



Acetate filter production at Filtrona Filter GmbH in Hamburg, 1960. | Credit: Filtrona

# A Potpourri of Anniversaries

*Anniversaries are not only cause for celebration but also reflect the industry's resilience.*

By Thomas Schmid

Regardless of industry, companies are rightfully proud when they reach milestone anniversaries. After all, these markers go to show that the firm in question is on the correct track, has earned respect within the business community, and perhaps has even attained the coveted status of industry leader. The tobacco sector is no different. Some companies may come and go, but there always will also be those that through expertise, product quality, and outstanding services persist for decades, sometimes even a century and longer. This article pays tribute to select companies that are celebrating this year, but to demonstrate that longevity is a rule rather than an exception in the tobacco industry, we also take a little outlook into the future by including some outfits that are gearing up for their very own milestones in the next couple of years.

## 2024 Filtrona 170 years of excellence

Incredibly, Filtrona, today regarded as one of the leading and most innovative specialty filter manufacturers on the planet, had very humble beginnings. The globe-spanning business was founded in 1854 under the name

“Bunzl” as a modest single-shop haberdashery in Bratislava, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. By the 1920s, Bunzl had expanded considerably. As the decade drew to a close, it added filters of all sorts to its trading portfolio. A dedicated filter production facility was eventually opened in Jarrow, UK, in 1948. By the 1950s, the company had established a presence in the US, with Asia following in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1979, the company adopted the name Filtrona. However, in order to better reflect its diversification into industrial components, including tapes, the firm in 2013 decided to rebrand as Essentra PLC. In November 2022, the successful filters and tapes divisions were acquired by a new owner, Centaury Management Ltd., who decided to revert to the Filtrona name. Today, Filtrona operates 11 manufacturing plants around the world, 3 innovation centers, 1 accredited laboratory, as well as the “Center of Excellence,” which is focused on sustainability.

“Filtrona has come a long way, thanks to the trust of our customers whom we have been supporting with our special filter solutions. Our rich heritage is synonymous with quality, reliability, innovation, and partnership. ... As an innovator leading the industry to change, we are excited about the future and will continue to drive sustainable transformations and support our customers to become future-ready.”

— Robert Pye, c.e.o., Filtrona