



The Chronicle

A great heritage spanning over seven decades worldwide.

Celebrating 70 years since our first entrance

The world in 1953 was a very different place, but many of our founder's strategies and values remain relevant today.

■ The Record brand has been thriving for 70 years now, so it's a good moment to reflect on our progress – especially after the excitement of the ASSA ABLOY merger and our integration into Business Segment Pedestrian. One thing that's striking to me is how certain characteristics have endured throughout Record's history. In other words, how we've managed to evolve while retaining the qualities that have made us successful.

For example, Record has consistently maintained a global perspective. From the beginning, Helmut Heinz Bunzl had ambitions for his company beyond the national borders of Switzerland. He set up an Austrian subsidiary in the company's first year, then continued across Europe and into the US.

It's an approach that has served us well, and post-integration we now have subsidiaries in over 30 countries. Looking back, you can see the wisdom of our founder's approach. Corporate consolidation has been an inescapable trend for decades, and without the economies of scale that came from careful international expansion, Record would not have been able to compete. The founder had the vision to look outwards to larger markets, and 70 years later, we hold on to that ambitious attitude.

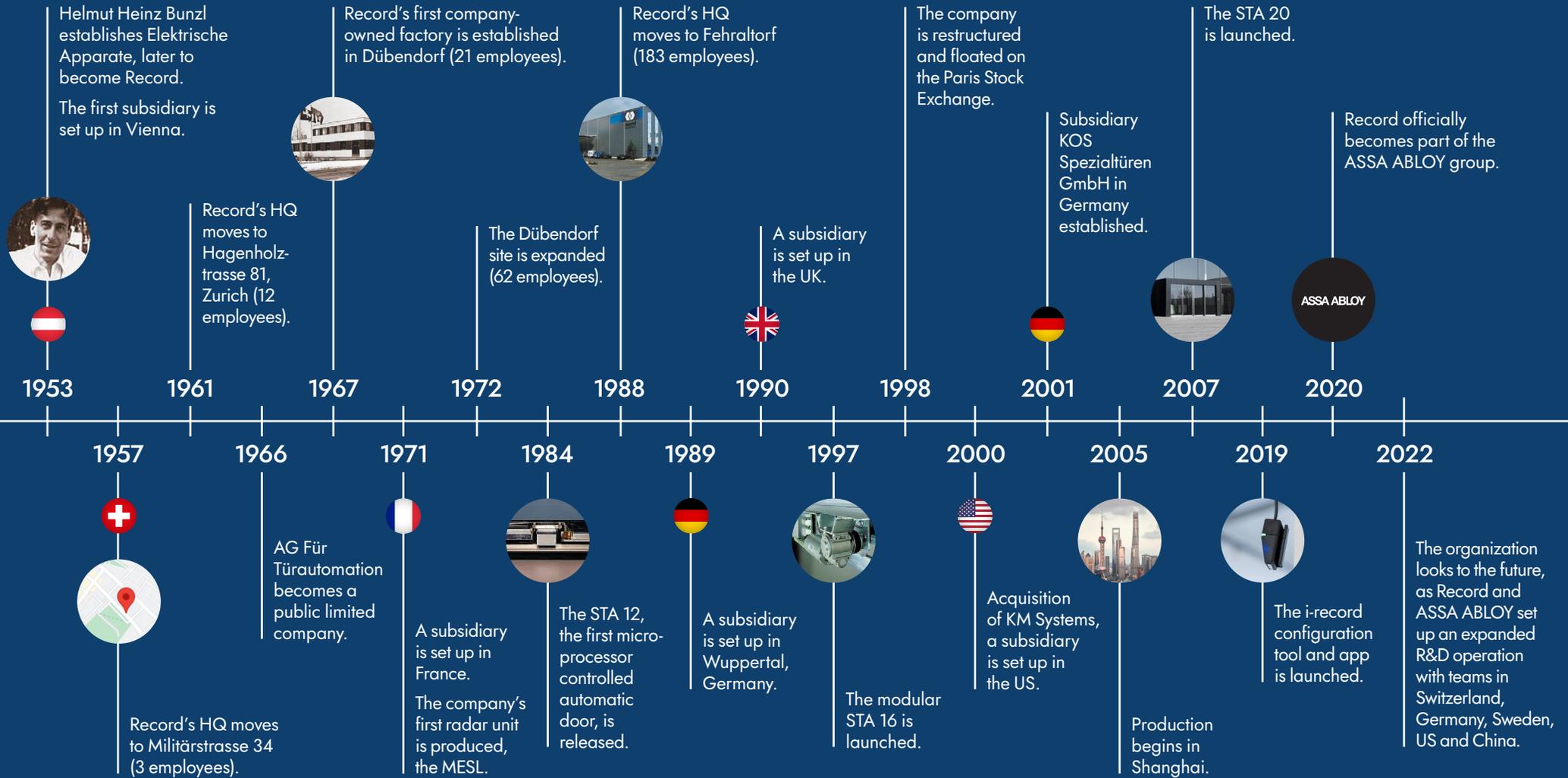
When Record introduced System 20, in 2007, it confirmed our international approach. That was when we fully embraced the platform concept, and it allowed us to successfully set up manufacturing hubs throughout the world. Its enduring success owes a lot to another factor that Helmut Heinz Bunzl held dear: product quality. Mr Bunzl stayed closely involved with product development here until he was in his 80s, and his devotion to robust, innovative solutions continues to inspire us.

Of course, a lot has changed over the years. We're bigger, and we're part of something bigger still. When I joined Record in 2011, our annual revenue was around €200 million. By the time of merger, we were taking in about €400 million every year, and now the merged pedestrian business accounts for more than €1 billion in sales.

And this growth means that more people are involved. Fortunately, we've been able to maintain another Record characteristic: a committed, positive and good-natured workforce. My fondest memories during my twelve years have been the times spent with colleagues who've become friends. My proudest moments have been seeing people develop, in their careers and in their lives. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Record's first 70 years!

Markus Kast, Head of Business Segment Pedestrian







A part of the Record family – at work and at home!

As well as spending over 30 years of his career at Record, Michael Hirt is married to Patricia Hirt-Bunzl, daughter of founder Helmut Heinz Bunzl. Clearly, his bond with Record runs deep, so we asked him to reflect upon his time here.

Michael, you spent much of your professional life at Record. When did you join the organization?

I started in 1989, so by the time of the merger I was the old fossil of the company! I started in export administration and I went through a lot of different jobs after that. I was assistant to the CEO, then I was based in Paris as a liaison between our headquarters and our French subsidiary. I came home after that, to be managing director of Record Switzerland for about five years. I also sat on the executive board, first as CMO and then as MD for Eastern Europe. I was on the executive board for 15 years, right up until the merger.

You must have seen a lot of changes over the years.

Of course, yes. Looking back, I can see clear eras at the company. There was the Helmut Heinz Bunzl era, when the company was small enough to be led by a charismatic owner. He founded the company and expanded it, and he was smart enough to see that as the company grew, it would need to become more professional. That led to a new era with Hubert Jouffroy as CEO. He introduced the STA 16 which was a major breakthrough for us, both technically and in terms of shaping our future. Then in the 17 years under Stefan Riva, we became a more professional and even more international group. And finally, in the latest era as part of ASSA ABLOY we became jointly the clear global market leader.

It's often difficult for company founders to step back, but it seems that Helmut Heinz Bunzl handled it well.

He did it really, really well. He stepped back from his role as managing director, then as chairman, then finally from his R&D role. He gave up these positions to people who were younger and more familiar with new technologies. As the company grew, he saw that it really needed a team of managers to move forward. In the last, say, 17 years before the merger, the executive board worked very closely. It was real teamwork between the 8 of us, and we're still good friends who meet up whenever we can.

Was it still a family business after Mr Bunzl stepped back?

It was important to my father-in-law that the family would continue to have some influence, so his daughter Michèle represented the family on the board of directors for many years, and I sat on the executive board. The other two sisters, were involved too. Christiane, the oldest daughter, worked alongside me in marketing for a few years. My wife, Patricia, is a graphic designer, and she helped out with jobs from time to time. The daughters were all shareholders, so they were also involved in a lot of major decisions.

The biggest decision must have been the merger with ASSA ABLOY?

Yes, that was mostly a decision between the four main shareholders, including the three daughters. We saw it as a chance to change the company in way that benefited

everyone. A lot of people are still there and now part of the ASSA ABLOY Group, especially senior management, which is a positive thing. It also ensured that we would continue to have offices and production in Fehrltorf which was important to us all.

I expect it was an emotional moment, especially for Michèle, Christiane and Patricia

Record was a part of the daughters' lives since they were born. But it was a good time to open a new chapter. And we knew that ASSA ABLOY would help Record to continue as a brand and as a team, so it was a super decision for everyone.

Why do you think that Record has been successful for so long?

I think there's been three pillars of success. In the 1990s, we moved to more modular concept. Starting with the STA 16, we introduced a common base for our sliding doors, swing doors and revolving doors. That created a lot of synergies, gave us a lot of purchasing power and really changed the way we operated.

The second pillar was the focus on the customer, service and maintenance. We developed it professionally, moved into preventive maintenance, improved the longevity of our products, and gave our customers more security and confidence in their doors.

The third was to enlarge our network. We increased our international reach, but we also expanded into installation and maintenance. All three combined made us stronger.

Are there any values or principals that Record continues to represent?

Fairness has always been at the heart of our business, and that goes back to our founder. It was always about offering the best products and services. Satisfied customers guarantee the development of the company, so we strived for excellence and I think that philosophy is still there.

It was important that we weren't only fair to our customers, but also fair to our employees. I'm really happy that, as part of ASSA ABLOY, that's become even wider. We can now offer more opportunities, more positions and better training as part of a larger group.

It certainly sounds like you're happy to have spent so much of your working life with Record.

Yes, and I'm thankful to my father-in-law for giving me the chance of a lifetime. Thanks to my wife too, for staying with me during the times when I travelled abroad so much! I'm especially happy and proud that the Record brand name is going to continue. You've got such a strong image, around the globe!

The Record story

Pre–1953

Record's roots in Switzerland and Austria

For one of the formative events in the history of Record, we can look back to the beginning of the Second World War. When the annexation of Austria forced many Jews into exile, Dr Felix Bunzl and his two sons Helmut Heinz (b. 1924) and Otto (b. 1925) left for Switzerland.

Helmut Heinz Bunzl would go on to study at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. His father had given him the idea that doors which moved automatically could be a successful enterprise – the elder Bunzl had always felt that door handles were somewhat unhygienic. Together, they devised a prototype of a swing-door drive (the N1), and Elektrische Apparate was founded on 18 March 1953 with HH Bunzl as sole proprietor.



Both father and son felt that Switzerland was a great place to develop their products but that it wasn't large enough to meet their ambitions. Therefore, they looked back towards the country of their birth. The company's first subsidiary was set up later that same year, in Vienna, Austria.

1953

A year of discovery and change

Helmut Heinz Bunzl invented his N1 prototype at a time when major breakthroughs were taking place all over the world.

1953 was the year that James Watson and Francis Crick published their discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA – an advance that remains fundamental to our understanding of genetics.

It was also a year that brought huge political developments. Joseph Stalin died in March, and was soon succeeded by Nikita Khrushchev as the de facto leader of the Soviet Union. Dwight D. Eisenhower was inaugurated as the 34th President of the United States and, in London, Elizabeth II was crowned as Queen of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

An epic breakthrough occurred in May 1953, when Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary became the first people to reach the summit of the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest.

1953 was also a big year for television debuts. It was the first year that the Academy Awards ceremony was broadcast on TV (The Greatest Show on Earth took home the Best Picture prize). Closer to home, television was broadcast in Switzerland for the first time on 16 March – two days before HH Bunzl founded his company!

1953 – 1967

Record on the move

The company was very much a one-man operation when HH Bunzl set up its first home in Zurich – Sumatrasstrasse 20, to be precise. After personally manufacturing 25 units, he moved the company to larger premises later in the year. Still in Zurich, he was also able to take on two employees.

With a third employee, the company moved into a larger space in 1957, and again in 1961 (they had 12 employees by this time). It demonstrates the steady, incremental growth that took place in the early years, as consumers began to appreciate the advantages of automatic doors and the company expanded and improved its range.

The biggest step, though, came in 1967 when they finally moved in to a company-owned factory. By this time a public limited company with 21 employees, AG Für Türautomation (as it was then known) moved about 10 km out of Zurich to Dübendorf. This plant would be the company's headquarters until 1988.



1971 – 1978

Technological leaps forward

The Dübendorf base became a hive of innovation and development throughout the 1970s, in keeping with HH Bunzl's passion for engineering and invention. A huge leap forward came in 1971 with the MESL, the company's first radar unit. It looks rather bulky compared to the sleek technology that Record manufacture today, but it was a game-changer that ultimately eclipsed underfoot contact mats as the industry standard.

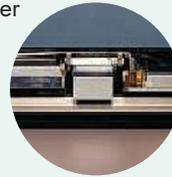
Radar technology was followed by the increasing use of electronics, culminating in the STA 9. This was the company's first sliding door fitted with an electronic control unit (it was released in 1976). Shortly after this, Record kept the electronic revolution moving by setting up a second plant in Zurich, dedicated to electronics. 'Plant 2' operated from 1978 to 1988.

1984

The computer age reaches Record

In the early-1980s, computer technology was becoming more and more widespread so it was natural that Record would look to incorporate it in their products. This happened with the STA 12, the

world's first automatic door system controlled by a microprocessor. It was launched in 1984 – the same year as the release of the Apple Macintosh, and one year before Windows 1.0 hit computer terminals. It would be one of the company's most successful models all the way through to 1992.



1988

The Fehraltorf era begins

183 employees were based at the Dübendorf plant by 1988. It was bursting at the seams, and the time had come to find more suitable premises. A custom-built headquarters was therefore built in Fehraltorf, a few kilometers east of Dübendorf – and only 15 km from Helmut Heinz Bunzl's first workshop.

As the company continued to grow, expansion became necessary. An extension was completed in 2005, providing an extra 4,000m² of space. It was designed by architects Michèle Rota-Bunzl and Bruno Rota, the founder's daughter and son-in-law.

Record still operates from Fehraltorf – though, of course, as part of the ASSA ABLOY group – and is likely to retain a presence there for many years to come.

1997

The modular generation

The STA 16 was undoubtedly a landmark product in Record's history. It represented a major shift. Previously, the company had offered a fairly wide range of product groups, but with the STA 16 they started to implement a platform concept. The STA 16 was essentially a standard base for Record's sliding doors. It could be adapted to suit a wide range of applications and customer demands, but for the most part it relied on a small selection of components. It was Record's first product line based on modular design principles, and it set the template that generations of automatic doors would follow.

This approach provided many benefits. Reducing the diversity of parts simplified manufacturing and reduced costs, as well as enabling production in more locations. It helped with maintenance and upgrades too, since individual components could be easily replaced.

Installation was also simplified. It could take two days for two engineers to install the older models, but the STA 16 could generally be fitted by a single engineer in a day.

A serious gain for both the company and its customers.



1998

Going public

As the company continued to grow, the time finally arrived for it to be floated on the stock market. The company was restructured, with a holding company (agta record) and two spin-offs (agtatec and Record Door Automation) established in Zurich. A partial initial public offering was made in May 1998, and the company was listed on the Paris Stock Exchange.

1998 – 2003

European growth

During the years either side of 2000, the company embarked on a significant spell of European expansion. Both vertical and horizontal acquisitions were made at this time. The goal was not just to increase market share in sales of automatic doors. Companies we acquired in Denmark (1998), France (2000 and 2002), Sweden (2000), Poland (2001), Netherlands (2003) and Spain (2003). In 2000, subsidiaries were also set up in Spain and Hungary.



2000 onward

Sustainability matters

Into the 21st century, the environment became a bigger concern for everyone. Record was no exception in this regard.

Central to the company's sustainability efforts has been reducing raw material use in their products, especially aluminum and glass. The introduction of the CutITFmart cutting system was step forward in this area – it optimizes the use of aluminum profiles. Almost all the material in Record's doors is recyclable, and Record recycles material themselves: around 140 tons of material are recycled at their Swiss headquarters every year.

Recycling isn't the only sustainability measure to have been implemented in Fehraltorf over the years. Other examples include the installation of photovoltaic panels, and the development of a custom software package for optimizing technicians' vehicle use and driving routes.

Now, as part of the ASSA ABLOY group, Record contributes to group-wide science-based sustainability targets. These include ambitious emissions targets in scopes 1, 2 and 3.

2003

Stepping up security

In the aftermath of the appalling events of 9/11, security became a bigger concern in the minds of many. Record had been ahead of the trend in many ways. The burglar-resistant, multi-point locking CREMONA system had been introduced in 1994, while fire and smoke protection sliding doors had been available since 1996. The first automatic security doors (Flip Flow Exit Lanes) were released in 2000, for use in airports, subways and railway stations.

2003 was a big step forward for Record in this area. The SAFECORD line offered toughened glass, structural reinforcements and other security options, all integrated into a standard automatic door. The Record 16 RS added smoke protection to one of the most popular models, while the Flip Flow Twin was Record's first tunnel pedestrian gate for controlling flow in security-sensitive areas.



2007

A momentous year for Record

Two significant events in 2007 shaped the future of the company – the launch of the STA 20 and the acquisition of BLASI.

The STA 20 was the culmination of the modular concept introduced a decade earlier with the STA 16. The crucial development was the use of a CAN bus for communications between the control unit and sensor, allowing for simpler wiring and improved sensor performance. This was only possible because Record manufactures both control units and sensors, so in a sense, the success of the STA 20 justified the continuous R&D work done at Fehraltorf over the years. Remarkably, it continues to be in high demand, 16 years after its launch.

In the same year, Record acquired BLASI. The German manufacturer specialized in revolving doors and custom solutions. True craftsmanship and in a class of its own.



2020

COVID-19 and hygiene

The global pandemic that announced itself in early 2020 impacted on every industry imaginable. For Record, it represented both a challenge and an opportunity to make a positive contribution.

When the pandemic struck, the company's first instinct was to protect its employees by setting up work-from-home opportunities and ensuring social distancing. As industries shut down across the world, there was inevitably an economic impact for Record, but the organization adapted remarkably quickly, then realized that their products could have a positive role to play.

Automatic doors are inherently hygienic in that they remove the need for contact with door handles, and as a solution provider Record was able to quickly add additional services. For example, the FlowControl system was quickly developed and installed to count the number of people entering a shop or other building. Once the maximum safe capacity had been reached, the automatic doors would prevent more people from entering, thus ensuring that appropriate distancing could be maintained.

Record's automatic doors offer a wide range of benefits – access for disabled people, enhanced

security, design options and convenience. However, the company was formed in 1923 after Dr. Felix Bunzl convinced his son of their potential hygiene benefits. In a sense, Record had come full circle, and fulfilled the originators' objective throughout the pandemic years.

2020

A new chapter

As part of the 2020 merger with ASSA ABLOY, Helmut Heinz Bunzl's three daughters sold their stakes in the company. For the first time in its 67-year history, the organization would no longer be connected to the Bunzl family. It was a poignant moment for all involved, but it heralded both a new chapter and a continuation of the Record story.

The sisters were unequivocal that the Record brand would continue post-merger, and made sure that the organization's headquarters – so close to where their father built his first unit – would stay in operation. There may no longer be a Bunzl in the boardroom, but the Record family continues to thrive!



Technology at Record

Samuel Hedinger joined Record after he graduated as an electronic engineer in 1993. Formerly Head of Electronics, he has been Head of Application Engineering since 2016, so there are few people with a better overview of how Record's products and services have developed over the years.



The last few years at Record have been eventful, to say the least, but the most exciting developments in the near future are likely to be technological rather than organizational. That's the view of Samuel Hedinger, Head of Application Engineering, who believes that the new corporate structure will help the development of new ideas and products.

"We're at a time when the STA 20 and DFA 127 have been on the market for a long time," he says, "so it's an exciting stage in the development process: there's a lot of work going on around new products and new systems.

"Since the merger, there's a lot more new people involved, especially in development. Because we have more people, we have more ideas and more opportunities to progress in interesting ways. I've seen some great prototypes and I'm really looking forward to the future."

Breakthrough technologies, then and now

During his 30 years at Record, Samuel has seen the release of some of the group's most enduring products. In terms of products and platforms, he sees the STA 20 as a significant breakthrough.

"We'd used a CAN bus in the System 16 for internal communication for our control panel. We make both sensors and control units at Record, so when we developed the System 20, we realized that we could use

the CAN bus to connect the sensors too. That meant we could have simpler wiring with prefabricated cables. Another advantage is that we could set the parameters and visualize the sensors with the configuration tool i-record. These developments were unique in the market, so they were real selling points.

"Plus, our sensors used radar to look into the door leaf area and prevent ghosting [when automatic doors open without a pedestrian approaching]. We had more microprocessor power, too, so it gave the customer more options – it was a breakthrough in many ways."

Another factor behind Record's success has been its responsiveness and entrepreneurial spirit. Samuel feels that the group has always been quick to react to opportunities and market demands.

"We've always kept up with new technologies. With IoT for example, we started pilot projects early and tried to crystallize the advantages it might have for automatic doors. Once we saw there was a market for this technology, we were ready to move.

"It's the same story with data utilization right now. We have pilot projects where control units gather data. Again, it's about seeing the customer needs for these technologies. Which helps the products get ready to market quickly."

Life at Record – 30 years and counting!

During Samuel's early years at the company, Helmut Heinz Bunzl was a regular presence at Fehrltorf.

"He was a true entrepreneur," says Samuel, "but he was also an engineer. He had an affinity for technology and wanted to know everything, in detail, about the electronics and mechanics and everything else we were doing. His interest and his passion made a real impact."

Although the organization has always been ambitious, it has always retained the values of a family-run company. Samuel experienced this first-hand, when he suffered a stroke in 2012.

"After my stroke I was not able to speak," he says, "and I had to learn how to talk again over the coming months. My superiors supported me through this difficult time, and created a new position for me in the development department, where I could continue to work at Record.

"Not everyone stays at Record for 30 years. However, there are many people here that I've worked alongside for many years, and we do things together like motorbiking, snowshoeing, or just having fun. I have had made some very good friends over the years, and it's great that so many are still here."



Helmut Heinz Bunzl



Door leaves before delivery



The first logo, designed by Micla Bunzl



Kingdom Tower installations, Riyadh



Dübendorf new HQ, 1967



First swing door drive, 1953



Electronics testing in 1978



First circular sliding door, 1986



The heart of our operators, the circuit boards



Hotel Savoy Baur en ville, Zurich, 1955



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