



Press Release

Date

August 7, 2009

Marion Eisenblätter
Corporate Communications
Tel. +49 911 395-2645
Fax +49 911 395-4041
marion.eisenblaetter@gfk.com

Dr. Raimund Wildner
GfK-Nürnberg e.V.
Tel. +49 911 395-2573
Fax +49 911 395-2715
raimund.wildner@gfk.com

75 years of GfK

A successful piece of German market research history

Nuremberg, August 7, 2009 – For 75 years, the name GfK has been synonymous with responsibility, initiative and innovative spirit in the field of market research. The company has succeeded in growing from a small association with close university links to one of the leading global market research organizations. Back then, as now, GfK placed people at the very center of its work: according to founder Wilhelm Vershofen, it tries to “allow the voice of the consumer to be heard”.

On August 8, 1934, Wilhelm Vershofen, one of the founding fathers of GfK, published an essay entitled “Broad-based consumer surveying”. This paper was essentially GfK’s birth certificate. Wilhelm Vershofen, Erich Schäfer and Ludwig Erhard subsequently established the small, university-affiliated association “Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung e.V.”, the foundation stone of the now fourth largest market research organization in the world, which generates annual sales of more than EUR 1.2 billion.

The milestones

In 1936, GfK started out with a survey into the level of recognition of the Bayer company logo. Continuous consumer research began in 1957, when the company Henkel commissioned GfK to establish the first household panel in Germany. This panel initially comprised 1000 households that reported regularly to GfK on their purchasing behavior, and it has since grown to include 30,000 households. Further milestones included the start of retail panel research in 1970 and the takeoff of TV research in 1984. The past decade, in particular, has seen rapid growth: in 1999 GfK was launched on the stock exchange and in the same year, the company took the leap over the big pond, acquiring GfK Custom Research Inc. in the USA. In 2005 it purchased the market research company NOP World, which operated in Europe and the USA, in the largest takeover in GfK’s history to date. As a consequence, within six years GfK succeeded in becoming the number 7 market research company in the USA, the most important country worldwide in the field of market research.

GfK SE
Nordwestring 101
90419 Nuremberg

Tel. +49 911 395-0
Fax +49 911 395-2209
public.relations@gfk.com
www.gfk.com

Management Board:
Prof. Dr. Klaus L. Wübbenhorst
(CEO)
Christian Weller von Ahlefeld
(CFO)
Petra Heinlein
Debra A. Pruent
Dr. Gérard Hermet
Wilhelm R. Wessels

Supervisory Board Chairman:
Dr. Arno Mahlert

Commercial register

Nuremberg HRB 25014



No future without a past

Many GfK subsidiary companies also have traditions that go back a long way. The oldest company is GfK Custom Research North America: its origins date as far back as 1923, when Dr Daniel Starch carried the first global advertising effectiveness surveys. The first foreign subsidiary of the GfK Group was GfK Austria, which in 1960 ushered in the new international era of GfK.

Subsequent years saw a continuous expansion of the GfK network, with the initial focus on Western European countries widening after 1989 to include Eastern Europe. In 1992, GfK ventured to the other side of the globe and integrated the first Australian subsidiary into the GfK network.

GfK then went on to extend its network into Asia, the Middle East and Africa. In 2002 it was the first company to enter the Latin American market of Brazil, and experienced rapid growth there. In the meantime, GfK Brazil has become the number 4 company in the country's market research industry.

GfK pursues its strategy with consistency and expands its global network by acquiring market research companies that are well rooted and established in their domestic markets. Today, the GfK Group is the number 4 market research company worldwide, and operates in more than 100 countries.

Then as now: the consumer is at the center

Since its establishment, GfK has retained its undiminished role as an initiator and promoter of innovative methods and measurement technologies. Today, GfK produces studies on all areas of economic life, including purchasing power maps, advertising effectiveness tests, media research and detailed location analyses – all at global level. Although much has changed in the years since 1934, one thing has remained constant: the goal of “allowing the voice of the consumer to be heard”.

The GfK Association

The GfK Association was established in 1934 for the promotion of market research. Its membership consists of approximately 600 companies and individuals. The purpose of the Association is to carry out basic research, to promote the training and further education of market researchers and to regularly produce studies to be made available to the membership. With a 57% stake, the Association is the majority shareholder of GfK SE. Further information: www.gfk-verein.com.



The GfK Group

The GfK Group offers the fundamental knowledge that industry, retailers, services companies and the media need to make market decisions. It offers a comprehensive range of information and consultancy services in the three business sectors Custom Research, Retail and Technology and Media. The no. 4 market research organization worldwide operates in more than 100 countries and employs over 10,000 staff. In 2008, the GfK Group's sales amounted to EUR 1.2 billion. For further information, visit our website: www.gfk.com.

Responsible under press legislation:
GfK SE, Corporate Communications
Marion Eisenblätter
Nordwestring 101
90419 Nuremberg, Germany
Tel. + 49 911 395-2645
Fax + 49 911 395-4041
public.relations@gfk.com