# Media Release

**June 1, 2011**

## maxon motor: half a century in motion.

The drive specialist from Sachseln is turning 50.

**The canton of Obwalden's largest employer can look back on half a century of history: 50 years of maxon motor ag means 50 years of innovation, quality, reliability, precision and progress. It therefore stands to reason that maxon drives are used wherever they need to work in extreme conditions - from the earth's interior all the way to Mars.**

Originally planned as a production site for the Braun GmbH electrical group in Frankfurt in December 1961, Sachseln-based maxon motor ag is today a company with a worldwide reputation. In its 50 year existence, the company has been marked by innovation, has braved change and economic ups and downs, turned from Interelectric AG into maxon motor ag in 1999 and created a completely new understanding of high-precision drive systems.

Employing close on 1,900 staff, of which more than 1,000 work at the headquarters in Sachseln alone, maxon motor is the largest employer in the canton of Obwalden and the flagship for the entire region. One particular order helped the company become world-famous and catapulted it into the public limelight - this was when NASA's Sojourner rover landed on Mars on July 4, 1997, as it was fitted with 11 maxon DC motors.

**Mars mobile with maxon motors**

maxon motor has been one of NASA's preferred suppliers since 1997. The Obwalden company began writing another chapter in its joint history with NASA at the beginning of 2004 when the Mars rovers Spirit and Opportunity (MER) successfully landed on Mars, each fitted with 39 maxon micromotors. Nobody would have dared believe that the rovers would keep on working for more than six years, as the mission's original aim was simply for the rovers to work for three months. Another important space mission also began in March 2004 which is when the European cosmic probe "Rosetta" - also fitted with maxon motors - set off on a journey that will take more than ten years.

**Innovation: the key to success**

When it began, the Obwalden company made a virtue out of a necessity: after Braun GmbH was sold to Gillette in 1967, the then Interelectric AG was at risk of its orders collapsing. The fledgling company was forced to develop a new product in double-quick time to avoid closure. Thanks to pioneering foundation work on DC micromotors in the company’s development department, not only was it possible to develop an entire program of DC motor types in record time, but also the patented production process for the ironless rotor with patented rhombic winding. The absence of iron in the rotor almost doubled efficiency compared to traditional DC motors, thus laying the foundation for all its subsequent innovations.

maxon motors are used in many other areas apart from space travel, such as medical technology, industrial automation, in cars and planes, power tools and leisure equipment, security technology, ATMs, measuring and control technology, not forgetting robotics. In the past, two particular robotic applications have been the focus of attention, namely humanoid robots and robotic fish. These fish are driven by efficient maxon motors and will in future be able to guide shoals of fish away from danger zones into safe waters.

**Awards for maxon**

The company has also won numerous awards for its innovative products, such as the Innovation Prize from the Central Switzerland Chamber of Commerce for the A-max program in 1996. In 2005, NASA's MER Award was added to the collection and only a year later, maxon celebrated meeting the environmental norm and winning the

Central Switzerland Prize for Entrepreneurship. In 2010, maxon won the Innovation Prize from the Central Switzerland Chamber of Commerce for the second time for the EC 22 HD - its motor for extreme conditions - which demonstrates the company's continuing power of innovation.

**Sustained growth, constant expansion**

Apart from innovation, the drive specialist has also been shaped by constant expansion and sustained growth in sales and headcount. The company began developing its European operations by opening its first subsidiary in Munich in 1980. In 1981, the Obwalden company acquired Interelectric AG's US distribution partner in San Francisco, to provide for the increasing significance of the American market. The second half of the 1980s was ultimately dominated by strong international expansion, including not only new distribution partners in Europe, but also ones in the Far East where increasing attention could be given to the growing need for a local service. In addition to the sales companies in Germany, the US and Japan, dozens more dealerships had been set up by the end of the decade.

The production premises were also significantly expanded as well as the number of distribution partners. To this end, the company opened a factory in Sexau (Germany) in 1989 and also moved into a production facility in Veszprém (Hungary) in 2004. As a result, maxon motor today has a production area of 16,000 m2 in three countries and a network of sales companies and authorized dealers in more than 30 countries; around 80 per cent of all production is exported to 55 countries.

This is mirrored in the growth in sales and headcount which have both been steadily rising over the past 50 years. As with most companies, there have been some years when sales were down, but these have been relatively few and far between based on the ups and down of the (global) economy. Today the flagship company employs more than 1,000 staff in Sachseln alone, with the worldwide figure standing at almost 1,900. The last fiscal year looks set to go down as one of the best in the company's history at more than CHF 300 million.

**Continuity in company management**

"maxon motor's power of innovation and sustainability are principally due to leading figures who have brought continuity and stability to Sachseln", said Dr. Karl-Walter Braun, the company's majority shareholder. "They are Bodo Fütterer and Jürgen Mayer." Fütterer, an outstanding engineer from Germany, had been hired in the mid-1950s by Max Braun, founder of the electrical appliance manufacturer Braun GmbH, to develop razors and headed this area until coming to Switzerland in 1961.

In 1967, the Bavarian Jürgen Mayer, who is also a qualified mechanical engineer, joined maxon's design team until he switched to Sales in 1970 and built up the international sales organization. He was promoted to Head of Sales and Marketing in 1974. When Bodo Fütterer retired from operational management and subsequently stood down from the Board of Directors, Mayer became CEO in 1993 and Delegate to the Board of Directors in 2004.

Since 2007, the Executive Board has comprised Eugen Elmiger, Armin Lederer, Ulrich Claessen and majority shareholder Dr. Karl-Walter Braun who is responsible for Controlling on the Board. Eugen Elmiger, who had already worked for maxon for more than 20 years, became the new Chief Executive Officer on January 1, 2011.

**Progressive corporate philosophy**

In addition to innovation, reliability and quality, progress is also one of maxon motor's hallmarks. The company opened its own crèche in Sachseln in 1972 at a time when it was dismissed by policymakers and many companies as reprehensible and "communist-friendly". It then brought out a staff magazine - maxon post - in 1977 and built a new company sports facility in 1986. maxon motor has been holding a Factory Talk in Sachseln since 1998 which is a dialog platform for staff and people from the region. In 2003, maxon was ranked as one of the 25 most popular companies in a financial newspaper. And the drive specialist also proved to be progressive

when it came to employing its quota of women when it elected Dorothea Zünd as the first woman onto the Board of Directors in 2004.

Environmental protection has always been important in Sachseln, and not just with the advent of terms such as green or blue technology. maxon motor has always tried to use resources sparingly and treat environmental issues sensitively. The ISO environmental standard is firmly fixed in all corporate processes. Trains of the Swiss railway company Zentralbahn have stopped directly in front of the company's premises since 2005. Furthermore, maxon motor not only produces efficient drive systems but uses renewable energies wherever possible, such as photovoltaic installations at production sites in Switzerland and Germany.

## Milestones at maxon motor: from the earth's interior to Mars

1961: Establishment of Interelectric AG (maxon motor ag since 1999) in Sachseln

1968: Development of the maxon program – DC motors with ironless rotor

1988: ISO 9001 certification - seventh Swiss company to meet ISO 9001 standards

1996: Innovation Prize from the Central Switzerland Chamber of Commerce for the maxon A-max program

1997: Successful Mars Pathfinder NASA mission. Eleven maxon motors are used in the Sojourner Mars mobile

2002: Official opening of the new crèche

2004: Back on Mars with NASA's rovers Spirit and Opportunity. Both are equipped with 39 maxon motors each

2005: NASA's Mars Exploration Rover (MER) Recognition Award

2006: Awarding of the Swiss Venture Club's Central Switzerland Prize for Entrepreneurship

2008: ISO 13485 certification of maxon medical

2009: Five years of Spirit and Opportunity

2010: Innovation Prize from the Central Switzerland Chamber of Commerce for the EC 22 HD. A motor for extreme conditions that can be used for geological research deep underground.

## maxon motor in figures: the canton of Obwalden's largest employer

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|---|---|
| Founded: | 1961, operated as Interelectric AG until 1999 |
| Legal form: | Family joint-stock corporation |
| Principal shareholder: | Dr. Karl-Walter Braun |
| Head office: | Sachseln, canton of Obwalden |
| Executive Board: | Eugen Elmiger (CEO, Sales & Marketing), Dr. Karl-Walter Braun (Controlling), Armin Lederer (Operations) and Dr. Ulrich Claessen (Development)) |
| Workforce: | 1,865, worldwide, of which 1,049 are based in Sachseln (January 2011) |

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|---|---|
| Sales 2010: | Over CHF 300 million on a consolidated basis |
| Production area: | 16,000 m2 in three countries (Switzerland, Germany, Hungary) |
| Production output: | 5 million units in around 10,000 variations |
| Quality management: | ISO 9001 since 1988; ISO 14001 since June 2006; ISO 13485 since June 2007 |
| Sales network: | Sales companies and authorized dealerships in more than 30 countries |
| Export: | Around 80% to 55 countries |
| maxon products: | DC motors with ironless winding and flat motors with iron core (output power up to 500 Watt, mechanical and electronic commutation); planetary gearing, spur gearing, special gearing; sensors; servoamplifiers, position controllers; high-tech CIM and MIM components |
| Main markets: | Medical technology, industrial automation, security technology, measuring and control technology, communications, robotics, automotive industry and aerospace |

Scope of media release: 10860 characters, 1734 words
This media release can be downloaded from the Internet at: www.maxonmotor.com

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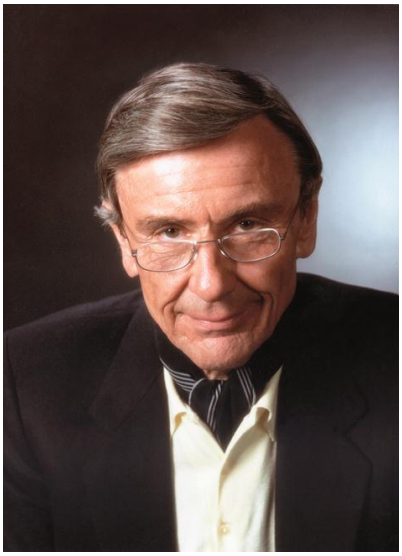
maxon motor
driven by precision

Premises 1963



Company founder of Interelectric AG, Sachseln, Erwin Braun

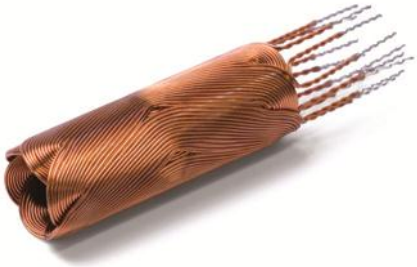
Bodo Fütterer



maxon motor
driven by precision

left: Jürgen Mayer , right: Dr. Karl-Walter Braun

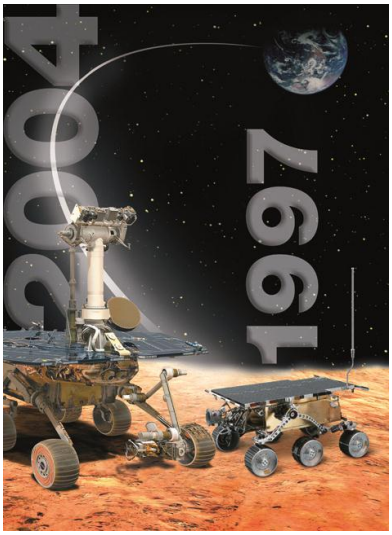
The first maxon DC motor



The ironless maxon winding



maxon motor
driven by precision




Mars rovers Sojourner and Opportunity, fitted with maxon motors

Headquarters 2011

maxon EC 22 HD, precision motor for extreme conditions wins the Central Swiss Innovations Prize.



maxon motor
driven by precision