

Training at Sauter – world-class performance is the goal.

Our market activities can be compared to a sports challenge. One of the indispensable requirements to be fit and successful in 'market sport' is continuous training that keeps knowledge and abilities absolutely up to date. However, this also involves providing our customers with all the information they need to handle our technology. This is why we take a broad-based approach to increasing professional building management expertise.

Building management technology is becoming more complex, more demanding – and yet simpler at the same time: more complex in terms of its functionalities, and therefore more demanding in terms of the requirements for planning and implementation – but simpler as regards handling while a building is being operated. Exploiting all the possibilities of a modern building management system calls for an understanding of all the interlinked aspects that can be developed only by imparting knowledge backed by a high level of expertise.

Conveying knowledge – an investment that brings returns

Our employees from every region should be enabled not only to understand Sauter's technology, but also to explain, demonstrate and apply it: in short, to 'sell' it. These goals are primarily achieved in the Sauter Training Centres at our headquarters in Basle and at Freiburg in Germany, where an extensive programme of seminars and courses is assembled each year. Major national companies such as those in Spain also maintain their own training centres.

Thanks to its location, of course, the training centre at our headquarters is close to the factory and to our development work and our production facility – in short, to the experience and expertise that we have accumulated.

*René Bader
Training Manager, Fr. Sauter Ltd.*

Most of the three- or four-day seminars mean a brief non-productive period for the employees who participate from the national companies, but this investment in time brings returns that should not be underestimated. The employees' new knowledge and abilities result in time savings, a more professional approach to customers and – in many cases – new customers acquired.

As well as Training Managers René Bader (at Basle) and Gerald Mestwerdt (at Sauter Cumulus in Freiburg), Sauter employees with very sound knowledge of specialised areas are available as presenters. Many of them regard these presentation assignments as a welcome change, and also as a special mark of respect for their expertise.

Benefiting from the snowball effect


Many course graduates from the national companies pass on their newly-acquired knowledge and skills to their colleagues and customers when it is their turn to take on the presenter's role. In keeping with the principle of 'training the trainer', we aim to exploit and foster this snowball effect even more intensively in the future. Knowledge should not stay put in just a few minds – it should be spread far and wide, and should enhance the overall expertise not only of Sauter's staff but also of our customers – in every region and at every level.

Customers need more knowledge

The increasing complexity of building management also makes it necessary for users to expand their knowledge. The better they are able to handle the technology, the more benefits they will naturally reap from it. This is why it is up to us to impart application-oriented knowledge about systems and components to our customers' specialist staff.

The aim here is not merely to familiarise customers with Sauter's technology. In fact, a growing number of customers are aiming to increase their expertise in the general technology of building management – in terms of consulting and application alike. For example, many of them want to know how a heating or ventilation system actually works, how a plant is structured, or how control technology is best handled.

Our national companies endeavour to impart this knowledge to their customers in the ways required by their particular markets. If they do not have appropriate resources of their own, they invite their customers to seminars in Basle and Freiburg im Breisgau, where courses are offered in German, French, English and Italian. Customer seminars are always kept separate from those for employees, because each category has its own conditions and requirements.



"Knowledge should not stay inside just a few minds – it should be spread far and wide among many individuals, so that our customers can benefit."

*Gerald Mestwerdt
Training Manager, Sauter Cumulus GmbH*

To ensure individual interchange between participants and presenters, the number of participants in all Sauter seminars (for customers and employees alike) is usually limited to 12 people.

Needs-oriented support and feedback

In courses at Sauter, we regard it as a priority to know every participant's requirements. Do they have a need for knowledge at this particular moment – in a specific task area, for instance – or do they need broader-based knowledge that will guide them on their way in the future? On this basis, the dialogue between the presenter and the course participant can take different forms – and the feedback from

participants to the presenters is also very important. In fact, the presenter is also involved in a constant process of broadening his knowledge – or, as a Latin proverb puts it: "By teaching we learn." This is why the courses are already subject to quality assurance so that their content and techniques can be continuously improved.



"The time invested in a seminar is paid back many times over – by time saved on many activities in the future thanks to increased expertise."



Fr. Sauter Ltd. and Sauter-Cumulus GmbH have already been certified to ISO 9001, and quality assurance is already in place in the basic and advanced training sectors as well. Increasing efforts are being made to ensure that Sauter's product managers receive feedback from the courses so that the maximum of customer experience can be integrated into advancing product development.

Sauter training: a magnetic effect

The training that Sauter provides is based on practice, for use in practice: user-oriented knowledge accumulated over many years is passed on. This is one of many reasons why the contents of Sauter's seminars and the presenters are equally appreciated elsewhere – for example by technical colleges including the Zug Technology and IT College (ZTI, the former Landis & Gyr training centre for engineers). Even competitors' employees attend Sauter seminars.

Spain offers another example of the level of respect for Sauter's training: even government departments have their building engineers trained at the Sauter Training Centre in Barcelona.

The Sauter Technical Academy: a customer training project with far-reaching prospects

Sauter realised a long time ago that customer training can be an effective tool for strengthening customer loyalty in the long term. In recent years, we have been seeking new ways to expand this sector and make it even more professional. Efforts have been aimed at creating interdisciplinary specialist training in building management.

Sauter looked for suitable partners through the specialist associations in the technological sectors involved, knowing that, although these associations had long since recognised the need for more professional training, nobody had properly satisfied this requirement. On the other hand, technical colleges were also looking for possible ways of closing gaps in their training programmes.

We ultimately managed to find a very interesting and professional partner: Mr Bremer of the Zug Technology and IT College (ZTI). This co-operation led to the first course of a more comprehensive nature: a postgraduate course in Managing Projects in Building Management. The knowledge imparted on this course covers the entire order handling process: this means that the material is geared to the sequence of a real project, dealing with all the relevant stages of a project from acquisition and the actual focus – the

"Our concern is to increase professionalism in building management in order to improve the sector's image. To do this, we need a greater degree of professionalism in training."

Dr. Felix Gassmann

General Manager, Sauter Building Control Switzerland Ltd.

technical implementation of the project – through to the hand-over to the Service department. Important topics such as contracts and legal aspects are also given due attention. The course design targets the comprehensive management expertise required for the special role of the project manager in building automation. This training in project management marked a first step towards making training more professional, and the foundation-stone of the Sauter Technical Academy was laid.

'Building Automation Technicians' – a new category of professionals?

The aim of the second step was to close the huge gap between the building automation project manager and the electrical installer. We were ultimately able to enter into another partnership with the Swiss Technical College of Winterthur (STF, through Mr. Haupt). The focus was on developing course contents such as the technical and – above all – practical basics of heating and ventilation systems, building automation systems and components, IT for building management, co-operation between project technicians and project managers, service, and so on. This new specialised course entitled 'Building Automation Technician' has already met with a lively response.

It has since become clear that these courses are appreciated not just as further education undertaken while working for a company. To an increasing extent, they are also attended by young people who have just completed their apprenticeships and who want to follow on with im-

mediate advanced training, specialising in aspects such as programming technology, customer consulting or maintenance.

All the Sauter Technical Academy courses at the ZTI and the STF are strictly neutral as regards technology. Knowledge about specialised Sauter technology is provided only at Sauter's seminars in Basle (and at the national companies).

More recognition for the role of building management technology

Building management technology is traditionally regarded as just one of many subdivisions of the construction industry.

This view is utterly outdated. Nowadays, building management technology is taking on a leading role as a key factor in determining the benefit that a building can yield.

As yet, however, the realisation that building management experts are eminently important partners in the construction industry has not become adequately established. Even the hourly rates in the sector show this very clearly, as compared (for instance) to those for IT – which are generally twice as high.

Building management technology at colleges and universities?

Given the current role of building management technology, it is hardly presumptuous to talk about the profession of building technician as a future training subject at university and college level. Technological development is bound to continue advancing in this sector, and this must inevitably be accompanied by an increase in the level of professionalism.

For its part, Sauter will make every effort to continue fostering basic and advanced training in building management, in co-operation with professional partners.

rene.bader@ch.sauter-bc.com
gerald.mestwerdt@de.sauter-bc.com
felix.gassmann@ch.sauter-bc.com