Refurbishment of the extrusion hall completed

Production plant technically and economically up to date

To facilitate greater efficiency in semi-finished parts production, renovation of the extrusion halls was on the ENSINGER agenda this year.

The focus of this project was mainly improvement of production economy, the increase of the reliability of production processes, greater security for the workers, better working conditions in general and last but not least in consideration of ecological matters.

Visitors recently travelling from the north to Nufringen may have noticed the new bright sites for granules at ENSINGER. From these, raw materials are transported within closed pipes direct to the production plants.

This is an improvement for delivery material supply at the extruder and for employees.

A new fire protection concept was developed and adopted by the authorities. An essential part of this is a sprinkler system in all production areas. The new system allows dissolution of possible fire areas within the building. Production security was increased by the renewal of the complete cool water pipes and of the whole electrical supply equipment. Everything now is at a technically optimum status.

A completely re-designed ventilation system takes care of improved – temperature conditions in the hall, especially in summertime. This is controlled by the employees. The ventilation system distributes over 40,000 m³ air per hour. New crane installations also make work easier.

With completely newly designed lighting, ENSINGER has taken account of ecological points of view. Roof windows let more daylight into the hall and depending on brightness, a modern lighting concept controls the timing of luminaries and optimum light conditions that are at the same time energy efficient.

Of course, production could not be interrupted while the work was being carried out. The work was therefore split into three phases – in each phase only a third of the area was affected. After nine months, in September, and one month earlier than planned, the last phase was finished.

Such an exact schedule was only possible after detailed planning, with regard to technique and time. We therefore thank everyone involved, especially the engineering office who gave fundamental input as well as the in-house technical services department, headed by Günter Secker, who contributed his years of experience in many small details during the renovation process.

We are sure, that we have created an installation with which we can obtain successful extrusion work for many years to come.

Karl-Martin Hess

Individual solutions with the help of polyurethane

Addition to the casting materials TECAST and TECARIM

ENSINGER has enlarged its product range with a new material family: With immediate effect and in close cooperation with the Swiss company Kundert AG, ENSINGER now sells in the German market polyurethane elastomers; they occupy an enormous important place in modern technology.

Polyurethane (PUR) is an optimum addition to the cast materials TECAST least PAI and TECARIM (Nyrim). As with TECARIM, the material’s properties can be varied according to the application. The material ranges from flexible, rubber-like to hard types that are similar to polyamides. Depending on the modification, a hardness from 10 Shore A to 75 Shore D can be achieved.

Characteristic features of polyurethanes are the low wear rate, the very good abrasive behaviour and the outstanding damping behaviour. Exposed to static stress, PUR hardly tends to flatten (e.g. in rollers) whilst at the same time offering very good behaviour under dynamic load.

PUR is resistant to many oils, greases and solvents as well as to ozone, UV and energy-rich radiation. Continuous operation in temperatures between minus 40 degrees Celsius and up to 120 degrees Celsius is possible. Polyurethane parts are produced in reactive casting processes, with different methods providing the possibility of various material combinations. Combinations of polyurethanes with other materials (e.g. metals) are possible as well as combinations of polyurethanes with different degrees of hardness.

Polyurethane elastomers have proved to be best as technical engineering materials in many application fields. The main fields of application are engineering, automotive technology, building and the electronic industry.

The individual choice of a particular system is determined by technical and economical criteria. Typical components are rollers, cylinders, sealing and membrane elements as well as a number of supporting parts. (continued on page 2)
Dear Reader,

Quality stands in the way of improvement. This is often true of today’s quality systems: ISO standards, EFQM, 6 Sigma, etc. Many companies have made a virtue of necessity and significantly improved their processes and structures in the course of certification. Nowadays, one doesn’t talk about quality systems – one “just has them,” and this makes them worthless as image promoters. There are several reasons why they have become dull routine in many quarters. The certifying bodies are exposed to increasing competition, with the result that the auditors seek closeness to the customer. Their assessments and recommendations are couched in friendly rather than official terms, and when inspecting compliance to these they try not to raise too much dust. This of course tempts one or the other customer to exploit this leniency to the last degree possible.

It is still normal usage to adhere formally to the standards without further investigating their spirit and meaning, and sooner or later all involved find this blind obedience ridiculous. This can be a beneficial compulsion to make changes, but when the responsible managers in the companies do not themselves believe in the changes, they soon become bogged down – involving, as they do, a tedious process of adaptation. The standard then degenerates into a compulsory exercise, a straitjacket.

We believe that ENSINGER recognised quality systems as an opportunity at a very early stage and used them as such. We have learnt to crystallise that which is useful in them, and to apply it purposefully. But, to be honest, even we could have done better, and were often enough satisfied with what was good, instead of striving for that which was better. An important aspect of many quality systems is the establishment of work circles and individual interviews, which serves the purpose of jointly identifying goals and of gaining clarity about the progress of the measures. Thus individual interviews take place regularly in the company, but many employees and managers are slow to realise what an unused potential lies in the constructive evaluation of the individual. Constructive criticism holds an objective mirror up to us, thus giving us insights into ourselves and our appearance in the eyes of others. And it is only genuine insights that awaken preparedness for change. But quick though the interview guidelines are to be drawn up, the road is long and hard. It starts with compulsory exercises and a lot of nervousness (on both sides). Everybody makes mistakes. For instance, there will be no balanced evaluation in cases in which personal esteem prevents objective criticism, or when both partners in the interview make their evaluations with a one-sided view to compensation. Criticism must also be uttered repeatedly, and must be supported by objective criteria. This is where the significance of clearly defined goals and measurable performance criteria, etc. again come into play. I could go on with the list of possible mistakes, and talk about similar experiences with other instruments. It is definitely an advantage to limit oneself to a few programmes, to take each step moderately, and to plan the way to one’s goal carefully. When you say yes to an instrument of management, you should think of learning a musical instrument: the first steps are the hardest. But the compulsory programme is followed by the free programme, and the initial drudgery by virtuosity – with regard to the example of the employee interview – a lot of enjoyment from good, constructive co-operation.

Yours,

Klaus Ensinger

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Fire service at ENSINGER

Fire drill and viewing of new hall and sprinkler system

(IDW) Whereas on August 17 most of our colleagues enjoyed Sunday morning at home, at ENSINGER we had the fire service in house – not because of a fire but rather because we wanted to be forearmed in case of such an emergency!

34 members of the volunteer fire brigade had met in the Nürtingen production department to give the new building and the technique of the new sprinkler system a close look and to become familiar with the new facilities. „Since there is no time to study the technique in cases of fire or emergency and since then everything has to be very fast, it is important, that everyone involved already knows the area and the systems,“ says Security Manager Rolf De Lenardis who has carried out an inspection and the following investigation.

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Piston ring for shock absorbers

(IDW) ZF Sachs in Schweinfurt develops and produces vibration dampers and other chassis control components, as well as torque converters and clutches for passenger cars and utility vehicles. ENSINGER produce the piston ring for one of their single-tube dampers (see illustration), which is used as an axle shock absorber in passenger cars and utility vehicles.

In this shock absorber, the working room is filled with oil and gas, the two substances being strictly separated from one another by a dividing piston. The oil, which is under pressure, must be securely sealed in, whether the piston rod is at rest or in motion, so the piston rod and the seal are especially important components.

ENSINGER manufacture the piston seal in a die-casting process in friendly rather than official terms, and when inspecting compliance to these they try not to raise too much dust. This of course tempts one or the other customer to exploit this leniency to the last degree possible. It is still normal usage to adhere formally to the standards without further investigating their spirit and meaning, and sooner or later all involved find this blind obedience ridiculous. This can be a beneficial compulsion to make changes, but when the responsible managers in the companies do not themselves believe in the changes, they soon become bogged down – involving, as they do, a tedious process of adaptation. The standard then degenerates into a compulsory exercise, a straitjacket.

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ENSINGER manufacture the piston seal in a die-casting process in
ENSINGER’s fastest employee
Andreas Fauß won the third German Master title in Formula H Series

[Kal] Wait for the green start signal and then full speed ahead!

On 17 August 2003, Andreas Fauß, employee from the ENSINGER Sales department, had his last start in the formula handicap series for this racing season.

The 29-year-old who has been confined to a wheelchair since he was 15, is an enthusiastic go-kart driver and has already had many successes. Twice Andreas has taken second place and in his last race for this year in Wittgenborn, he won his third German Master title in Formula H Series. The “Gäu-Speed-Racing Team”, which consists of Andreas Fauß and his two mechanics, has six races per year on different racetracks in Germany, France and Switzerland. There, they compete with others who are enthusiastic about go-karting. During such weekends, the races are not the only fun for the ENSINGER employee and his team - camping is always a real highlight. For Andreas Fauß, this is what gives the event its special atmosphere!

In Formula H, there are no prizes for the winners; to finance such a racing season, the Gäu Speed Racing team will have to start searching for sponsors in the next weeks. “And with good luck it will be fine for a new Chassis,” says the team.

This year’s ENSINGER service awards included one for Dietrich Grötzner, who has been with the company for 25 years now. Ingrid Quei, Roland Elsässer, Raimund Akermann, Joachim Neumann, Werner Musterle, Wolfgang Wunsch and Winfried Götz were also celebrating, each having worked at ENSINGER for 10 years (all on the left picture). A celebration of their loyalty had already been held at the summer party and was followed with gifts of flowers and wine the next day. Erich Nuss (right picture, together with Martin Baras, head of the sales and marketing department) was honoured for his 10 years service together with Ibrahim Babic (30 years), Herbert Vetter and Siegfried Buchwald (10 years). Our thanks and best wish go to all!

Two colleagues showed a very different side of themselves: In a sketch, lady farmer Ilona Brodt did not let herself get worked up by the lady from the town, Irene Dengler, who strolled along “Nufringen Railway Station”. In their dialogue, based on “Schiller and Schaller” there were many communication difficulties and confusions – leading to great amusement for the guests who laughed almost until they cried. The musical end to the afternoon was performed Janez Gorse and his musicians who played Slovenian folk tunes.

And how were the celebrations in Cham? Very different in this year – but read more about this in the next impulse . . .
Numerous company anniversaries in Cham

[Ph] In the 3rd quarter of the year, there were also a couple of company anniversaries in Cham. Rose-marie Zangl, assistant to Mr. Alsfasser, can already look back on 10 years with ENSINGER. Together with her, Robert Ederer, master electrician in the maintenance department, also celebrated his first completed decade with the company. Andreas Alsfasser congratulated them and thanked them for many years of successful cooperation. In September, we congratulated the following colleagues for their 10 years service at ENSINGER in Cham: Thomas Edener, who is working in the Tooling department, Josef Krottenhaler and Stephan Wagner who are working in the Machining department. Josef Graf, head of the tooling department, Fred Nass head of the machining department and production manager Anton Baumeister congratulated their colleagues who have worked there for a long time. On behalf of the works committee, Franz Schönbürgner conveyed the congratulations of the employees. By the way: All three September anniversaries started their professional career at ENSINGER! On 1st September 1993, they joined the company as trainees and have remained loyal ever since.

A hearty welcome

from ENSINGER to the new employees who have joined our team since September 2003.

Nudringen
Marina Hippisch Trainee Industrial Commerce
Sven Rhode Trainee Tool Mechanic
Sven Schmidt Trainee Tool Mechanic
Thomas Staeihl Trainee Process Mechanic
Markus Killinger Trainee Process Mechanic
Corinna Steck BA Engineering
Alex Ninos Technician

Cham
Markus Kulzer Tool Mechanic
Matthias Aumer Trainee Machining Mechanic
Christoph Paul Trainee Machining Mechanic
Florian Pommier Trainee Machining Mechanic
Sandra Wanninger Trainee Process Mechanic
Daniel Bröckl Trainee Process Mechanic
Alvin Herrenberger Machine Operator, Custom Cast Division
Gertraud Söldenwagner Sales Clerk, Custom Cast Division
Yasmin Lenth Assistant to the Machining Products Division Manager

We wish you all a successful future at ENSINGER!

Successful completion of training at ENSINGER in Cham

[Ph] For each company that offers training, good final results are an occasion to be proud of one’s future young workers. But when two out of four successfully completed apprenticeships at a company belong to the very best of the region’s commercial chamber, this is a special occasion to emphasize this achievement. So, Factory Manager Andreas Alsfasser and Training Manager Max Langlechner congratulated the successful young workers for their great results with special pleasure: Anja Trinkler (Process Mechanic), Tobias Schwärtscher and Christian Kropf (Tool Mechanics) as well as Thomas Karl (Machining Technician) have completed their final exams with extraordinarily good results. Moreover, Christian Kropf and Thomas Karl will receive a special honour from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, since they belong to the best graduates of this year. Perhaps, the two could provide encouragement for the six new trainees that have started their training for work on 1. September 2003 in Cham. The company is proud to have a good reputation as a training company: There are already numerous applications for the training year 2004 and ENSINGER is taking care that the rising generation of craftsmen will get a chance!

Sporty ENSINGER

[Ph] In the 3rd quarter of the year, 100 employees of ENSINGER participated in a running competition in Cham on 29.6. The whole company has received great support and encouragement for the six young workers that have started on 1. September 2003. Good luck!
The ENSINGER Interview

Questions to Hansjörg Faller

Hansjörg Faller studied mechanical engineering at the University of Stuttgart. His main areas of study were plastics technology and precision mechanics. He has been with the company since July 1990. He has built up quality management and led the company through ISO certification. Today, Hansjörg Faller is responsible for Quality Management and the Work Safety Committee.

How do you get to be Quality Manager at ENSINGER?

Nowadays, you can gain this specialised knowledge quite specifically during your course of study. However, I personally come from the plastics side, and with my previous employer I was responsible for investigation of thermoplastics and qualification of components. When Mr. Wilfried Ensinger offered me the opportunity to build up a complete quality system, I jumped at the chance and took on the job. As an engineer, you are mostly involved in individual projects and seldom have the opportunity, like an architect has, for instance, to build an entire house, so this was a unique opportunity.

What exactly does the Quality Management department do?

We work in many different areas. Our area is responsible for the further development of the Quality System, which has been established and certified under DIN EN ISO 9001:2000. Another of our tasks is the physical and chemical testing of materials. We are also responsible for environmental questions, and for the disposal of waste that calls for special attention. We support the divisions in drawing up operational instructions that govern the handling of dangerous substances, and develop measures to improve work safety.

What measuring processes do you need to judge the quality of a plastic and the products made from it?

ENSINGER have a very well equipped material-testing laboratory. Our standard work involves testing delivered goods and doing general material tests, some of them for customer certification or material approval. Apart from the mechanical characteristics, we ascertain, for instance, the rheological data, which are important from a processing point of view. We can even carry out friction and wear tests.

Pride of place undoubtedly goes to our thermooanalysis, which can be used to draw conclusions about both the material and its use.

What is your procedure for identifying plastics?

There are a few simple methods for the first approach to analysing plastics. One of them is setting light to them – but please don’t try that over the carpeting in the office or your living room! The smell, the colour of the flame, or drips are characteristic. Another method is to drop the plastic from a specific height onto a block – the sound gives an indication of the material. The easiest way to get information about the density of the water test: does the plastic float or not?

What is an audit?

How is ENSINGER certified?

Even the best of systems must be continually updated and improved. If their quality is to be kept up to scratch. To preserve these certifications, regular inspections are therefore prescribed, the so-called audits. The entire system may be assessed, or an individual process (for example a production line), or just one product together with its requirements.

With us, system audits are carried out regularly, which means that the whole of ENSINGER is inspected. This is done both externally by the German Association for Certification of Management Systems (DQS) and internally by our department.

How does ENSINGER monitor process outputs?

Process and product monitoring is the job of the divisions. At ENSINGER we have worker self-inspection; that is, the worker is responsible and answerable for the quality of the products that he manufactures. In this, he is supported by the division’s Quality Assurance, which provides him with test plans – in the ideal case, agreed upon with the customer – and test tools, and carries out statistical evaluations.

What are the strengths of the ENSINGER quality system?

The basic ENSINGER quality system has been in existence since the early 90s. When the auditors told us after the first audit that we were the company with the least paperwork, we were all proud of ourselves. We have structured the system so that emphasis is on responsible action on the part of the employees rather than on regulations, and have thus achieved the greatest possible flexibility.

What is the outlook for future certification?

At present we are working on an enhancement for DIN EN ISO 13485: medical products, which will soon be complete.

Mr. Faller, thank you very much for the interview!

New premises for THERMIX®

With effect from July 2003 we are therefore at your service from the following address:

ENSINGER GmbH
Niederlassung Ravensburg
Mooswiesen 13, 88214 Ravensburg
Phone and fax numbers remain unchanged. Just drop in – we look forward to your visit!

Visit from Cham mayor Leo Hackenspiel

During a round trip, the gentlemen were informed about the fields of Alchering, Custom Cast and building products. The visitors were impressed by the technical possibilities and the working conditions at the company. Mayor Hackenspiel even named ENSINGER “a bright star in our economic skies”.

Golden badge of honour by the IHK (Chamber of Industry and Commerce) for Wilfried Ensinger

The question that arises again and again: “Plastic cork” or “real cork”?

Or: It’s a matter of the “Pop”

An alternative has to be found. The plastic cork! Only really good wines that will be stored for a long time (and “long time” really means longer than ten years!) need a real cork. For the wines that we buy for everyday use, plastic corks would do no harm. Actually, these wines are processed in a way in which the opening takes place within the barrel and the wine is bottled ripe, ready to be drunk.

Storage is not necessary – the cork just needs to be tight and will not foul up the wine.

Therefore: In the off licence or at the supermarket, there is no problem buying wines with plastic corks – without being regarded as a philistine.

By the way: A specialist journal asked acknowledged experts to taste different wines under cover. They had four versions of each wine: one with natural cork, one with pressed cork, one with plastic cork and one with screw top. The result: The wines with plastic cork and screw top achieved the best results in a taste evaluation. So it is just a question of time, until anybody develops a plastic cork, that makes the wine ripe as well as a real cork – and without the danger of the cork taste.
For 15 years now, since June 1988, ENSINGER has been directly participating in the development of the market for semi-finished products and machined parts in France.

The first branch was opened in Blain-Mersin, and the company then decided to build a factory in Goussainville, near the Charles de Gaulle airport. From there, application development together with sales and stockholding of semi-finished parts was carried out. In the year 2000, ENSINGER acquired UMP Society in Beynost, near Lyon. UMP specializes in machining finished parts for the textile industry, for medical technology and for the bottling and packaging industry.

The acquisition of UMP has enabled the company to strengthen its position to offer a complete service from development through production and assembly to very demanding customers in specialised markets.

We wish the team from ENSINGER France under the direction of Michel Layac all the best and success for the future.

Internship in the EDP department

“On 4 August, I had my first day as student trainee in the EDP department at ENSINGER. Of course, it was exciting and a little bit nervous – what would be expected of me in the following two weeks? But the strain passed quickly, since my colleagues welcomed me heartily. I was at once confronted with a PC problem. So, I was entrusted with a computer whose power supply system had exploded … But this explosive experience remained an individual case. One of my everyday tasks was the fitting of a new fixed disk and the re-installation of the operating system with all drivers and the required program files. Because of our carefully planned firewall there was no entry for the worm. The network was well protected and the external laptops were quickly updated with the latest security standards.

ENSINGER was safe from the worm, but many employees had it on their private computer – they had a problem where their PCs permanently tried to reboot. With us, they got the help they needed to get rid of the weakness.

All in all I had a very interesting and varied internship during which I had – thanks to my nice and kind colleagues – a lot of fun. At this point, I want to say thank you to all my colleagues, who have supported me during these two weeks and who made time for me.”

Nico Mario Busch

ENSINGER Italy’s annual visit to Cham

[DVl] In June, employees of ENSINGER Polska spent a weekend together at a sales training seminar. All colleagues from the offices and the sales representatives from Leszno, Sosonowiec and Gdański took part in the event that took place in a small guest house in Karpacz (Giant Mountains). Of course, an important point was that the people could get to know each other better. An intensive hike in the mountains was exactly the right thing for this.

Sales training in the Giant Mountains

[DVl] It’s almost a tradition: Each year, during their annual summer holiday, colleagues from ENSINGER Italy organize a trip to the Bavarian ENSINGER factory in Cham for some employees and business partners. Under the direction of the Italian Managing Director, Giancarlo Piatti, the delegation of eight and the hosts had a couple of nice days in Cham. The meeting was informative in terms of business as well as in terms of cooking. The visitors got a guided tour around the production areas followed by a technical forum on the services and range of products from the company presented by Walter Wagner, one of the managers of the Custom Cast Division. He also introduced the new structure of his product division which has been uniting cast PA 6, PA 12 and TECARIM under one roof.

The evening was extremely cozy and amusing – since the guests did not order their food à la carte as usual. No, specifically according to instructions, the chef created original Italian specialties – and the Italians impressed their Bavarian hosts with creations of the finest Italian finger food.