

03|2019

OCTA NEWS

THE ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

**The future is created
by connections.**

Interview:

Hans Bruder on
connecting ideas

Visionary and founder:

the entrepreneur
Hans Staeger

The next steps:

the way ahead by Managing
Director, Thomas Gräter

OCTANORM



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1969-2019



CONNECTIONS ARE IN OUR DNA.

On landmark company anniversaries people always like to ask: What is actually the secret of success? In the case of OCTANORM it comes down to just one word: connections. This primarily relates to our systems in which everything is interconnected. But connections have another, much more fundamental meaning for us. After setting up OCTANORM Hans Staeger didn't just drive forward the development of ground-breaking trade fair systems, at the same time he built up a network that would soon span five continents. Of course Hans Bruder also played a key role in the international expansion since he was just as successful as the founder himself at forging connections with people. It was way back in 1969 – at a time when other companies were tentatively beginning to consider international expansion – that OCTANORM acquired its first licensee in England. The adding of further licensees and the founding of subsidiary companies have made the OCTANORM service network truly global. Then in the 1980s the OSPI network was founded, and it now has more than 140 partners in over 40 countries around the world.

Our latest OSPI meeting took place just recently – on an especially memorable date. The OSPI family met up on 06.12.2018 in South Africa, 50 years to the day from the press conference at which Hans Staeger announced the founding of OCTANORM. There'll be more about that meeting in this edition of OCTANEWS. Of course we raised a toast to this event together with the members of the OSPI family. What we were particularly pleased to see at the meeting was the fact that OCTANORM is not only a truly worldwide partner but that it now links different generations. There are now already OSPI partners who are following in their parents' footsteps.

However, one of the reasons for OCTANORM's success over the last five decades is also that we've never dwelt too much on the past – we prefer to think about the future instead. Over recent decades the world has changed more than in virtually any period of human history. Digitization and globalization have fundamentally changed how we live and work. And the era of change is by no means over – it's continuing at unrelenting speed. Our customers will benefit greatly from the new developments. For instance, artificial intelligence will in the foreseeable future help to provide solutions which will enable trade fair exhibitors – but also shop owners – to have even stronger links to their target customers. And that's not all – they'll also win more new customers. In this magazine our Managing Director, Thomas Gräter – who took over from Hans Bruder as the head of the company four years ago – reveals more about the exciting developments that lie ahead. And the grandson of the company's founder, Nic Staeger, reports on ground-breaking developments in relation to trade fairs and shop systems. However, we don't want to get ahead of ourselves, but instead to take the opportunity to thank everybody without whom OCTANORM's success simply wouldn't have been possible: our customers and partners throughout the world and our staff in Filderstadt as well as our subsidiary companies and licensees.

Jörg Staeger
OCTANORM shareholder

Hans Bruder
OCTANORM shareholder

HOW TO UNDERTAKE SUCCESSFUL WORLDWIDE NETWORKING OVER A PERIOD OF MANY DECADES.

The art of creating robust connections.

In conversation with Hans Bruder, the Managing Director of the OSPI partner network.

Hans Bruder ranks alongside the company's founder, Hans Staeger, as a key figure in OCTANORM's fifty-year history. Since he joined the company on 01.05.1978 Bruder has played a major role in the company's international success. Even after he gave up his management role in 2015 after 37 years at the company, his colleagues at Filderstadt have continued to benefit from his excellent worldwide connections. He is still the Managing Director of OSPI.

Mr Bruder, OCTANORM was unveiled 50 years ago – can you tell us about that memorable press conference?

Unfortunately I didn't attend the press conference on 06.12.1968 myself. But Mr Staeger made a point of telling me how he managed to leave a lasting impression on the guests and journalists at the event. His aim was to demonstrate at the event just how flexibly, and above all how quickly, the OCTANORM system can be used for assembling and disassembling stands. In order to provide a suitable setting for the event, the workbench room at the Raumtechnik company was completely transformed.

At the press conference Mr Staeger arranged for two employees to make a Christmas tree out of OCTANORM upright extrusions and beams. But the actual climax of the conference was yet to come – when all the attendees thought the event was over. Following the press conference the guests were invited to lunch in a restaurant. While they had lunch there the conference room where they had just met disappeared. In no time at all it was completely dismantled and reconfigured. When the visitors returned to the building after lunch they couldn't believe their eyes: the room in which they had attended the event no longer existed. Instead they were in a workbench room full of machines. It would have been difficult to highlight more impressively just how flexible the OCTANORM system is. The astonished journalists ensured that the event received high profile media coverage. So Mr Staeger achieved exactly what he had been hoping to achieve.

What was – and still is – so unique about Hans Staeger's idea?


The octagonal upright extrusion. It's been used as our trademark, and it's become a symbol of our brand which still prompts an unrivalled level of recognition. It provided the solution for right-angle corners. Its eight outlets at 45° from each other provide greatly enhanced design opportunities, giving trade fair architects a much greater degree of freedom. In addition, the quick connection system using a tension lock was crucial to ensuring that extremely short set-up and disassembly times could – and can – be achieved with the OCTANORM system.

OCTANORM is a widely recognized name in the trade fair world – what's the reason for this name?

The shape of the upright extrusion inspired Mr Staeger to use the Latin word for eight, i.e. "OCTA". Adding the suffix "NORM" expressed the modular nature of the system. So joining the two elements together produced the "OCTANORM" company name.

How long did it take after the company was set up for OCTANORM to attract international attention?

Hans Staeger already had contacts with numerous marketing partners in other countries due to the marketing of the RTS glass construction system that he had developed. These marketing partners then spontaneously expressed an interest in marketing the OCTANORM system in their countries. The first OCTANORM licensee was appointed directly after the OCTANORM press conference that I mentioned at the start: it was the "RT Display" company in England. Shortly afterwards we managed to conclude further licence agreements in other countries.



**"I still particularly value
the personal contacts
between us and our
partners."**

Hans Bruder



The birth of OCTANORM.

In 1968 on St. Nicholas Day (the 6th of December when children are traditionally given presents in honour of the saint), the memorable press conference took place at which Hans Staeger announced the setting up of OCTANORM.



A high-profile founder.

From the very outset the octagonal extrusion was the symbol of the OCTANORM brand.



A press conference turns into a major event.

With an impressive hands-on presentation the great flexibility of the OCTANORM system has been demonstrated.



Based on the octagon.

Immediately after the press conference the first licensee was acquired in England.



The EuroShop seems to have been very important for OCTANORM from the outset – why is that?

The EuroShop in Dusseldorf is a key venue for OCTANORM because it's the world's largest event relating to trade fair construction as well as shopfitting and general interior fittings. In addition, more than half of the people who come to EuroShop are foreigners, making it a really international trade fair.

Making connections is evidently one of the company's core skills. Tell us about OSPI, what's the idea behind it?

The idea of the OCTANORM Service Partner International network is to bring together trade fair construction companies from around the world. The "Hier gedacht – dort gemacht" ("Designed here – built there") principle means that they can provide inexpensive and environmentally friendly trade fair stands for the international exhibitors that they work for. And they do this by working with a cooperation partner at the local trade fair site.

Who apart from you are the individuals or partners who have had a particular influence on OSPI?

Hans Staeger who helped me to get it started, and Angelika Holzwarth-Kocher who is the OSPI secretary, have certainly had a major influence on OSPI. The OSPI honorary committee has become an important body: its elected members support the work of OSPI GmbH.

The OSPI meetings are held at some of the most exciting locations in the world, such as the Iguazu Falls, the African savannah, or the Great Wall of China. Which is the one that you particularly remember?

It's enormously difficult to pick a favourite out of the 17 OSPI meetings that have so far been held. Every event has had its highlights. All the same, I've got particularly fond memories of the 1984 OSPI meeting at EuroShop in Dusseldorf since it was at the OCTANORM trade fair stand there that the OSPI partners met for the first time. Another very special event was the 2008 OSPI meeting in the United Arab Emirates when we celebrated OCTANORM's 40th anniversary in the desert in Dubai. And the 17th OSPI meeting in South Africa was of course very special. It was held in fascinating Cape Town and in the wilderness just outside

Johannesburg, and it gave us the opportunity to join our partners and look back on the first 50 years of OCTANORM.

What's the "OSPI Next Generation" all about?

The "OSPI Next Generation" was unveiled for the first time at the 16th OSPI meeting, which was held in Canada. The working group is very keen to get the young, up-and-coming workers in the OSPI firms interested in the OSPI concept as well, so that they maintain its vibrancy and its success in the future.

Mr Bruder, you've forged a huge number of valuable links for OCTANORM, can you tell us what the secret of a good partnership is?

Good partnerships are based on mutual trust, because that's the bedrock of any successful collaboration.

The world is changing. Has it become easier to establish and maintain links which stand the test of time in the digital era?

In my opinion it's not necessarily got any easier to establish lasting links in the digital era, but there's no doubt that modern means of communication are very helpful. Especially in terms of maintaining existing contacts. However, I still particularly value face-to-face contacts. The fact that our OSPI partners feel the same way is always made clear by the huge number of people who attend the OSPI meetings which we hold every two years.

Today OCTANORM already operates in over 80 countries around the world. Are there nevertheless still locations that you would like to establish links with?

Potentially interesting areas for the future are countries in the Middle East and the Far East.

Mr Bruder, many thanks for this interview, and we wish you every success in establishing new links in the future.

1969–2019

Milestones in the 50-year history of OCTANORM.

An idea that's always ahead of its time.



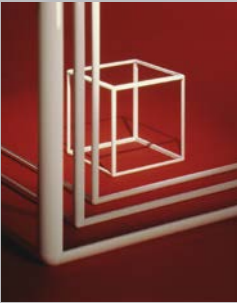
06.12.1968 – The founding of OCTANORM is announced at a press conference.
(For more information on this see the interview with Hans Bruder on pages 4–7).

1972 – The company is unveiled at the EuroShop trade fair, and it presents the OCTANORM round beams.



1974 – Move from Möhringen near Stuttgart to the current location in Raiffeisenstraße, Filderstadt.

1978 – The Newline range is unveiled. Hans Bruder joins OCTANORM.



1984 – Premiere of OCTANORM Double Deck, the system for two-storey stands.



1984 – First OSPI meeting at EuroShop in Dusseldorf.



1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993



1969 – OCTANORM-Vertriebs-GmbH revolutionizes the trade fair world with the first octagonal construction system.



OCTANORM presents the double-floor system for systematic underfloor installations.



1981 – At the EuroShop, the lamella ceiling of OCTANORM is shown for the first time.



1987 – The OCTAcad software is launched.

1993 – Transparenta showcase system.





1997 – Presentation of Maxima Truss System for large-span ceilings.



2009 – 40th anniversary of OCTANORM. Celebration in Dubai.

2001 – First display partner congress

2003 – Founding of the cleanroom department.



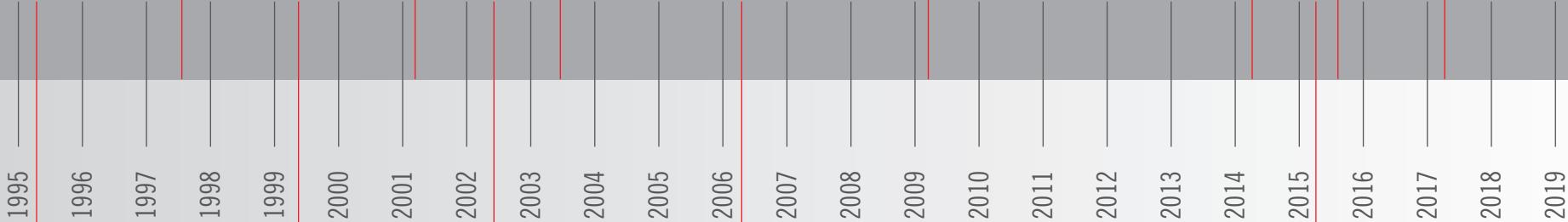
2015 – Relaunch of OCTANORM corporate design.



2017 – Presentation of OCTAuniversal at EuroShop.



2014 – Launch of OCTAlumina.



1995 – DIN ISO 9001 certification.

2002 – 2nd OCTANORM competence forum.



1999 – Presentation of Maxima light, Vario Displays, and the Newline shop shelf system at EuroShop.



2006 – 11th International OSPI meeting in Las Vegas.

2015 – Thomas Gräter takes over from Hans Bruder as the Managing Director of OCTANORM.



2018/2019 – 17th OSPI meeting in South Africa marking the company's anniversary.



IDEAS WITH WHICH WE HAVE
SYSTEMATICALLY CHANGED THE
TRADE FAIR INDUSTRY.

MADE

in Filderstadt.

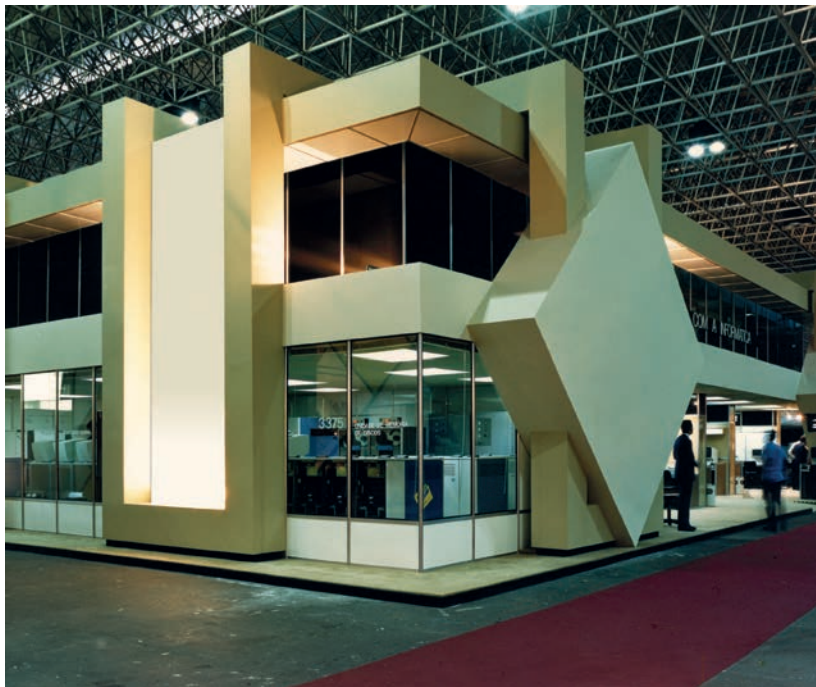
Five innovations from five different decades.

No single idea is so ingenious that it can produce a 50-year success story all by itself. You only have to ask the bosses at Apple in Cupertino who are constantly wringing their hands in the search for "one more thing". In order to remain a technological leader in your market over a period of decades you need to have a constant stream of fresh innovative ideas which lead to a series of trend-setting products. That's the case with OCTANORM's systems. What particularly characterizes them is the fact that everything is interconnected, from the latest innovations to tried and tested products. So now the builders of trade fair stands can choose from a comprehensive range of profiles, beams and accessories precisely those parts which realize even their most ambitious ideas at the drop of hat. Here we've brought together five key innovations which exemplify our success over the last five decades.



■ THE OCTAGONAL PROFILE S 100:

the original profile that started everything off. With its eight corners the S 100 system revolutionized the trade fair world in 1969. OCTANORM still owes its reputation to this invention. Above all, its versatility opened up a wide range of completely new design options. Its great rigidity also meant that it became the heavy-duty, load-bearing solution for trade fairs around the world. So although its inventors didn't manage to "square the circle", they still managed to break out of the right-angled mindset thanks to its unique shape.



■ DOUBLE-DECK:

trade fair exhibitors spent a long time trying to increase the height of their displays. Double-deck trade fair stands were seen as a promising solution for simply coping with the space constraints at the most popular events in the sector. The problem was the construction of them – it was very time-consuming, and for a long time it could only be done with the use of expensive lifting equipment. The real solution was provided by OCTANORM in 1984 in the form of a double-decker system which meant that stands could instantly expand upwards while still being able to be dismantled just as quickly. All without the use of any heavy machinery. Of course this solution is also compatible with all the OCTANORM trade fair system components.



■ MAXIMA:

expansion into completely new dimensions. Since 1999 OCTANORM Maxima has opened up completely new design options for the builders of trade fair stands. Using 40, 60, 80 and 120 mm diameter profiles. And the profiles can be either round or square-shaped. The "Maxima" name refers not only to the many options provided by the system but also to its great load-bearing capacity, its large span, as well as its extraordinary quality and the durability which results from this.

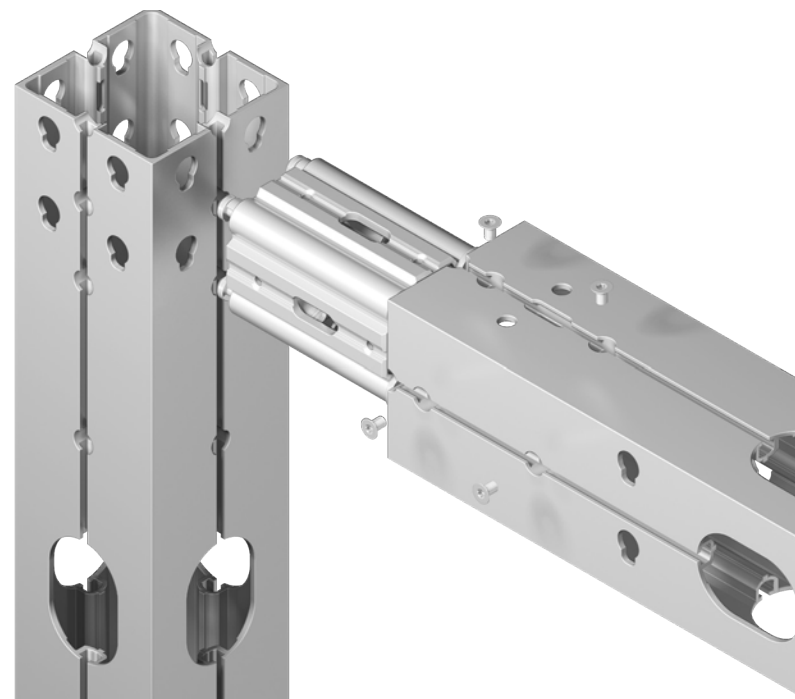
■ OCTALUMINA:

Let there be light! Since 2014 OCTALumina has ensured that companies can present their products and solutions more effectively than ever before. This doesn't just apply to trade fairs but also to the retail sector and any public spaces. The illuminated walls magically attract people's attention. High-quality power LEDs and a novel form of lens technology provide an extra-special level of focus. As with other OCTANORM systems, OCTALumina is characterized by the wide range of options that it provides in a variety of different frame sizes. And of course it's a plug-and-play system, so it's really easy to operate.



■ OCTAUNIVERSAL:

this system opens up a whole range of new options. OCTAuniversal is more than just a framework construction. It's the perfect combination of the present and the future. And it provides a versatile basis for using any of the existing systems such as Maxima, and any systems that will be developed in future. Together with OCTALumina the modular system makes it possible to not only display images or graphics in an illuminated frame, its novel design means that pioneering multimedia systems can also be operated on it. The incorporation of LED panels brings the stands to life as never before. Moving images provide a captivating spectacle. What's more, OCTAuniversal completely transforms the space. Flexibly-sized beams mean that every last inch of valuable space can be used to maximum effect on the trade fair stand or in shopfitting or other projects. The locks and bolts create connections which are not only absolutely secure in terms of load-bearing capacity but can also be statically verified.





THE FOUNDER HANS STAEGER.

Entrepreneur, visionary, networker.

23.06.1928 –17.05.2007

Great entrepreneurs are always well ahead of their time. This applies particularly to the founder of OCTANORM, Hans Staeger. He didn't just have a visionary instinct for devising ground-breaking products, he drove forward developments such as sustainability, globalization and networking long before these terms ever became an issue for most companies.

Hans Staeger's career didn't begin at an elite university, instead it emerged from the chaos of the Second World War. In 1944 when he was just 16 years old he was conscripted to serve in the mountain infantry. At an age when young men are normally preparing for their school-leaving examinations, he then found himself a prisoner of the Americans. After being released in 1946 he was sent on a march across Germany. It was on this march however that he got to know the woman to whom he remained married until his death, and with whom he had three sons. Like many of the key entrepreneurs who were to become the drivers of Germany's legendary "economic miracle", Hans Staeger was a self-made man. After a short stay in what was then Russian-occupied East Germany, he moved to Swabia where he began to build a new life as a carpenter. It was in this period that Hans, a Berliner by birth, became especially fond of the people of Swabia who are renowned for their hard work. Eleven years after the end of the war Staeger passed his final exam as a carpenter and immediately took over the operational management of a company called "Raumtechnik" in Untertürkheim. Two years later he became a partner in the company. Over the following years

he worked with Manfred Malzacher on developing the RTS shelf construction system, which was included in the exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art in New York a few years later. Meanwhile he had devoted himself completely to the trade fair sector, and in 1963 he became a founding member of the Fachverband Messe- und Ausstellungsbau (FAMAB) – the German trade fair and exhibition federation. Then in 1969 he founded OCTANORM. Although Staeger KG Raumtechnik had by then become one of the most important trade fair companies in Germany, he soon sold his shares in order to avoid any conflicts of interest and so that he could concentrate fully on OCTANORM. From the outset he was an entrepreneur who attached great importance to networking – and this soon spanned the globe. On pages 8 and 9 you can read about all his other achievements in the period from then until 1995 when he left the company. The fact that under his leadership OCTANORM grew into a company which now operates in over 80 countries around the world is probably due to several factors. Staeger's inventiveness is just as responsible for this as his special negotiation skills and his talent for building links with people – and successfully maintaining those links for decades. In his private life too he was passionate about technology, and he loved beautiful cars, and also high-class clocks – which he actually wrote a book about after leaving OCTANORM.

HE SHARED THE ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE OF SWABIA.

Interview with Hans Staeger's close associate, Paul Kerschbaumer.



Paul Kerschbaumer...

...spent almost two decades working alongside Hans Staeger. Staeger had selected him out a total of 63 candidates in 1976, and he later made him the Technical Manager of the company. In 1994, before leaving the company, he gave Kerschbaumer overall authority to take his life's work forward.

Mr Kerschbaumer, what was Hans Staeger like to work for?

Hans Staeger expected me to provide him with precise information and to carry out my assigned tasks reliably, but as a boss he was also always interested in my life outside work and he was a particularly good listener.

How did he generally appear in the company?

He was actively involved in all the departments, he had a detailed knowledge of what was going on, and he always kept a close eye on work processes. He backed any improvements, and he also rewarded the people behind them because motivating staff was very important to him. He was someone who the staff could go and talk to.

Can you add anything more about his management style?

As a boss he made sound decisions about staff. He had vision and he always worked assiduously to secure the company's future. He had the Swabian attitude to work, and he didn't accept anything less than total commitment. For us staff he was someone who led by example and was always ready to help.

How did he represent OCTANORM externally?

Hans Staeger got on really well with partners and customers – he had a special empathy with

other people and their experiences. I found him to be both a strategically astute entrepreneur and a really tough negotiator. He was extremely gifted in this respect, and he used his network of contacts with consummate skill from the very beginning.

And how did he promote the development of new ideas?

His strength was memorising things that he had seen anywhere in the world, and then at some point in the future generating an idea for a product as a result of this. He had a special flair for this, and he could see in advance how successful product developments should be carried out!

What for you was his most characteristic quality?

His sense of responsibility towards the staff. He was the one person who was particularly committed to safeguarding jobs at OCTANORM. When times were hard Hans Staeger set an example by reducing his own expenditure – he cut out expensive flights and made sure he had a cheaper company car. He was a great mentor for me, I've got fond memories of him and I often think of him.

GREAT PLANS AND 1 MB OF WORKING MEMORY.

The invention of the future – ahead of its time.

A software package makes history: OCTAcad.



Jörg Staeger and a member of his team...
...developing OCTAcad 1.0 on a computer with
a 40 MB hard drive and 1 MB working memory.

If today's employees were taken back in time to the 1980s they would be simply amazed. The place where a computer is on a desk nowadays was probably just the space that was used for an ashtray. Smoking bans were unknown in offices – as were PCs. Messages to colleagues weren't emailed, they were put into large brown envelopes and sent via the internal post system. Even after the 1984 unveiling of the first Macintosh computer by Steve Jobs, computers were simply not used in most firms. Anyone who openly advocated the introduction of EDP (electronic data processing) faced resistance. Above all from the people who were responsible for financial matters. Even relatively small computers often cost as much as a sports car. However the biggest hurdle to their introduction was ignorance of what they could do. However, this was another area where OCTANORM took a far-sighted approach. At a time when hardly anyone in the trade fair sector bothered with computers, Jörg Staeger, the son of the company's founder, started to think seriously about using them. He initially looked into the opportunities that the new technology might provide for OCTANORM and its partners.

The traditional methods.

In the middle of the 1980s, all drafting and design tasks were carried out with the aid of a drawing board. Only in exceptional cases did people work with perspective views, since they were very labour-intensive. Especially when changes needed to be made. This could only be done by using scalpel blades and glass-fibre eraser pens.

If bigger changes were needed the draft was simply thrown away, and then the job started again from the beginning. Determining the quantities of the various components that were needed was also a laborious process. This was done by using check lists. So there were huge opportunities for making improvements.

The shape of things to come.

At the 1986 OSPI meeting in Brazil, OCTANORM made the opportunities for using computers in planning a key subject of discussion for the first time. And in the same year three initial CAD/CAM solutions were presented at the OCTANORM Service Partner conference. The costs of a single workstation were certainly huge, and for two workstations they ran into hundreds

of thousands of Deutschmarks. However this didn't dampen people's enthusiasm because everyone realized that the future lay in planning. What's more, Jörg Staeger had another ace up his sleeve at the conference in the form of a much cheaper solution. This had been devised by the Aachen-based aerospace engineer, Günther Stöhr. It was based on AutoCAD 2.5® software and ran on a cheap PC. This solution was derided by the experts because at that time the average PC had a 1 MB working memory and a hard drive of perhaps 40 MB. They were proved wrong. Autodesk®, the company which created AutoCAD® is now the world's largest provider of CAD, visualization and animation software.

How to plan planning software.

Jörg Staeger led a team which drew up requirements for the software that was to be developed for OCTANORM based on the AutoCAD®. The aim was to make life easier for designers, drafters, planners and project managers, but without spending a fortune. In order to come up with a practical solution, experts from the trade fair construction and data processing fields worked together. By 1987 the result was already presented at EuroShop, and the year after that it was presented at the OSPI meeting in Canada. OCTacad 1.0 wasn't just an excellent tool for drawing up plans, the new software also produced lists of materials and worked out the costs. Exhibition stand builders were accordingly very enthusiastic about it. However, the final breakthrough would still take some time because the infrastructure first had to be created within the companies and people had to be provided with the necessary know-how. So Jörg Staeger and his team really undertook pioneering work.

Reunification year

1989 was marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall, and it was when the OCTacad breakthrough began with the unveiling of Version 2.0 at EuroShop. The printouts that came out of the plotter became the crowd-draws of the trade fair. Perspective views were possible for the first time. The program went on to be used in more and more planning departments – all around the world. Exciting new features were added almost every year. In 1990 OCTacad became capable of producing 3D renderings for the first time.

Then in 1995 the unveiling of OCTAdesign opened an entirely new chapter. The multifunctional plug-in for Autodesk 3ds Max® became the ground-breaking solution for trade fair designers and architects due to its customized functions. Even today it still sets



Joachim Kopf
The manager of the Digital Innovations department is responsible for all the digital developments at OCTANORM.



Jörg Staeger
As the representative of the principal shareholder and the Managing Director of Staeger-Verwaltungs-GmbH he recognized at any early stage the opportunities which can be opened up by computers. He still devotes himself to working on ground-breaking issues, and right now he's especially fascinated by developments in relation to digital presentation, AV media, AR, AI and 3D printing.

the standards for the sector in terms of efficiency and speed. Of course developments continued in relation to OCTacad, and in 1996 the software was converted to Windows. The new user interface and the ease of use which it provided meant that even more users were able to benefit from it. This development already took place under the leadership of Joachim Kopf – one of the very first users of OCTacad. In 1992 he joined the team, and since 1994 he has taken prime responsibility for all the innovations introduced in the DI department. He's the driving force behind all the important digital innovations of the last 25 years. This also includes the development of the OCTasketch online tool which today enables virtually anyone who doesn't have any specialist knowledge to use a computer in order to design a professional trade fair stand. Joachim Kopf has had a crucial role in ensuring that in our anniversary year over 1,200 companies in 65 countries use OCTANORM software solutions. He's currently preparing a campaign for a variety of new digital products and solutions. They include pioneering developments in the field of e-commerce, AR, VR, AI and 3D printing. When asked what his department might be expected to come up with in the next few years, Joachim Kopf answers: "At the moment we're concentrating very much on issues relating to artificial intelligence (AI) and 'augmented reality (AR)'. AI and AR will help us to ensure that in future our customers will still be able to rely on pioneering and innovative software provided by OCTANORM."

OCTANORM AT EUROSHOP.

An outstanding environment for ground-breaking innovations.

Trade fair appearances spanning five decades.



EuroShop is the biggest event in the world in the fields of trade fairs, shopfittings and interior furnishings. OCTANORM has been presenting its latest innovations at this industry-wide event since 1970. The international focus of EuroShop has in particular made it the ideal forum for showcasing the latest developments and ideas to come out of Filderstadt. The trade fair was first held in Dusseldorf in 1966, and since 1972 it's taken place every three years. 2017 marked EuroShop's 50th anniversary, and it drew 113,000 visitors from 138 countries around the world. The next big dates for this great event are from 16–20.02.2020.



e Skala von Modellen.
bi von Einzelteilen.
n Anwendungen.
t ein Beispiel dafür.

Nach der Rundschau
bring
OCTANORM
das Viertelkreis-Profil

1975





1978

1978 saw three different popes in the Vatican, and it also saw the unveiling of OCTANORM's Newline range at EuroShop. In the same year a new, fresh-faced member of staff joined the company who has remained with it ever since – Hans Bruder.



1981



1984

Contrary to George Orwell's predictions this wasn't the year of "Big Brother", but it was marked by another great OCTANORM innovation. OCTANORM Double Deck is the first modular system for building two-storey trade fair stands.

1990



2002

1996

In the Munich area the broadcaster DF1 starts digital TV broadcasts, and in the capital of the North Rhine-Westphalia region OCTANORM unveils its Vario Displays.



1987

Big events cause a real stir: This is the year when people in Moscow are talking about perestroika, while in Düsseldorf OCTANORM is launching OCTAcad.

1993



EUROSHOP

2014

The crowd-puller at the international trade fair is OCTAwall, the wall system from OCTANORM which is really quick to assemble. It may have been the inspiration behind the German football team whose defensive wall in the semi-final of the 2014 World Cup proved to be unbreakable and ensured their victory.

2005

After a transition period the new German spelling system finally comes into force. Another reform taking place in the same year is the OCTANORM stand concept. For the first time the stand is divided into three presentation zones and one communications zone, an innovation which is really well received by visitors from all five continents.



2008

2011



1999



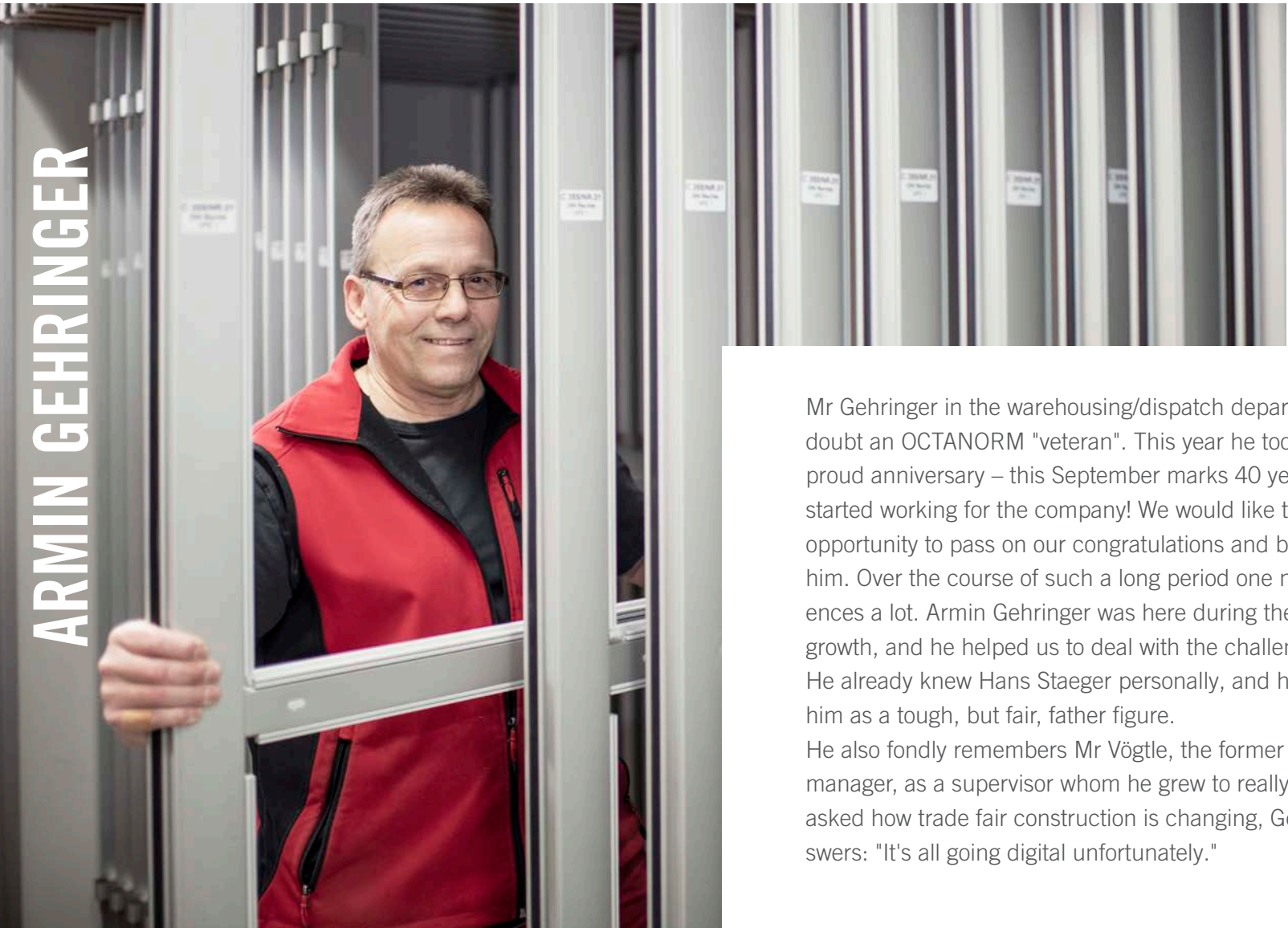
2017

THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE. THE WAY THEY ARE NOW. WHAT'S COMING IN THE FUTURE.

The OCTANORM family.

Memories from the past five decades.

ARMIN GEHRINGER



Mr Gehringer in the warehousing/dispatch department is without doubt an OCTANORM "veteran". This year he too is celebrating a proud anniversary – this September marks 40 years since he first started working for the company! We would like to take this opportunity to pass on our congratulations and best wishes to him. Over the course of such a long period one naturally experiences a lot. Armin Gehringer was here during the period of rapid growth, and he helped us to deal with the challenges posed by it. He already knew Hans Staeger personally, and he remembers him as a tough, but fair, father figure. He also fondly remembers Mr Vögtle, the former warehouse manager, as a supervisor whom he grew to really respect. When asked how trade fair construction is changing, Gehringer answers: "It's all going digital unfortunately."



The experienced sales employee, Ms Müller, still remembers her first day at work very clearly. It was snowing back then in January 1985. Gabriela Müller started off working as a secretary in the sales department. Younger members of staff find it difficult to imagine the work processes that were involved. Letters were typed directly onto the original of the letter paper. A sheet of carbon paper and a thin sheet of duplicate paper had to be placed under it for making copies. Typing mistakes could only be corrected with difficulty by using "Tipp-Ex" correction fluid which was a kind of white paint. The method used for corporate communications at that time was punched-tape telexes. She also remembers Hans Staeger, the man who personally appointed her, very clearly: as someone who was ready to listen to everyone and who provided practical help to everyone. Ms Müller recalls how this man – who in her words combined generosity with a hint of strictness – built the company from scratch. She still remembers really well the day when she first saw a modern computer screen on her desk, a development which consigned Tipp-Ex and carbon copies to history.

GABRIELA MÜLLER

JANINA STAUCH



As part of the new generation at OCTANORM, Janina Stauch began her training at the company three years ago. She likes to recall the friendly welcome she received from the Personnel Manager. Now Ms Stauch works in a sales role dealing with cleanroom systems. One of the changes that she has already seen is the modernization of the showroom. She's delighted with the new stylish decor and the fantastic cafeteria. Her biggest achievement so far has been successfully completing her training, and her transfer to a department that she really likes working in.

A colleague whom Ms Stauch has grown particularly fond of is Mr Erdbrink. She describes him as a kind person with great sense of humour. As regards the future, she expects virtual reality to become standard and touchscreen displays to become more important.

JAN-BJÖRN GROMANN



Mr Gromann, the Internal Production Manager, has also been with us for over a decade. Right from the start he appreciated the good level of cooperation within the IP team. After just three years he was promoted from being a technician to become the Production Manager within the Internal Production department.

He has fond memories of Hans-Peter Stefan, the person who mentored and taught him during his initial period of work at the company. In Mr Gromann's view the most important issues for the future are 3D printing and digital media. The latter will also become increasingly important in terms of the visual presentation of the displayed products.

BERND LÖFFELHARDT



Bernd Löffelhardt will soon have been working at the company for a quarter of a century. From the very start he liked the family atmosphere at OCTANORM. He works in the Export Department helping the licensees to ensure the successful global marketing of the products. He considers the biggest change since he joined the company in 1995 to be the faster pace of everything in business nowadays. If he has a point of criticism, it's that some things are sacrificed to speed. Bernd Löffelhardt also worked closely with the company's founder, Hans Staeger. He sums him up as a company boss with great expertise and a sure instinct. As regards the future, he expects the reusability and recyclability of structural components to become much more important.

OVER 30 YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL NETWORKING.

Welcome to OSPI.

The OSPI family has a get-together in Cape Town.



It was long before other companies had even started to consider issues such as sustainability and globalization that here in Filderstadt we were working on specific solutions. The result was the setting up of OSPI as the world's largest global trade fair construction network. The abbreviation is short for OCTANORM Service Partner International. Now OSPI links 140 partners in 40 countries around the world. The idea behind the network is to be able to undertake planning across national boundaries based on the motto: "Hier gedacht, dort gemacht." ("Designed here, built there.") No matter where a trade fair stand is designed, the client can rely on his plans being implemented right down to the minutest detail on the other side of the world. And on it being done with OCTANORM's country-specific know-how and original system components. That's because they are available locally, which saves a huge amount of logistical expenditure that transportation would otherwise involve. Over the years the OSPI network has grown into a real family. And it gets together on a regular basis at a wide range of different trade fair sites around the world. The 17th OSPI meeting was held in South Africa in December 2018, and it had a record attendance with 219 participants from 37 countries taking part.



"I've learnt a lot about the work processes in various companies, and I've made many invaluable friendships."

Judy Lee, A. Worldtech (International) Ltd., Wanchai, Hong Kong, OSPI partner since 2002.

"OSPI enables us to provide new services for our clients across the world."

Allison Trost, CEP International, Chicago, Las Vegas, Orlando, USA, OSPI partner since 2004.

"I was just 17 years old when I attended my first OSPI meeting. I was given a really warm welcome."

Pancho Perrier, Arquitectura Promocional S.R.L., Montevideo, Uruguay, OSPI partner since 1984.

"I'm inspired by the special spirit of it, it feels like a family."

Elsa Io Pizzo, Buckdesign, Alkmaar, Netherlands, OSPI partner since 2009.

"We set great store by our successful cooperation agreements with our friends from all around the world."

Dennis C. Birsa, CB Displays International, Las Vegas, USA, OSPI partner since 1992.





"OSPI is one of most efficient networks that I know of."

Tomáš Moravec, Veletrhy Brno a.s., Brno, Czech Republic, OSPI partner since 1992.

"The best thing is the meetings which provide a pleasant setting for getting to know people better."

Eliana Sarria, Expomar, Mar del Plata, Argentina, OSPI partner since 2009.

"For us OSPI means having people all around the world that we can work with and trust."

David Daw Event Exhibition and Design Ltd, Marlborough, Great Britain, OSPI partner since 2011.

"Keep up the really good work and never stop being a source of inspiration!"

Jason Weddle, Hamilton Exhibits LLC, Indianapolis, USA, OSPI partner since 2003.

"Our know-how in relation to the global trade fair market has grown enormously due to OSPI."

Derek Gentile, EEI Global, Rochester Hills, USA, OSPI partner since 2007.

"OSPI is like a big family."

Marco Wallochny, Klaus Lünemann GmbH, Ibbenbüren, Germany, OSPI partner since 2014.

"An extensive network with members throughout the world."

Tamer Eliwa Mahmoud, PROJEX, Dubai, UAE, OSPI partner since 2012.

"The special thing about it is the partnership with the other OSPI companies and their workers."

Anders Osvald Hertzberg, One Vision ApS, Herning, Denmark, OSPI partner since 2016.

"We are delighted to have the opportunity of congratulating OCTANORM on its 50th anniversary."

Pauline Hilbrink, Gerwin Altena, Peter Hilbrink, Expovorm international, Almelo, Netherlands, OSPI partner since 1994.

"It's the people who make OSPI so special. It's great to meet such clever and amusing people who also understand the business."

Lena Zeissig and Hartmut Zeissig, ZEISSIG GmbH & Co. KG, Hanover, Germany, OSPI partner since 1984.

"The ability to see the wider picture!"

Ulrich Rechner, Raum + Werbung, Berlin, Germany, OSPI partner since 1984.

"My best memory is of arriving at a trade fair site in the middle of nowhere in the Mozambique capital, Maputo, and finding that the stand was practically ready a week before the event was due to open!"

Hannelore Gerber, ZENIT-MESSEBAU GmbH, Cologne, Germany, OSPI partner since 1984.

"Friends do business with friends. Friends keep their promises and live up to the expectations that are placed in them."

Cameron Stevens, stevensE3, London, Canada, OSPI partner since 2010.

HOW DIGITIZATION IS CHANGING THE TRADE FAIR WORLD.

"We have to know what our customers' needs are before they actually have them."

In conversation with Nic Staeger.

It is now up to Nic Staeger, the third generation of the family which founded the company, to map out its future. Jörg Staeger's son lives in Stockholm, and as a permanent member of the OCTANORM advisory board he helps to devise future strategies relating to digitization, logistics and supply chain management. Nic has a Masters degree in Management and Engineering Science as well as a BA in Mechanical Engineering. He began his career working at various companies including General Electric, and as a consultant at several Swedish companies. Today he's a digitization expert focusing especially on the supply chain.

Nic Staeger, what will OCTANORM's business look like when the next generation of the founding family takes over?

In order to see what the future holds it helps to take a look back at the past. Why has OCTANORM been successful for 50 years? Above all because it has enabled millions of people to meet up, and to exchange ideas and to network. And to do so face-to-face. The need to create personal contacts will still be with us for the next ten or twenty years, it's a basic need which everyone feels, and that won't change. Nevertheless, the way in which people meet up may change.

I see two fundamental developments in today's megatrends. Firstly there's a new type of consumer behaviour, and secondly there are new technologies. Both will result in radical changes, and recent examples of this are the music industry and e-commerce. We have to bear these developments in mind when thinking about the future. We will need more personalized solutions. The necessary resources for this are provided to us virtually "on a plate" when people leave their details online. Nowadays one is provided with data fairly easily even in the real world. So it's not expensive to make the "internet of things" a focus of one's attention. This will also have implications for OCTANORM. We'll have to find ways of getting to know our customers' customers better, and finding out about their needs – before they actually have them.

OCTANORM will develop into a service provider for its customers whenever it's possible to do so; we could provide solutions which would enable the movements of everyone attending a trade fair to be tracked at any time. From today's perspective that may sound a bit scary, but in the not-too-distant future it will be a matter of course. So at the end of a trade fair, you would get much more reliable data. Whether a trade fair was successful is something that you can only measure at the moment by looking at the number of leads or business cards that are swapped – but in future we'll know exactly which products and services the visitors have actually found interesting.

What will the products and services offered by OCTANORM have to look like in future?

OCTANORM will be able to offer its customers much more than a trade fair stand and the necessary equipment for it. To do this it's crucial for OCTANORM to fully understand how visitors to trade fairs act. And this has changed considerably over the last ten years. We initially have to investigate three phases: prior to the trade fair, during the trade fair, and after the trade fair. We have to find out in advance: Where is the decision to visit the trade fair made? When do the visitors themselves decide that they will be attending, and why? At the trade fair itself we need to ascertain: Why do visitors go to a specific stand, and why do they spend time there? Have the staff at the trade fair stand responded to visitors' needs? After the trade fair: What questions may people who attended the trade fair still have? How should the next "call to action" be made? In future, OCTANORM will accompany visitors throughout their journey.





How will trade fairs change?

Nowadays people often attend smaller events which are devoted to very select groups of visitors. The reason for this is that we can establish links with very well defined target groups long before we have actually got to know the people concerned. Of course this also changes the requirements in terms of the presentation of products and solutions – they have to be more event-focused. The level of financial resources which companies will devote to personal meetings will stay the same, but the overall context will alter. So we won't just see new products which meet the changed requirements, we'll also adopt new approaches to logistics and production which will make tailor-made solutions possible. For example, in the case of 3D printing, CNC and "last mile logistics". A current megatrend is precisely the fact that people prefer to buy things online. In Sweden, the country that I live in, 16% of all products are bought online. This threatens to cause the closure of shopping malls and stores. On the other hand, the area used for restaurants and other food outlets in the malls has doubled over the last five years. Evidently people want to meet up, but they don't necessarily want to go shopping. I think that malls which are in attractive locations will increasingly turn into market places where people meet and exchange ideas. And new solutions will be needed for them.

What impacts is digitization already having on the trade fair business?

I think the biggest change is that one can establish close links with current and future customers without meeting them in person. What people actually look for at trade fairs is trust. You trust someone better if you've had a conversation or a meal with him/her than someone you've never met. Digitization has changed the numbers of visitors who only come to see a new cool feature or to do a bit of research. For the modern generation everything is just a Google search away. So digitization will make it possible for the "right" people to come to trade fairs, the people whose trust you would like to gain and whom you want to make more loyal to your brand, products and solutions. And this process must begin well before the trade fair, and it must continue long afterwards.

Will it still actually be necessary to travel to a trade fair in future, or will visits tend to be more virtual?

That's the crucial question. In the internet people are working right now on creating solutions which build trust with the minimum possible amount of human interaction. In this field there are various brands which are not merely synonymous with an outstanding product but which also stand for excellent service and superbly automated communication. However, there are also providers which only operate with certificates so that they can prove that they are trustworthy. Buzzwords in this area are: "Trusted Shops" and eco-labels. At the same time, there are technologies which are structured in such a way that people can trust them without anyone vouching for them – the much discussed blockchains. The various developments simultaneously demonstrate the lack of confidence and trust that still exists online. And this can problem only be overcome if trust is based on personal contacts. I still consider this trust to be essential, so I'm sure that: Trade fairs will not die out owing to the development of virtual technologies. The need to have real meetings with other people will endure for a long time to come.

"ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY, MODULAR
STANDS ARE EXPECTED TO BECOME
MANDATORY BEFORE LONG."

**Sustainability will continue to play a leading
role in the future.**

Jean-Michel Lemarchand of OCTANORM France on the issue of "Corporate Social Responsibility".



All the developments at OCTANORM up to now have taken due account of future generations. From the very beginning we focused on using recyclable materials. For decades now the OSPI partner network has enabled huge savings to be made in terms of logistics operations. But at OCTANORM we have never rested on our laurels for long. Rather we are considering what more we can do to safeguard the world that we all live in. One suggestion in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has now come from our Sales Manager in France.



Customized stands are throw-away products. After being used for just a few days they simply turn into a giant pile of rubbish.

What does CSR stand for?

Corporate Social Responsibility stands for social responsibility within companies. This is about companies acting responsibly and voluntarily making contributions which go beyond the statutory requirements and rules. This applies both to ecological issues and to cooperation with their staff and other firms. In France companies with a workforce of more than 500 employees and a turnover of over 40 million euros are obliged to get involved in this process. Although OCTANORM France is not a company of that size, CSR is an important issue for us. In the interview Jean-Michel Lemarchand explains how OC France can make the trade fair construction business more sustainable.

Jean-Michel, what are trade fairs like in France today?

At French trade fairs one mainly sees "traditional stands" at the moment, i.e. stands which are only used once at one single trade fair. The substructure and the visible parts of a stand are made of wood. After the trade fair all the materials making up the stand are disposed of as waste. That's despite the fact that recycling/reuse options have been available for some time now. The exhibitor can hire wall units for his stand at the trade fair itself. This already available material is called "Installation Générale" in France. However, exhibitors who have an adequate budget don't make use of the facility. They prefer to have the entire stand built to order by their trade fair stand builder or stand designer. And in France a modular system is still viewed as being synonymous with the unloved "Installation Générale". However, thanks to CSR, the situation is moving in the right direction. The exhibitors now have a reason for specifying the modularity of their trade fair stand in their CSR report.

Is the focus of planning and design on the company or on the environment – and where is there the most urgent need for action?

The companies are free to set their own priorities. It makes sense for the companies which prioritize environmental issues to publicize their efforts. At the same time, the ministry responsible for the energy transition is looking for ways to greatly reduce the amount of waste that is thrown away once a trade fair ends. Limiting the volume of waste for all the exhibitors is an idea that's currently being discussed. No decision has been reached as yet. However consideration is currently being given to introducing a 20% limit as from 2025 on the total amount of wood used that exhibitors can throw away after a trade fair, together with a total ban on the disposal of plastics. So it's high time that we started to think about how stands should be planned in future. The concept of single-use stands that are simply thrown away afterwards should finally be obsolete. The use of environmentally friendly modular stands could soon be obligatory for exhibitors.

There are regular alarming news items about CO₂ emissions. Can CSR and OCTANORM make a contribution to reducing emissions?

In the trade fair sector OCTANORM's modular system clearly represents a significant improvement from an environmental point of view. A reduced volume of waste automatically means reduced CO₂ emissions. In relation to CO₂ emissions, our global OSPI network also provides a unique advantage. The builders of trade fair stands simply use the OCTANORM materials which are already available at the place where the trade fair is to be held. Only the design itself has to travel around the world.

Can CSR provide benefits for companies?

The ministry that is responsible for the energy transition wants the CSR report to be used by exhibitors in order to clearly show the public what their environmental policies are. If it shows that they are acting in an environmentally responsible manner this will enhance their image – and provide an advantage compared to any competitors who don't yet do so.

Is there also opposition to this?

Yes, in France the builders of trade fair stands, especially their design departments, felt that their creativity would be stifled by the modular system. Our task is now to show designers that they can design customized stands by using our OCTANORM systems – fully in accordance with the wishes of each customer. The carpenters who are frequently used for the assembly works may however be against the modular system. That's because it means them spending less on assembly, and not being able to charge for as much wood. However, as our systems can easily be clad in wood and are used as a substructure, they're also meant for carpenters. And this is how people really like things to be done in France.

Are you committed to the environment and the company in your private life too?

We don't have to draw up a CSR report ourselves, we're too small for that. We still "do our bit" – for instance our employees avoid using cars within the Paris metropolitan area whenever they can, something that applies to car use for private purposes as well as to our work for OCTANORM.

"YOU LEARN A LOT ABOUT A PERSON IF YOU SPEND 15 HOURS TRAVELLING WITH HIM OR HER."

OCTANORM growing global.

In conversation with Norm Friedrich, CEO of OCTANORM North America.

The success of OCTANORM is primarily based on links to reliable partners around the world that have been built up over many years. One of them is Norm Friedrich, the CEO of OCTANORM North America, which is based in Lithia Springs, Georgia. He's been involved with the company for over three decades now, and he's made the brand one of the most important players in the US and Canadian markets. We talked to him about his relationship with Hans Bruder, and naturally about the trade fair market in the United States.

When did you join the OCTANORM family?

My career at OCTANORM started officially on 16.06.1986 in Toronto. At that time OCTANORM North America was looking for an engineer who could manufacture and store OCTANORM components, all in strict compliance with German guidelines. Since I'm an engineer and I was born into a German family it was easy for me to spend three months in Germany. There I learnt everything there is to learn about aluminium, and then I took this knowledge back to North America with me.

How did you actually get into the trade fair business?

After graduating from college I first went into the construction industry – a sector that I had a keen interest in. At weekends I renovated apartments, so I earned a bit of extra money. When I was doing this I also got to know some people who worked in the trade fair industry and were looking for someone who could produce wooden shipping containers. And that's how I "got into" trade fairs. I immediately got the impression that's it's a really crazy business where everything always has to be completed at the very last minute. Then when I learned about OCTANORM I found the exact opposite. The company was really well organized and well structured.

Do you know Hans Bruder well?

When I started, Hans Bruder was the President of OCTANORM North America. We were always in close contact. The fact that at the time I drove a red 1976 Corvette Stingray which Hans Bruder was crazy about may have had something to do with it. Shortly afterwards he bought a silver Corvette himself. When we worked at a trade fair I didn't just build the stand, I also hired a truck and drove hundreds of miles to get there. Hans always came along too, and we shared the driving. You can learn quite a lot about someone if you spend 15 hours together driving around the country, so we got to know each other very well. Since then he has been my mentor and my most important source of inspiration.

How is the trade fair sector changing in America?

It's not easy to pin down the current trends in the USA trade fair sector. At the moment there are a few negative influences. I always found it hard to understand why in "the land of the free" freedom seems to be really constrained for people who take part in trade fairs. Restrictions cause inordinate expense, and this makes any organization which attends a trade fair work out every last detail of the stand that it will use. That's why we concentrate on stands which can be easily assembled at the exhibition site, and which are easy to transport. Prefabricated structures have played a key role in this respect, and they will continue to do so for some time to come.

What are the most popular systems in the USA?

Of all the systems that OCTANORM produces none is more popular here than the MAXIMA series. This is without doubt where we have the greatest expertise. Greater use is being made of large-scale fabric solutions which can also be backlit with state-of-the-art LED lighting. The textile industry is currently making further improvements to the quality of its products, and the printing industry is doing likewise. The result is light fabrics which are a perfect match for the graphics.

What are the differences compared to Europe?

The biggest difference between trade fairs in the USA and Europe is in the set-up and dismantling periods. For us in North America it takes on average no more than two days – not long at all – in order to get the parts into the display hall and to construct the display. The result of this is that a narrow time window is needed, together with intelligent design and careful planning. Another difference compared to Europe is the frequency at which trade fairs are held: whereas they often only take place every two or three years in Europe many trade fairs in the USA are put on twice a year. That's why the fairs as well as the stands are smaller and less complicated, which is definitely not beneficial.

Does "Made in Germany" still have any impact in the United States?

"Made in Germany" is still a good USP in America because it stands for quality. Nevertheless, it's not as important as it used to be because quality is now available throughout the world, including in

Asia. This makes pricing a tricky matter. We're forced to provide great quality at a very cheap price. There was a time when we could say that a low price meant you couldn't also expect to have great quality and great service, in those days you had to make a choice. But that's not the case anymore, people want to have everything.

How has trade fair design altered?

Trade fair design today has to place less emphasis on the structure and more on grabbing people's attention. Technologies which impress are in demand nowadays, and will remain so over the coming years. Virtual and augmented reality are becoming

more and more sophisticated, and they're providing incomparable experiences as they become more realistic. I personally think that holographic technologies are the next big thing – especially at trade fairs displaying heavy equipment and machinery. The technology is still in its infancy, but it has the potential to create an exciting, holistic experience.

Thanks very much for talking to us Norm Friedrich!



TRANSFORMATION FROM A PROVIDER OF PRODUCTS INTO A VERSATILE SERVICE PROVIDER.

What's going to happen over the next 50 years?

Thomas Gräter on the future of OCTANORM.

At OCTANORM the future started long ago – almost exactly 32 years ago to be precise. When they presented OCTAcad 1.0 in 1987 the bosses in Filderstadt were already setting the company on track towards a digital future decades before digitization became a major topic of discussion. Nowadays digitization has become synonymous with progress. This is the most radical change in the industrial sector since the invention of the steam engine. It's not only the trade fair world which is in the process of completely rediscovering itself.

The experiences during the development of OCTAcad have made us into a pioneer and trailblazer for the whole sector. We were way ahead of our competitors in making it possible for our customers to plan and design their trade fair construction projects digitally. That's why OCTAcad and the OCTAdesign and OCTAsketch planning tools will remain very important in future too. However, what makes them so valuable is primarily the fact that with their help we have learned to think digitally from an early stage.

Over recent years the transformation from a pure provider of products to a versatile service provider has begun for us, and it will continue with increasing speed. In this process the digital technologies that we have become familiar with will play a decisive role. The integration of artificial intelligence and augmented and virtual reality as well as of new AV media and interactive interfaces enables us to provide our customers with very powerful tools. Thanks to the use of these tools visitor behaviour at trade fairs can now be analysed in greater detail than ever. This opens up more and more opportunities for providing additional services.

The trade fair experience itself is also becoming radically different. Working in close collaboration with Stuttgart Media University we are now carrying out various projects together with the students in order to investigate how important the use of future AV media technologies may be for the trade fair business. However it's not only at trade fairs but also in the retail sector that big changes are underway: for instance, AI can be used in this area to produce completely new security systems. And that's just the first tentative steps – over the next few years our customers and partners will be able to do a whole lot more. A particularly promising area is the developments taking place within 3D printing. The idealized vision is to produce an individual trade fair stand on site by using a 3D printer. And to do so at an affordable price, and with a sustainable approach to the use of materials.

Despite all the hype about digitization we're not of course losing sight of what the source of our success is: trade fair stand construction systems. The use of alternative materials will be an important issue, including in relation to sustainability considerations. In this area too we want to work with students who are doing research in these fields as part of their BA and MA courses. A big issue in relation to products over the coming years will be ergonomics. Our systems should be able to be assembled and disassembled with ease – and without requiring expert knowledge or using tools – and this is an area in which we are continually seeking to make further improvements.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE NETWORKING DIGITIZATION

NEW MEDIA MATERIALS SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability must be a feature of any discussions about the future. And it's been a concern for us ever since we produced our first OCTANORM system. Ultimately there can be no more sustainable solution than one which is reusable and can be used for very long periods. The cycle of sustainability is also enhanced by the recyclability of aluminium. We're already thinking holistically, and so it's not just our products but also our solutions which are sustainable.

The best example of this is our OSPI network, which has existed for three decades now. It enables customers with international operations to carry out trade fair construction projects at virtually any trade fair site in the world – using OCTANORM systems and without materials having to be transported around the globe – which provides an effective way of curbing CO₂ emissions. That in itself is a reason why the expansion and enhancement of the quality of the OSPI network is at the top of our list of priorities. But we also take care to use sustainable materials and processes in all our other new products and services in order to help to improve our energy footprint.

There are also pioneering developments in relation to cleanrooms. The pharmaceuticals and healthcare sector is very security conscious, as are the semi-conductor and electronics industries. We can protect them even more effectively through the incorporation of AI. Digitization in general brings with it a series of promising innovations in relation to cleanroom systems. Examples include interactive walls for integrated control technologies.

The coming years will bring many new exciting challenges as well as further as yet unforeseen opportunities. With our fantastic employees in Filderstadt and friends and partners throughout the world we are actively gearing up for the challenges that lie ahead.





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