

# TRADITIONALLY INNOVATIVE

After joining Voith Hydro in 2012, **Chief Business Development Officer Kirsten Lange** reflects on a year in hydropower and plans for expanding aftermarket business.

**After a little over a year of working in the hydropower industry, what fascinates you the most?**

What I find intriguing is the fundamental importance of hydropower. It constitutes such a large share of renewable energy, making a very decisive contribution toward the attainment of climate objectives. I am also impressed by just how efficient it is, especially in compari-

son with thermal power stations. A third aspect: the positive side effects, such as flood protection and navigability. When I lived in China in the 1990s I experienced myself how important these factors are.

**What else has impressed you so far?** Hydropower is a unique combination of tradition and innovation. It is a sector

that has been around for a long time – some plants have been operating for over 100 years. At the same time, there is a great potential for innovation, in areas ranging from small hydro plants to the use of ocean energy. I find this combination extremely interesting.

**What attracted you to join Voith?**

Voith is a hidden champion with an excellent reputation, a company that successfully combines a long tradition and set of values with a modern approach. This can be seen in both the strategy and the day-to-day interactions with the customer. This special corporate culture really distinguishes Voith.

**Do you think these values are practiced actively at Voith around the world?**

Yes, definitely. They are a very unifying element. We are represented locally in markets all over the world, and yet there are the same strong values and a common understanding of what is important for the customer and what “engineered reliability” means.

**So, for you, Voith Hydro is both a global and a local company?**

We are active all over the world; there are very few companies globally that have such a high share of sales – and value-added – outside of their home country. And in all of these markets we are truly local companies with local employees.

**Where could Voith Hydro improve?**

I would like to move from an “either-or” mentality to more of an “and” approach. In other words, instead of focusing on either technology *or* costs, we need to think more about technology *and* costs. We won't put restrictions on technological development just to save money. We want to be both quick *and* thorough simultaneously. From the point of

view of an outsider, however, I can also say this: in its 140-year history, a great many things have been done well at this company. We can be proud of our capabilities.

**And what could be improved in the hydropower industry in general?**

I am troubled by the occasionally negative image that hydropower still has for some of the public. The entire industry needs to act more decisively and emphasize the advantages very clearly and distinctly: a safe, stable energy supply is the prerequisite for social development opportunities and economic growth. It can lead to greater educational opportunities, increased prosperity, more jobs and improved living conditions in developing and emerging economies. As the biggest contributor in the area of renewable energy, hydropower has a vital role here.

**You are in charge of aftermarket business, among other things. What innovations and developments are there in this area?**

The service business is a global growth market and a very important one. We want to be a comprehensive problem-solver for our customers. Service is more than replacing parts, it is about comprehensive asset management. There are many possibilities for us to contribute our technical expertise and help our customers.

**Will these changes take place in conjunction with customers?**

It only works in close collaboration with our customers, when combining the specific issues of our customers with our experience and expertise to create win-win solutions. We are continuing to invest and we will further build our local presence. To this end, we already took over Vortex Hydro earlier this year to strengthen our business in North America.



“Service is more than just replacing parts; we want to be a comprehensive problem-solver for our customers.”

**Tell us about the developments in the automation sector.**

Automation is also a core component for us. We have our own products in the market and want to continue to grow. We have not only an integrated product offering for large plants, but also competitive solutions in individual components. In modernization projects in particular a lot can be achieved with up-to-date control systems. Our specialists are available worldwide, such as in our automation laboratory in Brazil, where the advantages and efficiency of

modern automation systems can be simulated in real time. This is a solution that has been very well received by many of our customers.

**What would you like to see in the upcoming year?**

I would like to see satisfied customers, who notice time and again that we are a reliable partner, not just for turbines and generators, but also in automation and in the service business – in other words, that our traditional strengths are also effective in newer business areas. //