



Mr Hauke Kleinschmidt (right) and Mr Matthias Fuchs, general managers of Electronic Wood Systems

## ELECTRONIC WOOD SYSTEMS: A LITTLE UNIQUENESS GOES A LONG WAY

**Electronic Wood Systems runs a tight ship even though business momentum is accelerating. Being small, smart and fast is still part of its growth strategy, with something more to offer.**

**M**r Hans-Peter Kleinschmidt is way past the average age of retirement. He has no plans to stop working. Why should he? The 72-year-old is in the pink of health and a helpful advisor in Electronic Wood Systems, a company he founded 20 years ago.

One of the leading suppliers of measuring systems, spark detection and extinguishing systems burst fresh onto the wood-based panel equipment scene in 1996—a bold move, risky even, in the face of more well-established brands in Germany. The first few years of the company's founding were indeed tough, with only three employees, and a lot to do. But Mr Kleinschmidt had a network of contacts and over 20 years of experience working on many wood-based panel lines around the world.

The company found success first in Southeast Asia where relationship-building is above all, key to securing trust. It was perhaps sincerity and a natural affinity with people that EWS quickly became well-known in the region. Some of the bigger lines it has worked on include VRG Dong Wha and Kieng Giang in Vietnam, Panel Plus in Thailand and Daiken in Sarawak, East Malaysia. Soon, Canang Indah in Indonesia as well as Vanachai in Thailand will feature EWS installations too.

In China, a sales representative in Beijing, Mr Stephan Dong, has worked on start-ups, technical installation, service and spare parts supply for more than 15 years. Some of these lines include Yingang, Wei Hua, Lishui, Guodong and Lu Yuan.

"Customers appreciate that we are a tight-knit team, very flexible and able to respond quickly to service needs," said Mr Hauke Kleinschmidt at the EWS headquarters in Hameln, a small town 40km south of Hannover, home of the biennial LIGNA fair. "They also like it that the management is directly involved in projects, which simplifies communication tremendously."

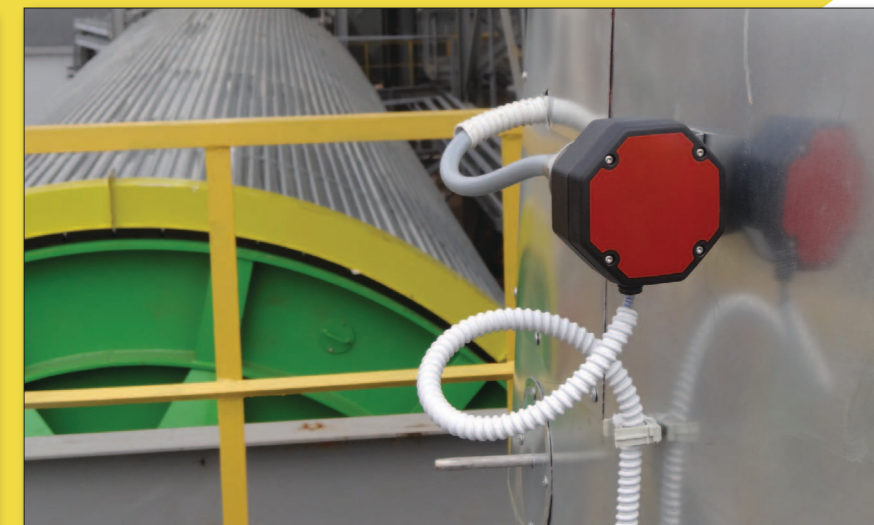
The younger Mr Kleinschmidt joined 12 years ago and now helms the company as general manager. His background as a precision engineer, expertise in sales and marketing melds well with Mr Matthias Fuchs, another experienced general manager and electrical engineer who takes care of research and development.



EWS blow detection and thickness gauge system installed on a panel line



EWS Non-contact weight scale CONTI-SCALE X using X-ray evaluates the area weight distribution of the final board



New generation spark detector

In 2007, after careful evaluation of all available measuring systems on the market, Siempelkamp decided on EWS's advanced sensor technology for all of its new production lines under the name SicoScan, leading to a signed exclusive delivery contract.

The partnership enabled EWS to further secure its reputation for precision engineering around the world. Initially covering only Asia, Australia, New Zealand and USA, its systems can now be found in

65 Siempelkamp lines around the world, adding up to a total of more than 400 measuring systems.

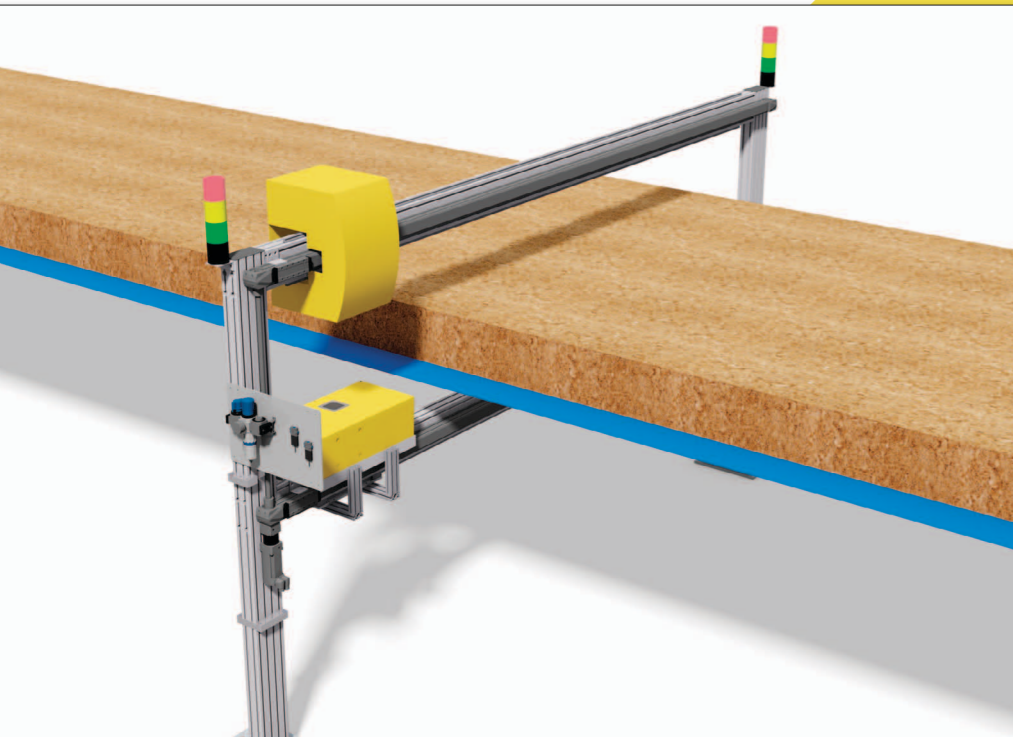
As the company expanded, so did expectations of its systems.

### NEW GENERATION SPARK DETECTION

Spark detection and extinguishing systems have always been part of the EWS portfolio since the company's founding. Seven years ago the

company started developing a new generation of systems which performs better than previous technology. Some of these benefits include high effectiveness even with significantly reduced water consumption and features to reduce installation materials and effort.

The new generation spark detection system received Factory Mutual (FM) certification; the spray nozzle in the extinguishing system secured patent approval last year.



The MASS-SCAN X MultiEnergy utilises X-ray to measure the area weight of an MDF mat

**NEW GENERATION MEASURING SYSTEM**

A new model of area weight measuring system using X-ray technology was also developed - the MASS-SCAN X MultiEnergy. At the centre of this system is a hyper-sensitive X-ray detector for extremely low radiation energy. The energy levels in the X-ray tube can be changed to accommodate a wide range of panel thickness in panel board

production. The new development allows measuring precision of up to 4g/m<sup>2</sup>. To date, 15 systems have already been installed worldwide.

“The demand for sound advice on how to optimise production is always high, so this X-ray technology is more than just a measuring system. It supports our goal to help customers improve overall efficiency and production capacity,” said Hauke.

**NEW TECHNOLOGY DIVISION**

This year, a new Wood-based Composite Technology Division was established with Konrad Solbrig as Director, where EWS performs R&D on the pulse of application to meet the advancing requirements of their customers. EWS measuring technology helps the customer to optimise production processes and product quality and to achieve savings in raw material and energy consumption.



Photo 1-3: The EWS headquarters in Hameln, Germany, accommodates space for its growing family and production capacity.



**REMARKABLE SERVICE**

Four years ago, EWS moved into a brand new office building to increase production capacity and accommodate its growing family, now standing at 35 employees. Today, the EWS team is still racing to better itself at every hurdle. Rather than depending solely on country representatives to service lines, its very own technical officers make regular visits to each factory to train line managers on usage and maintenance. This ‘re-education’ is now the company’s key focus for the next few years.

“Spending a little more each year on proper maintenance will increase a machine’s longevity. You will



certainly save on the bigger cost of replacing an entire system. At the same time, this also means fewer downtime and higher productivity overall,” said Hauke.

Unfortunately, panel bosses in Asia often focus on other priorities, he added.

In the spirit of innovation, EWS is devising an approach to constantly remind customers about maintenance—by developing automatic self-analysing systems that will prompt a user to react to the machine’s needs (especially in the absence of human technicians). In future, all of its systems will also be programmed to be straightforward, fuss-free and easy-to-operate.

While it may seem like the future plug-and-play system removes the warm, affable service that EWS built its reputation on, it is reminiscent of a company constantly re-inventing itself according to the times and the market’s needs. ©

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