



Fifteen years of success

TEXT: Jan Minar PHOTO: archives IMP Kontakt

They have been on the market for 15 years and have founded a successful company with his brother in 1997. About the key moments that shaped the IMP Kontakt, Inc., Bratislava, and about the future prospects we talk with Ing. Miroslav Petráš, co-owner and the company director.



Ing. Miroslav Petráš

The company IMP Kontakt, Inc was founded together with my brother in 1997. Based on valuable information from our business friends, we visited the major European manufacturers of the mechanical engineering products. These meetings exceeded our expectations and as a result we managed to obtain exclusivity in the Slovak Republic. That was a very strong motivation to us. In the early days we had our office in the apartment. Later on we rented premises in the industrial zone of Bratislava. Over the time, as the number of contacts gradually increased, the company was able to afford the personal growth as well. Sales grew, however; the business was complicated due to – at that time – mandatory product certification. After the acceptance of Slovakia into the EU, the situation radically changed

and our turnover started to grow dynamically. This progress has allowed us to finally move in 2006 into our own business premises. In the same year we launched the import of pressing elements from Asia to the company Vienna International, Inc that have been used them as parts in TVs Philips. This project, with the volume of 54 mil. crowns, has shifted us among the most powerful companies in the supply of sheet metal components. In 2007 we started exporting those components to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and later on to Austria and Germany. The import volume has also forced us to move the storage to larger premises in 2011. The export increased also due to the Quality System Certification according to ISO 9001: 2000. That reflected particularly in the improvement of customer services.

Your company is the exclusive distributor of components, in particular from company Elesá + Ganter. How did you attract your international business partners so they have decided to work with you? Who is your other supplier?

We were very lucky to become the sale rep for Elesá + Ganter for Slovak Republic in 1997. We did not have much to offer at the beginning of our cooperation but the technical training and experience... They trusted our abilities without having visited us. In return, we repaid by regular growth in turnover; for many years the largest one in Central

and Eastern Europe. After 15 years of successful cooperation, we have become a valid member of their worldwide distribution network. Since 1998 we represent company Recoil Inc. Konus Kerb. We work with other suppliers from Italy and Germany as well.

You are the supplier of specific components for the final engineering production. What are the products in particular?

IMP Kontakt is the Slovak leader in standard engineering elements. It's all about high quality industrial handles, clamping levers, operating handwheels, indexing elements – plungers, levelling elements, and hundreds of other machinery parts. Our main catalogue has over 1,100 pages ...Manufacturers Elesá S.P.A. (Monza, Italy), and Otto Ganter GmbH (Furtwangen, GERMANY) add every year dozens of other new products. After over 100 years of development and production they are well-deserved world leaders, and we appreciate that we represent them in Slovakia. For the purposes of export to the countries of the former Eastern block Elesá and Ganter joined their forces and operate under the brand name Elesá + Ganter.

As the company moves forward, so the customer portfolio grows. Which companies are your main business partners, where do the components end (in which final products)?

Our biggest customers are the leading engineering companies that successfully export already for many years. There are the companies like Konštrukta Industry, Matador, ZVS ENCO, ZTS Sabinov, TRIPLUS SK, GE Energy, group Chemosvit, Chirana Medical, IMC Slovakia, Marel Slovakia and hundreds of others. Components Elesá + Ganter are mounted on the rubber machinery, gearboxes, presses,



packaging machines, medical equipment, food machinery and products from thin sheets (the switch, PC cases, solar panels).

In addition to the standard product range E + G has developed a specialized series of components for the medical and hospital equipment, food and pharmaceutical industry, chemical production, for high temperatures, high pressures and aggressive materials, fireproof and self – extinguishable plastics, for ESD – antistatic protection area (EPA) – mounting antistatic accessories for electronic devices, for transmissions, accessories for light technique, fitness and sports, the devices for the handicapped, etc. Practically in every production plant there is the use of our product range.

In order for the company to survive and expand it is necessary to export abroad. Do you operate on the Slovak market only?

IMP Kontakt is the exclusive sale rep for Elsea + Ganter only in Slovakia. In other countries Elsea + Ganter have its own local sale representative. Tooling and riveting elements for metal sheets are made in Asia. We started to export them in 2007. Strangely enough, the crisis helped us when other companies started to reduce their costs. Since 2009 is our export level at 30-45 % of the turnover. The largest export volume is to Czech Republic.

Distribution to the final consumer – this is the logistics in particular. In what way you ship components, or how do you ensure the communications with the customers?

We had to split our logistic in European and the overseas one. In Europe we use reliable carriers such as UPS, DPD, Der Kurier, GLS and

the like. Delivery time is in the range of one-two days, which is usually sufficient. For deliveries outside Europe we cooperate with company Cargo Partner on long-term basis.

Are you thinking about creating branches where ever you have the logistic base?

In Bratislava we have new premises with the area of approximately 300 m². There we have placed mostly elements from Asia. The E + G elements are delivered twice a week from the central warehouse in Vienna; therefore to store large quantities is not necessary. We do not plan to open branches in other countries, as we count on our distributors and quality carriers. Colleagues in the export department communicate in five different foreign languages.

Working with your own staff belongs usually to the most important elements of successful company. Do you have permanent staff?

Our results are based on several specifics: quality of the products, professional services, personal approach, reliability and long-term cooperation. Three sale representative take care of about 700 customers now. Colleagues in the marketing department work for us from 4 to 14 years. Their professionalism and long-term loyalty is appreciated by our customers as well as by the management of the company. Currently the company has 17 employees.

The company is doing well, the 15 years of its existence is the best proof. However, you went through the bad times and good times too... How do you perceive the past year in business and what do you expect from 2012?

We had to compensate for the crisis year of 2009. We increased efforts in export and achieved extraordinary results. We saved working positions of all colleagues. I appreciate their work a lot.

For example, we finished a large project for company Philips that triggered our export activities and gave us „wings“ towards the international export. The most successful years for us were 2007-2008. This year we will exceed the turnover of the two million euros. We fulfilled the plan, although the joy of success is spoiled by the high long-term active debts. Unfortunately, the next year we have to pay taxes from them. Sadly, the tax laws are damaging the honest entrepreneurs. And the year 2012? It will be a major challenge again to hold water in the domestic and foreign competition. I do not dare to forecast what lies ahead of us. This is a challenge for macroeconomic leading experts as well. The Austrian school of economics suggests saving measures, by contrast, the opposition camp favours a permanent financial injection into the economy.

I believe that with the people with whom we have been cooperating for the last 15 years we will overcome this year as well!



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