150 years of experience in all branches

In our anniversary year 2014 we proudly present our new promise: “Expect Performance”. This underlines our continuing objective to our customers worldwide of first-rate performance with a new definition of quality. Our high quality aspirations extend right back to 1864 when Wilhelm Meyer founded a machine factory in Aerzen. With a good four dozen workers the company made agricultural implements such as harrows and tedders while the foundry made drinking fountains and crosses for tombstones. The first positive displacement blower was produced already in 1868. 150 years later, our family company which is now being run by the fourth generation has become one of the world’s leading manufacturers of machines for conveying and compressing gas. Our products stand for energy efficiency and procedures that help protect resources. Around 2,050 employees work for the company at its headquarters in Aerzen and in more than 40 subsidiaries worldwide.

150 years of quality, innovative ideas, service and efficiency

In our anniversary year we look back on an eventful history. Whether Wilhelm Meyer who was the first manufacturer on the European continent to produce positive displacement blowers using the Roots method, Hermann Allstaedt, the Managing Director during the 1930s who focused production consistently on blowers, pumps and gas meters or Hasso Heller who initiated an international approach by founding the first subsidiary Aerzen France in 1968 – over the last 150 years the “Aerzeners” often took brave decisions which put them a step ahead of the competition. Even so, time and again we had to deal with major challenges such as hyperinflation and the global financial crisis during the 1920s, the threat of dismantling in the post-war years or the recent economic crises since the start of the new millennium. But even in difficult times we have always won through with quality products, innovative ideas, great flexibility and a distinctive feel for customer and market requirements together with the commitment and support of our skilled, loyal workers.

150 years global brand Aerzen

So where do we stand today? Even as a global Group we have still preserved the character of an independent, medium-sized family company. Our success has always depended crucially on high quality standards as well as a deeply anchored culture of innovation and consistent customer orientation in all parts of the company. Products made in Aerzen stand for sustainability and energy efficiency. They help to protect the environment and resources. Integrity and reliability are among our most valuable attributes. All over the world communication, team spirit and trust, commitment, initiative and diversity of opinions are the elementary pillars that uphold our corporate culture – values founded in the 150 years of our history.
Already as a young man, merchant Wilhelm Meyer from Hanover (1836–1884) runs an agricultural machine factory in Reher near Hameln. Up to 50 workers produce agricultural machinery. When the premises get too small, in 1864 Wilhelm Meyer founds a machinery factory in Aerzen. He uses the nearby Greilse stream to provide natural power for his machines. The company swiftly establishes contacts with England as the motherland of industrialisation and sets up an iron foundry in Aerzen. From 1868 onwards the company produces the first positive displacement blowers produced on the European continent using the method developed by Francis Marion Roots – blowers that are far more efficient than conventional machines. But to start with, the positive displacement blowers are just one of a whole range of products. Initially they are used in the field forges also made in Aerzen where they are responsible for generating wind.

Aerzener Maschinenfabrik also benefits from the economic boom following the founding of the German Empire. Meanwhile about 80 employees make their livelihood here. Among others, a forge and a metalworking shop are added to the factory. Wilhelm Meyer retires from the company in 1872 and hands it over to his younger brothers Sigmund (1840 – 1911) and Emil (1841 – 1899). The economic upswing enjoyed by Aerzener Maschinenfabrik during this period is due above all to the factory director Heinrich Meier who works tirelessly at designing and patenting new machines such as steam traction engines for threshing grain and tedder machines. He devotes particular attention to the safety of his workers. For example, machines made in Aerzen are designed with dangerous cogwheels securely accommodated in metal boxes. In 1878 Aerzener Maschinenfabrik causes quite a sensation at the trade show for industry, skilled crafts and factories in Hanover. The company receives the first prize for its products in the agriculture and forestry class. Numerous new customers are acquired during the 1880s including chemical companies, shipyards, railway workshops and other up-and-coming branches of industry. The Roots blowers become a best-seller with their increasing popularity as blowers for smithy hearths, ousted the hitherto standard bellows.

Aerzener Maschinenfabrik is founded in 1864 by the manufacturer and merchant Wilhelm Meyer.
Given the crisis in large-scale agriculture, from 1894 the new factory director Wilhelm Muhlert stops producing agricultural machinery. Instead he focuses consistently on making blowers and products for the growing heavy industry such as smithy hearths, heating furnaces and pneumatic hammers. Aerzener Maschinenfabrik is quick to adapt to customer requests and constantly includes new machines in its range including pitch machines for breweries that apply a coating of pitch to the inside of wooden barrels. In 1897 Aerzen is connected up to the railway network and a real boom ensues.

Just a few weeks later a new production record is set up: the 5,000th positive displacement blower is finished and sent to Berlin by rail.

The new century brings fundamental changes in the company management. In 1902 Sigmund Meyer retires from business and the long-standing factory director Wilhelm Muhlert becomes the Managing Director. When profits fail to develop as expected, in 1907 the engineer Hermann Allstaedt (1873 – 1942) from a wealthy family is brought into the company as personally liable partner and Managing Director. He turns the company into a GmbH (limited liability company).
Hermann Allstaedt puts Aerzener Maschinenfabrik back on the road to success. He invests in expanding the Aerzen site and, like his predecessors, focuses on expanding the range and on product innovations. One of the best-sellers consists of the “modern dedusting system” for houses which the company starts offering in 1909. A positive displacement blower from Aerzen installed in the basement works with a system of pipes to remove dust from curtains, carpets and furniture. In the same year the company obtains a patent for silencers for blowers to clearly reduce the operating noise level of the machines. Hermann Allstaedt’s willingness to respond at any time to customers’ requests is demonstrated by the invention of the running or guide wheels for turbo machines in 1910 and the start of production for turbo blowers for iron foundries, collieries and chemical industrial companies in 1917.

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, many of the 200 workers at Aerzener Maschinenfabrik volunteer for military service or are conscripted into the armed forces. Together with the lack of workers, Hermann Allstaedt also struggles to cope with the restrictions prevailing in international trade relations. From 1914/1915 arms are produced in Aerzener Maschinenfabrik, including above all gun carriages consisting of mobile steel frames for transporting guns. All in all, the company manages to survive well during the war years. And the first orders from abroad start arriving in Aerzen again already in 1919.

Following a smooth start in the post-war years, Aerzener Maschinenfabrik then goes through a difficult period under the impact of the crises of the Weimar Republic. Galloping inflation has a major effect on work processes. As soon as the workers receive their daily wages, they go shopping to spend as much as possible of their money which loses value by the hour. In August 1923 Aerzener Maschinenfabrik distributes its own emergency money to the workforce. It can either be redeemed with the company solidarity fund or is accepted in payment by the Kreditbank Aktiengesellschaft Hamelin. The currency reform at the end of 1923 restores a certain degree of economic stability to Germany but this still does not herald a golden era for Aerzener Maschinenfabrik. In the crisis Hermann Allstaedt decides to start making rotary piston pumps again, which his predecessor Muhler had stopped producing in the 1890s. The rotors of the new generation of pumps are based on rotary pistons, similar to the blower. They stand out with symmetrical, two-cog profiles so that they can pump both thick and thin fluids. The new pumps are launched in 1936 and are soon in great demand particularly from customers in the chemical industry. One particular success consists in an export order to India for 18 pumps at the end of the 1920s.
The hesitant economic recovery in Aerzen is brought to an end in 1929 by the New York stock market crash and the subsequent world economic crisis. Redundancies cannot be avoided. In 1930 only about 100 workers are employed in Aerzen. Furthermore, the foundry is closed after 62 years. This eliminates many products from the range. But at the same time Hermann Allstaedt starts to produce rotary piston gas meters – a crucial step on the way to becoming specialists for positive displacement machines. Purchasers soon also include Ruhrgas AG and Friedrich Krupp AG. Bolstered by this success, from 1931 Hermann Allstaedt focusses consistently on specialisation. From now on Aerzener Maschinenfabrik only produces three different types of positive displacement machines: blowers, pumps and gas meters, thus setting the points for moving the company out of the economic crisis.

Following the seizure of power by the national socialists, Aerzener Maschinenfabrik benefits from the general economic recovery. The first foreign commercial agency in Milan is opened in 1934. In the following year, Aerzener Maschinenfabrik receives a large order from the Soviet Union and supplies positive displacement blowers for expanding the oil fields in the Caucasus. A new production record is celebrated in 1936 with the delivery of the 20,000th positive displacement blower.

In Aerzen they also use the proven Roots principle for rotary piston gas meters: blower NG 60 (on the left), a rotary piston gas meter station (at the bottom).
In 1954 Aerzener Maschinenfabrik has 464 workers and office employees. Although the workforce grows continuously as a result of the boom the company still preserves a friendly working atmosphere like in a big family.

Since the start of the Second World War in 1939, contracts for arms keep Aerzener Maschinenfabrik working at capacity levels. In the middle of the war Karlheinrich Heller takes over the management from his father-in-law Hermann Allstaedt in 1941 and starts to develop the first screw compressors. Aerzener Maschinenfabrik was essentially spared from air raids during the war, so that on obtaining permission from the British occupying force, work can begin again already shortly after the end of the war.

During the 1950s, Aerzener Maschinenfabrik also experiences its own economic miracle. The site in Aerzen is modernised and a branch factory is opened in Hamelin. When Karlheinrich Heller dies suddenly in 1960, he leaves behind a prosperous company.

Karlheinrich Heller runs Aerzener Maschinenfabrik from 1941 to 1960.

Superchargers and scavenging blowers made in Aerzen are in great demand particularly with truck and shipbuilding companies.

The development and production of screw compressors begins in the middle of the Second World War.

The Aerzen site is extended at the end of the 1950s. This entails moving the Grieße stream which up to now has run across the company premises with a constant risk of flooding. Then today’s Unit III is constructed for the turning shop and the tool shop as the first large new-build after the Second World War. Just after the new unit is inaugurated, the 100,000th positive...
displacement blower leaves Aerzener Maschinenfabrik. In the most successful year hitherto in the company history, the meanwhile 600 employees generate overall production amounting to 1,718 tonnes. To quote the local newspaper: “Aerzener Maschinenfabrik plays the same role for Aerzen that Krupp plays for Essen.” The sudden death of Karlheinrich Heller on 20 July 1960 is a great shock, not just for the workforce. Around 2,000 people attend the funeral. The procession to the cemetery is so long that at times it disrupts traffic on the main B1 road. This is the end of an era in Aerzen.

Although the workforce grows during the busy years of the “economic miracle”, the company still preserves a friendly working atmosphere like in a big family, group picture showing the production department.

In 1959, workers proudly present the 100,000th positive displacement blower made in Aerzen (on the left). Aerzener Maschinenfabrik shows its gas meters at an exhibition in Berlin (on the right).
The new employees in Emmerthal benefit from the flexitime working arrangements already established in 1973 for the core workforce in Aerzen and can organise their working hours on a more flexible basis than most other West German employees. The company premises in Aerzen are also modernised. A new test facility building is constructed in 1975 followed in 1979 by the inauguration of the new administration building on Hermann-Allstaedt-Weg.

Aerzen Maschinenfabrik still continues to make a name for itself with spectacular product innovations. In 1978 for instance the company presents the world’s largest positive displacement blower with a huge piston measuring 1.5 metres in diameter for use in the steel industry. New standards are also set in 1984 by the world’s largest screw compressors with a rotor diameter of 845 millimetres. Another important new construction made in Aerzen is presented in 1987 with the patented three-lobe blowers. This world innovation from Aerzen sets a new market standard which is still in force today.

More internationalisation 1960 - 2000

Following the death of Karlheinrich Heller, the company is run for five years by Paul Grote. When he dies, Hasso Heller, the only son of Anneliese and Karlheinrich Heller, becomes Managing Director. The new boss advocates an international approach and in 1968 founds Aerzen France as the first foreign subsidiary. This is followed by branches in England, the USA and South Africa among others. At the same time, Hasso Heller maintains the modernisation course started by his predecessors. He continues to expand the Aerzen site and launches innovative products such as the world’s largest positive displacement blower. The new Delta Screw and Delta Blower series are still being used in the 1990s to cultivate new customer relations.

Modern machinery results in a clear increase in productivity (at the top). Among others, Hasso Heller adds screw compressors supported on roller bearings to the company’s range (at the left).
At the same time the company remains on internationalisation course. Following subsidiaries in Spain and Belgium, in 1983 Hasso Heller founds the first company outside Europe with Aerzen USA Corporation. This is followed in 1985 and 1987 by Airgas Compressor in South Africa and Aerzen Canada. From 1987 Aerzener Maschinenfabrik joins forces with its subsidiary Aerzen Special Products to expand its international supplier network for accessory components. By the end of the 1980s the company has nine foreign subsidiaries. Around 950 employees work for Aerzener Maschinenfabrik all over the world. The financial figures also speak for themselves. In 1989 the company generates record turnover amounting to 180 million D-Mark.

In 1990 Aerzener Maschinenfabrik is one of the very first German companies to be awarded the DIN EN ISO 9001 certificate, thus showing its customers that high quality standards are heeded in Aerzen. Hasso Heller also focuses on new pioneering products. The Delta Blower machine has been in production since 1994, followed in 1996 with the Delta Screw series of particularly energy-efficient screw compressor units. After 35 years at the helm of Aerzener Maschinenfabrik, in 2000 Hasso Heller retires from operative business and entrusts his son Klaus-Hasso (born 1967) to lead the family company into the 21st century.
At the same time as expanding the Aerzen site, Klaus-Hasso Heller also persists with his father’s internationalisation course. In 14 years more than 20 new companies join the Aerzen Group. Together with East Europe, Aerzener Maschinenfabrik also focuses on Asia. For the first time in the company’s history, in January 2011 a production site for main components is founded abroad in cooperation with the subsidiary Aerzen Turbo in South Korea. Furthermore in spring 2013 the company management makes around six million Euro available for the construction of a new company building in Shanghai. A proactive service has been in place since 2005. Aerzen staff regularly visit customers and their machinery on site and offer their support, and the range of services is expanded. Moreover, in 2006 the service company Abaris Blower Repair N.V. is founded in Belgium. This firm also takes on the maintenance of positive displacement blowers and screw compressors from manufacturers no longer represented on the market. In 2009 Aerzener Maschinenfabrik builds its own repair and spare parts centre.

When Klaus-Hasso Heller 2000 becomes his father’s successor as Managing Director of Aerzener Maschinenfabrik he faces major challenges. He restructures the production programme, streamlines internal processes, invests in the Aerzen site and forges ahead with internationalisation. At the same time he focuses on new energy-efficient products such as the Delta Hybrid, the world’s first series of rotary piston compressors. His efforts pay off. In the anniversary year 2014, the order books of Aerzener Maschinenfabrik are well filled and around 2,000 workers are employed at the company headquarters and in the more than 40 subsidiaries worldwide.

Klaus-Hasso Heller has been running Aerzen in the fourth generation since 2000.

Investment in the Aerzen site: numerous new buildings have been erected in recent years.

Economic crisis in the engineering sector with fewer orders and short-time working: becoming Managing Director of Aerzener Maschinenfabrik in 2000, Klaus-Hasso Heller faces major challenges. He restructures the production programme, streamlines internal processes, invests in the Aerzen site and forges ahead with internationalisation. At the same time he focuses on new energy-efficient products such as the Delta Hybrid, the world’s first series of rotary piston compressors. His efforts pay off. In the anniversary year 2014, the order books of Aerzener Maschinenfabrik are well filled and around 2,000 workers are employed at the company headquarters and in the more than 40 subsidiaries worldwide.
The success of Aerzener Maschinenfabrik is still driven by quality products and product innovations. For example, blowers and screw compressors made in Aerzen are now being used increasingly for the treatment of biogas. At the 2010 IFAT environment trade fair in Munich the company presents the Delta Hybrid as the world's first series of rotary piston compressors which consume up to 15% less energy than conventional compressors. Energy is also saved by the 5th generation of turbo blowers for particularly efficient generation of process air. In 2010 Aerzener Maschinenfabrik is mentioned for the first time in the "Lexikon der deutschen Weltmarktführer" (Encyclopaedia of German World Market Leaders).

Aerzener Maschinenfabrik marches on into the second decade of the new millennium led by a troika of managers. In 2011 Klaus-Hasso Heller is joined in the company management team by industrial engineer Bernd Wöhlken and engineer Björn Irtel who have both been at Aerzen for many years. The company’s Vision 2020 is presented by the new management team in 2011 with an ambitious programme for realigning and expanding the Group. The new objective aims at establishing Aerzener Maschinenfabrik as one of the world’s three leading application specialists for the conveying and compressing of gases with energy efficient products and processes that help to protect resources. Group turnover is therefore to be doubled within ten years to reach 580 million Euro while forging ahead with globalisation. These ambitious targets are also reflected in Aerzener Maschinenfabrik’s new image. In time for its 150th anniversary, in March 2014 the company presents its new philosophy and logo. The "Expect Performance" promise underlines Aerzener Maschinenfabrik’s determination to redefine quality and to convince customers all over the world with its excellent performance.