

Customer Feedback

Carlos Rodolfo Schneider is head of Ciser Porcas e Parafusos and the man who commissioned the innovation benchmarking project conducted by Fraunhofer IPK and SENAI Innovation Institute for Manufacturing Systems in Joinville. FUTUR talked to him about the importance of innovation for his family-owned company and collaboration with Fraunhofer in the project.

FUTUR: What role does innovation play in your business?

Ciser: In a world where change occurs at increasing speed, the business environment becomes much more challenging. The key issue then is how to follow this revolution, be part of it, and if possible, be a protagonist.

And the main tool for achieving this is innovation in processes, in products, in materials, in business models. It therefore follows that innovation will necessarily dictate the future strategies of our business.

FUTUR: As a family owned business, how do you shape up in the global competitive environment?

Ciser: The 137 years history of the H. Carlos Schneider group and the 59 years of Ciser testify to the company's concern with its perpetuity. Based on our strong values, we always seek to prepare and direct future generations of the family to add their own chapters to this history. The skills needed to do so point more and more towards resilience as a key factor in preserving competitiveness in an increasingly global environment, despite political resistance that we believe to be transitory.

FUTUR: You have German roots and recently conducted a project with Fraunhofer IPK. What is it like working with Germans as compared to working with Brazilians?

Ciser: The company was founded in 1881 by a German immigrant and ever since then has sustained its trajectory with values inherited from the previous three generations, values which include ethics, austerity, financial solidity and the commitment of each generation to deliver to the next more than it received from the previous one. Preservation of these values established by the founder no doubt facilitates interaction with German



organizations, which are usually guided by similar concepts. Fraunhofer IPK, an organization recognized worldwide for its competence and its work on the frontier of knowledge, was undoubtedly the right choice for this project, through which we are committed to understanding the future of our business.

FUTUR: What were the most valuable results from the project and how will you implement them?

Ciser: The work allowed us to become conversant with the business models of the most innovative companies in our industry, from a very broad point of view, and the trends that have been set by them. From there we will be rethinking our plans and strategies and developing the means that allow us to follow the trends and – who knows – even to dictate some of them. The interaction with Fraunhofer IPK may be just the beginning.

FUTUR: What advice would you give other Brazilian companies to become more innovative?

Ciser: It is important for companies to be clear about the fact that innovation can no longer be accessory, can no longer be at the periphery of business plans. The potential impact of changes in strategies and results requires constant attention to the last step taken by industry-leading companies and the next one they may be taking. Support by organizations such as Fraunhofer IPK certainly facilitates this work. ■

Role Model

Industrie 4.0 Application Center in China

Fraunhofer IPK not only plays a key role in Germany's rollout of Industrie 4.0, it is also one of the five German-based specialist organizations engaged by the Chinese government under its »Made in China 2025« initiative. In Nanjing, IPK experts support the implementation of SGIMRI – the Sino-German Intelligent Manufacturing Research Institute – which pursues an integrated training, demonstration and application approach in the field of intelligent production for both Chinese and foreign companies.

The privately organized Sino-German Intelligent Manufacturing Research Institute (SGIMRI) integrates training, demonstration and application-oriented research to create a comprehensive and modular package for industry located in Jiangsu Province. Fraunhofer IPK is supporting this institute along a five year planning and implementation process from a strategic, technical and organizational perspective. Fraunhofer experts have already developed comprehensive curricula for the specific application of Industrie 4.0 in China and conducted their first training programs to develop expertise. Key factors in this context are the integration of specific ancillary conditions and the enterprise culture in the Chinese business environment.

Through this project, Fraunhofer IPK seeks to establish an increasingly strong network with thriving Chinese companies. To achieve this goal, IPK experts cooperate closely with SGIMRI colleagues to develop new solutions for the local market. In the process, SGIMRI combines German engineering with the proverbial Chinese speed to turn innovative business models into innovative solutions. The benefit for the German economy is twofold. First, German machines and equipment will have a market in China, thus increasing German exports. Second, offerings of SGIMRI will help German companies in China to optimize their processes and technologies according to the needs of local Chinese markets.

Several technology-oriented innovation projects have already been realized within the first two years. One is the development of a novel factory concept for the production of control devices for electrical energy distribution for the NARI group, a subsidiary of China State Grid. This integrates modular production systems consisting of manufacturing facilities and shop floor IT with intelligent intra-logistics materials flow solutions. After implementation, the system is expected to shorten processing times by up to 60 percent, among other benefits.

A key success factor for this and other projects is the perfect orchestration of an intercultural and inter-disciplinary team. Moreover, five other Fraunhofer Institutes have already been involved in projects and joint activities. This integrated IPK approach has created a remarkable national perception. The Chinese state-run channel CCTV was just one of the channels to broadcast a half-hour special program about SGIMRI and its achievements. In 2019, joint developments with German companies in Jiangsu province and with a Chinese company for planning a new lead factory are foreseen. ■



Carlos Rodolfo Schneider

... earned a Bachelor and Masters at the São Paulo School of Business Administration of the Fundação Getúlio Vargas – FGV, and is head of the H. Carlos Schneider Group. He was CEO of Centrais Elétricas de Santa Catarina S.A. – Celesc and chairman of the Board of Directors at Celesc, two-term president of the Associação Empresarial de Joinville – ACIJ (Joinville Entrepreneurs Association) as well as honorary consul of Colombia for Santa Catarina. He received the Joinville Meritorious Citizen award from the City Council and the Order of Industrial Merit of Santa Catarina from the Industry Federation of Santa Catarina – FIESC. Schneider is also founder and national coordinator of the Movimento Brasil Eficiente (Efficient Brazil Movement) which seeks to increase public management efficiency, reduce the burden of taxes and simplify the tax system.

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