

Paul Meijering: "We say what we

In January 2013, *Stainless Steel World's* TV team visited Paul Meijering Stainless Steel in Zaltbommel, The Netherlands and witnessed the start of something big, which included a big plot of land, a spade and a cozy mid-winter barbeque.

Almost two years later, the *Stainless Steel World* team revisited Zaltbommel, to see what kind of new headquarters had been build at this location.

By Anne Cunningham & Conny Meijering

A new challenge

This past year of 2014 has been a busy and creative one for Mr. Paul Meijering, his wife, Ms. Conny Meijering and the company's Assistant Director, Mr. Stefan Bagen. What started as minor wholesale activities from a small shed in 1989 have steadily grown into an international stainless steel company located in a new 11,500m² industrial hall with an office comprising of 1,000m².

"This year and the previous one has taken a lot of hard work from everyone in the company. Moving a business, even if it is just around the corner, takes a lot of commitment, organization and adaptability," Conny Meijering said. "And we are proud of what the team has achieved." The new building houses all their stainless steel, from fittings to sheets, from tubes to pipes and the new and fully automated warehouse was designed by Paul Meijering himself. He explained, "I have worked all sides of the industry, from the warehouse to sales, to running the business, I know what we need and explaining that to an architect would just be an extra unnecessary step."

Keeping things simple and taking on challenges as they come seems to be Paul's motto. He worked hard to get where he is today, but is still humble when he takes us on a tour of his new building. "Life will constantly throw challenges your way, but that is what makes it exciting. I don't see problems, I see solutions. We love what we do and still enjoy our work every day. I do it for the customers, not for myself. Stainless steel has had a huge impact on the lives we live today." His love for stainless steel can be seen all around the new building. From the balustrades in the office and the warehouse to the cladding on the façade, from the fence outside to the kitchen in the break room, it comes back in many details throughout the completed building.

But that is not all the company has been focusing on. Paul described that, "Besides overseeing the build we have been very busy. We have decided to expand our

transport capacity by buying another truck, the fourth truck in a row. In this way we can arrange a lot of transport with our own drivers." He has always believed the company's success is largely due to customer satisfaction. "Our employees know what is going on in the company and the industry and even though we are growing we are not sacrificing knowledge or skill. We use direct lines. The sales team consists exclusively of people with extensive know-how and all our employees know what we stand for. We work as a team to achieve 100 percent customer satisfaction."

ISO 9001

Stefan Bagen, who joined Paul Meijering in 2004 has been working on the details of their ISO 9001 application. "We received our ISO 9001 certification in July 2014. It's all part of our customer satisfaction strategy. We realized it is important for us to be certified so they can supply to all industries. This helps our customers deal with the ever stringent requirements and regulations they have to meet."

This point of view returned several times throughout the conversation and it was apparent that Paul Meijering Stainless Steel stands for ultimate customer satisfaction. Walking through the company's current building we saw for ourselves how customer oriented each and every employee was. Everyone greeted us and as soon as we were alone someone popped up to ask if they could help us. "I believe in working with people who enjoy their job," Paul responded when we mentioned how friendly and helpful everyone was. "All our employees want to be here and know how Conny and I wish our customers to be treated. If a customer arrives at a quarter past five and someone is just finishing up then I know they will take the time to help the customer and do what is necessary. We understand that being in a situation where we can trust each and every person to work according to our service standards is important to our success and for this reason we invest in our employees and make sure they know they are appreciated."



An overhead shot taken in a man-up reach truck at 10 meters in the fitting warehouse.



The Bomar sawing machine, Extend 1120.

Paul Meijering Stainless Steel exports daily to more than **55 countries**. Its stock of around **3,000 tons** consists of approximately **11,000 different articles**, which are mainly supplied to **trading companies**, the **chemical, petrochemical** and **food** industries, as well as **construction** and the **offshore** industry. The latest addition to the stock is large diameter pipes, which range up to 1067 mm and 600lb ANSI flanges in 316L.



The new fully automatic Fehr Honeycomb storage system.

do and we do what we say"



The new headquarters in Zaltbommel, the Netherlands.

Happily surprised customers

When discussing the market and how things have changed since Paul started his business he grinned and said, "I remember a conversation I had with my father, who also had a business in stainless steel, back in the day. Within The Netherlands he delivered once a week. This was normal back then. The customer had to live by the rules set by the company. I challenged my father on this and from day one have kept this in mind. If a customer places an order we deliver as soon as possible." Stefan concurred, "Last month for example a customer called late one afternoon to place an order. The following day when the order arrived the customer called back to cancel the previous day's order as he thought he had made a mistake and must have placed the order twice. When we explained that he hadn't, but that we had a planned delivery and had just added his new one last minute he was lost for words. He couldn't believe that he had placed and received his order in less than 24 hours."

Conny added, "We receive the same reaction to our quotes. When people call us for a quote and we get back to them within a couple of hours, sometimes within the hour,



Mr. Stefan Bagen (Assistant Director) and Mr. Paul Meijering (CEO).

they are happily surprised. For us this is normal, but we realize from the reactions we get that it is exactly that which sets us apart. We keep it simple and as Paul always says: We do what we say and say what we do."

Working on the marketing side of the company Conny has also seen changes in the industry and believes it is important to keep up. "Paul started working with no more than a bit of stock, a phone and a fax. Nowadays of course everything is done electronically. We have invested in online marketing as we believe that is the way to go. Visibility is key and the internet is extremely important from a marketing point of view. When we added duplex to our stock we immediately wanted to communicate this to our customers. This used to be an issue, but now more and more companies are seeing how to apply the use of internet within the industry and you can get the message across fast using social media or your website."

All the hard work Paul Meijering and his team have been doing has not gone unnoticed. At the end of October 2013, they received the news that they won the title Entrepreneur of the Year 2013 by Business Events Bommelerwaard. "It's like icing on the cake," Paul said, "It's nice to see that people notice your hard work and that it is appreciated. We work hard and want to be the best, not the biggest, the best at what we do."

In terms of future goals, Conny explained, "One of the next steps forward is to expand our business, for example in Brazil. In March 2015 we will participate with the Flow Control Exhibition in Rio de Janeiro. This is a good opportunity to give notice to our wide activities in the duplex and super duplex markets. We are also looking for business partners in North and South America to expand our business."

All Photos: Paul Meijering



The eight Hänel leanlifts in the fitting warehouse.

Paul Meijering at a glance

Company Name:	Paul Meijering
Established:	1989
Headquarters:	Bossekamp 9-13, 5301 LZ Zaltbommel, The Netherlands
Products:	Hollow sections & bars, threaded and butt weld fittings specialized in heavy wall pipes and fittings, like SCH160 and XXS, seamless & welded pipes, valves, flanges, etc.
Industry markets:	Chemical & petrochemical, food processing, construction and offshore
Website:	www.pmstainlesssteel.com