

Vincotech

I recently had the distinct pleasure of visiting Joachim Fietz, CEO and Peter Sontheimer, Vice President R&D and Marketing, Vincotech at their company HQ near Munich, Germany.

Vincotech Navigates to Success

Since joining in January 2009, Joachim Fietz heads up the Vincotech Group with 600 employees. The company is headquartered in Germany, has manufacturing plants in Hungary and China and sales offices worldwide. Vincotech develops and manufactures subsystems and electronic components for the industrial, solar and navigation segments.

With the current financial climate it's a challenging time for all companies in our industry. Vincotech is a new independent business with new leadership. Joachim and Peter told me about the way they see the company's future.

One of Joachim's first actions as CEO was to continue and reinforce the company's program to measure the level of customer satisfaction achieved. In classic marketing style he and his team determined the key components of customers' expectations and the degree to which the new company, Vincotech, achieved this in comparison to the former Tyco operating organization.

He explained, "Our customers, who are made up mainly of mid-sized companies, are happier now than with the former regime. We are now able to react to their needs in a much more flexible and faster way, which in turn helps them to get to market faster. We have a very tightly knit management team here at Vincotech, which helps us to communicate faster and to make decisions in a matter of hours, which would take larger and more traditionally structured firms weeks to carry out. We do not suffer under multi layers of administration and do not need to seek the 'top-level' approvals found in many larger organizations."

Vincotech's customer base is made up mainly from medium sized firms which have an absolute need to be flexible and be able to customize their end products



to differentiate themselves from the 'one size fits all' offerings from the well known industry giants.

As a consequence, Vincotech needs to retain its flexibility and ability to respond to these needs. At Vincotech, management staff and employees alike are encouraged to question and challenge established procedures and processes, even those that have been in place and working satisfactorily for many years. There is no place at the new company for a 'comfort zone' mode of operation in these highly challenging and competitive times.

Joachim reflected, "Sometimes it takes an industry or financial crisis to forge a new and better mode of operation. We all get too comfortable in the good times, and when the pressure to survive and flourish in these hard times suddenly descends upon us, we find that we have latent reserves of ingenuity and creativity to help propel the company into a higher level of thinking and achievement.

As a sailor, I am determined to navi-



gate the storm with the sound knowledge that our ship is in good shape and fully capable of making it through these unfriendly seas.

We are operating also with a 'back to basics' approach. We are a young company with solid and well-founded roots. We strive to maintain and continuously improve our value proposition to our customers.

In the area of power modules, our ability to serve markets such as solar and renewable energy applications with top quality modules which are also easy and cost-effective to manufacture utilizing our press-fit technology, is establishing for us and our customers, an enviable position in the market."

When I asked about the huge media coverage regarding emerging automotive and other energy efficient applications of power technology, Peter Sontheimer explained, "There is a lot of hype and mis-information around in this area at the moment. We have a long term responsi-

bility to our customers to deliver the best products on the market. We have our own highly competitive goals in delivering world class solutions to them and will not divert valuable R&D resource into programs that will not help enhance this. We prefer not to enter into the energy efficient hype that is to be seen all around us – to the extent that the term itself becomes diluted- and we concentrate on the task of sustainable loss reduction, which I believe is a much clearer and tangible definition of what we do.

We are already extremely well positioned to contribute significantly to the success of our automotive, industrial drives and solar partners.”

Joachim added, “We have the unique

ability to select the best chips and components to build modules that are truly industry beating products. When our customers are, for instance, building a solar plant, each percentage point of extra efficiency helps minimize the loss or wastage of energy (and therefore revenue). Vincotech is not a manufacturer of chips and MOSFETs so can select the very best parts for the job. There are therefore no compromises as found in other module manufacturers who must, by corporate edict, only use their own chips and components. History shows that no one manufacturer can be the best in every field.”

In the industrial drives and solar applications the company faces the added requirement for extreme reliability.

These industries need to work around the clock, unattended and in extremely hostile environments. A service call to fix a failure in a remote and difficult terrain can be very expensive indeed. Vincotech’s experience, heritage and deep rooted commitment to quality in these fields can assure their customers a very bright future.

I came away from my visit to Vincotech with the reassuring feeling that the company was indeed run as a very tight ship and well set on its course with a captain and crew working tirelessly toward the common goal of success.

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