

# PSI EUROPE

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## **Axel Dostmann**

TFA Dostmann

50 years in PSI network

## **Product Guide**

Lifestyle, wellness, health

Knives, tools, safety products

## **PSF Forum 2017**

Satisfied participants,

lucky winners

## **SOL'S**

New products, new markets



# **WEEE More responsibility for manufacturers**

Ale benches, trestle tables and simple stands characterised the image of the first PSI trade shows. Heinz Dostmann, the founder of TFA Dostmann, still remembers the friendly, almost family-like togetherness. 50 years have passed and Dostmann is still involved.

## 50 years in the PSI company network

# “Making the impossible possible”



**H**einz Dostmann and Walter Jung laid the cornerstone for the long-term relationship between TFA Dostmann and PSI. What united the two entrepreneurs can certainly be called a friendship. In those days, the measuring devices and fittings of the young Franconian were supplied to the industry and trade. Nobody had originally given any thought to promotional products – except Walter Jung. He was traveling all over Germany and throughout Europe to persuade entrepreneurs to place parts of their normal product range on the promotional product market. Jung targeted everything that could be a brand ambassador. The company TFA, “Technische Fabrik für Armaturen”, also manufactured products that could be imprinted with advertising messages. And Dostmann remembers well that “in those days our stand was literally bombarded with visitors”. At that time, there were no catalogues, no special magazines, and certainly no Internet which could be used to obtain information. The trade show was the only place where products and information made the rounds. And many customers therefore grew with the PSI Institute.

### Feel-good character of the PSI

Over many years and development cycles, there has always been a moment at Dostmann from Wertheim that constitutes the relationship with the PSI from the very outset: the specialised public in the company network as well as at the trade show. In many cases, the character of the family-run enterprises led to a friendly, collegial relationship. Help was given where it made sense. After all, everyone wanted to develop a common market. The tradition of the PSI family emerged. Dostmann soon made staggering sales with distributors and catalogue suppliers of promotional products, such as Oppermann and Hach, the Amazons of the old school. Today nobody knows how



many hundreds of thousands of “Galileo Galilei” thermometers (photo) were sold at the time. The garden thermometer, also a premium product worth approx. 160 deutschmarks and still one of Axel Dostmann’s favourite products, has reached sales of nearly one million units to date and was delivered from Wertheim on pallets all over the world. Just like the house wall thermometer from the 70s with its freestanding numbers, a classic product which still finds many buyers.



A view of the company premises of TFA in the beautiful valley of the River Tauber.

### Innovations from Wertheim

However, Dostmann never rested on his laurels. Money was constantly invested in new products and diversification. Heinz Dostmann also ushered in the generational change at an early stage. In 1991, his son Axel joined the company after doing an apprenticeship abroad and took over the management of TFA a few years later. Together with his two brothers, he now determines the fate of the many family businesses that have evolved into the Dostmann Group with more than 300 employees. Mechanical thermometers, barometers, hygrometers and compasses are still manufactured in-house with a high production depth. On the one hand because of the quality, but also because many new product ideas and product developments evolve from the production. “An invaluable source of innovation,” says Axel Dostmann.

### New construction, renovation, expansion

Dostmann 4.0 was also launched early on: “Weather direct” via online, app products and cloud-based applications are the order of the day and are called Smarthy, Thermowire, Weatherhub or TouchPlay Upbeat. Added to this are many forms of watches, kitchen timers and, in the top segment, even Sous-Vide premium cooking products. The range of articles which can also be found everywhere in the trade is almost endless, thus proving the innovativeness of the North Franconian company. In order to meet the challenges of globalisation, mechanisation and digitalisation, Dostmann has recently invested enormously in digital printing technology, a modern logistics centre and automation. The buildings were completed as early as 2015, and the electronics have now been installed. Product availability and supply capability have been improved and further accelerated. “We produce ourselves, print ourselves and can therefore often make the impossible possible,” says Axel Dostmann. <

## Three questions, three answers

### When was your first PSI trade show?

In 1991, when I joined my parents’ business.

### What do you value most about the PSI?

Dealing with a specialist public and meeting lots of owner-managed companies.

### What are the main challenges facing the industry in the future?

Digitalisation and the unfair trade practices of certain new competitors entering the market. We and the PSI must be well prepared to overcome this.



Axel Dostmann with the legendary garden thermometer.