

STAR COOPERATION®

Your Partners in Excellence

WRITING
HISTORY
TOGETHER

REAR MIRROR 2015

06

SOLUTIONS OVERVIEW

The entire STAR portfolio at a glance.



48

STAR HIGHLIGHTS

What has been moving us this year.



08

PRELUDE

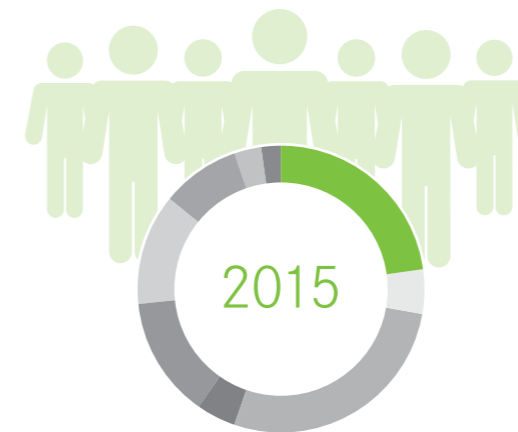
Frank Steinman owns a successful mechanical engineering business. Get to know him and his current challenges.



59

FACTS AND FIGURES

Turnover development and employees of the STAR COOPERATION Group.



- 04 | Foreword
- 10 | After Sales
- 16 | Electronics
- 22 | Marketing
- 28 | Logistics
- 34 | Technology
- 40 | Digital Business



PROF. DR. ALFRED NEHER
AND SOFÍA NEHER



STAR STORIES 2015

For a family business, the term 'history' is very important and has many meanings. On the one hand, our roots show us where we came from. On the other hand, we lay the foundation for adding ever more chapters to **STAR**'s story already today. And ultimately, as entrepreneurs, we are constantly searching for new, innovative stories that can advance us as well as our customers.

The past twelve months were studded with many interesting events on which we report in this annual report. However, some of our customers get a say for the first time and tell their story with and at **STAR** from their point of view. We would like to take the opportunity and thank them for taking the time and letting us in on their thoughts.

Special thanks go to our employees who have paved the way for the successful year 2015. We also thank our existing and new customers and partners who co-determine the next **STAR** chapter through their constructive collaboration each year.

We hope you enjoy reading the numerous colorful stories of the annual report 2015.

Kind regards
Prof. Dr. Alfred Neher and Sofía Neher

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature is 'A. Neher' and the second is 'S. Neher'.

SOLUTIONS FOR...



AFTER SALES

- Next Level Services
- Effective Service & Point of Sale
- Spare Part Management
- Strategy & Business Development
- Organizational Professionalization



LOGISTICS

- Logistics Consulting
- Media Logistics
- Production Supply Just-in-Sequence
- Supplier Management
- Contract Logistics
- E-Commerce Logistics

MARKETING

- Marketing Consulting
- Media Conception and Creation
- Media Management
- Video Production
- Desktop Publishing
- Sales Apps



ELECTRONICS

- Networking Technology
- Manufacturing
- Energy Technology
- Workshop Services
- Sensor/Actuator Technology
- Development by Proxy



DIGITAL BUSINESS

- SAP Consulting
- Business Intelligence
- SharePoint Development
- Product Information Management
- Requirements Engineering
- Test Management
- E-Commerce



TECHNOLOGY

- Spare Part Technology
- Remanufacturing
- Repair Technology
- Damaged Parts Analysis
- Virtual Engineering
- Diagnostic Systems
- Technology Support

GROUP SPECIALS

- Information Technology and Telecommunications
- Workshop Planning and Equipment
- Car Rental and Sales
- Facility Management
- startools.de

ON THE TOP FLOOR OF
THE STEINMAN COMPANY,
THE LIGHT IS STILL ON.

Steinman produces technically complex components for electric motors – from small ones for medical engineering to big ones for machine tools. It has been only a couple of years since Frank Steinman took over from his father and expanded the former small business into a medium-sized company with precisely 487 employees. Some days ago, his HR manager had suggested: Let's celebrate employee no. 500 with a big party for the whole staff and all our customers.

Frank Steinman had agreed instantly. He is proud of his colleagues. Many of them are just like him. Craftsmen. Tinkerers. Enthusiastic technicians and engineers. In any case, people of action who want to achieve something. Actually, he feels less like a boss, more like a part of one big team. Nevertheless, he has to make decisions every day. His head of development needs new hardware for the test laboratory. The marketing department wants to replace the trade fair booth that has become a bit outdated. His warehouse chief would like to introduce a more efficient system. The IT infrastructure is unable to cope with the numerous platforms in use. And even though he has competent people who support him in these decisions, he is the only one who has the final say – and thereby carries the full responsibility.

Currently, the business after the business is his biggest worry. The modern term for that is after sales. The Steinman customers have clearly insinuated that they expect an expansion of the services offered for his motor components. Lately, one thought has been crossing his mind a lot:

“ ACTUALLY, THE ENTIRE SERVICE SHOULD BE REVISED. ”

He sighs and looks at his cell phone. It shows three missed calls from his wife. They have company, he should have been home for quite some time. Frank Steinman is sending one last e-mail to his assistant for Monday morning. Then he shuts down his computer, packs up his things and switches off the light. On the way to his car, he asks himself, “Why do I have to spend half of my time with things I don't really know anything about?” After sales, for instance. Somewhere, there must be some experts for that.

IT IS LATE ON A FRIDAY
NIGHT AND FRANK
STEINMAN, THIRD-
GENERATION OWNER,
IS STILL SITTING AT HIS
DESK. HE STARES AT
THE LONG COLUMNS
OF FIGURES FROM HIS
ENTERPRISE RESOURCE
PLANNING SYSTEM.

SOLUTIONS FOR AFTER SALES



SOLUTIONS

NEXT LEVEL SERVICES

EFFECTIVE SERVICE & POINT OF SALE

SPARE PART MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFESSIONALIZATION

AFTER SALES

TURNOVER AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

STAR CONSULTING

EUR 9.4 million
Turnover 2014

EUR 10.8 million
Turnover 2015

74
Employees 2014

95
Employees 2015

Employee information excluding apprentices, interns, working students, bachelor students, master students, temporary employees and subcontracted employees.



“A comprehensive after sales strategy strengthens customer relations and secures profitable growth for our customers. For me, accompanying them with our know-how is the most important task for 2016.”

Nicolai Stickel | General Manager
STAR CONSULTING

She had called in a favor amongst colleagues. “Could you meet up with Frank Steinman? I met him the other day at an event and we were discussing after sales for a long time.” Marcus Butler does not know what to expect yet. But that is often the case. The company boss starts by telling him everything about himself and his company. How it started. Where it is now. How he imagines the future. And which limits he encounters at times. Marcus Butler is listening attentively, taking a few notes, sipping on his Coke light.

Afterwards, the entrepreneur shows him round the workshop and on to the development department – his pride and joy. Then, they go to the warehouse where Marcus Butler watches the bustle between the aisles for a couple of minutes. On their way back to the top floor, they stop by at the sales and marketing department. Eventually, they return to Frank Steinman’s desk and the engineer expectantly looks at Marcus Butler.

“**MR. STEINMAN, YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW TO BUILD AND SELL SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTS. I CANNOT TELL YOU MUCH MORE ABOUT THAT.**”

“But you will lose your customers if you don’t tend to them as intensively after their purchase as before. I can tell you how to approach that successfully. Maybe not by tomorrow, but definitely in the medium term.” 30 minutes later, Marcus Butler has made a first assessment – just like that, quick and dirty. The whiteboard on the wall shows terms like market research, process efficiency, logistics planning, repair technology, service portal and training concept.

Frank Steinman leans back in his seat. He is impressed. At this point, he had not anticipated that much input. In general, he does not like consultants. But Marcus Butler is different. The guy rolls up his sleeves – just like Frank Steinman’s people. “If everybody at STAR is like that,” he thinks, “this could be exactly what we need.” It is worth a try. They agree to hold a workshop. In a fortnight, Marcus Butler will bring his team to Frank Steinman, who will round up his most important employees. Then they will lock themselves up for two days and will try to figure out how a well-rounded after sales concept for the Steinman company could look like.

A WHILE LATER, MARCUS BUTLER, MANAGER FOR AFTER SALES AT THE STAR COOPERATION, IS SITTING IN FRANK STEINMAN’S OFFICE. THE MEETING HAD BEEN ARRANGED BY A COLLEAGUE.



AFTER SALES PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2015

After sales is booming – irrespective of products, industries or company sizes. In many organizations, service offerings partially already account for more than a quarter of total sales and the corresponding margins – with increasing tendency. However, existing business models cannot simply be copied to the time after the initial purchase. Here, specific processes, infrastructures, concepts and strategies are needed. **Our Experts for After Sales had the right approach also in 2015.**

THEORY CONFIRMED BY PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Today, buyers already think one step ahead when deciding to buy a product. What happens when something breaks down and has to be mended? Are there any adequate repair instructions?

That was also the challenge our customer faced, a medium-sized company in special vehicle manufacturing. There was no efficient spare part technology or definition, how all-purpose repair instructions could be generated. That was the point where the STAR experts for repair technology were able to help. Over several months and workshop rounds, they not only developed a repair methodology customized to the customer's requirements. They also verified the separate steps under actual workshop conditions. At the project's conclusion, a detailed documentation showed what has to happen in case of a defect. Which separate actions have to be performed on which part in order to achieve a successful repair? Eventually, the STARS also supported the transfer of the collected and generated data into the editing system on site. Now, our customer is able to compile high-quality repair instructions and optimize the spare part range according to this standard.

MONEY IS NOT AN ISSUE - OR IS IT?

It is hard to believe, but true: There comes a point where even the super-rich show decreasing willingness to pay a certain price.

For our customer, a manufacturer of exclusive sports cars, pricing has therefore been a big challenge, especially in the spare parts area. Supported by the STAR consultants, he was able to adopt a process of how to combine high customer satisfaction and excellent returns in this business that was established by manufacturers of mass-production vehicles. They are the trailblazers of value-based pricing and have reached a high degree of professionalism when determining after sales prices. The basic idea is to match the end customers' willingness to pay a certain price for differing spare parts as closely as possible in order to leverage high profits – and not to scare the customers away at the same time. The STAR team developed a customized value driver model to determine the exact willingness. Thereby, we were able to disclose the willingness to pay and to deduce the appropriate optimized prices for each part largely automated. Thereby, our customer's after sales returns have been increased significantly.



REPAIR TECHNOLOGY



PRICING



DIAGNOSTIC
SYSTEMSFINDING FAULTS IN VEHICLES VIA
LONG-TERM ECG

In human medicine, it is quite common: an isolated test does not facilitate a final diagnosis. Sometimes, you need to perform a long-term ECG to find the real cause.

In this, cars are quite similar to humans. Some error patterns are too complex to identify them with conventional diagnostics processes. That is why our automotive customer has been using a special device since 2015 which is mounted in the vehicle and gathers various data over a longer period of time. Well, developing a new diagnostics tool is not necessarily big news. These devices are used for countless purposes before, during and after producing a vehicle. However, in this case, attention had to be higher on many levels, since the existing processes had to be adapted individually to the product in order to enable a successful launch with country organizations, importers and garages. Seven STARS were involved in the extensive six-month project that included the entire process spectrum, from analyzing profitability to developing and formulating new logistics and training concepts to a fitting marketing strategy.

PARTS
AVAILABILITY

HELP TO HELP YOURSELF

Crossing national and cultural borders is one of the biggest challenges Central European companies have to face in after sales as well.

It is a long way to China. Not just when it comes to distance, but also for our German premium automotive customer's employees who were not accustomed to the IT systems used within the group. This made the parts availability within the after sales business in this important market especially challenging – from defining the right parts to their availability at the various workshop sites. Following the German parent company's recommendation, the customer chose STAR to undertake the extensive training process for their Chinese employees, since they could not provide the necessary capacities themselves. For, we are well versed in the different IT platforms and were able to quickly design a comprehensive and practical training concept. Following that, we coached the users, both on-site in Beijing and at STAR's headquarters in Böblingen, in the daily handling of the systems. And the more independent parts supply for the Chinese market as well as the optimization of successfully processed after sales inquiries showed the value of their steep learning curve.



In conversation:

Bernhard Urban

Global After Sales and Parts
Coordinator, Putzmeister GmbH

TURNING CUSTOMERS INTO
SERIAL BUYERS

You are wrong if you only think of plaster, concrete and building material when you hear the name Putzmeister. For, there is plenty of high-tech behind the premium manufacturer's pumps, machines and facilities for the building and power station industries.

For Bernhard Urban, Global After Sales and Parts Coordinator, 'Made by Putzmeister' is a very important attribute as it conveys the global company's unchanged high product quality around the world. **"We have close relations with our customers. Trust is very much linked to our people."**

This personal approach is what the company based in Aichtal also values when dealing with external partners. **"When we decided on whom to work with, a strong service and after sales affinity was very important."** However, the medium-sized company was surprised that even a mechanical engineering business can profit from STAR's strong automotive know-how. Their mutual project 'After Sales Portal' is in full swing. Amongst others, the new platform shall improve the service offerings. The most important items on the list: bringing the data quality to a high level worldwide, generating global standards, designing efficient processes, being available for the end customer any time. **"In addition to their experience, what I like best about STAR is that they are pragmatic and reliably stick to their timings."**

It is too early to talk about follow-up projects. **"However, if this project continues as positively, a long-term collaboration will not be impossible."**



SOLUTIONS FOR ELECTRONICS



SOLUTIONS

NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY

MANUFACTURING

ENERGY TECHNOLOGY

WORKSHOP SERVICES

SENSOR/ACTUATOR TECHNOLOGY

DEVELOPMENT BY PROXY

ELECTRONICS

TURNOVER AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

STAR ELECTRONICS GMBH (FORMERLY BERGER ELEKTRONIK)

EUR 7.4 million
Turnover 2014

EUR 6.8 million
Turnover 2015

88
Employees 2014

70
Employees 2015

STAR ELECTRONICS GMBH & CO. KG (FORMERLY EBERSPÄCHER ELECTRONICS)

EUR 5.1 million
Turnover 2014

EUR 4.2 million
Turnover 2015

28
Employees 2014

27
Employees 2015

Employee information excluding apprentices, interns, working students, bachelor students, master students, temporary employees and subcontracted employees.



Henning Lange, Zoran Cutura
Management STAR ELECTRONICS

“For us, to advance automotive Ethernet is one of our main tasks in 2016. For, it is much more than a fast and cost-efficient form of data transfer. The Ethernet technology will fundamentally change the vehicle architecture in the future.”

It belongs to the STAR Group. “And here, you can see how we assemble PCBs for our customers according to their exact specifications,” Christopher Brown is telling him at the moment. He is Sales Manager for EE solutions at STAR. You can hear in his voice that he is not from this neck of the woods. In fact, he hails from Texas. But, basically, the enthusiastic sales engineer spends most of his time in the car, on the streets and with his customers.

Frank Steinman has come here because he is still looking for the right hardware for his test laboratory. So far, he could not find any manufacturer that sells exactly the kind of devices he needs. “Maybe, you will just have to build them yourself,” was Marcus Butler’s proposal the other day. “Good idea if we had a specialist for that. But we don’t,” was Frank Steinman’s answer.

“ **PERHAPS YOU JUST NEED THE RIGHT PARTNER FOR THAT.** ”

Meanwhile, the Steinman head of development is discussing case sizes, bus systems and the different Steinman-specific applications with the STAR engineers present. The company boss brought him along, just in case. “That’s right,” Frank Steinman can hear Christopher Brown say, “we have specialized in products for vehicles and their electronics infrastructure. Nevertheless, I see big similarities in the components that can be considered for your use case.”

In the following months, both engineering teams will meet regularly and, using their combined electronics and mechanical engineering know-how, develop testing devices that Frank Steinman and his team need in their lab. When they are put into operation for the first time on the premises, Christopher Brown is witnessing the occasion. “Who would have thought that you can develop something like that yourself – with a little help,” Frank Steinman states. “Now I almost feel a bit bad that you have invested so much time into our project outside of your original area of expertise.” “That is one way to see it, Mr. Steinman,” the STAR salesman replies. “The world thrives from innovation. And you can’t find those on the beaten track. We got a lot out of the project for ourselves. I call that a win-win situation.”

FRANK STEINMAN IS
ASTONISHED: THE STARS
ARE NOT JUST EXPERTS
FOR AFTER SALES, BUT
ALSO FOR ELECTRONICS.
THAT IS WHY HE IS NOW
FINDING HIMSELF IN THE
MIDDLE OF A SMALL BUT
NICE MANUFACTURE.



ELECTRONICS

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2015

If you build automobiles, you will know: nowadays, it is not just about four tires, one steering wheel, six gears and up to twelve cylinders. The inside of a 21st century vehicle is more and more connected, the energy supply has a more and more important role and the further development is under more and more time and cost pressure. **In 2015, our customers found competent support in mastering these challenges with our Experts for Vehicle Electronics.**

THE FUTURE OF VEHICLE NETWORKING

The Ethernet technology is well-established in telecommunications. Now, it has also been discovered for vehicle construction.

Automotive manufacturers and suppliers increasingly develop innovative Ethernet-based bus systems that secure the fast data transfer between the mounted control units. However, new networking hardware has to be tried and tested. Our customer, an internationally successful tier 1 supplier of electric systems in cars, was looking for a partner to develop, build and run the corresponding test bench. STAR's EE solutions with their proven track-record in an automotive environment were the key element and came with warm recommendations. Within three months, our close cooperation led to developing a so-called networking board, adapted to the special needs of the customer, the various Ethernet control devices and the future application at the automobile manufacturers'. Even though the project had to be managed in three different languages due to the international setup, the cooperation between the involved people went very well. Today, the test bench is in constant use, the customer is satisfied and we were again able to show that our vehicle networking experts have their fingers on the pulse of time.



NETWORKING
TECHNOLOGY



NEW PRODUCTS CONVINCING CUSTOMERS

The second half of the year brought a lot of excitement to STAR's Experts for Vehicle Electronics. Both companies growing together, several trade fair appearances, product innovations and software updates kept our EE solutions teams busy.

Already in August, we extended our networking product family by introducing a high-end development tool for vehicle networking. Our FlexDevice-L offers to car manufacturers and their suppliers versatile solutions for electronic control units and associated components, e.g. gateways between different automotive bus systems, remaining bus simulation, signal manipulation and many more. Like all the other FlexDevice products, it is supported by the new and enhanced version of our FlexConfig RBS 4.0 software that followed in October. Engineers and technicians can use it to quickly configure their remaining bus simulations, gateways and signal manipulations. Furthermore, our Sindelfingen and Göppingen teams collaborated in developing our FlexConfig Analyzer, a flexibly applicable and freely configurable product for visualizing control unit communication via LIN, CAN and FlexRay data buses. We are convinced, this is a great improvement both in practical stability and functionality compared to the devices currently available on the market.



NEW
PRODUCTS



E-MOBILITY



TANGIBLE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Even though electromobility has been strongly promoted by the government in the past years, it was not yet able to establish itself on the market.

In addition to pricing, another important reason for this is the lack of working charging infrastructures. For, it often takes an entire night to fully charge an electric vehicle using a regular household socket with a 3.4 kilowatt capacity. From a purely technical standpoint, however, a significantly faster charging process with a capacity of 150 kilowatts is absolutely feasible. As the very first provider, our automotive customer wanted to prove that this is possible during the industry congress Electronics in Vehicles (ELIV) in Baden-Baden – and enlisted STAR's EE experts for this. In fact, we did not only design the charging system, integrated it in the demo vehicle and secured communications between the external charging column and the internal vehicle charging system. The IT specialists at STAR also implemented the corresponding application that impressively visualized the innovative turbocharging for the congress visitors. We will continue to make high-tech innovations visible, audible and tangible for trade fairs and events in future projects.



TESTING



UPHILL AND DOWNHILL

A vehicle travels on the mountain road towards Mont Ventoux in France, trailer in tow. The serpentine road forces it to constantly slow down, steer, accelerate.

Additionally, there are many cyclists on the road further impeding the ascent. In such a scenario, the motor, steering, chassis and brake systems are exposed to high strains – that much is clear. Those cases also have to be considered when testing a vehicle. Although many situations are simulated on a computer nowadays, the results have to be validated under realistic circumstances. For this, the STAR workshop team administers several brake- and load-trailers, so that our automotive customer does not always have to travel to Alpine regions for these test drives. With these trailers, you can simulate the handling on the local test track and make the towing vehicle believe that it is pulling a certain weight on a strongly ascending track. At the same time, you can measure how the motor cooling systems or the temperature of various components are dealing with the task. Our testing experts do not just independently carry out the coordination for test drives and the maintenance of these trailers. They also take care of the user trainings and thereby take a lot of coordinative effort off our customer.



In conversation:

André Flemming

Tim Stegmann

Managing Directors

atec innovation GmbH

LATERAL THINKERS
WELCOME

André Flemming and Tim Stegmann are both Managing Directors at atec innovation in Sindelfingen – and passionate inventors.

This is expressed in the numerous innovative products from their company. For instance, a device called ‚Braumeister‘, with which you can brew your own beer at home. They jokingly call it ‚a man’s Thermomix‘. At atec, even supposedly crazy ideas have a chance to be realized. **“Almost everything is possible with the right partner on board.”** They did find a reliable partner just a stone’s throw away – the STAR COOPERATION in Sindelfingen. **“We not only share service portfolios that wonderfully complement each other, but also the same way of thinking.”**

However, the key to success is not just having one innovative idea. In order to give it a solid base, it needs some **“straightforward craft, tangible consulting and, on a more personal level, good teamwork.”** That way, customers are never left alone with their idea, but profit from expert know-how also during implementation and right up to marketability. After all, every product and solution comes with a lot of heart and soul and a tremendous spur to always outdo themselves.

Therefore, both companies want to continue realizing projects together and not remain at supporting the classic assembly work. We are currently working on that with a lot of patience and vision – like we always do in all our projects.



SOLUTIONS FOR MARKETING



SOLUTIONS

MARKETING CONSULTING

MEDIA CONCEPTION AND CREATION

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

VIDEO PRODUCTION

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

SALES APPS

MARKETING

TURNOVER AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

STAR PUBLISHING

EUR 31.0 million

Turnover 2014

EUR 40.6 million

Turnover 2015

80

Employees 2014

107

Employees 2015

STAR MARKETING

EUR 1.2 million

Turnover 2014

EUR 1.7 million

Turnover 2015

9

Employees 2014

14

Employees 2015

Employee information excluding apprentices, interns, working students, bachelor students, master students, temporary employees and subcontracted employees.



“From a communications point of view, we have to speak the same language as our customers again. That is the main task for me in 2016. Of course, they should still know what our product or service is offering. But the benefits are even more important.”

Ramona Kaden | Managing Director
STAR PUBLISHING | STAR DISTRIBUTION

Frank Steinman’s first impression did not deceive him, the STARS really want to achieve something – just like his own team. Time to take care of some other decisions. This morning, his head of marketing had once again explained to him that Steinman’s outstanding products would drown at any trade fair if they did not modernize their public appearance at long last. However, he could not find an external agency so far that would have been able to really understand his business and his products. When he told Marcus Butler about his predicament, he is baffled.

“ **BUT WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD YOUR BUSINESS QUICKLY AND ARE OUTSIDERS, TOO.** ”

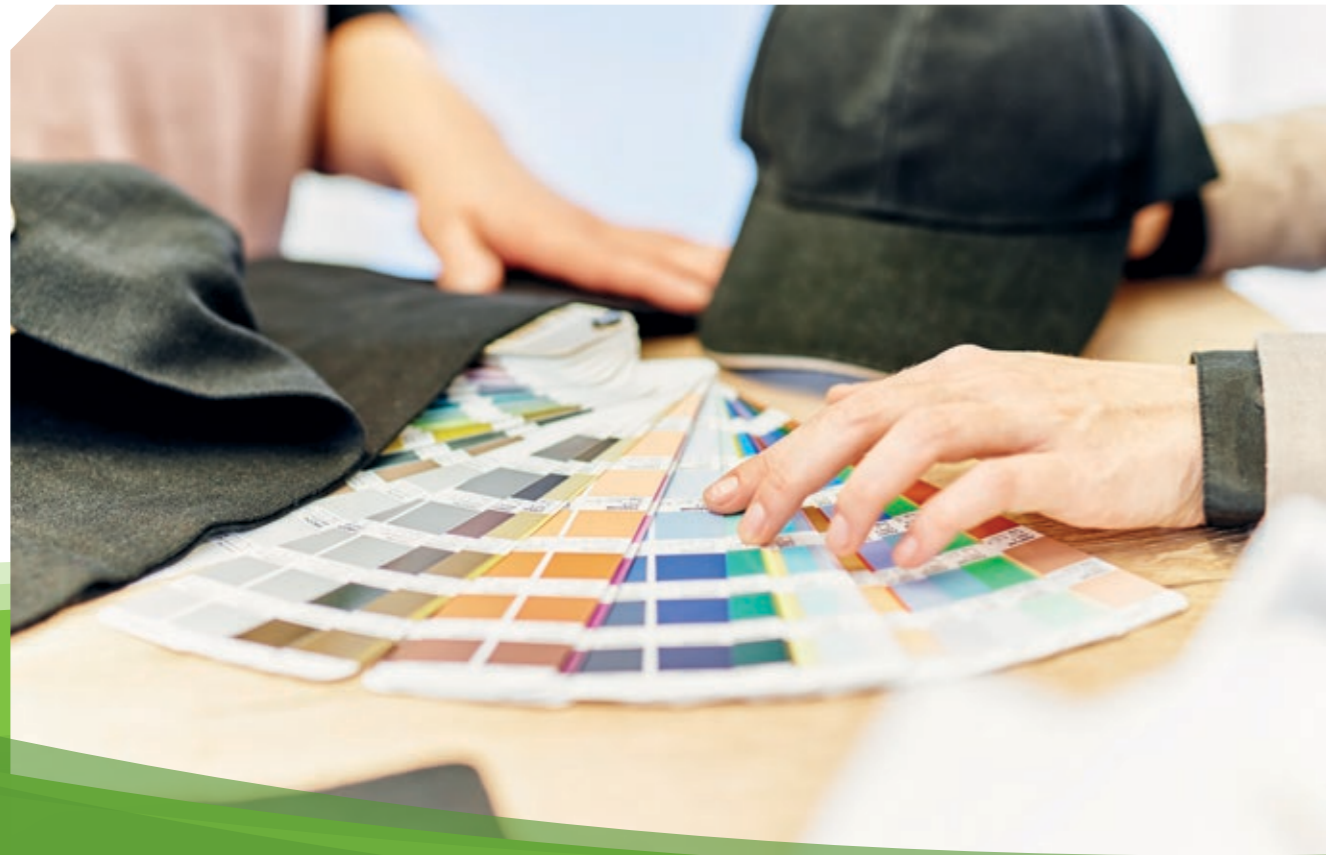
“Yes, well,” Frank Steinman says, “but you guys are the experts for after sales and not for marketing.” “I wouldn’t say that,” was Marcus Butler’s reply.

A fortnight later, Gwen Rodriguez is sitting in a company car. She is Communications Manager at STAR and on her way to a pitch presentation for the Steinman company. The contact was initiated by her after sales colleagues. “It was nice of Marcus to think of us right away,” she thinks and opens the car window slightly so that her brown hair can stream in the wind.

In her head, she is once again going through every aspect of her presentation. “I can leave out the introduction, they know us already. Then, we’ll do it differently than everybody else and present the conclusion right away: Modern, innovative products need a modern, innovative look. Afterwards, the two proposals for imagery and the trade fair stand.” That is how far the briefing went that the Steinman marketing department had sent to Gwen Rodriguez and some other agencies.

At this point in time, Frank Steinman does not yet know that she has a couple more aces up her sleeve. For instance, she proposes a trade fair app, especially developed for Steinman, with which he can present his products appealingly on a tablet computer, including the product catalogue and 3D animation. Such an app could be very helpful for his sales team as well, she is sure about that. And she has an idea for a video that explains the different motor components very simply. Later in the lounge, when Frank Steinman sees Gwen Rodriguez off, he feels understood – and is already looking forward to the next trade show.

THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE STAR COOPERATION AND STEINMAN HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR A WHILE NOW. SO FAR, IT IS GOING WELL, THE FIRST STEPS OF HIS AFTER SALES PROJECT HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY.



MARKETING

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2015

Currently, B2B marketing is undergoing a fundamental change from addressing customers in a standardized and purely technical way to a more emotional, customized offering. Storytelling, content strategy and customer-focused, inter-media brand experience are important buzz words in this context. In short: companies need to speak the customers' language again. **STAR's media experts have been supporting them actively in this in 2015.**

REACHING THE FINISH LINE WITH PERSEVERANCE

For a long time, medium-sized companies spent their marketing budget on the classic sales channels rather than investing it in expanding their mobile and online activities.

Today, the world has been evolving a lot and many have realized the large potential that mobile applications promise for their business. So, it is no wonder that, according to estimates, the number of newly developed enterprise apps will quadruple in 2016. Since the past year, our customer, a specialist in bathroom and sanitation appliances, is one step ahead. It needed a lot of assuring before the project could be kicked off. But eventually, the STAR experts convinced the customer with their knowledge about the specific challenges of the sanitation business and their know-how in mobile apps, so that they were able to win the pitch. They closely worked with the responsible persons on the customer's side and developed a sales app that presents the group's entire product portfolio and especially the novelties of 2015 in a user-friendly, interactive and appealing way. Since its release, it has been supporting both the national and international sales teams optimally in selling the products – and it is the base for a long-term partnership with our customer.



MOBILE APPS



THE WORLD OF DATA STAGED FITTINGLY

Almost 70 years after its foundation, nothing is like it used to be for our customer, a marketing service company from the South of Germany.

That is no surprise, since the world of communications has performed a quantum leap through the emergence of the internet and smart devices. So, it was high time to reflect that change of image also in the outward appearance. This was conducted by STAR's media experts with a customized communications concept. Apart from the timing set by the industry's leading trade fair dmexco and the slogan, the STAR team's creativity had no boundaries. The finished package consisted of the new, universally usable key visual, the corresponding trade fair wall and obligatory give-aways, a TELL ME! explanatory video designed especially for the trade show, various ads and banners, texts and design elements for the event-specific landing page as well as optimizing the social media channels in use. Everything was conceived and implemented by the STAR experts, in fact so convincingly, that the designed key visual will be used for different events and communications occasions in future.



MEDIA CREATION



PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT



SPORTIVE CUSTOMER CHALLENGES STAR

Often, we have to stand up to our competitors over several pitch and bidding rounds with our services before we can win a customer – not just in marketing.

That is also the case if it is a large company we have been working for in the past or in other areas like this sportive customer. Within the group, they are responsible for producing and marketing motor and other components for e-bikes and needed to equip their sales employees with a complete merchandising package. The look was predetermined and STAR's media experts took over the following production management. The team had to pedal hard in order to stick to the project's challenging timing and to deliver the right amount of desired items to the customer on time. Ultimately, they succeeded and supplied the e-bike sales experts with new merchandise. Today, they can be seen across the country, dressed in polo shirts and soft-shell vests provided by STAR, the cars branded with stickers, not to be overlooked with their beach flags and almost six foot tall elliptical columns.

MEDIA CREATION



50 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

Many events provide the perfect occasion to start a communications campaign: a new brand, a product innovation, a change in management, a newly opened location. And there are plenty of reasons to celebrate, too.

Celebrating its location's 50th anniversary was the perfect trigger for our long-term customer, a medium-sized manufacturer of industrial drive solutions, to support communications and boost its brand profile. First, we gathered all the different ideas in a small creative workshop, before our STAR experts consolidated those in a customized and integrated communications concept. Our creative team implemented the anniversary year's consistent visual look, from a logo designed for this special occasion to ideas for the right give-aways and suggestions for the anniversary celebration to stand-out banners and incorporating the anniversary in the customer's web site. No doubt, the highlight was the historical time bar of the company's history that, today, is permanently anchored in the location's rooms and vividly illustrates the development.



In conversation:

Matthias Bienert

Head of Marketing
KSPG AG

MARKETING IS COMMUNICATING ADDED VALUE

Matthias Bienert, Head of Marketing at KSPG AG, loves his job. You notice that very clearly when he gushes about the performance of mechatronic products and the technical finesses of developing bearings and spools.

These components have a share in reaching car manufacturers' future CO₂ targets. Drive technology forms the main business of the supplier with its Kolbenschmidt, Pierburg and Motorservice brands. This passion for mobility is the link between KSPG and the STAR COOPERATION. Back in college, Bienert attended a lecture of STAR's founder Dr. Neher and remembered the Böblingen-based supplier when he was looking for fresh input for his trade fair content.

"STAR gave us a lot of good ideas and the entire one-stop implementation." Technical know-how combined with automotive experience and regional proximity – these were the deciding factors to win the pitch. **"We were able to comprehensibly illustrate highly complex cohesions in a very short time. Not many would have managed this as well."**

Naturally, there were some obstacles to overcome and the pressure to succeed was high. But ultimately, the big IAA appearance and the media-compatible editing of KSPG's products was a great success. **"The feedback in Frankfurt was overwhelming and STAR has proven that they are prepared for all kinds of surprises."** Therefore, the cooperation shall continue, the next projects are already in the pipeline. **"Would I recommend working with STAR? Yes, absolutely."**



SOLUTIONS FOR LOGISTICS

SOLUTIONS

LOGISTICS CONSULTING

MEDIA LOGISTICS

PRODUCTION SUPPLY JUST-IN-SEQUENCE

SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT

CONTRACT LOGISTICS

E-COMMERCE LOGISTICS

LOGISTICS

TURNOVER AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

STAR DISTRIBUTION

EUR 17.4 million
Turnover 2014

EUR 15.2 million
Turnover 2015

57
Employees 2014

51
Employees 2015

Employee information excluding apprentices, interns, working students, bachelor students, master students, temporary employees and subcontracted employees.



“Further offering our customers fitting consulting and service solutions that guarantee economically optimized inventories while securing a high level of availability, that is an important task for me in 2016.

Key word: Predictive logistics.”

Alexander Schüle | Managing Director
STAR DISTRIBUTION | STAR PUBLISHING

For a quarter of an hour, he has been glued to his cell phone talking to a new customer for STAR’s logistics experts. The project is part of a bigger logistics undertaking – and he is just covering for a colleague who is currently on leave. In fact, his expertise lies in media logistics. But that is part of being a STAR. How did Marcus Butler describe the project earlier?

“ **WE NEED TO GIVE THE LOGISTICS DEPARTMENT A BOOST THERE.** ”

So far, he has been listening most of the time, adjusting his pocket square, aligning a stack of flyers. “Yes, Mr. Steinman, we will have to look closely at how we want to approach that project,” Kevin Chang finally says affirmatively. “I propose we visit you in the coming days and inspect your warehouse in all aspects. How it is structured, how the incoming and outgoing storage works, how production supply functions, which shipping companies you work with, which software and hardware you use and so on.” “No, don’t worry. We have no intention to turn everything upside down. But we may find a couple of starting points where you can save a dollar or two and accelerate your processes at the same time. Often, there is tremendous potential in these logistics processes that you have not yet utilized.”

“Sure, we will review everything with you and your head of warehousing. You know most about this and you can tell us right away from experience when and where it can get tricky.” “Our learnings so far? Possibly, it may make sense to slightly change your setup so that the routes within your warehouse become shorter and more efficient. So that your warehouse employees are not getting in each other’s way. Or maybe we have to simply stack your shelves differently – big parts on the left, small ones on the right, original parts close to the production, spare parts closer to the service area. But I can tell you more when we have been on-site and analyzed your processes and specifications.”

“Okay, Mr. Steinman, that’s the way we’ll do it. As soon as I’m back at my desk, I will call your assistant and arrange a meeting. Have a great day.”

THE EMPLOYEES AT STAR’S WAREHOUSE LOCATION ARE ALREADY USED TO IT. KEVIN CHANG, LOGISTICS MANAGER AT STAR COOPERATION, IS ON THE PHONE AND PACES UP AND DOWN BETWEEN THE SHELVES.



LOGISTICS

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2015

The logistics business manages to square the circle with great regularity. Nowadays, supply processes have to be both safe and efficient, both reliable and cost-effective, both fast and flexible. This task does not get any easier in a globalized world with supply chains spanning the entire globe, limited warehouse resources and high expectations concerning the sustainability of transports.

LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP BY RECOMMENDATION

Just-in-sequence can save manufacturing companies time, warehouse space and, ultimately, money. STAR is aware of this fact and therefore continuously expands the services in sequential production supply.

In the last STAR rear mirror, we already reported on such a project at our location in the South of the USA. There, we consolidate, preassemble and deliver numerous additional parts for each vehicle to the assembly line as a general contractor. We were able to resoundingly convince our customer in the past twelve months, so that they were happy to recommend our services to a partner company from the high performance automotive industry. For their production supply, they were looking for a professional service provider that could get the project going reliably and in a very short time. STAR's team was able to satisfy the customer and ultimately prevailed over the competitors. Since then, the STAR team has been ensuring that the premium cars produced there get fitted with the right tires. Our specialists do not only have to exercise particular care and caution because those tires come with high-quality forged aluminum rims. They also had to rethink the underlying processes and adjust them for this purpose.



JUST-IN-SEQUENCE



TREADING NEW PATHS WITH STAR

Logistics outsourcing can absolutely make sense depending on the individual customer. However, handing over internal duties to an external service provider also requires a large amount of courage and trust in the offered solutions.

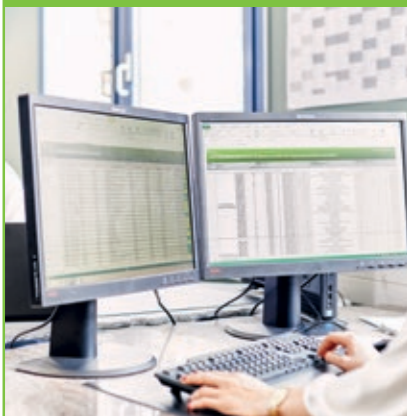
In 2015, we were able to persuade our new customer, a manufacturer for cleaning machines, to take this step for the first time. To be precise, the German sales organization consigned their entire print and merchandise logistics to our logistics experts. They now supply the market with everything needed to optimally stage the products out of the STAR warehouse in Obertürkheim. Why STAR? In addition to our long years of expertise in media logistics, the deciding factor was that we are also a family business from the same region. Together, we planned the outsourcing process well in advance. And at its conclusion, both sides were affirmed: not only can the customer use the released warehouse capacities for the expansion of their primary business. The inventory audit taking place at the end of 2015 also yielded very good results and stressed STAR's reliable execution and good warehouse management.



OUTSOURCING



SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT



STAGED PERFECTLY WORLDWIDE

Today, outstanding technology is not enough to successfully market a product. The orchestration needs to be right in order to satisfy analysts, journalists and, ultimately, the end customer.

The premium car manufacturers are true masters in perfectly staging their products. Whether it is a research vehicle, a design study or a car premiere, they present their vehicles at countless trade fairs, company and sponsoring events during the year as well as for promotional purposes at film and photo locations across the world. We have been taking care of this show car management in the past year for one of our automotive customers. The STAR team manages and supervises the specialist logistics companies, ensures the necessary infrastructure on site and processes possible insurance cases. In addition to confidentiality, the issue of transport safety plays a major role since the vehicles are usually unique and can be worth millions. Taking into account possible itineraries from Germany to the USA to Southeast Asia to Brazil, the customer is very glad that, thanks to STAR, the right vehicles arrive at the most extraordinary locations at the right point in time and without any damages. That way, they can leave the perfect impression.

LOGISTICS CONSULTING



SUCCESSFUL CONSULTING ALSO FOR STARTUPS

When young entrepreneurs have had a good idea, they obviously first and foremost take care of a successful design for their products.

Afterwards, they deal with production organization and developing a marketing strategy. But in any founding process, there comes a time when you have to ask yourself, "How will our products reach our customers?" That is when our logistics consultants help to find the right answers for the individual company. That was also the case for a startup from the greater Berlin area that develops premium e-bikes from city pedelecs to high-tech mountain bikes. For them, we have been generating a comprehensive logistics concept in 2015. Selling via a web shop or through brick-and-mortar? Establishing a sales network of their own or partnering with existing vendors? Installing a self-owned warehouse or outsourcing warehouse logistics? Offering a distinct service or supplying spare parts through others? Using own capacities for transport or handing over deliveries to a freight service? For, only because these important issues were clarified individually and implemented expediently, the e-bikes reached the retailers on time for the market launch.



In conversation:

Christian Huster

General Manager Service
Coperion GmbH

RELIABILITY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY

It started out with dough mixers and processing bulk goods. A part of the market and technology leader Coperion's business is still revolving around that.

But their systems also process the raw materials of many everyday products like tooth brushes, seals, screw anchors and shoe soles. By now, Coperion has changed from a traditional mechanical engineering company to a modern systems supplier. Christian Huster, General Manager for service at Coperion in Stuttgart, and the company have followed in these footsteps also in after sales and services. **"We have accomplished a lot on our own, but not everything."** Especially when it came to optimizing delivery reliability, they were looking for a partner.

"We needed more than just a logistics expert. In the STAR COOPERATION, we have found a process pro that gathers the right experts under one roof and supports us with methodology and manpower." The regional proximity was also not the least reason for this important decision. The project was under enormous time constraints and, as in any long-term relationship, there were also some frictions here and there. Nevertheless, so far the feedback has been positive throughout: **"STAR does not only consult well, but they really implement the projects in real life."** All persons involved were satisfied and the tentativeness in uncharted waters was reduced. The next steps have already been planned and an extension of the cooperation is a definite possibility.



SOLUTIONS FOR TECHNOLOGY



SOLUTIONS

SPARE PART TECHNOLOGY

REMANUFACTURING

REPAIR TECHNOLOGY

DAMAGED PARTS ANALYSIS

VIRTUAL ENGINEERING

DIAGNOSTIC SYSTEMS

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

TECHNOLOGY

TURNOVER AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

STAR ENGINEERING

EUR 18.7 million
Turnover 2014

EUR 17.7 million
Turnover 2015

176
Employees 2014

150
Employees 2015

Employee information excluding apprentices, interns, working students, bachelor students, master students, temporary employees and subcontracted employees.



Tobias Utz, Thorsten Piel
Management STAR ENGINEERING

“Enriching technical after sales products with modern technologies from the field of virtual engineering will be one engineering task for us in 2016.”

He just got out of his monthly status meeting with Frank Steinman where they are talking about the current state of their after sales project. On these occasions, Marcus Butler often listens to the big and small problems arising at the time for Frank Steinman. This time, the company boss had asked him, “Tell me, Mr. Butler, you also have engineering specialists at STAR, right?”

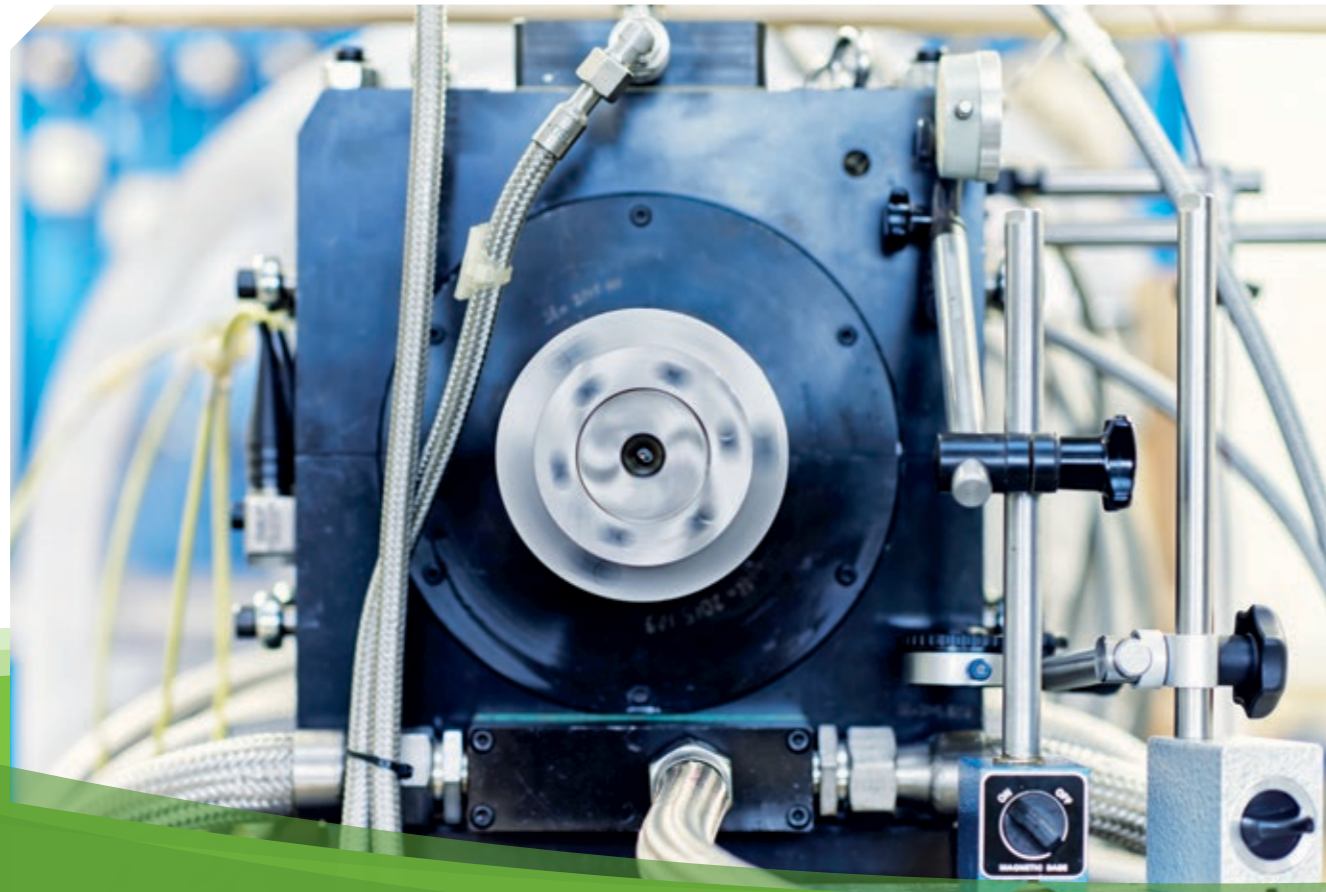
“ **HOW DO YOU COPE WITH WITH THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLED EMPLOYEES?** ”

“Well,” Marcus Butler replied, “that’s not always easy. Especially in our region where demand for good engineers is high. Why do you ask?” For quite a while now, Steinman’s head of HR has been looking for a test engineer for his motors – to no avail. Now, the entire test bench project has been put on hold. With this thought at the back of his mind, the consultant is heading back to headquarters – and the permission to hand on his contact details to a colleague.

A few days later, he is sitting in the canteen across from Tony Dalvalli, Testing Manager at STAR. “It’s great to meet you today. After all, it’s Ash Wednesday.” Tony Dalvalli answers with a grin. He was born and bred in New Orleans, so the Mardi Gras festivities are still a fixture in his calendar. The canteen is pretty busy and the volume accordingly high. Wednesday is hot dog day. “Okay, let me check if I understood everything correctly,” the engineer says. “You have a customer who manufactures motor components and there is nobody taking care of his test benches.” Marcus Butler answers, “Exactly. At the moment, the whole project is on hold. Can we offer him a solution?” “Give me more details,” Tony Dalvalli replies and picks up a bit of salad with his fork.

And Marcus Butler tells him the entire story. How the cooperation started. What he and Frank Steinman are currently working on. And for what purpose the development department needs a test bench. Tony Dalvalli again lets him describe in detail the different motor components and systems that Steinman manufactures. Marcus Butler really knows a lot about those by now. When the plates are empty, the engineer leans back in his chair. “Mr. Steinman can stop worrying about that. We will build him the exact test bench he needs. I’ll give him a call later in the afternoon.”

IT IS FEBRUARY AND THE WEATHER IS PRETTY NASTY. ON HIS WAY TO THE CAR, MARCUS BUTLER GIVES THE RECEPTIONIST A FRIENDLY NOD, FOLDS UP HIS COLLAR AND LEAVES THE BUILDING.



TECHNOLOGY

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2015

Technology companies have rarely had to face as many challenges as in 2015, not just in the automotive industry. Sustainability, resource shortage, globalization and a high pressure to innovate force manufacturing companies to focus on their core processes like product development. At the same time, they need to monitor their profitability and increase transparency. **The engineering experts of the STAR COOPERATION have accompanied them in many areas.**

ANTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT EARN MERITS

When a vehicle is being developed, all the people involved have their own agendas: The design department wants to launch a beautiful product, the development engineers aim for high-tech innovations, the production team wants an easy assembly process.

And the service? The post-delivery time also has to be taken into account during the development process. A premium car manufacturer entrusted the STAR engineers with this task for one of its model series. They possessed the right combination of expertise with their experience in repair and spare part technology, vehicle development and after sales. The basic idea was to influence the product's design already during the development stage so that the costs for spare parts can be minimized and the repair time optimized. This saves the manufacturer a lot of money for warranty and ex gratia cases and leads to customer satisfaction through reasonable repair costs. Due to the high number of interfaces, STAR's team had to perform a lot of coordinative work. But the trust the customer has placed in us with this project was affirmed: STAR is now successfully managing the measures for a serviceable end product across several locations.



AFTER SALES
TECHNOLOGY



BUSINESS CASE FOR CUSTOMER RETENTION

Remanufacturing – reconditioning spare parts with used components – is a trend that makes an important contribution to profitability and sustainability within the automobile industry.

For years, we have been one of the few service providers who have been consulting enterprises in their remanufacturing processes. One of our utility vehicle customers has realized the high potential hidden in remanufacturing. For them, our consultants and experts for technology issues came together and developed a full-blown concept for establishing remanufacturing business processes that, so far, were non-existent in the company. For this purpose, the analysis stage, where the current processes and the set benchmarks as well as the market potential and competitors were examined carefully, was especially important. This enabled us to hand over customized target processes, the business case including a cost prediction as well as concrete recommendations how the concept can be implemented in detail. The project was particularly exciting because there were so many different areas involved, from old parts and product management to marketing and logistics to IT. Our experts measured up to the expectations and the concept is being realized as proposed.



REMANU-
FACTURING



CERTIFICATION



NO PERMISSION WITHOUT CERTIFICATION

The year 2015 has clearly shown how important the correct certification of vehicle components can be.

There are STAR engineers who are experts for certifying all kinds of vehicle components, no matter if they are for wipers, lighting or rims and tires. Due to the legal and technical requirements, issuing an operational certificate is an important task so that it passes the following examination by the authorities. The amount of incidents is large since every change in a component requires a new certificate. In order to save capacities, our automobile customer has handed over this task to STAR on a considerable scale. Certification for foreign markets like the US and China is a particular challenge, where there are several approval rounds necessary due to the language barrier. In this project, the STAR experts have not just become acquainted with the group's internal approval systems, but the customer is enabled to spend more time on strategic and technical core issues.

VIRTUAL
ENGINEERINGOPTIMIZING DIGITAL MODELS
FOR EVERYDAY BUSINESS

Back in the day, when computer performance could not be compared to the one of today's work stations at all, developing had to be done on a real-life prototype.

Today, the necessity for that is significantly smaller because super computers can easily manage several quadrillions of operations per second. Virtual engineering is the magic word that has revolutionized development and STAR has true experts in this area. For instance, we have been generating so-called digital mockups of components and modules for our industrial customer for years. With the help of this virtual visualization, they can test whether an altered component fits into the assigned space or how the procedure for mounting or de-mounting for repair should look like. It is convenient for the customer that STAR's engineers are real experts for data management and know exactly how the necessary data structure has to be set up especially for digital visualization. In addition, the standardized order system introduced by STAR has not just minimized the planning efforts for the number and frequency of ordered data packages for the customer. It also significantly improved the delivery time and quality as well as cost transparency.



In conversation:

Dr. Dirk Walliser

Managing Director Automotive
Controls Eberspächer

INNOVATION IS A QUESTION
OF CULTURE

Modern diesel engines can be tricky. On the one hand, their high efficiency is a desired effect. On the other hand, this leads to a lack of waste heat that can be used for the passenger cabin.

Dr. Dirk Walliser, Managing Director Automotive Controls at Eberspächer, smiles when he talks about this unforeseen effect. **“That means entirely new marketing opportunities for our vehicle heaters.”** 150 years of history and family-owned over five generations – that is an important prerequisite for the success of the Esslingen-based company.

This family factor is also what the system development business also values when working with partners like the STAR COOPERATION. The collaboration started with endurance test benches. Today, the two companies are linked even more: Eberspächer's former electronics division has been a part of the STAR Group since 2014. For Walliser, the deciding argument was that **“the STARS are passionate product designers with the right know-how to take the next step in developing the electronics sector.”**

Accordingly, the integration was conducted without complications or frictions. **“The colleagues are a tight-knit community on the lookout for better solutions.”** This special spirit and the strong customer focus is a real added value for Walliser: **“To us, STAR does not just add capacities, but acts as a competent partner.”**



SOLUTIONS FOR DIGITAL BUSINESS



SOLUTIONS

SAP CONSULTING

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

SHAREPOINT DEVELOPMENT

PRODUCT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

REQUIREMENTS ENGINEERING

TEST MANAGEMENT

E-COMMERCE

DIGITAL BUSINESS

TURNOVER AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

STAR SYSTEMS

EUR 4.4 million
Turnover 2014

EUR 4.9 million
Turnover 2015

32
Employees 2014

39
Employees 2015

Employee information excluding apprentices, interns, working students, bachelor students, master students, temporary employees and subcontracted employees.



“Digital business is changing the business world so fundamentally that only a lot of creativity, speed and technological know-how will serve the purpose of a digital transformation. Accompanying companies during this process is still the main task in 2016 for me.”

Oliver Messer
Managing Director STAR SYSTEMS

Seth Goldblum is downing the contents of his mug and steps to a side table to get another coffee and a donut. He did not get much sleep last night, his little daughter is teething at the moment. At the STAR COOPERATION, he is an expert for product information management, in short: PIM. He really enjoys working at the customers’ and with all the people involved in the process directly – and that is why he and two colleagues are visiting the Steinman company today. In this requirements workshop, they want to reorganize the different systems and processes used by Frank Steinman and his team.

During the past couple of hours, they have been analyzing the different kinds of data, information, images, media and their designated uses around the various Steinman products. “That is quite a lot,” Seth Goldblum thinks and contemplates the large collection on the white board. The company boss is following his look and approaches Seth Goldblum. “At first, I was asking myself if we actually need another system. You know, after all, we are just a small company.” Seth Goldblum gets that a lot.

“ **BUT WHEN I SAW ALL THE LINKS VISUALIZED, IT BECAME CLEAR.** ”

For the rest of the day, they will examine the different source systems being used in the various departments. In marketing, sales and after sales. In development, production and quality assurance. Obviously, they must not forget the finance department and also external parties like suppliers and sales partners. Seth Goldblum wants to find out exactly what information the employees need for what, when, where and how.

The day after, they go about reconciling all these data, requirements and users. For, that is what PIM is all about: to unite product data, texts and images in one central system in a way that the different operators have access to the correct and most current data status at all times. No matter in what language, for which product variety or for which output medium. “Because you don’t want to have old, non-maintained product information in a current or in the wrong flyer,” Seth Goldblum had explained at the start. And Frank Steinman and his team quickly understood that a centralized data management can facilitate their work.

“LET’S TAKE A BREAK FOR 15 MINUTES AND GET SOME FRESH AIR. THEN WE’LL HAVE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMS.”



DIGITAL BUSINESS PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2015

For many companies, a profound digital transformation ranks high on the agenda for the coming 24 months. Away from traditional IT towards fast and agile systems. Away from transaction management towards relationship management. Away from using isolated data towards a cross-linked customer experience through big data and e-commerce. Away from limited server systems towards flexible cloud technology. **The IT experts at the STAR COOPERATION accompanied numerous customers on this path in 2015.**

ORGANIZING THE FLOOD OF INFORMATION

Successfully managing large corporations with complex company structures requires a functioning reporting system.

Key figures from the most varied areas, e.g. the production, warehouse, marketing and controlling departments, have to be gathered, consolidated and processed for meaningful reports. The higher the number of systems used for this is, the more will transparency and control of the business processes be afflicted. That was the exact challenge our customer had to face, one of the largest manufacturers of construction machines in the world. Their management wanted a data warehouse that was able to visualize all the relevant information from the value-added chain of each location in a standardized and time-saving way. Today, that is called 'single source of truth'. With their analysis of the consolidation potential, STAR's business intelligence experts have laid the foundation for this. The customer was so convinced of the proposed setup for the data warehouse that they extended the project by after sales. As soon as the requirements for this area are clarified, our business intelligence solution adjusted to the customer's business processes can be implemented.



BUSINESS
INTELLIGENCE



THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STANDARD CUSTOMER

It does not matter if it is about increasing efficiency, optimizing processes or saving expenses: in order for a new IT system to yield the desired effect, it has to be customized to the individual business model of a company.

That, in a nutshell, is a project that STAR's experts for product information management have realized in 2015. The newly established service division of a medium-sized wholesaler wanted to implement the PIM system Perifion for the data management of its products, much like the parent company had successfully done a few years earlier. The arising obstacles led to STAR's involvement. The customer expected a recommendation on how to deal with data supply, import, manipulation and export. Together with the customer, the STAR experts took a close look at the situation, from the business model to relations with the parent company and the current processes as well as data sources right to the target state. STAR's consultants recommended that the desired result would only be achieved if the PIM strategy and the individual process and implementation steps were tailored to the customer's individual specifications.



PIM
SYSTEM





ARMED FOR THE FUTURE

Nowadays, many company areas develop so rapidly that the tried and tested IT system quickly reaches its limitations despite regular updates.

Then, it is time to dare a reboot and to install a sustainable system perfectly tailored to the scope of application. That was also the situation for our customer from the automotive industry, where warehouse management system got increasingly unstable due to the expired technical support. The system of choice was a highly productive SAP ERP platform – and STAR’s team was called in because they are experts for these solutions. The generated blueprint was examined by the customer’s IT revision department and declared ‘very professional’. Therefore, nothing stood in the way of implementing the core system and the associated modules. The project was particularly complex, not just due to the numerous interfaces with other IT systems, but also because the customer wanted to operate the processes within the warehouse from mobile devices like tablet computers. And the best thing about it: the implemented system can be extended without difficulty and therefore can grow with the customer’s requirements.



DESIGN & USABILITY TESTED

When programming and implementing new software, the testing stage takes on an outstanding role. You do not want to correct many errors after the release.

The STARS are qualified and certified experts for IT test management and have taken over this part for several customers, e.g. for a premium car manufacturer’s online order system. There, retailers, workshops and customers shall order original and replacement parts as well as accessories easy and error-free. STAR designed an extensive test concept and numerous test cases for the go-live of the new system in order to offer a high-quality application from the beginning. They took on many different user roles when performing the individual tests and put both the front and back ends of the system through their paces. This not only made sure that the application came with a very small error rate and our customer had a high transparency about the system’s state. The optimal user experience also yielded a higher customer retention and, ultimately, an increase in turnover because of the quality-assured online sales. STAR will also take care of the test management for future system generations.



In conversation:

Sven O. Maier

Managing Director
Schwäbische Traum-Fabrik

“WE SELL A GOOD NIGHT’S SLEEP”

When Sven Maier, Managing Director at Schwäbische Traum-Fabrik, is talking about downy feathers, foam plastics and alpaca wool from his own animals in his show room in Bad Boll, his eyes are glistening with joy.

Back in 1997, the socioeconomics graduate and his wife Eva founded their company, where 70 employees sustainably manufacture mattresses and bedding products. He quickly understood that the paraphernalia for a good night’s sleep will not just be bought at brick-and-mortar retailers, but increasingly online.

He wanted to take the plunge into the World Wide Web – and met the STAR COOPERATION. **“At first, we were skeptical if we wouldn’t get lost at such a big service company.”** Eventually, he was convinced by the professionalism with which the STARS presented themselves from the beginning. **“They didn’t arrive with a ready-made standardized solution but asked a lot of questions first. We were delighted about how interested they were.”** According to Maier, the work on the project was markedly harmonious. **“We could always rely on STAR, even in the stressful times. For example, the question of interfaces with our enterprise resource planning was very important to us. There, they were very flexible and collaborated well with our third party supplier.”**

The result of these efforts is Schwäbische Traum-Fabrik’s new web shop that has been available at www.ichschlafsgut.de for some months. **“The initial apprehension has flown by, the next projects with STAR are already scheduled.”**



ON THE TOP FLOOR OF THE
STEINMAN COMPANY, THE LIGHT
IS NOT ON ANY MORE TODAY.



This time, he is holding a glass of champagne and watches the bustle in his company's yard. Many hundreds of guests have accepted his invitation: customers, partners, suppliers, old and new companions. The employees have brought their families. The kids still make the bouncy castle rock, their laughter fills the air. The band is covering everything from Elvis to Coldplay. A short while ago, they hired another development engineer – the Steinman company's employee no. 500.

Hailie McDuff from the STAR COOPERATION approaches him with a beaming smile. She is wearing a black skirt and pink sneakers. "Otherwise, my feet would not survive the day," she had explained laughingly in the morning. She has joined up with his assistant and his marketing team to organize this event. Hailie McDuff also does that for STAR, he has been at their STAR Insight events a couple of times. It was her idea to look for employees with band experience who would like to play tonight. Furthermore, she had proposed to use the occasion and present the new Steinman branding for the first time. Now, you can see the new product posters and flyers everywhere, a screen premieres the brand new explanatory film and the modern trade fair stand is towering the whole thing right in the middle. It has already been proving its value at many a trade exhibition.

"Well, Mr. Steinman, did you envision your celebration to be like this?" "Not in the slightest," he confesses. Hailie McDuff gives him a contented nod and brushes a lock of her black hair out of her face. "Please excuse me, but I better check if we've put enough drinks on ice. This could be a long evening." And away she is. Standing at a table, he discovers Marcus Butler. This time, he does not hold onto a Coke light but a glass of red wine. "Great party, Mr. Steinmann," he calls out to the company boss. "Great work, Mr. Butler," he retorts. One year later, Frank Steinman has a really good feeling when thinking of after sales. For, with STAR's support, he has implemented the concept in his factory to a great extent and increased his turnover through service significantly. As he makes his way to his STAR consultant, a thought crosses his mind.

“ NOW, I CAN FINALLY SPEND MY TIME ON THE THINGS
I REALLY LIKE – DEVELOPING AND MANUFACTURING
GREAT PRODUCTS. ”

FRANK STEINMAN HAS
SWITCHED OFF HIS
COMPUTER HOURS
AGO – THE COLUMNS
OF FIGURES FROM HIS
ENTERPRISE RESOURCE
PLANNING SYSTEM CAN
WAIT UNTIL NEXT WEEK.



STAR HIGHLIGHTS 2015

In addition to the numerous success stories the STAR COOPERATION has been writing together with the customers in 2015, the STARS have experienced a lot also outside of their work projects that is worth reporting on. The following pages recount all the big and small stories that have been shaping everyday life at STAR in the past twelve months.



ELECTRONICS AREA IS GROWING TOGETHER

In 2014, we welcomed a new member in the STAR Group.

The products of Eberspächer Electronics in vehicle networking technology were the ideal supplement to the development and workshop services of our Sindelfingen-based subsidiary BERGER ELEKTRONIK. In the months since acquiring the Göppingen-based company, we have been making some organizational adjustments, so that the sales, procurement, development, manufacturing and workshop teams could collaborate increasingly efficiently.

Eventually, 1 September 2015 marked an important milestone for STAR's EE experts. Since then, STAR has been offering a joint and broad service portfolio under the new

name STAR ELECTRONICS to car manufacturers and suppliers: products in networking technology, energy as well as sensor and actuator technology, development by proxy of customer specific products and projects, fully-automated PCB assembly as well as vehicle installation and modification.

In future, our customers profit from the synergy effects coming from our collaboration and from the consolidated EE product families adjusted to their needs. We will continuously develop and extend these products further in the coming years.





EVERYTHING NEW IN THE WEB FOR STAR

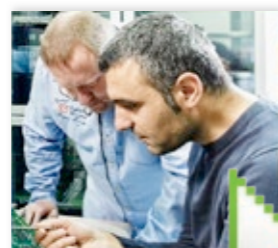
The year 2015 was an important corner stone for the STAR COOPERATION Group's presence on the internet.

In December, we proudly announced: STAR has an entirely new presence in the World Wide Web. A couple of years had gone by since the last relaunch and the online world has since been making huge advances, both technically and visually. STAR also has developed further, introduced innovative products and services and implemented a new brand setup. So, it was high time to reflect this modern branding also on the web. For months, we have been fine-tuning content, conducting photo shoots for the adequate imagery, laying the technical foundations for the coming years and

optimizing the pages for the most important search engines. Now, all STAR services and solutions are united under the motto 'Experts for ...' and at one single domain (www.star-cooperation.com) – clearly arranged and sorted into topics. When programming the new site, we also thought of mobile end devices, so all sites have a responsive design and are perfectly displayed also on a smartphone screen. The English version of STAR's web presence will follow in the coming weeks as well as additional new technical features.



CONSULTING & IMPLEMENTATION



TECHNOLOGY & DOCUMENTATION



OUTSOURCING



STARS ON THE ROAD – AT TRADE FAIRS AND CONGRESSES

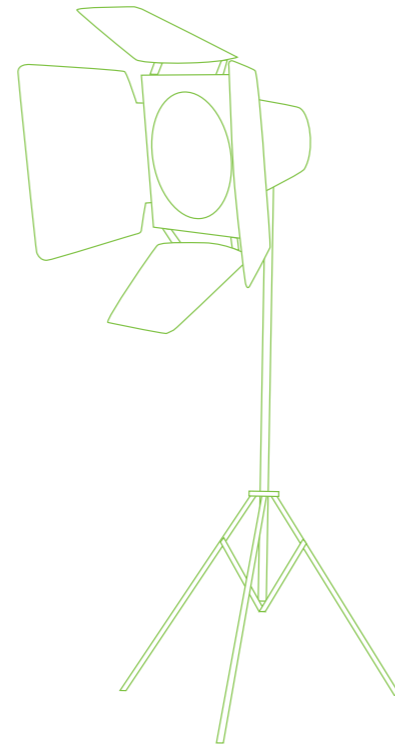
STAR's schedule for 2015 was again studded with conferences, congresses and trade fairs where we presented our services and solutions successfully.

For example, our experts for marketing and e-commerce were able to point out the importance of a proper e-commerce strategy to entrepreneurs and established retailers during events for Baden-Württemberg:Connected and the trade association of Baden-Württemberg. In April, STAR's experts for new mobility presented themselves at the MobiliTec trade fair during Hannover Messe. As a part of the collective exhibition booth of Baden-Württemberg and in the immediate vicinity, everything revolved around new technologies and concepts for tomorrow's mobility. In June, the STAR engineers presented a trolley for motor testing applications, the centerpiece of any test bench, during the Automotive Testing Expo in Stuttgart and demonstrated their know-how in measurement and testing technology. Finally, our experts for vehicle electronics did not just con-

vince the numerous visitors of STAR's in-house exhibition in Sindelfingen. They also attracted many visitors to come to their brand new trade booth at the VDI congress Electronics in Vehicles with the simulated sound of sports cars and the corresponding custom-built hard- and software.



STAR INSIGHT INSPIRES STAR'S GUESTS



Four events, three key notes, three bands, one in-house exhibition, one art exhibition and many, many interesting conversations and encounters – that is how STAR's event year can be summarized. We regularly invite our customers and partners to spend an inspiring evening with and at STAR.

STAR INSIGHT I

Marc Gassert, the blonde Shaolin known from TV, kicked-off the year and taught the audience in his key note what even normal people are capable of with discipline and will power.

Afterwards, Florian Scharnofske and his rock'n'roll trio took the STARS and their guests on a journey through the musical history of the fifties, sixties and seventies and rocked the Green Salon with his virtuoso live show.



STAR INSIGHT II



At STAR Insight 2, Dr. Jörg Wallner's audience got to know the customers of the future and learned how they can effectively be targeted with flexible business models. Wallner is Director Innovation Management & Consulting for the trend researchers at 2b AHEAD ThinkTank. Subsequently, the artist Valentin Vitanov guided the guests through his exhibition with the title "One + One = One" and discussed his works between abstract and realistic art with the evening's guests.

STAR INSIGHT III

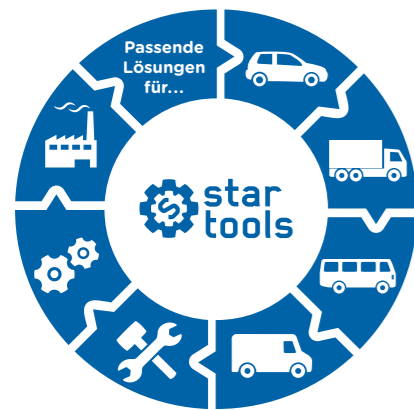


STAR's workshop in Sindelfingen provided the perfect backdrop for the third event of the STAR Insight series. Following STAR's in-house exhibition held traditionally in October, Auto di Takt visited us with their electrifying workshop show. And the attendants were amazed by how the two musicians produced real rock classics with their instruments recycled from old scrap parts.

STAR INSIGHT IV



Dr. Stefan Frädrieh concluded the STAR Insight event series. The motivational trainer and his personal weaker self called Günther gave many practical tips on how our guests can motivate themselves in everyday situations. The highlights was the well-known a capella group Fünf who performed a best-of of its current show 'Bock drauf!' and made the packed Green Salon swing and clap.



EASY ONLINE ORDERING OF EQUIPMENT

STAR's experts for workshop equipment have been developing their online shop startools also in 2015 and further extended the product portfolio.

At www.startools.de, workshop customers do not just get 65,000 high-quality tools and equipment articles, but also the right gear for electromobility. The new chat function comes in handy, with which the web shop's visitors can address their tool-specific questions to experts. Finally, startools is the only web shop where transport businesses can order the assembly frames for the obligatory on-board units in trucks. Those devices became mandatory in trucks from 7.5 tons in October 2015, so a large amount of assembly frames could be dispatched in a short time. This project is processed in close collaboration with STAR's logistics experts who send the on-board units all over Europe for their customer – from Calais in France to Debrecen in Hungary, from Danish Oresund to Palermo in Sicily.

STAR MOBILITY ENSURED

For many of our customer projects, the STARS need to stay mobile at all times, because we are often with them at their site or on the road for them.

To ensure this mobility, the STAR COOPERATION's company car fleet consists of more than 100 vehicles of different shapes and sizes. Our employees also profit from this large car pool, since they can borrow the different models for the weekend at an attractive price – no matter if they want to take a short break in the mountains or if they planned a move. Our employees' mobility makes collaborating with our customers especially easy when a meeting, a presentation or operation on site is required. The short-term availability of our car fleet supports our flexibility.



RENT A STAR
THE CONVENIENT WAY OF WEEKEND DRIVING

It's quite simple:

1. **Reservation:** in person or by telephone
2. **Collection:** on Fridays as agreed
3. **Return:** on Mondays by 08:30 a.m. latest

Contact the STAR reception for easy handling.



"The online business continues to grow solidly. Therefore, one of my most important tasks for 2016 is to further work on our online offerings, add useful functions and simplify the order process – for our customers' benefit."

Katharina Hennigs
Managing Director STAR EQUIPMENT

STAR IS DEVELOPING – ALSO SPATIALLY

For STAR's facility experts, the year of 2015 was dominated by alteration and extension measures, by relocations and move-ins. When teams, departments and entire divisions are growing, the on-site conditions have to be adjusted to the new requirements so that every single STAR can work on the projects at a perfectly equipped workplace. To be precise, we developed another 450 square meters of office space on the second floor of our Böblingen headquarters for the STAR engineers. We also founded a new location in Neu-Ulm to better take care of our customer projects there.

Finally, our Göppingen-based Experts for Vehicle Electronics found a new home. Because the manufacturing with its Electronic Manufacturing Service (EMS) needed to move as well, we first had to take numerous measures to lay the technical foundations for the move.

2016 will also come with an extension of STAR's locations. For instance, we plan to significantly expand our activities in Munich. Here as well as in our headquarters in Böblingen, our tenants will profit from the infrastructure in place and the comprehensive service of our facility and office experts, from the reception and switchboard service to postal and office services to providing catering services and meeting facilities.

Germany

Böblingen | Berlin | Bremerhaven | Fellbach |
Frankfurt | Göppingen | Karlsruhe | Munich |
Neu-Ulm | Sindelfingen | Warehouse: Stuttgart |
Wolfsburg



MODERN COMPANY, MODERN VALUES

Our spirit is young, creative and fresh.

We are driven by customer satisfaction and growth.

The linking element has been formulated already during STAR's foundation in 1997: services along the process chain for our customers. Interdisciplinary, thus in all fields of business. Intercontinental across all national borders. We take over everything that our customers do not absolutely have to perform themselves. From bread-and-butter business to innovation. Having modernized our branding on the internet in 2015, we have also put the STAR Spirit, our corporate values, to the test and revised them:

COMPETENT:

We consequently improve our theoretical knowledge and our practical know-how in the areas we work in, combined with a distinct methodical competence.

INNOVATIVE:

We want to be creative, not controlled and we open up space for ideas. We keep our eyes open for our customers on the quest for trends and new added values.

HUMAN:

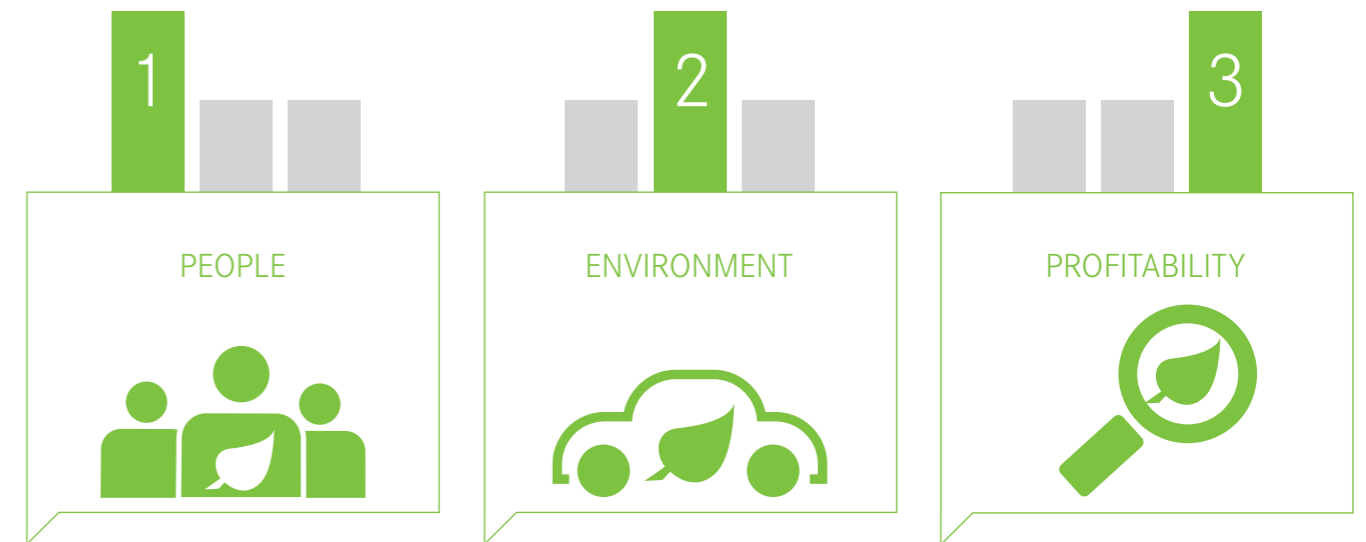
Respect, kindness and appreciation when working with each other is paramount for us. Our work's results shall continuously improve life.

RESPONSIBLE:

Every day, we actively and dynamically fulfill the responsibility we have assumed for our customers, the environment, our social surroundings as well as colleagues.

BETTER:

We thrive to understand our customers' businesses, to anticipate and fulfill their needs and to be better every day.



RESPONSIBILITY WITH A CAPITAL R

Also in 2015, we have been living up to our corporate responsibility and further advanced sustainability at STAR.

At the start of the year, we defined three columns for the STAR COOPERATION on which our sustainability activities rest: people, environment and profitability. The corresponding measures varied and applied to all three areas.

For example, we have been changing all our print products like brochures, flyers and the annual report now available to environment-friendly uncoated paper in the past twelve months. Additionally, we aim to fulfill all the requirements for a certification of our environment management (DIN EN ISO 14001:2004) and our energy management (DIN EN ISO 50001) for the first time in 2017. This shall give our efforts in these areas an official seal.



YOUNG STARS' SOCIAL COMMITMENT



For years, our Sterntaler, the group of apprentices within the STAR COOPERATION Group, have actively been supporting charitable organizations in the Böblingen region with their activities.

Also in 2015, they have been diligently raising funds and sold cake, crepes, waffles, ice-cream and sandwiches as well as performed dozens of tire changes in return. Their 2015 earnings benefit three different initiatives:

Frauen helfen Frauen e. V. thamar

This organization runs an outreach center for sexual violence victims called thamar (www.thamar.de), which helps girls, boys and women to cope with harassment incidents and which is strongly involved in prevention and education measures at schools.

Förderverein Helfende Hände e. V. Stuttgart

This association supports fellow human beings who need help, no matter whether it is a homeless person, a senior citizen without family ties, a single parent or a teenager with no prospects.

Malteser / Caritas „Schwanger in der Fremde“

Translated into English, the project means 'Away from home and pregnant'. It was initiated by the Maltese order and Caritas and it takes care of pregnant women who were swept to Stuttgart by the floods of refugees in the past months. They now have to prepare for giving birth without knowing the language or having a social network.



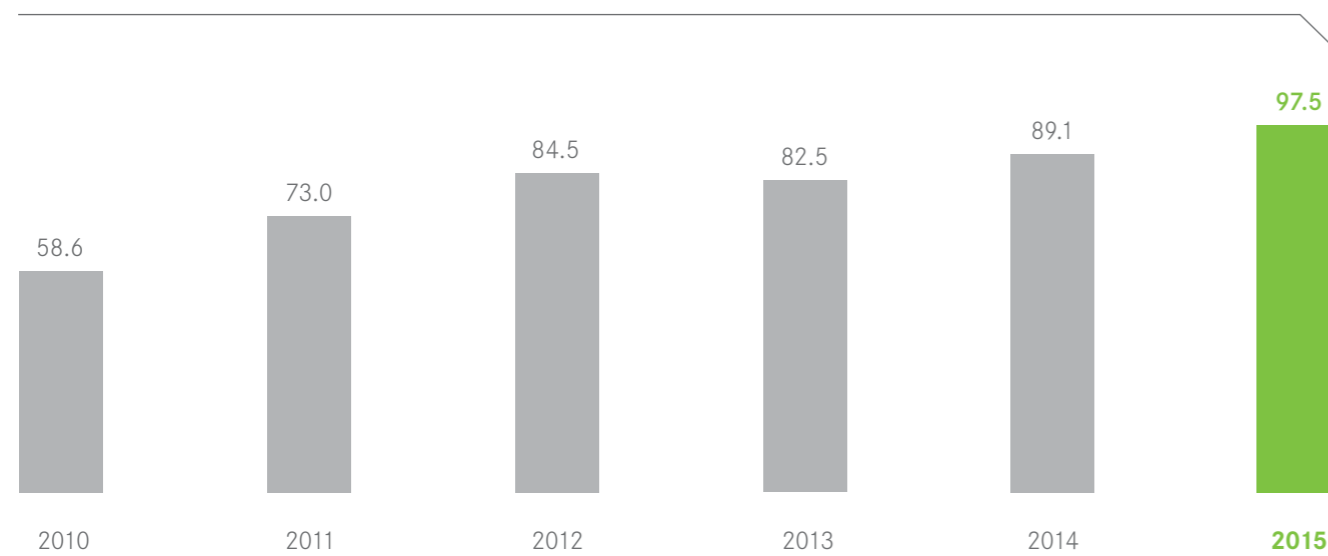
FACTS AND FIGURES

The STAR year of 2015 can only be a well-rounded story with an overview of the most important turnover and employee key figures.

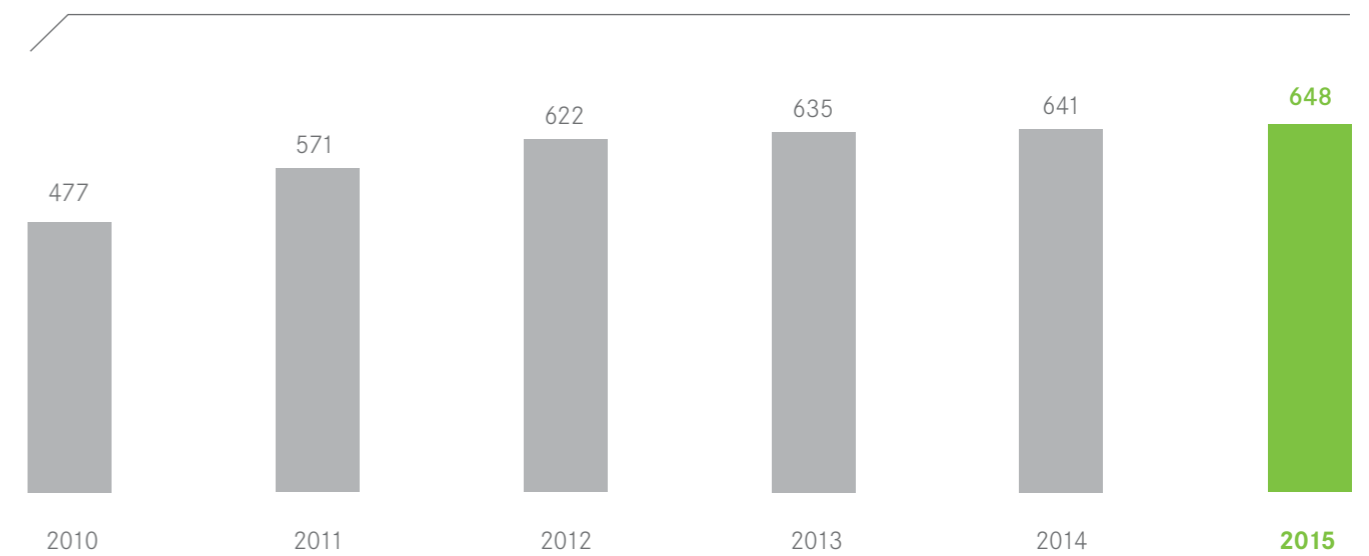
2015 | EUR 97.5 MILLION TURNOVER

2015 | 648 EMPLOYEES

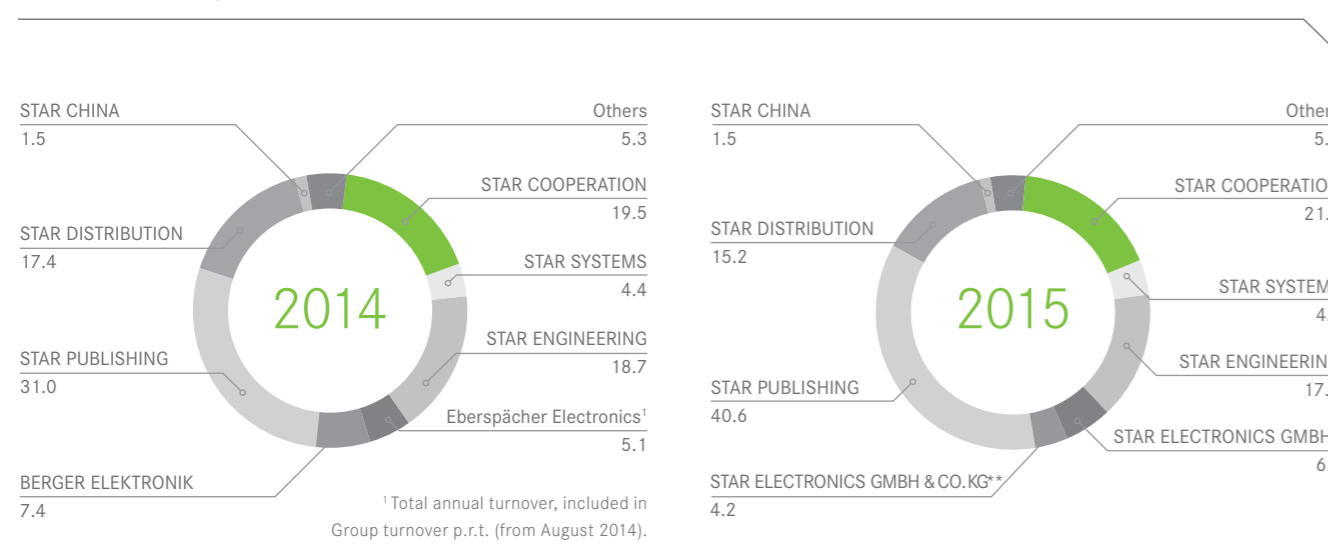
Turnover development of the STAR COOPERATION Group in EUR million



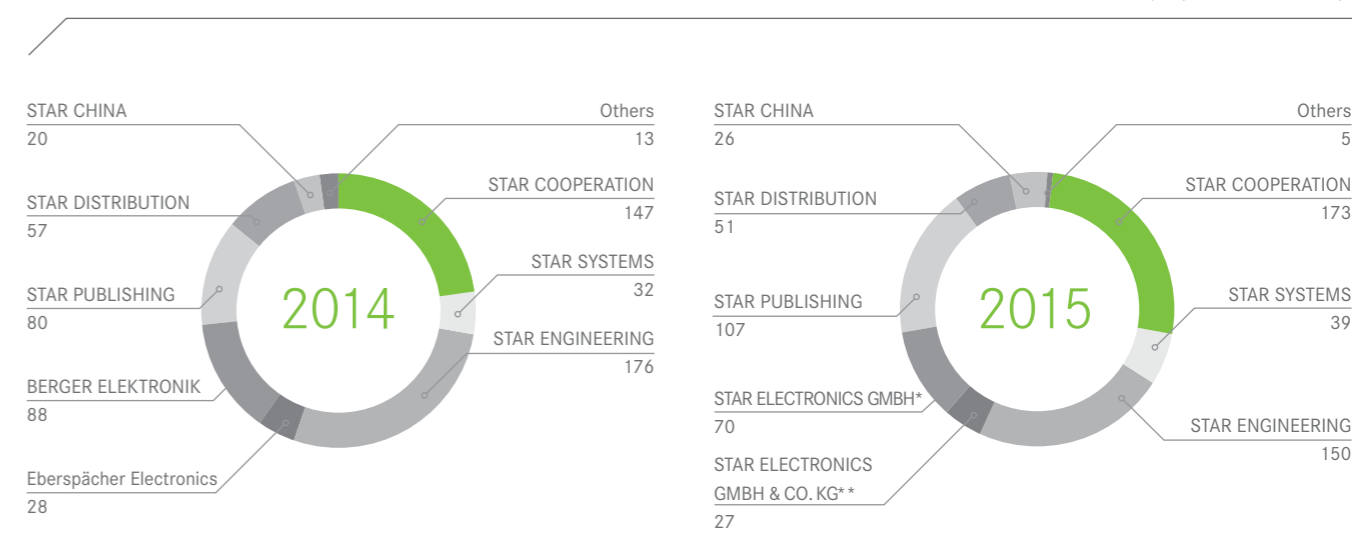
Employees of the STAR COOPERATION Group



Turnover/subsidiary in EUR million



Employees/subsidiary



Note: 2015 values prior to conclusive confirmation of currently ongoing audit of accounts. In order to present Group turnover, the cumulative value of the individual subsidiaries was adjusted for internal turnover (consolidating entries).

Note: Employee information excluding apprentices, interns, working students, bachelor students, master students, temporary employees and subcontracted employees.
* formerly BERGER ELEKTRONIK **formerly Eberspächer Electronics

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By the way: Frank Steinman, his mechanical engineering company and the projects with STAR are fictional. But there are many customers and projects that resemble our story in some aspects. If you recognize yourself here or there, this resemblance is purely accidental and not intended.

STARTING THE NEXT CHAPTER TOGETHER ...



STAR COOPERATION GmbH

The STAR COOPERATION has been certified according to DIN EN ISO 9001:2008.

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