now able to present itself as a provider of turn-key automation projects with a unique system. The company managed to acquire key clients, for example Henkel, which has been one of the most successful partnerships over the years. There were additionally many new projects from the brewing industry which were secured with the help of the renowned German companies Huppmann and Tuchenhausen.

The business relocated from Erlangen to Herzogenaurach in 1992. In 1994, the dairy company Molkerei Alois Müller took over Sachsenmilch, which had gone bankrupt and commissioned ProLeiT to automate the entire new facility in Leppersdorf near Dresden. This was by far the largest project ProLeiT had ever undertaken during its early years. It generated an annual sales volume of roughly five million German marks. The project was completed on schedule on August 1, 1995. In the following period, cooperation with the Kitzing-based brewhouse specialist Huppmann was intensified and in 1997 it was decided to create a joint venture, brewmaxx, for the worldwide automation of brewing facilities. This was the start of a ten-year journey of success which saw ProLeiT

automate over 300 breweries around the world. In 2000, fourteen years after its foundation, ProLeiT converted from a limited liability company (GmbH) to a public company (AG). The new brewing facility of the Grolsch Brewery in Enschede, the Netherlands, opened in 2004 and was the largest and most comprehensive project that ProLeiT had ever carried out. The entire process automation system to ISA S88.01 was implemented using the brewmaxx system family. In 2006, ProLeiT AG acquired a 100 % share in brewmaxx after purchasing Huppmann's 50 % stake and began effectively promoting and marketing the product worldwide.



Today, the former two-man company employs roughly 400 people around the globe, is based in Herzogenaurach and boasts four national and ten international branch offices. More than 1,600 production facilities in over 100 countries currently use software solutions developed by ProLeiT. Besides the brewing industry, a field in which ProLeiT is now a global market leader, the provider of process control systems and MES solutions has also made a name for itself in many other sectors. Manufacturers from the food (e.g. industrial bakeries), beverage (water, soft drinks and fruit juices), pharmaceutical, fine chemicals (e.g. cosmetics) and paint and varnish industries capitalise on solutions from ProLeiT.

ProLeiT AG is looking to increase the number of staff at its headquarters in Herzogenaurach from the current number of 300 to around 400 over the next five years. Consequently, a decision was taken at the end of 2015 to construct a new office building. The building will incorporate an underground car park and provide 4,400 square metres of office space across four floors. The ground-breaking ceremony will take place at the end of July/start of August this year. The anticipated construction period is 18 months, at a cost of around €10 million.

This means ProLeiT is building the foundation needed for its continued growth and will be well equipped to tackle the challenges it may face on the way to becoming the world's leading provider of operational IT systems for the process industry.

ProLeiT AG: Expansion of the Management Board

www.proleit.com

ProLeiT AG is set to increase the number of directors on its Board to four on July 1, 2016. This is in response to the company's continued growth and to ensure it is well placed to meet the demands and challenges of the coming years.

Until now the fortunes of the Herzogenaurach-based Group with a network of a further four national and ten international offices have been in the safe hands of the two founders, Wolfgang Ebster and Manfred Czepl. The two entrepreneurs established the business in an Erlangen apartment back in 1986 and have managed to build up a workforce of 400 people over the past 30 years. Nonetheless, to enhance the benefits the company offers, particularly to its international customers, it is now the right time to make appropriate changes to the Group's management structures.

The two founders will retain their existing roles and responsibilities on the Board. Wolfgang Ebster (56) will remain Financial Director and Chairman, and Manfred Czepl (59) Sales Director. The technical management roles, which until now have been handled by the two founders, will be taken up by new members of the Board.

Jürgen Wöfl (50) will assume the role of Project Director and become responsible for the Group's rapidly growing and increasingly complex automation projects. His duties will include overseeing successful know-how transfer within the Group, the development of project management expertise and the recruitment and qualification of managers and staff for project-related issues. Furthermore, he will also be accountable for providing the very best care and support for valued customers and safeguarding the high quality of our projects. Jürgen Wöfl studied Electrical Engineering at Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg and graduated in 1992 as degreed engineer. He joined ProLeiT in 1995 and was initially employed as a project engineer for chemical and food plants. He was named project manager in 1996 and oversaw nu-

merous projects in the said industries. He became team leader in the Chemical and Pharmaceutical department in 1997 and then head of the department one year later in October. After a

restructuring in 2001, he took up a new role as manager of the Pharmaceutical, Food & Chemical department, which, over the years under his guidance, has grown to a staff of more than 70. In 2011, he became a member of the Executive Board, an executive committee which helps the Board of Directors with all aspects of managing the Group and prepares its members for a subsequent role in top management.

Josef Buchsteiner (51) will assume the role of Development Director and thus responsibility for further developing ProLeiT's extensive product portfolio. He undertook his studies at an Austrian polytechnic where he graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He joined ProLeiT in 1986, four months after its foundation, and was, just like Jürgen Wöfl, initially employed as a project engineer. However, the focus of his work soon switched to developing software for the first process control systems supplied by ProLeiT GmbH, as the company was called at that time. He became deputy head of department in 1993 and was appointed head of the Brewery and Beverage Industry department in 1999. Josef Buchsteiner has been in charge of the Development department since 2006 and is responsible for developing core products (process control systems, MES systems, ERP connections, add-ons). He became a member of the Executive Board in 2010. In his role as Development Director, he will ensure the company continues and widens its high level of innovative output with the aim of providing products that offer our engineers, partners and customers sustained competitive advantages in their fields.



From left: Jürgen Wöfl, Josef Buchsteiner

Firestone Walker Brewing Co.: Brewhouse expansion using brewmaxx V8

www.firestonebeer.com

The Firestone Walker Brewing Co. is owned by brothers-in-law Adam Firestone and David Walker, who believe in brewing beer the traditional way. The company's main brewery is located in Paso Robles and is one of three operations run by the Firestone Walker Brewing Co. in the USA. Two further facilities can be found in Buellton and Venice. At the beginning of January 2016, ProLeiT was

commissioned by the Firestone Walker Brewery to automate its brewhouse expansion in Paso Robles, California. The existing brewhouse already operates with brewmaxx Version 8. So it was a natural step for the expansion to incorporate a further line utilising brewmaxx V8. The factory acceptance test (FAT) is planned for the autumn of 2016 and, if all goes well, the new facility should be commissioned in the spring of 2017. This project marks yet another productive and successful collaboration between our companies which will be continued in the future.

