



SWISSMEM – ADDED VALUE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Services, networks and representation
for Switzerland as a centre of industry
and research

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ZURICH

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- Legal Services
- Statistics
- Export controls

TRAINING & INNOVATION

- Innovation consulting
- Training policy
- Research policy
- Innovation policy

SPECIALIST GROUPS

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- Trade fair appearances
- Seminars
- Country desks

EMPLOYER ISSUES

- Labour law advice
- Experience-sharing groups
- Pay statistics
- Social partnership

COMMUNICATION

- Media relations
- Developing young talent
- Newsletter and magazine
- Industry Day

SERVICES

- Member administration
- Accounting
- IT infrastructure
- Post office

WINTERTHUR

SWISSMEM EXECUTIVE

TRAINING SCHOOL

- Leadership programmes
- Seminars
- In-company courses
- Advice

SWISSMEM VOCATIONAL

TRAINING

- Career profile development
- Publishing of teaching aids
- Specialist conferences
- Skills championships

LAUSANNE

SUISSE ROMANDE OFFICE

- Local representation
- Media information service
- "Comité Romand"
- Networking

SWISSMEM – A STRONG ASSOCIATION FOR SWITZERLAND AS A STRONG LOCATION FOR INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH

The mechanical and electrical engineering industries (MEM industries) play a key role in the Swiss economy. The MEM industries are Switzerland's biggest industrial employer by far, providing jobs for some 330,000 people, and account for one third of the country's total goods exports. Companies in the MEM industries have an excellent global reputation as suppliers of technologically advanced products and services and of whole systems and plants.

Swissmem unites around 1000 companies from Switzerland's mechanical and electrical engineering industries as well as from related technology-oriented sectors. We effectively identify the concerns of our member companies, encourage active networking and provide services tailored to their needs.

Among Swissmem's most important services are advice on export transactions, provision of contacts for innovation projects, support in matters pertaining to labour law, industry-specific training packages and tailored activities for specialist industry groups.

Swissmem is committed to open competition, innovation and entrepreneurial freedom coupled with social responsibility, and also campaigns for a constructive social partnership system. We represent the interests of Swiss industry in economic, political and public debates. In this way, we strengthen Switzerland's ability to compete at international level as a location for industry and research.

www.swissmem.ch/en



”Innovation and automation are the only way that we in Switzerland can remain competitive; that’s why we invest countercyclically. Swissmem’s experience and contacts played a major role in turning our idea into a success story.”

Heinz Duner, Co-Managing Director,
Andritz Hydro AG, Kriens

ROBOT PUTS FINAL TOUCHES TO TURBINES

Andritz Hydro's Pelton turbines are exposed to extreme forces during operation. As even the smallest of flaws can result in severe malfunctions, the workmanship needs to be extremely precise. This level of precision can now also be provided by a robot, as shown by a research project facilitated by Swissmem. A prototype is now able to grind the turbine buckets with the same level of precision as a human.

Andritz Hydro manufactures turbines for hydroelectric plants all over the world. At its Kriens site, the company manufactures Pelton turbines, which need to be able to withstand extreme conditions. In high-head power plants, the water from the pressure tunnel hits the turbine blades at speeds of up to 690 km/hour, thus driving enormous generators. Even the tiniest of flaws or irregularities on the surface of the turbine buckets will lower the efficiency of the turbine and accelerate wear and tear; they can even lead to accidents. That is why Andritz Hydro places a great deal of emphasis on extremely precise workmanship and meticulous quality controls.

In order to maximize the hydraulic efficiency of its products to the greatest possible extent, the turbine buckets have up until now been laboriously ground by hand. This labour-intensive production method drove up costs. Nevertheless, conventional wisdom held that this step could not be automated without forfeiting the high quality standards required. Co-Managing Director Heinz Duner was not deterred by this, and went looking for an automated solution capable of grinding the turbine buckets. He was encouraged in this undertaking by the many years of experience that Andritz Hydro has with robotic technology; this technology is already being successfully used at the firm to coat and weld turbine buckets.

From research project to prototype

What Duner actually wanted to do, by way of a research project with Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, was to clarify whether an automated solution was, in principle, feasible. In order to improve the project's chances with the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI), Swissmem innovation consultant Josef Keller was brought in. On his recommendation, the modest feasibility study became a major joint research project between Andritz Hydro and Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts with funding from the CTI. One year later, a prototype grinding robot is in use in Kriens. This robot can accurately process three-dimensional surfaces and is significantly reducing the time required to manufacture a Pelton turbine wheel.

WE ADVISE YOU

EMPLOYER ISSUES

Swissmem advises, informs and supplies documents to its member companies on matters concerning the application of the collective labour agreement (or "GAV" in German), labour law in connection with international work assignments, social insurance and related issues to do with management and HR policy. We give our member companies' HR managers access to numerous templates, specimen contracts, regulations and check-lists.

Members receive support during negotiations or disputes with employees and employee representation bodies. Annual regional meetings and local discussion groups also offer the opportunity for wide-ranging experience-sharing.

www.swissmem.ch/employer-issues

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company applies for partial unemployment benefit; the application is approved. SECO raises an objection. The company has 10 days to appeal. Swissmem prepares a response for the company and wins the case.
- A member company wishes to send a Swiss employee to work abroad for a fixed period. We provide the company with individualized advice and help with the preparation of the secondment contract.

COMMERCIAL LAW

The main topics on which Swissmem provides legal advice include purchase agreements, service agreements, agency agreements, distribution agreements, technology licence agreements, OEM agreements and confidentiality agreements. Many of our member companies also come to us to have their General Terms and Conditions for delivery, purchasing, servicing, repairs and installation checked.

Swissmem advises its members on matters pertaining to product safety legislation and the relevant aspects of the EU's technical legislation. Swissmem also supplies specimen contracts for export deals and runs reasonably priced technical seminars and free training courses at the member company's location.

www.swissmem.ch/commercial-law

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company is bogged down in contract negotiations with an Indian customer. During this process, a new clause is introduced by the other party. We assess the impact of the new clause.
- A member company asks whether compensation has to be paid when an agency agreement is terminated in Norway. Thanks to our international contacts with legal professionals in other countries, we can obtain the required information in a very short time.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Members are provided with information and advice on environmental and energy-related topics, for example legislation on chemicals, energy efficiency requirements and environmentally relevant product legislation in Switzerland and the EU. In the case of specific questions on REACH, RoHS and other topics, Swissmem offers brief consultations free of charge.

Swissmem informs its members of the framework conditions for exemption from the CO₂ levy and develops tools for climate protection and energy efficiency in the workplace. Swissmem also coordinates the industry solution for safe handling of the greenhouse gas sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) for the MEM industries.

www.swissmem.ch/energy-and-environment

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company is unsure if it is affected by the European law on chemicals, REACH. We carry out a preliminary investigation free of charge.
- A member company is considering ISO 14001 certification. We provide information on the key pillars of an environmental management system and, if necessary, put the company in contact with experienced professionals.
- A member company wants to export electrical appliances to the EU. We provide information on the relevant energy efficiency and labelling rules.

INNOVATION

For Swissmem member companies, innovations in products and processes are an important factor in remaining competitive. Swissmem is thus committed to creating a favourable environment for research, development and innovation.

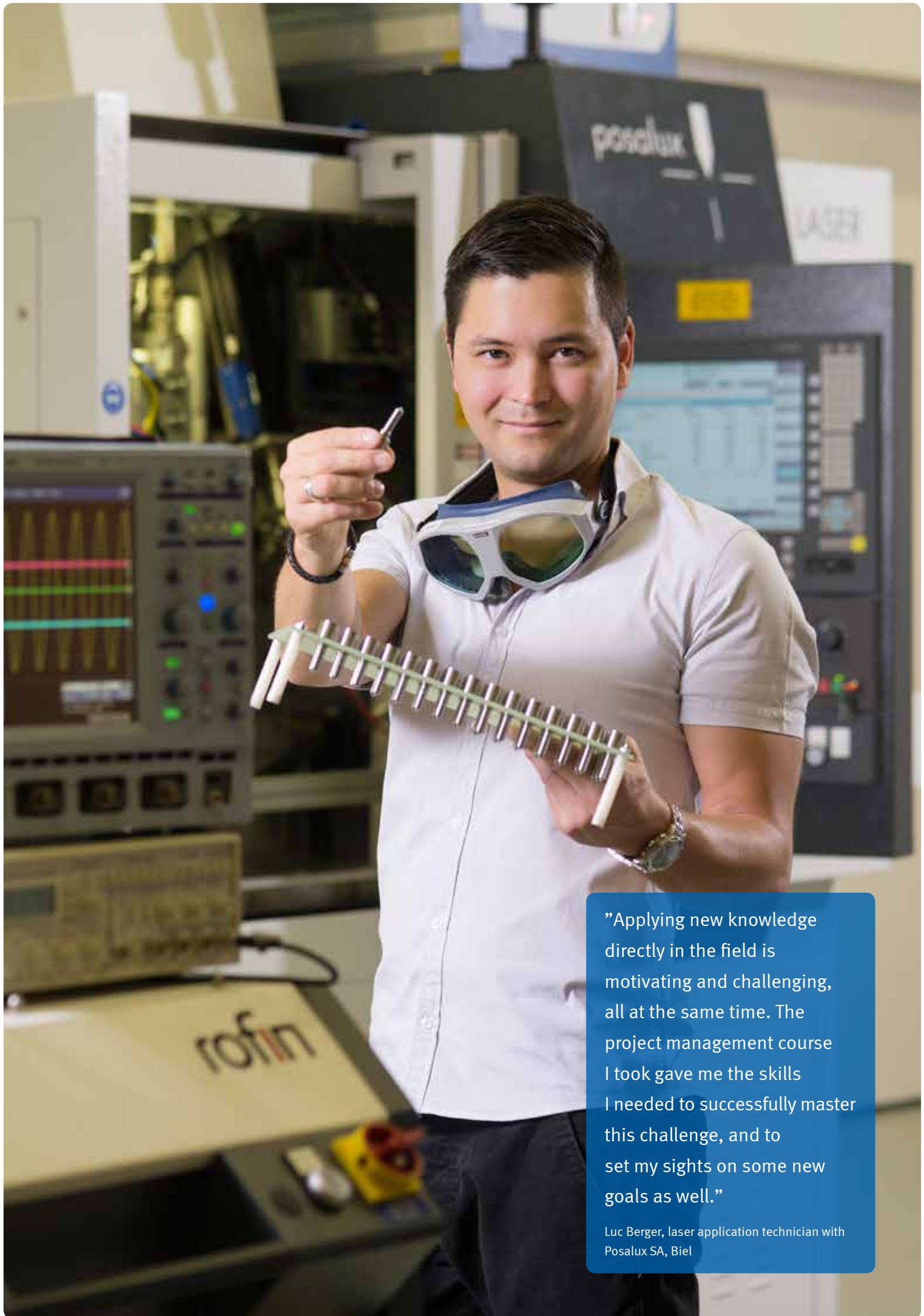
For SMEs in particular, increasing technological complexity is a challenge. Swissmem maintains close links with the Federal Institute of Technology institutions and universities of applied sciences to further develop the relationship between research and industry.

Our innovation consultants highlight opportunities for collaboration and help bring the right people together.

www.swissmem.ch/en/innovation

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company wishes to apply for a CTI project. We provide information on the required conditions.
- A member company is looking for a coating technology. We help it to make the right contacts with universities or other businesses.



”Applying new knowledge directly in the field is motivating and challenging, all at the same time. The project management course I took gave me the skills I needed to successfully master this challenge, and to set my sights on some new goals as well.”

Luc Berger, laser application technician with Posalux SA, Biel

TRAINING TODAY, HANDS-ON TOMORROW

Luc Berger started with Posalux SA as a service technician and then progressed to become a laser application technician. Thanks to a project management training course at the Swissmem Executive Training School in Prilly, he was able to take on a strategic project and prepare the ground for the next step in his career.

Biel-based Posalux SA is a leading provider of machine tools for the mass production of circuit boards and of precision components for the watchmaking and automotive industries. In order to assure the necessary precision and quality, Posalux relies on high-tech methods such as laser technology. These require the employees to have a very high level of know-how, and this is assured through internal skills development and training.

A big step up thanks to training

Luc Berger originally joined Posalux as a service technician. Three years later, he moved into the area of laser technology, where he was able to broaden his knowledge under the tutelage of laser specialists. As part of a project management course he took at the Swissmem Executive Training School in Prilly, Luc took on the management of strategic project "Mesure Z". The goal of the project is to integrate a measuring system into an automated production system for injection nozzles for the automotive industry.

Thanks to the combination of targeted training and an implementation project at his place of work, Luc was able to put his newly acquired knowledge into practice very quickly. This is characteristic of the training provided at the Swissmem Executive Training School. All the lecturers have years of industry experience and teach not only theory, but also how it relates

to practice. The course provides participants with a basic knowledge of projects, which is then deepened in the subsequent modules to include business administration, team leadership and communication.

A worthwhile investment

The project manager then demonstrates the skills acquired in the context of a certificate project. The subject chosen will be an in-house project aimed at generating added value for the business. The certificate is highly regarded within the MEM industries and is comparable to international IPMA Level C/D certification.

For the young technician, the extra time spent at work and in lessons has paid off. He has been able to broaden his skills, is already taking on new duties at work, and is seeing new prospects open up for his future career. For Posalux SA as an employer, and for his two line managers, the investment into the skills and motivation of this employee is also paying off.

WE TRAIN YOU

SWISSMEM EXECUTIVE TRAINING SCHOOL

Swissmem offers executives, project managers and vocational trainees in Swiss industry a range of programmes with lasting value. The school focuses on the ways in which training can be usefully implemented in day-to-day management work.

”From real life, for real life”: this claim is our premise. The Swissmem Executive Training School is a practice-oriented training establishment with teachers who are familiar with, observe and learn from the challenges of the market and rapid technological innovation. Students thus receive methodical training with content and concepts that are ideally suited to their needs and which they can put directly into practice.

www.swissmem-kaderschule.ch/en

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company wishes to boost the effectiveness and efficiency of its workforce. We provide the employees with training in project management, self-management, presentation skills, methodological competence, lean management, etc.
- A member company is facing the challenge of unresolved conflicts, dissatisfied employees or high staff turnover. We run workshops with the people affected to develop appropriate measures and provide support during implementation.

SWISSMEM VOCATIONAL TRAINING

There are around 18,000 trainees in Switzerland working towards careers as multi-skilled mechanics, mechanical practicians, designer engineers, electronics technicians, automation engineers and business administration professionals. Swissmem is the national sponsor for these professions.

Swissmem Vocational Training actively participates in cantonal and national bodies with a view to creating favourable conditions for vocational training, increasing willingness to provide and receive training, and fostering cooperation between businesses, inter-company courses, vocational schools and examining authorities. Job profiles are further developed based on the needs of the industry.

www.swissmem-berufsbildung.ch/en

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company wants to start training apprentices. We advise them of what organizational measures need to be taken within the company, how the relationship with the cantonal vocational training department works and what training is required for the teaching staff.
- Member companies can also benefit from discounts on vocational teaching media.

DEVELOPING YOUNG TALENT

A good technical and scientific education is a central foundation for Switzerland's success as a centre of industry and research. Only when interest in technology is sparked at an early age will young people later decide to pursue a technical career. With a broad-based commitment to education, from early support to career guidance and basic vocational education, all the way to advanced training, Swissmem supports businesses in their efforts to develop young talent.

As part of joint projects, Swissmem establishes new approaches to schools and parents. Interacting with young people allows businesses to call attention to exciting career prospects in the MEM industries.

www.swissmem.ch/young-talent

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company wants to develop an online presence as part of its young talent programme. We offer free company profiles on the tecmania.ch platform for young people.
- A company wishes to offer recreational activities to help get children interested in technical fields. We provide appropriate craft supplies and help with advertising and networking for the activities.
- A company is looking to nurture talented employees. We support learners who want to compete in skills championships and pass on specific expert knowledge.

TECMANIA – SWISSMEM'S ONLINE INITIATIVE

The internet has become the key medium for young people. With its tecmania.ch online initiative, Swissmem is using the virtual realm to stimulate interest in technical fields and provide fascinating insights into the working world of the MEM industries.

Swissmem member companies can set up a profile on the platform free of charge, thus increasing their visibility to young people and their parents.

The profiles are also networked onto other cross-industry online platforms, which are playing an increasingly important role in career choices.

A social media presence, newsletters and competitions facilitate interaction with young people and both spark interest and keep it alive. Information on taster courses and apprenticeship vacancies make it easier for interested students to get in touch with companies, and constitute a first step towards a training position in the MEM industries.



”Next to the advisory services, the most useful aspect for us is Swissmem’s network. Swissmem takes care of the professional administration of the specialist group, freeing us up to devote our full attention to our discussions and areas of interest.”

Eric von Ballmoos, CEO of Benninger Guss AG and Chair of the SSMI interest group

”WE NEED TO COMBINE OUR SKILLS”

Eric von Ballmoos, CEO of Benninger Guss AG and Chair of the SSMI (Suppliers to Switzerland’s MEM Industries) interest group, on the challenges facing the Swiss supplier industry, its relationship with its customers, and the value of networks.

What kind of firms does the SSMI cover?

Companies which manufacture in Switzerland for customers, but do not themselves make any in-house products. Alongside the classic producing suppliers, these may also include engineering or IT service providers.

Your members are not all from the same sub-sector. What implications does this have?

Essentially, we all have the same problem: none of us have any products of our own, and that makes us reliant on our customers’ success. The members of the SSMI are Swiss SMEs, all of which are successful in their own areas of expertise. Each one is a specialist in its field, but not in a position to offer the end customer a complete service. That’s why it is so important for all of us to pool our strengths – so that together we will be able to offer added value to our end customers.

What challenges is the Swiss supplier industry currently facing?

Increasing globalization is forcing us to offer our end customers added value through innovations and additional services. Swiss firms have an outstanding reputation with customers from abroad. One thing we hear over and over again, especially in our own country, is that ”everything is expensive in Switzerland”. In many cases, however, the price analyses are not based on Total Cost of Ownership. That is the point on which we want to reach our end customers with our coordinated full services.

How is the supplier-customer relationship evolving in general?

Business relations have become more impersonal and international. The purchasing departments of globally active Swiss companies are global-level organizations, for example, and English is the main language. Staff turnover is increasing, resulting in a loss of continuity and know-how. I am also noticing a general trend towards greater complexity. Everything is becoming standardized and specified. And while demands are increasing, serial order sizes are getting smaller. For suppliers, these developments are a cause for concern.

What goals does the SSMI want to achieve?

As well as expanding the membership of the group, I would like to create joint platforms for innovation and development projects. Another area with a lot of potential is joint marketing activities or trade fair appearances.

What advantages do you offer your members?

Networks are extremely important. They give us ideas, contacts, discussion topics and customers. I didn’t used to be much of a networker, and I’ve had to learn how important it is to have contacts. You get to know people and are able to build trust. Maintaining our network is therefore a key aspect of our group.

WE CONNECT YOU

SPECIALIST GROUPS

Swissmem's specialist groups represent different sub-sectors of the MEM industries. Each group is virtually an association within the association. The goal of the specialist groups area of Swissmem is to offer our member companies added value by providing tailored services that go far beyond normal Swissmem membership.

Each specialist group organizes itself and enjoys a great deal of autonomy within Swissmem. The activities of the groups are primarily determined by their committees and the needs of the member companies. Swissmem provides the administrative infrastructure for the groups and takes care of the professional organization of their activities.

In addition to networking and information sharing, a top priority within the groups is to represent members' interests to the public, government and media. Many specialist groups are also members of corresponding European or worldwide umbrella organizations.

In addition, the specialist groups collect economic key figures and data on market activity, and organize sector-specific marketing activities, for example in the context of joint appearances at leading international trade fairs, or publication of brochures and professional articles.

The specialist groups offer their needs for consideration when vocational training and university of applied science curricula are being changed.

www.swissmem.ch/specialist-groups

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- Membership of European umbrella organizations or international associations allows members of our specialist groups to actively influence events on the international stage, and to hear about new international legislative or regulatory developments and alignments before others do.
- Member companies want to participate in an international trade fair in a cost-effective and yet representative manner, in order to get a feel for business opportunities in new markets. We take care of the technical and organizational aspects of trade fair appearances and provide joint Swiss stands at favourable conditions, freeing the companies up to devote their attention to their marketing activities.
- Member companies are looking for a way to reach budding engineers as part of their programmes for developing young talent. We support them in the "war for talent" by means of various activities aimed at establishing contact, such as guest lecturers from industry at universities, or university events to promote joint projects, or even the creation of a new course.

COMMISSIONS

Swissmem's commissions are made up of domain specialists from member companies. They deal with specific matters of relevance to the industry, track political issues and developments, and campaign on technical, legal and education-related issues.

As part of the collective labour agreement (GAV) for the mechanical and electrical engineering industries, various joint entities exist covering a number of different thematic areas. Representatives of unions and employee organizations meet Swissmem for an exchange of experiences and views and to discuss issues relating to the practical implementation of the GAV.

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A trademark protection request by a member company is declined by the relevant Chinese authority. Via the Commission for Industrial Property Protection, the company highlights this matter at the industry round-table within the context of the Swiss-Chinese dialogue on the protection of intellectual property.
- Together with the employee organizations, Swissmem makes up a joint commission for any proceedings relating to wage dumping. The commission briefs the contracting parties and, where needed, develops settlement proposals.

COUNTRY DESKS

Swissmem maintains country desks with a view to providing member companies with a first point of contact for country-specific questions.

For questions requiring a more in-depth response, Swissmem works with partners such as Switzerland Global Enterprise (formerly Osec), chambers of commerce, SECO (the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs), the Swiss Business Hubs and occasionally other organizations. Swissmem's country desks also support economic missions of the federal government by calling attention to country-specific concerns of member companies in the fields of exports, customs, taxes, etc.

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company wishes to know whether and when its products will be exempted from customs duty under the free trade agreement between Switzerland and China. We provide a list for the corresponding customs tariffs, indicating the date from which the customs exemptions are to take effect and how the rule of origin is to be implemented.
- Swissmem participates in the meetings of the joint economic commissions between Switzerland and its key trading partners and represents the interests of its member companies in these meetings.

REPRESENTATION

Switzerland's leading position in worldwide rankings for innovative strength and competitiveness prove that the current framework of economic policy conditions is supportive of entrepreneurship. But like economic success, economic policy conditions are not a God-given right. It is therefore one of Swissmem's most important missions to continuously track developments in the relevant legislation and influence these developments to the benefit of its member companies. It does this with a particular focus on developments in economic, social, educational, energy and labour market policy.

The means it employs are many and varied. For example, Swissmem holds regular meetings with members of parliament, as well as maintaining direct contacts with senior representatives of the federal administration. It plays an active role in leading non-parliamentary committees of the federal government as well as selectively commenting on substantive issues within the context of regular consultation procedures. In the case of referendum bills with direct repercussions for industry, Swissmem actively campaigns on its members' behalf. And last but not least, Swissmem pursues an active media relations strategy, bringing the concerns of the industry to the attention of the media and thus also the general public.

The impetus provided by over 1000 member companies gives Swissmem considerable weight, and the more members we have, the more effectively we can further our political activities. The value of this work cannot be expressed in francs. Nonetheless, the benefit to businesses is extremely long-lasting, as only through this political work can entrepreneurial freedom be preserved and costly, undesirable political developments be prevented.

www.swissmem.ch/representation

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- Swissmem has successfully campaigned against initiatives harmful to the economy, such as the minimum wage, 1:12 pay and vacation initiatives.
- Every year, Swissmem responds to an average of 30 to 40 consultation requests from the federal government, thus ensuring that the concerns of its member companies are represented within the legislative process. Priority is given to bills relating to labour market, foreign trade, social insurance, energy and environmental policy.
- Every year, Swissmem organizes at least three media conferences, issues regular media releases, organizes interviewees, and maintains almost daily contact with journalists. This active media relations work generates around 3000 articles a year.
- As a member of the relevant European umbrella organizations (Orgalime, CEEMET), Swissmem represents the interests of the Swiss MEM industries at European as well as national level. The information obtained from these organizations on current legislative developments in the EU (e.g. the Machinery Directive) is of great importance to our member companies.

SWISSMEM COMPENSATION FUND

The social insurance field is both complex and subject to constant change. The international orientation of Swissmem's member companies constitutes an additional challenge. The Swissmem Compensation Fund is familiar with the special needs and concerns of employers in the MEM industries, and offers specialized know-how and a high level of professionalism with regard to all transactions relating to Pillar 1 (state) benefits.

The sound knowledge of its expert staff is one of the Swissmem Compensation Fund's biggest assets. On top of this, it focuses strongly on the needs of its customers and offers efficient workflows and rapid processing. Its other advantages include its proximity to Swissmem's centre of excellence and the option of consultations in Switzerland's three national languages (German, French and Italian).

The Swissmem Compensation Fund offers an advantageous rate for administrative costs based on the level of the company's wage bill for AHV (old-age and survivors' insurance) purposes. The current rates for administrative costs are detailed on the Compensation Fund's website. "Partnerweb" gives Swissmem members access to an online platform that enables them to complete the administrative tasks they are required to perform as employers conveniently, securely and easily.

The Swissmem Compensation Fund has held ISO 9001-2008 certification since September 2002, and in November 2013 it was awarded 4 stars in the "Recognised for Excellence" programme. Both the Fund's consistent focus on quality and its efforts over the last few years have thus been recognised by an external body and are generating significant added value for members.

www.ak60-swissmem.ch

EXAMPLES FROM REAL LIFE

- A member company is developing new expenses rules that include descriptions of benefits for expatriates. We review the rules in our capacity as AHV experts and let the company know which benefits are mandatory and which are not.
- An insured individual aged over 40 wants to know how big their AHV pension is going to be. We prepare a prognostic pension calculation for the person and, where applicable, their partner, and let them know what they can expect in terms of pension benefits.
- A member company is planning an event for employees approaching retirement. We provide a speaker for the event and information on the different retirement options under the AHV/pillar 1 system.
- Subsequent to a change of employer or a period spent abroad, an insured individual wishes to know whether their AHV contributions have been paid, or if there are gaps in these contributions. We provide a statement free of charge.
- A company wishes to provide training for its managers on a particular area (secondments, termination pay, expatriates). We work with the company to develop a presentation and provide a competent speaker to deliver it.

SET UP YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

Political influence or practice-driven services: Swissmem's activities begin where individual companies reach their limits. The benefit is yours.

As a Swissmem member, you are entitled to free legal and technical advice from experienced specialists. You also receive exclusive access to specialist professional networks and information from the MEM industries, as well as preferential rates on first-class training and development packages. And, not least, you help ensure that industry retains a strong political voice in Switzerland.

Swissmem membership is open to companies with headquarters in Switzerland or the Principality of Liechtenstein operating in the fields of mechanical/systems engineering, vehicle construction, the electrical/electronic industry, medical technology, metal and plastics processing and related industries, including software development in all fields.

The Association of Swiss Engineering Employers (ASM) is the provider of the industry's collective labour agreement (GAV). Swissmem members can adopt the GAV by taking out an additional membership with the ASM. However, adoption of the GAV is not a requirement for Swissmem membership. Swissmem membership costs 0.12% of the member company's wage bill for the previous year as calculated for AHV purposes, plus a basic subscription of CHF 500. Additional membership of the ASM is free of charge.

Swissmem has a very reasonable AHV compensation fund, and on top of this, the ASM offers its members an insurance cooperative against strike risk.

www.swissmem.ch/membership

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Swissmem

Pfingstweidstrasse 102, P.O. Box
8037 Zurich
Phone +41 44 384 41 11
info@swissmem.ch
www.swissmem.ch

Swissmem Suisse romande

Av. d'Ouchy 47
1006 Lausanne
Phone +41 21 613 35 85
p.cordonier@swissmem.ch
www.swissmem.ch

Swissmem Berufsbildung

Brühlbergstrasse 4
8400 Winterthur
Phone +41 52 260 55 00
berufsbildung@swissmem.ch
www.swissmem-berufsbildung.ch/en

Swissmem Kaderschule

Brühlbergstrasse 4
8400 Winterthur
Phone +41 52 260 54 54
kaderschule@swissmem.ch
www.swissmem-kaderschule.ch/en

Swissmem Ecole de cadres

Av. de la Rochelle 5 1008 Prilly
Phone +41 21 654 01 50
ecole.cadres@swissmem.ch
www.swissmem-kaderschule.ch/fr