

# Cutting costs means optimising processes

Although it might not look like it in some countries at the current time, the continuing liberalisation of the gas market will inevitably lead to international, 'borderless' competition and deep-rooted changes in the gas industry. Everything will come under the microscope. Mergers and acquisitions are creating larger, internationally active energy suppliers. They are all competing with each other and with smaller participants in the market. In the battle to win customers, energy, transport and metering prices will all feel the pressure. And as if this pressure isn't enough, there are still the regulation authorities to contend with. They are making regulations concerning how high the metering price is allowed to go in order to avoid unfair competition. There are already signs that the true costs of providing metering services are actually higher than the maximum amount now under discussion.

Anyone involved in the market who has closely followed the development of product prices in the last few years is fully aware that the required cost reductions cannot be compensated by purchasing cheap supplies. Many utilities have experienced first-hand that bargains can often turn out to be the most expensive alternative over a longer period of time and can make a mockery of the most carefully calculated profit projections.

As the manufacturer of components we are often the first to be targeted when it is a question of reducing costs. Our products have been under extreme cost pressure for many years. As a result of the opening of the European market and the ensuing fierce competition, prices have steadily fallen and have established themselves at a low level. From the experience of the last few years we have learned that the greatest potential for savings does not lie with parts or components but is to be found in the optimisation of process chains.

Process optimisation is the main task facing us in future. This is the only way of cutting costs sufficiently and making badly-needed resources readily available. In order to help you rise to the challenges you are facing, we have for a long time been developing products and systems which are of benefit in a process-oriented environment. These developments include the unique 'plug & play' Absolute-ENCODER for gas meters and the accompanying EK260 system volume corrector. This system ensures that the time-consuming and costly reproduction of original meter readings and the expensive monitoring of the pulse transmission on site are now very much things of the past.

Process optimisation need not always involve high-tech and electronic solutions. It can also manifest itself in small, inconspicuous but nonetheless ingenious things such as the CHEKKER® system, which we would like to introduce in this issue of Profiles under the heading of 'CHEKKER® – for optimised billing processes'.

You can rest assured that our efforts in helping you to optimise your processes will not stop here and that you will be hearing more from us in due course.



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## IMPRINT

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**DESIGN:**

design werk  
www.design-werk.com

**PUBLISHING DATES:**

Three times a year  
Articles signed by the author  
reflect his / her personal opinion