

Registering patents non-stop

Endress+Hauser strengthens the protection of intellectual property with a special program

Innovative products are essential to the success of a technology company. That's why the Endress+Hauser Group has been paying special attention to the protection of intellectual property for two decades now. The most recent figures confirm the success of this initiative: 318 initial applications in 2019 and a portfolio of more than 8,000 patents and patent applications worldwide mark new highs.

For 20 years now, a separate department at Endress+Hauser has been dealing exclusively with the protection of intellectual property. In 1999, the company merged and realigned all activities in this field. Today, 30 employees – 26 in Weil am Rhein, Germany, four in Greenwood, Indiana, USA – take care of patent issues, trademark protection and related contracts. The Patent Rights Incentive Program was launched at the same time. It encourages the Group's employees to submit invention disclosures.

“If we want to protect ourselves from unauthorized imitators, we need to be aware of all relevant developments,” says Angelika Andres. The physicist and patent attorney has headed the Group's IPR department since 1999. Her team determines whether the submitted inventions are worthy and eligible for protection. This applies in four out of five cases. The specialists then draft a patent application that grants comprehensive protection for the invention.

Success can be measured in numbers

In 1999, Endress+Hauser submitted 55 initial patent applications – in 2019 there were an impressive 318. “We took a leap forward in the first year after the introduction of the Patent Rights Incentive Program and registered almost twice as many patents,” says COO Dr Andreas Mayr. “Since then the numbers have been steadily growing.” The share of patents related to digitalization is increasing, and the field of analytical technology – a strategic focal point – is also gaining importance.

Endress+Hauser was granted 677 patents worldwide last year, protecting the company's products in all major European markets as well as in China and the USA. Today, the Group's entire IPR portfolio comprises more than 8,000 patents and applications. This is mainly due to the work of the more than 1,100 employees in research and development. “But any employee can file an invention disclosure,” emphasizes Andreas Mayr. “Innovation is not limited to certain areas.”

Awards for inventing and not inventing

The Endress+Hauser Innovators' Meeting should have taken place for the 20th time in 2020, but it was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. The meetings focus on the exchange between inventors. At the same time, prizes are awarded: Endress+Hauser honors economically important patents, particularly active innovators, the improvement of processes and procedures – and the reuse of patents already granted. Angelika Andres: “You don't always have to reinvent the wheel!”



EH_2020_andreas_mayr.jpg

Chief Operating Officer Dr Andreas Mayr is responsible for innovation in the Endress+Hauser Group.



EH_2020_angelika_andres.jpg

Corporate Director of IPR Angelika Andres heads the patent department of the Endress+Hauser Group.



EH_2020_developer.jpg

Innovative spirit: More than 1,100 people worldwide work in research and development at Endress+Hauser – like here in Greenwood, Indiana, USA.



EH_2020_digitization.jpg

Digital change: At Endress+Hauser a growing number of patents concern developments for the Industrial Internet of Things and Industry 4.0.



EH_2020_innovators.jpg

Exchange: At the annual Innovators' Meeting the inventors of the Endress+Hauser Group show their developments (archive picture from 2017).

The Endress+Hauser Group

Endress+Hauser is a global leader in measurement and automation technology for process and laboratory applications. The family company, headquartered in Reinach, Switzerland, achieved net sales of over 2.6 billion euros in 2019 with a total workforce of 14,000.

Endress+Hauser devices, solutions and services are at home in many industries. Customers thus use them to gain valuable knowledge from their applications. This enables them to improve their products, work economically and at the same time protect people and the environment.

Endress+Hauser is a reliable partner worldwide. Own sales companies in 50 countries as well as representatives in another 70 countries ensure competent support. Production facilities on four continents manufacture quickly and flexibly to the highest quality standards.

Endress+Hauser was founded in 1953 by Georg H Endress and Ludwig Hauser. Ever since, the company has been pushing ahead with the development and use of innovative technologies, now helping to shape the industry's digital transformation. 8,000 patents and applications protect the Group's intellectual property.

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