

impulse

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.....
Theme 3
Product and process development

.....
K trade fair 5
A brand new look for Ensinger

.....
Location 7
Ensinger Italia – customer proximity

.....
Perspective 8
Employees support projects in Haiti

.....

.....

Dear readers,



The bustling activity in the factory halls and offices is causing some considerable degree of amazement, with everyone wondering just how long the current boom can last. Given the ups and downs of the economic climate, anything appears possible and indeed is possible. However, it is important not to forget that the most recent crisis was brought about by devastating mistakes made in the financial sector. We are likely to go on feeling the effects for some time to come. But we should not let this jaundice our perception of what is actually happening now in the economy, where the trend is definitely upward. An ever increasing number of countries and people are entering into an active role in the global economy. The resulting division of labour and increasing specialization is generating worldwide demand for our products. This trend was bound to set in sooner or later. What had long been overdue has now become evident, and we find ourselves taken almost by surprise as we attempt to deal with some of the consequences: The shortage of qualified personnel, raw materials and energy to fuel the growth. There are many, myself among them, who see this shortfall almost with relief: Surely it is better to have insufficient manpower than a surplus of unwanted labour. And the need to find ways to respond flexibly to raw material and energy shortages should serve to fuel our ingenuity and feed our inventiveness – both attributes for which our particular industrial region enjoys an excellent reputation.

I am particularly gratified that we will be able to report on some interesting changes taking place in our company in this and the following issues of Impulse. Over recent years, we have strengthened our application and process engineering capability significantly. This strategy is aimed at more effectively addressing our customers' needs, the complexity of which increasingly exceeds the scope of a customary technical specification. Project management and process engineering need to change in step with these developments, which in turn calls for dedicated structures and specialist personnel.

Another major change is our new corporate design concept. Our websites and other communication media have been radically revised and modernized. By implementing a cohesive, clear and well arranged presentation of content in both the electronic and print media, we aim to simplify access to the relevant information.

In the next issue, we will be dealing with the topic of sustainability from a number of different perspectives.

It only remains for me to wish you pleasant and stimulating reading, and also all the very best for the New Year.

Yours sincerely, Klaus Ensinger



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The Product and Process Development Department Team.

Front right:
Dr. Christoph Krohmer.

Team members
not in the picture:
Elke Kastner,
Mario Schneider
and Thomas Gruber.



Development

How to systematically improve products and processes

Is it possible to manufacture high-grade stock shapes from newly developed compounds? How can we optimize our process engineering to increase output without compromising quality? What new technologies can be introduced to improve material properties? These are the questions that occupy the Ensinger Product and Process Development (PV) department in Nufringen. Under the leadership of Dr. Christoph Krohmer, a crack team of engineers and technicians is at work on improving every aspect of extrusion technology.

The work of the department focuses on the development and construction of equipment for producing stock shapes and profiles. One team of specialists is concerned with the design of extrusion tools, another directs its attention to the operating equipment, in other words the plant components, machines and other devices needed. The adjustment of removal and sorting devices for injection mouldings is another aspect which concerns the designers working under the direction of Department Manager Hartmut Leimbrink. Most orders are placed as a result of demands arising in the stock shapes, construction products and industrial profiles and pipes divisions, as well as longer-term internal process engineering development projects. One team of specialists concentrates on the design of extrusion tools, another on

plant components, machines and other equipment. The tasks performed by the design team surrounding head of department Hartmut Leimbrink also include adjusting removal and sorting devices for injection moulded parts. Maintaining and expanding core in-house expertise in the construction of tools and operating equipment is a central element of the services performed for the operating divisions. Internal customers benefit from an impressive standard of service, short decision-making processes and secure technological expertise in the long-term. Other locations are also involved in the projects. In Cham, Karl-Heinz Daiminger and his team from the construction products business division have specialized in the optimization and running-in of tools for insulbar profile production, working in close cooperation with the designers.

Volume Testing

Starting from the plasticizing screw through to the cooling unit, there are a whole array of adjustment facilities in any extrusion plant which impact on product characteristics. Since the beginning of 2010 a modern research department is now dedicated to the practically-oriented development of extrusion processes. This new facility offers scope for the systematic improvement of production methods without impairing actual production in progress.

In particular when it comes to running tests with costly raw materials, the smaller extrusion tools available to the research team mean far lower costs. “Unlike laboratory tests, there are no scaling problems here: Even if we are only using a few kilos of any particular material, the tests we run here offer conclusions which are just as valid as production volume production conditions”, explains the research facility manager Thomas Ensinger.

When it comes to projects, the PV Service Centre is able to draw on the technical expertise of Bernd Widmann. This experienced engineer is in charge of coordinating processes such as plant conversions conforming to CE regulations. This entails the adjustment of control systems to enhance machine safety. Widmann has also taken over technical supervision of the company’s foreign subsidiaries.

New production technologies are not put to use in producing locations outside of Europe until they have been exhaustively tried and tested in Nufringen. This procedure goes a long way towards ensuring that the same high standard of product quality and economy is achieved despite differing framework conditions. Posting staff members abroad has also made an important contribution towards the international transfer of know-how. The Nufringen-based process engineering experts regularly exchange their findings with the specialists from the USA and Brazil. But modern communication technology also has an important role to play in cutting costs here: Technical or organizational problems can frequently be resolved during transatlantic video conferences. [JF]

Interview with Dr. Christoph Krohmer

“By seeking and blundering we learn.”

During your mechanical engineering degree course you were already heavily involved in the processing of high-performance plastics. What is it that fascinates you about these materials?

Technical plastics offer enormous design and application scope. But the huge diversity these modern materials offer in terms of properties, colours and shapes is matched by the enormous challenge they pose in terms of processing. Just hearing the words “impossible to manufacture” is enough to provoke the ambitious engineer into defying the odds and looking for a solution.

What goals are you working towards in the field of product and process development?

We focus on the technical development of a product, while the various divisions concentrate on its commercial implementation and production. An important aim here is to ensure close coordination between the individual steps in order to maximize the achievable success.

The manufacture of our products often calls for the use of special process technologies. To find suitable machines and plants, we keep a close eye on the market, while at the same time continuing to develop our production technology.

Ever increasing importance is being attached to energy-efficient production. Minimizing energy consumption by fine-tuning machines and processes has become a central issue for PV.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

The thrill that comes from juggling the engineering, management and staff leadership aspects. These three elements working together pose an intriguing challenge both in terms of my technical training and also the non-technical aspects of Christoph Krohmer as a person – such as communication, empathy, and joined-up thinking.

How do you deal with a project which falls down at the last hurdle after months of work?

Goethe once said: “By seeking and blundering we learn”. Failure is an important part of development, because it exposes wrong conclusions.

When we analyse an error correctly and draw the right conclusions, we move closer to the truth – so every blind alley we travel is, in a manner of speaking, a worthwhile experience.

A brand new look for Ensinger

Surveys and internally conducted workshops have clearly revealed that both customers and employees associate the name Ensinger with technical expertise in the fields of plastics processing and application development. Employees were also shown to possess a high level of customer focus.

As a way of illustrating these characteristics to the outside world and to strengthen the corporate brand, Ensinger decided to gently modernize its corporate design.

The implementation phase started in Germany with the company's K 2010 trade fair presentation. Following the new website and the business stationery, the new design will be rolled out in stages, with brochures and company buildings all set to sport the brand new Ensinger colours and the revamped logo. The aim is for the company group to present itself to the world with a cohesive and identifiable corporate image. All the business units and subsidiaries will be using the umbrella brand logo exclusively in the future. Internationally launched product brands such as Thermix and insulbar will naturally be retained.

The new business stationery will emphasize the independence of the individual business units. This applies equally to navigation of the website, which was fundamentally redesigned back in the spring of last year. By breaking the home page www.ensinger-online.com down into Compounds, Stock Shapes, Finished Parts (Injection Moulding, Cast Nylon, Machined Parts and Direct Forming) and Profiles (Building Products and Industrial Profiles & Tubes), internet users will be able to access the individual business units directly. [JF]

ENSINGER 

Ensinger 

The new Ensinger logo (below) is more legible compared to the old one (above), even in a smaller view. Because customers know and value the logo, it has only been slightly modified to ensure instant recognition.



The Ensinger trade fair stand at K 2010 (27th Oct. – 3rd Nov.) sporting the new corporate design concept.

Employees

A warm welcome ...

Employees who have joined Ensinger since the middle of last year:

Nufringen

Installations/Car pool

Corinna Gauß

Building products

Sven Rohde

Silke Weinmann

IT

Christian Dannecker

Semi-finished products

Andreas Ade

Mirko Bretschneider

Kevin Cernutzan

Ali Ghadban

Vlado Jakic

Valentina Kim

Hubert Klumpp

Dalibor Komsic

Ulli Mornhinweg

Thomas Ott

Ibrahim Özgül

Andreas Reißner

Pascal Schilliro

Jens Spuhl

Manfred Straub

Christian Vujcec

Holger Wasmund

Industrial Profiles & Tubes

Viktor Frank

Alexej Tregubow

Marketing

Julia Kaupp

Nicole Swoboda

Quality management

Edith Holzberger

Human Resources &

Legal Affairs

Anke Haid

Monika Janik

Raw materials /

Compounding

Anika Harbord

Sinan Uysal

Apprenticeships / Studies

Industrial management

assistant:

Lisa Büchsenstein

Tooling mechanics:

Jonas Gerstner

Joschua Götz

Christian Rehfeldt

Process mechanics:

Patrick Weippert

Stefan Witulski

Bachelor programme,

Industrial engineering:

Janine Betz

Cham

Building products

Joachim Brandl

Fernando Di Napoli

Christian Eiden

Peter Gabriel

Florian Holzer

Benjamin Macht

Wolfgang Paulus

Georg Schwarz

Dominik Stelzl

Alfred Stoiber

Andreas Stoiber

Arkadiusz Szewczyk

Marko Thunig

Stefan Vrabec

Cast Nylon

Jakob Heller

Xaver Neumayer

Machining

David Beckmann

Benedikt Bricha

Thomas Engl

Ergenzingen

Injection moulding

Toni Ferro

Louis Fischer

Magdalení Giouroukali

Besnik Ibrahimí

Guelhan Karabacak

Claudia Kupper

Kevin Lukas

Martin Nadler

Eugen Rabinovic

Jürgen Rose

Timo Ruoss

Sarah Tobolla

Andrea Wild

Tool making

Sebastian Armbruster

Felix Walz



Stefan Hrnjkas celebrated 40 years with the company last summer. When he first joined the company, 12-hour shifts were the norm. The tasks performed by Croatian-born Hrnjkas included the assembly and cleaning of tools, transport of raw materials and cutting of stock shapes – demanding physical work, usually with limited mechanical aids. His alert eye for possible improvements caught the attention of management on many occasions. “Stefan’s constructive criticism and suggestions were always well received, which is why I frequently put him in charge of special assignments”, recalled Wilfried Ensinger at the jubilee celebrations in Nufringen. Now a Shift Manager in the stock shapes extrusion department and a father of five, Hrnjkas is due to take his well-earned retirement at the end of May this year.

Stefan Hrnjkas (3rd from right) with Dr. Roland Reber, Wilfried Ensinger, Martha Ensinger, Ivana Hrnjkas, Klaus Ensinger and Martin Luzens at the jubilee celebration.

In dialogue: Ensinger Italia is all about customer proximity

by Paolo Senatore, Andrea Rossetti, Martina Frattolillo

For a good twenty years now, Ensinger Italia has enjoyed an enviable reputation based on its adherence to proven business principles: customer-oriented solutions, outstanding service and wide diversity in its range of offered thermoplastics.

When this subsidiary was set up, its focus was on the distribution of stock shapes. The positive response it received from the Italian market prompted the Group only two years later to lay the foundations for its own factory on Italian soil and to expand its product range to include machined finished parts. Today, the factory manufactures using an impressive array of 5-axis lathes and milling centres, enabling it to produce even the most complex shaped components to individual customer order.

During the nineties, the first stock shapes warehouse was established in Northern Italy, joined by another one in Cassino in 2007. From this site located between Rome and Naples, Ensinger supplies its customers in Central and Southern Italy. Sound customer advice and fast deliveries are guaranteed by the existence of a well organized, close-meshed distribution network and a technical office operating within the company headquarters in Olcella di Busto Garolfo near Milan.

Characterized by a predominance of medium-sized and micro enterprises, the Italian market is highly fragmented and price-oriented, with most manufacturers preferring to offload the responsibility for marketing their products to dealers and distributors. Ensinger Italia takes a different approach, maintaining direct relations with OEMs and processing companies. By working in direct dialogue with OEMs, Ensinger benefits on every level from the comprehensive expertise of the Italian industry sector. This strategy has proven successful over the years, opening up all kinds of opportunities.



Headquarters in Olcella di Busto Garolfo

Ensinger Italia continuously strives to expand its own technical specialist expertise, largely through its close links with the Italian science and technology sector. Its cooperation with schools and universities plays an important role in this endeavour.

The drastic impact of the 2009 economic crisis necessitated a fundamental restructuring of the company's business activities. A strategic decision was taken to close or sell the Parma and Verdello branches of the company specializing in extrusion and injection moulding. The company succeeded in overcoming this crisis situation with the backing of the German parent company, by implementing a modified cost structure and, most importantly of all, through the untiring support and resilience of the dedicated Ensinger Italia team.

Today, Ensinger Italia employs a workforce of 48, and may justly claim to be the country's leading name in the marketing of high-grade products made from technical plastics. The modern profiles it produces for windows and facades comply fully with the latest energy-saving regulations stipulated for the building industry. The company also operates a flourishing finished parts business. Our aim: To make the brand name Ensinger synonymous with technical plastics.

Paolo Senatore is Stock Shapes Product Manager, Andrea Rossetti technical and application engineering manager and Martina Frattolillo is marketing assistant at Ensinger Italia.

Employees donate 7,450 Euro for aid projects in Haiti

A year on from the earthquake disaster, the situation in Haiti remains critical. Many of the country's population are still without homes and have no access to medical care. The Wilfried-Ensinger Foundation has supported the work of Doctor Anke Brüggmann in Haiti for many years.

Her aid organization runs a primary school and orphanage in the town of Beaumont funded by donations. Ensinger employees and apprentices dug deep following the disaster to raise more than 7,450 Euro in support of the people of Haiti. The Foundation ensured that the donations were forwarded directly to Beaumont.

“The money raised was used mainly to provide food and fund school education”, reports Martha Ensinger, who thanked the employees on behalf of the Wilfried-Ensinger Foundation. “We are now able to provide education for more children in Beaumont, helping us to cope with the large number of refugees flocking in from the capital.”

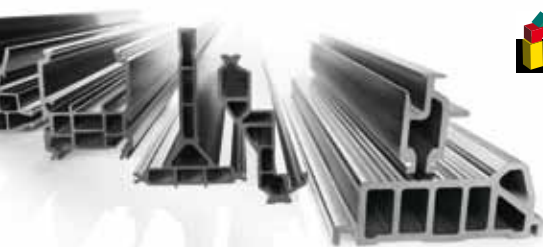
The Wilfried-Ensinger Foundation will continue to support the work being carried out in the town, in the hope of creat-



ing future perspectives for its children and youngsters. Anyone wishing to continue supporting Dr. Anke Brüggmann's aid program can donate funds directly by bank transfer to the Wilfried Ensinger Foundation, A/C no. 2236339, Kreissparkasse Tübingen / bank sort code 641 500 20 (quote "Haiti"). BIC / SWIFT Code: SOLA DE S1 TUB, IBAN: DE67 6415 0020 0002 2363 39. [JF]

Bau 2011: Framing the future

As the demands made on energy saving potential, thermal insulation and climate management in buildings continue to grow increasingly stringent, the pressure is on for window, door and facade manufacturers to come up with new and improved products. Have currently used materials and designs reached the end of their usefulness? Can the thermal insulation values (Uf) of the frame or the whole window system (Uw) only be improved by using new materials? What does the future hold by way of intelligent solutions?



 **BAU 2011**



Ensinger demonstrates that the Uf and Uw values demanded by the industry can not only be achieved but actually improved upon using the already established material polyamide. To base the current debated simply on the question of materials is understating the case. It is only by taking an overall view of the complex geometries that a real insight can be gained into the optimum coordination of materials, system components and processing methods. At the “Bau 2011”, Ensinger will be showcasing pioneering construction solutions and encouraging dialogue with well-versed experts in the field. Visitors will also have the chance to gain an insight into the rapid prototyping process with the aid of animated demonstration, and the trade fair presentation will be rounded off with an exhibition featuring further processing techniques. [Wey]