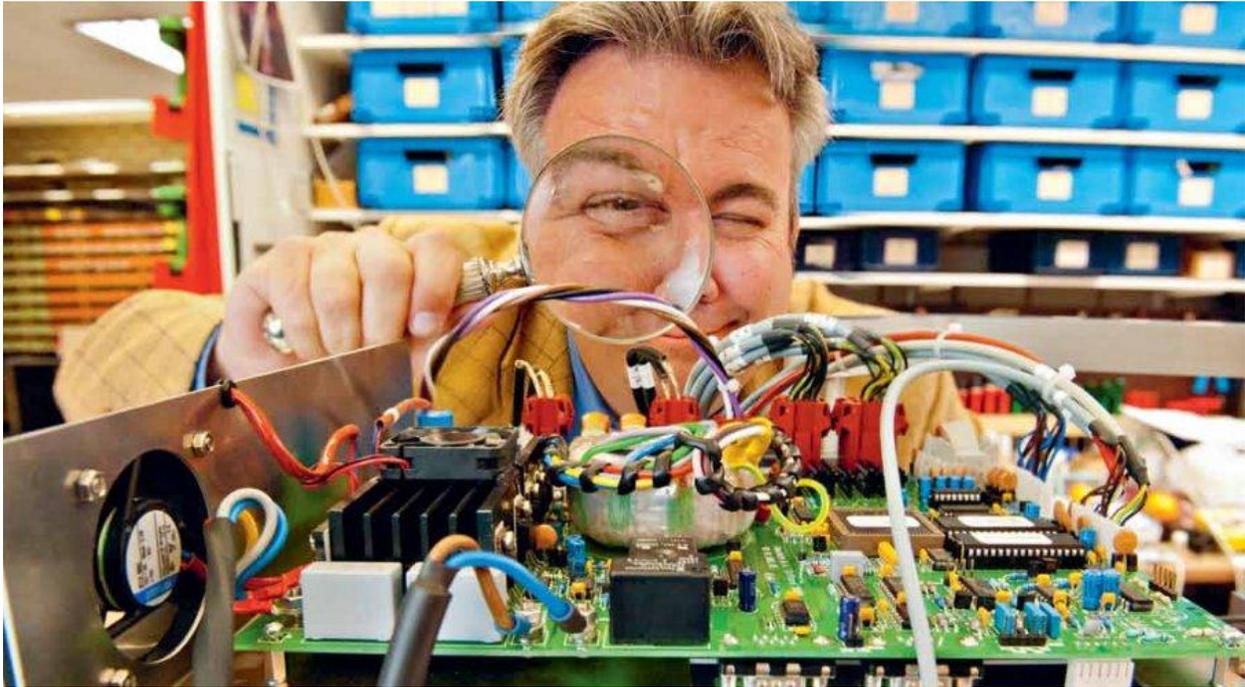


Hi-Tech World Player

Anatech is without doubt one of the most innovating companies in The Netherlands. Maybe even in the world. The instruments developed and built in Sittard are used in thousands of laboratories worldwide. Still almost nobody knows them.



They are nicely lined-up: brand new instruments of Anatech, ready for shipment to one of their largest customers in Connecticut USA. 'Made in the Netherlands'. The sticker on the back does not reveal more about its origin. Name and logo of the American multinational are prominent visible ... as producer. "No, not strange at all," president Archi Leenaers says. "We develop and manufacture instruments for different customers. They sell them under their own brand name. Compare it to a pizza factory working for Walmart: in that case the specific brand of Walmart is on the packaging."

That comparison can be considered a bit disrespectful, since we are talking about state of the art hi-tech instruments. "Anatech is among the top three manufacturers of thermal analysis instruments in the world," explains the plastics expert, who is since 2001 in charge of Anatech. "We have focused ourselves on devices that very accurately analyze materials during heating or cooling. Thermal analysis is a measurement method that is growing quite fast, due to its capabilities of determining e.g. composition or reactivity with other materials."

The world population is growing, resources are getting scarce and the competition fiercer. "Therefore the need for material knowledge is increasing rapidly," continues Archi Leenaers. "Look at mobile phones: everything is becoming smaller and more compact. Or lighter, e.g. cars with plastic bumpers and other parts. We deliver to ten large instrument companies that resell our instruments in 120 countries. Each year we bring new products to the market. This is done on our own initiative or on request of our customers. We always take this one step further."

Anatech, founded in 1987, is situated in Sittard (The Netherlands). It employs 30 people. Archi Leenaers expects to grow steadily during the coming years. "Sittard is a good base, a technological region where a lot happens, where more technological companies locate. I can find good motivated people here. Who says nothing is happening here?"

Anatech delivers measuring equipment that can handle temperatures between minus 196 and plus 1500 degrees Celsius. The newest furnace from Sittard heats materials with a speed of 2½ million degrees per minute. "This method yields more information on materials than before. Important for manufacturers of pharmaceuticals who want to know when exactly that pharmaceutical disintegrates in the stomach. Or how they can process medication in contact lenses, preventing patients to drip any longer.



In 2009 Anatech won the regional SME Innovation Award of Limburg, but the podium position this year in the USA was even more significant. "We were in the R&D 100, the top 100 most innovative companies. Between giants as MIT and NASA. No one knew who we were, but I really enjoyed it."

Source: De Stadskrant Sittard-Geleen, December 2011

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