

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. MICHAEL THIEMANN



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# WHAT DRIVES US ON IS ENTHUSIASM

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The outstanding performance of Uhde's international team has resulted in very good order intake and sales trends in the past two years. So as to ensure the sustainability of this growth, cooperation within the Uhde group is being further intensified.



"IF WE SUCCEED IN EXPLOITING ANOTHER  
10% OF THE DORMANT POTENTIAL OF OUR  
EMPLOYEES, WE WILL BE UNBEATABLE."

**“The power of new”: Dr. Thiemann, what does this sense of optimistic change mean for you personally?**

**DR. MICHAEL THIEMANN:** At Uhde I have always had a sense of optimistic change right from the start. I am always setting my sights on new goals – whether it is acquiring a new contract, clearing obstacles out of the way or finding new employees. And this sense of optimistic change is also clearly displayed among our employees, who are our most important resource. We are increasingly exploring ways to branch out into new fields. Fortunately, Uhde has a huge advantage in having a well-linked, truly global network of subsidiaries, in which an enormous energy potential lies dormant – and Uhde has recognised this.

— Our employees at our subsidiaries have impressively demonstrated what they are able to do. Take, for example, Russia, or South Africa, America, Australia or India – our people in these countries have already successfully completed several noteworthy projects. You can’t help but wonder what untapped potentials they may have. We want to examine this even more systematically. The aim of our “Global Networking” programme is to involve our colleagues throughout the world in major international projects.

**In what ways does Uhde intend to boost the potential of its employees?**

— To put it simply, there are people from all nations working with and in all nations at our company. We have job rotation and trainee programmes. And, of course, the joint project work. When we exchange information and get to know our capabilities, it is then that we form a team for the project work which is determined by three criteria: who is the most competent, who knows the local environment best, and who can really offer attractive, value-for-money services. If we now focus the ideas and abilities of the different cultures from all over the world on an important project, then the business really takes off – and we are simply faster, more efficient and cheaper than others. I can achieve this by splitting such projects vertically. Intelligent and skilful splitting leads to us achieving an end result which appears to have been cast from one mould – and it bears the name of Uhde.

**What advantages does this bring for your customers?**

— Basically, Uhde can work on a project round the clock, each team pursuing a precisely defined sub-project, for which it bears sole responsibility. Over and above this, the teams are regularly linked with the overall project to allow for optimum interface management. This makes it possible for teams across the globe to press ahead with the customer’s plant construction project up to 24 hours a day. And this, in turn, leads to divided responsibility, innovative “fast-track” engineering and added value for the customer.

**Uhde has been known for its entrepreneurship and spirit of innovation for generations. How can this much Uhde team power be channelled properly?**

— When people from different countries and cultures come together, there will automatically be new approaches. If you always follow the same path, it becomes very difficult to stray from it. As a very experienced colleague says: when teams change really good questions are asked! And this critical re-examination is something I have always thought commendable at Uhde. By the way, it is also a reason why Uhde makes so many patent applications. Our employees are full of new ideas, for the detail as well as the general picture.

**What values at the company are important for the employees personally?**

— Team spirit and good communications are crucial values. This includes showing great respect for your counterparts. And we have little hierarchy in the team as the team leaders are often surrounded by specialists. It is important to acknowledge a person’s value in a team. As to our ethics: There are certain things that we don’t tolerate. For us what count are fairness, correctness and support – on an internal and external basis. And, of course, the list simply wouldn’t be complete without common decency. This is the only way to build up trust with the result that customers come back – and that is the most important thing.

**How do you intend to hold your ground in today’s much grimmer economic environment?**

— Yes, times are turbulent. But our ship is on course and we are sailing through. With all we have achieved in recent years, we intend to prove that we are fit for the voyage. If we continue to be flexible and innovative, and to ensure that everyone knows what to focus his/her energies on, we will even enjoy overcoming the turbulent challenges ahead. —