

ZOOM



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Lifted by natural gas

Minol has established the Minol Energie company. It offers natural gas especially for the housing industry and thus supplements Minol's services.

Minol is changing from a billing service provider to an energy optimiser. The company has long since supplemented its core business, the consumption-dependent billing of heating and water, by further services such as energy monitoring and consumption analysis. These are now joined by a decisive service – the sale

of energy. Minol founded Minol Energie GmbH & Co. KG together with the Stadtwerke Nürtingen (Nürtingen public utilities) on 28 July 2010. The first product it has brought onto the market is natural gas, under the name Minogas. In future Minol Energie also wants to sell electricity and offer energy technology for electricity and gas. The compa-

ny is the only one in Germany that specialises in the housing industry. It supplies Minogas exclusively to holding companies, residential property associations, private home owners and housing administration companies – a further service for Minol's principal target groups.

Continued page 2

EDITORIAL



Dear employees,

if you want to make a name for yourself as an all-round energy optimiser for the housing industry, you need firstly the most complete range of services possible and secondly the most efficient structures possible. Minol has now taken a big step in both categories. The sale of natural gas, to which we have dedicated our title story, supplements our profile in an ideal way: our service can now start right at the beginning, with the procurement of energy. The circle is closed with the classic operating cost billing and energy optimisation. More efficiency in the core business has enabled us to create a new position in Sales Management: we very recently appointed a Central Project Leader, who controls the handling of complex large-scale projects. You can read more about this on page 4. Many different cultures meet in an international group of companies like Minol ZENNER. Sometimes the different habits and customs make us smile, like Shan Bai's story, which you can read on page 7.

I wish you enjoyable reading

Marcus Lehmann

Continued from page 1

Within Minol Energie, each partner concentrates on its strengths: With 20 branch offices and its closeness to the housing industry, Minol is responsible for sales and advising customers. The natural gas itself comes from the Stadtwerke Nürtingen. They also organise the change from the past supplier to Minol Energie for the customer. "The Stadtwerke Nürtingen is the ideal partner – a local company with a great deal of experience and success in the gas market. The geographical closeness of Leinfelden-Echterdingen to Nürtingen additionally simplifies cooperation", says Minol CEO Marcus Lehmann. The fact that this model works well has been shown by pilot projects in the Rhine-Neckar region in 2009. "We tested the market for natural gas in advance. The reactions of the customers were so positive that Minol Energie is now starting nationwide sales of H and L gas", says Marcus Lehmann.

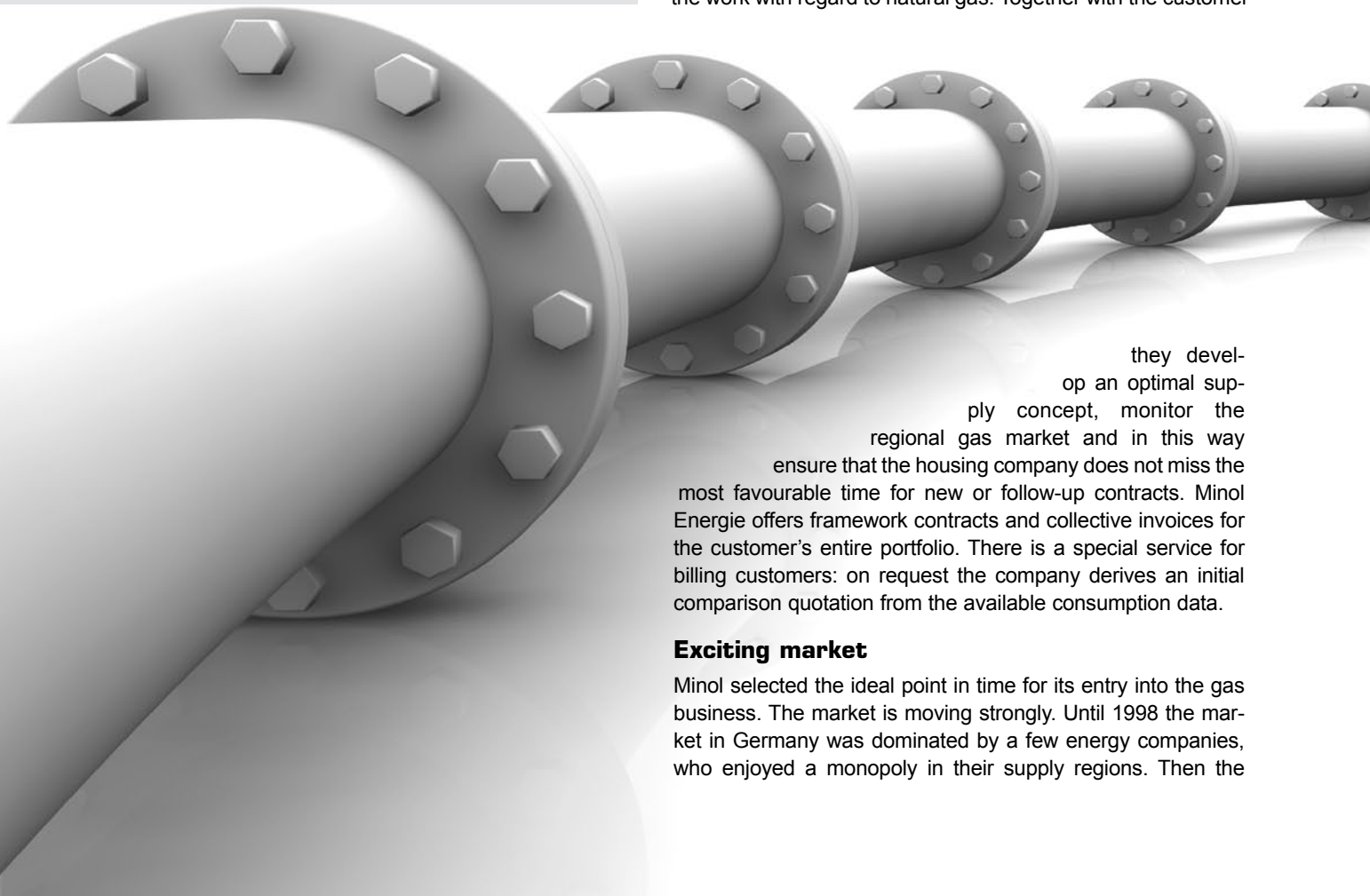
Natural gas with consultation

Minogas is tailored entirely to the housing industry. Customers benefit from the simple tariff model. For example, they do not pay a standing charge for annual purchased quantities of 100,000 to 1,500,000 kwh. The objective is to offer the customer the current best price for the respective supply region. Therefore there is also no fixed price list; each quotation is calculated individually. Fixed prices guarantee that the conditions remain stable over the entire duration of the contract. Thus, while Minol Energie adjusts itself completely to the fast moving gas market, customers are protected against the sometimes massive price fluctuations and enjoy planning security. This is accompanied by personal consultation as a unique selling point. Each natural gas customer has a central partner for his nationwide properties – the local Minol sales representative. The latter is in turn supported by the natural gas experts from Minol Energie. Corporately they relieve the customer of all of the work with regard to natural gas. Together with the customer

they develop an optimal supply concept, monitor the regional gas market and in this way ensure that the housing company does not miss the most favourable time for new or follow-up contracts. Minol Energie offers framework contracts and collective invoices for the customer's entire portfolio. There is a special service for billing customers: on request the company derives an initial comparison quotation from the available consumption data.

Exciting market

Minol selected the ideal point in time for its entry into the gas business. The market is moving strongly. Until 1998 the market in Germany was dominated by a few energy companies, who enjoyed a monopoly in their supply regions. Then the



Minol Energie at a glance:

Establishment:	28/7/2010
Partners:	Minol Messtechnik W. Lehmann GmbH, Stadtwerke Nürtingen GmbH
Shares:	Minol 75%, Stadtwerke Nürtingen 25%
Chief Executive Officers:	Marcus Lehmann and Volkmar Klausser (Stadtwerke Nürtingen)
Business purpose:	gas and electricity for the housing industry

European Union single market directive for gas and the German Energy Industry Act (EnWG) came into force and jump-started the liberalisation of the market. In 2005 the Federal Network Agency took over the supervision of the gas supply network and simplified entry. Since 2006 natural gas customers can freely select their supplier. Although the other large metering service providers are also positioning themselves in the gas market, Minol is a big step ahead of them and has the most mature and most conclusive concept in Minogas.

Logical addition

Minogas is more than just a new field of business. It is the logical addition to the existing service chain. Until recently Minol was only able to support its customers after the procurement of energy. Services such as operating cost billing, energy monitoring for administrators and the consumption analysis for users provide motivation for low energy consumption by means of information and feedback. As suppliers of energy, Minol can now influence the operating costs earlier and more directly. Thus the customer gets a comprehensive optimisation package, initially for natural gas, but soon for other types of energy too, like electricity. "The prospects for Minogas are good where billing customers are concerned, because they already know Minol and the contact partners. Conversely, the gas business is a door opener for the classic Minol services. Both segments support each other", says Marcus Lehmann.

The next steps

Minol Energie operates at present from Leinfelden-Echterdingen. However, the establishment of the company was only the first step. In the coming weeks, a team of employees from both partner companies will prepare details for the business operations that define and refine the necessary processes. Minol Energie will have a strengthened presence in the gas market starting from October at the latest. The Minol sales representatives will be prepared comprehensively for Minogas with training courses in October. Since the basic conditions differ from region to region, one training course is planned for the South German branch offices and another one for those in North Germany. Minol invited three renowned agencies to tender for the professional marketing of Minogas. The winner has now been chosen and has been commissioned with the detailed development of the publicity campaign. This includes a Minogas logo and advertisements. Minol Energie has its own website: www.minolenergie.de. ZOOM readers can also get more information about Minogas there.

+++ TICKER +++

Monitoring for housing users

Together with Bietigheimer Wohnbau GmbH (BW) and the Stadtwerke Bietigheim-Bissingen (SWBB) (Bietigheim-Bissingen Public Utilities), Minol started a pilot project concerning energy monitoring for housing users in June. Minol reads the heating and water consumption of the dwellings on the basis of the new radio system with a central master. The SWBB records the electricity, remote heating and water consumption of the entire building with a Smart Metering system. The information from all categories flows together in the Minol online portal, so that the users can promptly retrieve consumption and cost analyses for their dwelling. The project partners want to evaluate how the service is accepted by the housing users.

New orders

The Minol branch office in Hanover concluded two new framework contracts on 1 July. The first contract is for the billing of 1,200 housing units belonging to the Hamelner Wohnungsbaugesellschaft mbH (HWG). Minol will also gradually take over the HWG properties that are presently taken care of by competitors, in each case upon expiry of the contract. The second framework agreement is for the billing of around 800 housing units belonging to Wärmeservice Hannover/Enercity Contracting GmbH.

Certification according to plan

The overall certification of Minol to DIN EN ISO 9001 is in full swing. The goal for this stage is the certification of assembly, meter management, subcontractor control and accounts receivable by the end of 2010. Following the documentation of these processes and employee training, internal audits are currently taking place. From the middle of November (15/11 to 19/11), the external auditors from the DEKRA are then expected at head office as well as the branch offices in Chemnitz, Munich and Bielefeld.

Prelude to the seminar series

Minol's traditional seminar series is once again a fixture in the calendar of many property managers this year. Between 80 and 400 participants are expected at each of the nine events, which take place from mid-September to mid-November throughout Germany. One of the main items on the agenda at the beginning of the seminar concerns tenancy and property ownership legislation. This is followed by a lecture by a speaker from the housing industry on a current topic. Finally, Minol-related subjects will be addressed, such as experiences with the new heating cost regulations, consumption analysis and new online services.

Dates at a glance

14/9/2010	Lindau
15/9/2010	Leipzig
22/9/2010	Bad Vilbel (near Frankfurt)
28/9/2010	Aying (near Munich)
19/10/2010	Sinsheim (near Heilbronn)
9/11/2010	Ludwigsburg (near Stuttgart)
18/11/2010	Berlin
24/11/2010	Duisburg
30/11/2010	Freiburg



Keeping a tight grip

Bernd Langenfeld is Minol's first ever Sales Management Project Leader

There has been a new position at Minol since 1 June this year: Central Project Leader in Sales Management. He is responsible for the coordination of large, supraregional projects. "The position is a reaction to changing market requirements", says Tobias Flinspach, leader of Sales Management. Large property companies such as Patrizia or DeWAG are taking out framework contracts with Minol for their entire property portfolio or a majority of it with ever increasing frequency.

The buildings are scattered over the entire country and thus fall into the scope of responsibility of several main branch offices. "We needed a central coordinator who can keep a hold of all of the reins", explains Flinspach. Bernd Langenfeld has now taken on this task. As Project Leader in Sales Management he coordinates the interaction between everyone involved at head office and at the branch offices, so that Minol can handle large-scale projects efficiently and successfully.

Step by step

Bernd Langenfeld accompanies a large-scale project up until the point where the properties are ready for billing for the first time. It begins with a concrete, company-internal project order. The precise project goals are formulated together with the responsible customer support employee. On the basis of plans, Bernd Langenfeld records the steps and dates, in order to achieve the set goals. The customer regularly receives up-to-date status reports, so that he feels well informed and knows that his project is in good hands. The branch offices are, however, always responsible for the operational business. The responsible customer support employee always remains the contact person for the customer.

Complex structure

The example of DeWAG Management GmbH shows how complex large-scale projects can be. The Stuttgart-based property company took out a framework contract with Minol in 2009 for 10,400 residential units. The buildings are spread right across Germany,



belong to different property companies and are assigned to eight different property management organisations. Such a complex structure makes project management a real challenge. The objective is the successful migration of the property stock – in other words, adopting the properties properly from the previous heating service provider into Minol's system.

Uniform implementation

This also includes managing the termination of the old contracts with Minol's competitors, the conclusion of contracts with the property companies and coordination with the various property managers. Bernd Langenfeld supports the branch offices and ensures uniform implementation, for example, by developing standard contracts.

He also coordinates the next phase: the equipping of the properties with meters and the acquisition of the basic data for billing through the MM (meter management). Last, but not least, he informs departments such as Materials Management or DA (Billing Services), so that these can plan their resources in time for the project. Hence, the project leader ensures that everything runs smoothly – and to the customer's entire satisfaction.

Bernd Langenfeld

He knows the sales processes like the back of his hand – after all, he has worked for Minol for 17 years. In 1995 he moved from the former Order Development Department to Sales and Marketing. From 2004 to 2009 he worked in Key Account Management, where he was lastly responsible for the sales processes. Since 1 June 2010 he has been Central Project Leader in Sales Management and coordinates large-scale projects for the customers DeWAG, Patrizia, Allianz, Akelius and Pirelli. Langenfeld likes to go hiking with friends and colleagues, for example with colleagues on the 'Minol Mountain Tour', whose tenth anniversary is being celebrated this year by the participants. He otherwise dedicates his spare time entirely to his family, who give him much support.

FOCUS

Building site for the future: a

The R & D Department (research & development) develops both the metering equipment required by Minol for its services and the products sold under the name of ZENNER. It has 22 employees: Thirteen at the Saarbruecken location and nine in Leinfeld-Echterdingen, where the central department management is also located. The team works on the meters and system technology of tomorrow. This includes the next generation of the wireless remote reading system called radio3, ultrasonic meters, counter mechanisms and communication modules for the modular ZENNER product portfolio, system technology for Smart Metering and many others that cannot yet be disclosed here. The examples clearly demonstrate the breadth of the work of R & D. The team investigates the basic principles of new metering techniques and updates products, but it also provides complete system worlds for remote reading and for future Smart Metering requirements.

Within the group of companies the R & D employees consider themselves to be service providers, who also track down current technical developments and trends. However, the R & D Dept. is also involved in tricky support cases and is thus always connected with the daily business. Distinction is made between the working areas of mechanical engineering and system technology/electronics, both within the department and also beyond both locations. An additional group concerns itself with product approvals as well as the evaluation of radiators on the radiator test

Bringing it off together

Action weeks defuse the bottleneck in Billing Services

The work processes of the DA department (Billing Services) came under high time pressure in the first half-year. This was caused by two factors: on the one hand, around ten percent more cost-user itemizations were received than in the previous years, whilst on the other hand the conversion to the new meters billing system caused some handling problems, which concerned above all properties with rental and maintenance contracts.

Great dedication

The situation was made worse by the absence of employees, which cannot be planned for and which is unfortunately still affecting the company. How-

ever, Minol was able to overcome the bottleneck thanks to the dedication of its employees: The branch offices were informed so that they could approach their customers and defuse critical situations beforehand. Individual employees from Internal Sales (VI) and Sales Support (VS) assisted their colleagues in DA for four weeks with contract maintenance. The employees in the billing departments worked many hours of overtime on a voluntary basis.

Successful action weeks

Minol declared the so-called action weeks from the middle of May to the end of June. For seven weeks the DA teams worked 53 hours each week and prepared almost 20,000 bills. The SES

and IT departments widened the timeframes for their support accordingly. In certain phases an experienced external call centre also supported the employees, so that they had more time for the billing. Customers who were particularly affected by the bottleneck received a letter of apology.

Be prepared

In order to be prepared for the coming winter billing period, the DA has been training new colleagues since 1 July. "We would like to thank everyone involved for their dedication and customer orientation in this phase, which was also personally a very stressful time", says Holger Schiz, manager of the DA department.

portrait of the Research and Development Department



Left and right picture: the Research & Development Department

bench. As the keyword 'Smart Metering' clearly shows, software and IT are playing an increasingly large part in the development of new products. A 'smart' meter differs from a 'normal' one mainly by the software. In addition to the meter reading, standardised Smart Metering protocols supply a great deal of additional information about the meter and the medium flowing through it. During wireless remote reading these data must be 'understood' and converted into consumptions. The consequence of this development is that modern software development tools are gaining more and more in significance: the company-wide administration of software versions, a platform concept for the modular expandability of the software, the high value of software tests, common project management tools etc. R & D is thus ideally equipped for the future.



Dr. Hartmut Ritter

The leader of the Research and Development Department since April 2010 is Dr. Hartmut Ritter (born 1970). Before he came to Minol he was CEO of ScatterWeb, a company specialised in mesh networks on the basis of 868 MHz radio technology. Dr. Ritter had already cooperated with Minol in this position. The department manager says that his goals are "the tight consolidation of the R & D locations within the Minol ZENNER group, the alignment of product development and working methods to the requirements of the future market of Smart Metering and the business opportunities at home and abroad associated with that".



LOCATION

In the land of the islands

The Danish Minol subsidiary is flourishing

With 20 full-time employees the Danish company, based in Olstykke, about 35 kilometres from Copenhagen, is one of Minol's mid-sized foreign subsidiaries. In addition the team from Minol A/S is energetically supported by 25 policemen, who work part-time as meter readers and are operative throughout Denmark. The company was founded in 1984 as an independent service provider. It has been a 100 percent Minol subsidiary since 1996. CEO Benny Gamby has accompanied the development of the company since 1985. The energy engineering graduate was particularly pleased about the first-stage goal for 2010: Minol A/S moved into new business premises. "At last our employees now have an appropriate working environment with a great deal of space and light. Not only that, we can now hold customer seminars or product presentations in prestigious rooms", says Benny Gamby.

Being flexible is advantageous

Denmark itself is a relatively small market. Almost all buildings are already equipped with the necessary measuring devices. The market situation is currently



The team from Minol A/S in Denmark achieves great success in a small market.

still determined by the economic crisis, which has led to the construction of new buildings stagnating. Minol A/S must displace competitors in order to grow. It is thus an advantage for the company that, as a rather 'small' enterprise, it can react flexibly and quickly to customer requirements. Minol A/S has a very good repu-

tation in the Danish industry and is well known for good service quality. Thus, a week hardly ever goes by without Minol A/S taking over at least one property from its competitor Ista.

The internal working procedures will change strongly in the near future. The conversion of the billing software to mares/SAP is imminent. Minol A/S is thus creating the basis for further-reaching energy services such as energy monitoring, which is presently an important topic in Denmark. This is probably connected with wireless meter reading, in which interest is large anyway. When devices are exchanged, a wireless system is used in 75 percent of the cases. The proportion of evaporation heat cost allocators is only about 10.5 percent.

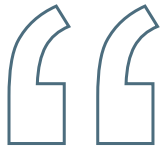
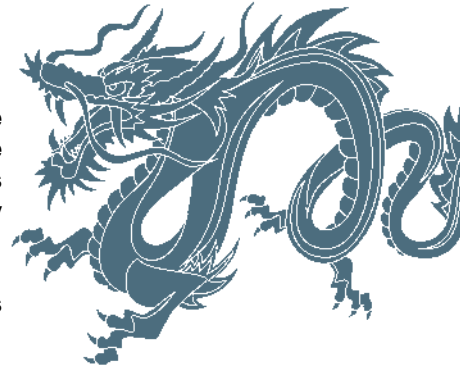


Bright and friendly: the new Minol A/S premises in Olstykke

A Chinaman in Mulda

Shan Bai lives 7,430 kilometres away from his homeland

Shan Bai is the first Chinese person to be officially registered at the resident's registration office in Mulda. The 36-year-old has worked since 2009 in Purchasing at ZENNER, with the emphasis on single-jet meters and Woltman meters. When he emigrated from Peking ten years ago to study Industrial Engineering in Dresden, he had already heard quite a bit about the country and its people. But not everything in Germany was as he had been told in China. With a wink of the eye he tells ZOOM what the Chinese and Germans have in common and why they nevertheless come from two different worlds.

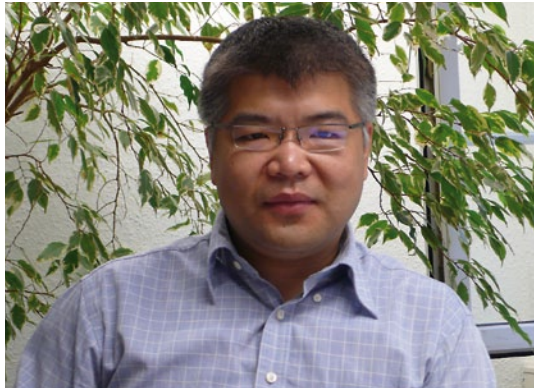


When I left my home in Peking I was very tense, because I didn't know what was awaiting me in Ger-

many. I was only familiar with the usual preconceptions: the Germans have

no sense of humour and they lack warmth and the joy of life. For many Chinese people, Germany is a kind of open-air museum with a shopping centre attached. It consists practically only of the Berlin Wall, Cologne Cathedral, the Rhine, the Hofbräuhaus in Munich and the famous German beer, which is served around the clock at a perpetual Oktoberfest. I soon knocked these conceptions on the head and instead gained many positive impressions. Germany is a particularly green country, with good air. The sky is much bluer here than in China.

At first I was very sad and homesick, but in the meantime I have settled in very well and have met many nice people. In my homeland I have experienced how megacities shoot up out of the ground in the shortest space of time, so when I arrived here, everything appeared tiny. The Chinese imagine



Germany to be more modern, bigger and busier – with much more traffic, skyscrapers and glass buildings. We also admire

the Germans for their economically strong products. So I was swept off my feet when I discovered that there are not half as many skyscrapers in Frankfurt as in a suburb of Peking.

Of course I also know that the Germans have their preconceptions of the Chinese. For example that we like to change our mind at the last moment, that we always say 'yes' in a friendly manner, that we hunt for bargains to our heart's

content and also that we want to eat exclusively Chinese food when we are out and about. One preconception is correct though, and that is that the Chinese like to complain just as much as the Germans. By the way, when we Chinese come home from a stay abroad, we like to be celebrated first. We invite friends and family, honour them with the most expensive gifts possible and lecture them about every single stopping place abroad. That is a tradition in China – we just want to impress.



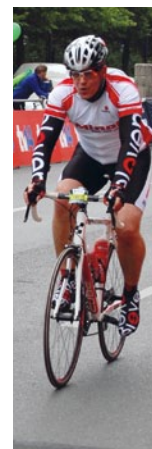
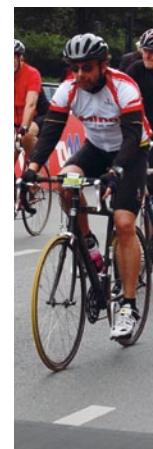
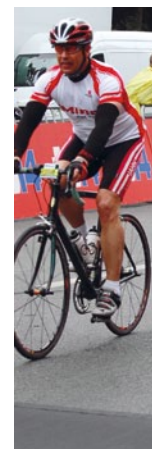
A celebration for cycling fans

Minol team on the starting line of the Velothon in Berlin

A Minol team also lined up at the start of the third Velothon in Berlin at the end of May. The four cycling-mad colleagues Peter Okrei, Eberhard Wendel, Jens Iwohn and Helmut Haussmann came up with the idea of taking part in the race. "The main thing for us was the team concept: spurring each other on and simply having fun", says Jens Iwohn. The Minol team lined up at the start at the Pariser Platz along with more than 10,000 other participants. The cycle circuit itself resembled a sightseeing tour: from the Brandenburg Gate, through the city

centre of Berlin, past the Memorial Church, Castle Charlottenburg, the East Side Gallery, Castle Bellevue and the Reichstag on the finishing straight, the 'Strasse des 17. Juni'. The mood was magnificent. Thousands of spectators stood at the roadside and spurred the cyclists on.

The Minol team for Berlin is the model for a 'Minol Germany Cycling Team' which, it is intended, will take part in similar events in future. For example in the 'Vattenfall Cyclassics' in Hamburg, which celebrated its 15th anniversary



this year. Anyone interested in taking part in such cycling events in the Minol team should contact Jens Iwohn at jens.iwohn@minol.com.

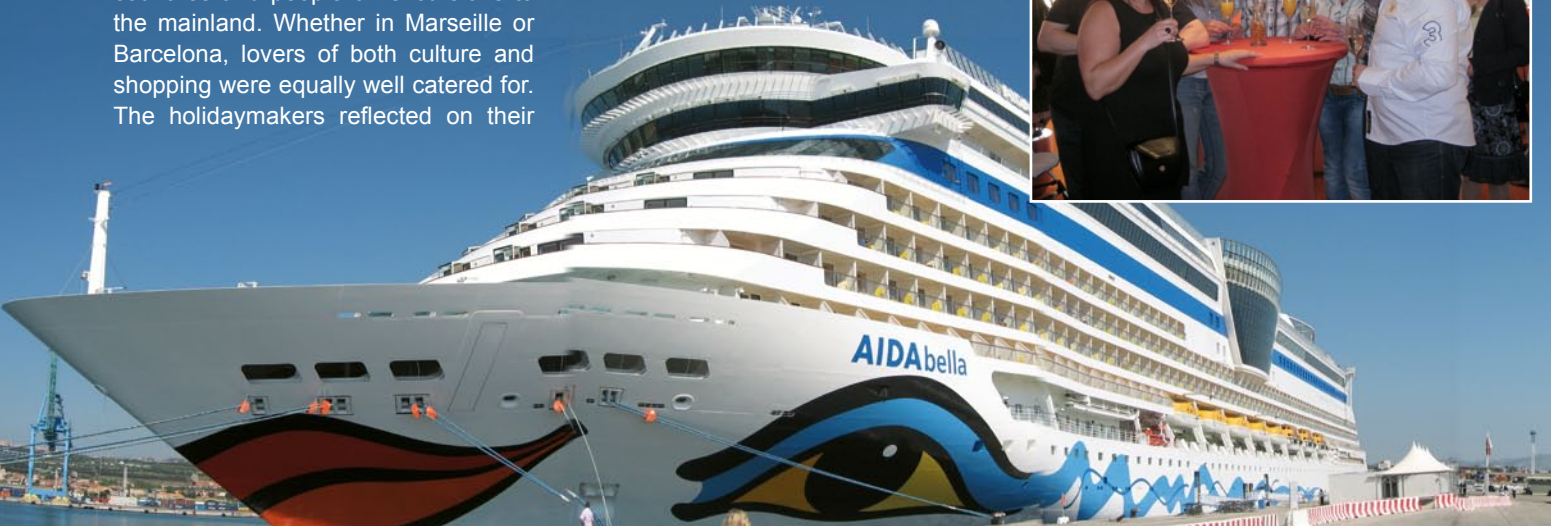
On the high seas

AIDA cruise for 'Best of Sales'

The nine winners of the 'Best of Sales' competition were able to spend four days exploring a ship as big as a small town. Accompanied by their partners, they started a Mediterranean cruise on 26 April. Before the AIDA casts off at around 10 pm, the winners toasted the sales successes in 2009 and an exciting trip with a glass of sparkling wine. There was much to discover just on board: numerous theme bars, cafés, great restaurants and a gigantic spa world. The guests were able to get to know Mediterranean countries and people on excursions to the mainland. Whether in Marseille or Barcelona, lovers of both culture and shopping were equally well catered for. The holidaymakers reflected on their

The winners of the 'Best of Sales 2009' celebrated their success and experienced four exciting days on the AIDA.

experiences at the grand closing celebration on the last evening. Other colleagues could also soon find out what makes an AIDA holiday so special: The next round of the 'Best of Sales' competition is approaching.



AND FINALLY

Prize Sudoku puzzle

The Sudoku puzzle 2/2010 was no problem for Ursula Neumann, sales support employee at the Karlsruhe branch office. She entered the correct numbers and earned her prize, a barbecue case. While she is already barbecuing, there is a new chance for those who have had no luck so far.

A smart Knirps umbrella will prove to be extremely useful in the autumn to the winner of this Sudoku. The solution is the sum of the numbers in the two red boxes. Send the solution, quoting the keyword 'Sudoku 3/2010', to ZOOM@minol.com or by post to Carmen Flad (contact details in the imprint) by 30 October 2010.

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