

Michael the man

IT HAS BEEN SAID MANY TIMES BUT IT'S NEVERTHELESS TRUE: A COMPANY'S ETHOS INVARIABLY PERCOLATES DOWN FROM THE PERSON AT THE TOP. IN THE CASE OF ROTOCON IT'S UNDOUBTEDLY MICHAEL AENGENVOORT'S PERSONAL CHARM AND STRICT INTEGRITY THAT HAS SHAPED THE COMPANY'S FORTUNES OVER THE LAST DECADE.

BY ANTON PRETORIUS

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MICHAEL AENGENVOORT lives by defined values and the rest of the company – his sons and staff (now numbering 45 employees) – follow a similar customer-winning ethic.

The company's success is also due to Michael's sons Patrick and Pascal Aengenvoort who are the company directors. The twins are an integral part of the Rotocon business. They built on the values set initially by Michael which are now universally applied as the foundation for the overall company culture.

Originally from Germany, Michael traces the roots of his business back to 1977 when he bravely borrowed money and teamed up with two cousins to establish a European arm of Canada's Rotoflex business. "In those days, delivery of a rotary die took four to five weeks. Today we deliver dies produced in our Johannesburg factory in 48 to 72 hours, or flexible dies, manufactured in Germany, in 48 hours."

He learnt the business at the sharp end – experience that has stood him in good stead throughout his business life. "When we started the tooling business in Germany, I became the company's first hand-sharpener," Michael says. After two years of hard manual graft, Michael turned his sights to sales, visiting customers to sell tools and machinery. "Sales and marketing became my passion."



SALES AND MARKETING BECAME MY PASSION.

BUILDING ROTOCON

It was discussions with Peter Frey, of Paul Frey and Son in Cape Town, which became the kernel of a new idea. The seed germinated during Michael's subsequent visit to PrintExpo in Johannesburg.

Michael was appointed as MD of Rotoflex South Africa. Before long he was running a multimillion rand business from his office in Midrand, Gauteng, but was still commuting regularly between Germany and South Africa. By 2005, a combination of his love for South Africa and his recognition of local potential for Rotoflex products and systems prompted Michael's permanent move to the southern hemisphere.

With the demise of Rotoflex South Africa soon after, Michael relocated from Johannesburg to Cape Town to establish a new tooling business. Back in Germany, Michael and his eldest son, Marco, established RotoControl, which was soon producing high-speed inspection-rewinders, booklet label machines and digital finishing machines.

It wasn't long before RotoControl was acknowledged as a leading global company in its field, and, of course, it was

quickly announced that Michael's new Cape Town-based enterprise had been appointed South African agent for these machines.

Rotocon has been a stellar success story ever since.

The company prides itself on establishing perfect digital partnerships with various printing companies. Case in point: Sign and Seal Labels in Blackheath, Cape Town (see the Rotocon article in our April 2020 issue). This partnership has embedded the business deep in the growing market for bespoke label designs.

Rotocon is constantly on the lookout for innovative products and new developments that won't break the bank. A prime example is Rotocon's newly established Ecoline range. The Rotocon RDF330 Ecoline digital finisher considerably enhances finishing operations.

But, as Michael emphasises, none of this could have been achieved single-handedly: it all comes down to the support of family, colleagues, staff and customers. "We view our employees as our greatest asset and we're very grateful to our South African customers for their loyal support," says Michael. ♦