

The changing face of semi-conductors

Nexperia has been on the rise for decades, but they've been adhering to a new growth strategy since 2019. They used to be a part of Philips, then NXP, and now the company is moving forward with a Chinese investor. "That means a lot to us", explains Charles Smit, managing director at Nexperia. "Although the Chinese influence on the global chip market is a sensitive subject, it enables us to invest in our people, expand our production capacity, and make new expansion plans. In the last five years, we've grown enormously: our turnover has doubled, and we're employing over 500 people in our headoffices in Nijmegen alone."

Nexperia is a global semiconductor company with more than 15,000 employees in Europe, Asia and the United States. They're a leading company in the development and production of semiconductors that enable the basic functionality of virtually every electronic design in the world – from cars to smartphones and consumer applications, with more than 100 billion products shipped annually. Current trends are important to Nexperia's growth, Charles explains. "We understand our role in shaping the future of sustainable technology and the impact our business has on society and the environment. For example, our products enable our customers to develop energy-efficient solutions."

Challenges of growth

Achieving rapid growth takes effort. "In 2019, we had to invest in product innovation and new markets for long-term growth. How do you find out which investments are best? We're still learning. We've created two new business units with people from other companies, which has helped us learn an awful lot. There's a general feeling that anything that has to do with China is dangerous. Because we have a Chinese owner, we often hear that we're automatically working for the Chinese state. That is not true. It's just a successful entrepreneur making commercially viable decisions. Besides, our head office is in the Netherlands, and we abide by Dutch law."

Still, Charles wants to be very clear on the matter: "Having a Chinese owner is still a challenge in these geopolitical times, but we believe the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. If we had stayed with NXP, we wouldn't have been able to develop as we have. The growth we've experienced, the increase in R&D investment and the desire to invest in a new building in Nijmegen or in our employees – we wouldn't have been able to do it otherwise."

"Of course, the new collaboration was difficult initially, especially since the transition took place at the beginning of the covid pandemic. This is exactly the time when a personal connection is most important, but this was not possible. However, by asking the right questions and providing each other with evidence, we got off to a flying start. Our key figures paint a clear picture of a successful company that is increasing its presence in Nijmegen and in the Netherlands in the long term. We are very transparent and are happy to explain and show our stakeholders how we work."

Big ambitions

As one of the leading Dutch chip manufacturers Nexperia has big ambitions. For example, it wants to invest over 50 million euros in a new building in Nijmegen. "Our current building is gradually becoming too small, so this ambition makes sense. We're prepared to invest heavily in the Novitech Campus – in consultation with the organisation and the city of Nijmegen, of course."

"There are at least 500 of our chips in every electric car"

Getting young people excited about working for Nexperia is incredibly important for the company's long-term goals. But it's not enough to create enthusiasm: you also need to be known as a good employer. "This reputation is a combination of our image and our approach to job interviews. Nexperia has a long history, but we still act like a start-up from time to time. When it comes to new employees, for example, we're more interested in the people than in a specific profile."

Nexperia Young

Charles explains that new colleagues are given broad responsibilities early on. "We emphasise someone's contribution to the big picture. Our products are hardly visible but they are crucial. There are at least 500 of our chips in every electric car. It would be a shame if our employees didn't realise this and felt that their work amounted to nothing. Our company and our products are essential for the energy transition, for example."

Nexperia has come to the conclusion that the greatest potential lies with the new generation. "That's why we created Nexperia Young, our youth organisation. We're letting them develop new ideas that'll help us appeal to the younger generations – think of the collaboration with the Vierdaagsefeesten or INNOVATE. In short, we continue to invest in our development as a company and as an employer."

