

SKS: Werner Frankenberg retires after 40 years of dedicated service

With its noble history of driving the glass industry forward for more than 150 years, SORG Group has been able to create a strong bond with its surrounding communities. Lohr am Main, where the company settled in 1949, is among these. Here Werner Frankenberg started working over four decades ago.





As a young man Werner Frankenberger aspired to work at SORG much like many of his age did in Germany's Reichenbach. Says Frankenberger: "Being fascinated by the stories and experiences of those who worked at SORG, it soon became clear to me back then that I wanted to enter the glass industry."

For him it didn't take long, and he joined the company in 1981. Now, 41 years later, Frankenberger retires from the business with a telling reflection: "Certainly what I'll miss most is the exchange with customers and colleagues."

A BRILLIANT CAREER, AN INVALUABLE MENTOR

Frankenberger's trajectory is inspiring. He started as a bricklayer - his first task being to reconstruct a glass melting furnace at Steinbach am Wald. Eight years later he moved to the service department, where he enhanced his knowledge and skills with the help of Adolf Knauer. A brilliant technical manager, Knauer became a mentor for Frankenberger. Sadly, Knauer died in 1996 and it was

up to his pupil to assume the manager's role he left vacant. Says Frankenberger: "SKS has always given me both the possibility and the confidence to develop myself, and I am very grateful for that."

It's said that two days are never alike at SKS, which is why the new manager quickly adapted to a fresh challenge. Today it has him reflecting that "you never know what problems you'll have to solve, which is also why I love the excellent cooperation between SORG Group and its customers."

MEETING CHALLENGES HEAD-ON

As a technical manager, Frankenberger has been responsible for the technical execution of both projects and services: "A large part of my work has consisted in problem-solving and consulting customers. This has involved, for instance, assessing the condition of a furnace and figuring out what kind of repair makes sense to either maintain or extend equipment life."

One of his biggest challenges was a glass leakage in South Africa a few years ago: "The customer rang me out of bed in the middle of the night. The next morning I was on a plane to South Africa to support the customer on-site."

He also highlights his first change of a 2.5" electrode holder while the furnace was in operation: "At that time, an extreme challenge. Today, business as usual." Asked about his greatest accomplishment, Frankenberger brings up his first replacement of a complete throat in hot conditions: "It took a lot of preparation and consideration. I was jubilant when it all worked out."

PAST AND FUTURE

A lot has changed since he joined the company. "Today we have lots of tools and equipment for our work. Back then, everything was done by hand! I've also noticed that - due to digitalisation - many things get discussed via video conferencing and email. Personal contact on-site is becoming less and less frequent." Predicting more changes ahead, the experienced manager opines: "It's becoming increasingly difficult to find skilled experts and personnel for the glass industry. SKS is facing increased competition, especially in the areas of maintenance and hot repairs. Here preservation and knowledge transfer will be challenging, though I'm confident we'll handle it capably."

Werner Frankenberger's plans are simple, yet fun: "I'll miss my colleagues and customers, but I do look forward to investing more time in cycling." ■



SKS

**SORG KERAMIK
SERVICE GMBH**

Stoltestraße 23
97816 Lohr am Main - GERMANY
Tel: +49-(0)-9352-508-100
E-mail: info@sk.net

www.sk.net