

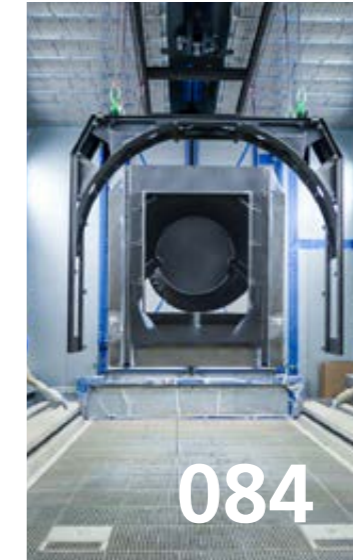
K»MOBIL

THE KIRCHHOFF GROUP MAGAZINE



The focus of the IZB's appearance at the fair was a research project successfully carried out together with VW Group Innovation. The result: CO₂ reduction through the use of a new steel grade in a modified hot forming process. During the tour of the VW Group and Brand Board of Management, Dr. Thorsten Gaitzsch, Member of the Executive Board of KIRCHHOFF Automotive SE (left), presented the advantages of "SIBORA" to Oliver Blume, Chairman of the Executive Board of Volkswagen AG and Porsche AG. [Continued on page 040](#) ▶

Content



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004 Editorial

SUSTAINABILITY / ENVIRONMENT

010 In Harmony: Ecology, Social Responsibility and Economy

014 CO₂-Reduction – Material and Forming Technology are Crucial

018 We are Becoming more Sustainable: Cooperation with Hyundai Steel

020 The SmartScan-Effect: In Use for Better Recycling Rates

022 Another Step towards Sustainability

024 Twice to the Moon and Back

026 Thinking Outside the Box

028 Neumünster goes Hydrogen

030 Why Motivation is so Important ...

KIRCHHOFF AUTOMOTIVE

034 Operational Excellence – in Everything we do

036 New Products on the Road

040 A sensational Trade Fair Appearance ...

046 25 Years in Poland: a Success Story

052 Technology with a Future:
15 Years of Hot Forming

054 New System for New Product Variants

056 Data Protection and Data Security are Important to Us

058 48 Years in the Service of Customers – an Interview with Klaus Lötters

KIRCHHOFF MOBILITY

064 'My New Old One'

WITTE TOOLS

066 Clear the Stage: Our Tools Celebrate their Live Comeback

KIRCHHOFF ECOTEC

068 People are not at the Service of IT - Rather, IT should serve People

070 Excellent: Global player with a regional heart

072 Heads up, Traffic Newbies: safer school routes ahead

074 New Capital Service Hub

076 SAY HI!
CITYPOWER rocks the IAA TRANSPORTATION

080 Next Level

082 Meet Heiko: Numbers, Sustainability, and a Taste for Jever Pilsner

084 Our Besties

086 All set and shiny

088 Hooked and Rolling

090 Our Home Ground is off-road

092 Making Waves together

094 Waste Management with IQ – Artificial Intelligence for Smart Disposal

096 An Export Hit: Interface Management

100 United Arab Emirates: Cleanliness in the Superlative

102 Rental and Secondhand – A Business with a Future



Dr. Johannes F. Kirchhoff
Managing Partner of the KIRCHHOFF Group & Chairman of
the Executive Board of KIRCHHOFF Ecotec SE

Dear Customers and Friends of Our Corporate Group, Dear Employees,

We live in turbulent times: The Middle East conflict and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have been weighing on us for some time. Complicated government formations in France and in the German states of Sachsen, Thüringen, and Brandenburg, as well as the recent re-election of the U.S. President and the collapse of Germany's coalition government, require our analysis and evaluation.

Reducing Energy Costs – Embracing Market Dynamics

For us, as the company's leadership and workforce, it's essential to unreservedly accept the things we cannot change while bringing the willingness and pace to adapt to changes and position ourselves resiliently. The German and European economies have shown resilience following the loss of Russian energy supplies and the resulting sharp rise in energy prices. Thanks to numerous energy-saving measures in infrastructure and processes, we mitigated worse impacts on our business performance. However, the high energy prices in Germany, in particular, are "self-inflicted." We must dare to embrace more market-oriented approaches in the energy sector and allow all forms of energy generation to be considered open to new technologies to achieve climate goals. Producers and consumers must be interconnected via intelligent, AI-based digital network and storage management. Reward-based pricing systems for the use of "excess" green energy should be implemented. Moreover, we must rapidly advance energy-saving measures in our factories, processes, and eventually in the use of our products. The potential new political direction after February 23, 2025, should support these necessary changes.

Embracing Change – Leveraging AI and Digitalization for Efficiency

Global trade developments present new challenges for our company. Europe has imposed import tariffs on Chinese vehicles, and the newly elected Trump administration has announced trade restrictions—beyond tariffs. The United States is our largest trading partner, so we must prepare for these impending trade barriers, particularly in the automotive industry.

Our global, decentralized setup helps mitigate these threats. However, we must monitor changes in our supply chains and those of our German customers, focusing on their impact on our German sites.

Significant opportunities arise from the megatrends of digitalization and artificial intelligence (AI). Internal working groups are intensively addressing the digitalization of our processes using AI, including text generation, translations for our customers' and employees' languages, video production, and image processing. Preventative maintenance, especially in our municipal vehicle division, is a key focus area for leveraging AI advantages.

Potential and Opportunities in the Circular Economy

We see enormous potential for German businesses, and consequently for the German and European economies, in the circular economy. ▶

As a resource-scarce economy, it is crucial for us to harness the raw materials from products after their use phase as a source of resources. This approach enhances the resilience of raw material supplies for our companies and, in turn, our economy, while reducing dependence on raw material imports.

To achieve this, we must motivate all stakeholders along the value chains of our intermediate products to collaborate in closing material loops. This can be done by dismantling products into their individual materials after the use phase or returning production „waste“ to suppliers. In this way, the potential of the circular economy for climate protection and resource security can be fully realized.

The circular economy does not begin at the end of the use phase. To ensure better dismantling and reintegration of materials into material cycles in the future, we need to consider the reusability of the raw materials used already during product development. Furthermore, we need innovative processing technologies for materials after their use phase.

A traditional strength of German industry lies in process technologies (thermal, mechanical, chemical) and the associated mechanical engineering. Consistently leveraging these strengths for material circularity presents significant opportunities for us and our industry.

In this context, it is important to guide policymakers toward creating a framework that is open to technological solutions without relying on prohibitions. Frameworks and target values should be established, but the „how“ should not be dictated by excessive regulation.

More Personal Responsibility – Less Government

And: we need a return to the social market economy as a clear regulatory principle for our future political leadership. It must once again trust in the adaptability and capability of citizens and businesses. Only in this way can the upcoming changes be managed in a timely and resource-efficient manner. The

share of the state in the economy must be consistently reduced. Our society, the state, should create the best possible framework conditions for this, but nothing more, and ensure freedom and competition. Please, let the path to achieving the goals not be dictated. The trust of our political leadership—and thereby the state—in its citizens, their ideas, and their sense of personal responsibility will hopefully serve as the regulatory compass for our newly elected political leadership.

The regulatory pressure of the past was nothing more than distrust cast into legal paragraphs – distrust in the personal responsibility of market participants, in our citizens, and in our businesses.

Despite extremely challenging conditions, all parts of our company have contributed significantly to our overall economic success over the past year through their high adaptability and swift actions.

Looking at the companies of the **KIRCHHOFF Group**, they managed to increase their revenue to €3.3 billion with 14,200 employees despite challenging economic conditions.

KIRCHHOFF Automotive faced a year of challenges in 2024. Despite volatile markets and declining demand for electric vehicles, we were able to maintain stable revenue. A diversified customer base, a broad product portfolio, and our global orientation helped to cushion market fluctuations. Additionally, our collaborative partnerships with customers contributed to jointly overcoming crises and finding solutions. A major focus was on developing resource-efficient and crash-relevant lightweight components for combustion and electric vehicles. One highlight was our collaboration with VW on the material and process development of a new silicon-boron steel grade, „SIBORA,“ which demonstrated improved crash performance while reducing weight and CO₂ emissions.

Investments in modern technologies and production facilities were the focus worldwide. Two new plants have been established in Mexico for the production of raw body parts and dashboard carriers for

new customer programs. In San José Iturbide, we are already installing the first machines and equipment on 16,000 square meters, including a large cathodic dip painting (KTL) plant. The site in Puebla has been expanded with a second production building featuring resistance welding, spot welding, and bump welding facilities.

As part of our 20th anniversary celebration in Hungary, two new halls were inaugurated in Dorog and Esztergom. On 5,600 square meters, new production areas are being created with complex robot-controlled welding technology and logistics areas.

Based on new orders for larger and more complex assemblies, we have also made numerous investments in modern, highly automated welding systems at other European plants. These are equipped with the latest robotic technology and vision systems that, for example, carry out quality checks using integrated scanner sensors.

Currently, we are working on an Energy Monitoring System to optimally control the energy demand of our plants. With the help of a system (Press Condition Monitoring) for continuous monitoring of the stamping presses, downtime can be avoided. To quickly and smoothly onboard new employees, we will soon use Augmented Reality (AR) for work instructions in the native language of the machine operator. Initial tests have been launched at our Portuguese plant in Cucujães.

This year, the Mielec plant celebrated its 25th anniversary, marking the success story we began in Poland in 1999. Today, we operate three locations in Poland with 2,000 employees, equipped with the latest technologies such as transfer presses, hot forming, and all types of advanced joining techniques, making them an important pillar in our global strategy.

Sustainability remains a key focus. We have deepened our partnerships with steel manufacturers to bring CO₂-reduced steel body parts to market and set ambitious climate goals validated ▶

awards FAUN received during the fair: the GoGreen Award for our climate-neutral exhibition stand, the Gold Status for our involvement in the traffic initiative „Blicki blickts e.V.“ and the 2nd place VAK Innovation Award for the Safety User Display, which improves the safety of the operating personnel.

ZOELLER used IFAT to showcase over 20 waste collection vehicles and lifters on 2,200 square meters. Particularly of interest were the new MINIBaureihe for narrow old town streets and the MAGNUM X1 for eco-friendly commercial waste disposal. The 1st place VAK Innovation Award for the SmartScan from SCANTEC is a special recognition of our development supporting recyclable, clean material flows.

Another highlight was set by FAUN subsidiary ENGINIUS at the IAA TRANSPORTATION, the international leading trade fair for the commercial vehicle sector, with the premiere of the CITYPOWER series. This new truck, available in both battery-electric (BEV) and hydrogen-powered (FCEV) versions, attracted significant attention, underscored by the visit of Federal Minister of Economics Dr. Robert Habeck and VDA President Hildegard Müller.

An important strategic milestone was the participation of Contena-Ochsner AG in the Notterkran Group, which expands the KIRCHHOFF Ecotec product portfolio to include loading and crawler cranes.

In addition, a large contract with Zoomlion Nigeria Limited in October secured FAUN the delivery of waste collection vehicles for the city of Lagos.

With the founding of ZOELLER Waste Trucks (Pty) Ltd. in South Africa and the local production of the MAGNUM XL, ZOELLER is shaping the future of waste disposal in this growing region.

2024 was not only a year of technological innovations for KIRCHHOFF Ecotec aimed at reducing emissions, enhancing vehicle safety, and promoting the circular economy, but also a year of commitment to employees, the environment, and society.

FAUN has been part of the KIRCHHOFF Group

by the Science-Based Targets Initiative. By 2030, we aim to reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 50%, cut Scope 3 emissions by 25%, and use 100% renewable energy. ESG criteria have been integrated into our business processes, and we are among the first in the automotive industry to align our sustainability report with the new European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS).

The year 2024 was a special trade fair year for the companies of **KIRCHHOFF Ecotec**, marked by innovations, new partnerships, and both organic and strategic growth. Our industry faces the challenge of conserving resources and intensifying the circular economy. **FAUN** and **ZOELLER** are developing technical solutions to enhance the efficiency of material cycles and safety for operators and people through intelligent camera systems and telemetry.

IFAT, the world's leading trade fair for environmental technology, once again served as an important platform for our main brands, FAUN and ZOELLER. Both group companies and their subsidiaries demonstrated their innovative strength and future orientation by presenting their latest developments at IFAT.

FAUN impressed at IFAT with 20 waste collection vehicles and street sweepers, which set new standards for safety and efficiency with the „Safety & Performance“ features. Noteworthy are three

for 30 years. A reason to celebrate, as since its acquisition in 1994, FAUN has developed into a leading provider in the industry. In a series of interviews, we reflect on this success story in a personal conversation with me. The interview can be found at www.FAUN.com.

At the International Hardware Fair, the most important European industry event, WITTE Tools was able to establish new contacts, expand existing ones in future growth markets, and even present products to potential new major customers. Participation in the „STAFDA,“ the Annual Convention & Trade Show in Nashville, USA, was also successful. The focus was on acquiring new representatives and distributors for the WITTE brand in the USA and Canada.

For early 2025, the deployment of new injection molding tools is planned, which have been manufactured using the latest technologies and adapted to our new 3K injection molding system. This will allow us to work even more precisely and significantly reduce production scrap.

The 2024 business year was mixed, and from June 2024, we faced a decline in orders. However, new customers in the private label sector, whom we will begin supplying in January, offer hope for a recovery in 2025.

In the past business year, **KIRCHHOFF Mobility** was able to further strengthen its market position. This was achieved through the continued development of its own products, process optimizations, as well as targeted measures to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Part of this strategic realignment also includes the planned closure of the Bad Zwischenahn location in the first quarter of 2025. We are working intensively to ensure a smooth transition for our customers and are focusing on expanding our numerous other (partner) locations.

The further development of our rear conversions, which allow for the transportation of wheelchair users without requiring them to transfer, was particularly successful. The first sales of the rear entry

conversion kits ProLine and ProLine Comfort for Volkswagen and Ford have been realized. Our driving and control aid EasySpeed has also been optimized: EasySpeed 2.0 will be launched with a new production partner at the end of 2025.

Our collaboration with automobile manufacturers has been intensified. A particular highlight was the recognition of KIRCHHOFF Mobility Switzerland as a Ford Pro Converter, which strengthens our position in this area and offers our customers advantages when converting Ford vehicles.

Thanks to our trade fair appearances, including IRMA in Hamburg and REHACARE in Düsseldorf, we were able to establish new business and customer contacts. We were especially pleased with our participation in the RTLZWEI show „Mein neuer Alter,“ where we converted a vehicle for a woman of short stature free of charge – an initiative that once again demonstrated the positive impact of our work at KIRCHHOFF Mobility on the lives of our customers.

Thank you to everyone contributing to our sustainability journey. My sister Eva, my brothers Arndt Günter and Wolfgang, and our families wish you all a blessed Christmas and a joyful start to a peaceful, successful, and healthy new year in 2025.

Glückauf!

Dr. Johannes F. Kirchhoff



In Harmony: Ecology, Social Responsibility and Economy

Hagen Reck, Member of the Executive Board and Global CFO KIRCHHOFF Automotive, answers questions about the importance and integration of ESG (Environment, Sustainability, Government) criteria at KIRCHHOFF Automotive.



AUTHOR: ANDREAS HEINE
GLOBAL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

The automotive industry is undergoing a profound transformation in which sustainability plays an important role. Hagen Reck, Member of the Executive Board and Global CFO KIRCHHOFF Automotive, answers in an interview how KIRCHHOFF Automotive integrates environmental, social and corporate social and corporate governance aspects into its business processes and harmonises sustainability with sustainability with economic success.

1

How important is it to integrate ESG criteria into our company, especially as a family business with a long history and a particular focus on values?

As a traditional family business with a high degree of innovation, the sustainability of our business activities is important to us, especially with regard to future generations. Sustainable management has always been one of the core values of KIRCHHOFF Automotive. For us, sustainability means harmonising the three dimensions of economy, ecology and social responsibility.

It is important that all employees are guided by our basic principles, identify with them and have a common understanding of our company's goal. In addition, we ensure that all new employees familiarise themselves with these rules and procedures during the onboarding process.

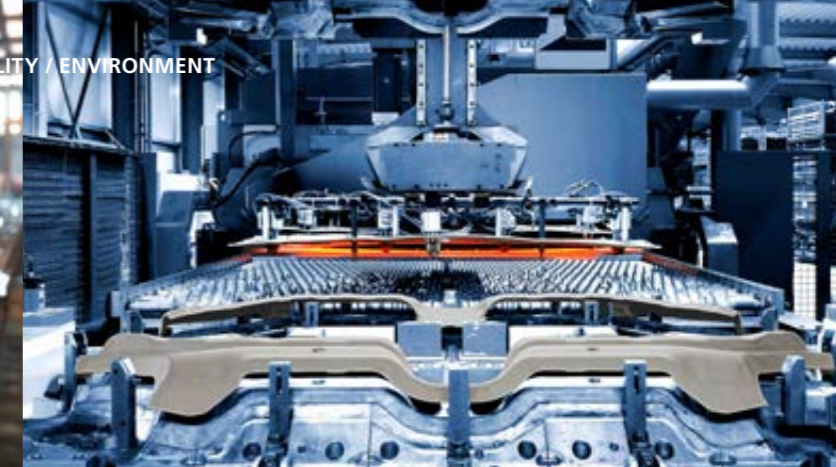
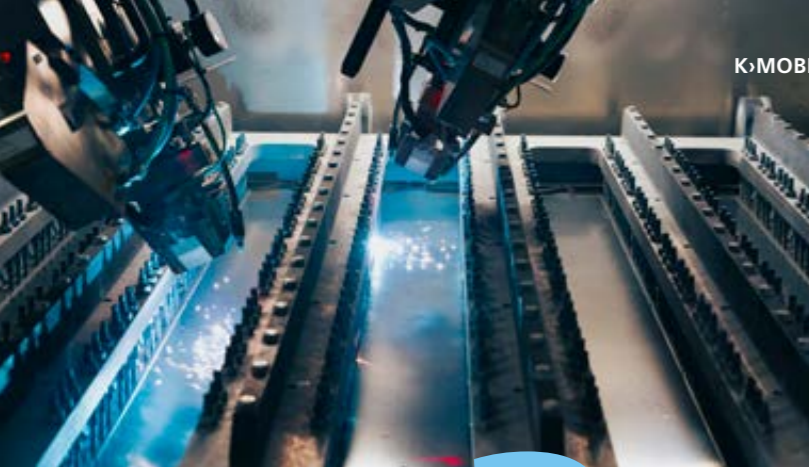
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How does your company integrate ESG criteria into our overall business strategy and decision-making processes?

In general, the integration of ESG criteria into business strategy involves several key activities. Firstly, we work to identify specific, measurable, clear objectives and time-bound targets related to ESG factors. So far, we have assigned responsibility for ESG to the Executive Board level and established a dedicated CSR & Sustainability team.

In addition, we consider conducting a materiality analysis to be another crucial point and the basis for identifying the most relevant ESG issues for the company and our stakeholders.

We also have systems in place to collect and analyse ESG data to track performance and progress towards our goals. In addition, we provide training to raise awareness of ESG and promote a corporate culture that values sustainability. ▶



3

What specific environmental initiatives has our company taken to minimise the environmental impact of your production and supply chain?

Our plants are committed to implementing and maintaining environmental and energy management systems and ensuring that all employees receive appropriate training. In line with this strategy, almost all European KIRCHHOFF Automotive plants are already equipped with green electricity. All plants in China and North America will follow suit in the next few years, by 2030 at the latest. By 2023, we will have already increased the proportion of green electricity in all our operating plants to 67%.

An integral part of our strategy is the implementation of standardised energy monitoring systems in all KIRCHHOFF Automotive plants. These systems will provide real-time data on energy consumption and help us to identify opportunities to improve efficiency and support our emission reduction targets. At this point, it is important to emphasise that the introduction of systems for the precise, detailed determination of consumption in the plants is very complex and cost-intensive (investments, securing integration into the IT systems for secure operation, etc.) and the company-specific benefits, such as savings, are expected to be manageable. This applies against the background that we as a company are already endeavouring to operate as efficiently as possible due to high energy prices.

4

How does our ESG strategy influence innovation and product development, especially with regard to the transformation to more sustainable vehicle solutions?

Significantly, I can assure you. Our research and development is continuously focussed on preparing more sustainable solutions. Here, less material means less weight, which means less fuel and energy consumption and ultimately less impact on the environment during vehicle use. That is why we are focussing on the development of cost-effective, safety-relevant components in light-weight construction for the vehicles of the future. To manufacture our products, we use special types of steel that make a decisive contribution to reducing the weight of entire assemblies through special forming processes, alone or in combination with aluminium or plastic.

We have also established partnerships with the largest steel producers in order to bring CO₂-reduced or, ideally, CO₂-free steel into automotive production. We support and cooperate with companies such as ArcelorMittal, Thyssenkrupp Steel Europe, SSAB, H2Green Steel and Hyundai Steel Company to validate the new steel grades. A good example is a front crash management system. In the production of this part, instead of using material produced in energy-intensive blast furnaces with high CO₂ emissions, we used a new steel grade made from recycled steel produced from 100% renewable electricity. Thanks to this modification, we save almost 40% of emissions in the production of a front bumper – that's 585 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

5

What do we see as the biggest challenges in realising our ESG goals?

Firstly, making our production processes more environmentally friendly, especially where natural gas is used in technological processes and its consumption is significant. However, most of the work here has to be done in Scope 3, where the commitment of suppliers and customers is essential. We are therefore intensifying our collaboration with green steel suppliers, as the material used in production contributes to 90% of our emissions.

However, I would also like to emphasise the constantly evolving landscape of regulations and standards relating to ESG. In particular, the comprehensive collection of high-quality and comparable environmental data is one of the biggest challenges of sustainability reporting. This is because ready-made IT solutions for the entire ESG reporting process are not currently available. In order to ensure that we meet the requirements, a great deal of individual work is required. The existing standard systems must be upgraded so that the entire reporting process does not have to be carried out manually, and new solutions must be added that also need to be integrated. The total amount of data that needs to be summarised into information should not be underestimated and poses a major challenge.

6

How do we see the role of ESG in the future of our company, especially in the rapidly changing automotive industry?

I would like to distinguish between two aspects here: the operational and the regulatory. Regarding the first aspect, customers are very focused on sourcing sustainable products and are demanding less carbon-intensive parts and products with green steel. This will definitely increase in the future. From a regulatory perspective, we need to focus on meeting all applicable ESG requirements and conducting our business in line with them.

In addition to the government requirements, the automotive industry itself has undertaken a lot to do its part to stop climate change after all. KIRCHHOFF Automotive is part of this challenging but also promising development. With our commitment to greater sustainability, we are also increasing the confidence of our stakeholders in the future viability of our company and making KIRCHHOFF Automotive an even more attractive business partner. ■

AUTHOR: MARKUS LÖCKER
TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT SENIOR SPECIALIST, KIRCHHOFF AUTOMOTIVE

NEW MATERIAL NEW PROCESS

+ SAFETY
- WEIGHT
- CO₂

CO₂- Reduction

Material and forming technology are crucial

Nowadays, the CO₂ footprint in the automotive industry is a key issue. While hot forming has sometimes been seen as a CO₂ driver due to its energy consumption, a new study by KIRCHHOFF Automotive shows the opposite. Innovative manufacturing processes such as hot forming can even make a decisive contribution to reducing emissions. The use of materials plays a decisive role here. »

B-Pillar formed in the modified hot forming process (BQP-process) from new steel grade SIBORA

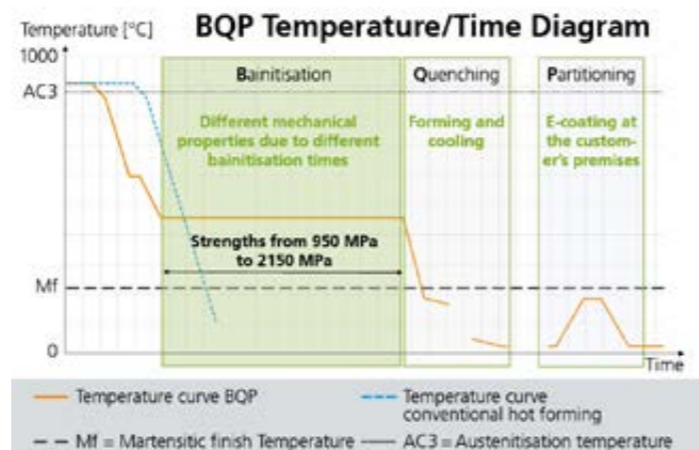


Advantages of the BQP hot forming process route with 'SIBORA' steel

Classic hot forming: High temperature above 900 °C and rapid cooling in the mould. This creates a martensitic microstructure that is very hard but also brittle.

With bainitic hot forming of 'SIBORA' steel, specific material properties of the finished component can be defined and achieved through adapted temperature control:

1. High strength: bainite offers a similar high strength to martensite.
2. Higher toughness: Compared to martensitic structures, bainite is tougher, the material is less brittle and less sensitive to impact.
3. Better energy absorption: This combination of strength and toughness makes Bainite ideal for components that have to withstand high loads, such as in vehicle safety components



Adapted temperature control for bainitic hot forming of 'SIBORA' steel (Image 1)

Hot forming line for BQP-process

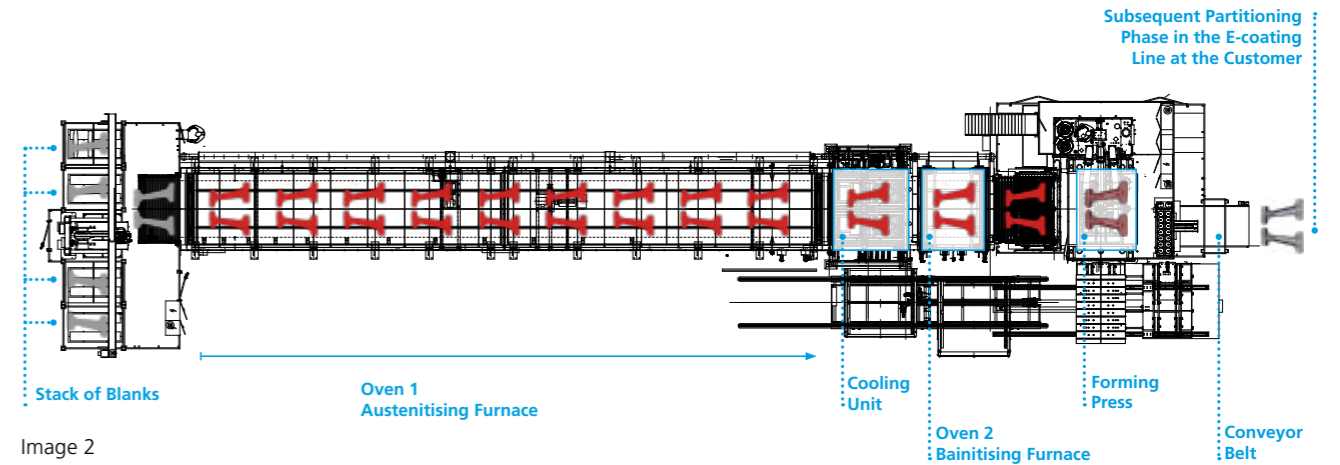


Image 2

KIRCHHOFF Automotive is therefore working together with VW on the technical realisation of a modified hot forming process (BQP-process) with the silicon-boron steel grade 'SIBORA' developed by VW. The use of the BQP-process (Image 2) with the 'SIBORA' material in the body structure is particularly important in terms of lightweight construction and improving vehicle occupant safety.

The special feature of this steel grade is that it has high strength in the press-hardened state and also a higher residual formability due to its content of bainite and metastable retained austenite. By using the steel grade 'SIBORA', an improvement in crash safety can be achieved as a result of higher energy absorption with a simultaneous reduction in body mass.

In order to verify this assumption, which was initially based on calculations, KIRCHHOFF Automotive carried out tests on a hot-formed B-pillar (Image 1) made of SIBORA material under series production conditions. For this purpose, the hot forming system was modified so that the various

temperature-time profiles can be developed and tested under series production conditions. The process is currently being developed on the series production line with the KIRCHHOFF Automotive B-pillar. Initial results confirm the positive properties of the 'SIBORA' steel grade (higher energy absorption and lower product mass) and show that KIRCHHOFF Automotive BQP is ready.

It is particularly attractive to design the BQP-process in such a way that different combinations of strength and ductility properties can be realised with just one steel material, depending on the component requirements. This can also reduce the variety of steel grades, which on the one hand generates further savings potential, e.g. in warehousing and logistics, and on the other hand supports more requirement-oriented recycling cycles for high-quality automotive materials.

In a lightweight design potential study carried out by VW with a corresponding life cycle analysis (LCA) on the ID.4, it can be shown that further lightweight design potential and thus further CO₂-savings are possible by using the 'SIBORA' material with the BQP process route. ■

AUTHOR: UWE HADWICH
GLOBAL DIRECTOR PROCUREMENT KIRCHHOFF AUTOMOTIVE

We are becoming more Sustainable: Cooperation with Hyundai Steel

KIRCHHOFF Automotive and Hyundai Steel aim to explore and develop opportunities to manufacture and supply low carbon steel products for the European market. To this end, KIRCHHOFF Automotive will test the low-carbon cold-rolled or hot-dip galvanized coils. These will be produced in a complex process that combines the blast furnace process and the electric arc furnace process.

“Thanks to the agreement with Hyundai Steel, we have created an additional opportunity to purchase green steel from as early as 2025. CO₂ will be reduced by mixing EAF and BOF material. In this process, some of the material is melted in the EAF (Electric Arc Furnace) during steel production, while the other part comes from the LD process (BOF/Blast Oxigene Furnace). This makes it possible to reduce the CO₂ footprint for this type of steel by about 20% compared to conventionally produced steel in the LD process from the blast furnace route. In the final stage of expansion, the blast furnace process is also to be replaced here by steel from the electric furnace route in order to achieve CO₂ neutrality,” explains Uwe Hadwich, Global Director Procurement.

The Korean company Hyundai Steel Company supplies us with steel in the form of cold-rolled and hot-dip galvanized coils and is a leader in the field of materials for the automotive industry. Through continuous investment, research and development, Hyundai aims to decarbonize the steel manufacturing

process and expand the production range of low-carbon steels.

“We plan to conduct actual parts testing with KIRCHHOFF Automotive and to proactively establish a low-carbon automobile steel plate sales network by collaborating with European automakers”, says an insider from Hyundai Steel.

With the signing of this memorandum of understanding, KIRCHHOFF Automotive is taking a further step towards more sustainable mobility. Further cooperation in this context already exists with the suppliers ArcelorMittal, thyssenkrupp Steel Europe, SSAB and H2Green Steel. The company also ranks among the top 5% in the “Manufacture of parts and accessories for motor vehicles” sector and was awarded a silver medal by EcoVadis, the world’s most reliable provider of sustainability ratings for companies. ■

2024. 05. 29 (WED)
Memorandum Of Understanding
AGREEMENT CEREMONY

KIRCHHOFF
AUTOMOTIVE

HYUNDAI
STEEL



At the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU): Michael Rank, Global Executive Vice President Procurement KIRCHHOFF Automotive (left) and Jungho Lee, Vice President Hyundai Steel Company.

AUTHOR: KRISTINA LERCH
 EDITORIAL TEAM ZOELLER GROUP

The SmartScan Effect: In Use for Better Recycling Rates

Since September, a special demo vehicle from STUMMER has been operating on Austria's streets: equipped with AI-based „SmartScan“ technology, waste disposal companies now have the opportunity to test this solution for the circular economy free of charge.

„The main goal in waste management is to increase recycling rates,“ explains Johann Streif, Managing Director of STUMMER Kommunalfahrzeuge. To achieve this, not only intelligent technical systems are needed, but also the motivation of citizens to improve their waste separation behavior. „SmartScan addresses both approaches – and that's exactly what we want to demonstrate with our test operations.“

The demo vehicle, a Medium X4 with Delta Lifter and SmartScan, is available to waste disposal companies for a set period. During this trial period, they can test the AI-based technology in their collection areas. After each deployment, STUMMER generates a standardized analysis of the current situation, providing valuable insights into the quality of separation

Efficiency through SmartScan Data

The data generated by SmartScan enables a significant improvement in waste separation. Problematic materials can be identified more quickly, residual waste can be reduced, and the recycling rate can be increased. This not only saves costs but also helps conserve resources.

„SmartScan analyzes the composition of the waste using optical data immediately after the loading process in the vehicle,“ Streif continues. „This data is then evaluated through the web-based analysis and information system ScanSuite,



Johann Streif, CEO STUMMER



Ready to go! The demo vehicle with SmartScan technology

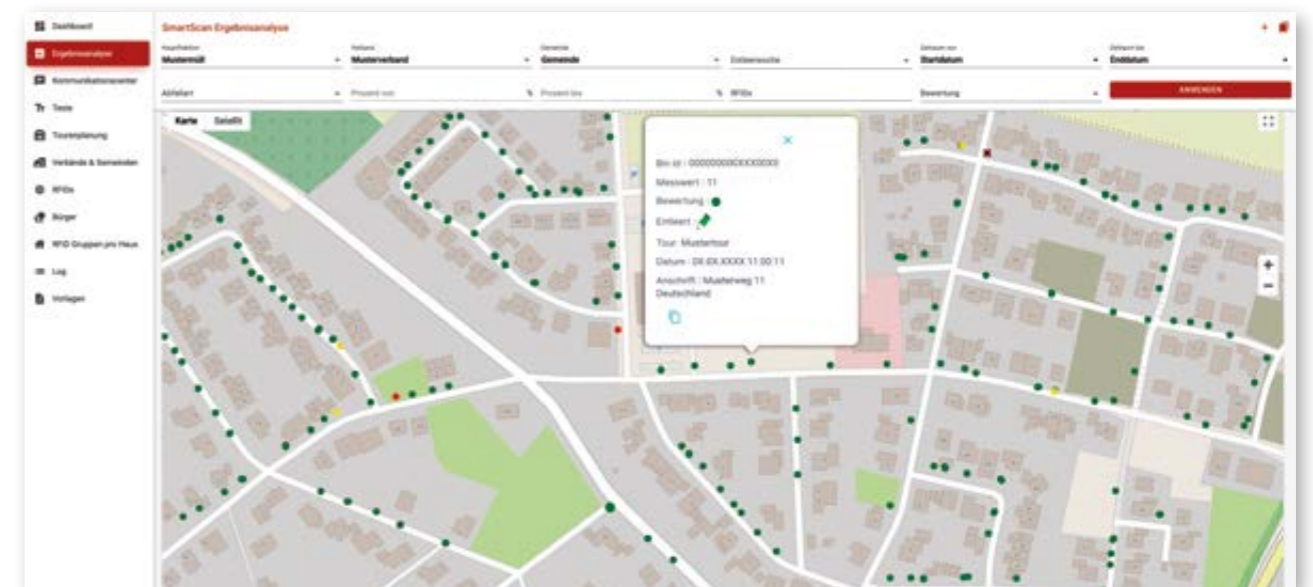
combined with GPS, weighing, and identification data.“ This enables precise analysis and provides a solid foundation for optimizing collection processes.

Turning Data into Action

But that's not all: the collected data also forms the basis for continuous and targeted communication with citizens. SmartScan allows real-time feedback to be provided to citizens about their separation quality – directly at the vehicle. Furthermore, the processed data can be used long-term to sensitize and motivate citizens through regular feedback. „Praise for successes and specific tips for optimization ensure that citizens understand

the importance of their role in the circular economy,“ emphasizes Streif.

„Ideally, all parties involved pull together. Good separation quality benefits waste collectors, municipalities, and citizens equally.“ It is important to raise awareness through continuous feedback and to encourage citizens. Incentive systems, such as collaboration with local retailers, could sensibly support this process. ■



SmartScan results analysis

AUTHOR: BARRY ROE
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY MANAGEMENT MANAGER KIRCHHOFF AUTOMOTIVE

Another Step towards Sustainability

KIRCHHOFF Automotive has set itself ambitious climate targets, which have now been officially confirmed and approved by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi). The targets are in line with the latest findings of climate science and the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5°C or well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels.



It is the declared goal of KIRCHHOFF Automotive to reduce its ecological footprint and to support global efforts to limit the effects of climate change. The fact that our climate targets have been confirmed and recognized by the SBTi underlines our commitment to sustainability and the fight against climate change.

'This is a great achievement for our company after completing the rigorous target review process,' says Barry Roe, Global Environment & Energy Management Manager. 'Our thanks and appreciation go to all team members who worked tirelessly on the target setting, validation and approval processes. This achievement was made possible by the great collaboration within our organisation and across departments. The dedication and outstanding collaboration of our various teams has been instrumental in achieving this milestone and will continue to be critical to realising our sustainability goals in the future.' ■

The 'Science Based Targets' (SBTi) initiative is a global body that shows companies a clearly defined way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, supports them in achieving the targets and has them assessed by an independent team of experts. **The climate targets validated and approved by the SBTi for KIRCHHOFF Automotive are as follows:**

- **Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions:** KIRCHHOFF Automotive commits to reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions (direct emissions) by 50% by 2030, using 2022 as the baseline year.
- **Renewable energies:** KIRCHHOFF Automotive undertakes to increase the annual purchase of electricity from renewable energies to 100% by 2030.
- **Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions:** KIRCHHOFF Automotive commits to reduce absolute Scope 3 GHG emissions (indirect emissions) by 25% by 2030, with 2022 as the base year.

AUTHOR: FLORIAN BRANDAU
CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER ENGINIUS GMBH

Twice to the Moon and Back

Waste collection and goods transport are part of everyday life in our cities—tasks we simply can't do without. But how can we make these processes more climate-friendly and efficient? The answer is innovation. We need fresh ideas to transform the municipal truck industry and move toward an emissions-free future.

Let's break it down from ENGINIUS' perspective: In Germany alone, about 12,000 waste collection trucks hit the streets every day. If all of them switched to hydrogen, we could save around 1,800 tons of CO₂ daily – that's as heavy as three jumbo jets! Today, nearly 200 ENGINIUS BLUEPOWER zero-emission waste trucks are already rolling through Europe. Together, they've racked up close to 2 million kilometers – more than twice the distance from Earth to the moon and back.

Every climate-neutral kilometer counts. Each BLUEPOWER truck is helping us get closer to our vision of sustainable, green mobility, saving up to 150 kilograms of CO₂ per day per vehicle. For municipalities, investing in alternative transport solutions isn't just a good idea – it's the way forward. Government incentives, strict CO₂ targets from the EU, and a rapidly growing infrastructure make the switch to zero-emission vehicles easier than ever. Plus, it's a big win for cleaner air in our cities.

Hydrogen: Fueling the future

Hydrogen doesn't just reduce emissions– it's also a water-saving champion. Producing green hydrogen via electrolysis with renewable energy uses far less water compared to conventional diesel production. Fun fact: burning one liter of diesel releases about 2.65 kilograms of CO₂. A typical waste truck burns about 0.8 liters of diesel per kilometer, spewing out over 2 kilograms of CO₂ for every single kilometer. With our BLUEPOWER and CITYPOWER vehicles, those emissions become a thing of the past. While BLUEPOWER leads the charge in waste management, CITYPOWER is designed to shine in urban transport and medium-duty logistics.

Flexibility is key: two technologies, one goal

At ENGINIUS, we believe in options. That's why we offer both battery-electric (BEV) and hydrogen fuel cell (FCEV) vehicles. BEVs are perfect for short city trips, while FCEVs dominate longer routes with their extended range, higher payload, and quick refueling. This flexibility means we can provide the right solution for every need – no compromises.



Focusses on hydrogen in the transport sector:
Florian Brandau, CTO ENGINIUS GmbH

Building the backbone: hydrogen infrastructure

The EU's Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) is setting the stage for the future. By 2030, hydrogen refueling stations will be popping up along major highways and in cities across Europe, making hydrogen-powered vehicles more accessible than ever.

Emissions-free vehicles are more than just **eco-friendly – they're also economically and socially smart.** By using renewable energy and cutting reliance on fossil fuels, companies like ENGINIUS are boosting local economies and supporting energy independence. Hydrogen can even be produced locally, creating jobs and reducing the need for energy imports. It's a win-win for cities everywhere.

Why hydrogen? Here's the big picture

In today's energy crisis, breaking free from fossil fuels isn't just important – it's essential. Hydrogen offers decentralized energy supply, flexibility, and stability. By producing hydrogen locally and using existing infrastructure, we're reducing transport distances and ensuring a reliable energy supply

for the future. But none of this happens without partnerships and a robust infrastructure. Hydrogen refueling stations are popping up all over Europe, giving drivers the fast refueling times and efficiency they need. Big names like Toyota, BMW, Hyundai, and Stellantis are all backing hydrogen as the go-to solution for both passenger and commercial vehicles, helping drive the shift toward zero-emission transport.

What's next?

With BLUEPOWER already on the road and CITYPOWER set to launch in 2025, ENGINIUS is ready to expand into new markets like logistics and emissions-free delivery services. Our goal is simple: shrink the transport sector's CO₂ footprint and lead the charge in the mobility revolution. ■

AUTHOR: ANDREAS DANNHEISIG
PROCUREMENT SUPERVISOR KIRCHHOFF AUTOMOTIVE

Thinking Outside the Box

The 'Cross-Industrial Innovation Circle Technology & Purchasing' promotes the cross-industry exchange of knowledge and provides access to innovative ideas and approaches. The result can be process optimisations, new business models or creative solutions for existing challenges.

Launched in 2021 by KIRCHHOFF Automotive and the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences, the CIRCLE now consists of around 120 participants from around 70 companies. Regular meetings, organised and moderated by Andreas Dannheisig (Innovation Sourcing, Purchasing KIRCHHOFF Automotive) and Prof. Dr. Elmar Holschbach (Chair of Organisation and Procurement Management at the South Westphalia University of Applied Sciences), offer the opportunity to discuss best practices, trends and technologies from various industries. Sebastian Diez, Global Director ME Technology at KIRCHHOFF Automotive, says: 'The CIRCLE initiative also allows us to familiarise ourselves with solutions from other industries. Where else can you talk to an aircraft manufacturer and an agricultural machinery manufacturer about production issues at the same time?' The exchange allows us to react to new developments at an early stage, avoid errors and save resources.

Knowledge transfer and exchange takes place not only through meetings, but also through company visits, where members learn about innovative technologies such as 3D printing in production. 'Mutual company visits on key topics are a very good opportunity to discuss the latest trends,' explains Andreas Dannheisig. This allows you to experience processes and innovations first-hand. In October 2024, 25 CIRCLE members from ten different industries visited BEULCO in Attendorn to exchange experiences on the 3D printing of devices and production aids. In addition, webcasts expand the exchange across geographical distances, for example on the use of augmented reality in production processes.

The cross-industrial platform enables companies to benefit from the experience of others and forge partnerships that lead to long-term success and new growth opportunities.

Further workshops will be offered from 2025 onwards, focussing on innovation management methods and AI-supported tools for finding and implementing innovations, among other things. ■

Neumünster goes Hydrogen

AUTHOR: SABINE KÄMPER
EDITORIAL TEAM ZOELLER GROUP



An experienced team: Loaders Justin Denz and Dominic Rixen, and driver Jakob Onoprienko (left to right).

Neumünster has 80,000 residents, ten refuse collection vehicles, and an ambitious goal: climate neutrality by 2035. The first BLUEPOWER vehicle has just started operating here. This step was so important to the city that it was taken without public funding. A field visit in Schleswig-Holstein.

At 6:30 a.m., shift one begins at the Technical Operations Center. The vehicle is ready to go, with 100 per cent full hydrogen tanks and buffer battery, four tanks with 16.8 kg hydrogen each – charged with 700 bar and more than enough operating time; with a quiet hum, the BLUEPOWER rolls into the sunny September morning. It's only the fourth day on the streets of Neumünster, but the crew seems so routine, it's as if it's an old friend. And actually, it kind of is.

Driver Jakob Onoprienko even seems a bit disappointed when he says, „It's all the same as the other vehicles – cockpit, displays...“ On the other hand, after a brief orientation, he was ready to go. And the low noise level, of course, is truly remarkable: „It's really, really pleasant. At first, I sometimes felt like the thing wasn't even on.“

The quiet qualities of the BLUEPOWER – alongside all the environmental benefits – are also noticeable

Below: Elegant, elegant: Even with a 10-ton payload, the maneuver still looks almost effortless. **Right:** Sound experience: Rolling tires on cobblestones, and nothing else.



Biological Waste Treatment (MBA) for unloading and meeting colleagues. Of course, the new addition to the fleet is a topic of conversation and also a cause for teasing.

While the BLUEPOWER crew is still waiting to unload, colleague Dieter pulls up in a diesel truck, revs the engine in neutral, and calls out through the open window over the roar, „Hey, what, can't you do that?“ Jakob responds, „What did you say? I can't hear anything! Your truck is so loud!“ and quietly laughs to himself.

Operating Costs to Offset Purchase Price

Despite the recently expired federal funding programs for climate-friendly commercial vehicles, Neumünster decided to proceed with the purchase. „Our mayor wanted to make a political statement with this,“ explains Ingo Kühl. „We can't always expect citizens to be engaged; the city needs to lead by example.“

Neumünster is well-positioned for this approach. The first public hydrogen refueling station in Schleswig-Holstein is here, and two hydrogen factories are being built nearby. Also, power is generated locally. „We expect the high purchase price of the vehicle to be offset by the reduced operating costs,“ says Ingo Kühl.

Meanwhile, Column 1 is heading toward the end of the shift. The BLUEPOWER drives back to the depot, the fuel cell still running for a while – and then quietly winds down with a soft pffff. ■

in the rear of the vehicle. When loaders Dominic Rixen and Justin Denz stand on their steps, they can have a conversation without shouting, even with the engine running. „Less vibration, less noise, much more comfort,“ sums up Dominic, and at least for him personally, it often means fewer headaches.

Committed City Goals

Neumünster wants to be climate-neutral by 2035 – which is earlier than the EU's target. Ten refuse collection vehicles need to be equipped with alternative drives. Currently, explains Ingo Kühl, head of the Technical Operations Center (TBZ), hydrogen is the only viable option. „The city itself is not that big, but to empty the trucks, they go all the way down to the south. A battery alone won't make it.“

Today, there are around 850 household waste containers along the route of Column 1. Typically, the crew makes two trips per tour to the Mechanical

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CLAUDIA SCHAUE, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FAUN GROUP
SABINE KÄMPER, EDITORIAL OFFICE ZOELLER GROUP

Why Motivation is so Important ...

In almost 240 years of company history, the KIRCHHOFF Group has grown steadily, has actively embraced change and has always adapted to new conditions. Behind this success story are people and a clear corporate philosophy. We promote the knowledge of our employees and their willingness to learn and try out new things. Values such as a sense of responsibility, helpfulness, appreciation and honesty form the basis for the way we work together.

Motivation is the key to personal development, team strength and joint success. We help our employees in the best possible way with individual training programmes and talent development.

At **KIRCHHOFF Automotive**, these include programmes such as KATE (development of high potentials), Excellence Awards (rewarding high-performing employees) and succession planning (positive career paths).

The **KATE** ('KIRCHHOFF Automotive Talent Education') **talent management programme** is designed to help employees who show outstanding performance and potential to develop more systematically and retain them in the company in the long term. Targeted career and succession planning is carried out on the basis of competences. ▶



The **'direct line'** gives employees the opportunity to talk to management. From corporate strategy to new projects and investments: the employees ask the questions and the bosses answer them. The best thing about it: both sides are enthusiastic! Employees appreciate the opportunity to speak openly and unfiltered. The management receives valuable feedback and, if necessary, can turn things around in good time.



Claudia Rueda from Querétaro/Mexico was promoted from quality technician to quality engineer following her participation in the **KATE programme**. This step was accompanied by targeted training in the area of leadership and specialised further training. 'The support from the company and my line manager was particularly valuable, as it opened up new, unfamiliar areas of responsibility for me,' says Claudia Rueda. Since then, she has had more direct customer contact and employee responsibility. 'At first, the idea of moving up in the company and especially my personal development was a challenge. But taking part in KATE has motivated me and helped me to develop, mature and break some of my thought patterns. That has been my greatest personal reward so far.'

'Five years ago, I joined the company as a project coordinator in Manufacturing Engineering. A year later, I was appointed KAPS Manager, and since April this year I have been trying my hand at a new role as Workshop Manager of the newly built hall. I was accepted onto the **KATE programme** in my first year, where I was given great tools for my development. The continuous development and always learning new things in the company has motivated me. In addition to my professional development, my family is another driving force behind my motivation, as I am the proud father of a one-and-a-half-year-old daughter.', **Máté Szilassy**, Workshop Manager Esztergom, Hungary.



Rewards motivate. The KIRCHHOFF Automotive **Excellence Award** is also a reward: 32 colleagues have received this award since 2016 for their exceptional achievements. **Chris Shepard**, Tooling Coordinator in Tecumseh/USA, was honoured in 2023. At the time, he took the initiative to reduce costs at third-party suppliers and proved to be a special team player. 'I helped wherever it was needed - from quality control to the repair of press tools. This extra effort beyond my actual area of expertise did not go unnoticed and I am delighted to have been recognised.'

In the **FAUN Group**, we rely on a diverse range of offers in all companies that inspire and strengthen our employees. Together, we create an environment in which each individual can get the best out of themselves – for themselves and for FAUN.

In Germany, for example, the **Junior Management Programme (JUMP)** provides targeted support for up-and-coming managers. Skills are honed and perspectives opened up. We also offer further training opportunities such as language courses and special training programmes. Health and fitness are also key topics: **Company fitness**, our **skiing holiday**, **sports activities at the workplace**, **cultural events with KIRCHHOFF Culture Live** or the opportunity to use the **JobRad** initiative bring exercise into everyday life. **Andreas Renken**, Safety Officer at FAUN in Osterholz-Scharmbeck, is delighted: 'I've had my bike since March and have already ridden almost 3,000 kilometres. It's fun and saves me 50 kilometres of driving per working day. As a member of the steering committee for company health management, I was also able to contribute my own ideas.'



Motivation creates innovation. **Ben Lord**, National Business Manager FAUN ZOELLER UK, explains: 'I joined the company in 2007 and completed a training programme at FZ UK. I have always been encouraged to develop professionally and personally. Our innovation-driven corporate culture makes me proud.'

No specific programme but many opportunities: **ZÖLLER-KIPPER** supports its employees' further training on an individual basis, depending on their interests and, above all, their area of work - from forklift driving licences and event management to evening studies. 'The biggest motivation in my job is my personal passion. I love what I do and find meaning in my work. This motivates me to give my best every day. I see every task and every situation as an opportunity to learn new things and develop myself further. In addition, ZÖLLER-KIPPER has supported me for five years during my 13 years with the company, firstly by helping me to become a master craftsman in precision mechanics and then a business economist,' says **Fabian Pauls**, Operations Manager at ZÖLLER-KIPPER Mainz.



At **STUMMER**, the **M.I.T. ('Montieren im Takt', Translation: Assemble in time)** programmes and a further training programme dovetail perfectly (more on this topic on p. 98). **Andreas Reiter**, Team Supervisor at STUMMER, says: 'Today, much more responsibility lies in the hands of the teams. This not only strengthens team spirit, but also promotes cohesion in the long term. A new training and bonus system motivates our employees to give their best. Our motto is: one for all, all for one.' ■

AUTHOR: JANINE FELGENTREFF
ASSISTANT TO GLOBAL COO

Operational Excellence – in Everything we do

With effect from 1 September 2024, Dr.-Ing. Jochen Luft has taken over the position of Member of the Executive Board and Global COO (Chief Operating Officer) of KIRCHHOFF Automotive AG at the Attendorn site. Born in Baden, he will provide forward-looking support to the companies of the KIRCHHOFF Automotive Group in the areas of production, lean management, quality, logistics and engineering and further develop our pursuit of operational excellence and customer satisfaction.

Operations – a core discipline

Production and technological progress as well as the pursuit of continuous and sustainable improvement in company processes have inspired Dr Jochen Luft from an early age.

He started as Head of Quality and Production Excellence in the automotive supply industry around 20 years ago and quickly developed an affinity for the area of operations. His activities as a plant manager in Germany and abroad led him to operational responsibility as Managing Director of several automotive suppliers: always with the focus on further developing and improving the operational footprint, production and process workflows as well as customer satisfaction.

In his new position at KIRCHHOFF Automotive SE, Dr Jochen Luft will continue to be actively involved in the issues of 'tomorrow's production technology' and contribute to the further development of processes. ■

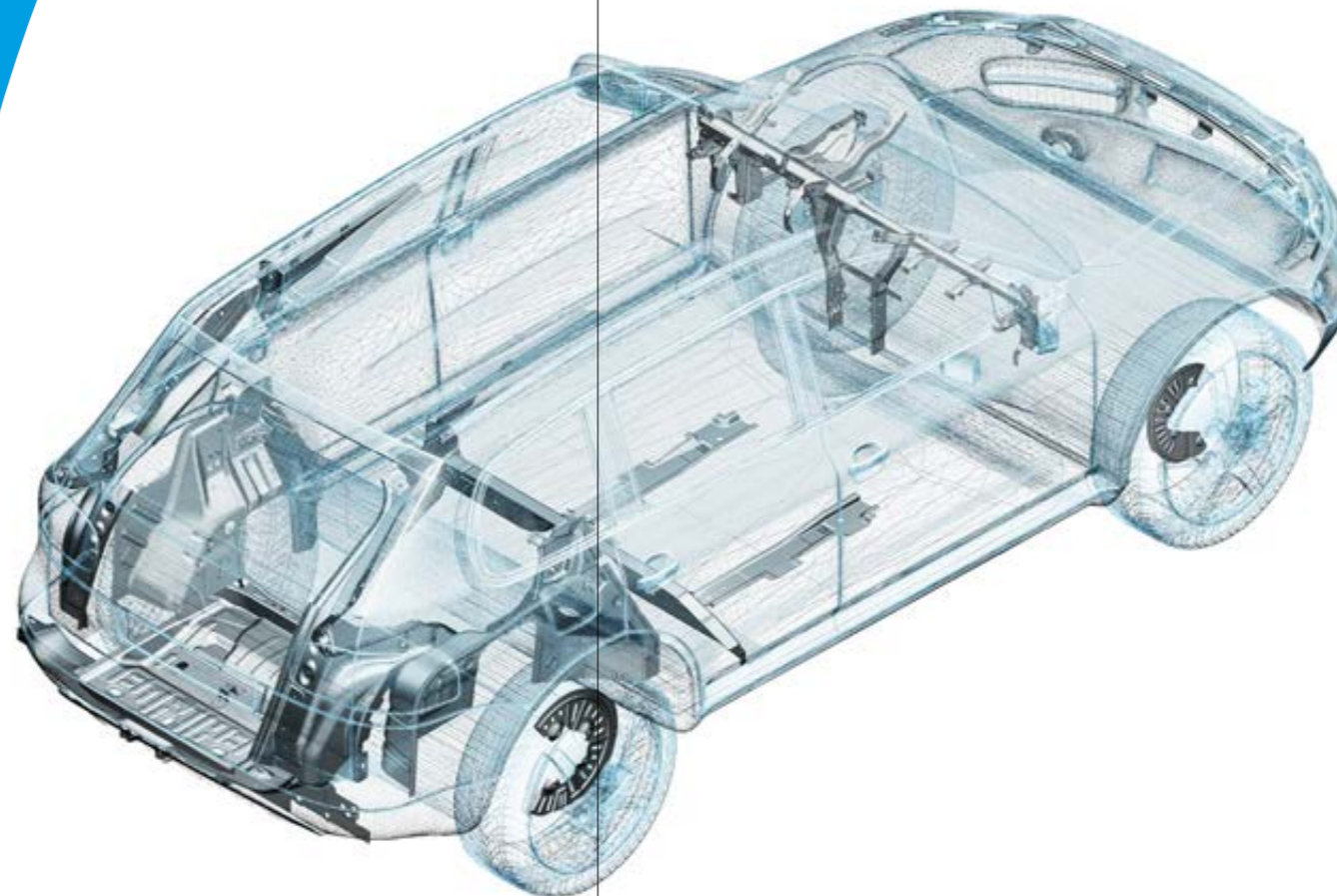
'Standing still means going backwards – the continuous development of our technologies and processes are the foundation of our future joint success.'

Dr.-Ing. Jochen Luft, Executive Board and Global COO of KIRCHHOFF Automotive AG

AUTHORS: SABINE BOEHLE
 COMMUNICATON & MARKETING MANAGER AND MARKETING MANAGER
 EVA RADEMACHER
 COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING SPECIALIST

New Products on the Road

KIRCHHOFF Automotive has once again demonstrated its many years of expertise in the manufacture of safety-relevant components. In addition to the use of proven production methods, new technologies are also utilised. The usual high quality guarantees smooth assembly at the customer's site.



Jeep Wagoneer S and Recon: Trunk Recess, Fascia Bracket Assembly, Aluminum Brake Splash Shield, Cross Car Beam and further BIW components

Technologies

Forming, spot and projection welding, MIG welding, adhesive, sealer, laser welded blank, tailor rolled blank

Production plants

Querétaro, Puebla II/Mexico

Customer/model

Stellantis Jeep Wagoneer S BEV, Recon

Key supplier for Jeep Wagoneer S and Recon

At the new KIRCHHOFF Automotive assembly plant in Puebla, Mexico, we will manufacture a wide range of products for the STLA Large Stellantis platform, including the **Jeep Wagoneer S luxury SUV and the Recon.**

A first for KIRCHHOFF Automotive in North America is the installation of the boot recess, for which we assemble formed parts provided by the customer. Other components for the vehicles include the assemblies for the right and left wheel arches, the rear light mount, the water drainage channel and the cover moulding. All of these parts surround the tailgate to prevent water ingress and increase the structural rigidity of the vehicle. At the Querétaro plant in Mexico, the right and left seat rail reinforcements are moulded, as is the impact cross member, which is attached to the rear floor pan under the rear seat. Other components range from the aluminium brake splash guard, which prevents dirt from entering the brake system, to the dashboard support, for which KIRCHHOFF Automotive was largely responsible for the design. Our contribution to the product design proved to be a decisive added value for the customer in this project. The bumper bracket was developed in such a way that it fulfils the special requirements for crash behaviour and pedestrian protection and absorbs the energy generated in the event of a collision. KIRCHHOFF Automotive has expanded the production area of the Puebla site by more than 9,000 square metres by renting a nearby hall for the production of eleven of the 20 new assemblies. Around 200 people will work here in future. All newly installed systems there are designed according to our lean standards, which guarantee an optimised production process.



Audi A6 e-tron: Mounting bracket

Technologies

Forming, MAG welding, e-coating

Production plants

Gliwice/Poland, Shenyang/China

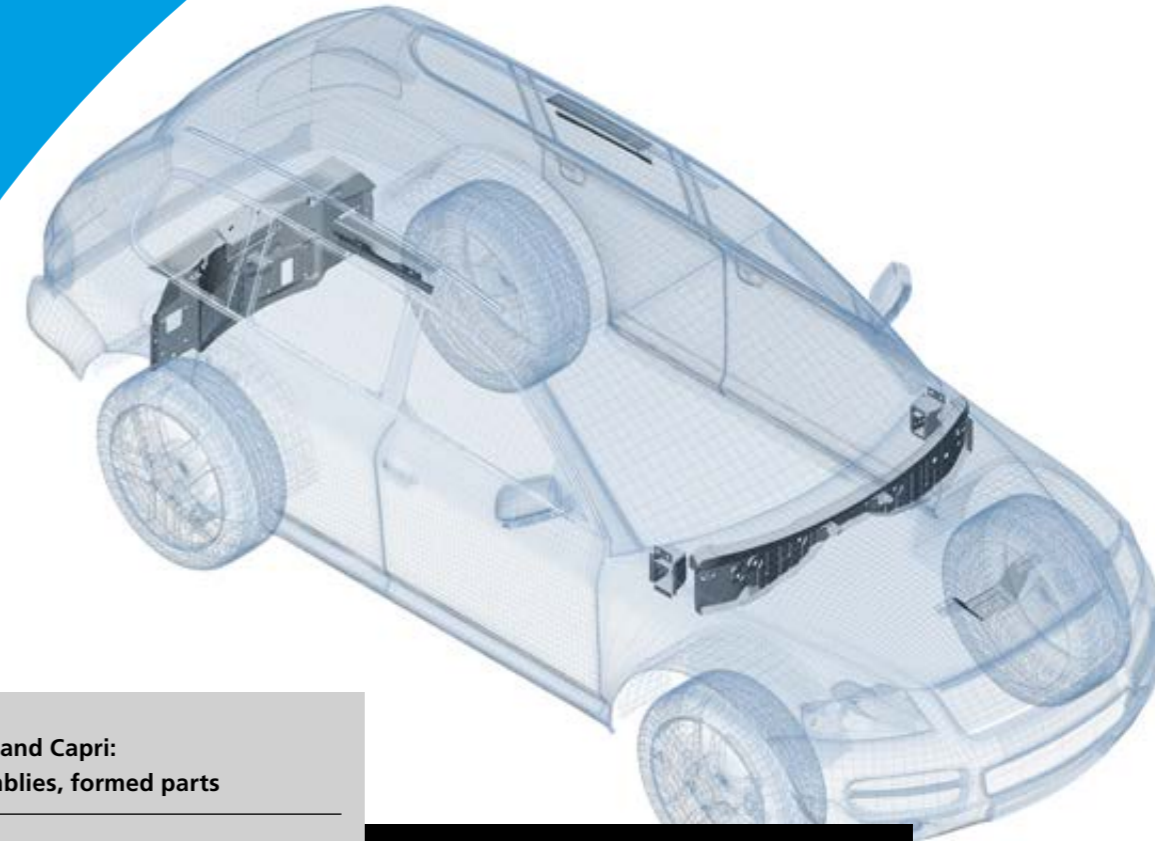
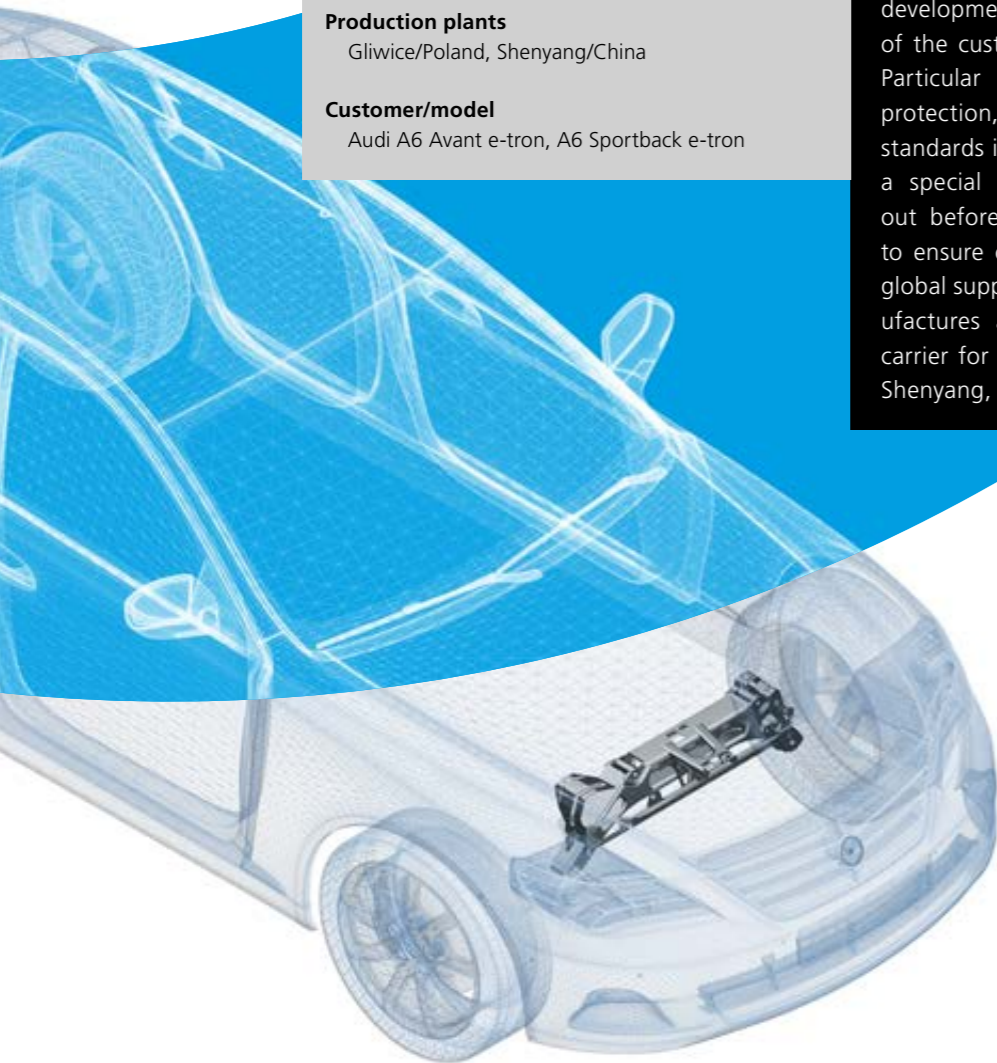
Customer/model

Audi A6 Avant e-tron, A6 Sportback e-tron

Innovative assembly carrier for Audi's electric flagship

KIRCHHOFF Automotive manufactures the highly specialised 2WD assembly carrier for the new **Audi A6 e-tron**. This complex welded steel assembly is the central connecting element for chassis and drive components and is specially designed for the requirements of battery-electric vehicles.

The 2WD mounting bracket is a chassis component for the vehicle variants with rear-wheel drive - the A6 Avant e-tron and the A6 Sportback e-tron. A particular challenge during development was the extremely tight tolerance specifications. The welding process introduces considerable heat into the component, which can lead to heat distortion and make it difficult to meet the tolerance requirements. As this component is a new development, our team implemented many of the customer's complex change requests. Particular attention was paid to corrosion protection, which must meet the highest standards in the chassis area. For this reason, a special pickling pre-treatment is carried out before the actual cathodic dip coating to ensure optimum surface protection. As a global supplier, KIRCHHOFF Automotive manufactures another variant of the assembly carrier for the Chinese market at its plant in Shenyang, China.



Ford Explorer and Capri: Welded assemblies, formed parts

Technologies

Forming, spot and projection welding, sealer application

Production plants

Attendorn/Germany, Mielec/Poland

Customer/Model

Ford Explorer, Capri

Highly sophisticated components for all-electric site

The new all-electric **Ford Explorer and Capri** has been rolling off the production line in Cologne since the beginning of June. The Cologne Electric Vehicle Centre is the first Ford site in Europe to be fully geared towards the production of electric vehicles.

KIRCHHOFF Automotive manufactures various body-in-white formed parts and welded assemblies for the new Explorer at the Mielec/Poland and Attendorn sites. In addition to the forming processes, joining processes such as spot and projection welding as well as sealer applications are also used. Among other things, KIRCHHOFF Automotive supplies the bonnet latch, which is part of the bonnet closing mechanism, for this vehicle as well as for several other Ford model series. Another assembly, the cowl assembly, connects the A-pillars with each other and at the same time serves to separate the outer windscreen from the vehicle interior. The component therefore has high geometric and technical requirements. The rear wall separates the load compartment from the vehicle interior and, as a large and relatively thin component, requires close moulding coordination. The products will be installed in another vehicle model that will be launched next year.





Sensational trade fair appearance ...

At the start of the International Suppliers Fair (IZB) in Wolfsburg, which took place from 22-24 October, the Group and Brand Board of Management of Volkswagen visited us – as one of only six of the 843 exhibitors at this trade fair! »

Visitors were able to experience the innovative solutions for less weight, lower CO₂ emissions and more safety at the KIRCHHOFF Automotive stand 6102 in Hall 6 from 22-24 October 2024.



Dr Thorsten Gaitzsch welcomes Dirk Große-Loheide, Board Member for Purchasing at the Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand and member of the extended Group Management Board.



Our joint research work with VW Group Innovation attracted a great deal of attention. Around 50 people from the VW Group and brand management informed themselves about the use of a new steel grade made of silicon-boron steel 'SIBORA' at the VIP Tech Walk. We were one of 6 companies from around 840 exhibitors selected for this tour.



At the IZB Wrap-up Panel 'Metal, Body & Chassis', Dr. Heiko Engels (2nd from right), Managing Director and EVP Sales and Technical Development KIRCHHOFF Automotive, shares his impressions of the past few days at the trade fair and answers questions about the joint research project with VW.



Exchange with the management of thyssenkrupp Steel: Dennis Grimm (2.f.r.), Spokesman of the Executive Board and Simon Stephan (center), Senior Vice President Sales Automotive.



At the VIP Tech Walk, KIRCHHOFF Automotive CTO Dr. Thorsten Gaitzsch (left) presented the joint research project with VW Group Innovation on the use of a new steel grade made of silicon-boron steel 'SIBORA'. Here in conversation with Oliver Blume, Chairman of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG and Porsche AG.

Arround 50 members of the VW Board of Management, including Oliver Blume (Chairman of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG and Dr. Ing.h.c. F. Porsche AG) and Dirk Große-Loheide, Board Member for Purchasing at the Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand and member of the extended Group ManagementBoard, learnt about our innovations during this VIP Tech Walk. The theme of the tour was "Accelerating marketable products." In focus: A joint research project with VW Group Innovation on the use of a new steel grade made of silicon-boron steel "SIBORA".

This year, our focus was on press-hardened, safety-relevant products, which included the newly developed steel grade "SIBORA". This has a high strength in the press-hardened state and also a higher residual formability due to its content of bainite and metastable retained austenite. Successful tests of a hot-formed A and B pillar made of "SIBORA" material

under series production conditions show that an improvement in crash safety can be achieved as a result of higher energy absorption with a simultaneous reduction in body mass. "We see many potential applications for this product at VW, but also at other VW Group brands," says Markus Löcker (Technology Development Senior Specialist), who, together with Dr. Ansgar Hatscher (Volkswagen Group Innovation), played a key role in the development of a modified hot forming process for the use of the new steel grade (see also report on page 14).

"We focus on excellence in technology, efficiency and sustainability," says Dr. Thorsten Gaitzsch, member of the Executive Board responsible for Technical Development and Sales. In addition to the product innovations made of "SIBORA" material, KIRCHHOFF Automotive also exhibited a steel modular cross member in an open shell design, which is not only lightweight but also enables the integration of cable harnesses, for example. ▶



Johannes Schauf, KIRCHHOFF Automotive Sales Director for the Volkswagen Group (pictured here with VW Commercial Vehicles buyer Jonna Lange), says: "We were delighted to make so many contacts, including many new contacts as well as many familiar faces, from the purchasing, development, quality and logistics departments of all the group's brands. The IZB has always provided the ideal platform for exchanging ideas with industry peers, but also for making personal contacts in a relaxed atmosphere, something that is appreciated by both sides. This already successful concept in the perception of the leading trade fair for us as suppliers was significantly enhanced again in 2024: short distances and direct contact with VW experts were offered by VW's own exhibition stands, the so-called Group Hubs. These, along with accompanying workshops, a live stage and the Connecting Area, provided an ideal framework for bringing customers and suppliers together more closely and sustainably."

One of our main goals is to develop and produce products that make car bodies more environmentally friendly. That is why we have validated the use of new CO₂-reduced steels in co-operation with leading steel producers. At the IZB, for example, we presented an Audi sill on which we successfully trialed the use of ArcelorMittal Usibor®1500 XCarb® recycled and renewably produced substrate as a starting material. This material consists of at least 75% recycled steel and 100% renewable electricity in the steel making process. This enables us to significantly improve the carbon footprint of our products.

This also made us a valued discussion partner at the IZB workshop "Green Steel". Among other things, it addressed challenges for calculating the CO₂ footprint of products, challenges in the transformation to green steel and climate neutrality targets. Under the guiding theme of "Empowering Partnerships", the IZB 2024 focused on the importance of strategic alliances between OEMs and suppliers. There was a particular focus on knowledge transfer in order to bring new technologies to market faster.

Dr Thorsten Gaitzsch sums up: "The discussions with their representatives of the Executive Board and the dialogue with VW experts in a small group were a special highlight, as they gave us important insights and at the same time further strengthened our partnership." ■



Together with VW, KIRCHHOFF Automotive worked on the technical realisation of a modified hot forming process (BQP process) with a newly developed silicon-boron steel grade 'SIBORA' (from left to right): Markus Löcker (Technology Development Senior Specialist KIRCHHOFF Automotive, Dr Ansgar Hatscher (Volkswagen Group Innovation) and Dr Oliver Schauerte (Head of Group Research Materials and Manufacturing Processes, Volkswagen Group).

More impressions of the IZB?
Click here for the video:



Excellence in Technology, Efficiency and Sustainability – our Innovations at IZB 2024



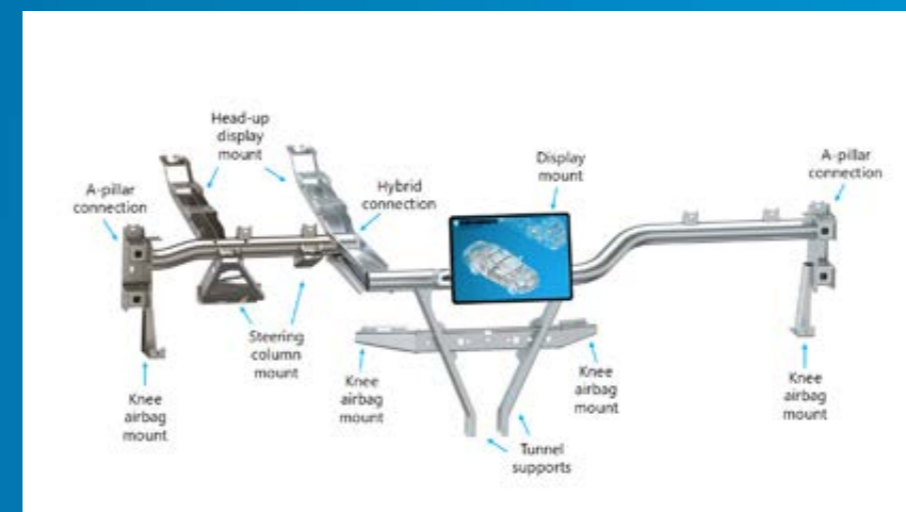
A-pillar and B-pillar formed in the modified hot forming process (BQP) from new steel grade 'SIBORA'.

Result:

- Improved crash safety due to higher energy absorption
- Reduction in body mass
- Less CO₂ emissions



Audi sill made from ArcelorMittal Usibor®1500 XCarb®, a recycled and renewable substrate.



Steel modular crossbeam in open shell construction

Data & Facts IZB:

The International Suppliers Fair (IZB) in Wolfsburg is one of the leading platforms for the automotive supplier industry and takes place every two years in the Allerpark near the Volkswagen Arena. 'Empowering Partnerships' was this year's guiding theme, which was followed by 843 exhibitors from 33 nations. Nowhere else do large and small VW suppliers have such an opportunity to enter into dialogue with board members, purchasers, engineers and developers from the VW Group. KIRCHHOFF Automotive was also there to bring its latest innovations and product developments to life for VW customers.

25 Years in Poland: a Success Story

KIRCHHOFF Automotive is celebrating its 25th anniversary in Poland this year. What began in 1999 as a small plant in Mielec has developed into an impressive success story. Today, the company operates three sites in Poland with a total of around 2000 employees and has become an important pillar in the company's global strategy. »

Numerous guests from Polish politics and business as well as business partners attended the official part of the 25th anniversary celebrations in Poland.

Today's KIRCHHOFF Automotive plant in Mielec, Poland.



At the press conference to mark the 25th anniversary in Poland, Arndt G. Kirchhoff, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the KIRCHHOFF Group.

History of origins

The decision to invest in Eastern Europe was made by the management and shareholders of KIRCHHOFF Automotive in 1998. Despite some challenges, such as the distance to suppliers and customers as well as an underdeveloped infrastructure at the time, they recognised the potential of the Mielec location. The town was characterised by the metalworking industry, and many engineers and technicians in the region had experience in the sector. In addition, after mass redundancies in the aviation industry, an experienced labour force was available.

Production started in Mielec in 1999 with a small press shop, a welding shop and a shipping preparation area. Over the years, manual processes have been replaced by automated high-tech solutions in production, logistics and quality assurance. Today, the plant in Mielec houses the company's largest press shop with presses ranging from 160 to 1600 tonnes.

The success in Mielec led to the opening of a second site in Gliwice in 2005. What began on an area of 4,000 square metres with 100 employees has now grown into the largest company site in Poland with almost 1,000 employees in two factories covering over 54,000 square metres. This was followed in 2016 by the establishment of a smaller plant in Gniezno, east of Poznan, which further strengthened KIRCHHOFF Automotive's presence in Poland.

Over the past 25 years, KIRCHHOFF Automotive has invested around 320 million euros in its Polish locations. This considerable sum underlines the company's long-term commitment to Poland and has contributed significantly to the modernisation and expansion of production capacities.

Hot forming plant in Gliwice



Employees in front of the plant in Gliwice

'The decision in favour of Mielec 25 years ago was a milestone in the history of our company. The combination of highly qualified employees, modern technology and a favourable business environment has contributed significantly to our growth and competitiveness.'

Innovations and technological development

KIRCHHOFF Automotive has continuously invested in modern technologies. The number of robots in the Polish plants has tripled in the last ten years. High-tech solutions such as press hardening, laser welding and 3D laser cutting of hot-formed components are used to produce ever lighter and stronger chassis parts. These technological advances have enabled the company to increase its competitiveness and meet the increasing demands of the automotive industry. As a result, KIRCHHOFF Automotive has established itself as an innovation leader in the industry. The Polish locations play a key role in KIRCHHOFF Automotive's global production strategy. They not only supply the European market, but also act as competence centres for certain technologies and manufacturing processes. The expertise developed in Poland is shared within the entire company and thus contributes to the continuous improvement of production processes.

Success factors and future prospects

Poland offers KIRCHHOFF Automotive numerous advantages. These include well-trained specialists, a high willingness to change on the part of employees and their ability to solve problems independently. A key factor is the significantly lower labour costs, which contributes considerably to competitiveness. The company also benefits from a lower bureaucratic burden in Poland. Locating in special economic zones provides attractive conditions that allow continuous investment in new technologies and the expansion of production capacities. Another success factor is the diversity of the workforce. In Poland, KIRCHHOFF Automotive is increasingly focussing on employing women in production. Almost a quarter of the workforce in Gliwice is female, which was previously rather unusual in Polish industry. The company has also successfully integrated workers from Ukraine and the Philippines to counter the shortage of skilled labour. ▶



To mark the 25th anniversary, a large family celebration was held in Mielec at the end of May, attended by over 2500 employees and their families. One of the highlights was an international KIRCHHOFF Automotive football tournament, in which teams from all European locations took part.



From left to right: Dr. Johannes F. Kirchhoff, J. Wolfgang Kirchhoff, Eva Kirchhoff and Arndt G. Kirchhoff also attended this special event in the history of KIRCHHOFF Automotive.

An appreciative gesture: long-serving employees were presented with commemorative statues to honour their loyalty and contribution to the company's success.

Numerous guests from Polish politics and business as well as business partners attended the official part of the celebrations with a press conference and plant tours. All the Kirchhoff siblings, Arndt G. Kirchhoff, J. Wolfgang Kirchhoff, Dr Johannes F. Kirchhoff and Eva Kirchhoff also attended this special event in the history of KIRCHHOFF Automotive.

success story. The combination of highly qualified employees, modern technology and a favourable business environment has contributed significantly to our growth and competitiveness.'

J. Wolfgang Kirchhoff, CEO of KIRCHHOFF Automotive, emphasised at the anniversary celebrations: 'The decision in favour of Mielec 25 years ago was a milestone in the history of our company. What began here in Mielec a quarter of a century ago was the start of two further plants in Poland, in Gliwice and Gniezno.' Arndt G. Kirchhoff, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the KIRCHHOFF Group, adds: 'And the development of our plants in Poland over the last 25 years is a true

The 25-year history of KIRCHHOFF Automotive in Poland is an impressive example of how a bold investment decision has turned into a true success story. The company has not only benefited from the advantages of the location, but has also made a significant contribution to the economic development of the region. With the commitment and expertise of the Polish workforce, KIRCHHOFF Automotive is well positioned to continue its success in the coming years and make an important contribution to the automotive industry. ■



AUTHORS:

FRANK BUCHHOLZKI, DIRECTOR OPERATIONS

THOMAS LOZINSKI, PRODUCTION MANAGER

Technology with a Future: 15 Years of Hot Forming

The first KIRCHHOFF Automotive hot forming line was launched in 2009. The line was set up in a new, purpose-built hall at the Iserlohn site with a furnace length of 25 metres and a hydraulic 800-tonne press.

In the **hot forming process**, blanks are heated to over 900°C in gas-heated ovens and then formed using water-cooled tools. This process is called press hardening. This results in a transformation of the material structure, creating martensite. This makes the parts particularly hard and tough and is particularly suitable for crash-relevant body structures that contribute to occupant protection. KIRCHHOFF Automotive operates further hotforming lines in Hungary, Poland and Portugal.

Just three years later, a second, more powerful system with a furnace length of 35 metres, a pressing force of 1,200 tonnes and the option of quadruple production was put into operation. At the same time, the first plant was 'upgraded' to quadruple production. The development of the systems continued over the following years. For example, an end-of-line solution for automatic stacking of components was installed in 2015 to increase competitiveness.

In the years that followed, the Iserlohn site further expanded its technological leadership in the field of hot forming technology with system expansions for the partial tempering of components with flexible geometries.

Alexander Schmidt, Operations Manager of the division, has been there from the very beginning and remembers the early days clearly. 'It was an exciting time for everyone. The technology was completely new back then.' Even after 15 years, the systems are still running smoothly thanks to extensive maintenance. 'The measures to maintain our systems will pay off in the long term,' says maintenance engineer Sebastian Kumbruch, who specialises in the hot forming systems and oversaw the measures.

Alexander Schmidt takes a positive view of the investments: 'This technology is the key to sustainable automotive production. This is because the use of hot forming can reduce the CO₂ footprint of a component by using less material.' ■



New System for New Product Variants



An adhesive application upstream of the welding process protects the component from corrosion.

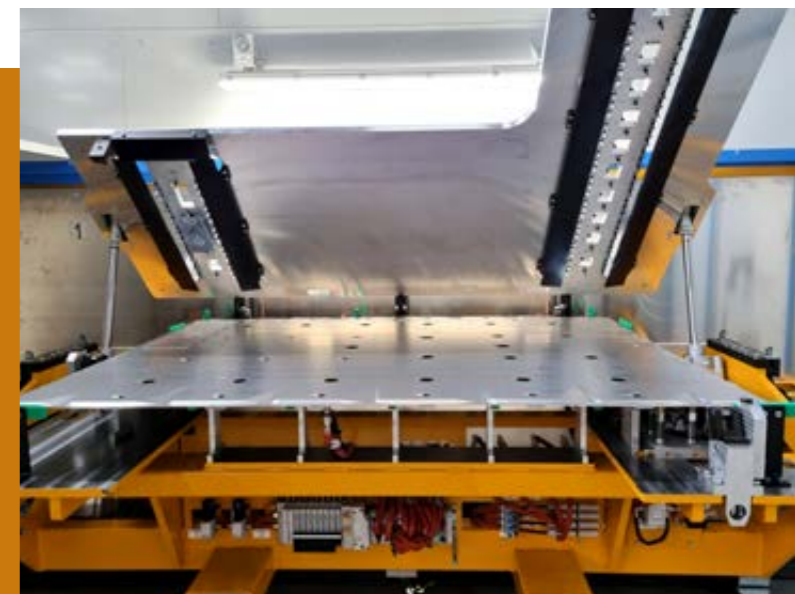
KIRCHHOFF Automotive manufactures two new variants of the VW underride guard for the VW MEB platform on a new welding system at the Iserlohn plant. The material flow within the welding system from the semi-finished to the finished part is fully automated.

AUTHOR: TIMO MÜLLER
MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING
MANAGER (ISERLOHN)

The new 'long' variants of the underride guard differ in the number of base plates: The variant for the ID.7 model gets one additional base plate, the one for the ID. Buzz gets two additional base plates. These additional base plates functionally reinforce the underride guard for the new heavier batteries with a greater range. They are stamped on the 1,250 tonne press in Iserlohn and fed to the welding system after external washing.

An additional upstream bonding process in the welding system is another special feature. A sealing adhesive is automatically applied to the base plates all the way round to protect the component from corrosion. Only an optimised and uninterrupted application of adhesive ensures that VW's customer requirements are met.

The laser welding of the quilting seams is carried out using the established equipment from the first welding line. An 8 kW laser is used here, and the welding head takes over the seam search and the quality inspection of the welded seams via integrated scan sensors. ■



Underride guard in the welding fixture.



New variants of the VW underride guard are manufactured on a new welding system at the Iserlohn plant. One or two additional base plates reinforce the underride guard for the use of heavier, more powerful batteries for greater range.



The locations in Attendorn, Iserlohn (Germany), Esztergom (Hungary), Letterkenny (Ireland), Gliwice, Mielec, Gniezno (Poland), Ovar, Cucujães (Portugal), Shenyang, Suzhou (China), Aurora (Canada), Puebla, Querétaro (Mexico), Atlanta, Manchester and Waverly (USA) will have the TISAX label.

Data Protection and Data Security are Important to Us

Almost two thirds of all KIRCHHOFF Automotive locations have received the TISAX label and have successfully demonstrated that their approach to information security complies with the industry-specific standards (VDA-ISA) specified by the VDA.

**AUTHOR: JUSTYNA MATERNICKA
GLOBAL ISMS MANAGER**

TISAX® (Trusted Information Security Assessment Exchange) is a cross-company assessment and exchange process for information security in the automotive industry. It focuses on data protection, its integrity and availability in the manufacturing process and in the operation of vehicles. The certification, which is carried out by independent experts, requires companies to conduct a self-assessment of information security based on site-specific information using predefined questionnaires and catalogues of requirements.

Today, global and local KIRCHHOFF Automotive teams work together to make the TISAX audits a success. The teams are made up of IT, HR, legal and data protection, procurement, sales, facility management, development and prototype expertise. ■



AUTHOR: ANDREAS HEINE
GLOBAL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

48 Years in the Service of Customers

– an Interview with Klaus Lötters

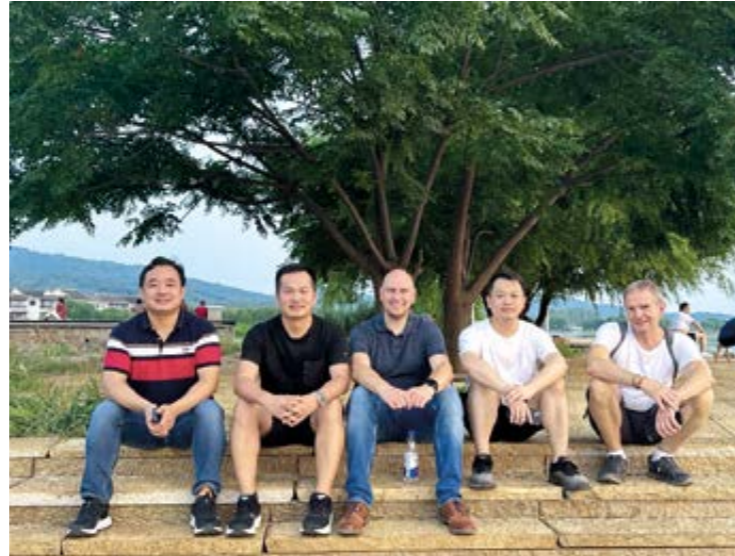
After 48 years with the company and an impressive career path from trainee to Vice President Sales for Europe and Asia, Klaus Lötters is going into well-deserved retirement at the end of this year. During this time, he has probably cultivated and built up more customer contacts than anyone else and thus made a significant contribution to the company's success story.

"Remain authentic, take a positive approach to the tasks set despite their complexity, but don't promise more than you can deliver."

Klaus Lötters, Vice President Sales



One of the first business trips that Klaus Lötters undertook in 1983 took him to Rheinische Braunkohlenwerke AG, to which KIRCHHOFF Automotive supplied chain links for lignite excavators and spreaders at the time.



At a team event with sales colleagues.

In this interview, he gives an insight into his career, explains what motivated him and reveals the arguments he has used time and again to inspire customers to join our company.

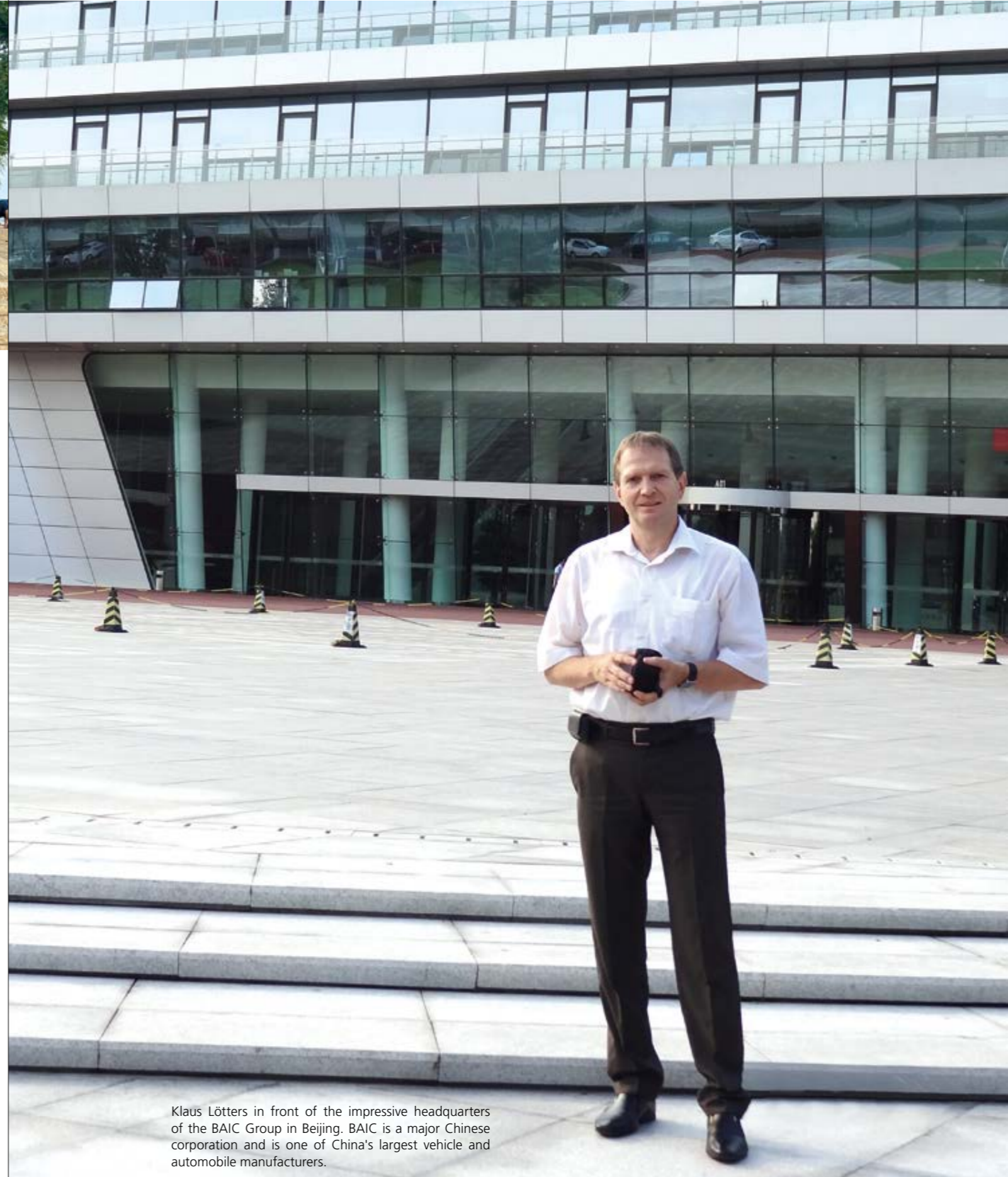
You started your career with us over 48 years ago. What were your first steps in the company and what has motivated you over the years to remain part of the company for so long?

I started as an apprentice at our site in Iserlohn in 1976, back then still in the centre of Iserlohn. Not only was our head office located there, but also our production, which was only later relocated to the industrial estate in Iserlohn-Sümmern. After my military service, which was still compulsory at the time, I gained my first sales experience in the sale of structural metal parts for the commercial vehicle industry. Many years later, I moved to Attendorn. There I was given the opportunity to support our customer Mercedes-Benz, then still Daimler Chrysler, as Key Account Manager. Looking back, it was a success story that I was very lucky to be part of.

Over the years, our company has developed from an initially local supplier, which mainly supplied lorry manufacturers, to a global player in the automotive industry. That also answers the question about my motivation. The company grew rapidly, there were always new tasks for me, the work was challenging and I was able to develop myself further. So there's no reason for me to look for new challenges outside our company..

Customer needs and expectations have changed over time. How have you managed to react to these changes and still maintain long-term and trusting relationships?

It's true that the automotive industry has changed a lot and this has become very clear in recent years. What has not changed in my view, however, are the fundamental demands that our customers place on us. OEMs are still looking for reliable partners who are able to offer projects globally and handle them professionally. We were and remain such a partner to this day. ▶



Klaus Lötters in front of the impressive headquarters of the BAIC Group in Beijing. BAIC is a major Chinese corporation and is one of China's largest vehicle and automobile manufacturers.

As Vice President Sales for Europe and Asia, you looked after very different markets. What are the biggest challenges in these regions and which strategies have proved to be particularly successful?

The regional challenges differ only in nuances. Open co-operation based on trust is a prerequisite for sustainable business in all regions and we can offer our customers this as a family-run company with short decision-making paths. Of course, negotiations vary from region to region. When I say that, I think in particular of my first assignments in China. There, we rely on our local customer teams, who are much closer to the action and know the customs.

You are known for cultivating more customer contacts than anyone else. What is your personal recipe for success for not only establishing these relationships, but also successfully maintaining them over the years?

Building a sustainable, successful customer relationship is only possible together. The entire company has to keep its finger on the pulse. What I mean by this is that long-term success was and is only possible if the company constantly modernises itself in all areas and thus remains competitive. We have managed this very well, especially in the past years of crisis. When asked about my personal recipe, I would like to answer as follows: remain authentic, approach

the tasks set in a positive way despite their complexity, but don't promise more than you can deliver.

You have looked after countless customers over the years. What would you say our customers particularly appreciate about us, what makes our company unique compared to the competition?

We sometimes take the liberty of rejecting a project enquiry, i.e. not offering it at all, if it seems too big or the team is not available enough to implement the project in the interests of our customers. In this context, a frank word is better received than a false promise. I think our customers also appreciate that about us.

Even though you will soon be retiring, what developments do you see in the next few years? Which trends do you think could have the biggest impact on the industry?

I am neither an economic sage nor a leading industry expert, but in my opinion, the path to electromobility is mapped out. We are currently experiencing a phase of upheaval, with negative consequences for the industry. I don't need to go into detail here, as the media is currently overflowing with new bad news. Nevertheless, I believe that we will remain a successful automotive nation, even in the face of increasing global competition, which we will

of course have to face. We at KIRCHHOFF Automotive are also well equipped for the future, as the majority of our products will continue to be needed in electric vehicles.

There is probably no one who has travelled so much abroad for the company. When you think back on all this travelling, what experience will you never forget?

First of all, yes, I travelled a lot. But I certainly can't keep up with the colleagues who realise our projects at home and abroad and visit our global suppliers, customers and production facilities in this context.

I will never forget my first trips to China. Back then, like many in our country, I was only informed by reports on the radio and television. In the meantime, I have been there many times and have been very fortunate to be able to form my own opinion. It was consistently positive, especially when I think of our loyal, committed and always friendly colleagues.

Incidentally, I am determined to travel to China again in the future to show my family some of the things I have experienced while travelling.

I would like to tell you one more nice story, and now it's getting a little melancholy. On my last return journey from China, I was sitting next to a lady who had travelled a long way and who told the flight

attendant that this was her last business trip and that retirement was imminent. I couldn't help but mention that this was also my last long-distance journey. As a thank you from the airline, we left the aircraft with a floral greeting.

Incidentally, business trips and the associated direct dialogue with our customers and colleagues have always been the 'salt in the soup' for me as a salesperson. The opportunity to travel and discover foreign regions has always been a privilege for me.

Dear Klaus, thank you very much for the interesting and personal insights into your time at KIRCHHOFF Automotive. We wish you all the best for your new chapter in life! ■

AUTHOR: SOUSCHA NETTEKOVEN-VERLINDE
MARKETING KIRCHHOFF MOBILITY

'My New Old One'

looking for a Car including Customised Conversion



'Finally a car that suits me!' says a delighted Tammy, who needs a car adapted to her needs due to her short stature.

Swap an old Renault Twingo for a customised Hyundai i10 – is that possible? No, impossible – but RTLZWEI with the programme 'Mein neuer Alter' and KIRCHHOFF Mobility have made it possible.



Adem Oktuan discusses the necessary modifications for Tammy's car and the estimated costs with 'My new old one' presenter Karola Becker.



An emotional moment: Karola Becker removes the red cloth from the vehicle and Tammy and her daughter Lea see their new car for the first time.



Tammy (left) with daughter Lea, her father and customer advisor Adem Oktuan.

Tammy is of small stature, has a young daughter and urgently needs a new car that is adapted to her special needs. Her old Renault Twingo is broken and her budget is tight. She applies for the RTLZWEI documentary soap 'Mein neuer Alter' ('my new old (car)'). In the popular TV show, car experts Karola Becker, Sidney Hoffmann and Lina van de Mars use their negotiating skills to help people with little money get a usable car.

In summer, the time had finally come. The crowning finale of the filming of 'Mein neuer Alter' took place at the KIRCHHOFF Mobility headquarters in Hilden. There the workshop team had perfectly adapted the Hyundai i10: seat raiser, dial on the steering wheel, driving and operating aid for gas and brake, hand control for blinker, light, horn and windshield wipers, as well as a supporting console for easier operation of the pedals were now part of the equipment of the small car. The supporting console is removable so that not only Tammy can use the Hyundai i10 in the future.

When Tammy arrived with her daughter Lea, who is also of small stature, and her father for the vehicle handover, the vehicle was initially covered with a

red cloth. The excitement was great and the joy even greater when Tammy was finally able to take delivery of her new car. RTLZWEI car expert Karola Becker and the team from KIRCHHOFF Mobility were delighted with her.

The episode 'Mein neuer Alter' was broadcast on RTLZWEI on 20 October 2024. Further information can also be found at www.rtl2.de/sendungen/mein-neuer-alter. ■

KIRCHHOFF Mobility has made the following technical modifications:

- Seat adjustment/booster seat for an ergonomic seating position
- Rotary knob on the steering wheel for easy control
- EasySpeed driving and operating aid for accelerator and brake, which requires little effort and provides more legroom
- MultiKommander Mini II, which controls the indicators, lights, horn and wipers directly from the hand-held control unit
- Installation of a removable support console in the footwell for easier operation of the pedals



AUTHOR: ANIKA TEUBNER-FEILER
 MARKETING & MEDIA DESIGNER DIGITAL & PRINT

Clear the Stage: Our Tools Celebrate their Live Comeback

WITTE Tools visited the annual meeting of representatives and distributors of construction and fastening technology in Nashville, USA, from 10th to 12th November and has drawn a positive balance.



Alexander Hingst (Head of Sales and Marketing) presented a wide range of WITTE Tools tools in the usual premium quality at the STAFDA Convention & Trade Show.

Nashville is known as the world capital of country music, but this year the city also attracted hundreds of industry representatives to the state of Tennessee. STAFDA (Specialty Tools and Fasteners Distributors Association), based in Wisconsin, had invited to the 48th trade fair and annual convention and 349 international exhibitors attended. The distributor association for speciality tools and fasteners was founded in 1976 and WITTE Tools has also been a member for some time.

After more than ten years, a wide range of screwdrivers and bits 'Made in Germany' celebrated their return. Alexander Hingst (Head of Sales and Marketing) unpacked his sample case just in time for the start of the trade fair and presented a variety of tools in the usual premium quality. His aim was to strengthen customer relationships in the USA and establish new agent and dealer contacts. Alexander Hingst was pleased to note the high regard in which the WITTE brand is held by trade visitors. Interested private label customers, who experienced almost limitless fulfilment of their individual wishes, were also drawn to the stand.

"Only the threat of punitive tariffs following the last presidential election could make cooperation with representatives from the USA more difficult," said the otherwise completely satisfied WITTE Tools sales manager after his return. ■

STAFDA's 48th Annual Convention & Trade Show

Registration opens June 3 at 8 a.m. Central at stafda.org



November 10-12, 2024 ♦ Music City Center

**AUTHOR: GLENDA LANGE
MARKETING ASSISTANT OF
MANAGEMENT KIRCHHOFF ECOTEC**

People are not at the service
rather, IT should serve people. of IT -

Effective October 1, 2024, Rafael Kutz will assume the position of Member of the Executive Board and Chief Digital Officer (CDO) at KIRCHHOFF Ecotec SE in Iserlohn. In this role, the Münsterland native will provide forward-looking support to the companies of the KIRCHHOFF Ecotec Group in the areas of IT and digitalization, guiding them towards a successful digital future.

IT must not only function but also make progress tangible.

Both the industry and corporate structure inspired Rafael Kutz early on as an IT partner. "For me, the companies of the KIRCHHOFF Ecotec Group combine the best of a traditional industry with innovative ideas and entrepreneurial spirit."

Over 20 years ago, Kutz began his career as a developer and consultant at an ERP consulting firm within the Microsoft ecosystem. Through his work in consulting and project management for industrial projects, his career path led him to the executive management of two companies: one focused on

process and job-shop manufacturing, and the other in the life sciences sector. In his new role, Rafael Kutz will also actively participate in ongoing activities and contribute to IT projects. "The implementation of strategies is more successful when you not only lead but also get involved practically."

At both the FAUN Group and the companies of the ZOELLER Group, Kutz will be involved in ongoing ERP and digitalization projects. In addition to optimizing reporting processes, his focus will be on future-oriented IT solutions, innovations, the use of AI, and improving efficiency. "I am excited to gain deeper insights and work more effectively with the on-site IT teams to achieve sustainable results," Kutz stated. ■



Rafael Kutz – Chief Digital Officer (CDO)
of KIRCHHOFF Ecotec AG

AUTHOR: GLENDA LANGE
 MARKETING ASSISTANT OF MANAGEMENT KIRCHHOFF ECOTEC

Honored: Global player with a regional heart

The KIRCHHOFF Ecotec subsidiary ENGINIUS is setting new standards in the development of vehicles for climate-neutral freight transport.

KIRCHHOFF Ecotec has been recognized by the IHK Südwestfalen for the technological innovation and pioneering role of its subsidiary ENGINIUS in the emission-free commercial vehicle sector. The company's advancements, particularly in hydrogen-powered trucks, underscore ENGINIUS's strength in driving sustainable transport solutions on a global scale.

Südwestfalen, known as the region of "Hidden Champions," is one of Germany's economically strongest areas. Here, cutting-edge technology meets deep-rooted regional identity. Companies from the region excel in innovation, quality, and leadership in their respective markets – often unnoticed by the broader public.

This strong economic framework is further supported by regional universities of applied sciences and networks that collaborate closely with the business community. Südwestfalen also stands out with its high quality of life, excellent infrastructure, and strong integration of companies and skilled professionals. This ensures the region remains a global player with a regional heart – a magnet for talent from around the world. ENGINIUS is a prime example of how the unique blend of innovation and regional pride can shape globally forward-looking mobility, extending far beyond Südwestfalen. ■



The honor goes above all to the ENGINIUS team and to them: Burkard Oppmann (CSO), Dennis Boller (CPO), Patrick Hermanspann (CEO FAUN Gruppe), Thorsten Baumeister (CEO) and Florian Brandau (CTO)



Dr. Johannes F. Kirchhoff, Chairman of the Executive Board of KIRCHHOFF Ecotec SE, proudly presents the certificate with the award, which was presented by the South Westphalia Chamber of Industry and Commerce.



The FAUN Group was awarded Gold Status during IFAT 2024 for its commitment to the "Blicki Blickt's" initiative! Pictured from left to right: Dirk Hendler (Blicki e.V.), Burkard Oppmann (Managing Director, FAUN Group), Patrick Hermanspahn (CEO, FAUN Group), Blicki, Claudia Schae (Head of Marketing & Communications, FAUN Group), Dr. Johannes F. Kirchhoff (Chairman of the Board, KIRCHHOFF Ecotec SE).

Heads up, traffic newbies: safer school routes ahead



Where did the whole class go?! That's the big question for the 3rd graders of Peter-Härtling Elementary School in Mainz, Germany during a traffic safety workshop with Blicki e.V.



**AUTHORS: CLAUDIA SCHAE
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FAUN GROUP
SABINE KÄMPER
EDITORIAL TEAM ZOELLER GROUP**

Around 9:15 a.m., the magical moment arrives: the entire 3C class suddenly disappears. Gone. Completely. Why? Because they're standing in the massive blind spot of a FAUN VARIOPRESS and a ZOELLER MEDIUM X2 truck. From the driver's seat, all you hear is the puzzled question, "Where did everyone go?" It's an eye-opening experience for the kids when they realize just how big the blind spot is – large enough to hide almost an entire class. The follow-up realization hits hard: It's no wonder accidents happen when a truck driver simply can't see children nearby.

According to Germany's 2023 traffic statistics, there were over 26,000 accidents involving trucks and personal injuries. The youngest road users are particularly at risk, says Blicki e.V.

Big trucks, bigger lessons

Since 2017, the kangaroo-themed Blicki e.V. has taught traffic safety to more than 72,000 elementary school kids across Germany. The focus? Hands-on workshops with large vehicles, especially trucks. "Kids are fascinated by trucks – they're drawn to them with so much excitement that they often miss the danger," explains Rosamaria La Russa from Blicki e.V. That's why the workshops always feature real trucks, generously provided by logistics and municipal vehicle industry partners. For the kids, getting up close to these giants is a thrill. They don't just get to see the trucks – they climb into the cab to experience

the driver's perspective. Looking out from way up there, they learn just how limited a driver's visibility can be.

Changing perspectives, saving lives

The workshops are all about raising awareness in a fun, hands-on way. The practical part builds on lessons taught in the classroom beforehand. On the big day, it's all about movement – running games to illustrate stopping distances and exploring the blind spot in real life. "When kids and heavy vehicles share the same routes every day, it's essential to raise awareness about risks like blind spots. But it's not just up to them – all of us play a role in making streets safer for children. By driving carefully and showing consideration, we can make a huge difference," says Patrick Hermanspahn, CEO of the FAUN Group. Volker Schröder, CFO of the ZOELLER Group and a father of two, attended the Mainz workshop and was thoroughly impressed: "This is such a fantastic and important initiative! It's educational, practical, and incredibly well executed. As a company, we definitely want to support and expand this effort in the coming year." ■

01 Spacious, spacious. One of several blind spots – on a truck, it can be big enough to hide several children at once. **02** Certificate presentation by Volker Schröder, CFO of the ZOELLER Group. **03** VARIOPRESS and Blicki – to be continued in 2025. **04** A big highlight and an eye-opener: climbing into the driver's cab! From up there, the kids get a clear view of just how much can't be seen from such a high vantage point.

AUTHORS: CLAUDIA SCHAUE
 MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FAUN GROUP,
 SABINE KÄMPER
 EDITORIAL TEAM ZOELLER GROUP

New Capital Service Hub

The ZÖLLER-KIPPER East branch and the FAUN customer center have relocated. The teams have found a new home on Malteserstraße, offering more space for trucks, additional customer parking, excellent transport links, and extra workstations in the workshop. And the move during ongoing operations? A piece of cake.

Over the years, things have gotten a bit tight on Rigistraße in Marienfelde. ZÖLLER's production and the two service hubs have been sharing the space – all while being on a steady growth path. It was clear that a solution was needed: either a new location to rent or a completely new build.

After a two-year search, the perfect spot was finally found in early 2024 – and conveniently, it's only about 500 meters away from the original site. Even better, it was an existing building that, after some remodeling, was ready for occupancy by the summer. "And because the new workshop has more workstations than the one on Rigistraße, we were able to move almost seamlessly," explains Stephan Wolf, Branch Manager East at ZÖLLER-KIPPER. The new facility on Malteserstraße was ready to

handle any emergencies while the team packed and unpacked everything in just 14 days.

ZÖLLER-KIPPER and FAUN now have access to 3,000 square meters of usable space, including 2,200 square meters of workshop, storage, and hall areas – that's about half the size of a small Bundesliga soccer field. The newly rented facility houses not only expanded workshops with additional service workstations but also the special construction area for ZÖLLER's Micro HG, which now has plenty of room to grow. Meanwhile, the rear loader production team is thrilled about having more space and increased capacity at the original Rigistraße location – finally allowing for smoother workflows and higher throughput. With this expansion in Marienfelde, ZÖLLER and FAUN are ready to meet growing demands and keep everything moving smoothly – on the field and on the road. ■



Malteserstraße 145–147
 12277 Berlin



FAUN and ZOELLER hand in hand – Jürgen Kowalke and Markus Dautermann (ZÖLLER-KIPPER) together with Burkard Oppmann (FAUN) wish the Berlin teams great success. A strong alliance for top-notch service and customer proximity.

ENGINIUS[®]

FAUN GROUP

ays of
ustainability

action

transport.

AUTHOR: CLAUDIA SCHAUE
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
FAUN GROUP

SAY HI!

Say hi to
CITYPOWER

FCEV

ENGINIUS

Say hi to CITYPOWER

CITYPOWER rocks the IAA TRANSPORTATION – ENGINIUS
launches a new zero-emission truck for the medium-duty class

"Say hi to CITYPOWER!" At this year's IAA Transportation, ENGINIUS unveiled the CITYPOWER 1633 – a real game-changer in the medium-duty class. Built on the trusted Classic Space cab of the Daimler Truck ATEGO, this compact powerhouse is designed for urban agility with a gross vehicle weight of 16 tons and a slim 2.30-meter width for great maneuverability and visibility. Available in two wheel-base options, 4,760 mm and 5,360 mm, there's a CITYPOWER to fit every need. ▶


BEV or FCEV – Flexible and zero emission


Whether you opt for the battery electric vehicle (BEV) or the fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV), ENGINIUS offers both powertrain options to meet your specific needs and infrastructure. This flexibility allows businesses to tailor their green logistics strategies to their operations, fleet size, and available infrastructure. Perfect for urban deliveries or longer hub-to-hub trips, the CITYPOWER will be ready for orders in 2025, with the first models hitting the road in Q3 2025.


CITYPOWER BEV – The urban ace


With a range of 300 km in urban and regional traffic and a payload of 8.8 tons, the CITYPOWER BEV is the ultimate choice for inner-city deliveries. Its 280 kWh battery capacity ensures optimized operating costs and eliminates inefficiencies. It's all about setting a new standard for efficiency in urban logistics!



 Refueling approx. 15 minutes

 Hydrogen consumption: approx. 4–8 kg H₂/100 km (depending on application)

 Energy recharge time: approx. 2 hours at 150 kW, 12 hours at 22 kW

 Energy consumption: approx. 60–100 kWh/100 km (depending on application)



Team work makes the dream work.

CITYPOWER FCEV – Built for distance

Need more range? The CITYPOWER FCEV is your go-to option. With up to 600 km of range and quick refueling times similar to diesel, it's perfect for hub-to-hub transport. Add a payload of 9.4 tons and modern 350-bar hydrogen tanks, and you've got the ideal vehicle for long, emission-free journeys.

Power that packs a punch

With 248 kW of continuous power and up to 368 kW peak performance, the CITYPOWER brings serious energy to the table – and it's completely emissions-free. Its powerful synchronous motor and three-speed gearbox make it efficient and a blast to drive. Plus, smart regenerative braking tech keeps energy use impressively efficient.

Compact, flexible, and built for more

The CITYPOWER is a real all-rounder. Whether you need dry or refrigerated box bodies, it's ready to handle it. The frame height and easy access make it simple for body manufacturers to add standard bodies without extra adjustments. And thanks to space-saving integration of batteries and hydrogen tanks, the vehicle length stays the same – meaning maximum flexibility for your needs. ■



VDA President Hildegard Müller and Federal Minister Dr. Robert Habeck explored ENGINIUS' emission-free trucks for freight transport. (Photo: VDA)

CITYPOWER is all about the future of zero-emission transport, and ENGINIUS made it clear at the IAA what's possible. This is just the start.



www.ENGINIUS.de

Next level

A big step towards the mobility transition: ENGINIUS GmbH and Daimler Truck AG have reached an important milestone this fall by signing a memorandum of understanding that lays the groundwork for a strong collaboration in promoting zero-emission trucks. This strategic partnership paves the way for ENGINIUS's new CITYPOWER models to be directly introduced to potential customers in Germany through the Mercedes-Benz Trucks sales team.



United on the path to emission-free mobility: (from left) André Meinzen (Center Manager, Daimler Truck AG Commercial Vehicle Center Mercedes-Benz Bremen), Patrick Hackenberger (CFO Germany Own Retail, Daimler Truck AG), Burkard Oppmann (FAUN Managing Director & CSO ENGINIUS GmbH), Joachim Reiner (Head of Business Performance & Development Sales, Mercedes-Benz Trucks Germany), and Hannes Haßmann (Truck Sales, Daimler Truck AG Commercial Vehicle Center Mercedes-Benz Bremen).



Contract signing for a cleaner future: Patrick Hackenberger (CFO Germany Own Retail, Daimler Truck AG), Burkard Oppmann (FAUN Managing Director & CSO ENGINIUS GmbH), and Joachim Reiner (Head of Own Retail Management, Mercedes-Benz Trucks Germany), from left.

The partnership is hitting the ground running, and both sides are excited about the enhanced collaboration. "We're thrilled about this agreement," says Burkard Oppmann, Managing Director of the FAUN Group and CSO of ENGINIUS GmbH. "Our two companies have been working together closely and trustfully for years. This new level of cooperation is a strong statement of our shared goal: actively driving the mobility transition and delivering sustainable solutions for the logistics industry."

A win-win for both partners

At the core of this agreement lies the strategic use of synergies between ENGINIUS and Daimler Truck. While Daimler Truck contributes its strong sales network and deep market expertise in the commercial vehicle sector, ENGINIUS brings cutting-edge know-how in the development of zero-emission vehicle solutions.

"We, too, are looking forward to shaping the future of zero-emission transport with ENGINIUS," adds Joachim Reiner, Head of Business Performance & Development Sales at Mercedes-Benz Trucks Germany. "This new agreement allows us to refer interested customers to ENGINIUS. Ultimately, the synergies created by this partnership will benefit our customers as they transition to more sustainable transport solutions."

CITYPOWER: Efficiency for Medium-Distance transport

ENGINIUS is setting new standards with the CITYPOWER 1633 in the zero-emission medium-duty vehicle segment. The CITYPOWER is available as both a battery-electric vehicle (BEV) and a hydrogen-powered vehicle (FCEV), providing maximum flexibility depending on its intended use. What sets it apart is the combination of innovative drivetrains and proven Mercedes-Benz technology, making the CITYPOWER a versatile choice for urban areas as well as medium-distance routes. The BEV version boasts a range of up to 300 km, perfect for city driving, while the FCEV model delivers an impressive 600 km range, ideal for longer distances.

Sustainable mobility, today and tomorrow

For ENGINIUS and Daimler Truck, this partnership marks a crucial step toward making the commercial vehicle market more sustainable. By the third quarter of 2025, the first CITYPOWER vehicles will hit the roads, actively contributing to CO₂ reduction. "This agreement is a major milestone for us and a big step toward climate-neutral mobility," emphasizes Burkard Oppmann. "Together with Daimler truck, we can significantly accelerate the adoption of zero-emission solutions. We are confident this is just the beginning of a long-term and successful partnership."

With this collaboration, ENGINIUS and Daimler Truck are proving once again that sustainable mobility is not just a vision but an achievable reality. Together, they are paving the way for an emissions-free future in the transport sector. ■



FAUN is strengthening its finance team: Heiko Dirks, 47, took on the role of Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in July.

Meet Heiko: Numbers, Sustaina- bility, and a Taste for Jever Pilsner

AUTHOR: CLAUDIA SCHAUE
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FAUN GROUP

A trained business economist and former auditor, Heiko Dirks brings a wealth of international finance experience to FAUN. Before joining us, he worked at Remmers Gruppe AG, a global company with 1,600 employees. His career also includes time at Deloitte, where he spent 1.5 years in the U.S., and a stint at a shipping company. With a sharp eye for numbers, a knack for sustainable finance strategies, and a soft spot for Jever Pilsner, we're excited to get to know him better – in true K>MOBIL style!

Editorial team: Hi Heiko! Before your time at FAUN, did you have any connection to garbage trucks?

Heiko Dirks: Funny enough, as a kid I wanted to be a farmer since I grew up in the countryside. But one of my top three dream jobs was being a garbage truck driver – or at least standing on the back of the truck and collecting bins. I was totally fascinated by it as a little boy!

Editorial team: You've stepped into a big role here at FAUN. How would you sum up your job in one sentence?

Heiko Dirks: My team and I make sure FAUN always has the financial information it needs, stays liquid, runs secure IT systems, and has the right people in the right place at the right time.

Editorial team: Time for a classic Northern question: Beck's or Haake?

Heiko Dirks: (laughs) The answer is Jever Pilsner! A bit of a diplomatic choice, but it's the one for me.

Editorial team: Early bird or night owl?

Heiko Dirks: I'm definitely a night owl forced to live like an early bird. So yeah, I'm up early – because of my current commuting situation.

Editorial team: Budget hawk or big spender?

Heiko Dirks: As a CFO, the obvious answer is "budget hawk" – it's part of the job!

Editorial team: Heiko, we're thrilled to have you on board! Thanks for the fun chat, and welcome to FAUN! ■

AUTHOR: CLAUDIA SCHAUE
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER FAUN GROUP



Our Besties

Three of our besties: President of the chamber of industry and commerce in Lower Saxony, Matthias Kohlmann (left) and FAUN Purchasing Manager Dennis Fuge (right) congratulate Florian Surmann on his outstanding graduation certificate.

Florian Surmann and Matthias Kohlmann – two personalities who truly embody what matters most: dedication, passion, and being unapologetically authentic.

Let's kick things off with a massive shoutout to Florian Surmann for hitting a huge milestone in his young career! Florian crushed his industrial clerk apprenticeship, graduating with an impressive 95% and earning top honors from the chamber of industry and commerce (IHK) Elbe-Weser at the awards ceremony. He's sticking with the FAUN family and stepping into the world of strategic purchasing – living proof of how we do training at FAUN: versatile, hands-on, and future-ready. We couldn't be prouder and are excited to see where his journey takes him next. Congrats, Florian – keep smashing it!

Now, let's talk about another bestie: Matthias Kohlmann. After 24 years, he decided to step back from his operational role with FAUN at the end of June. As Chief Financial Officer, Matthias poured his heart and vision into shaping FAUN, playing a key role in positioning us as a leading manufacturer of environmental and municipal vehicles. Dr. Johannes

F. Kirchoff, Chairman of the Board at KIRCHHOFF Ecotec SE, summed it up perfectly: "Matthias Kohlmann has been a driving force behind FAUN for almost a quarter of a century, and since 2015, he's left a lasting mark as CFO, shaping the company's financial strategy. We're incredibly grateful for his loyalty, reliability, and precision. He'll be deeply missed – as an innovator, a trusted partner, and, above all, as a remarkable person."

But don't worry, Matthias is not going far. As president of the chamber of industry and commerce of Lower Saxony, he's continuing his mission to champion young talent. With a clear vision, he's all in on supporting the economic and industrial growth of Lower Saxony, where training and innovation go hand in hand. At the awards ceremony in Cuxhaven, he made it clear: "The skilled workers of tomorrow are the backbone of our region's future. Supporting them isn't optional – it's an obligation." ■

ONE OF US



Beard, overalls, and a proper Northern German charm – that's Reinhard. He's been with FAUN since 1981 and holds the unique title of being the only service technician to have repaired refuse trucks or conducted training sessions on all five continents. Reinhard is not just the face of FAUN service in export markets but also the legendary crowd-pleaser at the IFAT exhibition shows. In July, he checked off his fifth continent while in Australia. Retirement is planned for 2026 – let's see what adventures are still in store until then!



All set and shiny. Click here for the video:



AUTHOR: CLAUDIA SCHAUE
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FAUN GROUP

All set and shiny

At the FAUN plant in Osterholz-Scharmbeck, we've got a brand-new, state-of-the-art paint shop for refuse trucks that's taking our production to the next level.

With the launch of this cutting-edge facility, we're taking a huge leap into the future. After years of meticulous planning and construction that began in 2018, our new paint shop will officially kick off operations in mid-2024 – a true game-changer for our refuse truck production.

Teamwork makes the dream work! This project is the result of over 6,600 hours of hard work and the expertise of more than 100 people from seven different companies. Talk about a massive team effort!

Just the Facts

- Size matters: The facility spans an impressive 1,200 m², with enough space for parts up to 11.0 meters long, 2.60 meters wide, and 3.0 meters high.



- Smart design: By integrating the topcoat process, we reduced the overall footprint by about 1,000 m², boosting efficiency in a big way!
- Heavy lifter: Each work carrier can handle loads of up to 5 tons.

slash energy consumption in the manual painting booths.

- Ergonomic design: Improved working conditions eliminate noise issues and overhead tasks, making the workplace safer and more comfortable.

Fully Automated, Fully Awesome. Here's how it works:

- riming - Drying - Cooling
- Topcoat application - Drying again - Cooling again

This high-tech setup ensures maximum precision and consistency. And the cherry on top? Our innovative air purification system filters out VOC emissions (volatile organic compounds), so almost no harmful substances escape into the environment. It's a win for quality and sustainability.

Capacity Boost, Environmental Gains

With this new facility, we're doubling our throughput potential, preparing for future growth without relying on external painting capacity. This means greater flexibility, independence, and efficiency.

But it doesn't stop there:

- Green energy: The facility uses renewable energy for drying.
- Energy savings: Advanced heat recovery systems

Why It's a Big Deal

- Lower CO₂ emissions thanks to renewable energy sources.
- Energy efficiency through smart heat recovery.
- Faster production with increased capacity.
- Top-notch quality through automation.
- Better working conditions for our team.
- Digital precision with advanced process management and data analysis.
- Sustainable practices with efficient paint use.

A huge thank you to everyone who made this project a reality! Together, we're building a future that's efficient, sustainable, and packed with color. ■

AUTHOR: CLAUDIA SCHAUE
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FAUN GROUP

Hooked and Rolling

Together, they are shaping the future of
Notterkran Group AG and Contena Ochsner AG:
Thomas Notter (left) and Renato Heiniger.



notterkran

With Contena Ochsner AG acquiring a minority stake in Notterkran Group AG starting January 1, 2024, the succession plan for Notterkran has been successfully secured – and with a clear vision for the future! Together, these two long-standing companies in the transport sector aim to make a mark and drive innovative solutions forward. “This partnership ensures the long-term future of our company group, which my father founded 60 years ago,” says Thomas Notter, Managing Director of Notterkran Group. “With Contena Ochsner, we’ve found the perfect partner for our product portfolio and corporate culture. Both family-run businesses share the same values and a clear vision for the future.”

As Switzerland’s leading truck manufacturer for truck-mounted cranes and hooklift systems, Notterkran represents strong brands like Hiab, Fassi, and Zetterbergs and recently achieved revenues exceeding 50 million Swiss francs with its 210 employees. Notterkran also plays a role in the German market, where its assembly center in Ebersbach builds refuse trucks for KIRCHHOFF Ecotec. Looking ahead, the focus is clear: both companies aim to combine forces to drive innovation and flexibility in the logistics and waste management sectors. The growing trend of shifting waste collection systems underground calls for smart crane solutions – and this is exactly where Notterkran and Contena Ochsner plan to offer cutting-edge answers to meet rising demands. “For over 15 years, we’ve relied on Notterkran assemblies to deliver the best in crane solutions for our customers,” says Renato Heiniger, Managing Director of Contena Ochsner AG.

The bottom line? This partnership creates synergies, strengthens both brands, and offers significant value to customers across the DACH region. A win-win for everyone involved! ■

Our home ground is off-road

AUTHOR: ELLIE ROBERTS
FAUN TRACKWAY® MARKETING COORDINATOR



Rough, unyielding terrain? No problem for TRACKWAY®. The team from Llangefni in North Wales was awarded two major contracts.

FAUN TRACKWAY® are thrilled to have secured two multimillion-pound-contracts, for the Dutch Ministry of Defence, and the US Department of Defence (DoD). With all manufacturing taking place at our Head Quarters in North Wales, both contracts will see us producing and delivering our Heavy Ground Mobility System and Helicopter Landing Mat.

With TRACKWAY® – lightning-fast, safe off-road access

Consisting of ten TRACKRACKS with M150 TRACKWAY® and an additional 40 Spool pallets the Heavy Ground Mobility System will address the challenges that many site stabilisation scenarios present. It will allow the aluminium roadway to be deployed rapidly, with only two personnel required, preventing heavyweight vehicles from becoming entrapped in adverse conditions such as snow, marsh, mud and sand.



Chris Kendall, CEO at FAUN TRACKWAY®, said: "This is a landmark agreement for FAUN TRACKWAY®. Our system will allow the Royal Netherlands Army to reinforce its on-the-ground capabilities by providing quick and easy access for vehicles in all types of environments, with final delivery expected in 2025".

This year will also see the production of up to 54 Helicopter Landing Mats to support Marine Corps' Expeditionary Airfield emergent requirements on Expeditionary Advance Base Operations. The Helicopter Landing Mat System features the lightweight and logistically efficient PSA Flat Top N TRACKWAY® panel to facilitate the rapid construction of landing, take-off, servicing and maintenance areas suitable for helicopter and aircraft flight operations. Tried and tested on the harshest terrain, it protects assets and personnel, ensuring safety is a top priority.

Chris Kendall: "Our Engineering team has worked extensively to understand the requirements of the end user, along with historical issues encountered. The result has been the design, development and extensive testing of a product that we are proud to support the Marine Corps with now and for years to come". ■

Making waves together

FAUN Environnement and sailing star Adrien Simon are taking their partnership to the next level – with the course set for the next three years.



AUTHOR: JOSIANE ROYER
ASSISTENT TO MANAGEMENT &
COMMUNICATION

During the sailing season, Adrien Simon passionately dedicated himself to environmental protection. Together with other skippers from the Figaro class and with the support of schoolchildren, he organized beach clean-up campaigns to send a powerful message about the importance of taking responsibility for our natural world.



In July, the Figaro FAUN was officially christened during the maritime festival in Brest. Present at the ceremony were Etienne Blaise (front row, 2nd from right), President of FAUN, the FAUN team, and the vessel's godfather Anthony Marchand, skipper of the trimaran Actual.

Since 2022, this powerhouse team has been proving how innovation and environmental responsibility can thrive on the open sea. The Mini 6.50 FAUN has already tackled major international races, like the Gran Premio d'Italia, Corsica Med, and the iconic Mini-Transat. Adrien absolutely crushed the Mini-Transat in 2023, landing an epic 6th place in a non-stop, unsupported Atlantic crossing.

2024: A new horizon

Next up was the Solitaire du Figaro Paprec – a race that's as much about brains as brawn. This isn't just about having the best gear; it's about grit, strategy, and pure sailing skills. And Adrien was ready to take it on.

High-Tech meets high stakes

The boat flying the FAUN flag this time? The Figaro Bénéteau 3 – a cutting-edge monohull built for the legendary Figaro Solitaire. It's a real beast:

Length: 10.89 m
Beam (Width): 3.48 m
Draft: 2.50 m
Sail Area: 174 m²
Weight: 3,175 kg

This machine doesn't just perform; it dominates.

A season to grow

"This season has been a massive learning curve for me, and I'm coming out of it stronger," Adrien shared after wrapping up the final leg. From rookie moments to tech glitches, he pushed through and smashed every goal he set. With 2025 on the horizon, the best is yet to come.

Why sailing, though?

This partnership isn't your average sponsorship deal. It's about sending a message. FAUN Environnement's Managing Director, Etienne Blaise, put it perfectly: "We have a responsibility to protect our planet. Together, we're shining a light on ocean pollution and pushing for sustainable solutions – on land and at sea." This collaboration goes way beyond building state-of-the-art garbage trucks. It's about driving change, inspiring innovation, and staying on course for a cleaner, greener future. ■

Waste Management with IQ – Artificial Intelligence for Smart Disposal

AUTHOR: KRISTINA LERCH
EDITORIAL TEAM ZOELLER GROUP



Preserving resources, advancing the circular economy, and managing increasing waste volumes: the waste management industry faces significant challenges. At the same time, worker and public safety must be ensured, while vehicle ease of use and efficiency continue to improve. In an interview, Dr.-Ing. Bojan Ferhadbegović explains how intelligent camera systems and telemetry can help meet these demands.

Dr.-Ing. Bojan Ferhadbegović,
Head of Development and Design at ZÖLLER-KIPPER

How can AI be used in waste collection vehicles?

At ZÖLLER-KIPPER, we pursue three main goals with AI: reducing the workload for bin loaders, improving efficiency, and most importantly, enhancing safety. Our vehicles are large and heavy, posing potential risks to workers and pedestrians despite numerous safety systems. That's why we're constantly developing new, comprehensive safety measures. AI cameras can assist by detecting people in hazardous areas and automatically stopping the machine.

What challenges does this involve?

The biggest challenge is data quality. Camera technology can struggle in varying lighting conditions or when lenses are dirty. For this reason, we currently use AI systems as supportive tools, complementing existing safety systems.

How do camera systems enhance comfort and efficiency?

We're working on systems that can automatically identify the type of waste container and adjust the vehicle's operating mode accordingly. This accelerates the emptying process and increases convenience for the workers. Additionally, the systems can determine whether containers are full or empty, further optimizing workflows.

ZÖLLER-KIPPER also uses telemetry. What does that entail?

Telemetry is one of our key focus areas for the future. We aim to continuously collect vehicle data, such as load capacity, energy consumption, and material wear. By intelligently analyzing this data, we can reduce machine costs for our customers. Potential malfunctions can be detected early, and both causes and possible repair steps identified. This minimizes downtime and allows for better maintenance planning.

What are your long-term hopes for telemetry?

We want to provide customers with clear, intuitive evaluations of vehicle data that they can use to identify additional efficiency potential and optimize fleet usage. Our goal is to deliver actionable recommendations that help reduce costs and maximize vehicle readiness.

How do you see the future of AI in waste management?

The potential is enormous, but it will take several years for these new technologies to become fully mature and widely adopted. In any case, it is clear that waste disposal can be transformed into a circular economy more safely and efficiently using AI. ■

AUTHOR: SABINE KÄMPER
EDITORIAL TEAM ZOELLER GROUP



Ten o'clock in the morning in Bischoffshofen: The team leaders at the project handover (from left to right) Florian Kronthaler, Lukas Herman, Werner Wurzer Junior, Daniel Ly

A manager's dream: day-to-day operations run almost on their own. At STUMMER, this dream has become a reality. Following an expansion of its factory grounds in 2019, the company completely reorganized its structure – introducing handover management, increased team autonomy, and a sophisticated bonus system. The result? A model that has sparked interest across the group.

An Export Interface Management

Hit: 10

10

Every morning at exactly 10 a.m., STUMMER's team leaders meet for a 10-minute handover session. During these meetings, tasks are seamlessly passed along – for example, the order management team hands over new projects to production. While all documentation is also shared digitally, this in-person exchange is crucial. Each team leader thoroughly reviews new orders, flags any missing information on the spot, and ensures it is promptly resolved. This minimizes friction. "Customer requirements need to be clarified down to the last detail," says STUMMER Managing Director Johann Streif. In the past, special requests were often addressed during final inspections, which led to delays when additional accessories had to be installed. Now, with the improved workflow, delivery times are reliable, and capacity planning is more efficient.

Responsibility Lies with the Team

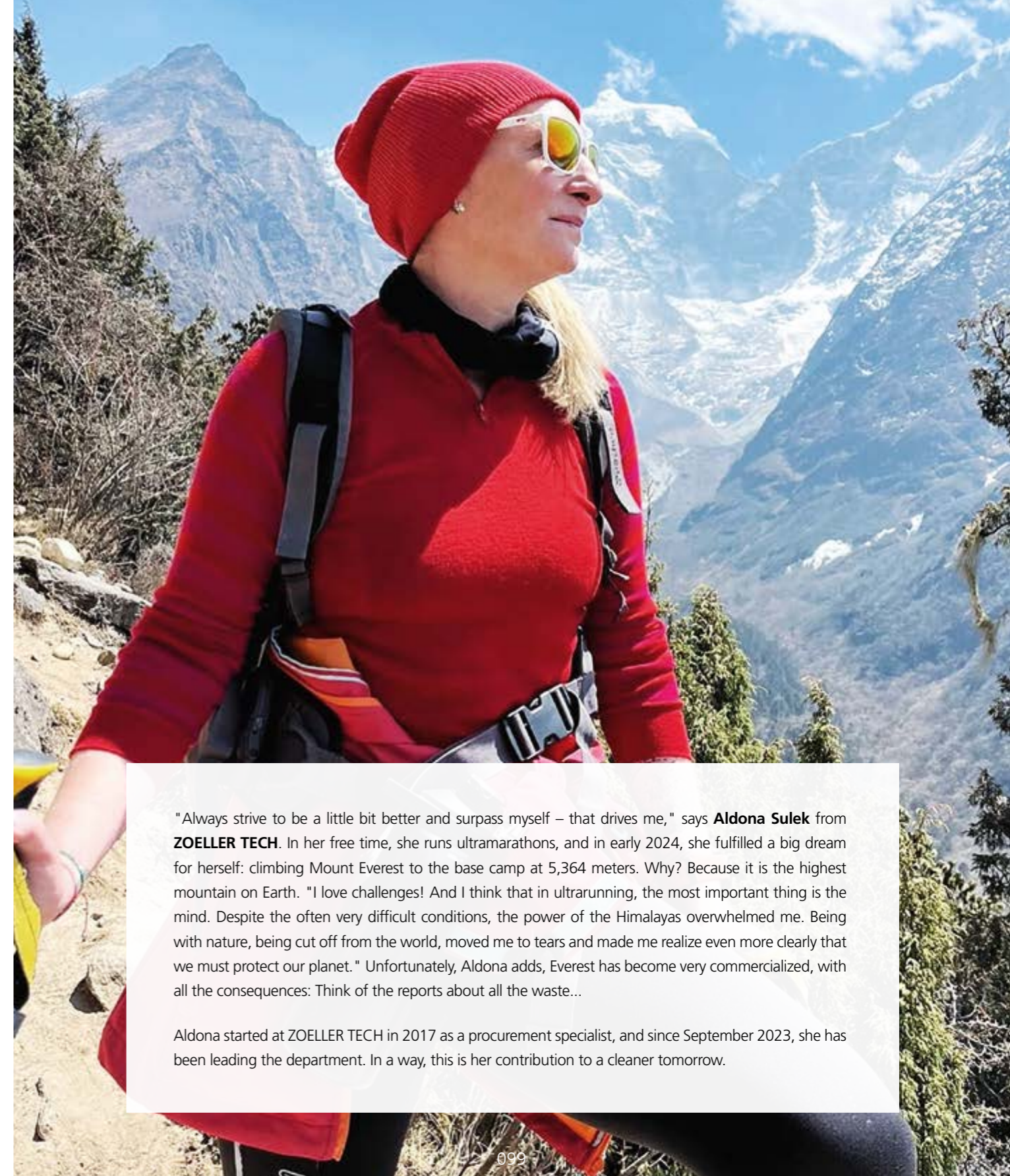
Previously, STUMMER's management was heavily involved in day-to-day operations. Today, the goal is for 90% of orders to flow through the company error-free and without additional inquiries. To achieve this, interface management is linked to a sophisticated bonus system. Missing information during order handovers results in point deductions. Each interface is evaluated monthly to identify bottlenecks. All tasks

follow fixed processing times, based on a 38.5-hour workweek per person. Teams have the freedom to decide how to allocate their resources and when to complete tasks. If a team finishes ahead of schedule, the time savings are split 70:30 between the team and the company.

Performance Incentives and Skill Building

Additional incentives aim to strengthen both individual expertise and team cohesion through a qualification framework. Each employee starts with a base number of points, which determines their monthly salary. Completing further training, such as courses on working with high-voltage systems used in e-chassis, increases these points. "It's no longer, 'Boss, I need a raise,' but rather, 'Boss, I need a training course,'" Streif explains enthusiastically. Highly skilled and well-coordinated teams complete tasks more quickly, unlocking additional performance bonuses. If a team meets all quality standards and reduces the allocated time by 5%, 10%, or even 15%, they earn a task-specific bonus. This encourages knowledge-sharing within the team and aligns everyone toward the collective goal of earning a "15th monthly salary" in the form of bonuses – a goal STUMMER employees are close to achieving. ■

ONE OF US



"Always strive to be a little bit better and surpass myself – that drives me," says **Aldona Sulek** from **ZOELLER TECH**. In her free time, she runs ultramarathons, and in early 2024, she fulfilled a big dream for herself: climbing Mount Everest to the base camp at 5,364 meters. Why? Because it is the highest mountain on Earth. "I love challenges! And I think that in ultrarunning, the most important thing is the mind. Despite the often very difficult conditions, the power of the Himalayas overwhelmed me. Being with nature, being cut off from the world, moved me to tears and made me realize even more clearly that we must protect our planet." Unfortunately, Aldona adds, Everest has become very commercialized, with all the consequences: Think of the reports about all the waste...

Aldona started at ZOELLER TECH in 2017 as a procurement specialist, and since September 2023, she has been leading the department. In a way, this is her contribution to a cleaner tomorrow.

STUMMER crane vehicle symbolic picture



United Arab Emirates: Cleanliness in the Superlative

In the United Arab Emirates, the motto is often to think big. This also applies to cleanliness and waste disposal. With the largest waste incineration plant and the title of "cleanest city," Dubai is at the forefront globally in two key areas. Even when it comes to special vehicles, the Emirates rely on market leaders and clean services.

No cigarette butts, no flying paper scraps or packaging waste – cleanliness in the Emirates is almost embarrassingly immaculate. Dubai has been ranked as the "Cleanest City in the World" several times on the Global Power City Index (GPCI) by the Mori Memorial Foundation, a research institute founded by Tokyo's leading city developer, Mori Building.

**AUTHOR: SABINE KÄMPER
EDITORIAL TEAM ZOELLER GROUP**

However, sustainability and recycling were not on the city's agenda for a long time. But with the "Dubai Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2021-2041" and the launch of the Warsan waste incineration plant in March 2024, the city aims to become one of the most sustainable in the world. The plant will use 2 million tons of waste annually to generate electricity, enough to supply about 135,000 households.

Few Municipal Waste Disposal Services

Only Dubai manages waste collection as a municipality; elsewhere in the Emirates, waste disposal is almost entirely in private hands. "Tenders are issued every five years," explains Johann Streif, Managing Director of STUMMER. "For entrepreneurs, it often doesn't make sense to invest in quality. From 2014 to 2019, we delivered 150 vehicles to the Emirates, but now we face competition from local markets and India."

For regular vehicles, STUMMER has completely withdrawn from the market. However, when it comes to special vehicles, such as wash trucks, wash combination vehicles, or crane vehicles, STUMMER remains a key player.

Johann Streif explains, "At one point, they tried to have the vehicles replicated locally, but that apparently didn't work out so well." STUMMER recently delivered six MBR IV wash vehicles to the Dubai city administration, mounted on Astra chassis. These vehicles wash large containers from 2.5 to 4.5 cubic meters. In hot countries, washing is mandatory, and Dubai is especially strict: the vehicles are washed daily, while bins and containers are cleaned at least once a week. Additionally, two crane vehicles were dispatched to ADNOC (Abu Dhabi National Oil Company). The company operates around 500 gas stations, where waste containers are located. About two years ago, a vehicle with a roof crane and swivel chute was ordered on a trial basis for underground and igloo containers. The pilot program is now being expanded. If successful, the same system will be implemented at all gas stations, and the disposal vehicles will be updated accordingly. ■



AUTHOR: ISABELLE CUROT
EDITORIAL TEAM ZOELLER GROUP

Rental and Secondhand – A Business with a Future

A new subsidiary of SEMAT in France has been dedicated exclusively to the rental and used vehicle business since the end of 2023. LOCCA emerged from a merger of AMV and BOM Services and promises to be a win-win for all parties involved.



Ludovic Ardouin, CEO of LOCCA and Head of Sales at SEMAT, takes a test drive, so to speak ...



It's a bit like the proverbial "buying a pig in a poke" which no one likes to – but turned into a positive: Whether it's about testing new technologies, such as alternative drives or new lifter options, or trying a new collection method, like a side loader or a crane vehicle – once something is familiar and appreciated, you want to keep using it. This is just one of the advantages of businesses focused on rentals and "used" vehicles: For customers, it also means increasing operational flexibility (short-, medium-, or long-term), as well as the ability to quickly respond to additional needs with "turnkey" vehicles while maintaining cash flow.

"Our goal is to be as close to the market as possible and provide our customers with access to the entire SEMAT range in the format best suited to them," says Ludovic Ardouin, CEO of LOCCA and Head of Sales at SEMAT.

Customer Proximity and a Large Selection

Currently, demand is great during the summer months. In some cities, the population can increase tenfold due to tourism, compared to winter months. Nevertheless, LOCCA is seeing a steadily growing demand from customers for acquisition options in the

"Sales/Leasing/Used" category. "LOCCA currently has a fleet of 300 vehicles aged 0 to 3 years, so we can offer current used vehicles that are maintained by our network or refurbished as needed," explains Ludovic Ardouin.

LOCCA relies on "SEMAT Production" (with a production of 80 units per year) and "SEMAT Service," which has nine locations across the country. This means short distances and reassuring proximity, which customers greatly appreciate.

For a comprehensive customer service, the new website, www.locca.fr, will soon be available. It will allow customers to access vehicles available for rent or for (used) sale in real-time, submit online booking requests, and track their vehicles and associated data, such as mileage, operating hours, or the next maintenance date. The goal is also to bundle all activities, optimize operating costs, and, most importantly, offer high availability to create a win-win situation for all involved. According to SEMAT, the rental market now accounts for more than 15 percent of new registrations in France, and it seems to have a promising future ahead. ■



Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year!



LORES REZEPTEBUCH

Oh, how delightful the aroma...
Our suggestion for Christmas donuts
and angel eyes by Lore Kirchhoff.
www.lores-rezpte.de