

# And the winner is ....



For the first time, a medical system from Siemens, the MULTIX Swing, has been sold in an Internet auction.

Shortly before 4.00 pm, at 3.59 pm to be exact, Renate Fürst finally clicked the "bid now" button. A split second later, the internet browser routed her command through to the Siemens server in Erlangen and sealed the deal. With one mouse click Mrs. Fürst had bought a new x-ray system from Siemens in an Internet auction. "It was very exciting and when I finally clicked the 'bid now' button, I was not sure if I really made the deal. We are very satisfied with the price and looking forward to the installation of the new system," she commented. Mr. and Mrs. Fürst are running a surgical practice in Passau, in the south of Germany. Before long, they will move to new premises where the new MULTIX Swing will be installed.

They also won another extra: Siemens is now taking care of the de-installation and appropriate disposal of the old x-ray system.

The local Siemens sales representative, Mr. Gumminger who actually informed the Fürsts' about the online auction, is also very pleased. He liked the idea that Siemens was breaking new ground and involved the sales force from the very beginning. Bernd Weber, chief of marketing for radiography and fluoroscopy and head of the marketing communication group in the AX Division, was very optimistic: "Fluoroscopy and radiography are to some extent suffering from a rusty image. But the classic x-ray systems still play the most important role in medical imaging. Our goal

is to put radiography more into focus. A look at the most recent sales figures shows that we are well on our way."

## Keeping up with time

X-ray systems based on film cassettes, such as the MULTIX Swing, are real work horses, very robust, reliable and easy to use. However, they are silent unobtrusive colleagues and are not in the spotlight of big PR campaigns like a brand-new CT scanner. The market for these x-ray systems is highly competitive and prices are tight.

To be successful in such a market, it is vital to come up with something special.



From left to right:  
Siemens sales representative Franz Gumminger, Renate Fürst, Dr. Joachim Fürst and Bernd Weber, Head of Marketing for Fluoroscopy and Radiography.

So the marketing communication specialists of the Angiography, Fluoroscopy and Radiography (AX) Division at Siemens Medical Solutions made up their minds and came to the conclusion that innovation does not necessarily mean “ground-breaking technology”, but also entering new sales channels. Naturally, the Internet is not a new sales tool and e-commerce has been well-established in our society for years now. This was not so for the medical technology industry; medical systems were just not sold over the Internet. So Siemens Medical Solutions ventured into new territory by offering the MULTIX Swing x-ray system in an Internet auction. The idea brought with it many hurdles. Would there be customers ready to bid

for a medical system? What about the data security? How to proceed after the actual purchase? A lot of expertise, moral and financial support was needed to finally get this auction going. Minutes before the start on December 7, 2006 at 2:00 p.m., the final adjustments had to be made.

### Not English, but Dutch

Finally, the auction started at a price of 60.000 Euro. Unlike a “normal” auction, the price dropped by 125 Euro per minute. In Dutch auctions, it is the first, not the highest, bid that wins. Now it was time for the registered auction partici-

pants to place their bids and wait for their price to be reached. The trick was not to bid too early and not to hesitate too long. And the concept worked. The offered system was sold to the practitioners in southern Germany. Since then two more systems have been sold through this Internet auction platform and who knows what kind of other activities will follow. As Mr. Weber puts it: “This auction was an important milestone and I am looking forward to more marketing activities like it.”

#### Contact

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