

ACHENBACH BUSCHHÜTTEN – A TRADITION OF 555 YEARS

Specialists, leaders in technology and market partners for non-ferrous rolling mills

Achenbach has remained in family ownership for over 555 years. The many generations of family and employees have with not only hard work but also with pride in identifying with their product, built up the firm Achenbach Buschhütten into what it is today, a world leader in the production of non-ferrous rolling mills. With its market brand of unparalleled quality Achenbach has remained up to the present day not only family owned but also independently family run.

The concept, which underlines all Achenbach's philosophy and actions is "Technology for Future Concepts"; Achenbach has the technological know-how and future ideas to be able to make rolling mills for its customers according to specification, rolling mills, which can produce top class strip and foils out of metals such as aluminium, copper, zinc and their alloys.

The paths Achenbach has taken over the 555 years of its existence have been manifold.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRM AND ITS TECHNOLOGY: The 555 year development not only reflects the technical development of a whole branch but also that of a region, native Siegerland. Periods of stability were often intercepted by periods of upheaval and in order to insure continued survival, far-sighted decision making was vital at every stage and particularly in view of an ever changing environment. The wisdom of this far-sightedness finally resulted in a successful development process from a water powered forge plant to the global high-tech mechanical engineering firm Achenbach is today. The following represent some of the stages of development that resulted from these visionary decisions.

- In 1846 the conversion from waterwheel driven forge to a modern functioning iron foundry.
- During the European industrial revolution in the course of the 19th century the transition from supplying cast iron products for household and agricultural purposes to cast iron products for industry, particularly rolls
- In 1888 beginning of the production of the first rolling mill for sheet metal, continual development of the rolling mill as well as the production of cast rolls.
- Metallurgical preoccupation with the new light metal aluminium (only industrially available since 1888) and its formability.
- In 1918 the construction of the first aluminium rolling mill.
- From 1927 onwards the invention of coiling and decoiling by coilers made the transition possible from plate rolling to strip rolling, which is the basis for present day strip and foil rolling technology.
- At the conclusion of the Second World War specialisation in the construction of rolling mills for non-ferrous metals along with expansion of a predominantly domestic market to an ever increasing global field of business activity.
- In view of the ever increasing environmental protection and recycling regulations, foresighted development of rolling oil filtration equipment as well as equipment for the decontamination of the air in rolling mill plants.

- Since the end of the 1970s with the revolutionization of information technology, Achenbach develops its own rolling mill control technology.
- End of the 1980s the development of an aluminium foil rolling mill with the width of over 2000 mm and rolling speed of more than 2000 m/min.
- In the 1990s design of state of the art technology for the entire plant for the rolling of non-ferrous metals.
- In 2006 extension of the production programme to cutting machines for aluminium foils.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF CUSTOMER RELATIONS: Over this long period of time new customers were successively acquired and often business relations were developed on a long term basis. It has always been Achenbach's policy to pursue confidential and long term co-operation with its customers beyond individual projects. The combination of the variety of routes tailored to meet the needs of the individual customer is the basic policy responsible for the success Achenbach enjoys today. In the course of the different projects there are invariably stages during which the firm/customer relationship is less pronounced or notably intensified.

Achenbach's initial communication with its customers is threefold in both word and deed:

- "We are the SPECIALISTS": We will design and build your plant according to your specifications. We will remain in close co-operation with you in accordance with the clearly defined condition that at all times we will adhere strictly to Achenbach's globally recognized high standards of quality.
- "We are the leaders in TECHNOLOGY AND QUALITY": On the basis of the most modern rolling mill technology, which we constantly improve to combine mechanics, control and drive technology in specific plant projects, we are always intent on attaining the highest quality of mechanical engineering without losing sight of the cost factor.
- "We are your PARTNER": Achenbach's efficiency will be complemented by our desire to satisfy you on a long term basis. We not only supply exclusive plants, but at the same time are committed to giving a maximum support over the whole period of its operational life.

3. PLANNING OF PROJECT RELATIONS: Each plant project consists of various phases, beginning with inquiries, followed by the order phase, and finally an agreement of acceptance. These phases can vary from months to a few years. The limit of the time span depends upon the nature of the individual order taking into consideration the extraordinary technical challenge presented by a custom made engineering product such as a highly complex rolling mill. Every plant like a new born child receives its own name under which it is serviced beyond completion of construction for the length of its operational life.

From time to time particularly in the case of technologically leading customers, innovative impulses evolve leading to a co-operation in a development project which proves technologically progressive for the whole branch of rolling mill engineering.

- 4. CULTIVATION OF DEPENDABLE LEADERSHIP:** One noteworthy success factor responsible for the development of Achenbach is surely the traditionally continuous leadership by family members, whose involvement and contributions up to the present day have always been underlined by their passionate devotion to rolling mill technology. They have advanced the firm by accentuating different aspects, thus making the brand Achenbach synonymous with tradition and innovation. The personality of these long term leaders has not only been responsible for setting standards but to a large extent for establishing a code of ethical concepts. To these belong the high standard of quality to which Achenbach commits itself, as well as high dependability of plants and schedules. Customer dealings are based on respectful and confidential co-operation guaranteeing exceptional service and flexibility. The family management is there for you at all times.

- 5. TRADITION OF LONG TERM STAFF RELATIONS:** Qualified staff is possibly the most important prerequisite for the successful development of the firm, employees who not only contribute their knowledge and capabilities, but also because of their long term identification with the firm. Advancement of know-how and products reflects after all human advancement. Both the ethical concepts of the firm and continuity of management insure a great degree of security for Achenbach staff. The wide scope of work typical for medium sized companies, including a comparatively large proportion of individual independent decision-making, yields self fulfilment in a highly interesting and demanding field of work. Functional team spirit is more important than hierachical thinking at Achenbach. Achenbach staff, who often over a period of many years enjoy a loyal affinity to the firm are not only an advantage for the development of the firm but also to the customer, who can depend upon and always refer to a long term contact partner.

- 6. REGIONAL ROOTS:** “Busch’s Hütte” (Busch’s iron works) was the original name given to the settlement of Buschhütten in 1452. Generations of employees were recruited from this local area. Today employees native to Buschhütten intermingle with those from the rest of Germany as well as from abroad. The fascination of rolling mill technology is their common bond. In spite of all difficulties, the firm has always remained loyal to this German location, or more exactly to Kreuztal-Buschhütten, and concentrates here not only the complete development, engineering and sales, but also a considerable part of manufacture and pre-assembly. This is a competitive feature unique to Achenbach.

After 555 years it remains a constant challenge to guarantee the continuation of the careful planning and creativity, which trademarks this firm. Not only believing in the firm itself but to convey this passionate spirit for product and firm internally as well as externally is the immense challenge which faces every new generation of Achenbach, a firm richly rooted in tradition. After all, the firm will always need staff, who have an ambition to instrument change, who are prepared to share responsibility and to contribute to visionary thinking, who offer constructive criticism, and who at all levels make an effective contribution guaranteeing ambition and team spirit, which is vital to success in the world of competition. This is the essence which makes for success of a well run medium sized company, also known as “HIDDEN CHAMPIONS”. This is synergy, as it should be, not in theory but in practice.