

Protective shield for the spirit of invention

Endress+Hauser successfully follows a clear intellectual property rights strategy with 236 new patent applications in 2013

Each year Endress+Hauser invests more than five million euros worldwide in the protection of intellectual property. This strengthens the Group's position against its competitors – and spurs on the company's inventors. The strategy proves successful: In 2013 Endress+Hauser filed initial patent applications for 236 new developments. The total number of 'live' patents and patent applications amounts to almost 5,700.

“We operate in an intensively competitive industry,” states Michael Ziesemer, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Endress+Hauser Group. “Our advantage is secured by innovative products – and in turn we can safeguard these innovations by protecting them with patents at a very early stage.” Michael Ziesemer, member of the Group's Executive Board and responsible for patents, is therefore pleased with last year's total of 236 patent applications; six more than in 2012.

In measurement engineering, the medium-sized company is one of the leaders amongst applicants for European patents. Endress+Hauser invests heavily in research & development in all fields of activity. Of the 720 employees working in this area, 365 were involved in filing an initial patent application last year. “We strongly encourage our employees to register their ideas as soon as possible and without any reservation,” emphasizes Angelika Andres. The physicist and patent lawyer heads the 20-strong patent department of the Group that assesses and processes all invention disclosures.

Germany and the European Union, the United States and China are the countries in which Endress+Hauser has applied for patents and holds the majority of files. Only about one third of these patents are actually used, as Angelika Andres explains. The patent portfolio is therefore regularly reviewed, keeping an eye on markets of decreasing importance: “The older patents become, the higher the fees.”

A protective wall of patents

Even the 70 percent of patents that are technically unused nevertheless have an economic weight – “in order to stave off attacks from competitors,” as Michael Ziesemer explains. From time to time competitors believe that their industrial property rights have been infringed. “A large patent portfolio acts as a protective shield,” the Group's COO confirms. The more patents a company can throw into the balance, the better the prospects in a dispute. “Our patents are our insurance.”

How innovative a new invention really is and what advantages it can offer customers often only becomes obvious after many years. Michael Ziesemer cites wireless technology as an example – the wireless transmission of measurement values, which is used more and more in the monitoring of industrial processes. “The peak time for patents was ten years ago. If we hadn't patented technologies and the corresponding software and hardware back then, we would have to pay license fees today and would only be able to supply our sensors as components.” Instead, today Endress+Hauser is a successful system supplier in the field of wireless solutions.

For Michael Zieseimer the Endress+Hauser intellectual property rights strategy fits seamlessly into the long-term goals of the company management. An integral part of this strategy is the honoring of inventors at the annual Innovators' Meeting, which took place in 2014 in Freiburg, Germany. All employees involved in patent applications in the past year are invited. Prizes are awarded for patents that are of particular economic significance for the company.

Captions

Endress+Hauser celebrates its inventors: the Group invited all employees who applied for a patent in 2013 to the Innovators' Meeting in Freiburg, Germany.



Accumulated inventive genius: the Endress+Hauser Group invited all employees who applied for a patent in 2013 to the Innovators' Meeting in Freiburg, Germany.



The Endress+Hauser Group

Endress+Hauser is a global leader in measurement instrumentation, services and solutions for industrial process engineering. The Group employs approximately 12,000 personnel across the globe, generating net sales of 1.8 billion euros in 2013.

Structure

With dedicated sales centers and a strong network of partners, Endress+Hauser guarantees competent worldwide support. Our production centers in 11 countries meet customers' needs and requirements quickly and effectively. The Group is managed and coordinated by a holding company in Reinach, Switzerland. As a successful family-owned business, Endress+Hauser is set for continued independence and self-reliance.

Products

Endress+Hauser provides sensors, instruments, systems and services for level, flow, pressure and temperature measurement as well as analytics and data acquisition. The company supports customers with automation engineering, logistics and IT services and solutions. Our products set standards in quality and technology.

Industries

We work closely with the chemical, petrochemical, food & beverage, oil & gas, water & wastewater, power & energy, life science, primaries & metal, renewable energies, pulp & paper and shipbuilding industries. Endress+Hauser supports its customers in optimizing their processes in terms of reliability, safety, economic efficiency and environmental impact.

History

Founded in 1953 by Georg H Endress and Ludwig Hauser, Endress+Hauser has been solely owned by the Endress family since 1975. The Group has developed from a specialist in level measurement to a provider of complete solutions for industrial measuring technology and automation, with constant expansion into new territories and markets.

For further information, please visit www.press.endress.com or www.endress.com

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