

## Guenther Friedl, KURZ Group

**G**uenther Friedl, global product manager at KURZ Group, is responsible for worldwide market share, product portfolio in line with the card market, customized product developments and placement. He also supports the International sales organization and is responsible for key account management for magnetic stripe, signature and scratch-off foil. He has been with the KURZ Group since 1997 where he began as head of the test and appliance center for KURZ in Fuerth, Germany.

The KURZ Group is the world's largest manufacturer of stamping and security foils. Based in Fuerth, Germany, with North American headquarters in Charlotte, NC, KURZ is a privately held company founded in 1890. KURZ manufactures foils utilized within the card industry, including magnetic, holographic magnetic, optically variable devices (OVD's including holograms), signature panel, tipping, scratch-off, cold indent and thermal transfer foils. Other products include decorative stamping and transfer foils used in packaging, greeting cards, telecom, electronic, appliance, cosmetics, textiles, furniture, and automotive markets. In addition KURZ is a market leader in foil based Banknote and ID document security. KURZ also manufactures and distributes a line of application machinery and stamping tools, including the MM-series hot stamping machines, MTL 750 tape-laying machine and MWS collator utilized within the credit card manufacturing industry.

The KURZ Group is comprised of nine production facilities located in the United States (2), Germany (4), Switzerland (1), Malaysia (1) and China (1), as well as nineteen international branch offices and seventy agencies. The KURZ Group employs

approximately 2,900 employees globally.

The KURZ company philosophy is based on three pillars: customer focus, technological leadership and corporate quality. The DIN EN ISO 9001 compliant quality management system they have implemented serves to support this philosophy. They are also registered with EMAS (Environmental Management System). KURZ is a Charter member of NASPO (North American Security Products Organization) and the BPA (Brand Protection Alliance). In addition, they are accredited by the ECU (European Credit Union) and member of the ITI (Information Technology Industry Council) INCITS B10.

It was at a previous position in the United States that Guenther became involved in the industry. The job was at National Machinery in Tiffin, Ohio which was a parent company to the German facility. Due to the machine background and foreign experience there, he experienced an easy transition into KURZ. It is no wonder that Guenther ended up at KURZ since he was born and still resides in Oberasbach, Germany located close to Nürnberg, only a short distance away from KURZ headquarters.

Guenther has always had an interest in machines and technical things. He started out in the machine department at KURZ and was involved with the first machine installations in the United States. His experiences with the card application equipment gave him a unique insight into the foil applications and card manufacturing. He holds a degree in Engineering from University of Nürnberg for mechanical engineering.

In his position, Guenther has contributed to the constant growth of card products at KURZ and to the standardization and streamlining of the magnetic stripe production process in both the German and Charlotte facilities. In his role he has directed the negotiations and procurement of global supply agreements with both card manufacturers and specifiers.



He has expanded global sales of card products by 30% and scratch-off business world-wide by 100%.

Guenther is quite independent and enjoys a variety of hobbies. Some of his favorite activities to indulge in during his leisure time are the precision sport of archery, hiking and art. When asked about some of the risks he's endured in his career he jokingly responds, "I have frequently traveled to Asia and survived!"

KURZ has been a member of ICMA almost since inception as they joined in 1992, two years after ICMA was formed! Guenther has been an active ICMA member since 2000, attending and exhibiting at every ICMA EXPO since then! When asked what his favorite EXPO was, he readily replied "I feel the Miami and Prague shows were the best attended shows but I enjoyed the Vancouver and Cancun locations the most." During the events he eagerly awaits the results from ICMA's Global Market Surveys due to the wealth of industry information it provides. At the ICMA EXPOs and Workshops he has the unique opportunity to network and reach all KURZ's key customers. As a result, each year he looks forward to this annual event. Furthermore, KURZ continues to support ICMA and the annual EXPO by participating each year as a Gold sponsor as the supplier of the conference shirts... if you're planning on attending the EXPO in Athens you can be sure to see Guenther there! 🎯