

The Window to the World

Schott is a pioneer in glass components for television sets. The success story began in 1936, and since 1953 the Mainz plant has been fabricating screens and funnels for the entertainment electronics sector – 250 million to date.



“The Days of CRT Are Far from Over”

Dr. Udo Ungeheuer, responsible for the Strategic Business Unit Display Solutions on the Management Board of Schott Glas, talks about the future of TV glass components and Schott's evolution to a full-range provider of displays.

The demise of television based on cathode ray tube (CRT) technology is constantly being predicted. How near is the end?

Dr. Ungeheuer: It is a well-known fact that those whose death is predicted often live longer. The cathode ray tube is a prime example of this. Schott and its partners in the industry believe that this mature technology will remain literally “on the air” at least for the current decade. The TV tube is enjoying remarkable market growth worldwide in 2002, with an estimated production of almost 160 million units. We expect the TV tube to expand its market position in the long term because of its value for money, even though a whole number of new display technologies are trying to break into the market.

Does the same apply to PC monitors?

Dr. Ungeheuer: The situation here is somewhat different. As a result of the worldwide crisis in the IT/telecommunications industry, the segment has suffered a decline of 30 percent. Innovative LCD displays were equally affected, but they were able to emerge from the slump stronger than before and have since been able to increase their market share.

Is development work on cathode ray tubes still being carried out?

Dr. Ungeheuer: More than ever. We have seen a high rate of innovation with cathode ray tubes in the last ten years. Intensive development work has enabled the CRT to fend off the new display technolo-

gies, and it continues to offer customers additional benefits. However, the high rate of innovation can only be maintained in collaboration with strong partners. Examples of our product innovation include completely flat screens as well as lighter and less bulky funnels. We have also shown ourselves to be a reliable partner in improving production processes.

Speaking of improved processes – is there a potential for improvement in what is now a mature CRT production process?

Dr. Ungeheuer: Of course. We are constantly working on improving our processes, from new melting technologies to finishing. As part of the recently introduced EFQM process, we have also identified new potential, which project groups are already working to optimize. We also see great promise in the field of logistics, in which Schott has made a name for itself with its innovative ideas. These include the introduction of

► For billions of people, television is the "window to the world." The range of TV programs offered today is as astounding as the international coverage. We have long become an information society. No medium other than television is better able to communicate the latest knowledge or to influence the way opinions are formed and images are built. It is thus both an opportunity and a challenge. Our world is getting smaller all the time. Television knows no borders and brings continents together, because the language of pictures is international.

A TV star with a TV glass component:
Actor Mario Adorf autographed the jubilee screen in the presence of Management Board members Dr. Udo Ungeheuer (left) and Dr. Leopold von Heimendahl.

Schott has been helping to make what was once the dream of television a reality for nearly 70 years. The company started producing glass components for television sets back in the 1930s and has since established for itself a permanent place in the history of the medium's development.

Today, Schott is Europe's biggest manufacturer of glass components for the television industry. More than 20 million glass components for televisions are produced per year in Mainz and Valašské Meziříčí in the Czech Republic. The range covers 50 different screen and 50 different funnel designs. A total of 1,500 people are employed at both sites.

September 25, 2002 was a major landmark for Schott: it was the day the company celebrated the production of the 250 millionth TV component: a large, completely flat

(True Flat), 76 centimeter (32" WS-FL) TV screen. Schott invited customers, partners and competitors to participate in the event.

The popular German actor Mario Adorf made a surprise appearance at the evening celebration. For the movie and TV star who currently lives in Rome the visit was also a walk down memory lane. As a student in the early 1950s, Adorf worked during a semester break for the construction company that erected Schott's first production buildings in Mainz. ◀

KAN-BAN – the "warehouse on wheels" concept – and the transfer of our internal logistics operations to an outside service provider. In all our considerations, customer benefit is always at the top of our priorities.

But Schott is also investing in LCD displays. Are you not creating competition within your own organization?

Dr. Ungeheuer: Schott is developing into a full-range display provider. Special glass for CRT tubes and thin glasses for display applications complement each other in our portfolio. Apart from investing in the classical CRT area, we have developed new processes for manufacturing thin glasses for LCDs. At the beginning of September, we celebrated the inauguration of a TFT melting tank in Jena with our potential customers and partners. A measure of the faith we have in the future of CRT is the fact that, in the last three years, we have invested double-digit millions of euros in our CRT glass manufacturing operations in Germany and the Czech Republic, primarily in expanding capacity and increasing efficiency. There are already firm plans for more investments in the years to come.



Television screens are getting flatter and bigger.