

50
FIFTY
YEARS

PRISMA

The WILD Group
magazine

50 YEARS BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

▼ **WILD**
▼ **PHOTONIC**

WILD's evolution
to a successful
systems partner.

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Viral protection
solutions for medical
technology.

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3D light simulation
opens new horizons
in design.

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"PASSING ON 50 YEARS OF KNOW-HOW TO THE NEXT GENERATION."

It is the people who have made the WILD Group what it is today and what it will be in the future, stress the three Managing Directors Josef Hackl, Wolfgang Warum and Michael Wratschko.

As longstanding companions and pivotal figures in the company's history, CEO Josef Hackl, CTO Wolfgang Warum and CFO Michael Wratschko talk on the 50th anniversary of the Group about their first contact with WILD, about crisis situations and important lessons learned, as well as their confidence with regard to the years ahead.

What is the first memory you associate with WILD?

Michael Wratschko: "I am probably one of the few who look back and recall an image of the company that has absolutely nothing to do with today's situation. When I joined WILD back in 1997, we were in a restructuring phase, in the midst of a radical change. Times were very hard back then. Today, on the other hand, we are extremely well-positioned in all areas and we can be proud of our achievements and our economic success."

Wolfgang Warum: "My first contact with the company came about through microscopes made by WILD Heerbrugg, which we used in the development laboratory of my employer at the time. As a founding member of WILD Electronics, I was deeply involved in the development of the Wernberg site, which made a significant contribution to the expansion of the WILD Group's technology base."



Michael Wratschko, WILD Group CFO



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Wolfgang Warum, WILD Group CTO

When you look back, what have been the most important milestones in the history of WILD?

Michael Wratschko: "I would sum it up as follows: The first decade was about learning how high-tech production works and how you achieve Swiss precision. In the early 1980s, the wage cost advantage was diminishing for the Swiss parent company. This caused the first crisis, which the company was still able to overcome on its own together with Leica. From there on, the focus was on acquiring new customers. That went well until 1994/1995. The share of the overall business with the parent company, however, did not diminish significantly as a result. There was a second crisis, which the company was no longer able to manage alone. The change of ownership finally brought a decisive change in strategy - moving away from being a component manufacturer and towards becoming a full-service provider. That decision has proven to be absolutely right up to this day."

How was WILD able to maintain its lead in so many different areas of technology for decades?

Wolfgang Warum: "Anyone can buy machines but unique expertise in the complex technology field of optomechanics can only be developed with great effort and over a long period of time. It is precisely this technological edge of our staff that makes a difference in the market. Now the time has come to pass on 50 years of know-how to the next generation."

What would you say are WILD Group's most important strengths today?

Josef Hackl: "We listen very carefully to our customers, define the right setup from our service portfolio for them and we reliably deliver what we have agreed with them."

What can the staff members of the WILD Group be particularly proud of?

Josef Hackl: "That our customers still fully rely on our services even during the coronavirus crisis, in which many of them are faced with a significantly weaker demand. The WILD staff continue to seamlessly provide information and products to our customers, further strengthening the great confidence they have in us."

Will WILD continue to be an innovative market leader in international competition even in the year 2030?

Josef Hackl: "I am confident that we will play an even more integrated role with many of our customers as a most trusted partner".

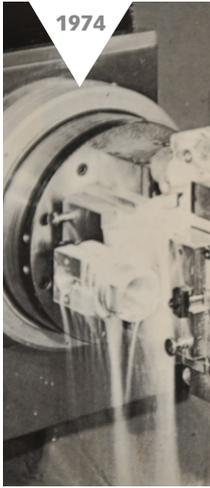
Wolfgang Warum: "The market of the future will still have a demand for partners who offer holistic solutions and not just individual work steps. We will flexibly and proactively find the right answers to the strong technological challenges, without fear of change."



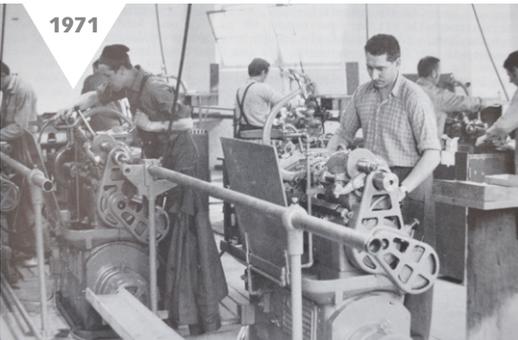
Josef Hackl, WILD Group CEO

HOW WE BECAME A SYSTEMS PARTNER.

From a precision theodolite in the early 1970s to innovative 3D laser scanners, state-of-the-art diagnostic imaging or analysis systems for industrial and medical use. A brief time journey through five decades explains what makes up WILD's success.



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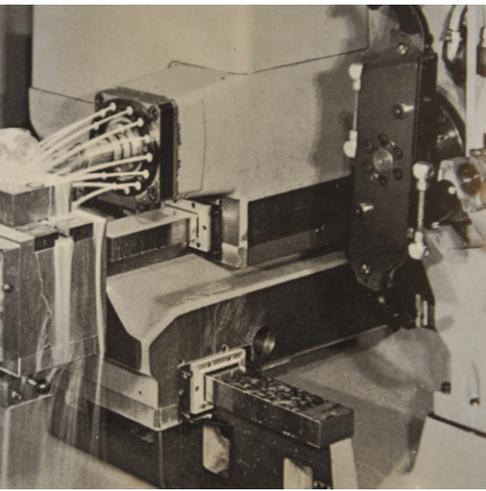
THE PAST

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It all began with an instrument that became synonymous with reliability and precision for surveyors around the world: The theodolite was one of the first products for which WILD delivered components with an accuracy of thousandths of a millimetre. These were initially manufactured by seven pioneers who had been trained at the Swiss parent group WILD Heerbrugg. WILD Heerbrugg, which established "Wild Kärnten GmbH" in Völkermarkt on 2 December 1970 because of a lack of skilled workers in Switzerland, was already considered an absolute pioneer in the areas of geodesy, photogrammetry and microscopy at the time. At the beginning, the site in Carinthia was merely an extended workbench of the parent company, yet one that proved to be a complete success. Just over one year after the establishment of the site, a new production hall was built for a workforce that had grown to 130 people. What made the site stand out was its commitment to utmost precision. The demands on the workers were high and the manufacturing possibilities were limited by the machinery available at the time. For instance, electronic calibration was not available. Mechanics and optics were the

only ways of achieving maximum measurement accuracy. This required an enormous level of dexterity, comprehensive assembly expertise and skilful use of optical elements.

Between 1974 and 1979, WILD invested in its first numerically controlled machine tools (NC machines), in new manufacturing procedures, a cylindrical grinder and a paint shop for the surface treatment of individual components. This laid the foundation for the production of entire assemblies. The first



such assembly manufactured by WILD was the tripod, which became a best-seller with 10,000 units sold per year. In 1985, the company eventually manufactured a complete device, the microtome, a cutting instrument used in the preparation of samples for examination under the microscope. The know-how acquired by WILD's staff over the years did not go unnoticed and 1987 marked the next milestone in the company's history: IBM and Digital became the first customers outside the Leica group to be brought on board.

THE TURNAROUND

Despite all efforts, the company's economic situation reached rock bottom in the mid-90s and a closure of the site was imminent. But this was averted by Herbert Liaunig and Dieter Feger. They purchased WILD and transformed it into an independent company. WILD Kärnten and Photonic were outsourced from Leica, forming the WILD Group. Herbert Liaunig implemented a strict restructuring programme in record time. In addition, WILD moved away from the "extended workshop mentality" and reorganised the puzzle pieces of available know-how in the company. The result is considered an essential success factor to this day:

a unique combination of knowledge in the areas of optics, precision mechanics, electronics, software and assembly technology. Thanks to this ability to be a one-stop shop, the company managed the turnaround. Just two years after the takeover by the new owners, WILD brought in a stream of new customers and opened additional business areas, such as the semiconductor industry and aerospace. ▷

Legends	
1971	Seven pioneers start production
1972	WILD opens the new production hall
1973	Theodolite becomes the first best-seller
1974	Introduction of the first NC machines
1982	The tripod: The first assembly manufactured by WILD
1987	Manufacturing of hard disks for IBM
1997	The company ventures into the production of semiconductors
1998	WILD manufactures the Heidelberg Retina Tomograph

1999



2010



2004



2008



2011



As of the turn of the millennium, WILD has grown into a renowned contract manufacturer of complex optomechatronic systems and devices. Medical technology has become the group's strongest mainstay, with WILD signing manufacturing contracts for products that are now considered innovative milestones. For instance, the Group supplied numerous components for the C-Leg prosthetic leg and the world's first head-mounted surgical microscope was manufactured in Völkermarkt.

FROM MANUFACTURER TO A ONE-STOP-SHOP PARTNER

The following two decades were marked by a fundamental change of strategy. WILD evolved from a pure manufacturer into a systems partner with significant development competence. Customers realised that the combination of development services and high-precision manufacturing is a decisive advantage. This brought WILD new manufacturing contracts, e.g. for the world's first large-format aerial camera.

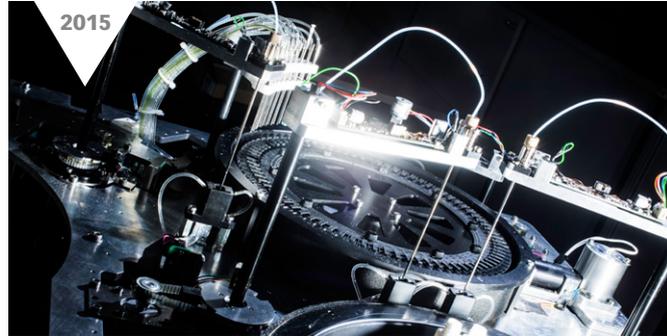
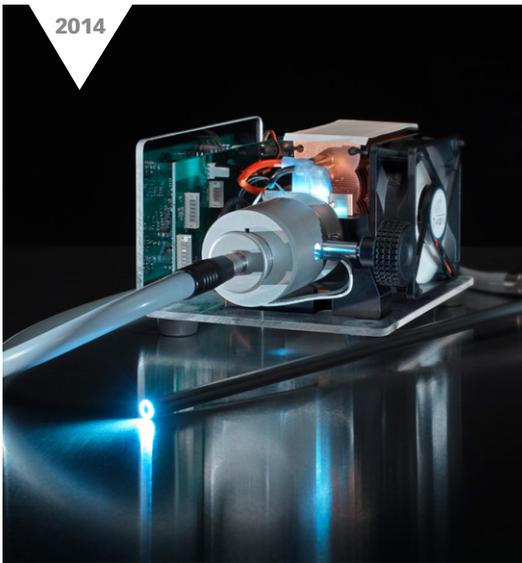
In addition, WILD enlarged its locations and expanded its portfolio. In 2004, WILD Electronics was established, soon becoming a coveted systems partner in the area of in-vitro diagnostics and adding electronics and software to the

Group's core competence. As of 2006, the newly established WILD Technologies s.r.o. in Slovakia enlarged the manufacturing capacity of the Group. Vienna-based Photonic increasingly evolved into a lighting specialist within the Group, winning over customers with its flexible LED modules for versatile use.

Since companies increasingly require high-precision components that are completely free of any production residues, WILD invested in the expansion of its cleanroom capacities and its precision machinery from 2010 onwards. This equipment has remained a decisive factor to this day, especially for measurement and laser technology customers.

SUCCESS IS TEAMWORK

In the last ten years, WILD has ramped up networking activities both across its production sites and with external specialists. Two instruments form the basis for an optimised



combination of know-how, experience and the latest scientific findings: the WILD Integrated Network (WIN) and the Technology Roadmap (TRM), which ensures that WILD stays up to date with regard to future technologies. The company has multiplied the resources put into development, significantly expanded its simulation competence and considerably pushed software development, especially for standard requirements in medical technology. The WILD Group is positioning itself as a knowledge hub that enables projects with a significant development depth and an extremely high level of technology.

An increasing number of international market leaders put their trust in the systems partner and take advantage of its one-stop-shop solution, ranging from product development and an individually adjusted supply chain to a strict quality management and process-stable, valid and FDA-compliant

production. Thanks to the Service Roadmap (SRM), which comprises a total of 13 service modules, even combinations of individual modules from this process chain are possible.

Legends

- 1999** | Innovative C-Leg prosthetic leg by Otto Bock
- 2004** | Production order for the first aerial camera
- 2008** | Manufacturing of articulated surgical arms
- 2010** | WILD develops and manufactures sterile products
- 2011** | WILD begins operation of new optics and prototype laboratory
- 2014** | Photonic develops LED modules for versatile use
- 2015** | Development order for the Biochemistry Analyzer
- 2019** | FDA attests that WILD meets the highest quality standards

A BOLD VISION OF THE FUTURE.

In the last 50 years, the WILD Group has built a strong economic, human and technological foundation which provides the company with the necessary certainty to push forward visionary ideas with agility, openness and dynamism.



There are not many companies out there that have successfully sailed through crises to remain in business for 50 years – and that are looking to the future more optimistically than ever before. On the contrary: especially the coronavirus pandemic has literally put the brakes on numerous businesses. WILD, on the other hand, has so far been able to cope with the crisis well. This can be attributed in particular to the WILD Group’s special “immune system”, designed to react quickly and flexibly to new requirements. The systems partner delivers proof of this innovation power and resilience by guaranteeing maximum supply security for its customers through sophisticated systems and innovative co-working and communication tools.

This willingness to change and to succeed is an integral part of the WILD Group’s DNA. The same applies to the fact that, not having its own products, the contract manufacturer always puts customer interests first. The WILD Group owes its ability to offer bespoke solutions even for the most specific requirements to a unique mix of skills. The smart composition of teams, in which employees who have known the company and the target markets for years are working next to young experts who contribute new ideas, is also a contributing factor.

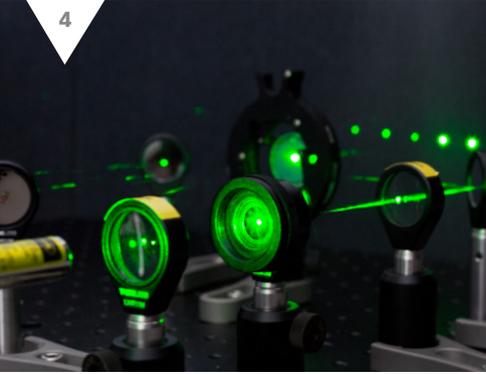
This is also a reason why the WILD Group, long established as a manufacturing partner in the market, has been able to significantly expand its development know-how and enlarge its technology base over the last two decades. “We have multiplied our resources in optics development and have considerably expanded our simulation competence and software development, especially for standard requirements in medical technology. Our order books are full and our staff members can be very proud of that”, stresses CTO Wolfgang Warum.

A SOLID ECONOMIC FOUNDATION

It has also been the staff at all four sites that have managed to establish a solid economic foundation over the last decades. This position will be instrumental in coping with the coronavirus crisis. “WILD has not been in the red for the last 22 years and can look to the future with a clear conscience”, confidently asserts CFO Michael Wratschko.

“This future will be characterised by an even greater push towards digitalisation and the fact that customers will be

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reacting much quicker to changes in the market. Therefore, we are putting a strong focus on agility and volatility so as to swiftly implement new processes and ideas”, CEO Josef Hack reveals. Taking quick decisions instead of relying on long planning cycles will be equally in demand as the ability to tap into new markets – such as imaging techniques in medical technology. “From a technological point of view, software will be taking over more and more functions in a device and the miniaturisation of optical solutions will continue to advance”, affirms CTO Wolfgang Warum. Optical measurement methods will open completely new opportunities in many industries, which will also open new doors for WILD.

CUSTOMERS PREFER PROBLEM SOLVERS

The WILD Group is well-prepared, not only for high technological requirements. In future customers will continue to rely on partners who offer holistic solutions. Covering just a few individual work steps is not enough. Customers are looking for problem solvers who can offer a tailor-made overall package and a well-functioning network. “This is

exactly how we see ourselves. In the coming decades we want to live up to our reputation as a most-trusted partner through proactive know-how expansion in our target markets, a high level of agility, intensive customer contacts and the strong cohesion of our staff”, the three Managing Directors stress in unison.

Legends

- 1 | Safely relocating projects with digital assembly models
- 2 | Networking production
- 3 | Networked development know-how across all sites
- 4 | Development and production of customised laser technology solutions
- 5 | State-of-the-art measuring machines for utmost precision
- 6 | New target market: Imaging techniques



THE CORONA EFFECT.

WILD supports its customers in integrating viral protection approaches into medical technology products.

Hospitals, medical practices, care homes. Institutions in which there is direct and close contact between medical staff and patients have been dealing with the topic of viral protection for a long time. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, in addition to the corresponding hygiene and protective equipment, there is now an increasing focus on the design of medical products themselves. "We are seeing a change in the mindset and the purchasing behaviour of our customers, which has an impact on the product design", says Business Developer Franz Aigner. Many medical technology companies are now asking themselves how they can adjust their products to make them more "virus safe".

A possible answer to this are remote control solutions. "This makes perfect sense in the case of devices used in eye examination or in the clinical monitoring of skin diseases, so as to minimise the contagion risk as much as possible. "The diagnostic devices are operated and controlled at a safe distance from the patient using remote control", Aigner explains. The systems partner is also carefully following the latest developments regarding anti-microbial surfaces currently being tested worldwide. However, as Aigner qualifies, "because coatings do not have a lasting germicidal effect, manufacturers are nevertheless taking other precautionary measures at the moment".

A significantly more promising approach is the integration of a suction system for aerosols at or near to the potential source of viruses. In the case of dental interventions, it has been shown that most aerosols head in the direction of the patient's and dentist's chest, and toward the face of the dental staff. Therefore, an at-source capture system can contribute to significantly reducing the contamination risk. WILD co-developed a similar system some ten years ago, which captures the laser aerosol cloud generated during eye laser surgery as a result of the ablation of the corneal tissue. "That is precisely the point: There are already several technical solutions on the market for the problem of viral protection. The objective now is to properly integrate these in medical technology products. As a contract manufacturer, we see ourselves as initiators and partners in product development, who can contribute a decisive technological edge in many areas", says Aigner. The fact that the WILD Group operates in several different sectors creates a fertile ground for cross engineering effects, resulting in exciting solution approaches.

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FAST-TRACKING OUTSTANDING LIGHT DESIGN.

Photonic is now using new software for the virtual design, modelling and prototyping of state-of-the-art optomechanical systems for industrial and medical technology.



If the objective is to reduce development cycles and cut costs at the same time when developing challenging and innovative lighting technologies, the only way to go about it is through 3D light simulation. As a development and production partner with years of experience in the design of imaging optics, Photonic, too, has been applying this creative tool for quite some time to make the best possible use of its interdisciplinary know-how and to successfully implement customer requests as quickly as possible.

“We recently invested in Light Tools, a software programme which is considered to be the gold standard in the market for lighting optics. It provides our developers with significantly more design and analysis possibilities, and guarantees that the customer requirements can certainly be met”, explains Photonic Site Manager Stefan Zotter.

Especially in medical technology, these requirements are often formidable. Endoscopes, for instance, are using ever thinner optical light guides, an increasingly brighter light and homogeneous, colourfast illumination for the correct tissue differentiation inside the body. At the same time, light solutions in medical technology must be safe, long-lasting and cost-efficient. “The objective is a lighting solution that is perfectly adapted to the customer’s system. This is because shadows, colour fringes, irregular intensity distribution or scattered light can significantly impair medical technology products”, Zotter explains. Therefore, simulation plays a

decisive role in the development process. The exact 3D modelling of optical systems allows developers to precisely trace the course of light rays through and inside optical elements and mechanical structures. “This allows us to take quick decisions, it minimises errors from the very beginning, reduces the prototyping workload and creates an important precondition for efficient production”, Zotter stresses.

However, there are more factors behind the major success of Photonic’s development projects: The lighting specialists maintain an excellent partner network (WIN) and can thus directly influence the developments of LED manufacturers so as to have

LEDs adjusted to the customers’ requirements with respect to light quality, performance and colour rendering index. Zotter adds: “We distinguish ourselves through our in-depth expertise in the areas of electronics, software, mechanics, optics and application knowledge, as well as through our modular solutions. Moreover, our knowledge of normative requirements is essential for the quick approval of our customers’ products”.

“The objective is a lighting solution that is perfectly adapted to the customer’s system. This is because shadows, colour fringes, irregular intensity distribution or scattered light can significantly impair medical technology products.”

Stefan Zotter, Photonic Site Manager

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THE WILD GROUP

The WILD Group is comprised of the WILD brands which are established in Völkermarkt, Wernberg and Trnava/Slovakia, as well as Vienna-based Photonic. The Group's 451 highly qualified staff members are always the first choice when precision and reliability are a must and when innovations are called for.