**Facts and figures**

* Headquarters: Widnau, Switzerland
* Founding year: PLASTON AG Switzerland, February 1956
* Organization chart: BONECO is a company of PLASTON Group
* President of the board of directors: Jörg Frei
* Autonomy: BONECO AG Switzerland, April 2015
* Employees: Approximately 40 around the world
* Sales volume: CHF 40 million worldwide
* Sales: Approximately 500,000 Air Treatment appliances
* Products: HYBRID Humidifiers and Air Purifiers, Air Purifiers, Humidifiers (Air Washers, Ultrasonic Humidifiers, Steam Humidifiers, Evaporators)
* Design-Award: Red Dot Design Award for the products E2441A, U200 and P500
* Certification: ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001
* Distinction: PLASTON Group won the "Preis der Rheintaler Wirtschaft" award to honor businesses in the Rhine valley in 2015

**Company history**

**The family-owned BONECO AG – from 1956 to today**

Today, the family-owned company BONECO AG is part of the PLASTON Group and is internationally active in portable air treatment solutions for living areas. But it all began in the garage next to a family home in 1956, with plenty of help from the whole family. Hans Frei and his son Roland Frei founded the PLASTON company despite trying economic conditions. It became a success story and continues to this day under the BONECO healthy air brand. Alongside plastic products for industry, products for the domestic sector were developed, manufactured and put on the market over the years.

**The launch of humidifiers**

It was 1963. Roland Frei was studying at the Institute of Plastics Materials at the technical university in Aachen, Germany. Frei wrote his thesis about an air humidifier system that was intended to use the heat from radiators to increase the excessively low humidity in interiors during the heating period. The idea led to that humidifier becoming part of the production program. A success! Hundreds of thousands of units of the product were produced and sold under the BONECO store brand.

**From the garage to a new facility**

In the middle of the 1960s, Frei had a production hall built next to his parents' home. A new era began. The time where everyone did everything, where all hands had to be on deck, was over. The new facility did not just mean the creation of new jobs, it also meant new structures. Hans Frei focused on administration, human relations and purchasing. Roland Frei handled management and sales. Well-trained employees were brought on board for finances and technology.

**Coping with economic crises into the 90s**

The oil crisis of 1973 triggered an economic crisis the likes of which has not been seen since. The large investments in the new facility and machines coupled with the sudden drop in orders put a huge strain on PLASTON. General uncertainty also put a damper on the consumer goods market. Necessary corrective measures had to be identified early and implemented. Together with customers, solutions emerged for coping with the difficult times. Exceptional business relationships paid off. Targeted cost management and collaboration with customers made it possible to overcome the challenges successfully.

**The focusing of products**

Customers' development needs made things difficult for PLASTON to manage. The product design had to be adapted every three to five years. This led to immensely high development costs and tool investments. A change of course was needed. By freeing up resources, it was possible to improve and streamline processes. In order to focus on specific markets with a greater sense of purpose, PLASTON Group was split into the business units of "Air Treatment Systems" and "Industrial Plastic Systems" in 1991.

**Expansion of production sites**

In order to meet customers' high standards, PLASTON built a production plant in the Czech Republic for the "Industrial Plastic Systems" business unit in 1996. This plant has continuously operated production in three shifts to this day. This was not the case in China. The production hall there was opened in 1995 and had to be closed just three years later. The founding of a subsidiary under the name PLASTON Zhanjiang Ltd and the state requirement to identify a Chinese person as a partner subsequently cost PLASTON quite a bit of money. The experiences with customs authorities, power outages and the staffing of a state-owned business are not something PLASTON will soon forget. At times, it took ten people to produce a single case. In the Swiss plant, the same work required just one well-trained employee. But a breakthrough came in 2004 with the construction of a company-owned production facility in China. Another location that could work to the benefit of the "Air Treatment Systems" business unit. The number of employees rose to 150 by mid-2000.

**Market expansion to the United States and Canada**

Demand for humidifiers was very high in the North American market. Competitors heavily favored ultrasonic humidifier systems. This is a very visible means of air humidification that appeals to American consumers. PLASTON also joined the market in 2003, with the poorly insulated wooden homes being one of the reasons for making the step. The AIR-O-SWISS store brand was founded to emphasize the company's "Swissness." Economic crises once again made it difficult for PLASTON to launch its products. But it was a success story nevertheless. Within a decade, AIR-O-SWISS emerged as the leading provider of air treatment appliances in this market. PLASTON is represented in every major market around the world by activities in Europe, Russia, Asia and North America. Expansion to the North American market increased the number of employees to 400.

**Separating ourselves from the competition**

The need for PLASTON to differentiate itself from the competition came as an important insight. This led to the continuous development of the Air Treatment Systems product range into the 2000s. Air washers, ultrasonic humidifiers, evaporators, steam humidifiers, air purifiers and dehumidifiers are the systems that make PLASTON the world's only provider of every kind of air treatment system. PLASTON meets the hygiene and cleanliness needs of its customers by drawing on its Swiss experience with quality.

**On the path to a public brand**

Having two in-house brands was the proper strategy for many years. In order to become a public brand, however, we have introduced the "BONECO healthy air" brand. "Healthy air" says exactly what BONECO stands for. Awareness of healthy air will continue to increase around the world. We would like to use the potential of this need. All products and all markets are being unified under the BONECO healthy air brand.

**Autonomy as a new incorporated company**

BONECO AG was founded in April 2014. BONECO AG is part of the PLASTON Group and will continue to operate as a family-owned company. Jörg Frei, the son of company founder Roland Frei, is head of the company as the president of the board of directors.

**The best for healthy air – since 1956**

**Additional information at:**

[www.boneco.com](http://www.boneco.com)

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