

Article in "Nuernberger Nachrichten"

Date: November 3rd, 2005

The bottleneck is the lack of employees

CoreOptics: Former Lucent-employees established their own business in 2001 with success.

For years big companies have been made up the business establishments in Nuremberg. But the change in the economy did not spare them. The big companies went. More and more smaller companies are now filling the gap that the big companies left over. This is the evidence that the production location Nuremberg is not so bad as some people think.

A concrete example is the CoreOptics GmbH in the Nordostpark. Founded in February 2001 as a five-man-company, today it employs more than 70 employees. In 2004 they had sales of € 2 millions. This year they want to achieve sales of € 8 millions.

Georg Roell and his four founder colleagues, which also established the company, have already been thinking over an own company when they were still working at Lucent Technologies. "At that time the branch was booming", the managing director of CoreOptics said. "Thus we thought the small company would be quite profitable in future."

At the world point

And indeed the estimation was true: Nowadays CoreOptics GmbH with its transponders belongs to the world's best companies. They consist of a sender and a receiver for data transmission of more than 40Gb/s per second. Via fiber optic cables they form data - highways and connect the big telecommunication centers.

Also some other companies already had the idea of specializing in the development and production of transponders. However, CoreOptics makes itself noticed by the development to apply electronic signal processing to optic communication transmission. The new procedure enables an overcoming of large distances easily and, at the same time, transmit the data over fibers, which have a lower quality. By the way, the development of CoreOptics was also supported by the German research ministry.

Successful combination

It is a very successful combination that has become apparent in the entire branch. Nowadays the company has its customers worldwide - from USA to China.

The headquarters of the company are still in Nuremberg. "That will remain in such a way", the managing director of CoreOptics says. "On the one hand, we have been working in this city for years and we are feeling good here. On the other hand, this location suits us perfectly. It is much more cost efficient compared to other big cities, and owing to its good infrastructure with highway-connections and airport near to the company we can reach the customer as fastly as if we were at another location.

The company build up a worldwide network of distribution- and support partners. Understandable: If a customer has a problem in the US that should be solved as soon as possible, it "is important to have a representative who supports him on the location.", Roell explains.

CoreOptics had its most difficult phase two years ago. "It wasn't that easy to find customers for our products", Roell says. "That phase we fortunately left behind successfully". In the meantime the company is increasing steadily and is organized like a real company – with distribution, development, fabrication as well as all the other departments that belong to a company. Inclusive the internal learning processes that will not stop with the success. Every employee brings in some knowledge from his former company.

"It does not simplify the integration, but it is also an interesting matter", the managing director says. "Getting impulses from the outside, being confronted with the culture and the philosophy of other companies, can be very interesting. Anyway, we benefit from it"

Asia is not interesting

Smaller numbers of items the company produces in Nuremberg. In order to fabricate bigger numbers, it works together with a company in Milan that has a lot of experience in this branch. Outsourcing to Asia will not be considered within CoreOptics. "The experience of the employees is very important in our branch", Roell says. "Such people you cannot find everywhere in the world".

It is indeed a difficult problem for CoreOptics to find qualified employees. Even if the IT-branch is still very attractive for many entrants. The company is trying to cover its staff requirements by advertisements and recruiting-fairs, such as the "akademika" in Nuremberg, and also by the Internet as well as vacancies on its own homepage

However, they have not had the desired success, Roell said. "So there is nothing else for it but to hope that in other companies in this branch there will be staff cuts and that we can gain this employees then. How does the managing director think about the future of the company? "There are always these big wishes", says Roell and smirks. "Considering it realistically, we are certainly able to extend our position and to grow step by step. And at the moment the phase of the economic slump seems to be over. On the world's market there is a recovery and we would like to use this chance for us."