

MAN ON A Mission

Swiss company DECTRIS is the leading supplier of detectors for analytical X-ray diffraction applications. CEO and founder Christian Broennimann's entrepreneurial spirit is helping it to push the boundaries of science and enter new markets – not to mention support COVID-19 research.

Christian Broennimann
CEO @ DECTRIS

DECTRIS develops and manufactures the world's most accurate X-ray and electron cameras to fuel scientific breakthroughs around the world. While photographic cameras capture visible light, DECTRIS cameras count individual X-ray photons and electrons.

CEO Christian says the company's mission from the start has been to advance scientific discoveries, for example in biological research. Like a start-up, DECTRIS is constantly innovating, researching, and developing in its quest for perfection. Christian says speed is DECTRIS' unique selling proposition (USP); it's aiming to manufacture detectors that are 50 times faster than current standards. "Once you realise this technology's potential, you have customers for life – the world is getting faster and this remains our driver, to deliver excellent data at the fastest possible speeds,"

he says. Another DECTRIS specialty and a source of pride is its rapid support and commissioning, Christian adds.

DECTRIS is also the global leader in photon-counting X-ray detectors for science and industry, and the company has advanced into new markets such as electron microscopy and medical imaging. "I am very proud of our broad customer base," says Christian, who believes the company's biggest achievement is that its "instruments are being used at leading research facilities." Today, more than 50% of all new protein structures are determined with DECTRIS detectors, including a vast number of projects related to discoveries around COVID-19. Being at the forefront of scientific breakthroughs is what drives Christian.

Entrepreneur

So how has the CEO personally managed the company's rapid growth? "By hiring excellent



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DECTRIS' HQ in Switzerland

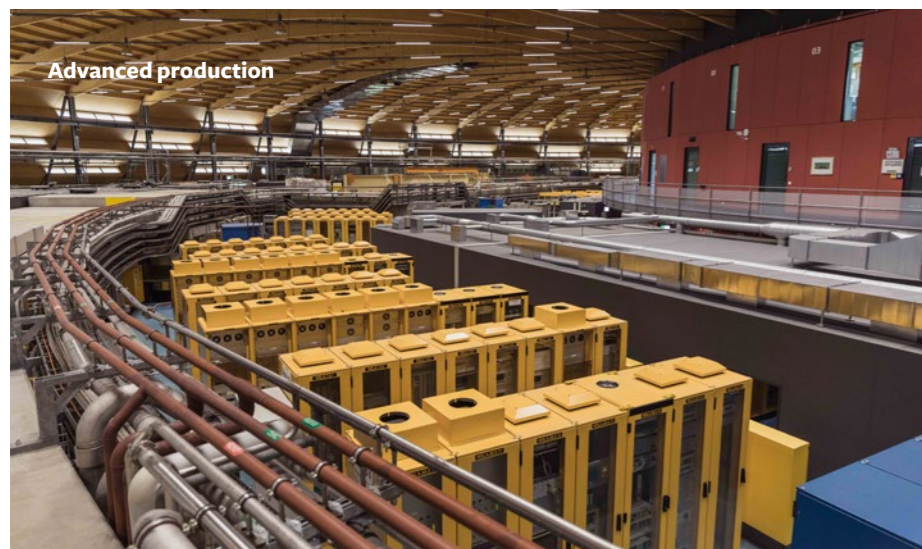
people,” he remarks, “but I’m definitely not a manager, I’m more of an entrepreneur. The long-term focus is allowing DECTRIS to constantly adapt and stay fit and reactive to all the challenges that arrive in the future.” As founder and CEO, Christian says he will never compromise on his original vision of product excellence and innovation.

After completing his studies in physics at the University of Zurich and his PhD at the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), he started developing a new X-ray detector for the Swiss Light Source SLS. In 2005 the young Christian commercialised the device and year later founded DECTRIS with three partners, taking advantage of a prime opportunity to develop

and sell the X-ray sensor to various industries.

Part of this success is also down to DECTRIS’ suppliers, Christian notes. He references 20 key partner companies worldwide and explains that direct relationships are crucial, especially amid the COVID-19 crisis. Managing the supply chain is currently one of the biggest challenges for many manufacturing companies, including DECTRIS. However, it had a record year for sales in 2020, which is testament to Christian’s entrepreneurial foresight and willingness to adapt. As soon as the pandemic hit, he planned much further ahead than most CEOs ever would and quickly increased inventory sizes to mitigate any supply chain shortages, just in case the situation turned into a long-term disaster.

COVID-19 also presented an important mission to DECTRIS, which has been supporting frontline research into the virus. With the importance of biological research at an all-time high, the company’s cameras are a vital cog in this system. Many laboratories dedicate their efforts to solving the structures of the coronavirus proteins – to date, 1,288 structures have been recorded, 873 using DECTRIS detectors. An endeavour Christian is very proud of. [🔗](#)



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Georg Cramm, CEO