

impulse

Issue 2/2011

Employee and business partner magazine

www.ensinger-online.com



.....
Subject 3
How sustainable is Ensinger?

.....
(Un)healthy growth 9
Interview with the CFO

.....
A personal experience report 14
The streets of Shanghai

.....
The Ensinger Cup 16
International football tournament

.....

.....

Dear readers,



Sustainability has been defined as the capacity to endure and the means by which mankind can unlock the “potential to maintain its well-being”. None of us are under any illusion about the importance of sustaining our own natural environment. But how do we view the social and economic sides of the equation? The textbooks tell us that “money is the means by which we exchange and retain values”. One very noticeable aspect is missing from this definition: The fact that money can be used as a means to virtually produce new money. Did you know that roughly one quarter of the world’s richest individuals make their money simply by having money in the first place? At the beginning of the eighties, only ten per cent fell into this category. Last year, a major US investment bank paid its 26,000 employees an average of 370,000 Dollars a head – which is many times more than what companies like ours are able to pay their staff on average. It would seem to be far more lucrative to make money with money than to be employed in actually manufacturing products.

But is it really? At first glance it might appear so. But a second glance has to throw the issue of sustainability into the equation. In the long term, revenue and profits have to be based on real values. Certain finance products are not built on any such solid basis, although the banks which deal in them wield an unmistakable economic significance. When the whole system went into a tailspin, politicians had no option but to stop the astronomical gap with taxpayers’ money. But a good year later, many banks have been handed back control of just the same financial instruments as before, and are once again distributing exorbitant bonuses from their profits. Sustainable? Hardly.

How many years can our system go on weathering onslaughts such as these? The legacy of the financial crisis has not only burdened governments with enormous sovereign debt, it has also left us angry and at a loss to understand. Why is there no better way of dealing with this problem? Unless viable answers are found to these questions and to the issue of overwhelming sovereign debt, we are at risk of being drawn back into crisis.

The issue of sustainability looms large as a decisive factor not only for the big players, but at the grass roots level too. We have taken up the topic in this issue in an attempt to illustrate what we, company and employees, understand by sustainability and what role we can play in achieving it. The ecological aspect is reflected in our products and our environmental policy, while our social commitment is rooted in our corporate social responsibility (CRS). The following pages provide an insight into our standpoint on these issues. After all, the fact that we view money exclusively as a means to exchange and retain value testifies to our fundamental understanding of economic sustainability. You will find an interview on the subject with our CFO Anton Ritter on page 9.

Hoping that these pages will provide you with sustained food for thought, it only remains for me to wish you a pleasant and stimulating read!

Yours sincerely, Roland Reber



Imprint

Employee and
business partner
magazine of
Ensinger GmbH

Ensinger GmbH
Rudolf-Diesel-Straße 8
71154 Nufringen
Tel. +49 7032 819 0
Fax +49 7032 819 100
www.ensinger-online.com

Publisher:
Klaus Ensinger
Dr. Roland Reber

Editorial staff:
Jörg Franke
Jochen Weyershäuser

Title photo:
Schlüter-Fotografie

Production:
Druckerei Maier,
Rottenburg



Sustainability

The shape of things to come

The application of plastics offers a number of advantages, for example, as insulation or for use as lightweight construction materials. On the other hand, a great deal of energy is required to manufacture semi-finished goods and precision parts. And another aspect should not be forgotten – waste is also produced. Can an industrial operation ever be environmentally friendly? Is Ensinger as a company geared to operate in a sustainable way?

Dozens of extruders are standing in the manufacturing and production halls at Ensinger. Apart from the tubing used for plastic granules, water and compressed air, arm-thick cables – which are power lines – pass through the building. Thermoplastics, such as PEEK, are able to withstand continuous operating temperatures of 250 °C. Appropriate temperatures and high pressures are required, in order to melt the pellets and process them into semi-finished goods or profiles using tools which give them shape.

In addition, the extrusion process requires large amounts of cooling water. Before they can be stored, semi-finished products still have to undergo several hours of annealing for quality reasons. Everyone can see that a lot of energy has to be used here. Or is it also being wasted?

In order to investigate this question, Ensinger is taking an important step. Amongst other things, the introduction of the environmental management system according to ISO 14001 – and last autumn, the injection moulding division began working out the basic principles. After the certification in September, other company divisions will then start systematically examining their own processes for their impact on the environment.

Environmental management system at injection moulding plant

by Raphael Degler

Ensinger is introducing an environmental management system according to the ISO 14001 standard at the injection moulding plant in Rottenburg-Ergenzingen. Nothing totally new will be created with the certification – but more to the point, this will harmonize existing structures with the requirements of the standard and allow missing data to be collected.

In preparation, employees participating in the certification of the site first collected important environmentally relevant facts. Not only were all machines and materials included in the test, but also the working procedures – even the plan for emergency measures.

With the help of a so-called failure mode and effect analysis (environmental FMEA), the participating experts defined possible environmental risks and contingency measures for improvement on site. This consideration of risks and hazards is the central element of the system.

Risks can also be reduced by adapting the processes according to environmental aspects. An example of this is the substitution test for potentially hazardous substances: this should be applied during the purchasing process – or even better – before this takes place. Before purchasing a critical starting product or operating material, the availability of a less hazardous substance could be checked.

The list of environmentally relevant aspects is long. Particular attention is placed on the development of emissions and the consumption of valuable resources, such as energy and water. ISO 14001 places the main emphasis on a “continuous improvement process” as a means of attaining the defined objectives. This is implemented in the form of an “environmental programme” and thus creates the basis for sustainable economic activities. Ensinger will take a further step into the future with the integration of an energy management system according to DIN EN 16001. This way, energy efficiency will gain even more significance.

As the environmental norm is similar in design to that of ISO 9001, the certification was prepared in the Quality Management Department in Ergenzingen, which is under the management of Markus Schroth. The team is supported in its work by all affected departments in the injection moulding plant and by Angelika Plust, the Commissioner for Environmental Protection at Ensinger.

In September of this year, the certification according to ISO 14001 and DIN EN 16001 will take place in parallel with the assessment of ISO/TS 16949 in Ergenzingen.

Raphael Degler prepared the fundamental structure for the environmental management system at Ensinger as part of his diploma thesis at the University of Stuttgart. Currently, he is using his expertise at the Regulatory Agency for Construction and the Environment in Freudenstadt.



“The company carries responsibility for the environment. This means that we already check the ecological impact of our actions in advance.”
*Klaus Ensinger
and Dr. Roland Reber
(Managing Directors)*

By handling raw materials responsibly and recycling waste materials, resources can be conserved. In the manufacturing industry, there are not only social reasons but also economic motives for trying to achieve such ambitious sustainability goals because investments in environmental technology often pay for themselves after just a few years. For example, by reducing electricity and water consumption. On the other hand, certification according to the ISO 14001 standard should further strengthen the position of Ensinger in the market. In particular, the automotive industry sets very high standards in this respect.

At the end of last year, Ensinger defined its own set of principles for taking sustainable action (see ensinger-online.com, Environmental policy). “The environmental management system is closely connected with the values and objectives of the company,” said Managing Director Klaus Ensinger: “We act not only for economic reasons, but as citizens, who should accept responsibility for their environment – even if it ultimately costs the company something.”

Too good to burn

One of the biggest challenges of all for the industrial and developing countries is the economical and considerable exploitation of global oil and gas reserves. Consumption statistics show that 80 % of the valuable crude oil is used purely for energy purposes in Germany – this amount is burned as fuel for heating or for electricity generation and is thus used only once. Just 6 % goes into the production of different polymers, much of which again serves to reduce the consumption of resources and thus also to reduce emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases. Durable plastics can save far more energy than is used for their production and processing – whether in form of reduced fuel consumption for cars and airplanes through weight reduction or in the form of heat insulation for buildings to save heating energy. Ensinger has been playing an important role in these markets for decades, for example, through the production of technical parts for lightweight applications or through the development and production of insulating profiles and spacers for glass frames (cf. page 10–11).

Closed circuit

In the planning and redesign of infrastructures, the energy efficiency of plant and machinery is the main focus of attention. However, the avoidance of waste is also becoming increasingly important. In Nufringen, for example, large amounts of grinding sludge are produced in the processing of semi-finished plastic goods. This material consists of fine plastic particles due to attrition and the cutting fluid used. Without treatment, the abrasive slurry is classified as hazardous waste and would have to be disposed of correctly – high costs would incur. Stricter environmental laws and price increases for coolants and lubricants however make recovery more efficient.

It therefore makes sense from an economic and ecological point of view to separate the materials contained in the abrasive slurry from one another, in order to recycle them separately. Ensinger has been reprocessing the sludge using a centrifuge for about a year now. The maintenance-free continuous operation means that about 10 to 15 percent of the amount of coolant can now be saved. Due to the high drying capacity, it is possible to connect the centrifuge directly to the central dust extraction, thereby reducing the effort needed for handling even further. The grinding process, filtration unit, centrifuge, and extraction of the dry chips and return of the coolant to the filter plant now form a closed system.



High loads
Engineering plastics offer the ideal profile of characteristics for use in wind turbines

Tough operating conditions

The use of renewable energies, which are essential for climate protection, is not possible without innovative materials. Engineering plastics are highly significant in improving existing solutions, such as wind energy, whose potential has still not yet been fully exploited: the replacement of older plant with modern systems of a higher efficiency factor (“repowering”) and the use of off-shore wind energy offer perspectives for further development. However, increasing output figures and extreme conditions in off-shore wind parks demand more and more from the materials used. Ensinger provides manufacturers with guide plates, sliding rings, bearing shells, sleeves, couplings and transmission components. Lightweight engineering and high-temperature plastics offer many advantages compared to conventional materials, such as low friction, temperature resistance, abrasion resistance and corrosion resistance.

More than just environmental protection

The idea of sustainability is not just about environmental protection, but also about equal consideration of ecological, economic and social aspects. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) paraphrases the contribution made by business, which at the same time exceeds the legal requirements.

As their activities have far-reaching consequences, companies bear a particular obligation to the environment and the community, as well as to their employees and customers. “Responsible leadership to me means to align the decision-making processes and entrepreneurial actions according to the welfare of these stakeholders and to avoid negative consequences for everyone,” said Klaus Ensinger. “It is crucial that the values and principles of the entire workforce are lived”, stressed the managing director: “Because conversely, all managers and employees also assume responsibility for the company.”



Ralf Grammel, Master Craftsman in the sampling team of the testing department in front of one of the new hybrid injection moulding machines

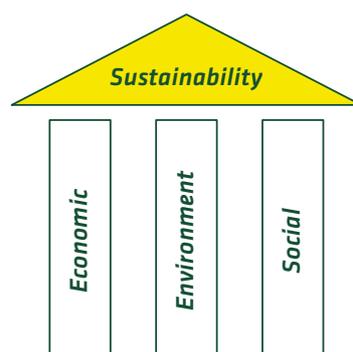
Hybrid or electrically driven

Environmentally-friendly practices can be expressed in different ways: for example, in increased energy efficiency, the recovery of raw materials and operating supplies, or by using technical innovations. Ensinger recently set up one all-electric and three hybrid injection moulding machines in Ergenzingen. The new acquisitions are more expensive than conventional systems, but they will pay off in the coming years.

The hybrid injection moulding machines are equipped with servo-motors. This particular power unit uses virtually no energy when the machine is stationary (e.g. during the cooling time). Furthermore, the machine is quiet and its demand for cooling water is much lower.

The all-electric injection moulding machine is particularly energy efficient. Its higher efficiency is based on a toggle-lever clamping unit, combined with a servo-electrical drive. When braking, electrical current is fed back into the system. When added together, these factors reduce the energy consumption anywhere from 25 to 50 %.

High investments in the granules drying-plant and material supply systems have also had a positive effect on the energy balance of the injection moulding plant. Drying is carried out in Rottenburg-Ergenzingen according to demand – the drying hopper is adapted to the exact size of the required amount of granules. A part of the energy used is recovered by means of heat exchangers and re-employed, amongst other things, for the floor heating system of the building. In the case of production breakdowns, the advanced process technology lowers the temperature automatically to a stand-by value. This not only saves energy, but is also easy on materials.



Environmental, economic and social goals are referred to as the three pillars of sustainability.

It is worth it

In the light of heightened efforts to achieve greater climate protection, process technologies, materials and services from Ensinger are on the ecological credit side. With its compounds, semi-finished products, profiles and customised finished parts that are used worldwide, the company can make a positive contribution to addressing this social challenge.

In operational practice, this means making an extra-amount of effort to bring environmental protection and economic efficiency under “one and the same roof”. Temperature-resistant plastics cannot be processed without supplying heat. However, technical progress and investment in plant and machinery can continuously improve energy efficiency in production.

The environmental management system demonstrates that economics and ecology are able to mutually promote one another. Improvements that serve the environment and protect customers and employees secure the company’s success. This is also why sustainability is not just a fashionable trend at Ensinger, but a worthwhile goal, which is increasingly becoming the main focus of attention. [JF]

**Relief projects,
science, culture**

The significance of a company is more than just its economic success. As early as 1970, Wilfried Ensinger and his wife started the first relief projects in Brazil, in order to give people in the favelas (slum areas) the opportunity to earn a living. In 1998, the Wilfried Ensinger Foundation was founded. Today, the non-profit organisation supports social projects in Central and South America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia. Another major focus is on the promotion of young talent in the technical professions. The Foundation awards prizes for excellence in writing theses and dissertations in the area of plastics technology and thus contributes to making this field of study better known. The third focus of attention is supporting cultural activities in the towns and communities around the Ensinger sites in Germany. The endowment funds of the Wilfried Ensinger Foundation originate from their founders. Promoted projects are funded primarily from investment income and private donations. Ensinger GmbH also transfers a set amount to the foundation year after year. [JF]

More information:

www.wilfried-ensinger-stiftung.de



**Injection moulding factory receives
the award as a “premium supplier”**

Ensinger has been distinguished as a “premium supplier” by Schaeffler Technologies GmbH & Co. KG and Continental AG. The injection moulding division belongs to a group of twelve international suppliers, which completely satisfies the catalogue of requirements of both companies’ purchasing departments. Maria-Elisabeth Schaeffler highlighted the significance of strategically important suppliers: “In the face of increasing technological requirements, Schaeffler and Continental have to co-operate with partner companies who satisfy our high demands.” Reimar Olderog, Head of the Ensinger Injection Moulding Division, congratulated the staff at the site in Rottenburg-Ergenzingen for their team achievement.

Maria-Elisabeth Schaeffler (3rd from right)
and Dr. Jürgen M. Geißinger (CEO, 4th from right)
with the suppliers.

“Running too fast only leads to a fall before the goal”

Interview with Dr. Anton Ritter

Strict cost discipline, short-time working and good collaboration within the company's staff have helped Ensinger to survive the global financial and economic recession unharmed. Since the beginning of last year, the demand for plastics has dramatically increased – some raw materials are even in agonizingly short supply. Does a chief financial officer have to have particularly good nerves?

We knew at the low point of the business cycle two years ago that Ensinger would be able to persevere for a long time and that the recession would not last forever. More to the point, the question was: how quickly and when would the recovery come. The commercial banks, who had previously offered us one credit after the next, were very reluctant to give us any financial commitments in the recession – in contrast to the regional savings banks and regional banks.

What is the ratio of equity and borrowed capital at Ensinger?

Our equity-to-assets ratio is about 50 %, which is considered to be a very healthy figure in Germany. To stay in calm waters, we keep a close watch on the loan quotient.

Loans on the equity market are still reasonable. Is this an incentive to ‘tank up’ with liquidity before interest rates increase?

I am not a friend of cheap money! It has the disadvantage that the threshold for taking risks on the capital markets is economically artificially lowered. All of a sudden, commercial transactions seem to count which economically make no sense, but promise to bring the players a quick profit. This leads to a non-calculable and instable environment in the long term.

If in doubt, do you decide against an investment?

It is our objective to approach growth, as far as possible, by self-financing the funds required. Financial planning is always designed to run over the next three year period.

Which key performance indicators do you watch in particular?

Since the recession, we follow cash-flows in all Ensinger companies worldwide on a monthly basis. An important statistical indicator is the relationship between sales and operative cash flow, which is the result after tax and depreciation. This can be seen more simply: it is a matter of what still remains in the company to finance investments, supplies and customer requirements.

How is divisional and investment controlling organised at Ensinger?

In controlling, we differentiate between the operative controlling of the divisions and the service centre for Ensinger GmbH and investment controlling for the worldwide Ensinger Group. For investment controlling, the balance sheet and the profit and loss statement of all Ensinger companies are loaded into a central databank and managed there. We like to carry out an intensive exchange of knowledge within the company group, the last time being in May at a financial workshop in the USA. In the case of Ensinger GmbH, the prepared numbers are discussed at quarterly meetings. Investment controlling, on the other hand, prepares the financial statement relating to commercial law.

Dr. Ritter, you are responsible for financial planning at Ensinger. What do you understand by the term sustainability in your area?

A company should always only incur that amount of risk that it is prepared to bear. “My experience is: those who run slowly – but continuously – will cross the finishing line. It may take a little bit longer, but you will not fall by the wayside. Those who run too quickly will get out of breath quickly. Perhaps you will recover again, but this is not certain. Uniform, sustainable growth is, in my opinion, the healthier way to go for all participants.” [JF]



Dr. Anton Ritter is Chief Financial Officer at Ensinger



Climate protection

Green technology for windows, doors and façades

Currently, about 40 % of the energy consumed in Germany and the EU comes from property and real estate. Large amounts of thermal energy are released by the shell of the building. For this reason, consistent insulation of the outer walls, roof, windows and doors helps to contribute to energy saving and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Special importance is placed on windows in this respect. Although triple insulating glass and modern frame constructions have improved the ecological balance, even through closed windows a lot more energy is lost than through a solid building wall.

Aluminium is frequently used as a material for window frame construction in particular in commercial high-rise buildings. The high degree of stability of the profiles allows the use of narrow frames, so that inner rooms get maximum light. The metal construction is especially suitable for this purpose and is also low-maintenance. Due to the higher heat conductivity, however, aluminium possesses lower insulating characteristics, so that greater effort is needed to achieve the required insulating quality.

Technical pioneering work

As early as 1974, Wilfried Ensinger began the development of extrusion technology to process fibreglass-reinforced polyamide for the manufacture of precision profiles.

Three years later, the company was able to supply the first production run of thermally insulating profiles to manufacturers of metal windows and façades – just before the second oil crisis.

Apart from the energy saving, a second important aspect has come to the fore in the meantime: the objective to reduce CO₂ emissions generated during the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) makes it necessary to lower heating energy consumption even more. Thus, the legal requirements for heat insulation of buildings are increased on a regular basis. With the new Energy Saving Directive (EnEV 2012) taking effect, the heat transfer coefficients for window and door systems (U_w values) will clearly have to be improved once again. The standards will not be achievable by merely optimising the values for glazing alone, but will require a distinct increase in the insulating coefficients of the frame (U_f).

Ensinger has permanently continued to further develop insulbar® insulating profiles. The straight and off-set profiles were replaced in the 90's by more complex geometries. The current multiple hollow cavity profiles are considered to be forward-looking solutions. In addition, Ensinger has started with volume production of highly insulating polyurethane foam profiles. Construction engineers are working with users and scientists on minimising the loss of energy even further.



Precision profiles for any use: insulbar® plastic profiles interrupt the flow of heat between the metallic inner and outer shells of the frames. Thermix® spacers represent a modern solution in the area of thermal separation for glazing. This way, the heat stays in the building in winter and outside in the summer.

The “warm edge” asserts itself

In addition to insulbar®, the Thermix® product line also makes a contribution to climate protection. The glazing spacers from Ensinger decouple the thermal bridge at the transition from the insulating glass lamination to the frame. Higher surface temperatures at the glass edge of the room (“warm edge”) mean lower thermal heat loss. Vice versa the edge spacers reduce the energy expenditure for air-conditioning in summer.

In the meantime, the second product generation of Thermix® TX.N® has established itself in the market. In the meantime thermally improved “spacers” have become an indispensable component in many windows and façades in order to achieve the required heat insulation. In comparison to edge spacers made of aluminium, fibreglass reinforced plastic and stainless steel co-extruded profiles improve the U_w value by 8 to 12 percent. “Currently, only a third of all insulating glass produced in Germany uses the warm edge technology, however, the demand for our products is increasing”, Jochen Weyershäuser, Marketing Manager for the insulbar® and Thermix® product lines, is pleased to report. “Our main customers for the edge spacers are in Europe. In addition to the growing US market, the Asia region also has a lot of great potential.” [JF]



insulbar®



Thermix®

EVI: Sustainable improvement processes

by Markus Schroth

In the past two years, the Ensinger Improvement Instrument (EVI) has been introduced at all sites in Germany, in order to optimise working procedures in the production areas and offices. It is a characteristic of our company that every employee bears a high level of ownership through implementation of the continuous improvement processes.

If the personal working environment was initially the main focus of attention (Level 1), now numerous EVI-workshops are being carried out, in which procedures in the divisions, departments or shifts are being contemplated. In this respect, either the degree of collaboration within a group (Level 2) or inter-departmental processes are involved (Level 3).

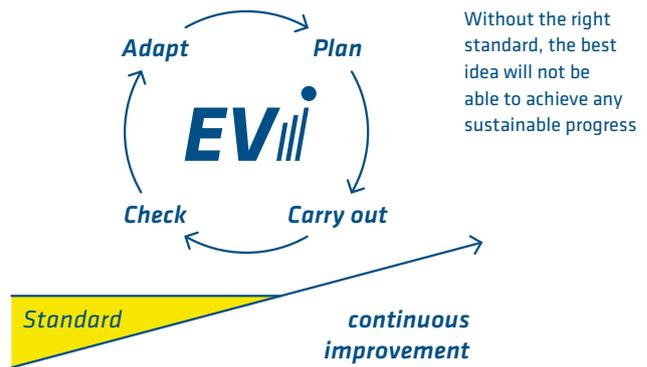
In the workshops, all kinds of different subjects have been discussed. In the injection moulding plant in Ergenzingen, for example, improvements in goods-received inspection, the reduction of circulating stocks or the performance of setting-up workshops have been addressed.

Supported by trained moderators, employees check work processes as part of the workshops and develop suggestions for improvements. Individual measures can be implemented in the short-term, such as the preparation of checklists or the synchronisation of classical and digital filing systems. In the analysis of inter-divisional tasks, the teams document the processes and their interfaces. Where there are uncertainties or problems, ‘flashes of lightning’ mark the critical process steps. The solution pathways are coordinated via action plans and performed systematically to the end.

No progress without standards

An important part of a workshop is the standard which is developed – because without a standard, the best idea will not produce any sustainable progress! Only when the optimised procedures and controls become a part of daily practice errors can be reduced and productivity increased.

A further mainstay in the improvement process are regular EVI meetings in individual category groups. This is where new ideas are gathered – actions from the workshops are also mutually evaluated and followed-up over a longer period of time.



The EVI programme also places emphasis on the tried-and-tested principle of improvement in small steps. Any other approach may overburden the required method and let the processes become confusing at the end. That would mean creating frustration instead of developing enthusiasm for the improvement initiative.

When the agreed measures have been implemented, the staff and moderators evaluate the new standards during a review session. These concluding discussions are an indispensable element, as they confirm the sustainability of the improvements and give participants a positive feedback: “Yes, we did the right thing and it also functions in everyday routines”.

Markus Schroth is Head of Quality Management at the injection moulding plant in Rottenburg-Ergenzingen and a member of the EVI Steering Committee.



Flashes of lightning mark the critical process steps

A warm welcome ...

Employees who have joined Ensinger:

Nufringen

Building products

Graciela Enss
Tarek Guennouf

Semi-finished products

Ilija Babic
Ralf Böhler
Denis Colomba
Alper Deniz
Frank Gauß
Harald Gramer
Dennis Günther
Stefanie Gutscher
Daniel Häßler
Esref Halil
Marcel Herrmann
Stefan Kuppel
Alexander Magenheim
Sascha Marquardt
Enikö Ore-Mousavi
Mathias Sebastian
Daniel Steyer
Dimitrios Vasvatekis
Tobias Wilhelm

Industrial profiles

& tubes

Patrick Bühler
Vitalij Hamburg

IT

Dirk Lang
Katja Christoph

Product and process engineering

Wolfgang Bay
Damaris Sitter

Raw materials / Compounding

Nico Rösler
Birgit Luz

Cham

Building products

Harald Bartz
Stefan Emberger
Thomas Hausladen
Martin Holzapfel
Alexander Hrimer
Daniel Janker
Daniel Kreuzer
Sebastian Kunert

IT

Thomas Wüller

Human resources

Maria Unterstaller

Cast nylon

Josef Pongratz
Franz Stockerl

Technology / Electrical maintenance and repair

Matthias Brey

Administration

Erika Dietl

Tool making

Stefan Bauer
Matthias Baumer

Machining

Matthias Bierl
Michael Kelnhofer
Simon Mayer
Stephan Oswald
Markus Piller
Peter Raith

Ergenzingen

Injection moulding

Stefan Bruno
Dominik Hezel
Frank Hörrmann

Quality

Iris Rentsch

Tool making

Sebastian Gärtner

Ravensburg

Thermix

Renate Linder

The following employees celebrate their twenty-fifth company anniversaries at Ensinger in 2011:

Nufringen

Oezcan Akkaya
Rainer Braun
Peter Eckstein
Ilija Jakic
Janus Kaminski
Gerhard Marquardt
Thomas Nitsch

Cham

Anton Baumeister
Franz Betz
Thomas Bricha
Gerhard Göttlinger
Reinhard Lang
Wolfgang Zollner

Ergenzingen

Ralf Grammel

New building in Nufringen: Long goods high rack warehouse

Ensinger has invested in an extension to the site in Nufringen to link the semi-finished goods production and the logistics departments more closely together. After completion in summer next year, a high rack warehouse and a shipping hall will connect with the existing production area. The storage locations can be loaded with up to 3 m long packaged containers via automatic shelf access equipment.

Ottmar Widmann took two weekends to build a model to a 1:100 scale. The warehouseman used the building plans from architects Schmelzle + Partner to demonstrate the planned facade. Ottmar Widmann has been an employee in the Semi-Finished Goods Division since 1990. [JF]





A Stay Abroad Full of Surprises

By Christoph Lutz

Nǐ hǎo ma? How are you? This is the popular set phrase to greet people in China. And I was frequently asked this question over the last two years! From March 2009 to March 2011, I spent a working period in the Applied Technology Department of the Semi-Finished Goods Division in our Asian subsidiaries.

Over the entire period of my Asian stay, I had my place of residence in China, where the skills and fortunes of Ensinger are managed by Ruxun Dong and Gary Davies for the semi-finished goods and machining divisions respectively. Currently, about 60 employees work for Ensinger in the Republic of China, but should the rate of growth continue to increase, as I experienced during my stay, this is certain to break through the 100 barrier very soon.

With my Chinese colleagues, I was responsible for handling technical enquiries from all of Asia. The collaboration with our two other Asian subsidiaries in Japan and Singapore was the main focus of attention in this case. John Speirs (Vice President Stock Shapes Asia) was available to help me in every possible way over the entire period of my stay.

Working in Asia is interesting in many different ways. Firstly, I found the plastics applications in the semiconductor industry – which were not familiar to me – very exciting. On the other hand, working with new colleagues and customers also revealed a number of surprises. Generally speaking, we have young, motivated and ambitious staff at all our subsidiaries in Asia, so that Ensinger in the Far East is very well-placed to cope with the future.

As Asia is sure to be best known from TV reports and therefore characterised by certain prejudices for most people in the population of the Western hemisphere, I would, of course, like to share some of my personal impressions with you. I was able to collect a lot of different experiences during my stay – some nice, some not so nice, others funny or bizarre – of which I would like to divulge a few in greater detail.

After a number of borderline experiences with taxis driving higgledy-piggledy, generally overtaking both on the left and the right, I decided to apply for a driving licence in China, whereby the test is limited to the theoretical part. The biggest difficulty in this respect was without a doubt the translation of the Chinese questionnaire into English, paired with my own English language knowledge and abilities. Nevertheless, I managed to successfully pass the test and was now able to explore the streets of Shanghai with my own vehicle. This is where my difficulties really started! As a moderate Western European driver, I was – to put it mildly – unable to cope with the active driving conditions in the road traffic in Shanghai to start with: the smallest gaps between the vehicles are used to ‘merge over’, so that the weaker driver is forced to give way. While overtaking, all available traffic lanes (as well as the no longer available lanes!) are used. The obligatory right hand is permanently on the horn, whereas the left hand remains poised ready to flash the headlights at an instant. Furthermore, the rather complicated traffic routing system has to be added to all this; up to four carriageways pass over each other at the same time. Despite everything, I was able to familiarise myself with the local driving style quite quickly and had a great time joining in.

A popular topic – which I have often been extensively questioned about since my return to Nufringen – is the food in Asia. In this case I can say straight away, however, that in all the countries I visited in Asia I experienced really good food everywhere. The girth around my middle is proof of this!

Naturally, there are also local specialities, which do not produce the same pleasure for everyone, such as duck’s tongue, jellyfish, chicken’s feet and fish heads – to mention just a few! Nevertheless, mealtimes were always so diversified that there was always something wholesome to eat, even for me.

Many a time I was approached about safety or rather the crime rate in Asia. “Is it at all safe there?!” Well, with few exceptions I felt very safe in Asia, whether in China, Vietnam or South Korea. Nevertheless, I did get into trouble with the law myself one day. Not because of my adapted style of driving, but because of another misdemeanour. Somehow counterfeit banknotes were passed on to me and – when I tried to pay with them – I ended up surprised to



be taking a free ride in a police car. These, by the way, are in no way inferior in the way they are equipped to the taxis in Shanghai! As my knowledge of Chinese was not good enough to describe a “petty offence involving bogus money” – and the police officer himself spoke no English – the whole interrogation turned out to be rather tough going, so that I was certainly not sorry to see the back of the police station when I was finally allowed to go. This then was my only experience of “breaking the law”, apart from a few traffic violations, during my entire stay.

Right from the very start I was received by my local colleagues very warmly and, very often, they would support me beyond just purely business matters, so that I was able to master the pitfalls of everyday life. The multitude of Chinese characters and the totally unknown language did their best to make even everyday things a great challenge for me, whether trying to understand the instructions of the washing machine, deciphering the water bill or explaining where I wanted to go to the taxi driver. For their tremendous support and friendship over the last two years, I would like to express a word of thanks to all colleagues in Asia once more. I am able to look back on a really exciting time and was really pleased to have been given this tremendous opportunity.

Christoph Lutz is an industrial engineer and a member of staff in the Applied Technology Department of the Semi-Finished Goods Division.

Ensinger Cup: International football tournament

An international football tournament was once again the main focus of attention at the summer fete celebrating the company's 45th anniversary. Thirty teams from around the world battled it out in July at the Nufringen sports grounds for the "Ensinger Cup". The biggest event since the company was founded was visited by more than 1,300 guests.

In addition to German employees and their families, staff from the company's subsidiaries were also invited. These came from France, Great Britain, Italy, Austria, Poland and Spain – some with more than one football team. The Asian branch offices as well as the USA and Brazil put two further teams together. Many foreign company members had already arrived a few days earlier in order to exchange ideas with their colleagues in a number of larger meetings.

With mild temperatures, the football players were able to kick off in one of two categories "fun" or "pro". In the final of the pro-tournament, the Czech pro-team defeated Medtronic 1-0 (the team is one of Ensinger's customers). There were twice as many participants in the no less ambitious fun-footballers category. This was won by the "Beach Boys" (an all-star team from Nufringen) after a penalty shoot-out against the "RSL Tigers" (Raw Materials / Compounds Division). In the meantime, it has become a tradition of the tournament for the cheerleaders and football players to wear fancy costumes. The football shirt competition was won by the Round House Kickers (a team of EVI presenters and facilitators) that – despite their rather impractical beards and chest-hair toupees – were nevertheless quite successful in sporting terms.



The tent was sent into raptures

Before the award ceremony, Klaus Ensinger and Dr. Roland Reber put themselves into the year 2045: in a debate seasoned with wisdom and irony, they reviewed what has happened since the last big summer party. At least in one point there was no difference of opinion – a big word of praise was showered on the organization team: Jannis Argiriadis, Werner Buschek, Ralf Dietrich, Rainer Hamann, Karen Lehmann, Klaus Rackelmann, Rolf Römer and Wolfgang Schwab. Nothing was missing, neither cakes, beverages, salads nor other delicacies from the grill. Even with the live music the team made a good choice. The Vöhringer "Bätschmusik" with Bernhardt Haid provided a fabulous start, then the party band "Madison Bow" sent the tent into raptures – the marquee went crazy on this cool summer evening, and the mood continued to remain "high" until well after midnight. [JF]



"To this day we have not experienced a company celebration like this one: from the first to the last song, apprentices and 'big bosses' – everybody joined in as if there was no tomorrow ..."
Quote from the website of the band "Madison Bow"