

**CEO Udo Grünhoff is always looking ahead. He expects growth at the existing three sites and new sites in other countries. The founder of SIMENO Systems AG in an interview:**

### **What are Simeno's core competencies?**

Simeno specializes in the subject of "electronic shopping". Since its founding 15 years ago, we have grown from a small software company that developed catalog software to now a high-class service provider that supports well-known companies in the world in the planning, setup, and operation of electronic procurement systems.

We still develop powerful software solutions in Switzerland and operate them around the clock in one of our data centers or, at our client's discretion, in the customer's data center.. The range of our portfolio is completed through the service catalog management and the general procurement services.

### **Are there any sectors in which you want to re-gain a foothold, for example in the aviation and defense industry?**

The Simeno solutions are generally applicable and not geared to any particular sector. Already today we have customers from different areas as, inter alia, the financial industry, the pharmaceutical sector or the automotive industry.

Our goals are, therefore, geared towards general expansion and less to a specific industry. We want to win as many new customers as possible, regardless in what sector they operate.

### **Which will be the main development priorities of Simeno in the coming years?**

During the last 18 months we have invested significant resources in research and development and have developed our two main products "mycatalogpool" and "easyProcurement" practically from scratch. In addition, we launched the "Vendor Integration Portal" (VIP), a completely new product, on the market. Therefore, I am very satisfied with the current scope of function and the performance of our existing portfolio and expect in this area rather lower activity in the near future.

Our focus for the next 18-24 months is on the closure of the remaining smaller gaps in our portfolio, such as supplier evaluation and supplier risk management.

In addition, we want to keep up with the general rapid technological progress. The performance of mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, has increased enormously in recent years and the established "PC" falls more and more into the background. Today every one of our users is virtually anywhere connected to the Internet and has hardware such as scanners or camera wherever you go. Our software must also take account of this development in the future.

## **What issues do you want to resolve for the customers?**

We want our customers to focus on their core business and, thus, with the help of our software we want to simplify the processes and our related services as much as possible.

The procurement of goods and services must be as simple and quickly as possible, without neglecting, for example, security and compliance with operational and legislative regulations.

Already several years ago we started to combine our individual software components into one in order to ensure that the transition from one task to another can be carried out as easily and smoothly as possible. We call this "SmartBuy".

## **How do you promote the Simeno team to ensure that also in the future it continues to be one of the best in the field of purchasing management?**

I believe that several factors are necessary if excellence is to be provided for a long period of time.

Firstly, there is the composition of the team: We have employees from over ten nations. Among them are younger colleagues, but also a lot of experienced people who already have gray hair. This type of diversity ensures that new ideas are combined with experience, and that we can continue to evolve without losing the tried and tested.

Furthermore, it is important to challenge and to promote. Our team wants exciting challenges and is ready to go the famous "extra mile". That is why we demand a lot. We are also always willing to promote, whether through training courses or longer-lasting extra occupational education such as "e-business manager" or studies leading to a Master's degree in Information Systems.

Finally, it should be noted that in my view, motivation is a very important factor. Just like a top athlete before each contest, also my colleagues get motivated for new customers and new projects and they compete with the aim to win. Thus, our motto is "work hard, play hard". We work not only hard but also know how to party! The Simeno events are legendary and our visitors should not be surprised if they find staff members playing table soccer or at a Playstation even during working hours. This is also part of our recipe for success.

## **Which is the biggest success of Simeno during the past decade?**

From my perspective, there is no single outstanding success in Simeno's history. Of course we are happy about every global customer who decides to use our solutions. We are proud and delighted when we can assert ourselves against competitors which are many times larger and better known. Thus, all contract acquisitions are duly celebrated.

Our greatest achievement is that we have received the trust of our customers not just once, but are able to maintain it often for more than ten or more years! Especially in the area of service it is extremely important- and this says a lot about my colleagues- that this trust must be earned every day anew.

We have the market's reputation that one can rely entirely on Simeno and Simeno's solutions. This is the biggest success that you can have as an entrepreneur at all.

## **What are your visions for Simeno for the next five years?**

I am a passionate wine lover and would, therefore, like to draw an analogy to the development of a world-class wine.

Before top-quality wine can succeed on the world market, you have to have the right vineyard, have the vines planted rightly and it takes many years of work and patience until these young vines produce excellent grapes. And, on top of it, if you are lucky with the weather and have an outstanding team around you, then you will succeed in producing a wine that critics and consumers will acclaim enthusiastically worldwide. Prominence among connoisseurs and commercial success are then merely the logical consequence.

Applying this to Simeno, we have now reached the point where our vines produce top quality. The current product portfolio is so good and so full as never before, and with major investments from own resources we have succeeded to build up an efficient infrastructure that is used by users in over 60 countries.

In the next five years we hope to convince more and more well-known customers all over the world and, different economic sectors, of the quality of our products- without neglecting our existing customers. This means that we as a company at the existing locations in Switzerland, Germany and the US continue to grow, and that we are going to open new offices, primarily in Asia and South America.

The level of maturity and functionality of our products will continue to increase. In future, we will increasingly cooperate with implementation partners. I assume that the "Simeno ecosystem" will also include partners, suppliers and subcontractors, beside ourselves and our customers, who will all benefit from our growth. Just as in the past, this growth will yield profits, because growth without profit is meaningless.

And, much like a great wine, in which ultimately everything is geared towards maximizing enjoyment, I am convinced that in five years the company Simeno will still continue to be an employer for whom it is great fun to work and who will continue to attract many talented employees from all over the world.