Working arm in arm

Automation in the Cham factory simplifies processes and everyday work for employees of the Cast Nylon Division.
Dear Reader,

This issue marks the fiftieth anniversary of our company. My thoughts surrounding this landmark are focused on a single emotion: that of gratitude. Gratitude for the pioneering spirit displayed by the founders, Wilfried and Martha Ensinger. For the commitment of our workforce both at home and abroad. For the confidence and loyalty shown by our customers. For the privilege of being allowed to work in this environment and to look forward to each new day with its challenges and interaction.

Many employees and partners feel a fondness for our company. Particularly gratifying is that this affinity can create a bridge of reconciliation to those who may have parted company in disagreement. Because even those who have moved on still hold a place for Ensinger in their heart. This special empathy creates a connection, no matter how opinions may differ.

Alongside the overwhelming sense of gratitude, the weight of anxiety is naturally far away. The responsibility of ensuring the survival of the company can grow into more of a burden with every passing decade and generation. Who would want to be the one to break with or even end a successful tradition?

But a company’s purpose is not set in stone. Many employees and partners feel heard and respected, and those who have moved on still hold a place for Ensinger in their heart. This special empathy creates a connection, no matter how opinions may differ.

How we address these differences, whether right or wrong, will impact heavily on how we prepare for future challenges. There is a clearly visible tendency in our company that success and nurturance are best achieved by bringing these two poles together in a melting pot of old and new approaches. These solutions tend to be more balanced and bear more weight. Representatives of the different positions feel heard and respected, and are themselves capable of making moves towards change. The culmination of this process is a move away from “them and us” towards “we”. Under the bottom line, this is what forms the substance of the company and the affinity we all feel after fifty years of Ensinger.

Very truly yours,

Klaus Ensinger

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**News channel picks Ensinger as "Hidden Champion"**

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**Stress test for fibre-reinforced plastics**

The way in which fibre-reinforced plastics react to mechanical stress was the subject addressed by Dr. Matthias Zscheyge in his doctoral thesis at the Dresden University of Technology. The Scientific Alliance of the University Professors of Plastics Technology (WAK) selected this thesis as the winner of the Wilfried-Ensinger Prize. The findings elaborated by Zscheyge, now employed as “High-Performance Polymers” Group Leader at the Fraunhofer Institute for Mechanics of Materials IWM in Halle, can make a contribution in fields such as arming the bodywork components of cars to more effectively resist crash loads.

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**For quality and logistics**

For the third time in a row, automotive industry suppliers Schaeffler and Continental have awarded Ensinger's injection moulding division the honour of “premium supplier”. A total of 37 international companies were given this status. For the suppliers, inclusion in the “premium supplier circle” has the advantage that they become involved at an early stage in product development projects. The selection criteria of the Schaeffler-Continental purchasing cooperation arrangement include not only fully developed quality management but also good logistics performance with a global and regional presence. Reimar Olderog, head of the injection moulding division, thanked the employees at the Rottenburg-Ergenzingen site. “Being awarded the honour of premium supplier shows that our collective efforts from the last few years, including those to keep on improving, have been worth it.”

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**Imprint**

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**Presenting Supporters**

Wilfried Ensinger Stiftung
Top-scoring car nut

Manuel Mühlbauer likes nothing better than messing about with his cars – he applied the same enthusiasm to his studies as a process mechanic. The 22 year old from Oberpfalz achieved the best final exam in the whole of Germany.

In 2015, Mühlbauer learned from his stepfather – a car mechanic – how to handle tools, for instance, and prepares the extruder with the appropriate tools, for instance, and prepares the production. He works shifts. “I always have two early, two late and two night shifts, and then four days off,” he says. “That suits me better than having just Saturday and Sunday free.”

When you visit Manuel Mühlbauer you are likely to find him in the garage. Before he shakes your hand, he wipes his oily fingers. Replacing a radiator or changing the oil are a piece of cake for him. “I’ve always been passionate about cars,” he says. “My stepfather was a car mechanic and he taught me a lot. We repair everything ourselves – at least what we can manage without the workshop.” Manuel Mühlbauer bought his first car when he was 18 – a silver-grey Opel Astra. “I want to make sure both cars get used regularly so I drive the old one in the winter and the new one in the summer,” he explains.

Technical skills weren’t the only thing Mühlbauer learned from his stepfather – he also learned how to persevere. And the 22 year old put this determination to good use when he completed his training as process mechanic for plastic and rubber technology. “Preparation for the exams here at work was great,” remembers Mühlbauer. “I had already predicted I would pass the theory and practical, but when I was named Germany’s best student in the field of semi-finished products by the IHK – I was gobsmacked.” Since last July, Mühlbauer has been plant and machine operator in the insulbar division. “Every apprentice was allowed to choose a shift before the takeover,” he says. “I wanted to go to shift 3 because even while I was training I was getting on really well with the colleagues. If I don’t know something, there is always someone there I can turn to.”

As soon as Mühlbauer clocks in, he pulls on his safety shoes and receives his instructions from his shift manager. Then he sets up the extruder with the appropriate tools, for instance, and prepares the production. He works shifts. “I always have two early, two late and two night shifts, and then four days off,” he says. “That suits me better than having just Saturday and Sunday free.”

His girlfriend moved back to Innsbruck some time ago to study there. “But he’s happy to drive the 370 kilometres. He just turns up the music and enjoys the drive – and the hours of work he’s invested in his car are well worth the effort.”

Employees who have joined Ensinger:

**Nufringen**

- insulbar®
  - Antje Christine Will
  - IT
  - Robert Veit
  - Januscz Zyga

- Shapers
  - Jürgen Rösler
  - Franzi Fichtner

- Thomas Kächele
  - Andreas Kühler
  - Markus Häfner

- Basic
  - Franz Wimmer
  - Thomas Hausladen

- Belinda Böckle
  - Thomas Schuster
  - Jörg Blumenthal

- insulbar®
  - Andreas Seifert

**Cham**

- insulbar®
  - Josef Adam
  - Wolfgang Berzl
  - Sandra Bösl

- Benjamin Breu
  - Tobias Liebl
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- Ergenzingen
  - Injection moulding
    - Sebastian Armbruster
    - Magnus Faßnacht

- Thomas Gärtner
  - Ahmet Karayilan
  - Svenja Lupold
  - Tom Michael Mayer

With best thanks...

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- Nenad Jokic

**Cham**

- Dr. Milan Cavic
- Nenad Jokic

**Ergenzingen**

- Nufringen
  - Mario Bache
  - Marianne Böhler
  - Anica Gorse

- Götz Hausotte
  - Bert Meiner
  - Carsten Berger
  - Harald Sauer

**Nufringen**

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This year the following employees celebrate their company anniversaries at Ensinger:
Change is a wonderful thing

In the past two years Ralph Pernizsak, head of the Shapes Division, has made a lot of changes at Ensinger. He explains here why this was important and what his goals are for the future.

When you started at Ensinger at the beginning of 2014, what situation did you find?
A Swabian family-owned company of international standing — dynamic, with committed employees who identify strongly with Ensinger. Yet it was often in fire-fighting mode. Production hall employees suffered acute problems but there were scarcely any calm discussions on how to tackle the long-term causes. As I walked through the factory, I often saw hectic scenes.

What do you mean? Why was that?
Only too obvious — the stock shapes division had grown enormously in recent years. This had also created disorder. This was compounded by the fact that Ensinger didn’t realise how big it was and hadn’t yet become properly accustomed to being a global Group. Many departments and sites hadn’t joined up the dots. But we need a comprehensive overview of things: how do the processes within the company and in the individual production plants fit together? What do we need to focus on? What are our priorities?

What have you done since joining?
First of all we defined our objectives. On the one hand we wanted to make processes more efficient. Closely associated with that is the second objective of increasing productivity. And of course we were pushing for strong growth, and still are. These three objectives require permanent effort. We implemented the core elements of this production programme, which we call TECAsport, with assistance from management consultants from Porsche Consulting. Their teams of experts are results-oriented and very demanding, but they go about things intelligently. The consultancy assignment lasted three months, up to June 2014. Together we devised plans for the months and years ahead, which we have been implementing ever since.

Can you give us an example of such a measure?
The pilot project was the cutting service in Nufringen. This exemplified all the problems. Orders were going unfulfilled, everyone was stressed out, overtime, frustration, high rates of sick leave. In just two weeks we had reorganised the cutting service and introduced textbook flexible production methods, so-called lean management. For example, we changed the work processes — previously, each individual plastics joiner was responsible for picking up his order, obtaining the material, programming the saw, sawing, cleaning the saw, filling out the paperwork and removing the completed material. During an eight-hour shift, the saw was operating for a mere 45 minutes! But the cutting service only earns money when the saw is running. So we assigned work packages and linked them together: one person plans, another one fetches, another one removes and everyone else saws. After just a short time, what we saw was that there was no more overtime, no Saturday working — but despite that we were able to handle more orders. Suddenly the mad rush in the cutting service had ceased, and the employees were once again working calmly and with concentration. Obviously a restructuring such as this isn’t concluded and firmly established after just two weeks. But thanks to the early evidence of success, a willingness to change has developed within the workforce.

This openness underpins the measures being continued independently.

The TECAsport programme measures are costly. Has it been worth it?
I think so. The machine operating times have increased, and productivity with it. This is evident from the OEE metric: Overall Equipment Effectiveness. Before TECAsport kicked off, everyone in Nufringen was in agreement, “We have gone as far as we can with efficiency. We need more employees, a new production hall, more machines!” What is now apparent is that just through better organisation we have been able to achieve quite a bit! But we’re still a long way short of our goal. There’s still a lot to do.

Are there any more examples of better organisation?
We are now focusing more on work processes. There was a long-standing culture at Ensinger of tackling improved productivity by technical means alone. One example — setting up a particular machine takes four hours. There was some idea of reducing that to three hours with robotic assistance. But on average, it took six hours until an employee had any time at all to do the set-up. During that time the machine was idle. It was these six hours that had to be tackled first, not the four hour set-up time! Because that’s just a coordination task. For example, to help with this, there are now detailed planning boards in the factory that employees can use to organise themselves. They think about what helps to create value, what the major levers are — and what constitutes waste.

What else has changed?
The employees’ mindset. That is far more important to me than any figure on the balance sheet. People are communicating with one another, improving processes and making their own decisions. The willingness to change can be seen in the numerous CIP workshops as part of our FVI improvement tool. One of them was saying that he had been researching packaging materials for our semi-finished engineering products at home on the Internet, and wanted to try out something new. That made me think: “wow! It worked.”

Change is a wonderful thing — this attitude is now part of our life. That makes me happy, because we never stop changing. Change is a continuous process. Do you know what? It isn’t at all difficult to get the teams to do something — the employees have know-how,
To know their needs and speak their language. Part of that also is building bridges into and help shape the change process. We openly communicate our initiatives outside the company. Our experience of this has been positive.

Ralph Pernizszak worked in Japan for seven years, where he became acquainted with different corporate organisation models.

For over 50 years, machining specialist Trig Engineering has been supplying international customers from the aviation industry and the offshore sector. Lisa-Jayne Burman introduces us to the Ensinger subsidiary.

Percy Triggol founded Trig Engineering in 1965 in a backyard workshop in North Petherton, UK. In 1994, the company was acquired by the Ensinger Group, and three years later it moved to a modern production hall in Bridgwater, Somerset. Trig now employs eighty members of staff on the site. Together with the subsidiary Ensinger Precision Engineering (EPE), Trig Engineering forms Ensinger’s “Machined Parts Division”. This division specialises in the manufacture of precision components from high-performance plastics and is one of the biggest suppliers on the British market. A small management team from both companies runs the machining unit, headed up by Terry Maggs.

Close ties to customers

Trig manufactures components for the most challenging sectors in the world, including defence and oil and gas, with the aero-space market continuing to be the root of success. Its performance has enabled the company to develop strong, long-lasting relationships with customers such as Airbus, Messier-Dowty, Rolls Royce and Siemens.

And how does the customer benefit from all these changes?

Market dynamism has increased enormously. We are witnessing strong competition on the customer side, logistics challenges as a result of just-in-time production and the shrinking of inventories tying up lots of capital. Our customers benefit directly from the changes introduced at Ensinger in the production, logistics and sales fields. They can order from us in significantly shorter cycles, our portfolio has expanded and become more stable and the customer appreciates us now being far better at putting ourselves in his shoes.

A shade more precise

3-D CNC coordinate measuring

Trig is an expert in both manual and CNC turning, along with milling and cutting. On this basis, experienced engineers and skilled machine operators produce complex components and assemblies – that are often difficult to process – from high-performance plastics. The specialists at Trig are also proud of their performance in finishing and further processing techniques such as ultrasonic cleaning, heat treatment, parts labelling and deburring, and the assembly service. This know-how, together with state-of-the-art and high-quality technical equipment like the three-dimensional CNC coordinate measuring machine, enable exceptionally high quality throughout the entire manufacturing process. Here, a role is also played by the certified quality assurance in line with ISO 9001, 2008 and AS EN 9100.

Lisa-Jayne Burman is Marketing Assistant at Ensinger Ltd., Tonrefail.
50 Years Ensinger: Founded to last

Ensinger will be celebrating its 50-year company jubilee on June 17 and 18th. What better time to take a look back at the early days of the company in Ehningen and the period of diversification and expansion. In the next issue of Impulse, we will be providing impressions from the years following the change of generation. A detailed chronicle of the company’s history is provided online at http://bit.ly/ensinger-history

The chemical industry had already developed a number of high temperature-resistant polymers to the market stage when Wilfried Ensinger launched his first extrusion experiments in 1966 in Ehningen. The then thirty year-old engineer had ambitions to produce high-grade semi-finished products and machine elements using the up-and-coming glass and carbon fibre-filled materials. With the support of his wife Martha and his untiring staff, Wilfried Ensinger developed new extrusion methods using self-constructed plant and machinery. His enthusiasm and personal integrity – coupled with technical foresight and willingness to take risks – formed the basis for the close, trusting ties he forged with customers, suppliers and employees alike. Wilfried Ensinger chose the right course for the successful development of the family firm right from those very early days. Pivotal to the company’s success were the on-going modernization of its manufacturing processes, the development of additional areas of business, new technical applications and international expansion with the foundation of branches in Europe, America and Asia. None of this would have been possible without the commitment and sense of responsibility demonstrated by the company’s qualified technical personnel and its capable management team, many of whom have remained loyal to the company to the present day.

Multitasking in the sixties
Wilfried Ensinger at work with his oldest daughter Eva

Future CEO Klaus Ensinger takes his first steps in the company

Relocation of the company headquarters from Ehningen to nearby Nyfingen marked the beginning of decades of headlong growth

The first branch abroad
Ensinger Inc., founded in 1986 in Washington/PA

A growing shortage of skilled personnel in the Stuttgart region prompted Ensinger to establish a branch plant in Cham

After a three-year development period, Ensinger delivered its first insulating profiles for windows and facades in 1977
Well on the way to the new ERP platform: Successful conclusion of the technical concept phase - by Dr. Erwin Schuster (CIO) and Jochen Centerczewsky (ERP Project Manager)

Implementation gets under way

Success in the implementation of a project improves motivation. Achieving a key milestone helps create confidence in our own abilities and brings the assurance of a successful outcome. And yes: The project team has met with success, first and foremost the key users. By wrapping up the technical concept phase, the ERP has achieved a major milestone. Documenting all the ideas, concepts and SAP-specific processes and moulding them into a structured form – as so-called business blueprints – involved a lot of communication and collaboration work at times. The responsible Heads of Division and other senior management members have now fully endorsed the technical concept. This provides the foundation stone for the next stage of the ERP project: the implementation phase.

Implementation of SAP processes

Now comes the moment when the processes, many of them only worked out theoretically, have to be mapped out – one step at a time – in the software. This means that it is now actually possible to see in the SAP how Ensinger will be processing its orders, starting logistic processes, planning production or integrating complex systems such as high-bay warehouses in the future. The challenges faced along the way will include the introduction of an integrated system of batch management, the definition of a new process for handling semi-finished short lengths or rebuilding our artifactory system. The main objective of the implementation phase is to map out and safeguard the SAP processes to ensure that everything functions smoothly day-to-day. It is up to all those involved in project to make this work: The key users acting in the role of experts in their departments to check technical correctness; the representatives from Finance/Controlling who ensure that entered values are assigned to the correct accounts; and importantly also the IT department, whose job it is to ensure that the interfaces work and the software runs reliably. Needless to say, these are only a handful of examples from the long list of tasks to be completed.

Next step: Integration tests

The implementation phase including all the module tests, will take until the end of September 2016. After this, the production preparation phase begins. A major element of this are integration tests which allow us to ensure that integrative processes overarching the different divisions run without any glitches in the SAP. The next issue of “Impulse” will be reporting on this in more detail.

Good cooperation between the departments and information management is vital to the successful introduction of a new ERP platform. At Ensinger, the Divisions and Service Center benefit from the support of experienced SAP specialists. Impulse talked to two of them about their sphere of work: Gerd Johannsen (left) is responsible for master data management. As Business Process Manager, Thomas Dressler (right) is in charge of scrutinizing the company’s work flows. They share an office in the IT building in Nufringen.

Everything grinds to a halt without master data

All of us here at Ensinger, no matter in which part of the company we work, are dependent on the existence of good quality master data. Planning, producing, selling or receiving our monthly salary by bank transfer – a countless number of processes are regulated by master data. As this operationally relevant basic information is entered, for instance into customer master data sets, the company address, name of the contact, bank data and so on do not need to be entered again with every order. In this way, the existence of master data prevents redundant processes and the expense involved in the multiple entry of data. Because a master data strategy generally hinges around the customers, the master data and associated organizational structures have to be developed at the same time and be capable of adaptation to dynamically changing market requirements. At Ensinger, the same applies as for many companies: The more branches there are accessing the same basic information (and updating, i.e. editing this master data), the more important it is to have the necessary regulations (master data processes), as well as fields of responsibility and authority in place. On the data field level, deficiencies are documented, for instance by means of non-conformance lists, and transferred to the data object owners for correction. This degree of regularity helps generate a high and sustainable standard of data quality. To ensure that the master data logger is automatically provided with a preselection, fields are pre-populated in the system; this means significantly fewer errors when entering data than when using free text fields. Changeover to the new ERP system offers the opportunity to part company with “data corpses”. However, for “master data people”, the concern is less about the number of different applications the IT department uses to support division strategies, and more about creating awareness that poor, faulty data and unregulated fields of responsibility across all the sequences and processes which rely on master data. As Business Process Manager, Gerd Johannsen and Thomas Dressler share an office in the IT building in Nufringen. The key users acting in the role of experts in their departments to check technical correctness; the representatives from Finance/Controlling who ensure that entered values are assigned to the correct accounts; and importantly also the IT department, whose job it is to ensure that the interfaces work and the software runs reliably. Needless to say, these are only a handful of examples from the long list of tasks to be completed.
Efficient, customer-focused business processes help add more value. This is why it is important for any company to take the time to analyse, design and improve their work flows. At Ensinger, coordination of these activities is the task of the Central Business Process Management, or BPM for short.

Processes frequently spill across departments, divisions or even corporate boundaries. This is why the end-to-end overarching coordination and optimization of processes lies at the very heart of process-oriented thinking – for instance from the receipt of a customer enquiry through to submission of a quotation. Business Process Management plays a major role within the framework of an ERP project. To create the underlying basis of the SAP technical concept, the requirements imposed on the process were mapped out in cooperation with specialists from the divisions to create a standardized process catalogue which was documented in the BPM portal. This catalogue is currently being extended in order to log all corporate processes using a process structure which is standardized across the whole of the company. This will create a vital condition for the harmonization of work flows and the realization of synergies, which will have benefits for the whole of the Ensinger Group in the long term.

Another key prerequisite for sustainable success, is the need to firmly anchor the concept of process-oriented thinking in the consciousness of all those involved. Transparency, understanding and orientation to the overall process will help prevent target conflicts and coordination problems at the interfaces. Responsibility for controlling and optimizing processes lies with the process owners. They are the key driving force behind a process-oriented organization and in this role they lead the concept of process-oriented thinking by example.

Applied process thinking
– by Thomas Dressler (Head of Business Process Management)

Under the heading “A look back to the past” we – nearly 40 retired Ensinger staff and our partners – took a bus ride towards Hohenlohe to the Schloss Langenburg. We reached our destination high above the Jagst valley in bright sunshine. The origins of the castle go back to the twelfth century. Once the first impressions had worked their magic on us, we went to the café in the castle, where we were greeted by a three-layered Black Forest gateau specially made for us. Duly fortified, we left the present behind us and took a guided tour through the renaissance courtyards back through the centuries. Right to this day, the castle is the seat of the Hohenlohe-Langenburg family, and it offers a fascinating glimpse into the cultural life of an old aristocratic residence.

In comparison, the German Automobile Museum, which you can visit in the castle grounds, is a mere stripling. Old rarities of chrome and metal, more than 50 years old, tell the story of the development of motoring and associated engineering achievements – and certainly awoke memories of our own younger years. Our eventful day came to an end with an evening in the Kerzenstüble restaurant in Gärtringen. There we talked about old and new stories about “our” company, Ensinger, and its future development. It was especially fitting that we were able to welcome the Managing Director Klaus Ensinger to the group.

Autumn excursion into the Jagst valley

Retired Ensinger staff on a voyage of discovery – by Ilona Brodt and Martin Hess

Second aid campaign for refugees in the Ukraine

Success! The momentum of the first campaign run by the Wilfried-Ensinger Foundation in aid of refugees in the Ukraine, was continued as a second consignment of donated items comprising dozens of pallets. Employees from across all the German locations donated clothing, blankets, toys and household goods. Ivana Dumancic, Theresa Koch, Martha Ensinger, Edith Holzberger, Kaljopa Stafidova and Eva Ensinger (left to right) helped sort and pack the items in Nufringen. The donations were transported by truck to Eastern Ukraine and distributed by aid agencies in the town of Oleksandrivka in October.

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The metal casting mould is the size of a small car and opens up like a dragon’s mouth. A sheet of polyamide appears; it is slightly larger than a front door and is at a temperature of about 150 degrees. Django immediately moves towards it and lifts the sheet out using its suction pads. Django is a robot arm on rails measuring nearly eight metres in height. The employees have made him a huge name plate from sheet metal and screwed it onto the base. Now, Django pulls the edges of the sheet through milling apparatus, which in a matter of a few seconds removes any protruding burrs. This is followed by automatic coding, after which the robot shows the sheet to an employee for a visual check and places it in a tempering box that has been automatically placed ready. There, the stock shape cools down in a controlled manner, whilst the robot waits until the next mould opens up.

Three years ago, things looked quite different in the Cham casting hall. Employees stood over the moulds and poured in the reaction liquid, heaved the sheets weighing up to 350 kilograms into the tempering equipment with the aid of manipulators, and cut them to size with circular saws. “That was no longer in keeping with the times: physical labour, too heavily dependent on manual tasks – this is something companies in newly industrialising countries are able to do just as well, but more cheaply”, says Dr. Edmund Zenker. Under his direction, Ensinger together with a machine builder developed two new facilities. In 2011 the system for round rods went into operation, then in 2014 the one for the sheets. “If we produce a relatively simple product such as cast polyamide here in Europe, this only works if we continuously improve the production processes. And here the route is leading towards greater efficiency combined with top quality. The basis for this is automation”, stresses Zenker.

Klaus Ederer’s desk stands in the centre of the plant by the sheet facility. From his chair he sees the moulds and the robot in the background. Mostly, his gaze is fixed on the three monitors all around him. Ederer is responsible for the facility running flawlessly – the mixing and casting unit, moulds, robots, tempering boxes. From his workstation, he monitors the reaction temperatures, the pressure in the tempering units and other important process parameters. If a fault arises, he can respond straight away. Richard Brandner, Head of Casting Production, specifies to the machine every day what types it should produce. The moulds are infinitely variable. There is form number two, for example, for sheet thicknesses of 8 to 130 millimetres. “That was no longer in keeping with the times: physical labour, too heavily dependent on manual tasks – this is something companies in newly industrialising countries are able to do just as well, but more cheaply”, says Dr. Edmund Zenker. Under his direction, Ensinger together with a machine builder developed two new facilities. In 2011 the system for round rods went into operation, then in 2014 the one for the sheets. “If we produce a relatively simple product such as cast polyamide here in Europe, this only works if we continuously improve the production processes. And here the route is leading towards greater efficiency combined with top quality. The basis for this is automation”, stresses Zenker.
In the past, changing the set-up for another thickness took one to two hours, today we can do it in two clicks of the mouse.
On solid ground. Open for tomorrow. 50 years Ensinger

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