AFG strengthens contacts in the Far East

«Climate protection included.»

AllStar AS1® – the new ultra-strong EgoKiefer plastic and plastic/aluminium window line: «Climate protection included.»
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  Ladies and Gentlemen,
  Dear employees
  «Democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.» In my opinion, this quote by Winston Churchill also applies to the market economy: of all the possible forms of running an economy, this is still the most suitable of all in spite of its many failings and wrong turns. And it is closely related to democracy. The «voting citizens» of the market economy are the consumers who make a conscious decision in favour of certain products. In this context it is interesting to note that it is not always the cheapest supplier who is chosen, but increasingly those companies whose priorities are quality, sustainability and the protection of the environment.

Ecology and economy obey the same laws
As is shown in the Focus article in this issue of AFG WORLD, AFG has to thank this trend for a considerable proportion of its success. The Division Windows and Doors makes its customers climate protectors by offering them products which preserve resources through their methods of production, the selection of materials and their thermal insulation characteristics, and thus contribute to a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions. Because ecology and economy are governed by the same underlying principles, care of the environment is becoming an increasingly important aspect which benefits not only the environment, but also the company and its customers. Because if you save material and energy, you also save money. And, wherever materials are obtained in a sustainable way, huge savings are made further down the line. The three companies of the Division Windows and Doors, as well as all other companies in the Group, systematically adhere to these principles. Egokofer puts clear emphasis on the high thermal insulation properties of its windows. As an ISO-certified company, RWD Schläter ensures that its doors are manufactured exclusively from sustainably harvested timber. And the window profiles manufactured by Slowaktaul are increasingly produced from aluminium, with its excellent recycling properties.

Success in the market can be seen as a «vote of confidence»
If I dwell a little longer on the image of market economy as «sister of democracy» then I could say that the Division Heating Technology and Sanitary Equipment, i.e. Kermi, has obtained outstanding results in the vote: this is represented by several international design awards as well as two first placings in the specialist trade in which product quality, ease of installation, competent advice and fast responses to queries are rewarded.

The Division Kitchens and Refrigeration is fully committed to sustainability – in its systematic expansion into the Chinese market, where the company has opened two Warendorf Stores in Peking and Shanghai in May, and in terms of its innovations. Forster has been optimising its production and energy efficiency, and the comfort of its refrigerators, by using automation and modern LED technology. For the purpose of achieving greater «sustainability», Piatti has issued clear guidelines for current kitchen design, from which the customer is already benefiting.

It is not quiet on the Western and Eastern Fronts The Division Steel Technology opens up new markets in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Creative concepts in refurbishment and innovative solutions for automotive manufacturers are evidence that Forster Profile Systems and Forster Precision Steel tubes are still very popular in these demanding market segments. By constructing the largest chromium bath facility in the USA, the Division Surface Technology has invested in creating a sustainable market presence. With this step STI Hartchron expands its previous activities for the defence industry and now also focuses on the commercial market in the US. In the Asia Pacific region, our high-tech surface technology activities will expand to an even greater degree. The groundbreaking ceremony for the most up-to-date production facility of our industry in the Far East will take place on 23 June 2010: we are starting construction work in Changshu in the Shanghai conurbation.

Dear readers, when reading this issue of AFG WORLD you will probably notice that our company is looking to the future and still relies on its success factors, i.e. quality, functionality, design and ecology – in spite of sometimes difficult economic conditions. I hope that you enjoy the read!

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In a nutshell

AG has achieved certification

AFG Küchenvertrieb (Schweiz) AG markets its three kitchen brands Forster, Warendorf and Piatti in Switzerland through its extremely close-knit distribution network. The organisation covers all customer concerns, from kitchen design to installation through to after-sales service. The company’s new ISO 9001 quality certificate, awarded in April, is proof of the fact that AFG Küchenvertrieb (Schweiz) AG manages its processes well.

Nominated: EgoKiefer Plastic Window XL®

The EgoKiefer Plastic Window XL® with «cold blocker» has been nominated for the 2011 Federal Republic of Germany design award. With its unique design and outstanding thermal insulation characteristics, the first MINERGIE-P® certified window of Switzerland has a lasting appeal. The Federal Republic of Germany design award is the most prestigious German design award.

Safe, safer, EgoAlarm®

Making windows and doors mechanically secure is the basis of effective security. For this reason all windows by EgoKiefer feature integrated basic security as standard, without additional charge. For even more security, there is the new EgoAlarm® alarm handle by EgoKiefer. Once this window handle has been fitted it will immediately show whether the window is properly closed. In addition, it monitors the fittings and the glass and triggers an alarm as soon as there is an attempted intrusion. In line with EgoKiefer’s system approach, the EgoAlarm® can also be retrofitted to all window systems. It couldn’t be simpler.

Division Steel Technology: certification has been confirmed

Once again, Forster Profile Systems and Forster Precision Steel Tubes have undergone an audit with success. This involved detailed monitoring of the existing management systems to ISO TS 16949, ISO 9001 and also the environmental management system to ISO 14001. The auditors concluded that all management systems have been maintained and improved: «Overall, the management system appears to be understood and to be functioning vibrantly and it fully meets the standard’s requirements.» Particularly positive points mentioned by the auditors were strategic business planning, the control system, the well-managed sales teams, quality control and the development of ecological projects (building with steel).

Standardised Kermi catalogue data

In order to optimise processes and reduce costs, standardised industry information has been defined for producing the Kermi catalogue. When exchanging data between manufacturer and trade, the focus is on processing master data. However, the production of a catalogue requires data with extended content. In a joint project, the consortium ARGE Neue Medien and IG Neue Medien, together with representatives of the retail trade, have defined uniform information for the design of industry catalogues. Kermi has taken part in this project and as of now is in the position to provide standardised catalogue data sets. The unified data model for the SHK industry has many benefits, e.g. greater efficiency, less errors, improved quality of product and pictorial data, faster and more effective updating and reduced production costs for the catalogue. Several Kermi partners in the specialist trade already produce their catalogues using Kermi data. These can be viewed online at www.shk-branchenportal.de (Germany) and at www.igneuemedien.at (Austria).

STI | Hartchrom sells factory |

After 50 years STI | Hartchrom AG Steinach is selling its oldest factory near the shores of Lake Constance in Steinach, St. Gallen. Production was relocated to Obersteinach where STI | Hartchrom nearly doubled its capacity with the new construction of the STI Westside Center in 2009. AFG boss Dr. Edgar Oehler personally handed over the key to the buyer, Christoph Richner, who intends to convert the 2,700 m² large property into the headquarters of his fast-growing garage and body workshop company. By selling the Hartchrom factory on the Steinach shores of Lake Constance, Dr. Edgar Oehler fulfilled the promise he made to the Steinach population on the occasion of the 1999 floods. A promise which he later renewed as boss of AFG: to relocate the shore-side AFG factories step by step in order to release the shores of Lake Constance for other purposes.

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EgoKiefer: «Climate protection included.»

EgoKiefer has been actively promoting a healthy environment for decades. The unique eco-balance of its products clearly show that EgoKiefer windows and entrance doors make a significant contribution to protecting the environment.

EgoKiefer windows reduce energy loss through windows by up to 75% compared to old windows. The new slogan «Climate protection included.» therefore is more than just an advertising campaign—it reflects the market leader’s commitment to sustainable climate protection. Since the beginning of 2010, the slogan «Climate protection included.» appears on all EgoKiefer communications. This commitment is not new for EgoKiefer. Ecology is one of the four pillars on which the company’s success is built. Already back in 1991, EgoKiefer together with Empa produced the first eco-balance for window frame materials in Switzerland. An eco-balance is used to calculate how much energy is used for the production, delivery and installation of a product. This value is compared with the energy saved by the product throughout its service life. This may result in a negative value or a positive one, as is the case with the EgoKiefer window. This means that during the EgoKiefer window’s lifecycle, it saves significantly more energy than is used in its production—therefore resulting in an energy gain.

More awareness of the environment
A positive «energy balance» can only be achieved with a systematic environmental concept. EgoKiefer considers the environmental performance of products as early as during the research and development process, and uses materials which are compatible with the environment—and where possible, recyclable. In this way, EgoKiefer achieves a positive eco-balance and supplies the most energy-efficient windows and entrance doors of the industry. All this is included in the commitment «Climate protection included.».
EgoKiefer has continually developed its own eco-balance since 1991. In 1999, EgoKiefer was awarded the ISO 14001 environmental management certificate for its ecological approach and actions. «Our efforts towards environmental protection and the thermal insulation performance of our windows and entrance doors are proof of the fact that climate protection is part of EgoKiefer’s approach», explains Thomas Gerosa, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors of EgoKiefer AG and Head of the AFG Division Windows and Doors. «Our windows reduce energy loss through windows by up to 75% compared to old windows. In 2009 alone, EgoKiefer windows used in refurbishment have reduced the consumption of heating oil by over 8,000 tonnes and CO₂ emissions by more than 25,000 tonnes», continues Gerosa. The exclusive EgoVerre® high-performance glazing by EgoKiefer plays an important role in this context: the new EgoVerre® triple-glazing achieves an above-average thermal insulation of \( U_g = 0.4 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K} \) while maintaining high light transmission and overall energy values.

**MINERGIE®: strict standard – strong partners**

In January 2010, EgoKiefer became the exclusive leading partner of MINERGIE® for windows and doors. This is another way in which EgoKiefer demonstrates its commitment to climate protection. All window systems produced by EgoKiefer are certified by MINERGIE® and, at the beginning of 2010, the company produced the first MINERGIE-P® certified windows in Switzerland with its XL® windows in plastic and plastic/aluminium. All EgoKiefer windows are suitable for installation in MINERGIE-P® and passive house buildings. Likewise, EgoKiefer offers the widest range of MINERGIE® certified entrance doors in Switzerland. MINERGIE® is the organisation set up to promote and accelerate an understanding of sustainable building construction. EgoKiefer provides expert speakers, thus contributing to the many energy-related events organised in all regions of Switzerland.

Thomas Gerosa comments on the partnership with MINERGIE®: «MINERGIE® is the new standard for new buildings and refurbishments. It focuses on energy consumption as a guiding parameter which quantifies the required construction quality and sustainability. Other aspects are comfort and health, i.e. properties which are included in EgoKiefer’s quality products.» A current example of this market strategy is EgoKiefer’s new, successful AllStar AS1® window line. Even the basic specification of the AS1® offers plenty of added value. Customers using the AllStar AS1® become climate protectors. However, EgoKiefer offers much more than off-the-peg products. Based on high-quality standard windows in all popular materials, the company offers a modular system for producing many different variations to meet customer requirements. In this way the customer benefits from an outstanding conceptual design, comfort, excellent sound insulation, efficient ventilation, very good security and attractive solutions for the disabled and infirm. 

«This is how elegant and cozy environmental protection can be: windows by EgoKiefer.»

«MINERGIE® is the new standard for new construction and refurbishments.»

Keep the cold out: EgoKiefer entrance doors.

Environmental protection helps preserve the earth’s originality.

Climate protection
Thomas Gerosa, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors of EgoKiefer AG and Head of the Division Windows and Doors.

EgoKiefer windows are particularly well-suited for sustainable building to MINERGIE® standards.

The Arctic should be preserved for future generations.

Fascinating and to the point – the large projections by light artist Gerry Hofstetter.

Old windows may be romantic. However, as a rule they no longer meet the requirements of environmental protection. For this reason it is worth looking into solutions that take care of the environment.

«With EgoKiefer windows, one becomes a climate protector.»

An exaggeration? In the interview below, Thomas Gerosa, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors of EgoKiefer AG and Head of the Division Windows and Doors, justifies his statement.

Why is thermal insulation necessary?

Thomas Gerosa: Year round thermal insulation is one of the most important functions of a window. Good windows protect against the cold and excessive heat, and ensure a comfortable interior. They save on heating costs and are easy on the environment. And they improve the quality of life. For this reason, thermal insulation features highly on EgoKiefer’s agenda, from product development through to installation.

Does that mean that all windows waste energy?

They do. In old buildings with poorly insulating windows, about 15 to 20% of all heat loss is incurred through the windows, causing unnecessary expense. Particularly in buildings that were built before 1990, there is a strong need for action in terms of energy conservation. New, modern window systems make it possible to achieve effective results at reasonable cost.

You say that EgoKiefer makes its customers climate protectors. What do you mean by that?

People who erect new buildings or refurbish old ones make long lasting decisions which affect energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. Modern high-performance windows such as our EgoKiefer AllStar AS1® or the XL® line reduce energy loss through windows by up to 75 % compared to old windows, and hence reduce the overall energy consumption of the building by up to 15 %.

In this way, EgoKiefer windows make a lasting contribution to environmental protection. They make it possible to save money and contribute to climate protection. That’s why our customers become climate protectors by using EgoKiefer windows.

Why did you select photographs showing animals in the Arctic for the new EgoKiefer visual world?

The animals that live in the Arctic have developed abilities and characteristics which enable them to survive in a harsh environment. Their fur must be thicker, they always need fresh air, even under water, and they must be able to move using less energy. This concept fits perfectly with our EgoKiefer windows and entrance doors: they provide added value which distinguishes them from conventional products and provide additional benefits for our customers. The photographs by Gerry Hofstetter illustrate the advantages of our products and also EgoKiefer’s commitment to the environment.

EgoKiefer’s new world of images

EgoKiefer and the well-known light artist Gerry Hofstetter have one thing in common: they want to alert the public to the consequences of global warming and make an appeal for climate protection.

Guided by this common interest, EgoKiefer and Gerry Hofstetter developed the idea for the unusual photographs of the new EgoKiefer world of images.

Temporary works of art

As a light artist, Gerry Hofstetter has transformed buildings, monuments, landscapes and mountains all over the world into temporary works of art using his light art projections. He has illuminated famous buildings such as the pyramids of Giza and the Brandenburg Gate as well as famous landmarks such as the white cliffs of Dover in England and the Matterhorn.

Ambassador for environmental protection

In September 2009 Gerry Hofstetter travelled to the Arctic on behalf of EgoKiefer. He created impressive images which, at the same time, draw attention to the consequences of global warming: the increase in temperatures leads to the melting of the ice which in turn deprives the animals of their all-important habitat. It is this problem which is addressed with the images. And they also convey the message of how an important contribution towards the protection of the environment can be made with the modern EgoKiefer windows.

«These images leave a deep impression and draw attention to global warming.»
AFG secures its long-term funding and achieves a respectable operating profit for the 2009 financial year. At the Ordinary General Meeting held on 16 April 2010 the assembly clearly agreed the approval of all applications by the Board of Directors, in particular the introduction of the common registered share.

Facing down the crisis

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Sound financial arrangements

Dr. Edgar Oehler, Chairman of the Board of Directors and CEO initially informed the shareholders about the placement of the debenture loan of CHF 200 million which had been communicated to the general assembly on the previous day. «The capital market has great faith in AFG – there is no other explanation for the fact that our loan, with a term of six years was heavily over-subscribed and an interest rate of 3.3/8%, was heavily over-subscribed.»

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A stronger balance sheet

In his review of the 2009 financial year, Dr. Edgar Oehler emphasised that the development of the construction-related company sectors had clearly improved compared to the technology divisions which had been heavily affected by the collapse in demand. The two home markets contributed significantly to the stabilisation of the company while the Eastern European markets, and Great Britain in particular, suffered more from the economic crisis. In spite of this difficult economic environment, AFG has been able to strengthen its balance sheet significantly. Financial liabilities have been massively reduced through the reduction in net liquid assets and the increase in capital in the spring of 2009, which meant that the company was able to increase its capital by net CHF 105.8 million. The debt position was improved to net CHF 239.7 million (CHF 441.3 million), and the equity ratio reached 44.1% (36.9%) on the balance sheet day, which is the highest ratio for ten years. With goodwill still at CHF 65 million (CHF 117.7 million) the balance sheet entry for immaterial values is still clearly below the industry average.

Free cash flow at record level

The cash flow analysis as of 31 December 2009 shows a free cash flow of CHF 112.5 million (CHF -63.5 million). This record value was achieved thanks to the reduction in net liquid assets and reduced investment. This means that AFG’s liquidity has improved significantly. Liquid assets have increased from CHF 63.4 million to CHF 122 million.

Modestly optimistic outlook

For the current financial year, Dr. Edgar Oehler conveyed a modestly optimistic outlook to the shareholders: «With the measures for reducing costs, the increase in marketing personnel and many new innovative developments in all divisions and the re-valuations, we have created good conditions for a sustained improvement in turnover and profit. In addition, we will sustain our efforts to maintain our competitiveness and will continue with the implementation of the AVANTI cost-reduction programme.»

While Dr. Edgar Oehler expects turnover to increase only slightly due to subdued demand, he anticipates that profit will increase disproportionately compared to the previous year. He also explained the planned changes in the organisational and management structure. AFG will be adopting the form of an industrial holding company and strengthening its Divisions into entrepreneurial units. The new management structure will be implemented as of 1 January 2011.

All applications by the Board of Directors approved

The shareholders clearly agreed to all applications by the Board of Directors: with the introduction of common registered shares, the different weighting that exists between registered shares and bearer shares no longer applies. At the same time, a large majority of voting shareholders approved the introduction of voting right restrictions of 5%, that was heavily over-subscribed within a few minutes», said Dr. Edgar Oehler. With the help of this loan, AFG’s financial position is soundly secured over the coming years.

New to Board of Directors: Georg Früh

At the General Meeting of 16 April 2010 the financial expert Georg Früh was elected to the Board of Directors for the statutory three year period, up until the 2013 Ordinary General Meeting. Georg Früh was born in Bregenz, Austria in 1961, is an Austrian citizen and lives with his family in Hard, Austria. He is married and father of two grown children. From 1979 to 1983 he studied Business Management at the University of Innsbruck and graduated with an M.A. (Magister). From 1984 to 1987 he was head of the financial control and accounts departments of various industrial companies in Vorarlberg. In 1987 he moved to the Alpha Group where he became Assistant to the Management. Today he is CFO of the company and a member of the management. Since 1999 he also contributes his valuable competencies to the Advisory Board of the Alpha Private Trust in Hard, Austria.
The discussions about cause and effect in quality lead to good, examples which can be comprehensively analysed. This internal exchange brings to light good, but also less and methods for quality assurance, using real life examples. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. Sometimes, the three construction-related Divisions and the two technology Divisions have different customers, markets, services, raw materials and production processes. In spite of the differences, the Divisions take advantage of various synergies. The Internal Audit Department supports and aids existing possibilities and measures in terms of quality management, from identification through to implementation.

Analysing cause and effect
The «100% Quality – Zero Tolerance» programme helped to create a joint platform of quality functions. All AFG companies and all of their outputs are characterised by a basic quality philosophy. AFG expects 100% quality, as is demanded by our customers. In order to systematically meet this demand, the connection between cause and effect in quality is constantly analysed and checked. In this context, the top priority is to ensure customer satisfaction, continuous improvement and sustained product quality. Professional exchanges between the different quality management functions make it possible to observe and discuss the different options, actions and methods for quality assurance, using real life examples. This internal exchange brings to light good, but also less good, examples which can be comprehensively analysed. The discussions about cause and effect in quality lead to constructive solutions.

Investment in quality is investment in the future
In order to make the development and progress visible and measureable, a group-wide reporting system of quality costs was introduced. This distinguishes between input (cause) and output (effect). The inputs are the planned and budgeted costs that are invested in test and error prevention activities. These costs are often directly related to the outputs which are mainly the produced – though certainly not intentional – errors and their associated costs. Analysing this development and actively working on the relevant parameters leads to the optimisation of the overall quality costs. Investment in quality at the right point in the value-creation chain is an ongoing task.

Quality achieved as a result of expert knowledge and the right attitude
Experience shows that quality results from the expert knowledge and personal attitude of each individual employee. For this reason, the «100% Quality – Zero Tolerance» programme communicated to all members of staff, giving detailed information. In addition to the special attention afforded by Quality Management, other departments have become involved in order to give wide support to, and continue to drive forward this recent positive development. The resulting dialogue between the different departments, AFG companies and customers shows that AFG is on the right path.

After AFG’s promising entry into the Asian market, business contacts in China are very valuable. Since 1980, SwissCham has been promoting networking activities between the members of the Swiss and Chinese world of commerce, finance and industry, who now number 700. For this reason, the Swiss Chinese Business Community of Shanghai invited its members to the New Year gala, in the sign of the lion, to the Hyatt Hotel in Shanghai on 29 January 2010. The gala was presented in a decorative setting depicting a Chinese jungle landscape, which prepared the many well-known guests for an unforgettable evening. After the opening address by SwissCham President Christian Guertler and the representative of the Swiss business community, William Frei, a colourful entertainment programme unfolded. The organiser had laid on a magnificent firework display as well as a fascinating African dance troupe. In addition, there was a rather tricky game which involved guessing special smells of the jungle, which drove the guests to try their hardest, as there were two classy Omega watches and two Swiss International Airlines Business Class tickets to win.

SUSAN CHEN – THE DESERVED WINNER
Thereafter, the Head of the Asia Pacific market, Felix Aepli, took to the stage. He gave a compelling presentation to the audience and showed a film demonstrating the wide range of AFG brands and products. One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the SwissCham AFG «Entrepreneur of the Year» award. The jury found Susan Chen, President of Swatch Group China, a worthy winner. She has successfully fended off the global drop in sales of Swiss watches and thanks to her well considered strategy, has managed to safeguard Swatch’s leadership in the Chinese market. In addition, Susan Chen has, time and again, surprised and convinced people with public commitments such as providing the main sponsorship for the 2008 Olympic Games. Together with Christian Guertler and William Frei, Dr. Edgar Oehler, Chairman of the Board of Directors and CEO of AFG, handed over the well-deserved award to the winner. Following the official programme, the eventful evening was rounded off at the well-known Vue Bar high above the roofs of Shanghai. The AFG representatives used the successful evening to present themselves to the interesting guests in a convivial atmosphere, and were able to forge new relationships with potential partners and customers.

SwissCham
SwissCham, Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce, is a network of companies registered in Switzerland and China. It includes over 700 corporate and individual members, including Switzerland’s leading trade, industrial and finance companies. SwissCham was formed in Zurich in 1980 and opened a branch in Beijing in 1996. Today the organisation is present in Beijing, Shanghai, Zurich, Geneva and Lugano. The SwissCham website can be found at www.swisscham.org

This year, Susan Chen, President of Swatch Group China, received the SwissCham AFG «Entrepreneur of the Year» award. From left: Christian Guertler, SwissCham Shanghai; Dr. Edgar Oehler, AFG; Susan Chen, the prize winner; William Keller, Keller Pharma Consulting, and William Frei, Consul General.
Impressive presentation of the Division Heating Technology and Sanitary Equipment with the Arbonia and Kermi brands at the SHK Essen 2010.

The new Decotherm Plus and Ascotherm cooling system spearhead the exhibition stand at the Swissbau.

The Division Heating Technology and Sanitary Equipment has already made full use of the year 2010 to present its numerous innovative new products. The Arbonia, Kermi and Prolux brands were not only represented at the regional trade fairs in Essen and Nuremberg, but also in Basle, Milan, Paris and Wels.

Successful launch of innovations

The wide and varied product portfolio of the Division Heating Technology and Sanitary Equipment, including the new Ascotherm cooling system underfloor convectors, was showcased and presented to the Swiss market at the Swissbau in Basle, the leading trade fair for the construction and housing industry in Switzerland.

The Ascotherm cooling system (2 and 4 line system) is based on forced convection with a cross-flow blower and is therefore suitable for heating and cooling with one system, ensuring a comfortable indoor climate all year round. If designed accordingly, the Ascotherm can be used as a full room heating or cooling system. The Ascotherm cooling system and the Asco Swiss products now round off the range in the underfloor convector sector for all residential planning projects.

All this stands for gentle climate adaptation and a high quality of life when it comes to heating and cooling.

Shift of focus from new builds to renovation projects

The presentation of new products at the spring fairs in Germany was fully in line with the main theme of design and innovation. The Therm X2 campaign was rounded off in the heating technology sector. The X2 technology is also now available as a compact version and therefore in the entire panel radiator range. Due to the shift in focus in the construction sector away from new builds to renovation, the exhibited topics were radiator replacement, xnet C15 and xlink. The sanitary division chalked up points with the extended Diga and Atea ranges as well as the new chrome surface for design radiators. Arbonia’s exhibits in Essen and Nuremberg included the new ceiling cooling convectors, the Decotherm Plus, the Ascotherm cooling system underfloor convectors as well as the Plantherm, Optotherm and Flagtherm design radiators. All new products are featured on the websites: www.arbonia.ch, www.arbonia.de or www.kermi.de

The new Decotherm Plus and Ascotherm cooling system spearhead the exhibition stand at the Swissbau.
Kermi: number 1 at Deinzer + Weyland

«Deinzer + Weyland», a specialist wholesaler for building services engineering based in Worms, recently carried out a supplier evaluation survey. Sixteen criteria such as specialist services provided by both in-house staff and field representatives, processing of complaints and speed were evaluated.

Kermi received the exciting news in the middle of March. Achieving 87 of 100 possible points, Kermi GmbH achieved the best result of all suppliers.

Kermi received the following message from Deinzer + Weyland: «Congratulations on your excellent assessment! Deinzer + Weyland warmly congratulates Kermi and all its employees on their outstanding supplier evaluation results. As a long-term supplier Kermi always was and is for us a reliable and flexible partner which is also skilled at handling complex projects. We were and are satisfied with Kermi’s constantly high level of quality. We will in future also be relying on Kermi’s excellent deadline compliance and goods identification system. With the well-structured and informatively designed brochures and price lists, our ordering processes can be optimised with regard to time input and the error quota. Specialist advice from the Kermi field representatives also left nothing to be desired. »

Consecutive winners

Four is a lucky number for Kermi shower enclosures, as Kermi was the overall winner of the bi-annual performance ranking in the «shower enclosure/bath screens» category for the fourth time in succession in May. Ten different criteria are evaluated, ranging from the product quality to ease of installation. The members of the Kermi team are thrilled with their achievement and particularly proud of retaining their position as number one for specialist trade partners. A big thank you to all partners in the trade and our wholesale partners, without whom such a resounding success would not have been possible in the three-stage distribution chain. This result proves once more that the company’s constant endeavours to supply the best possible overall package which is geared to the needs of the market have borne fruit. It also, however, underlines the fact that there are still challenges to be faced in some areas which Kermi will focus on selectively.

Excellent design

When it comes to forward-looking, individual design, Kermi has proven its outstanding competence many times over – with its shower enclosures as well as its design radiators.

With both new products Pasa/Pasa XP and Fedon, Kermi has once more impressively demonstrated its high profile, as both products were hardly on the market before they were awarded the «iF product design award 2010». In addition Pasa/Pasa XP also won the «red dot honourable mention 2010» prize. Last year the Fedon design radiator won the renowned «Design Plus» award. Kermi was able to pocket two awards for the premium Diga shower enclosures with a hinged and folding design – the «universal design award 2010» and the «universal design consumer favourite 2010». The «universal design award» was awarded for the third time this year and is now one of the most coveted awards for design and function. During judging of the products by universal design in Hannover criteria such as a wide range of usability, flexibility and intuitive use, error tolerance and reliability as well as economy were at the top of the list. Among the 105 international contenders, the wide-ranging functionality and excellent design of the Diga shower enclosure won the approval of the specialist panel. The Diga with the hinged and folding design was also selected as the «universal design consumer favourite 2010». The products were evaluated in a representative cross-sectional survey by 100 test persons from the viewpoint of a particularly user-friendly design. Arbonia also chalked up points with the new Plantherm design radiator. Plantherm was awarded the coveted «iF product design award 2010». 

«Kermi was the winner among more than 105 international contenders. »

Kermi was the winner among more than 105 international contenders.
To ensure that visitors and fans also keep warm on cold days, the BayArena in Leverkusen was equipped with Kermi heating systems.

**Heat from Kermi in the BayArena in Leverkusen**

The BayArena in Leverkusen is the home stadium of the first division club Bayer 04 Leverkusen. This sports venue is heated by a total of 3,800 m² of industrial surface heating as well as more than 600 heating walls and convectors supplied by Kermi.

The traditional club Bayer 04 Leverkusen, founded in 1904, has been playing in the first German division without interruption since 1979 and has a long-standing record of national and international successes. The original BayArena was built as the «Ulrich Haberland Stadium» and was re-opened on 15 August 2009 after undergoing major extension and modernisation work.

**New landmark**

In addition to extending the total capacity to 30,210 seats, the function and player areas also underwent large-scale extension work. With its tent-like roof construction with a diameter of 217 m, the stadium is a new landmark in Leverkusen. In addition to the home matches of Bayer 04 Leverkusen, the BayArena will be the venue of the women's world soccer cup in 2011.

**New: Aqualux with online clips**

Aqualux, the specialist for shower enclosures, has put a series of video clips on its website to offer their customers an even more outstanding service. A presenter introduces viewers to the most important product features in an entertaining and informative manner. The explanations of the products with audio and visual content offer customers obvious advantages. Features such as the easy-clean, clip-off doors can be demonstrated in a few steps in the clips. In addition to the well-known, clever design of the Aqualux products, the clips also show innovative developments such as the new screw-free Slot-Lock connection for shower enclosures.

**Much more illustrative**

The smooth motion of the sliding doors in the shower enclosures and the simple positioning of the jets in the steam cabins: the clips convey a much more comprehensive impression of the product to viewers and its positive effect on their well-being and health. The complimentary online training scheme is a new Aqualux approach focused on providing support to its loyal customers.

«Many things can be explained more clearly with moving images.»

An alternative selection of online product clips can be viewed at www.aqualux.co.uk.
Swissbau review: a trilogy of success

In spite of their very different concepts, Forster, Warendorf and Piatti together were very strongly presented at the «Swissbau» trade exhibition. On balance, each individual brand was able to present its particular strength thanks to a sophisticated differentiation.

Forster presented projects by well-known architects which were built as true replications of the originals. These exhibits showed examples of the use of steel in architecture and its integration in interiors. With their mirror effect and transparent construction, the walls of the stand gave an impression of the feeling of steel. An oversized reference book was available at the stand to give the facts and figures of the projects.

A designer philosophises about kitchens

Star designer Philippe Starck has created a kitchen furniture design for Warendorf which was presented for the first time in Switzerland at the Swissbau exhibition, and which is branded «Starck by Warendorf». At the start of the exhibition, the new kitchens were unveiled by the designer himself. Subsequently, in a scintillating speech, Starck philosophised about the real function of kitchens, questioning today’s kitchen culture, and tried to win the audience over with his new creations. The press reacted and publicised the unveiling of the Warendorf Kitchens by Philippe Starck in well-known TV programmes, such as «Glanz und Gloria» from Swiss television, and the largest Swiss daily papers.

Piatti – priority on sustainability

At Swissbau, Piatti showed its first concepts for a kitchen line designed with sustainability in mind. The new front in lightweight construction uses significantly less material and adhesive. This simplifies the development, design, procurement, production and installation of a new kitchen generation and thus contributes to its sustainability. The extensive interest and steady demand for this worldwide new development confirmed that Piatti was on the right track and moved the subject of sustainability to the top of Piatti’s agenda. With the presentation of the Quooker, which reduces energy consumption in the kitchen, Piatti unveiled another highlight. Hot water at 100°C at the push of a button, and tea can be served within a few seconds. Many small accessories in the kitchen or simply the right choice of equipment can optimise the energy balance.
Switzerland is also expressed in the logo. The normal ratio they have become a genuine Swiss classic. The link with an international reputation. This is one of the reasons why Switzerland» tag Forster Kitchens have succeeded in gaining manufacturer of steel kitchens and the positive «Made in material. The advantages associated with steel and its properties have helped Forster Kitchens to become widely known and gant presentation. The focus is on steel as a high-quality ma-

At the Swissbau exhibition in January and the subsequent spring exhibitions, Forster presented its new look. This was accompanied by two brochures which emphasised the ele-

As classy as the product: the new appearance of Forster Kitchens.

A Swiss classic in a new outfit

Forster Steel Kitchens experiences a new increase in demand. 2010 will see the launch of the revised product as well as a revamped corporate design.

At the Swissbau exhibition in January and the subsequent spring exhibitions, Forster presented its new look. This was accompanied by two brochures which emphasised the elegant presentation. The focus is on steel as a high-quality material. The advantages associated with steel and its properties have helped Forster Kitchens to become widely known and popular. With its new niche positioning as the only European manufacturer of steel kitchens and the positive «Made in Switzerland» tag Forster Kitchens have succeeded in gaining an international reputation. This is one of the reasons why they have become a genuine Swiss classic. The link with Switzerland is also expressed in the logo. The normal ratio of the size of the claim to that of the logo is inverted: in this way the brand name, the product and its provenance become the main statement in all applications. The actual unchanged logo is added as a mark of competence. The inherent properties of powder-coated steel are visually underlined and appear as background in promotional material. At the same time, the colours of the logo are reduced in order to give expression to the effect of the material. Over the course of the year, the new corporate design will be applied to all communication tools such as brochures, stationery, showroom decor, and the website.

Strength in the market thanks to automation

Forster Kitchens & Refrigeration AG wants to continue to strengthen its market position in 2010. Already back in 2008, the Forster team began revising the twelve existing basic models to meet the design requirements of the market.

For example, the inside lighting of refrigerators has become important. In the past a standard design provided a warm light source on the side or at the top. By contrast, today’s market demands better lighting levels and greater energy efficiency. It is believed that more light also uses more energy. But that is not true in the case of Forster refrigerators where all new base models are equipped with the latest generation of LED lamps. Compared to the warm light sources which were formerly used, there is a double benefit. Today’s LED technology does not emit any heat, which in a refrigerator is not wanted anyway. In addition, it is much more efficient than traditional lighting systems. In order to illuminate the interior more evenly, Forster has increased the number of lights by four- to six-fold, depending on the type of appliance, and at the same time reduced power consumption by more than 55%. However, this added benefit required great efforts at the pre-assembly stage of the refrigerators. The installation of the additional electrical cables meant that instead of the previous 90,000 holes there were now about 570,000 holes to be drilled which resulted in additional work of about 2,000 working hours per year. This meant that manual drilling was no longer an option for the future. Instead, the Forster team aimed for an automated solution without loss of cycle time or reduction in output. This meant that the automatic facility had to be incorporated into an existing system. In turn this meant that only the existing «Rigo 1» vacuum forming machine could be considered, which produces the inside containers of the refrigerators. Today this plant is used for a second work cycle after the forming process to cut recesses for the assembly of the container using a robot. In order to make optimum use of this processing time, the Forster team opted for a linear axle drill robot which was installed on a portal above this system. The result is impressive: in a cycle time of about 45 seconds, the robot drills up to 17 holes with three different diameters in each refrigerator container. These significant improvements create internal motivation and a clearly strengthened market position externally.

The Wittmann five-axle linear drill robot.

Member of the IF jury, Hansgeorg Derks inspects one of the submissions.
Piatti: four-fold sustainability
For Piatti, sustainability is at the centre of the design, detailing and implementation of kitchens. The Swiss kitchen manufacturer clearly emphasises the importance of the right materials, health, low primary and secondary energy consumption.

1. Choice of materials
Piatti tries to reduce the quantity of material used in its kitchen furniture by using new types of lightweight timber panels and optimised design solutions. This means that handling is easier and the amount of harmful substances for disposal can be reduced. But the choice of material can also be influenced by the customers themselves. For timber materials, Piatti recommends rapidly growing timber species which can be produced from sources as near as possible to the production site. This shortens transport and reduces environmental pollution created by haulage. Fully recyclable materials such as stainless steel and glass, or materials made from recycled substances, are used more and more in kitchen design.

2. Health
Use of the new lightweight timber panel has the additional advantage that its production requires less adhesive than traditional chipboard. Functional kitchen design and shiny surfaces are easier to clean and save on cleansing agents. Non-porous smooth surfaces such as chromium nickel steel help to keep kitchens as free from germs as possible, an important prerequisite for allergy sufferers.

3. Energy consumption
In normal households, the kitchen is one of the main «energy guzzlers». A lot of energy can be saved by selecting the right electrical equipment, and by employing sensible practices in the kitchen. Water-saving devices help to minimise water consumption. Recirculation hoods prevent large quantities of hot air from being extracted to the outside, while new equipment technologies help to reduce power consumption. By choosing two smaller fridges rather than one large one, one can reduce the amount of expensively-cooled air discharging into the kitchen every time the refrigerator is opened, and thereby cooling the interior.

4. Grey energy
Piatti tries to successively simplify the complexity of kitchen projects. New kitchen designs, simplified layout design options and optimised ordering processes help to reduce the cost of energy and errors in the design, production and assembly of kitchens. Quality management systems to ISO 9001 and the ISO 14001 environmental certificate help to keep the demand for secondary energy of Piatti kitchens at a low level, and even to reduce it further.

Philippe Starck with Warendorf in China
On 24 May 2010, the designer Philippe Starck and Dr. Edgar Oehler opened the new Warendorf flagship store in Beijing. Furthermore, he inaugurated the launch of the Starck by Warendorf product line in Shanghai a day later.

Already more than a year ago, AFG Arboaria-Forster-Holding AG formed AFG Asia Pacific in Shanghai in order to further the AFG Group’s interests from this leading Chinese metropolis under the heading “one building, one stop”.

Dr. Edgar Oehler looks forward to the partnership
«This is the reason why we want to be represented there with our kitchen competence. And with the two Warendorf flagship stores in Beijing and Shanghai, we are now offering our kitchens in both these Chinese cities – supported by Anna Pan here in Beijing and Mr CY Cheung and Mr Victor Wong in Shanghai. We firmly believe that with these persons we have found the right partners to appropriately and competently represent us. We are looking forward to a successful cooperation with them», said Dr. Edgar Oehler in his opening address in front of a total of about 400 guests from commerce, trade, architecture, design, the building industry and the media.

Presentation and sales in a central location
These two kitchen studios enjoy very central positions and exhibit exclusively Warendorf Kitchens over a space of 500 m² in Beijing and 250 m² in Shanghai. Philippe Starck, who is also popular and well-known as a designer in China, was therefore keen to be there in person to unveil his kitchen models himself together with Dr. Edgar Oehler, Blaise Godet, the Swiss Ambassador in China, Felix Aepli, CEO of AFG Asia Pacific, Susan Lu, who has been appointed by AFG for kitchen sales in China, and Cindy Chen, Head of AFG Marketing for Asia Pacific.

Philippe Starck cooks Chinese
The assembled guests enthusiastically welcomed the open lifestyle concept of the Warendorf kitchens and the different, future-orientated «Starck by Warendorf» kitchen line. They enjoyed the evening with some live cookery in the kitchens, and were clearly delighted to be able to show Philippe Starck how to prepare Chinese dishes.
The new Warendorf website

The new Warendorf internet portal – www.warendorf.eu – takes its cue from the company’s classy design and creates direct contacts to the trade.

The website is part of the corporate design and rounds off the overall image of the brand. Compared to the previous website, the number of items on the main menu have been significantly reduced to facilitate fast and easy access. Large images create an emotional appeal for end customers, motivating them to visit their specialist dealer in their city. It is hoped that customers will recommend the kitchens to others and thus create a kind of virus effect. The highly individual images create an emotional appeal for end customers, motivating them to visit their specialist dealer in their city. It is hoped that customers will recommend the kitchens to others and thus create a kind of virus effect.

The objective of the site is to support the end customer up to a certain level of decision-making and to facilitate contact with the dealer thereafter. In this way, customer loyalty and support are still firmly in the hands of the local dealer. For this reason it was important to integrate trade partners and flagship stores more prominently on the website. They are now able to include their company profile on our Warendorf site so that end customers can immediately gain an impression. See for yourself at: www.warendorf.eu

The double crown has been formed from the letter W which stands for Warendorf, where the kitchens come from. It is a sharp, clear symbol representing the precision and quality of reliable products. The jagged form is also a reminder of the shape of flames, of fire – which is the origin of cooking and kitchens, so that the logo has been supplemented by the claim «kitchens for personalities since 1973». The new corporate colour titanium represents durability, strength and longevity and is also a very precious material. In a market environment dominated by black, red, yellow and green kitchen brands, this colour by itself represents high quality and exclusivity. With its easy-to-read and use «Univers» font it expresses solidarity and modern elegance. Therefore the three elements always appear together and define the identity of the brand personality. In this way the corporate design combines the internal performance profile of Warendorf Kitchens GmbH with its visual presentation. The task now is to make the new brand recognisable in the market by positioning it in such a way that it cannot be overlooked. Effective public relations activities control the direct contact with the end customer. Examples are full page adverts and inserts in consumer magazines such as Elle Deco, Lust auf Genuss, Architectural Digest, essen & trinken, Häuser, Living at Home, Schöner Wohnen, Feinschmecker, Zuhause Wohnen, WohnDesign, H.O.M.E., Atrium, Spiegel, Stern. The brand change has already been accomplished in the factory at Warendorf and in the flagship stores at Düsseldorf and Hamburg. The stores were re-opened with an evening event with studio guests, trade partners, representatives of commerce and the media, on 23 April in Düsseldorf and 6 May in Hamburg.
Since January 2010 EgoKiefer has been the exclusive MINERGIE® leading partner for windows and doors and supplies the most comprehensive range of MINERGIE® certified windows and front doors.

EgoKiefer attended the «Swissbau» trade fair in January as the first Swiss supplier of MINERGIE-P® certified windows. EgoKiefer window systems make an important contribution to environmental protection. In 2009 alone the EgoKiefer windows used for renovation work lowered heating fuel consumption by more than 8,000 tonnes and the CO₂ emissions by more than 25,000 tonnes. EgoKiefer has been an active proponent of environmental protection for decades. The unique life cycle assessment of the products clearly shows that EgoKiefer windows and front doors play a considerable role in conserving energy. With EgoKiefer climate protection is all-inclusive. The EgoKiefer windows lower energy consumption by up to 75 percent in comparison to old windows. The range now also features the first MINERGIE-P® certified windows in Switzerland: the Ego Kiefer plastic and plastic/aluminium window XL®.

EgoKiefer is the MINERGIE® leading partner

Swiss buildings need modernisation. Around 1.5 million buildings require renovation. Sustainable development of the buildings is a decisive factor in achieving climate targets and the aims of the 2,000 watt society. Although public subsidies for energy-efficient measures and renewable energy sources have triggered a response from property developers and house owners, today only around one percent of buildings are renovated each year. With the aim of providing all-round information to property developers, house owners and planners on the various options for saving energy and therefore money, the MINERGIE® office and EgoKiefer are organising numerous information events in all regions of Switzerland.

Successful MINERGIE® projects with a role model function

In Switzerland 15,947 buildings are certified to MINERGIE®, 626 buildings to MINERGIE®-P, 66 buildings to MINERGIE®-ECO, and 82 to MINERGIE®-P-ECO. One building which is particularly worthy of mention is the green apartment block in Mels, St.Gallen. The first MINERGIE®-P residential building in east Switzerland with MINERGIE®-P certified EgoKiefer plastic windows XL® only consumes one litre of heating oil per square metre instead of the 16 required by an older block of the same size. The apartments are, however, not heated with oil, but by an environmentally-friendly groundwater heat pump.

«

Justly proud of the certificate: Martin Kappel, Head of R&D and Patricia Bürgi, MINERGIE® Construction Agency.
On top of the world: top windows for a top location

Since the autumn of 2009 the renowned mountain hotel and restaurant Muottas Muragl in Samedan, Grisons, has been undergoing renovation and modernisation work. This construction project which was carried out at an altitude of 2,456 m presented a considerable challenge to the EgoKiefer specialist, Beffa GmbH. The MINERGIE® certified EgoKiefer wood/aluminium windows XL® were installed as part of the project.

Along with the impressive mountains, which circle the upper valley of Engadin, lies one other highlight of this region: the Muottas Muragl, with its breathtaking view over the lakeside area, especially at sunset. In addition to its geographical position at the heart of Engadin, the oldest train in Grisons is also a very good reason to include this vantage point in your holiday itinerary. The building was modernised in keeping with the historical architecture, and the main priority of the project was to combine tradition and innovation. In addition to the operational requirements, the modernisation work executed on the main building meets the specifications of the MINERGIE® standard. As top products and a partner with the highest degree of flexibility and in-depth specialist knowledge was required for this project, the client decided to use EgoKiefer windows and awarded the contract to the EgoKiefer specialist Beffa GmbH from St. Moritz. 90 EgoKiefer wood/aluminium windows XL® were fitted. Transport and installation proved to be a great challenge. While the fitters of the Beffa carpenter’s workshop were transported every day with the cable car, the windows had to be flown in by helicopter. With its XL® window technology EgoKiefer supplies high-efficiency windows which are unbeatable when it comes to energy and ecological efficiency. Due to the use of the latest adhesive technology, EgoKiefer XL® windows feature extremely narrow side-face views and therefore ensure more light, heat and a wider view. Combined with the exclusive EgoKiefer EgoVerre® high-efficiency insulating glass, the heating energy consumption of the building can be lowered by up to 75 percent in comparison to old windows. The mountain hotel will remain closed in the 2010 summer season due to the renovation work. However, in spite of the on-going refurbishment of the Muottas Muragl mountain hotel, a limited range of refreshments will be available for guests throughout the summer season.

www.egokiefer.ch provides information on subsidies

Efficient energetic renovation makes sense both from an ecological and economic viewpoint. On the one hand the builder is making an active, long-term contribution to environmental protection, and on the other he profits from various state and regional subsidies and saves money as a result. The financial support provided varies greatly, however, from municipality to municipality. The EgoKiefer subsidy information platform provides an overview.

The EgoKiefer subsidy information platform is a product of Docu-Media Schweiz GmbH, and is a Swiss subsidy database for all construction, renovation and energy conservation projects. Alongside national aid schemes, it also includes the latest schemes of the cantons, towns, municipalities, foundations, utility companies and other promoters. In addition to the energy-saving programmes primarily aimed at encouraging the installation of an energy-efficient heating system, heat insulation or the use of renewable energies, the subsidy platform also lists all other subsidies in the construction sector. The EgoKiefer online service for developers and renovators is free of charge. To view the individual subsidy information, simply visit the EgoKiefer website (www.egokiefer.ch), click the subsidy platform database option and enter the requested information. You will then be given a list of all possible subsidies.

280 to 300 million Swiss francs available

The new EgoKiefer subsidy platform also provides information on the government’s «building programme». The new building programme ratified by parliament promotes energy-efficient building modernisation throughout the whole of Switzerland. From 2010 onwards around 280 to 300 million Swiss francs will be available each year for modernisation of the shell of the building and the use of renewable energy in the building. Modernisation of individual components such as replacement windows is also subsidised.

With its unique system competence EgoKiefer supplies a full range of windows with MINERGIE® and MINERGIE-P® certified window systems which meet all requirements of the subsidy programmes.

More detailed information on ecological building and modernisation is given on our website at www.egokiefer.ch »Subsidies«.
To date the construction of wide doors has been almost exclusively the domain of metal construction companies. However, the developments of recent years now permit the production of more economical wide doors made of wood. One of these is the new product of RWD Schlatter AG, the KS68-G OZR. The door element can be constructed with a single leaf with the dimensions 3.1 x 3.5 m and with a double leaf with the dimensions 5 x 3.5 m. It can be used for a wide range of applications. A separate rotating door can be fitted as an emergency exit, and a glass section of up to 2.4 m (emergency exit door: up to 2 m²) can be included in the main panel. If the element is subjected to climate fluctuations, the version KSAP with the same basic construction but an undisputed architectural trend of visually blending the frame frieze or front of the frame with the door which is mounted without frames, but this is in keeping with the actual sense of such elements is lost by such measures, as they do not meet architectural expectations. In addition, the acronym «OZR» which stands for «without a frame» seems to be an unusual way to develop a door. RWD Schlatter is facing this new challenge and has designed a new door type.

The highlight of this new development is, however, the tested fire protection door. Fire protection test for the new door element KS68-G OZR.

The door as a wall section
The highlight of this new development is, however, the meaning of the acronym «OZR» which stands for «without frames». At the first glance it may seem strange to develop a door which is mounted without frames, but this is in keeping with an undisputed architectural trend of visually blending the door into the wall. The frame freeze or front of the frame are regarded as unaesthetic. This presented the company with an extreme challenge during design of the door, as the aim was to not only mount a single door leaf with a weight of more than 400 kg and an outswing of more than 3.1 m, but also to design it in a manner so that it was also rotatable and fit for its purpose. A special challenge had to be faced by the architects and general contractor during the planning and implementation phase due to the size of the element. No tolerance is permitted by the masonry, at least with regard to levelness. Otherwise the door cannot be opened.

If, for example, the ground in the opening direction of the door rises by more than 0.5 degrees, the ground slopes upwards over the distance of the door outswing by 27 mm. As a result the door element would have to be made 27 mm smaller if there is no ground clearance. If a clearance of 10 mm is included in calculations, when the door is closed there would be a bottom gap of 37 mm, which naturally does not meet architectural expectations. In addition, the actual sense of such elements is lost by such measures, as they should be blend seamlessly into the wall. If the floor slopes downwards, this is obviously not a problem. The masonry also has to satisfy the same accuracy demands. Any deviation from the perpendicular means that there is a non-parallel shadow groove at the side. With a construction height of 3.5 m this can make a difference of several millimetres.

Deserving the best label
RWD Schlatter is following its path towards sustainable use of the world’s forests without compromise. The company only uses FSC-certified door blanks to promote environmental protection. One year ago RWD Schlatter was one of the few door suppliers in Switzerland which achieved FSC certification. FSC stands for «Forest Stewardship Council» and is the only label recognised by the WWF and Greenpeace as certification for sustainable forest management. RWD Schlatter has now extended the range of FSC-certified blanks by five types (F48-FSC, F58-FSC, PF-FSC, PF48-FSC, PF58-FSC).

There are also many other similar types of labels available in this field, but FSC has the highest standard. It not only promotes a forest management system but also the rights of the indigenous population in the respective regions. Naturally it is controversial whether it makes sense to lend the same weight to labels which are not comparable, but this matter must be handled on a political level. In this respect RWD Schlatter also acts in accordance with the principle that customers have the right to the best label. Clearly products which systematically exclude the ruthless exploitation of forests – mainly tropical timber – and which instate corresponding controls are somewhat more expensive than those which do not. However, the forests and oceans are our only source of oxygen. In adhering to these principles, we are making a small contribution to the protection of these valuable resources.
A fresh image for the company right through to the carrier bag: Forster Precision Steel Tubes also make a good visual impression.

In spite of the ash cloud and chaotic travelling conditions, Forster Precision Steel Tubes is able to look back over an interesting TUBE 2010 in Düsseldorf. The new colour scheme of the Forster Precision Steel Tubes stand met with the enthusiasm of visitors. The team were in excellent spirits, and optimism with regard to the economic situation was also noticeable among customers and interested visitors to the stand. Interesting talks took place between the various exhibitors. The rising steel prices were once more a main topic of discussion. The surprising attendance and non-attendance of various companies also provided plenty of food for conversation. This year the Forster team took home a number of interesting contacts and talks, new market insights and positive feedback from visitors. With these uplifting experiences the company is motivated to tackle the future and is looking forward to a «Wiedersehen» in Düsseldorf in 2012.

Dramatic conclusion with a happy end
It is the 15 April 2010. The sun is shining over Düsseldorf. Only the volcano eruption in Iceland casts a shadow over the fourth day of the fair. A voice on the radio reports on a dramatic natural phenomenon, the extent of which is difficult to estimate and is only a matter of speculation. A feeling of unrest spreads among exhibitors and visitors. The flight home suddenly seems to be uncertain. What now? Hope that the cloud of ash does not reach the travellers? Should they check out alternative means of transport? Before making any decisions, everyone closely follows the latest news. Friday, 16 April 2010. After a fortifying breakfast the Forster Precision Steel Tubes team books train tickets for the trip from Düsseldorf to Zurich. This was a wise decision, as all trains and rental cars are fully booked by lunchtime. Returning to the exhibition grounds, the extent of the consequences of the outbreak are clearly evident. Several exhibitors and especially international guests have already packed their bags and have fled from the fair. The trade fair management team tries to coordinate car shares among exhibitors and visitors.

Forster team, however, remains unflustered and is at the disposal of the last few visitors with advice and practical assistance. At the close of the fair the team also bids farewell to the exhibition and sets off for the main Düsseldorf station. The trip home offered sufficient opportunity to look back over a successful TUBE 2010.

Forster with a stylish, fresh new colour scheme at the TUBE.
Renovation and extension work on the Centre Hospitalier will be completed in 2014.

Plans involve the replacement of the eight windows in an entire section within one day; these are installed in four patient’s rooms. This means that the old windows will be removed and the new windows fully fitted at the same time so that life at the hospital can continue as usual. Each room will therefore only be unoccupied for a single day. Additional specifications such as the prevention of noise emission and minimal dust generation must also be complied with. «This building site is the greatest challenge of my career», comments Eric Ronsin, the site manager. «Luckily the Forster Unico windows are easy to install. The system with its excellent soundproofing values is predestined for the extreme conditions which prevail near Orly airport. Forster unico is a very good product and the customer is very pleased with it.» In addition to the windows, façade elements from the Forster thermfix vario system will be installed for the walkways.

### Construction site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Centre Hospitalier intercommunal de Villeneuve-Saint-Georges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Atelier Michel Remon, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal engineering</td>
<td>MBM, Salux de Vesoul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation</td>
<td>STIM Technibat, Saint-Ouen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Elements          | • 1,100 window elements 0.9 x 2.7 m with the Forster Unico system  
|                   | • 64 façade elements, total 560 m² with the Forster thermfix vario system, soundproofing 44 dB |
| Schedule          | Installation of the elements by December 2010, completion of the entire project by 2014 |

### High-profile modernisation

The Centre Hospitalier de Villeneuve-Saint-Georges was built near Paris in 1971 and is currently undergoing full renovation which will be completed in various stages. Currently 1,100 new windows with the Forster Unico system are currently in production and will replace the old windows in record time.

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### Rotary swaging: high-precision tube forming

Rotary swaging is a process which has been in use for more than 100 years, and which was developed further for the series production of individual automotive components. It is a non-cutting forming process for narrowing the cross-section of tubes, rods and wire. The final contour of the formed workpieces is achieved without or with only minimum further processing. The processing times are considerably shorter than those of cutting processes such as turning and milling, but almost the same accuracy is achieved. In many cases tubes can be used instead of solid material, which means a considerably lower weight and less material consumption with the same functional characteristics. Most tubes formed by rotary swaging are safety components in vehicles such as steering shafts for the steering wheel, piston rods for shock absorbers, stabilisers, drive and selector shafts. The high demands to be met regarding accuracy, stress resistance and reproducibility mean that the tube supplier can contribute his experience at the earliest possible stage of the development phase. To date mainly cold-drawn tubes and sometimes seamless tubes are used. Due to the precision production options, especially on the welding lines RS50 and RS60, and the increasing price pressure of the automotive industry, these are now frequently substituted with welded precision steel tubes.

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### Steel Technology

![Steel Technology](image-url)
The listed priest seminary St. Wolfgang in Regensburg, Germany was also renovated for the Pope’s visit in 2006. Inside with Forster fuego EI30 and EI90 fire doors.

Due to their outstanding static properties, extremely narrow profile cross-sections and state-of-the-art thermal insulation values, the strengths of the Forster Profile Systems really come to the fore in renovation projects.

Refurbishment of existing buildings presents a special challenge to planners. With the aid of the latest technologies they have to do justice to the more stringent legal regulations – for example the «thermal insulation ordinance» – and at the same time conserve the existing structure without changing the original character of the building. This applies in particular to windows and doors, which used to be made with much thinner frames, but no longer meet today’s insulation requirements. Forster Profile Systems made of steel or stainless steel are an excellent choice for all kinds of renovation projects due to their excellent static properties, very narrow profile cross-sections and the up-to-date thermal insulation values. Normally higher safety requirements such as fire, smoke and burglar protection are also required. In this respect the Forster systems also offer tested and approved design types.

«Forster Profile Systems are also an excellent choice for renovation projects of all kinds.»
Jörg Ploen, Forster’s technical consultant, had his work cut out showing the many interested visitors the advantages of the Forster Profile Systems.

Truck from Osnabrück – Berlin – Osnabrück: Since the fall of the Berlin wall an inner-German «road lift» for more than 20 years.

At the end of April Kötter+Siefker, the long-standing dealer of Forster Profile Systems, celebrated their 90-year company anniversary with a large-scale customer event. More than 25 years ago Kötter+Siefker was the first German distributor for Forster with regional market responsibility. The team of Kötter+Siefker and alkuba regard themselves as a full-range supplier for Forster Profile Systems in combination with fire protection and safety glass. At the same time the company also operates as a service provider for building automation and safety engineering. No fewer than 86 exhibitors presented their products at the company’s own in-house trade fair. More than 1,300 customers took up the invitation to attend the celebrations.

The interested visitors were also shown the many impressive benefits of the Forster unico profile system. The fact that the basic profiles are made of up to 100 percent recyclable steel and do not contain any plastic insulators left a lasting impression. The decisive advantages regarding the high degree of functionality, aesthetics and quality were widely appreciated.

Tradition geared to the future

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Market expansion in Eastern Europe

With the acquisition of Schachermayer, Forster Profile Systems is extending its sales and distribution structures in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Forster Profile Systems succeeded in acquiring the company, which is based in Linz, Austria, as a new distributor.

Schachermayer is one of the leading architectural hardware dealers with operations in 11 countries and employs a workforce of around 1,700. The subsidiary in Bratislava, Slovakia, is used as a central warehouse for Forster Profile Systems. The logistics standard of the company already complies with the highest specifications today. The basis for this is the «97-48-10» service principle. 97% of the around 110,000 articles are on stock. The normal supply and delivery time is 48 hours, and customers only have to wait 10 minutes if they collect their own goods. In the middle of April a delegation from the new markets visited Forster Profile Systems in Arbon for training purposes. For one week the attendees were given in-depth instruction on the steel and stainless steel systems as well as the corresponding software solutions. The Forster Profile team is very confident that Schachermayer will be a strong, competent partner and is looking forward to future collaboration between the companies.

Even more efficient door production

Forster Profile Systems now supplies pre-fabricated profiles for lock installation on the thermally insulated Forster unico door as were also supplied in the past for fire protection doors.

Market research has revealed that these satisfy actual customer needs. In spite of the already short processing times for the system, the profiles can now also achieve additional time savings during production of the door leaves of over half an hour. All necessary cutting and drilling work for the locks has already been done. It is only necessary to cut the profiles to the required length and then weld them together to make a frame. The pre-fabricated profiles are available in lengths of 3,000 mm in all three material types of bright steel, Sendzimir galvanised steel and stainless steel (ground with a 220 – 240 grain with protective film).

Visitors from the Far East

A large delegation from China made up of new distributors and a façade construction company visited the Division Steel Technology in Arbon at the end of March. Before crossing the Swiss borders the delegation attended the «Fensterbauforum» trade fair in Nuremberg, Germany, and were able to gain an impression of the dynamic and productive window and façade industry in Europe. At the Forster stand the visitors had their first taste of their profile systems. This was followed by a comprehensive system training seminar in Arbon. A tour around the AFG Corporate Center and a visit to the sister subsidiaries Forster Kitchens, RWD Schütter and EgoKiefer were naturally also on the itinerary. To round off their trip in a fitting manner, the delegation made use of the opportunity to admire the beautiful scenic highlights of our country. The Jungfraujoch as well as the town of Lucerne were a must.
In future, the American subsidiary of STI | Hartchrom will not only supply the defense industry, but also commercial US industries.

Since the formation of the US subsidiary Hartchrom Inc. in the USA in 1999, STI | Hartchrom has primarily been active in the high-end coating of defence technology products. In this way, STI | Hartchrom continues to drive its growth and expansion strategy in the American market. In addition to the strongly growing market in China, where STI | Hartchrom also operates, America offers great potential for surface technology. The new chromium bath has a volume of 65,000 litres in a tank measuring 2,500 x 2,500 mm on the inside, with a fluid level of 10,400 mm. In this size of tank customers have the opportunity of chromium-plating medium to large components of up to 2,000 mm in diameter, 8,000 mm in length and weighing up to 30,000 kg.

«America offers great potential for surface technology.»

STI | Hartchrom launches the largest chromium bath in USA

With the construction of the largest chromium bath in the USA, STI | Hartchrom enters the commercial US market. This is a clear commitment to the systematically implemented growth and expansion strategy.

The new plant can be used to chromium-plate components of up to 2,000 mm in diameter and up to 8,000 mm in length.
Mechanical precision machining

STI | Hartchrom will machine components to precise drawings and apply the desired finishes. The company machines small and large components economically and highly precisely to produce the required tolerances in shape and position, using CNC-controlled machinery.

All components have different requirements for their different applications which are specified in detail: their production requires highly sophisticated and efficient processes to produce top-quality at competitive prices. To this end, STI | Hartchrom maintains modern machines for turning/milling, grinding and polishing. In addition, STI’s specialists with their many years of experience ensure that the specified shape and degrees of roughness are precisely produced.

Specialised manufacture
The manufacturing industry demands high standards for their plant and machinery components. STI | Hartchrom’s performance spectrum includes highly precise, automated machining processes for individual and serial production, as well as for repairs and reconditioning. The company will process symmetric round shapes down to the smallest specified tolerances.

Infrastructure for precise measuring instrument technology
For an exact assessment of the processed finishes, STI | Hartchrom uses comprehensive measuring technology. For larger dimensions of up to 1,000 mm in diameter and 2,500 mm in length a highly precise 3D coordinate measuring system is available directly in the production environment. In addition, concentricity is checked in a separate test stand and the degree of roughness is measured with precision instruments. On request, STI | Hartchrom will include all measurement records and diagrams with the delivery of the component.

<table>
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<th>Broad service spectrum</th>
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<td><strong>Turning/milling</strong></td>
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Efficient processes and many years of experience make it possible to process components to the required tolerances.
Proven efficiency, reliability and top quality

STI | Hartchrom is the first company in the surface treatment industry to obtain Germanischer Lloyd certification for its marine branch. Its thermal spray coating was certified by the Thermal Spray Association almost at the same time. The internationally recognised certificates underline the high quality of the products and efficiency of the operating procedures.

Germanischer Lloyd is an institution with world-wide recognition which has certified STI | Hartchrom for large pistons for ship engines.

Quality assurance for thermal spray technology

STI | Hartchrom’s thermal spray technology has been successfully certified under the guidelines of the Thermal Spray Association (GTS). Certification under these guidelines involves the examination of process capability, machine technology and coating quality as well as the expert knowledge of personnel. «The examination, which takes the form of theory and practice tests and involves the coating of test samples, confirmed that the skills involved in thermal spray application are well mastered and comply with the quality requirements in the Association’s standards», explains Peter Heinrich, Managing Director of GTS, on awarding the certificate on 26 April 2010.

Expanding the technological base

In its growth strategy, STI | Hartchrom emphasises the installation of modern infrastructure, a strong international focus and the continuing expansion of its technological base. In close cooperation with its customers, STI | Hartchrom tries to find long-term economical solutions. Thermal spray technology supplements the company’s existing coating processes such as hard chromium, chemical-nickel and others and is therefore a valuable contribution to the service range of the STI group. STI | Hartchrom invested in the first thermal spray technology plant back in 2007. In 2008, with the construction of the STI Westside Center in Steinach, Switzerland, STI | Hartchrom has expanded its capacity by an additional 7,500 m² of production area and has created space for the thermal spray technology. After the initial construction phase, which was completed successfully, the first serial production of thermally sprayed cylinders for the printing machine industry was started in January 2009.

Economical surfaces

Leading engine manufacturers and their licensees are amongst the customers served by STI | Hartchrom. The company’s range of services includes hard chromium plating and grinding the ring grooves of new piston heads and those requiring renovation as well as the coating of piston rings, piston skirts, cylinder liners, crank shafts, valves and other components. In order to meet the high functional and economical requirements of the shipping industry, STI | Hartchrom has developed an innovative coating system for the grooves of piston heads and the associated piston rings of large diesel engines. The coating system provides maximum wear protection and is suitable for both new piston heads as well as those that have not been coated or have been coated and require overhaul. The modern, 2,000 m² processing centre in Steinach, Switzerland, was designed for short throughput times and maximum efficiency.

Germanischer Lloyd has international recognition

Germanischer Lloyd is one of the leading ship classification companies. The company not only looks after the classified sailing fleet and monitors ship building, but also enjoys an excellent reputation as a certification agency with world-wide recognition. STI | Hartchrom has achieved certification for its hard chromium-plateing process of grooves in large pistons for 2- and 4-stroke engines. The requirements of this process, which stipulate a high-quality, homogeneous and reproducible coating quality, were all complied with.

Thermal spray technology

Thermal spray technology relies on the interaction between thermal and kinetic energy. The choice of spray process depends on the respective application. STI | Hartchrom has achieved its GTS certification for the high-velocity oxygen fuel thermal spray process (HVOF), which can be applied to most metals, alloys and ceramics. This advantageous, economical process has only very little impact on the basic material of the component. Designs with many angles can be coated with hardly any problems, and in many cases it is not necessary to follow the work up with grinding and polishing. Due to these characteristics thermal spray technology is very versatile and is applied in the paper and printing industries, in engineering and in the energy and environmental sectors.

High-velocity oxygen fuel spray process

The common characteristic of all thermal spray processes is a concentrated, high-energy heat source into which the coating material is inserted in the form of wires, rods or powder, and is applied on to the component surface at high speed in the form of spray droplets. In the high-velocity oxygen fuel spray process the coating material is applied in powder form. The process is characterised by the extremely high speed of the fuel/oxygen jet. Due to this high gas speed, which reaches 2,500 m/s when using kerosene, it is possible to achieve very high quality and dense coatings with good adhesion.
**Well strapped, safely transported**

The legal requirements for securing cargo in transport are increasing all the time. In order to ensure that cargo in transport is adequately secured, also in ambiguous cases, STI | Hartchrom has called on the advice of an expert. The reason is that between the haulier, the supplier and the customer, there are often ambiguous situations.

STI | Hartchrom invests significant sums in a modern and reliable infrastructure. This includes transport and packaging where questions of safety and protection have a high priority. STI | Hartchrom called on the advice of Richard Knaus, an experienced expert on securing goods in transit. «If the cargo has not been adequately secured, or not at all, there is a risk for the goods, the vehicle and others. Although it always takes time and costs money to secure cargo, there are simple means and methods with which a lot of safety can be achieved», says Richard Knaus during the training in Steinach (Switzerland).

Inadequately secured cargo and its consequences

According to estimates by the «Association of German Insurers (GDV)» inadequately secured cargo could account for about 13% of road accidents in heavy goods traffic. «The most frequent excuse given for inadequately secured cargo is lack of time or lack of strapping material», explains Richard Knaus. Because in road transport, the acceleration and braking processes as well as avoidance manoeuvres or driving around bends causes significant forces to act on the cargo. Once a cargo is no longer secure serious accidents usually ensue.

Choosing the right packaging

For decades STI | Hartchrom has been cultivating close contact and cooperation with its customers. The coated and usually heavy and expensive components have to be delivered in excellent condition but also rapidly and on time. When the packaging is suitably designed – by the customer and the supplier – it is possible to avoid damage and/or loss. The packaging should not only protect the product from corrosion but also safely absorb forces occurring during transport. As STI | Hartchrom is an intermediate supplier, the company relies on components being delivered in suitable packaging by its customers.

Improving safety

Making cargo secure also means that one has to familiarise oneself with the legal and technical regulations as well as the laws of physics. This includes knowledge about the stability of transport vehicles and the strength of strapping. There are many examples that show that with relatively simple means and small changes, it is possible to significantly increase safety. STI | Hartchrom secures its goods in transit based on three criteria: the cargo should be as close-fitting as possible, it should be placed on anti-skid mats and it should be fastened with a suitable number of straps. In this way it is possible to reduce the risk to a minimum.

Richard Knaus, expert on cargo security.

«Cargo security is a mandatory requirement»

STI | Hartchrom puts quality first – and that includes the safety of HGV transport. For this reason, the company called on Richard Knaus who is an independent expert in the field. In the interview below he comments on a subject that unfortunately is often overlooked.

STI | Hartchrom: Mr. Knaus, cargo security is often seen as an overblown subject, but a necessary chore. What is your reaction to such comments?

Richard Knaus: It is imperative to secure cargo; it is clear from transport checks and accident statistics that more must be done. Cargo safety is something everybody owes themselves and all other road users. And the route to correct cargo safety is actually relatively simple – although it is important to understand the basic principles.

When securing cargo, what aspects should one focus on?

Goods should always be loaded on to the vehicle in such a way that they make close contact with the cargo area – particularly in the direction of travel, as this is where the strongest dynamic forces occur.

What is the most effective method for securing cargo?

The simplest method for securing cargo would be to fully load the vehicle bed with goods. However, in many cases this is not possible because the size of the cargo and the vehicle dimensions do not match 100%. Where it is not possible to closely pack the goods, gaps must be filled with pallets or air bags and the cargo must be secured with appropriate strapping and methods. What it is important to know: anti-skid materials such as anti-skid mats are useful in that they make strapping more effective. And – just like ratchet sets – they are inexpensive to buy.

What strapping systems do you recommend?

There are different systems available: straps, strapping wires and strapping chains. Which one you choose depends on the respective application. There are two important points to observe as a matter of principle. If the cargo has sharp edges, it is imperative to use edge guards. Secondly, any strapping used must be free from damage and have the appropriate label. The label should contain information such as the securing force of the respective strapping device.

Who is responsible and who is liable in the case of an accident?

Responsibility and liability are quite closely connected. The basic rule is: the security of the cargo is not only the vehicle holder’s responsibility and that of the dispatcher, the driver and also the loader and the supplier. All parties will be called upon.

How should be STI | Hartchrom’s approach when it comes to unusual loads?

In the case of unusual loads there are often misunderstandings and differing opinions. In such cases it is worth involving an independent expert.

The police are stepping up checks on the safety of cargo. This often involves delays. What should drivers do?

Today, major police control campaigns on motorways are carried out with a lot of manpower, comprehensive technical equipment and expertise. When we are talking about secure cargo, we are dealing with the laws of physics rather than opinions. The best approach is to be cooperative and, if requested, carry out additional safety measures.