

EXCELLING AT HOW WE SERVE OUR CUSTOMERS



HERBERT
WILLMY

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
GLOBAL SOURCING & SERVICES

To deliver greater value to our customers in constantly changing markets, we have set our sights on enhancing our skills and the service we offer. Every day, we confront and meet that challenge.

We operate in markets that are undergoing major change, not only due to growing technological complexity, but also, and more importantly, because of digital's impact across the entire economy. So in addition to delivering top-quality service every single day, we also have to provide our customers with more information, advice, technical studies and training. They expect no less. The most effective way to meet customer and market needs is to work closely with our manufacturing partners, so that we can make optimal use of each other's work.

MARKETS IN CONSTANT UPHEAVAL

For over forty-five years, we have been growing our business by providing relevant responses to our customers' business needs. We have invested continually and heavily in operational excellence, the term we use to describe first-class service. Offering each customer the right product in the right place at the right time—that's what it's all about. We have boosted our sales network to achieve better coverage, put in place tools for accessing information, streamlined logistics and opened up new sales channels. In every instance,

the goal has been to make life easier for our customers, whether they are installers, maintenance teams or industrial firms, so that they can focus on their actual business. We have gradually moved away from our initial full-service approach, expanding our product offers and creating more specialized staff functions in order to meet customer needs more effectively. For example, we have trained some of our people in lighting, others in industrial supplies, and others in HVAC or power distribution. We have even set up special-focus technical departments that conduct studies to assist our customers. All that reflects the increasing number and



DIELECTRO INDUSTRIAL, SPAIN

IN OUR CUSTOMERS' OWN WORDS

RUSTY SPRADLEY
 WORLD ELECTRIC SUPPLY
 (UNITED STATES)

"The people at Sonepar seem to keep a pulse on markets and market trends, as well as on customers and customer needs. The new technology they propose is always the very latest and extremely helpful."

variety of products and services we offer, their accelerating life cycles and the need to bundle products into solutions or systems. In strategic terms as well, the Group has opted for a faster pace, buying up specialty companies with leading-edge capabilities in particular areas. In doing so, Sonepar provides its staff with more advanced technical support, and its customers with the early-stage assistance they need on complex construction or design projects. This was exactly what we achieved in 2014 and 2015 in areas like industry, datacom services, tooling and safety equipment. The task we face in every instance is to disseminate and obtain rapid market uptake for innovations as a way of increasing value added for everyone along the value chain in fields such as comfort, safety and security and energy efficiency.

For Sonepar, that means multiple challenges, as well as multiple opportunities for growth, which are jointly identified by local staff and Sonepar International Services (SIS) as they work together with our suppliers.

SONEPAR INTERNATIONAL SERVICES (SIS) SURVEY WITH WATSON

Several online survey tools developed a few years ago and dubbed "Watson" (as in, "Elementary, my dear—") make it easier for Group operating companies to identify and respond effectively to market expectations. Customer satisfaction, brand perception and similar surveys are conducted to ensure better service. Internal polls are also carried out to assess distribution policy and the product offers of specific suppliers so that corrective action can be introduced where needed. And new features added in 2015 have made Watson an even more effective tool.

AN EFFECTIVE PRODUCT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (PIM) SOLUTIONS CENTER

The PIM international competence center located in Hanover, Germany, provides Group companies with a full range of tools for managing, sharing and using product information. Following deployment in seventeen countries, the PIM solution has been extended to China and Belgium and has reached the finalization stage in Poland, Spain and the UK. A major software upgrade was carried out after fifteen months of development and installed in all those countries at the end of 2015. The quality of data (and therefore information) from suppliers is essential to all users throughout the industry, with a new entry verification system connected in real time to a web application. As always, delivering excellence to customers is the name of the game.

