

# 40 Years

igus<sup>®</sup>  
plastics for longer life<sup>®</sup>

# The last 40 years – a brief history



Günter Blase was a factory manager for a plastics company in Cologne. He and his wife Margret, a Chartered Tax Advisor, formed igus® on October 15, 1964. Günter's older brother Karl Oskar, a graphic designer, came up with the name because he suggested it made a nice logo. The company's full name was "igus® Spritzgussteile für die Industrie GmbH ("Injection Molding Parts for Industry") and "igus®" is a mix out of the "Spritzguss" (injection molding) and "Industrie".

In today's language igus® would have been called a "virtual company". On October 18, a Monday, Günter took his VW Beetle and visited two potential customers. One was Pierburg, a maker of carburetors, and the other was Schlafhorst, famous for textile spinning machines.

All Günter had, was a 6-page brochure which was essentially a list of available engineering plastics and their features. His pitch was, "Give me your most difficult problem, I'll solve it."

Eight days later Pierburg sent an order for a "Ventilkegel", a tiny round-shaped part for the valves of a carburetor.

Based on that order, the Blases rented a two-car garage and ordered a small injection molding machine the size of a household sewing machine. The worst was not over, but there was hope for survival. Two small boys – 2 and 4 years old – had to be fed, too.

Schlafhorst would order some weeks later. Both customers would provide over 90 % of igus®' sales for the next 20 years.

# Chronology

'64

Founding of igus® GmbH Cologne at "Cologne-Mülheim, Rixdorfer Strasse"

'65

Production of first bushings for customers Pierburg and Schlafhorst

'68

Start of annual profit sharing program "Jahresprämie" for 2 associates

'70

Founding of iform GmbH to make the tools  
Move to Bergisch Gladbach, Paffrather Strasse  
5 people – 5 machines

'71

Production of first custom-molding EnergyChain® for customer "Schlafhorst"

'77

Move to Locher Mühle in Bergisch Gladbach  
10 people – 12 machines

'79

First 1-page-catalog of E-Chain®. 2 Products: 20.1.055, 20.3.055 (then "Tool Number 695 and 669")  
First trade show participation, K79 in Düsseldorf

'80

First bushing catalog: "DIN 1860 out of Nylon 6.6"  
Peak of the "custom molding" period: igus® produces roughly 1100 different parts from about 100 different plastics for mainly two customers.

'82

"Ausbildungsbetrieb des Jahres" award for most apprentices per company size  
12 apprentices and 12 other employees  
First ever international dealer "Damascus" comes from Sweden

'83



Start of E-Chain® engineering team  
"You sell it, I make it" – job sharing  
First catalog with brandname "iglidur®", developed iglidur® G  
"Merlin" starts work on a programmable typewriter  
27 Employees (12 apprentices included)

'84



First tests for E-Chains® on improvised fixtures  
**Series 10**  
Start profit sharing formula similar to today  
**First company party**

'85



**igus® inc. Rhode Island, USA**  
First international trade show "SITEV" in Geneva (automotive supply show)  
World's first 4-piece plastic E-Chain®, **Series 40**; igus®' first patent is for it; over 400 patents worldwide followed.  
**iglidur® X, iglidur® M250**



Paffrather Strasse



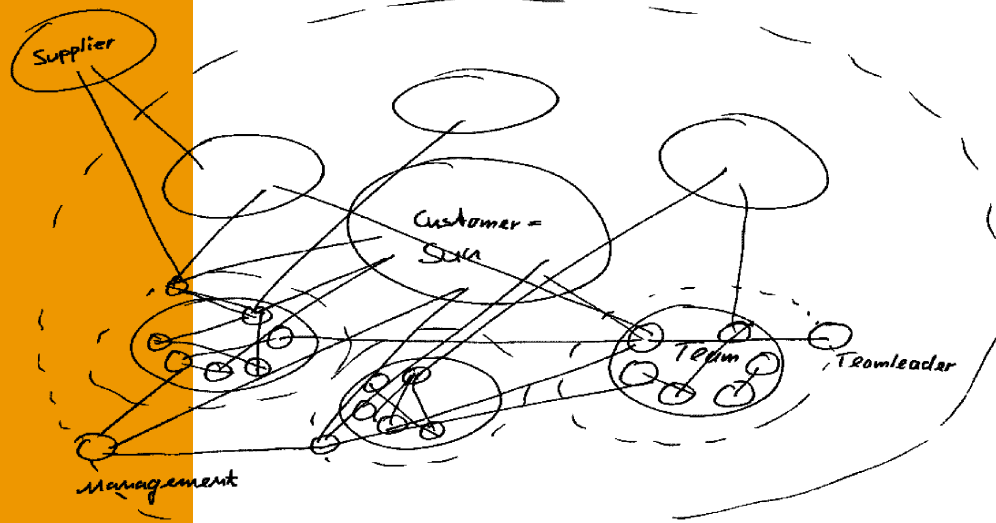
Locher Mühle



First trade show



First company party



igus® Japan



igus® UK



New factory building

Start of advertising  
**First sketches of "Solar System"**

Export to Japan starts with Captain Industries; many other loyal distributors come from this time period: ASI, Conlog, SKS, Treotham, Rolipsa, Hennlich, Hidrel, Automation Equipment. World's first open able **E-Tube R68**; igus®' first "if" design award for it and for Series 40 (10 more followed). Decision to phase out the "custom molding business" and to focus solely on igus®' own catalog products; transferral of these tools starts.

**Zipper E-Chain®**  
 First "igus® Ball" in Altenberg (annual gala)

Purchase of first parcel of land in Cologne  
 First Micro Chains, inner shelving, Triflex®, **iglidur® W300**

**igus® Japan as joint venture**  
 Size of company requires first official balance sheet  
 Beginning of igus® bearing laboratory: in a container on the parking lot.  
 First seminar "igus® Solar System" starts the tradition of company-wide seminars

First Chainflex® cable introduced: **CF1** with innovative "bundle design" and world's first "5xd", **First E4 tubes**

**igus® Netherlands**  
 First plastic fiberoptic cable for E-Chains®

**igus® UK Great Britain**  
 New iglidur® catalog and numbering system (current format)  
 First CAD-PC catalog for E-Chains® **xigus 1.0**

**iglidur® J, iglidur® H, iglidur® Clips**  
**Chainflex® Bus and Servo cables**  
 First Maintenance & Service team in factory  
 First IT department  
**Taking over of new factory building in Cologne, start of pilot production.**

'85

'86



'87

'88

'89



'90

'91

'92



'93



**Founding of igus® Italy**

Transferral of last custom molding tools  
**CF 9, CF 10**  
**First DryLin® R Versions**  
**First KMA**  
**Series 600**  
**First xiglidur**

'94



**Move to Cologne-Porz-Lind, "New igus® factory"**

(expanded 4 times since); about 160 employees worldwide; Start of free food program; First automated stock system; **igubal®** started

'95



**E4/00** (quietest of its size) and **E4/4** open new applications  
First silo storage of plastic resin, computerized resin flow to machines

'96

**igus® do Brasil**

Decision to start an additional sales force for bearing products  
Start Human Resource department  
**Easy Chain®**  
ISO 9001 Certificate

'97

**igus® Singapore**

Start of "**Ready Chain®**"  
**TwisterChain®**  
**DryLin® T**

'98



**igus® Sweden**  
**igus® Belgium**  
**igus® South Africa**

Arburg develops "silent molding machine" upon igus® request.  
**DryLin® N**

'99



**igus® China**  
**igus® Denmark**  
**igus® France**

igus® Communication Agency starts  
First Global Satellite Meeting  
"Market Specialists Program" starts with Crane Market; continues in the next years for Machine Tools, Automotive, Packaging, Textile, Robots.



**Series 800** – World's largest plastic E-Chain®  
**First RoI E-Chain®**  
World's first **CAT 5 cable** for E-Chains®  
**iglidur® Z**

'00



**igus® Poland**  
**igus® Spain**  
**igus® Portugal**  
**E2/000**



igubal® started  
**New igus® factory**



**igus® Sweden**



**igus® China**



**igus® Poland**

# 20/40 action +10

Program "20/40+10"



igus® Switzerland



igus® Hungary



BCC Catalog

## igus® Korea

igus® Austria (operation started earlier)

## igus® India

Start of Programs "20/40+10", "Smart Attack", Data Based

1:1 Marketing

3D CAD online

World's first online product-life calculation for polymer sliding linear bearings

## igus® Taiwan

"Zero-Play" JVSM bearings

**New E-ChainSystem®: E6**

## igus® Switzerland

igus® Japan becomes wholly owned igus® company; tight collaboration with Captain Industries continues.

**Triflex® R**

**DryLin® W**

**CF98 with 4xd**

World's first Plastic Bearing award "manus®"

**System E3**

**CF Braid**

**iglidur® V400**

**DryLin® WQ**

Expansion plan to increase capacity by 50%

in 9 months well underway

Between 1150-1200 employees worldwide, over 200 molding machines.

## igus® Hungary

**DryLin® ZLW**

**Chainflex® cables: FireWire, FOC**

**Micro Flizz®**

iF Design gold award, category crossmedia for

igus® Corporate Design Buch, Boris Blase

## igus® Ukraine

More than 1400 employees worldwide;

**LeviChain – first floating E-Chain®**

**CFBUS.065 USB**

**High Temperature materials** for E-Chains® and Bearings  
manus® award, after Germany now successful in UK, Brazil, China and Italy;

80.000 products

First worldwide catalog campaign: BCC

igus.de winner of "Der große KatalogBenchmark" in mechanical engineering and supplier

Certificate of career advancement of the youth by the

Bundesagentur für Arbeit

'01

'02

'03



'04



'05



'06



# igus® headquarters in Cologne



**Building planned by Nicholas Grimshaw and Partners LTD**

In October 1988, igus® acquired a plot sized about 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> in the Porz-Lind district of Cologne.

This will be the future site of development, production, sales, administration and planning. As the centre of all activities, this location will serve as the new igus® headquarters.

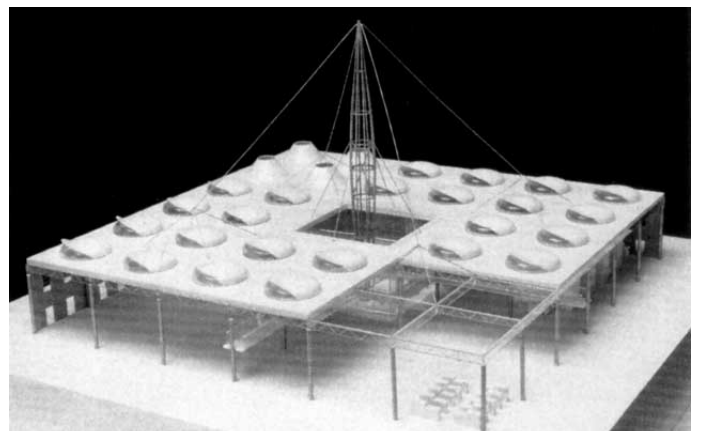
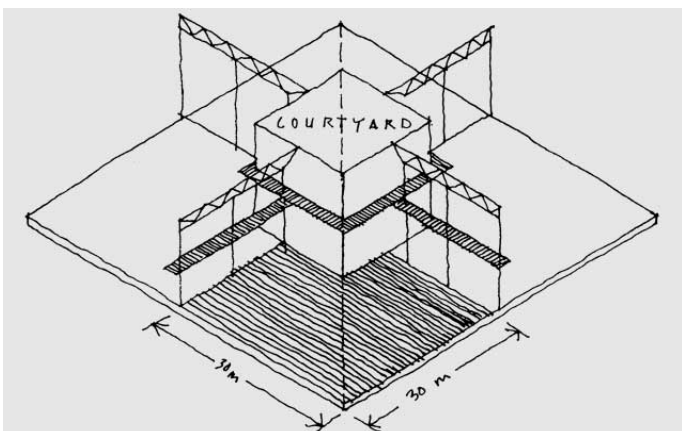
igus® has made preparations for fast growth, fast change and flexible response in all areas.

Offering the necessary facilities and technology, the new "igus® premises" will also be designed to promote staff performance.

The interior and exterior will be designed to reflect the enterprise's products and key philosophy: innovation – service – reliability, the customer being comparable to a solar system's centre orbited by all igus® staff and igus® entities dedicated toward solving the customer's problems.



**Office-"rondell"**



# igus® Slogans

igus® has a wealth of legends, oral history, oral "rules" and "sayings". Most of these "slogans" were presented or developed at igus® seminars and workshops.

Others were adopted from books or articles originally and became igus® folklore.

Still others originated from personal sayings and became legend. They have never before been written down

in one list. Nor are they in any way complete. Nor are they all logical, you will find contradictions.

The "list of slogans" may help to understand where igus® comes from, what some "old-timers" are talking about, and what has been thought out. It is by no means complete. Nor is it a "manual".

It's just some food for thought.

## igus® universal:

- "Yes, we do!"
- "In today, out today."
- Deliver OR inform.
- Speed: Nothing impresses like speed.
- Quality: Do it right the first time.
- No more boss! Give ME the customer!!  
Everybody is a manager!!!
- To Manage: to finish something successfully
- Customers are our sun. The sun is the source for all light and energy. Customers are the source for ideas (light, sometimes through complaints, "sunburn") and money (energy).
- "We are not nice-weather-managers."
- Decide AND inform.
- "We buy ourselves. We sell ourselves. We get better prices by personal involvement."
- Improve productivity. Always.
- "Finding profits in funny places": small improvements add up to large savings.
- "Innovation AND Service"
- 20/40Vision+10 ( Grow 20 % per year with ECS, 40 % with bearings, at minimum 10 % profit)
- Be a fly, not a bee.
- The power of "yet". "We can't do it...YET."
- "Every crisis holds an opportunity."
- Seek to understand before you make yourself understood.
- Leading by Numbers: We have to know where we stand.
- "3-1=4" If you do the work of 3 people with 2, your prices go down, sales go up, your company grows, and you hire 2 new people. And back to 3-1=4.
- "We work like structural engineers."
- "We don't work on the edge."
- "We mean what we say. 2+2=4"
- Stretch Goals
- Responsibility: You don't get it, you take it.
- "We trust our gut."
- "What's next?" Improve & innovate forever.

## On Products:

- Innovation: Invent something new.  
Products that excite.
- "Aim of all igus® products: Customers must have technical AND commercial benefits"
- Simplicity is the hardest to achieve.
- Plastics for longer life®: igus® plastic products and systems make machines last longer, reduce or eliminate maintenance and lubrication.

## On Production:

- "A busy-looking factory loses money." (Running and driving around is unproductive waste of time.)
- "Work with two hands."
- "We check our inventory. We stop spending money. We look at our numbers daily."
- "We send our invoices daily!!!!"

## On Complaints:

- "Each complaint must be seen by the leaders." To learn.
- "We are happy about each complaint. Because only 10% or less of our angry customers call us. The others buy someplace else."
- Complaints: If igus® made a mistake, it is igus®' responsibility. If igus® didn't make the mistake, we still must help.
- Solve the complaint first and fast to the satisfaction of your customer, then look for the culprits.
- "We don't stop to visit the difficult customer."
- Perfect complaint management is excellent selling. You may win a customer for life.

## On Selling:

- "First person on the phone helps!" (No connecting, no giving the customer the "runaround")
- "Answer the phone on first or second ring."
- "No saying 'No' to the customer before asking your teamleader"
- "Good service" is when your customer recommends you to a friend
- Preparation is 90% of success in sales.
- Talk-Listening Ratio of 30:70
- "We learn most from the toughest customers."
- "Selltainment®" – Communicate your aim, start, then let the customers lead you to what they want to see, touch, learn in pictures, graphs, films, samples, etc.
- Physical Selling: Show it, work with the products.
- "We try to gain the trust of our customers."
- An igus® salesengineer without a samplecase is not from igus®.
- WOW!-Effect. "The 'Moment of Truth' is my responsibility."
- Activity, Activity, Activity. We cannot always influence the customer's decision, but we can influence all our activities, quantity and quality.
- "Beware of the discount devil." The art of negotiating prices.
- "We do everything for our customers, we just want our money on time."

## And ...

- "Only you can make your life fun." (Günter Blase)

# igus® People



**Matthew Aldridge**  
igus® United Kingdom

32 years old, BEng (Hons), started at igus® 1996. Outside Sales (Southern England and Republic of Ireland), 1998; UK Bearings Product Manager, 1999; Director of UK Bearings Division, 2003.



**Virginie Beitzel**  
igus® France

30 years old, 1998 – Junior product manager igus® PLP in France, 2000 – International Sales Manager in Cologne Export Bearings, 2002 – Directrice Commerciale igus® PLP (Bearings), 2003 – Directrice Commerciale igus® SARL (Bearings and E-Chains®)



**Meinolf Blume**  
igus® Germany

59 years old, Electrician with igus® since 1992, responsible for everything electric like telephone installation, energy supply, complete networks, prevents breakdowns of machinery, troubleshooting



**Michel Cas**  
igus® Brasil

42 years old, Economist, General Manager igus® do Brasil, began in 1991 in Cologne as European Sales Manager; in 1996, started igus® do Brasil, first igus® office in Latin America.



**Joseph Ciringione**  
igus® USA

36 years old, North American Sales Manager ECS, Started in 1995 – Inside Technical Sales, 6 months later – Regional Sales Manager for New England, 2000 – Eastern District Sales Manager, 2002 – North American Sales Manager.



**Bilal Ismail**  
igus® Singapore

44 years old, with igus® since 1997 as Regional Sales Manager. Managing Director from 2001. Mission: To drastically grow the igus® presence in the ASEAN region. 1999-2001: assisted with sales in India, Korea, Taiwan, also supporting Australia.



**Diego Jiménez Prieto**  
igus® Spain

29 years old, Dipl.-Ing. (industrial). Started with igus® in 2000 as Junior Product Manager for E-Chains®. In 2003 as Product Manager for ReadyChains® and ECS. Mission: Develop igus® Spain to increase the ReadyChains® sales.



**Norbert Klein**  
igus® Germany

45 years old, with igus® since 1984, Executive Producer igus® ECS. Started as tool maker at iform, in 1987 as foreman at iform, switched 2003 to igus® as executive producer, cares for trouble-free production.



**Efstathios Manoussios**

igus® Germany  
31 years old, Installer, with igus® since 1997. Started in the assembly of E4, moved to stock, then to the final inspection, today shiftleader in stock and assembly, cares for the interaction of the sections and communicates with the distribution and the order process.



**James Mao**

igus® China  
36 years old, Managing Director, with igus® since 1998. Started as an igus® representative in China marketing for one and half years, setting up igus® China in 1999 with three persons, igus® China grew up to employ more than 30 people.



**Matthias Paluszek**

iform Germany  
35 years old, started in 1991 at iform as a toolmaker, since 2003 as a qualified technician, since 2005 as a team leader at iform. Mission: To develop and construct the best low-priced molds for igus®.



**Artur Peplinski**

igus® Switzerland  
33 years old, Dipl.-Oec., with igus® since 1997, until 2002 International Sales Manager; CEO igus® Poland and igus® Denmark during that time; in 2003 Sales Director igus® France; from 2003 CEO igus® Switzerland; since 2006 Leader Intl. Sales & Marketing



**Joschi Rohe**

igus® Germany  
40 years old, Dipl.-Ing. Produktionstechnik, with igus® since 1993, started as exhibition manager, leader electronic media since 1997, creating customer-related websites and electronic catalogs for all igus® customers worldwide.



**Angela Schwarz**

igus® Germany  
42 years old, working at igus® since July 1994 as team assistant Energy Chain Systems®



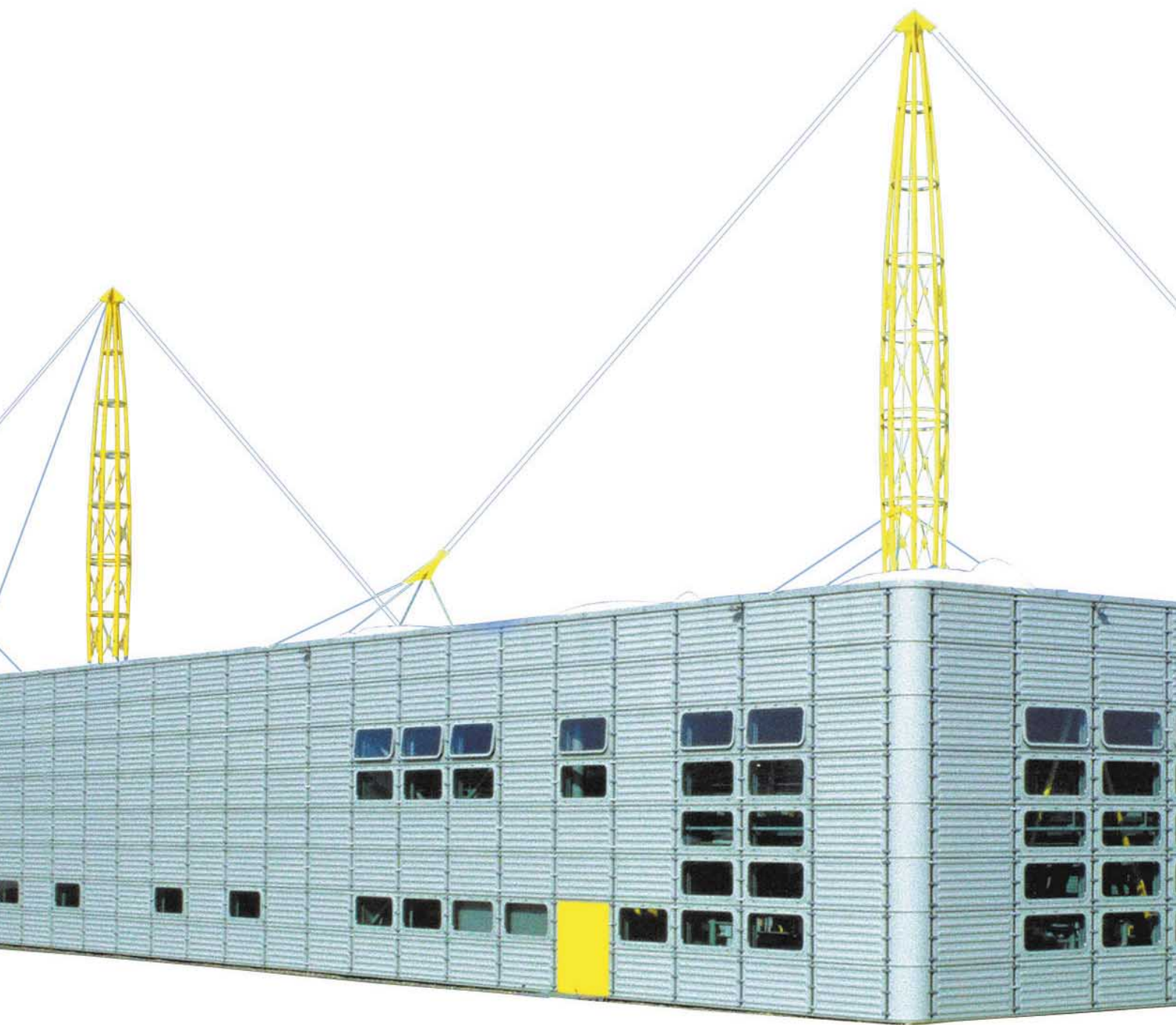
**Ronald van der Werf**

igus® Netherlands  
34 years old, with igus® since 1997, Inside Sales, Mission: Build a long time relationship with customers by giving them the best quality for a competitive price; giving advice for the right chain/ cable. Started as Telemarketer, Junior Product Manager, Product Manager.



**Pedro Villas Boas**

igus® Portugal  
38 years old, Dipl.-Ing. (Mec), with igus® since 1996. Developed igus® Portugal to profitably increase sales more than 50% this year through innovative products. Technical Sales Manager until 2000, then founding of igus® office as Managing Director.



**igus<sup>®</sup>**  
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