

“Quality is everyone’s concern!”

Josef Švamberg, Quality Director

Mini-series honouring some of the many professionals who contribute to the smooth running of the flow control industry

By David Sear

Talk to Mr. Švamberg for a few minutes and you immediately know that he is totally committed to his job, ensuring the quality of ARAKO’s internal processes and that of its products. To achieve this he manages some twenty people in the quality department as well as the quality inspection department. Considering what his work involves, Mr. Švamberg insists that the role of the Quality Director extends far beyond the walls of his specific departments. “To achieve quality takes much more than investing in test equipment or drafting an internal protocol. What is important is to make sure that every single employee in the company understands what quality is and why it is so essential. They need to understand that quality is not simply a matter for the quality department; rather it is a prime concern for all staff members, whatever their job roles are. In fact, I’d go as far as to say that making sure all my colleagues understand this simple message is the hardest part of my work.” During his long career spanning almost forty years Mr. Švamberg has of course witnessed many changes in the valve industry. However, probably the biggest development, he says, concerns the paperwork. “The quality requirements in the seventies were as strict as they are today. Nowadays, the main change I would say relates to the documentation. Previously we might have included thirty pages of documents with a valve but now that figure can run into hundreds of pages.” Asked about any special career highlights, Mr. Švamberg says that implementing the current quality system was definitely a memorable achievement. And this system has certainly stood the test of time, as it was set up some twenty-five years ago. “Of course, establishing and implementing a thorough quality programme



costs money and those costs will inevitably be passed on to customers. However, our clients need valves for demanding applications and are willing to pay a little extra to have long-term performance and reliability,” notes Mr. Švamberg. With retirement on the horizon Mr. Švamberg has already ensured that the work of the Quality Department will continue smoothly and seamlessly. “I am educating everyone in the quality department so that they can carry on as and when I am not here.” He concludes our pleasant interview with some words of wisdom for young professionals looking to make a career in quality. “Be tenacious, be consistent, and above all develop the necessary communication skills so you can convince everyone in the company why quality is so important.”

Personal profile:

Name: Josef Švamberg

Company: ARAKO

Location: Opava, Czech Republic

Position: Quality Director

Education: Secondary School of Industry and Mechanical Engineering (4 year study), Secondary School of Industry and Electrotechnology (1 year specialized study in leakage testing field)

Outside interests: music, photography

Following Valve World: since 2012

DID YOU KNOW.... That ARAKO:

- has been producing valves since 1953
- was at the birth of the nuclear energy industry in the former Czechoslovakia in 1976
- continues to deliver valves for NPPs within Europe, Russia and also Asia, including valves for the primary circuits
- is also strong in high-pressure area, such as high-pressure gate and globe valves for conventional power plants
- follows a wide tradition of engineering production including Minerva (producing world-famous sewing machines from 1881 to 1953), Armaturka Minerva Opava, later Sigma
- belongs to the engineering division of the corporation Rosatom – Atomenergomash, Russia.