



Laudatio on occasion of awarding the honorary membership of ÖGBMT to Dr. Hans Dietl

by Winfried Mayr
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Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,
Dear Hans,

It is a great honor and pleasure to introduce Dr. Hans Dietl, though only in brief, with just few examples and thoughts, a real lot more must remain open due to given time restrictions.

Dr. Dietl graduated in machine engineering in 1983 at the Technical University of Vienna and received his PhD in Biomedical Engineering at the same university in 1987, expanding his expertise already towards Biomechatronics, as the PhD-topic was in complex sensorics, specifically in objective Olfactometry.

Equipped with this grown knowledge fundament he started as R&D engineer at Otto Bock Vienna with a project on myoelectric controlled upper extremity prostheses, resulting in a very successful and kind of unique product for children rehabilitation, known as “Kinderhand”, and in parallel with an additional project on the design of fluid controlled prosthetic knees.

1993 he became head of the Vienna R&D-department of Otto Bock, with main focus on the most successful development and market introduction of the famous electronic “C-leg” knee, and in parallel on advances in multichannel intuitive control of upper extremity prostheses, known as “targeted muscle reinnervation”, named after the novel surgical approach for creating up to 8 bionic sources for the controlling bio-signals. It is important to mention also, that at the same time he continued lecturing related topics at the Vienna Technical University, and so kept his contact to academia fresh and active.

In 2000 he advanced to a next career step, CEO of OTTO BOCK Austria, 2003 he also took responsibility for the role as CEO of a newly founded cooperation enterprise with Medel Innsbruck, “STIWELL Healthcare”, for first developments of products for Functional Electrical Stimulation.

STIWELL is still very successful on the market, Otto Bock Healthcare Products developed in further electrical stimulation directions, with systems for gait support with non-invasive techniques and implants, under inclusion of international university spin-offs. The Actigate foot lifter implant is well-known. A most recent example is the Neuromodulation suit “Mollii” from a Swedish startup, which has enriched the spectrum further, with ongoing new developments and considerable market success with the existing, already MDR certified, version.

2006 Dr. Dietl became CTO of the entire Otto Bock Company Group, as a major carrier step, and since had substantial impact in further strategic developments of the whole group.



Later developments and roles in Otto Bock top management were proceeding very dynamically and not easy to trace. Among the many responsibilities, just as an example: building and directing the Otto Bock Open Innovation Space-Laboratory, founded in Mai 2015 in Berlin, for exploring novel creative approaches and technologies, complementary to classical engineering methods.

In other segments, he has started to step slowly back into more supporting and mentoring roles in the Otto Bock Group, and more and more getting prepared for next exciting projects and challenges in his next life episode, meanwhile coming up – just to mention horses and working with them, at, of course and not really surprising, also highest standards of professional dedication.

All his life accomplishments have been accompanied by a very fruitful and active role in the ÖGBMT. For many years Hans Dietl has been member of the board and had substantial impact in decisions of our society, in particular towards collaboration with biomedical industry und optimizing multidisciplinary collaboration of all Biomedical Engineering stakeholders and their needs and interests.

For us all, Dr. Dietl is an outstanding personality in Biomedical Engineering and an impressive example for an incredibly successful career as an engineer, with, at the same time, creating substantial impact in patient quality of life, in resilient economical grows, and in creation of most relevant and persisting progress in industrial and academic research and development.

Thanks for all this, it will be a great honor and privilege to have him as an honorary member in ÖGBMT and we look forward to many more of his inputs to prosperous developments in our society and beyond.