

Remembering Franz J. Fähler, Industry Trailblazer: A Personal Account



*Franz J. Fähler, Founder of Pharma Test
(December 16, 1948–February 8, 2026)*

We first met at a disastrous trade show in London in 1980. I felt a bit bad for this guy who had driven from Germany with a raft of equipment. I had never encountered dissolution before, so this was all quite novel. As I had done a PhD in pharmaceutical chemistry, this was something that I knew would be of interest. In the end, because of various jokes and innuendos, we were both laughing so hard that we had to sit down. We had an instant connection.

Franz founded Pharma Test in 1979 in an attic office in Hainburg, near Offenbach am Main, Germany. Through his previous sales experience in the drug quality control testing industry, he recognized the potential in this growing market. His goal was to set a new standard for testing quality-relevant properties of pharmaceutical products. Franz served as CEO until 2011, when his son, Björn, took over.

If you look at the older instrumentation and what we can offer now, you will see the influence of a keen and perceptive mind, producing instruments that are user-friendly and based on actual requirements, but with a view to future compendial directives.

We shared a lot of traits. A problem was simply a challenge waiting to be solved. “Never seen that before: a good time to learn something new! Every day is for learning,” he would say. I always liked his hands-on approach to new product ideas, and we made many road trips to customers, new production facilities and universities, continuously looking for new ways to achieve goals as well as employing totally innovative ideas and hardware. His dedication to customer happiness was second to none. Franz worked weekends and all the hours, and the results are clear: a firm foundation in thinking and practicality that is Pharma Test today.

On a personal note: Well, my friend, I will miss your company, the jokes, the laughs, and the beers. I was and am proud to call you, my friend. I know that I am not alone.

Dr. John Burmicz, Managing Director, Pharma Test Ltd, UK