

KIRCHDORFER NEWS

For the Employees, Customers, and
Partners of the Kirchdorfer Group



PRODUCTION SITE ON THE RISE

With a range of new products and the renaissance
of the traditional spirit, the TIBA/LUIKI
precast production site in Leoben (Styria)
made an impressive comeback.

PP. 19–21

HANDOVER

New plant and production management
at the cement plant in Kirchdorf

PP. 11 – 13

DEMAND

Good prospects for raw material
extraction in the greater Sofia area

PP. 15 – 17

MILESTONE

With the new SL 70, DELTABLOC® is
advancing on its "Road to Green"

PP. 28



Foto: © Sissi Furgler

EDITORIAL

SUSTAINABLE, PROACTIVE, FUTURE-PROOF

This current issue of Kirchdorfer News is all about a "sustainability offensive" coordinated across the Group. Even if global politics unfortunately seems to be full of "warlike" actions, thoughts and analogies at the moment, the term "offensive" is quite enlightening. After all, defensive restraint is not an option in the face of turmoil on the raw materials and financial markets, pronounced declines in important sectors of the construction industry and increasing challenges in the areas of environmental protection and sustainability.

Quite the opposite: the Kirchdorfer Group has set itself the declared goal of actively utilizing all efforts in terms of sustainability, not least with a view to creating important competitive advantages for the future. With a comprehensive range of topics - from environmental protection and digitalization to occupational safety - we are securing the long-term success of our family-run group of companies for the coming decades.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I invite you to take a look at the diverse and varied topics and initiatives and hope you enjoy reading our Group magazine.

Yours sincerely
Erich Frommwald

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THIS IS THE ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRIAN CONCRETE AND PRECAST PLANTS

Founded in 1956, the voluntary central interest group represents around 70 member companies in Austria. The VÖB acts as a mouthpiece and marketing body for the industry and represents the interests of its members in the political arena. It also offers them a range of attractive services for which cooperation within the industry pays off. For example, the Association of Austrian Concrete and Precast Plants has been working with some member companies, including MABA Fertigteileindustrie GmbH, on a special training program in the area of occupational safety since September 2020. This is specifically geared towards the needs of domestic precast concrete plants. In March 2021, the VÖB published a guideline on precast concrete crash barrier systems for the first time, which is intended to ensure the professional planning, design and construction of permanent and temporary precast concrete crash barriers on public and private roads in Austria. Currently, the VÖB is developing an EPD calculator for all precast concrete products - with the aim of generating as broad a database as possible from the member companies in order to be able to calculate life cycle assessments of precast concrete products as reliably as possible.



Further Information: www.voeb.com



MICHAEL WARDIAN IS VÖB-PRESIDENT

The 52-year-old Managing Director of the Kirchdorfer Group was unanimously elected as the new President of the Association of Austrian Concrete and Precast Plants (VÖB) on June 13, 2023. In a historic line of typical "owner-entrepreneurs", Michael Wardian is the first professional manager in this position. A fact that fits seamlessly with his self-image as a managing director with far-reaching responsibility for the industry and society at large. We asked Michael Wardian about his future plans and work program for the VÖB.

As the successor to Franz Josef Eder, who held the position of VÖB President from 2016 to 2023, Michael Wardian has of course big shoes to fill in the precast industry's key interest group. As president of the VÖB, Wardian now has the opportunity as well as the responsibility to implement his consistent pursuit of a number of topics such as sustainability, digitalization and occupational safety on a broader societal level. Topics, which he has been impressively promoting within the Kirchdorfer precast division for years and that will most certainly shape the future of the entire industry as well.

"Competitive construction and, in particular, topics such as CO₂ reduction, circular economy, efficient digitalization and high occupational safety are topics that find their natural home in precast construction in particular. In this respect, I clearly see the precast industry as one of the important beacons pointing the way to the future of construction," explains Wardian with great confidence.

Reconciling the interests of the company with the interests of the industry as a whole - not least in terms of time, resources and commitment - is of course a delicate trade-off, of which Wardian is only too aware. A sensible division of tasks and a focus on issues "that ultimately affect us all together" is therefore the right approach:

"We cannot solve the most important future issues in our industry individually. Not even as the person responsible for numerous mar-

ket-leading companies can we do that. Together, however, we can create an optimal basis for the future for all of us - step by step, one precast part at a time," says Wardian. We wish Michael Wardian all the best for his new responsibilities.



Michael Wardian, Managing Director of the Kirchdorfer Group, is the new President of the Association of Austrian Concrete and Precast Plants (VÖB).

GROUP-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

FIVE CORE ISSUES, ONE COMMON MISSION

Now that the Group-wide sustainability project, which was designed, formulated and completed by Joao Paulo Pereira da Silva and Armin Richter, has been approved by the management and the owners of Kirchdorfer Group, it is up to the individual divisions and companies to implement the defined goals in concrete terms. We spoke to project participants from the four Group divisions to get a sense of the scope of this ambitious project and to find out what the major topics are.

Even though around 2,500 working hours have already been invested in the Group-wide sustainability project, which was launched at the end of June 2022 and completed on schedule in April 2023, the real implementation work is now only just getting started.

After developing and laying out the objectives, methods and principles guiding Kirchdorfer Group's sustainability strategy, it is now up to the individual divisions and companies to "get the project off the ground", create the corresponding technical and organizational conditions and implement the various specific measures with a view to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Since the beginning of the implementation phase in October 2023, more than a dozen different coordination and project teams have started their work. They are supported and supervised by the Sustainability Manager of Kirchdorfer Group Services GmbH, Andreas Hermann.

Strategic objectives

In addition to the original "three pillars" of Kirchdorfer's sustainability strategy (economic, ecological, social), the final report of the project defines five strategic topics under which the numerous individual measures that are now being tackled in the implementation phase can be subsumed: Products, Circular Economy, CO₂ Emis-

sions, Energy and Workforce. These are, of course, linked to a whole series of general and specific goals, which we will report on in detail in the coming issues of Kirchdorfer Nachrichten as the sustainability project is gradually implemented.

In order to get an overview of what the various topics are all about, we recently spoke to the representatives of the four Group divisions, who were involved in the project as "coordinators" right from the start and until the completion of the final report: Alfred Wiener (KCE), Reinhard Pönisch (KCM), Gerald Lanz (KCS) and Marco Pollok (KRT). Together with their designated deputies for the initial project, they made a significant contribution to ensuring that the issues, challenges and perspectives of the individual divisions were incorporated into the Group strategy and taken into account accordingly.

And quite apart from all the actual topics we discussed, we also have found out that the four divisional coordinators were able to use this opportunity to kick off a whole new era of cooperation and synergy between the individual Group divisions.

Which is in and of itself already an important outcome of the whole project and which will probably deepen even further in the implementation phase. So in addition to the new era of cooperation, what are the individual sustainability topics all about? We asked the four colleagues to provide us with a few specific examples.



Gerald Lanz is head of product management for Kirchdorfer Concrete Solutions and took part in the sustainability project as coordinator of the precast division.

Ressource Efficiency & Life Cycles

What is an "end product" and how to optimize it in terms of sustainability is actually not a straight forward issue in an industrial group as diversified horizontally and vertically as Kirchdorfer: An "end product" for one company may very well be just an input (e.g., an aggregate or raw material) for another. But whatever it is, the potential for optimization with regard to sustainability is significant no matter what and therefore a clear focus of the overall strategy: Optimized use of resources - not only in production, but also in all upstream and downstream processes - is now one of the five strategic goals for all divisions of the Kirchdorfer Group.

Long life cycles and contributions to greater safety in society, on the other hand, are topics that are particularly relevant in the precast and Road & Traffic divisions. As head of product management and divisional coordinator for Kirchdorfer Concrete Solutions, Gerald Lanz has been working for years on new product developments that have a strong connection to sustainability issues:

"We currently have around 30 innovation projects on our research and development board. Sustainability has become a decisive criterion in deciding which products will ultimately be developed to market maturity and included in the KCS product range. Of course, we also consciously keep an eye on the many new market opportunities that arise from sustainability issues," Lanz explains.

Attentive readers of Kirchdorfer News will of course already be familiar with a whole range of innovative and sustainability-focused KCS products from previous issues: From noise barriers with PV panels to revolutionary HPFC security doors that outperform existing door concepts in every respect - from the use of resources to maintenance costs while at the same time significantly improving on overall tunnel safety.

With the "Concrete 30 to the power of 3" initiative launched two years ago, Kirchdorfer Concrete Solutions has also committed itself in the infrastructure sector to implementing both existing products, such as railroad sleepers, and new product developments with 30% recycled content wherever possible, as well as with 30% optimization in the area of logistics and the use of binding agents.



KCM divisional engineer Reinhard Pönisch joined the Group-wide sustainability project as divisional coordinator for the Kirchdorf raw materials division.

Raw materials and the circular economy

Recycling, the increased use of secondary raw materials as well as the expansion of in-house production and the provision of secondary raw materials within the Group form another strategic target area in Kirchdorfer's sustainability project.

These are issues that not only affect the various dedicated recycling and processing plants in the Kirchdorfer cement division, but increasingly also the raw materials division, as divisional technician Reinhard Pönisch (Kirchdorfer Construction Minerals) explains to us:

"In general, interest in secondary raw material products is increasing. This is an area that certainly opens up new possibilities and market opportunities. However, you also have to take into account the specific scope offered by the legal framework in the individual countries, for example, as well as the different preferences and special requirements of customers."

From the production of recycled concrete to the use and recycling of mining waste, there are therefore a number of topics that can be pursued here. Which basically sums up the concept of the circular economy: what is "waste" for one company (e.g. clay in mining) may be of use for another. Generating new possibilities and opportunities would therefore not only be a benefit for the Group in terms of the sustainability strategy, but for the construction industry as a whole.

The sustainability project has also shown that the raw materials division is already well positioned in some companies, particularly in the "social" aspects of the sustainability

goals, as Reinhard Pönisch explains: "As a matter of fact, in our business it's loud, it's dusty, and we cause a lot of truck journeys that local residents are not very happy with."

A good relationship with the municipalities in which the KCM subsidiary companies operate and actively support these communities - whether by financing social facilities or by building a bypass road with financing provided by the quarry operator - are things that have already been successfully implemented at the Czech Kámen a písek companies, for example.

The optimization of transport logistics, the increasing electrification of mining and re-



Alfred Wiener is responsible for compliance, energy and projects at the Kirchdorfer cement plant and represented the topics of the cement division in the Group's sustainability project.



Marco Pollok, who is increasingly working in product management at Deltabloc International from his base Leipzig (Germany) acted as divisional coordinator for Kirchdorfer Road & Traffic in the group-wide sustainability project.

source extraction sites as well as in-house electricity generation (e.g. on idle water surfaces) are further topics that KCM is actively pursuing in terms of sustainability.

Reducing CO₂ in cement production

The reduction of CO₂ emissions is an issue that affects all divisions, companies, processes and products throughout the Group. In the cement plant, however, the challenge is particularly acute, as two thirds of the CO₂ released in the cement plant are pure "process emissions". The CO₂ that has been bound in the sedimentary rock for millions of years is partly released during the calcination process (i.e. the heating of limestone and conversion into lime). Which is of course a basic matter of chemistry: CaCO₃ (limestone) becomes CaO (lime) plus CO₂ in the rotary kiln. The big issue for the cement industry in the future is therefore the "capture" of this CO₂, as Alfred Wiener explains: "Emission neutrality in the cement industry ultimately requires CO₂ separation (carbon capture) including storage (CCS) or further utilization (CCU)."

Although the technology for this is ready in principle, an industrial-scale plant with this capability does not yet exist. In addition, the enormous energy requirement for this process would of course have to be covered by green electricity in order to make sense. As of yet, there are no quick and short-term solutions for all of this, as Wiener explains:

"The most important efforts within the ce-

ment industry at this moment are therefore going in the direction of further developing the properties of cement in such a way that it becomes more efficient in use and that the clinker content, which entails all the process emissions, is minimized as much as possible."

Optimizing energy use

Unsurprisingly, energy is another core topic in the Group-wide sustainability project: one that has of course been relevant in practice for years and is pursued with great care in the individual companies of the Kirchdorfer Group - hardly a month goes by without new PV systems being installed somewhere on some factory building.

Like recently, for example, in the "Home of Road Safety", the corporate and divisional headquarters of Kirchdorfer Road & Traffic. In this elegant office building, which has been cleverly designed with energy consumption in mind, we meet Marco Pollok, Product Manager at DELTABLOC International GmbH. Over the past few years, the Kirchdorfer Road & Traffic division has developed into an extremely high-revenue subgroup, which now employs around 170 people. Nevertheless, the division is responsible for less than 1% of the Group's energy consumption, as Marco Pollok tells us.

Of course, this has less to do with the fact that the offices consume so little, but rather that almost all of the division's products are manufactured by license and production

partners. Therefore, the corresponding energy requirements in production are not included in the Kirchdorfer Group's operating data collection.

As the developer and know-how provider of the products manufactured under license, Deltabloc International is nevertheless making enormous efforts to literally leave no stone unturned with its product portfolio in line with their ambitious "Road to Green":

Optimized design, reduced use of materials and optimization of production processes ensure that the increasingly sustainable products have a significant international market advantage. These efforts have been pursued intensively for years, as the division coordinator Marco Pollok, who has gradually moved from engineering to product management in the division, explains. His interest in the Group-wide sustainability issues is therefore particularly focused on the topic of human resources.

Workforce

Employees are undoubtedly the company's most important resource, and sustainability in this area (and in terms of the SDGs) is one of the project's core objectives. The promotion and development of the workforce is just as much a topic as Group-wide initiatives in the areas of occupational health and safety.

"In the future, a Group-wide HR strategy will be helpful in order to pursue uniform standards in areas such as management training, team building, employee support and employee management," explains Pollok: "In the KRT division, for example, we have the challenge that more than half of our staff work in ten different countries and therefore also bring ten different work cultures to the mix." Even though the Group is still working on a corporate strategy in various areas, "cross-divisional cooperation and collaboration has gained enormously from this sustainability project," says Pollok.

An extremely positive result - long before the concrete implementation work of the Group-wide sustainability project had even begun.

And something else has already become apparent: The objective of implementing sustainability comprehensively has now truly become a shared mission that welds the entire Group together.

„THE SPECTRE OF SOIL SEALING: MYTH AND REALITY“

KN: Mr. Wardian, Mr. Richter ... concrete is often being portrayed in the media as the "scapegoat" for an increasingly "sealed" environment. Is that fair?

RICHTER: Soil sealing is undoubtedly a real phenomenon and an issue that needs to be discussed at a societal level. But before this discussion is even held, the question must be asked: What is concrete anyway? How do we use it, what do we do with it? And what makes sense and what does not.

WARDIAN: Over hundreds of years, concrete has proven to be the most versatile, stable and - it must be said - sustainable building material that our civilization has ever developed. It is therefore completely inappropriate to suddenly use the metaphor "everything is being concreted over" in order to indiscriminately create a mood against the further development and refinement of our built environment and civilization. Instead, we should not only deal with the actual facts, but also consider how we could even significantly reduce the amount of sealing with the help of intelligent concrete structures!

KN: A few facts first: the so-called degree of sealing is nowhere near as dramatic as it is often portrayed. A not inconsiderable part of what counts as sealed is purely for administrative reasons ...

WARDIAN: Yes, that is correct. Essentially everything that is designated in the land registers for certain types of use is considered sealed. This is only remotely related to the actual sealed area. If you take Wiener Neustadt, for example - on paper, it is more or less the "concrete capital" of the country. In reality, however, there is hardly any other city with so many green and open spaces. If you think of the airport grounds alone, they consist almost exclusively of grass and are considered sealed! Compared to other countries, above all Germany, Austria is a model when it comes to green spaces. And then we say in a nutshell that there will be no more farmland in 200 years. That is complete nonsense.

KN: Do you see the problem that construction activity in our latitudes is generally going in a somewhat undesirable direction, and what can be done about it?



„Concrete construction is an excellent means to an end - namely the design of intelligent buildings that can be used sustainably for generations.“

Armin Richter, Division Manager Kirchdorfer Construction Minerals

RICHTER: I generally take a critical view of some things when it comes to building construction and land development. It is undisputed that we have repeatedly neglected the town centers and city centers over the decades and have instead built around the municipalities like rings of donuts and thus certainly opened up more natural areas on the outskirts of the towns to development than would perhaps be necessary. A significant 'densification', which concrete in particular makes possible like no other building material - not least in terms of height and depth - would certainly be desirable.

WARDIAN: I absolutely agree with that. It makes no sense to build parking lots the size of soccer fields when a compact parking garage or underground parking garage will serve the same purpose in a much more elegant way. And there is another aspect to this as well: instead of long lasting and compact concrete structures that we can use for decades, if not centuries, developers regularly build a whole series of "big box" structures that we will have to tear down again in a few years ...



Michael Wardian, Managing Director Kirchdorfer Group

„We need to use concrete cleverly to counteract the trend towards soil sealing with a high degree of density - both in terms of height as well as in depth.“

KN: How can clever precast concrete parts minimize sealing and what products does the Kirchdorfer Group have in its range in this regard?

WARDIAN: The concept of the "sponge city" is being discussed more and more seriously in the field of civil engineering, for example. With TIBA Austria GmbH, we already have a whole range of infiltration solutions in use here - including grass pavers, which enable the design of stable, paved urban areas without completely sealing the ground. There are also tree rings and other practical prefabricated systems that allow great flexibility in the design and edging of green spaces in built-up areas. The most important thing, however - and I would like to emphasize this again - is that we use concrete optimally for slender and dense, compact structures that make sufficient use of the ability of concrete for building long lasting high rise buildings as well as underground structures.

WHEN FIRST AID SAVES LIVES

When KAMMEL employee Peter Jurcic collapsed unexpectedly on a construction site last year, three quick-witted colleagues saved his life with immediate first aid measures. In order to further increase safety at the Kirchdorfer Group's workplaces, the company's own network of defibrillators is now being massively expanded.

A defibrillator is a medical device that is used to treat life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias. "Defis" deliver an electrical shock to the heart, which restores the normal heart rhythm. They should therefore be used in situations where someone suffers a sudden cardiac arrest or life-threatening cardiac arrhythmia such as ventricular fibrillation.

Usually such an emergency occurs without warning and quick action is crucial to save the person's life. Training or education in the use of a defibrillator is recommended, but not mandatory. Modern defibrillators are often equipped with easy-to-follow instructions and visual guides so that even people without specific training can operate the defibrillator. These devices are known as "automated external defibrillators" (AEDs) and are designed for use by first aiders.

Nevertheless, a basic knowledge of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of a defibrillator is extremely useful.

Starting with the Wöllersdorf site, the Kirch-

dorfer Group will therefore be holding corresponding training courses for staff over the coming months in parallel with the installation of the defibrillators. First aid training definitely increases confidence and the ability to react effectively in an emergency. This ultimately makes our working environment one step safer again!

It is important to note that initiating CPR quickly and calling for professional medical help are just as crucial as using a defibrillator. If a person suffers a sudden cardiac arrest, 911 should be called immediately while life-saving measures such as CPR and the use of the defibrillator begin.

LIVING SAFETY CULTURE AT THE CEMENT PLANT

The aim of a series of safety workshops, which started in September 2023, is to analyze the safety culture at the cement plant and subject it to change.

A potential analysis of the various safety topics was carried out in the first round of three workshops. Responsible managers from the areas of electrical engineering, metalworking, building maintenance, chemical laboratory and production worked out what already works well in the individual areas and where there is potential for improvement - from the correct safeguarding of electrical systems to the safety training of external workers.

An occupational psychologist and an expert in machine safety from AUVA moderated the workshop.

In a second round, also comprising of three workshops, the collected points will then be prioritized and solution concepts developed. Employees with management responsibility from the cement plant and quarry thus determine the topics themselves and work on the issues and measures that affect their own departments and work areas. By incorporating their own concepts into their management work, the aim is to then initiate and bring about change in the safety culture.



Sabine Rumpf, Work Safety & Employee Health.



PORTRAITS OF OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES

JENNI AND THE BOYS ROCK THE WAREHOUSE

Deep in the labyrinth beneath the office building of MABA Fertigteilindustrie, a formidable young team has taken over the reigns –headed by Jennifer Sommer, who is just 19 years old.

How do you go from apprentice to apprentice trainer in just one year, we ask ourselves. No big deal, says Jenni: "It was clear that we'd need another apprentice in the magazine soon, so I thought I'd take it on myself and do the training" explains the young high-flyer. No sooner said than done, 15-year-old Elias has already started his apprenticeship in Jenni's team and is already whizzing through the magazine as nimbly and cheerfully as his three colleagues.

There is definitely plenty to do for the young team: over 15,000 different "articles" are stored and managed at the MABA headquarters. And just like in a well-run supermarket, everything has to be constantly procured, ordered, reordered, sorted and delivered so that every locksmith has his screws and tools, every production employee his equipment and every office worker his thinking, writing and working utensils and work does

not come to a standstill because something is missing somewhere. And then, of course, everything has to be administered and accounted for accordingly.

From apprentice to team leader

When Jenni started her apprenticeship as a "company logistics clerk" after graduating from polytechnic school in 2019, she was enthusiastic about the "great mix" of office work and physical activity right from the

start. So after she completed her apprenticeship with distinction, a number of other departments were already queuing up to poach the young coworker internally - but the Lower Austrian, who lives in Würflach near the Hohe Wand, simply liked it too much at the warehouse. Since March 2023, she has occasionally assisted the site manager and in July the position of team leader finally became vacant. The rest is history!



Teamwork: Marko (27), Elias (15) and Dominic (24) with their new supervisor Jennifer (19).



Plant manager Christian Breitenbaumer, production manager Roland Kammerhuber, majority owner Eva Hofmann and her daughter Maria Christina Habsburg-Lothringen actively participated in the planting of the soakaway at the Kirchdorf cement plant.

CEMENT PLANT PROMOTES BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Kirchdorfer Zementwerk Hofmann is committed to preserving nature and promoting biodiversity in the region. As part of a new traffic concept, the existing meadow orchard at Kirchdorfer Zementwerk was redesigned and expanded with old tree varieties. The project was supported by the local landscape conservation association "Bergma(n)dl" and majority owner Eva Hofmann.

As part of the design of the new traffic guidance system at the Kirchdorf cement works site, space had to be created for a soakaway for the targeted drainage of surface water. This step required the removal of some trees in the company's own orchard. "We didn't want to be satisfied with a purely technical

solution", says Managing Director Erich Frommwald. "Instead, we are pursuing a holistic approach that focuses on ecological aspects."

Planting the seeds

In close cooperation with the local landscape conservation association "Bergma(n)dl", seeds and seedlings of rare plant species worthy of protection were planted in the soakaway to promote biodiversity.

This project received the full support of the majority owner Eva Hofmann. The great-great-granddaughter of Kirchdorf's founding father Adolf Hofmann not only attached great importance to preserving the orchard, but also to maintaining and

expanding the garden: "Nature and naturalness are very important, we have to make sure that old orchards are preserved. It's nice when employees can enjoy fruit from the company's own orchard," emphasized Eva Hofmann.

Another highlight of this commitment is the nature partnership between the landscape conservation association "Bergma(n)dl" and the Kirchdorfer Zementwerk, which was recently awarded the Lions Club's sustainability prize. This award recognizes the successful cooperation and the joint project "Nature Sponsorship", which aims to promote biodiversity and sustainable action.

GENERATIONAL HANDOVER IN THE PLANT MANAGEMENT

With the retirement of plant manager Christian Breitenbaumer, a new generation is taking over. In a production process in which the most important ingredients alongside limestone are experience and team spirit, internal replacement is the most important key to continued success.

"When I took on my first management position at a cement plant in southern Styria in the 1990s, it was common practice in large corporations to rotate ambitious managers from one plant to another every few years and to send them from one country to another so that they could gain as much experience as possible," outgoing plant manager Christian Breitenbaumer tells us during our farewell visit.

A philosophy that could not be further removed from what the mining engineer, born in Windischgarsten in 1961, has stood for all his life: consistency, stability and a relentless focus on internal training and development - from apprentice training to management coaching - have characterized his 35-year professional career in the cement

industry. It was only when Breitenbaumer and his former Retznei cement plant topped a widely respected internal Group ranking that the critics fell silent and he was spared the odd foreign engagement (Jordan and Russia were planned).

When the Kirchdorf cement plant finally came knocking in 2008 and wanted to bring the already highly renowned production manager back to his home region, they almost didn't want to let him go ...

Impressively steady career

For Christian Breitenbaumer, his "return" to Kirchdorf was not only of a personal nature, but in a way also a professional one: he had already earned his driver's license in 1979 with an internship in the laboratory of the Kirchdorf cement works. Incidentally, he has always worked, and whenever possible: when the graduate of the prestigious Albertus Magnus School and the TGM in Vienna finally decided to study rock metallurgy at the Montanuniversität Leoben, his first son was already on the way.



Retirement after 35 years in the cement industry: Plant manager Christian Breitenbaumer hands over to the next generation.

However, his wife, who also had to help run his parents' mountain farm (including the family ski lift) near Spital am Phyrn at the time, insisted that he complete his studies. Soon afterwards, a daughter was born. As a result, every opportunity to earn money on the side was taken by the young student and father - from letter carrier to university assistant, and at weekends he also worked at the farm at home.

With such a responsible attitude towards family and career, it is not surprising that potential employers were already lining up for him before he had even finished his studies. In the end, he opted for the offer from Perlmoser (later Lafarge, now Holcim).

As a "warm-up" position for his fledgling career, he was first sent to the control room of cement mill 7B in Austria's largest cement plant in Mannersdorf for six months as a process engineer for commissioning - even though it was already planned from the outset that his actual workplace would be at the Retznei cement plant, where his family followed him for the next 20 years.

As much as he and his family enjoyed the idyllic wine-growing region around Ehrenhausen and Gamlitz in Southern Styria, when a former farm with outbuildings in his Upper Austrian homeland came up for sale, it was time to put the money he had saved in Styria to good use and buy the property.

It was an investment that quickly got around

in the industry - not least at the Kirchdorf cement plant, where the experienced production and deputy plant manager from Retznei could be put to good use.

However, in order to gain the approval of the Lafarge management to move to Kirchdorf, he first had to introduce an already planned 6-shift model and train his own successor team accordingly. The latter was not difficult for Christian Breitenbaumer, because gradually introducing the next generation to the complexities of cement production has always been in his nature.

As a result, we can now equally reap the rewards of his many years of consistent training and development work at the Kirchdorf plant. The next generation is ready and waiting, building seamlessly on Breitenbaumer's 10 years as production manager and, most recently, six years as plant manager.

"I always say: 10 apprentices have to constantly push from the bottom," explains the outgoing plant manager. And the fact that both the next Production Manager and the next Plant Manager both started their careers as apprentices at the Kirchdorf cement plant and have never stopped training is probably the best confirmation of his philosophy for young talent.

With **Roland Kammerhuber**, Christian Breitenbaumer's previous Production Manager is now the new Plant Manager since November 1st, 2023.

Born in Micheldorf in 1976, Kammerhuber began his career with an apprenticeship as a chemical laboratory technician. Alongside his work in the laboratory and later as a process technician, he studied process engineering production at the University of Applied Sciences in Wels, followed by a master's degree in plant engineering. In 2013, he took over the management of the laboratory. When Christian Breitenbaumer took over as Plant Manager in 2018, he succeeded him as Production Manager.

Following in Kammerhuber's footsteps as production manager is another Micheldorf-based colleague who also started out as an apprentice at the Kirchdorf plant:

After completing his apprenticeship as a fitter, **Martin Hüttner-Aigner** (born 1985) switched to clinker production. From there, he went through all departments in a two-year trainee program - from the quarry to the packing plant, followed by training as a "Industrial Master Craftsman for Lime and Cement" in Düsseldorf.

After managing the cement mills and packing plant, he finally returned to the burning process in 2012. The long-serving production assistant only recently completed a part-time degree in project and process management in Salzburg.



Roland Kammerhuber is the new plant manager at the cement plant.



Martin Hüttner-Aigner moves up to Production Management.

30-YEAR SERVICE ANNIVERSARY

THE STEADY HAND BEHIND GOOD NUMBERS

For 30 years, Joachim Gruber has been the calm force and steady hand behind the consistently good financial results in the cement division - whichever way the wind blows. But the Kirchdorf career of the young-at-heart kite surfer is and has been far more varied than his position as CFO of the cement division would suggest.

"Do you play tennis?" was the all-important final question of the three-minute interview that the then 26-year-old Gruber had with the legendary managing partner Max Machanek. The interview took place at the end of November 1993 at the company's headquarters in Linz. It is important to note that it was initially only for a three-month project in financial accounting. And then you also have to know, that the tennis tournaments between Kirchdorf and Krumlov, which have become legendary since, were only just beginning.

So the young sportsman, who had returned to his Linz home after a short professional stint in Vienna, immediately replied "Yes, I play tennis too" - and the rest is history, so to speak. Four weeks later, a certain Erich Frommwald from Leoben also joined the notoriously colorful "Jolly House" at Hopfengasse 3 to support Max Machanek as an assistant in his diversification strategy. In addition to the famous Jolly colored pencils and the takeover of MABA in 1984, the 1990s were dominated by the development of the raw materials division within the Kirchdorfer Group.

The takeover of the Bohemian company Kámen a písek not only secured first-class tennis partners, but also the visionary expertise of co-owner Otakar Veselý, with whom the Group subsequently built up a series of quarries and gravel plants in south-eastern Europe.

Here, too, Joachim Gruber's many talents were put to profitable use - on numerous trips alongside General Director Veselý (including to Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania). Only since the formal establishment of the raw materials division in 2011 have these agendas been taken over by Armin Richter and his team. However, Gruber has remained in charge of the management of the Hungarian Köes Homok, a position he has held since 2005.

In addition, Joachim Gruber was not only responsible for finances and investment management in the cement division, but also worked for a time as coordinator of various commercial areas at the Group headquarters, which was still based in Linz at the time - until these agendas and others were transferred to Michael Wardian in Wöllersdorf in the course of the Group's reorganization.

In order to keep the "veteran" (by his own definition) suitably busy, he not only sits on the WIBAU Supervisory Board, but is also responsible for personnel and organizational agendas in addition to finances within the Group's Cement Division.

As seems to have been clearly proven in his case, the optimal mix of professional consistency and variety over the decades obviously keeps you young forever! Because the family man, who was born in Linz in 1967, doesn't let his age show at all. And his sporting hobbies do the rest. He also still plays tennis from time to time. At least once a year - in the traditional international matches with his Czech colleagues. After 30 years, by the way, the score is more or less tied!



Joachim Gruber celebrates his 30th anniversary with the company in 2023.



TEAM-BUILDING AND SAFETY TRAININGS

Strong teamwork, in which everyone can rely on each other, and occupational safety are inextricably linked. This is why the Kirchdorfer raw materials division likes to use voluntary "leisure adrenaline" for active team building to really weld their teams together.

The classic team-building outings - especially when they revolve around joint, exciting sporting activities - are not only important for satisfaction and work motivation, but also have a strong safety aspect.

That's why the Kirchdorfer Group's raw materials plants always have a varied program of company incentives that help to build strong work teams. After all, training camaraderie, dexterity and physical self-confidence together in the great outdoors makes it easier to work together in the Group's quarries and gravel pits. And, above all, safer: because if you can rely on your colleagues, the likelihood of accidents at work is or course significantly reduced.



Team building with family participation
on the Struma River near Sofia, Bulgaria.



RAW MATERIAL EXTRACTION IN SOFIA

Just a few kilometers outside the Bulgarian capital Sofia, Kirchdorfer's raw materials division operates two neighbouring mining concessions from which gravel and sand are extracted for construction activities in the greater area of the Balkan metropolis. As everywhere else, the raw materials business is highly dependent on the local construction activities.

"Business has been excellent this year," says a delighted Jiří Maroušek, who manages the Bulgarian raw materials subsidiary together with his colleague Grigor Krastanov. Strictly speaking, these are two different companies, each with their own mining concessions, which would otherwise be difficult to transfer under Bulgarian law. This is why the two companies, Kamani i Pyasak EOOD with the Pet Mogili gravel plant and Transkomplekt Engineering EOOD with the Krivina gravel pit, are managed from a shared modern office tower on the outskirts of Sofia, Bulgaria's beautiful and bustling capital city.

"Originally, there were actually three sand pits," Maroušek recalls the founding of the company in the early 2000s, "but the third plant was closed a few years later because the state needed the properties for the construction of the highway and the land was simply expropriated - despite the intervention of the Austrian Embassy."

The construction of the highway was not only a curse for the young company, but of course also a blessing in the long term. This is because public construction activity in the greater Sofia area, where more or less the lion's share of the economic development of the entire country of 6.5 million inhabitants is concentrated, is one of the most reliable sources of revenue for the raw material extraction sites east of the capital - from the expansion of the highway network to the construction and extension of urban metro lines.

The latter are also the reason why the market situation has been at a good level over the past two years and the two companies are currently operating almost at their peak capacities. With the subway construction having been planned for some time, the raw material producers were also able to prepare for the huge rush by investing in advance.





For example, a used and newly adapted hydraulically operated floating grab was installed at the Krivina gravel plant in 2019, allowing the technically possible extraction depth of up to 60 meters to be achieved despite the complex clay layers. The grab, which is attached to ropes, can pull up six to eight cubic meters of excavated material in a single operation and separate most of the clay and sludge directly on the floating platform.

With the highly automated plant, the Krivina gravel plant achieves an annual capacity of around 300,000 tons. Together with the 250,000 tons that can currently be extracted annually at the sister plant in the Pet Mogili gravel works, the large public construction projects can therefore be well served.

"We won't quite reach our strongest year to date, but the prospects for the near future are very good," explains Jiří Maroušek. Immediately before the economic crisis in 2007/2008, well over 600,000 tons were already being extracted - in the same two gravel plants as today. After that, however, turnover fell by more than half and it took until 2015 to more or less reach the pre-crisis levels again.

Private construction activity however is rather weak at the moment - residential con-



struction in the capital in particular (sand as a concrete aggregate is the company's main product) is a constant rollercoaster of ups and downs. In addition, the political situation always comes into play - a common thread that runs through the whole of South East Europe. As in the rest of Europe, the labor market in Bulgaria is extremely problematic.

In order to retain the current 38 employees in the two companies, considerable efforts are being made to keep the workforce happy with ongoing training and attractive team-building measures. After all, with decades of raw material reserves up their sleeves and good technical equipment at a high level overall, it is ultimately up to the employees to secure a productive future for the Bulgarian resource extraction sites.





Tunnel launch for the Vienna subway extension: tunnel driving for the extension of the U2 line between the Matzleinsdorfer Platz and Rathaus stations is being carried out using a tunnel boring machine and segments from MABA Fertigteilindustrie GmbH.

TUNNEL EXPERTISE FOR VIENNA'S U2 SUBWAY

As a subcontractor of ARGE U2 (STRABAG/PORR) and on behalf of Wiener Linien, MABA Fertigteilindustrie GmbH will once again be able to demonstrate its substantial experience and expertise in the production of segment rings for mechanized tunnelling over the next two years. Production of the 3,218 tunnel lining rings will start shortly.

From January 2024, the main plant in Wöllersdorf will once again be the scene of another tunnel project: under the proven management of Norbert Stricker, the mechanical and technical conditions are currently being created to start segment production for the extension of the Vienna subway railroad in the middle of the city. The factory hall, in which the last track support plates for the Koralm line were produced until recently, is being tidied up, painted and adapted so that the necessary electrics, appropriate lifting equipment and a total of 54 formworks are ready for the start of production at the beginning of the year.

20,000 prefabricated parts for subway extension

The two tunnel tubes, each around 2.25 kilometers long, which in future will run from Matzleinsdorfer Platz via the Reinprechtsdorfer Straße, Pilgramgasse and Neubaugasse stations to Vienna City Hall, will be built around

30-40 meters below the densely populated residential area using a tunnel boring machine.

In this particular tunnel construction method, six individual precast segments are laid to form a completed ring of tunnel lining before the tunnelling machine advances a few meters further. 48 sets of rings, which are roughly required for each week of tunnelling, are stored directly at the construction site near Matzleinsdorfer Platz. Up to 744 rings will also be stored at the production site in Wöllersdorf when the storage facility reaches its maximum capacity in spring 2025 after the four-month conversion of the tunnel boring machine from tube 2 to tube 1. The tunnel project will then be completed by the end of 2025.



Bmstr.-Ing. Norbert Stricker

Special Projects / MABA Fertigteilindustrie

TIBA AUSTRIA GMBH

PRODUCTION SITE ON THE RISE

When the traditional LUIKI Betonwerke in Leoben became part of the Kirchdorfer Group in April 2020, expectations were extremely high. This was followed by a period of restructuring, modernization and realignment. Now that the integration of the site into TIBA Austria GmbH has been completed, things are looking up again in Leoben - as a proud part of Kirchdorfer Concrete Solutions and with specific product groups that are manufactured exclusively in Leoben, Styria.

Under the competent management of Roman Leithold, the traditional site has not only been organizationally integrated into TIBA Austria GmbH over the past two years, but has also been technically optimized and prepared for the production of a whole range of new products. In addition to the gardening and landscaping portfolio, which is well-known and in demand throughout the country, the still highly successful paving stones and various civil engineering special prefabricated parts, the Leoben-based company is now also focusing on newly developed rectangular manholes, which complete TIBA's comprehensive range of civil engineering products.

But that's not all: another new development - the easyblock system originally developed by TIBA co-owner KANDUSSI in Carinthia - is now also being manufactured in Leoben and is developing well: "easyblock is already selling extremely well. This clever retaining wall system based on the building block principle is extremely versatile and easy to install" Christian Lanzmaier tells us. As a sales representative now based in Leoben, he looks after the Enns Valley and the Upper Austrian region, among others. The "handy format" of the easyblock elements, as well as the sophisticated stone look on the outside, also fits perfectly into the comprehensive LUIKI Gala portfolio, which will continue to be marketed under the well-established brand name in the future.

Intensive work is already underway in Leoben on a further development project and a corresponding investment. We will report on this as soon as production starts!



Robert Kleinschek has been with LUIKI since his apprenticeship days and is the longest-serving employee at the site. He has now taken over as site manager in 2023.



Roman Leithold is the new Technical Manager of TIBA Austria GmbH, based on the Leoben site. Previously, the Trofaiach native served as site manager in Leoben from 2021 to 2023 and mastered the challenging reorganization of the site brilliantly. He was assisted by Robert Kleinschek, who has now succeeded him as Plant Manager.



Automated and specialized: the impressive Zenith paving machine has for years been the workhorse for one of the most successful product groups of the traditional precast manufacturer in Leoben. Further investments will soon be made to integrate the site even better into the Kirchdorfer Concrete Solutions product range with new product developments.



RAUTER FERTIGTEILBAU GMBH

RAUTER REACHING FOR THE STARS

The conference table in the office of Rauter Managing Director Wilfried Klade will soon be too small to accommodate the many "Stars of Styria" award trophies of recent years. Austria, on the other hand, is definitely big enough for the many special precast elements from the concrete artists!

Wherever sophisticated architecture, the finest choice of materials and the highest quality requirements come together, custom precast elements from RAUTER Fertigteilbau GmbH are the first choice. Of course, the production challenge also has to be a little complicated (to the point of "almost impossible") for the concrete artists in the Upper Mur Valley to get their money's worth:

"Very often, we initially have no idea how certain parts can be prefabricated and produced. Then we put our heads together and in the end we always find a few new tricks to achieve the required result," explains Wilfried Klade during our visit to the plant



Award ceremony 2023 for the "Stars of Styria" of the Chamber of Commerce: from left Managing Director DI Wilfried Klade, Gregor Cecon (authorized signatory) and Hubert Galler (Production Manager, Apprentice Training Manager, 4th from left) are proud of **Tobias Maier** and **David Resch**, who each passed their final apprenticeship exams with excellent results. (© Foto Fischer / WKÖ)

in Styria. To add that there is virtually no hierarchy when it comes to creativity and problem-solving skills: The opinions of the production employees count just as much here as those of the boss. And he has been doing this since he started at Rauter as a 19-year-old and is the first person who prefers to be on the shop floor himself when there is a need.

Fortunately, there is rarely a shortage of people, especially thanks to the constant supply of excellent apprentices who are initiated into the secrets of the concrete artists every year. "At the end of the day, it's the people that count," says Klade, at the risk of sounding like an advertising slogan: "At the beginning there is always a challenge and at the end you have a precast concrete part. Everything in between depends very much on our employees."

And if everything fits together, then you can see inspiration, craftsmanship and basically even the good atmosphere in the factory hall with the end product, we might add.

Incidentally, the shareholders of the Kirchdorfer Group were recently able to see this for themselves during their autumn visit to the upper Mur Valley. And if you don't believe us that one can sense the good vibes in the prefabricated parts, then take a look for yourself at a small selection of legendary and current RAUTER projects on the following pages ...



Good training, good atmosphere: not a year goes by at RAUTER without new apprentices from the region being initiated into the secrets of the art of precast concrete. Although the colleagues are really challenged by the highly complex production of MMK wood-concrete hybrid ceilings for a project in Linz, the mood in the production hall is excellent.

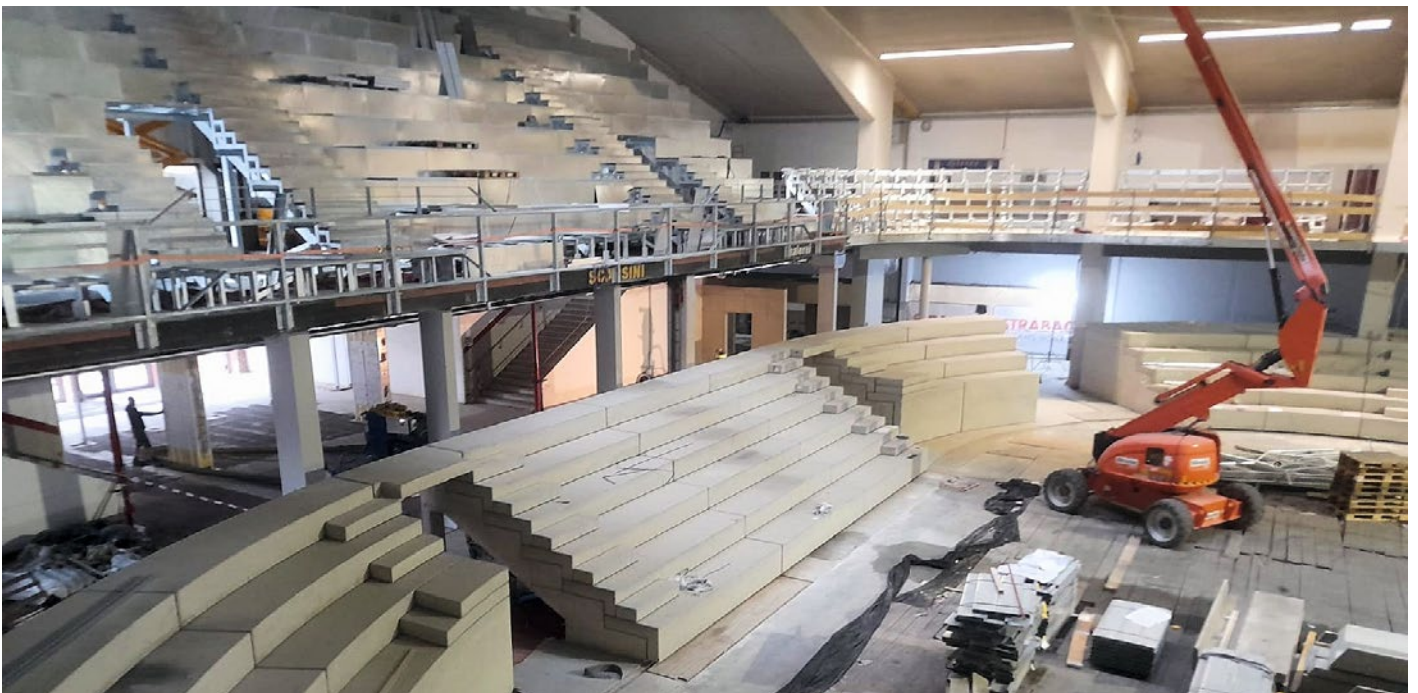


Timeless classic: the spacious, elegant urn walls in Graz Central Cemetery perfectly embody the expertise of the concrete artists from the Mur Valley.

NH Graz City Hotel
Pfauengarten, Graz



Round and colorful: elegant staircases, which also form benches and a small arena, adorn the Herberstein Zoo in Stubenberg, Styria.



Eishockey temple: since 2022, fans of the legendary KAC have been sitting and cheering in their Klagenfurt arena on stands prefabricated by RAUTER.

MABA PREFA SPOL. S R. O.



EASY CONSTRUCTION WITH MABA PREFA

With a new parking garage not far from the city center of České Budějovice, our specialists for prestressed girder structures have once again impressively demonstrated how easily and efficiently sustainable infrastructure buildings can be constructed using the supreme discipline of precast construction.

MABA Prefa, based in Veselí nad Lužnicí near Budweis, stands out within the Kirchdorfer precast division not only due to the enormous size of its plants (originally dimensioned for the construction of the Temelín nuclear power plant), but also due to its focus on technical planning expertise. An ideal prerequisite for large and proverbially "difficult" challenges in building construction and industrial construction, where so many challenges - e.g. in the construction of large halls - are already solved at the precast manufacturer's drawing table.

As was recently demonstrated during the construction of a parking garage for almost 500 cars and 75 bicycles near the large sports hall in Budweis: The impressive ceiling system of the 4-storey parking lot consists of a total of 222 TT panels, each 15 meters long and weighing around 16 tons, which distribute the not inconsiderable loads of the vehicles particularly elegantly and reliably. With the appropriate resources and possibilities of MABA Prefa, a number of such projects have been completed efficiently, smoothly and to the highest quality in recent years. At the moment, however, the building construction market in the Czech Republic (as in large parts of Europe in general) has slumped dramatically. Fortunately, our colleagues in Bohemia are now also well positioned in the infrastructure sector, so that appropriate capacity utilization of the large plant can hopefully be achieved even during difficult market phases.



MMK WOOD-CONCRETE COMPOSITE PARTS

BERLIN-BRANDENBURG PROMOTES HYBRID BUILDING

A new flagship project for MMK Holz-Beton-Fertigteile GmbH: with 5,600 m² of XC® ceilings, the new research hub of the Free University of Berlin is receiving the hybrid construction jewels from Kirchdorfer Concrete Solutions. However, the new "FUHUB" is not just another showcase project for MMK in a new region, but also the start of a long-term cooperation.

After a decade of attractive and spectacular pioneering projects, it is time for the construction industry to develop a certain level of routine acceptance for the new timber-concrete hybrid construction method. With the commitment of the state government in Berlin-Brandenburg, an important step has been taken in Germany in this respect. And with a new cooperation between MMK, a local timber construction company and a medium-sized precast manufacturer, an attractive offer for future hybrid projects around the German capital is available under the motto "We for Berlin". While the XC® floor elements for the first project are still being manufactured by RAUTER Fertigteilbau GmbH in Austria due to the complexity of the formwork construction, MMK's expertise and technology will soon be available in the form of a regionally based supply chain.



#HYBRID CONSTRUCTION

ENGINEERING FÜR HYBRIDE BAUKONSTRUKTIONEN

XC®-DECKEN • GANZHEITLICHES BAUEN • EXPERTISE



FUHUB goes hybrid: the new laboratory and research center of Freie Universität Berlin is being built with innovative wood-concrete floors.

MABA FERTIGTEILINDUSTRIE GMBH

DRIVEABLE ABSORBER PLATE

In an emergency, the accessibility of railroad tracks with emergency vehicles is an important criterion in tunnel safety. With a new technical solution from MABA Fertigteilindustrie GmbH, there is now another option on the market.

The technical possibilities for creating trafficable cover plates for rail tracks are vast. However, if the implementation of a sound-absorbing solution is pursued at the same time, the possibilities are drastically limited: As impressively demonstrated by MABA, lightweight concrete with porous structure absorbs sound. However, it lacks the compressive strength to support a fire engine driving on top of it.

With a new hybrid solution that surrounds the absorption bodies with a stable special concrete frame, Austrian Federal Railways now has another option for equipping tunnel structures, which has already been in the test phase on the Koralm Railway since summer 2022.



Driveable absorber plates: test section at the tunnel portal.

KIRCHDORFER ROAD & TRAFFIC



A trio for the green future: from left Vladimir Crovetto (design), Wolfgang Ruppitsch (materials) and Thomas Höller (production) have laid the foundations for a new product category with the DB SL 70 in their joint development work.

SL 70 GREEN TECHNOLOGY: LIGHTWEIGHT, EFFICIENT AND MORE SUSTAINABLE!

With the new SL 70, the DELTABLOC® development team has achieved a quantum leap in sustainable concrete safety barriers. Optimized design, CO₂-reduced materials and twice as efficient production technology mark a new milestone on the "Road to Green".

The completely new hybrid concept, which is currently celebrating its premiere in the form of the DB SL 70 and is making its first appearance as part of the preparations for the 2024 Summer Olympics in France, leaves no stone unturned, no taboo unquestioned and also completely overturns a production process that has been practiced for decades.

The three young "rebels" responsible for the revolutionary new development have rethought the areas of product design (Vladimir Crovetto), material development (Wolfgang Ruppitsch) and, last but not least, production technology (Thomas Höller) and presented a coherent, efficient and, above all, sustainable overall concept.

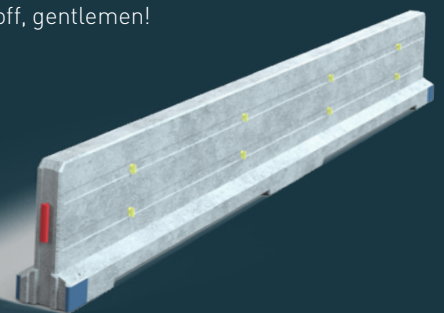
The brief was simple and not atypical: invent a concrete barrier that is as robust and efficient as the SB series (optimized for temporary use) and as indestructible as the DB 80, yet as light and with as little steel as a sports car and that can be produced twice as fast. Oh yes, and with just a pinch more cement than in a loaf of bread.

The result: a super-slim SL 70 that can be used just as well temporarily as permanently, with a friction-effective "foot" design (plus steel sheet) instead of the classic Jersey profile.

In true "Road to Green" fashion, the SL 70 gets by with eco-optimized reinforcement and can be removed from the formwork after just a few hours (instead of overnight curing), just like on a baking tray, so that a second production run with the same mould can be arranged comfortably just around lunchtime.

In other words, and to sum it up: less cement, less steel, less weight, a smaller coupling, less lifting, less maintenance and twice the capacity utilization of the newly designed formwork technology.

And all this with the same performance and a reduced ecological footprint. Hats off, gentlemen!





PREMIERE AT THE STRADA DEL SOLE

Creating a good foundation for the establishment of DELTABLOC® concrete safety barriers in neighboring Italy is not so easy: the entire lobby is practically behind the country's gigantic steel producers.

Lobbying is one thing, elegant technical solutions are another: What old-style steel systems definitely cannot do - and no matter how deeply rooted its proponents are - is to construct a vehicle restraint system with an integrated noise protection structure that protrudes up to 6 meters from the edge of the road and is put together in the blink of an eye and in the most space-saving way imaginable.

This year, such a marvel - lavishly equipped with natural-colored wood-concrete absorbers of the "Waveline" type - was created on the much-vaunted "Autostrada del Sole", the iconic Italian motorway that leads from

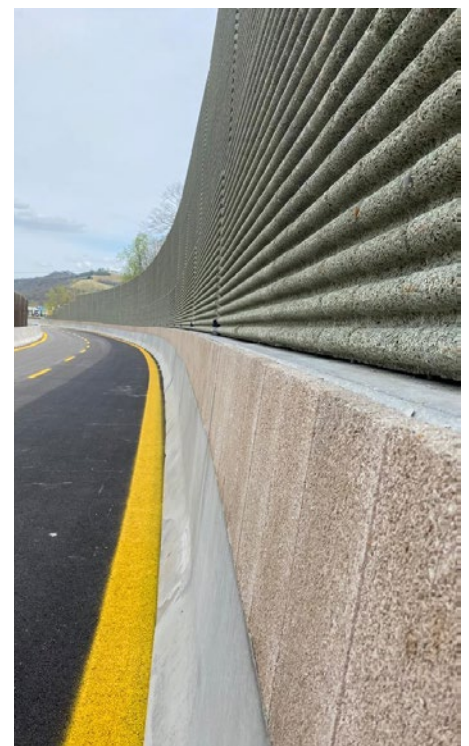
the business metropolis of Milan over 750 km in the direction of the sun. In truth, the A1 "Sun Road" really only has one small drawback: the sound of the sea cannot be heard anywhere along the route ...

This has less to do with the new noise protection installation than with the route meandering through the mountains and valleys alongside the country's most important cities.

In the middle of the beautiful countryside, just south of Bologna - before heading up the hills towards Florence after driving through Ferrari Land and the home of balsamic vinegar - it is now all of a sudden extremely quiet for 500 meters: no more traffic noise for the local residents. Courtesy of the DB NBF noise barrier implemented with the Sardinia-based license partner. One new icon on the iconic road!



Hasan Durmaz is responsible for key account management in Italy, Bosnia, Serbia, Slovenia and the Netherlands.



DELTABLOC® SOUTH AFRICA



Mobile TPP setup on a huge open space near Durban, South Africa..

100 KM IN TEMPORARY PRECAST PRODUCTION

The DELTABLOC® sales company in South Africa has perfected the outdoor production of concrete safety barriers. In the meantime, the sophisticated TPP system is already making its mark even in Europe.

Ever since DELTABLOC SOUTH AFRICA (PTY) LTD. was founded in 2010, the open-air production of concrete safety barriers „in the bush“ has been a recurring theme in the company's history. Since building up a network of reliable production partners across the entire south of the vast continent never seemed to be a viable option from the outset, Garth Strong and his son Craig took manufacturing into their own hands and created a production system that works as close as possible to the installation site without any fixed production infrastructure. And, above all, delivers first-class quality at virtually any scale.

From the first projects in Eswatini (Swaziland) and Mozambique to a number of major projects in South Africa, the Stronges have already produced a good 500 kilometres' worth of DELTABLOC® elements with their unique „Temporary Precast Production“ (TPP) system – in top quality, as Craig Strong points out: "With comprehensive quality

control based on embedded serial numbers, laboratory testing and full traceability of all components, we actually outperform many or the permanent production facilities that have CE certifications".

And this despite the fact that in the TPP system practically all production steps are carried out by hand and often literally „in the middle of the bush“: With ready-mix concrete trucks from nearby concrete plants, a crane-based mobile turning plant and a number of modifications to the forming, compacting and demolding of the elements, the South Africans deliver perfect quality in a regional, scalable outdoor setup.

And when the rain comes, we ask Craig Strong? „No problem at all“ he says, „then we roll a mobile tent roof over the ongoing production and that's that!"

100 km DB 80 production in Camperdown

In spring 2021, a gigantic new TPP project started west of Durban. With just under 70 production employees on site, a total of 16,646 DB 80 elements were produced for the general modernisation of the M3 in the space of just one and a half years. A record-breaking project that is already setting standards on the old continent, by the way - with the first TPP copycat projects in Romania and Greece!



The mobile turning unit is a core component of the unique South African TPP system.

DELTABLOC® EXTRANET BLOWS THROUGH 3,000 USER MARK

CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND SUPPORT ON THE EXTRANET

With around 1,000 new registrations per year and already over 3,000 customers, partners and interested parties on the platform, the DELTABLOC® Extranet has become a powerful tool for market-specific customer loyalty and support.

"The DELTABLOC® Extranet is not only a neatly organized information platform for our customers, partners, suppliers and employees, but has also become an indispensable and powerful tool for our sales team" explains Paul Bittner.

As a Product Manager at the headquarters in Wöllersdorf and responsible for "Documentation & Education", he is the architect behind the platform, which has become an indispensable part as a powerful sales tool – as the first point of contact

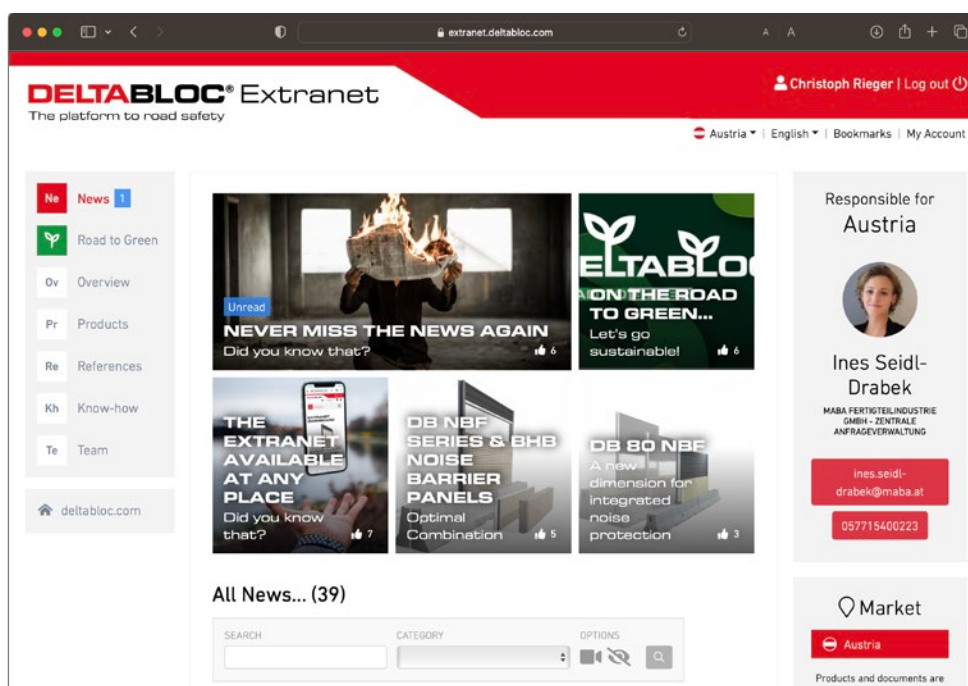
for interested parties from a total of 100 designated international markets, as well as an information hub for all DELTABLOC® customers – from licensees to suppliers, planners, construction companies and authorities.

"The content on the extranet is 100% tailored to the markets of our registered users," explains Bittner: "Each market has different technical requirements and a specific regulatory environment. Therefore, only a subset of our already more than 500 products and product variants is of interest for each country. Users can therefore see what is relevant for them." And, of course, they can also see when something is happening in the product portfolio or when current topics are published in the newsletter.

DELTABLOC® also uses the extranet within the company for know-how transfer. In this way, all employees at all locations in the company can be kept informed regardless of time and place. In addition to the presentation of new products, technical details on various solutions and similar content, a whole series of 10 to 15-minute training videos are also available to raise the level of knowledge of the entire DELTABLOC® family.

In addition, the extranet also provides detailed and powerful evaluations that optimally support the sales strategy.

So, if you are interested in road safety as well, then why not register right away and see for yourself at: extranet.deltabloc.com



Paul Bittner: The architect of the extensive DELTABLOC® extranet has developed the information platform into a powerful sales tool.

extranet.deltabloc.com offers market-specific content for customers, partners and interested parties.

KIRCHDORFER.EU RELAUNCH

KIRCHDORFER LIONS ROAR ON THE WEB

Even though the individual Kirchdorf companies and divisions have always been extremely active in the vastness of the internet, the Group's presence on www.kirchdorfer.eu has long been limited to a rather simple listing and description of all Group companies. This will now change fundamentally from mid-December 2023: The Kirchdorf lion will also fully awaken on the Group website and really show off with exciting topics, innovative features and a contemporary design.

With a fundamental overhaul of the Kirchdorf Group's corporate identity, the Corporate Communications department of Kirchdorf Industries Group Services GmbH (KIGS) a lot of new additional content: The focus of the new site is not on the individual companies, but on common topics that affect the entire group of companies.

What is special about Kirchdorf's corporate culture? And what are we doing in relation to the important issues of our time, which are becoming increasingly important in our daily work? Sustainability, safety, careers and more.

With a personal LEO assistant, a strong focus on recruiting, employer branding and a powerful job portal (including a personal career match test and job alert!), the new Kirchdorf Group website now plays all the tunes and is the perfect home base for the social media activities of the entire Group and its outstanding employees. A big thank you to everyone who really thought of something great here and good luck on the World Wide Web!



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WE LOOK FORWARD TO **RECEIVING YOUR
FEEDBACK** ON THIS ISSUE OF KN:

KirchdorferNews@kirchdorfer.eu



KIRCHDORFER
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