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Interview with
Silke Wüstermann and Dr. Peter Oltmanns

**Pioneering Preservation –
schülke Continues to Innovate**



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An Interview with Silke Wüstermann, Marketing and Sales Director and Dr. Peter Oltmanns R&D Director Schülke & Mayr GmbH

SOFW J.: schülke is a company with a long tradition of innovation; next year you celebrate your 125th anniversary. Briefly describe your company's beginnings and the essential stages of its developments.

S. Wüstermann: Founded in 1889 by *Rudolf Schülke* and *Julius Mayr*, Schülke & Mayr GmbH was among the pioneers of modern hygiene and preservation. The first branded disinfectant, *lysol*®, played a significant role in fighting the 1892 cholera epidemic in Hamburg. This was followed in 1913 by *sagrotan*®, the first branded disinfectant for household use. What began with protecting people from dangerous microorganisms was then expanded to include the protection of industrially manufactured products. In 1924, the introduction of *gotran*® heralded the first branded preservative worldwide. Since 1996, Schülke & Mayr GmbH has been a member of the Air Liquide group – the world leader in gases for industry and health.

What markets are you active in today?

S. Wüstermann: With our headquarters based in Norderstedt, Northern Germany, schülke is internationally active in more than 70 countries; represented by our own subsidiaries and distribution partners. It is the aim of our business to protect people and materials against infec-

tions and contamination. We are the partner for hygiene and preservation for not only pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics, but also preservatives and multifunctional additives for myriad industries; e.g., cosmetic industry, metal-working industry, etc.

P. Oltmanns: For all of these industries we offer innovative technologies, highly effective products and expert support services in the selected sectors of hygiene and special preservation. As a certified company according to GMP, ISO 9001, ISO 13485, ISO 14001 and EMAS we offer a total quality environment. We not only provide effective products, but also support our customers through our Microbiological Quality Management (MQM). This includes lab services, application advice, monitoring tools and system cleaners, as well as training programmes.

What influences your customers' choice of cosmetic preservatives?

S. Wüstermann: The choice of preservative for personal care products is influenced by many factors. The formulation components; pH; area of use on the body; and packaging are of great importance. However, public opinion and regulatory issues have also become significant in this decision in recent years. Public and regulatory pressures to minimize or elimi-

nate contentious chemistries have made developing an effective preservative system more difficult.

P. Oltmanns: schülke's investment in research and development has resulted in several recent, patented innovations in this area. The products developed based on these patents offer the industry new concepts in preservation, avoiding the more controversial, traditional preservative systems.

What are the current trends in the cosmetic preservation market?

S. Wüstermann: In trying to avoid preservative chemistries that are receiving negative public attention, there is a shift to »green«, »soft« and »multifunctional« materials. With the introduction of ethylhexylglycerin, schülke was among the pioneers in the use of multifunctional additives to improve the microbiological integrity of cosmetic products. The multiple functions of these additives help save material, storage space and ultimately money, making them more sustainable or »green« options. The ethylhexylglycerin blends that we have developed are among the most effective non-traditional preservation methods available to the cosmetic market.

P. Oltmanns: We hold patents on the antimicrobial efficacy of the combination of ethylhexylglycerin with a wide variety

of other materials. The quality of our multifunctional additive ethylhexylglycerin is unique due to our patented stabilisation method. This stabilisation avoids the formation of impurities that may have a negative impact on the colour, the odour and, more importantly, the safety of this material. This ensures that our customers can rely on getting a consistently top-quality product.

What is your shooting star in the market?

S. Wüstermann: euxyl® PE 9010 was introduced as a substitute for paraben-containing preservative blends. Most paraben-replacements require an acidic environment to be effective. euxyl® PE 9010 is stable to pH 12. In our testing, it has also been shown to be a drop-in replacement for traditional phenoxyethanol/paraben blends, effective at the same level in the same products, reducing reformulating costs.

P. Oltmanns: In this sophisticated, patent protected combination, the well-known antimicrobial efficacy of phenoxyethanol has been enhanced by the multifunctional additive ethylhexylglycerin.

The competition does not sleep. How can you hold your own in such an aggressive arena?

S. Wüstermann: Further strengthening the euxyl® PE 9010 preservative blend and its position in the market, schülke is proud to announce that new EU and US patents have been granted on this combination.

P. Oltmanns: At schülke we have always specialised in one thing – antimicrobials. This gives us a unique insight into our products and our markets. We have held multiple patents in this area for well over a century; we file more than 20 patents annually. Patents protect not only our know-how, but also protect our customers, ensuring their freedom to use our concepts without restrictions. This effort is supported with assistance from our parent company, Air Liquide, global



Dr. Peter Oltmanns
Silke Wüstermann

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leader in the production of industrial and medical gases. With the backing of Air Liquide, we are able to develop more uniquely effective products for a wide range of product types.

What are the latest developments – your »next big thing«?

S. Wüstermann: sensiva® PA 30 is the most recent result of our constant push for innovation. It combines a corn-based emollient with two nature-identical fragrance additives. The combination helps maintain the microbiological stability of a wide variety of cosmetic products, including emulsions, wet wipes and rinse-off systems. It is pH-stable, heat-stable, globally approved, biodegradable and cost effective.

Pushing the envelope of innovation and ingenuity, what is the vision of schülke for the future?

P. Oltmanns: Over the last few years, we have increased our capacities in Research & Development. This has allowed us to focus more effort on research for

new substances and blends. One of our most important current projects is in the area of antimicrobial stabilisation for cosmetic products. sensiva® PA 30 was the first result of this project. Several additional new products are at various stages of development. We look eagerly towards the future. We feel that, because of our past, schülke is uniquely situated to have a significant impact on the future of cosmetic preservation.

S. Wüstermann: Patents are part of schülke's ongoing research and development efforts in the area of protection from microbiological contamination of products and people, insuring that customers always receive the innovative and quality products that they have come to expect.

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