timber

Pfeifer Group Company Magazine

PFEIFER

EDITION 7 | *May 2020*

Innovation is our expertise

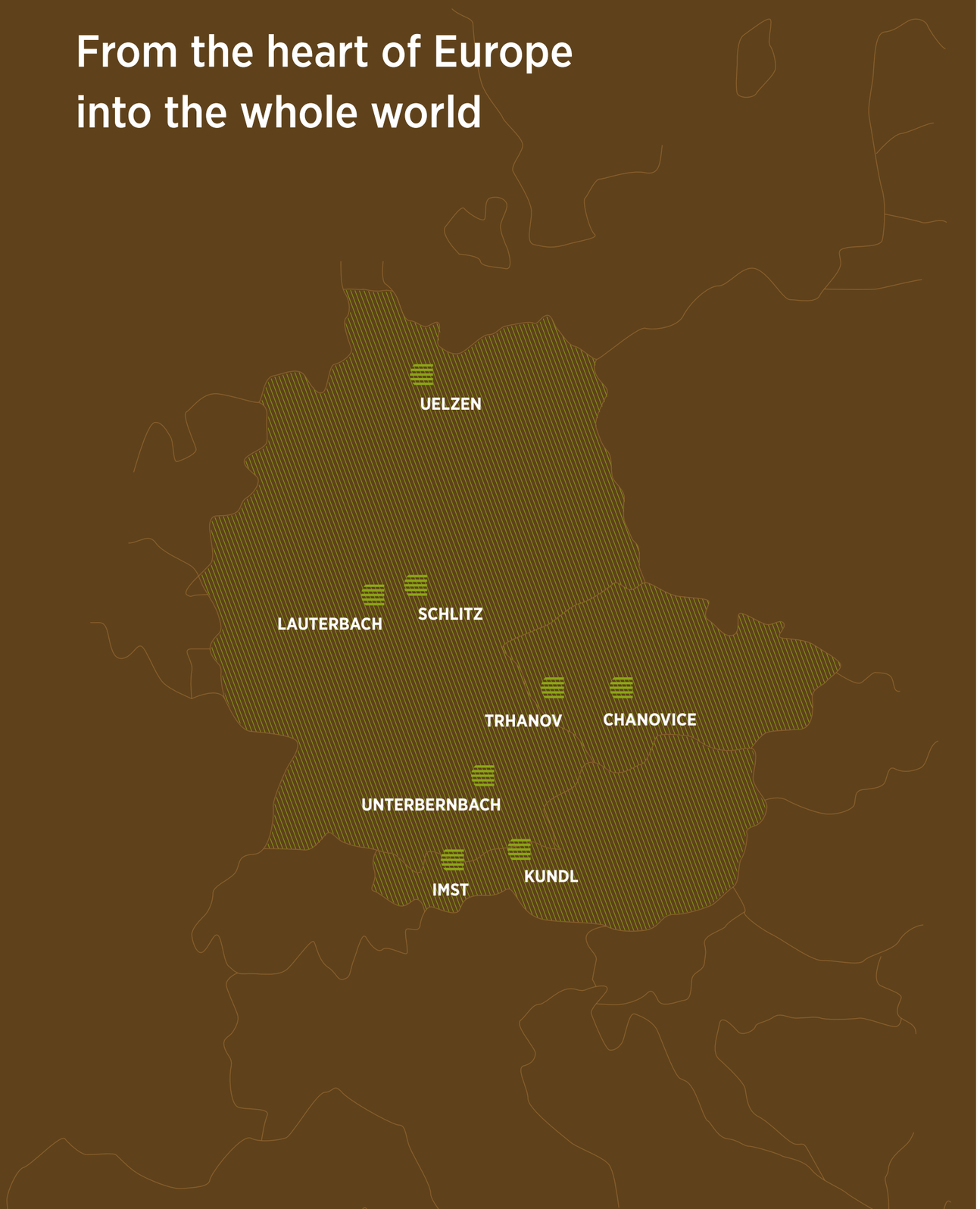
CLT production in Schlitz

Quality management

Innovation team

Upturn in Chanovice

From the heart of Europe into the whole world



PASSION FOR TIMBER

© Gerhard Berger, Title page: Uwe Mühlhäusser

Editorial

Wood is one of the most fascinating raw materials. It is long-lasting, flexible and versatile. Its similarities with the characteristics of the Pfeifer Group are obvious. Thanks to our history spanning more than 71 years, our partners in more than 90 countries around the world see us as a company that has grown healthily and stays true to its values. As a family-run company, we think in terms of generations. This is precisely why we see change as something steady.

The Corona pandemic represents an unprecedented challenge to the world's economy. Nevertheless we face its effects with determination and confidence. We believe in the future of wood as a building material and believe in the quality of our products. No matter if they are used as building material, sources of energy or packaging material: Our products' sustainability blazes a path towards economic perspectives for our customers and our Group.

With this in mind we are particularly proud of taking into operation our new CLT manufacturing plant in Schlitz. Wood – refined into cross laminated timber – is the most promising alternative to conventional building materials in the building trade. Pfeifer CLT has enjoyed high demand prior to the lockdown. A sign that our products are associated with quality and reliability on the markets. Establishing our own quality management team is aimed at strengthening the Pfeifer products' excellent reputation, especially in these troubling times.

In the course of 2020, we will also offer our customers a significant quality impulse in the ordering and supply chain: Our new B2B service portal merges the analogue world of the timber industry with digital innovation. The e-commerce interface will allow you to order our entire range of products step by step. This automation of data exchange offers key advantages for all participants in the value chain. Pfeifer thus plays a pioneering role in the wood industry.

Our employees are deeply involved in all the innovations that are described in detail in this issue of timber 7. They practice the values that distinguish us as a leading company in the European timber industry every day: Commitment, a pioneering spirit and the unrelenting will to make a difference for the benefit of our customers. We consider ourselves lucky to be able to work towards the challenges of the future with such a great team.

Michael Pfeifer, CEO **Ewald Franzoi,** CFO **Clemens Pfeifer,** CTO
Managing Directors of the Pfeifer Holding GmbH

Products

10 – 19 Pfeifer CLT

Everything about the start of production and the comprehensive range of services

20 – 23 No.1 for bio-fuel pellets

How the status as Central Europe's largest manufacturer is being expanded

24 – 25 A perfect fit for timber construction

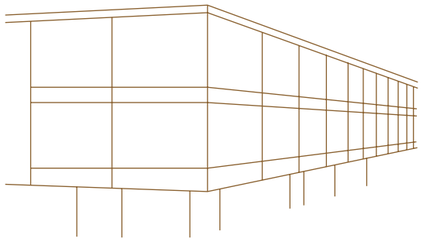
3-ply panels with tongue and groove combine quality and precision

26 – 31 Passion for quality

Introduction of the new Department for Quality Management

32 – 33 Export destination China on the rise

Timber construction products and sawn timber are booming, the conditions are complex



34 – 37

Locations/ Infrastructure

34 – 37 Plenty of room for strategic development

New office centres in Imst, Kundl and Trhanov secure attractive jobs

38 – 39 Location emphases

The most important investments and current projects at a glance

40 – 43 One does not work alone

Interview with CTO Clemens Pfeifer on core values and innovation culture

44 – 45 Logistics trends

How Pfeifer is pushing e-mobility and the expansion of rail transport

46 – 49 Upturn in Chanovice

Radek Pecka and Petra Moučková on the exemplary development of the location

10 – 19

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

© Hoch3, Dominik Steindl

Employees/ Partners

54 – 59 From the forest to the plant

Log purchasers and rangers work closely together on a sustainable basis

60 – 61 Further development in Uelzen

How the location positions itself as an attractive employer

62 – 65 Pfeifer Innovation team

Everything about the initiative to actively face strategic future issues

66 – 69 Desired work & opportunity provider

Pfeifer offers exciting jobs in various areas

70 – 71 Successful cooperation

Portrait of the Domingo family, our Spanish sales partner, and the Iberian market

54 – 59

50 – 52

Customer Relations

50 – 52 New service portal for customers

What the new B2B portal has to offer and how it works

53 Trade fair appearances in 2020/2021

When and where Pfeifer presents itself to experts

Basics

4 – 5 Editorial

8 – 9 Spotlight on our locations

72 – 74 Newsflash

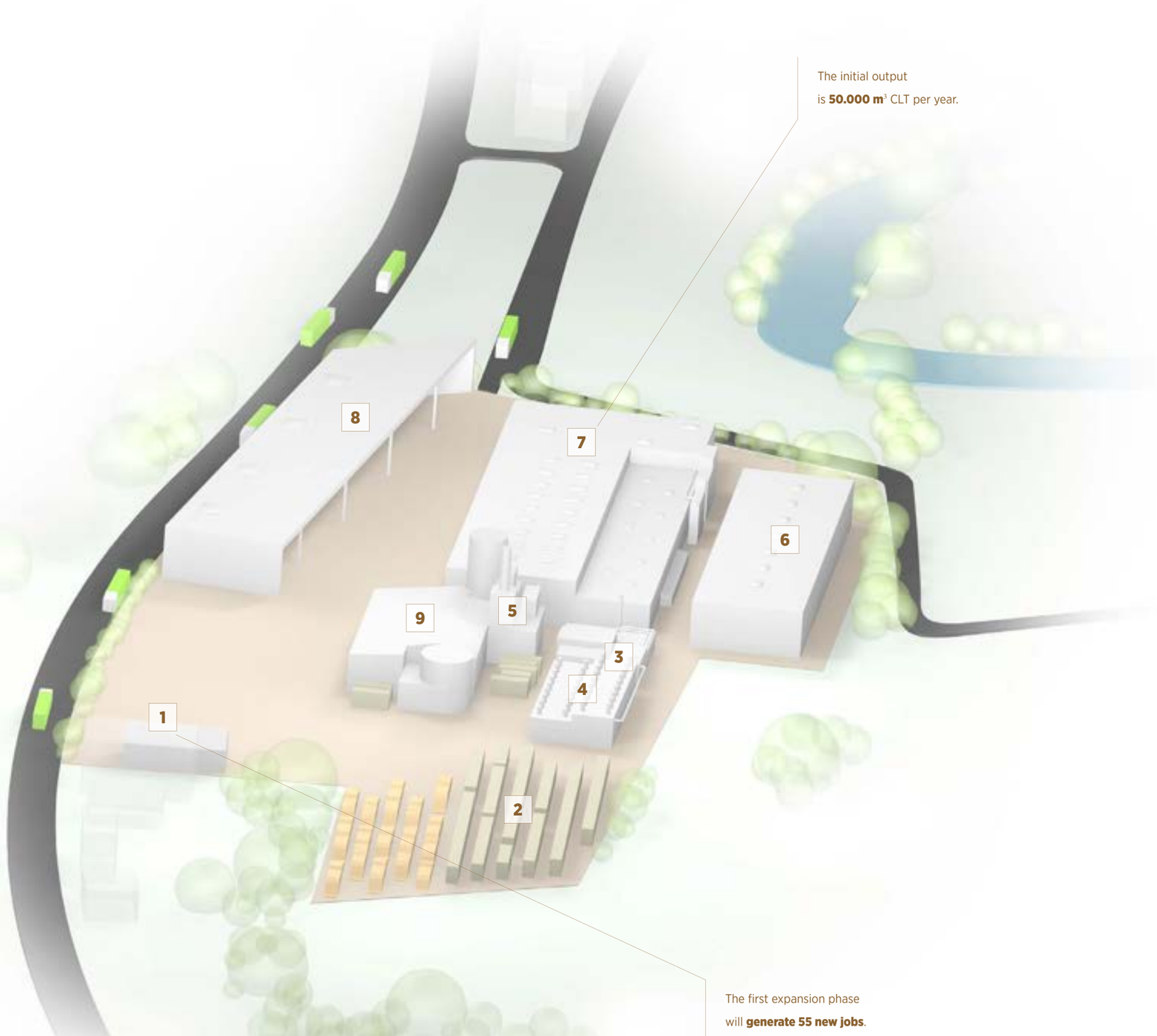
75 Imprint

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR LOCATIONS

Schlitz

The location in densely wooded central Hesse has been part of the Pfeifer Group since 1997. Until spring 2017, 1.2 million m² of concrete shuttering panels and formwork beams were produced here per year. Starting in autumn 2017, a new era began with the conversion and expansion for a highly modern cross laminated timber production CLT. Since the summer of 2019, high-quality CLT for the booming timber construction sector has been produced in the new production halls. The raw material for this comes from the neighbouring Pfeifer sawmill in Lauterbach, thus creating a perfect synergy between the two Hessian locations.

1 Office
2 Sawn timber stockyard
3 Heating system
4 Sawn timber drying
5 Chip treatment and storage
6 Planing hall
7 CLT production
8 Order picking hall
9 Warehouse



The initial output is **50.000 m³** CLT per year.

The first expansion phase will **generate 55 new jobs**.

NEW PFEIFER PRODUCT CONQUERS THE MARKET

Mission CLT
successfully launched

With the start of production of CLT in Schlitz, Pfeifer is positioning itself as a full-range supplier in the field of constructive wood building materials. This step entails major challenges for production, logistics and sales, which are being tackled with state-of-the-art equipment and IT, synergies between the locations and the most important resource – namely competent specialists.

Just in time for the summer of 2019, the production facilities at the Schlitz location were commissioned for trial operation to obtain all the necessary certifications and provide important feedback for fine tuning at all levels. At the same time, the sales team accepted first orders for the latest addition to the Pfeifer product range, which was tailored to the customers' needs in the newly created technical office in Schlitz. By the end of 2019, the first CLT panels were ready to leave the plant heading towards construction sites. With the sales launch, 55 new quality jobs have been created in Schlitz, the production volume in the first expansion phase is designed for 50,000 m³ CLT annually. Due to the great potential of cross laminated timber, there are already plans for a further expansion.

→

”

We cannot reinvent CLT, but we want to convince our customers with good product quality and reliable processing.

Bernd Gusinde, Technical Sales Manager in Schlitz

55

New quality jobs created thanks to the new production launch

50,000 m³

of CLT are produced annually

Expansion

Due to the great potential of cross laminated timber, there are already plans for a further expansion.

Comprehensive range of services

“We cannot reinvent CLT, but we want to convince our customers with good product quality and reliable processing,” emphasises Bernd Gusinde, Technical Sales Manager in Schlitz. Thus the proven Pfeifer virtues are also reflected in the CLT: first-class coverage of the market requirements for a load-bearing timber construction component; efficient and cost-optimised production using state-of-the-art production plants; leanest possible handling through IT-supported processes with simultaneous top customer service and on-time delivery. Due to the intensive support and project-related order processing involving the CLT material, it was necessary to set up a separate Technical Office, which also handles work preparation in direct proximity to the production facilities. Under the leadership of Bernd Gusinde, the appropriate infrastructure was established in the run-up to the start of production in order to optimise projects internally and generate orders as efficiently as possible. “In order to receive order information and design documents from our customers we need CAD know-how in work preparation. Based on this, we have to create, among other things, loading plans, provide customers with release plans in the form of individual part drawings and develop the control system for our joinery plant,” the timber construction expert explains. Ideally, the customer would already provide much of this information in a well-prepared form, but in practice, and especially for smaller orders, it is expected that these services would to a certain extent be provided in-house. When it comes to larger projects and more complex designs, a network of specialised partner offices handles the professional preparation of the documents for the customer.

Reinforcement for sales

In order to ensure rapid market entry, the existing network and sales structures, especially from the area of constructive timber products such as glulam (BSH) and solid wood panels (MHP), will be used. As CLT is a product requiring intensive customer advice and relevant topics such as statics, building physics and assembly have to be explained to a certain extent by the manufacturer, an increase in personnel was made to provide competent support in the market. On the one hand, our external sales force has been strengthened with employees who are technically specially trained for CLT, and on the other hand, the in-house technical service has been established at the Schlitz location. This team provides technical information, prepares pre-dimensioning and design proposals, gives processing instructions and clarifies technical production options.

Clearly defined target markets

Due to the central location of the CLT plant in Germany, the sales department focuses mainly on the German market, while Austria, Italy and Switzerland are

→

© Pfeifer Group, Dominik Steindl

What exactly is a technical sales manager, Mr Gusinde?

For one, I see myself as a classic product manager: I coordinate all product-related activities involving Pfeifer CLT internally and externally to ensure the desired market success.

This includes creating product strategies in coordination with the management, product marketing as well as advertising, planning and accompanying product development, among others together with research entities, universities and trade associations.

Furthermore, my tasks include active market research and analysing customer demands, closely monitoring the competition and supporting the Sales Department with key accounts and customer events as well as consulting activities with architects and engineers.

On the other hand, I take care of establishing and heading the Technical Office and Technical Sales Departments when it comes to product consultation, calculations and order processing.

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

also addressed. The existing Pfeifer customer structure makes it easier to enter these countries. In the mid-term, our European neighbours such as France and the BeNeLux states, but also Great Britain and Scandinavia will move into focus. Inquiries from Australia and the USA show just how international the CLT product is, even before sales launch. The developments in these countries, in Eastern Europe, Asia and overseas are being closely monitored.

Raw material supply guaranteed

The operation of a CLT production system relies on secure and high-quality raw material supply. Together with our Lauterbach-based sawmill as a supplier, Pfeifer has created a perfect synergy which offers enormous advantages in terms of efficiency and material yield, as well as guaranteeing consistent quality assurance. At Lauterbach, regional wood is cut in the quality and quantity we require and is delivered pre-sorted using the shortest possible route. The raw material from Lauterbach is mostly dried in Schlitz.

The Technical Office service team

Patrick Vey
hsbCad / CAD processing
calculation and order processing

Jan Kreß
Inquiries and supply
organisation consulting, calculation
and order processing

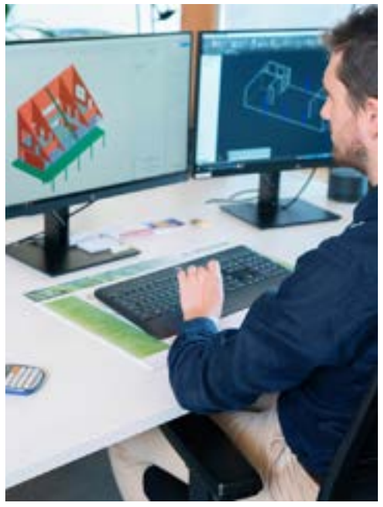
Benedikt Östreich
Statics / building physics / construction
consulting, calculation
and order processing

Edita Friedova
General organisation
customer creation and maintenance
CLT shipping and invoicing

From acquisition to delivery, all processes are supported by state-of-the-art IT. Nevertheless, a good pool of qualified personnel is needed to manage and monitor every step. An overview.

1

2



IT OPTIMISED PROJECT PROCESSING

Behind every step of the process are highly specialised employees

© Hoch3, Dominik Steindl

© Hoch3, Dominik Steindl

3

4

1

ACQUISITION AND OFFER CREATION

Orders are conventionally acquired via the existing sales network of the Pfeifer Group, especially by field staff. The latter is reinforced by technically trained employees who can provide more detailed consultation – supported by the technical office in Schlitz. Offer creation and order processing is mainly done with the help of IT, supported by the specialised TimberTec ERP system.

2

ORDER PROCESSING

Data and information are prepared in the system for ordering in production. Close coordination and communication with the customer is an essential part of this process step. The IT system also serves as an interface to production and logistics which efficiently reduces additional costs.

3

PRODUCTION

The entire production process is also controlled by the integrated IT system and utilises all optimisation options – from raw material management to packaging the finished CLT panels. The complex production is once more subdivided into individual processes: slat sorting, finger jointing, planing, CLT panel preparation, pressing, joining, cosmetics, order picking.

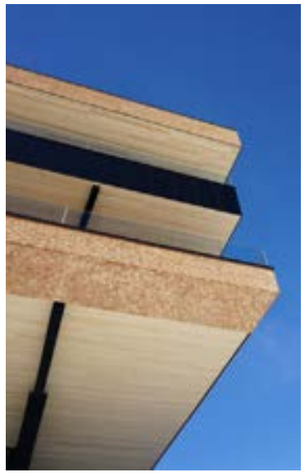
4

LOGISTICS

Data and information are prepared in the system for ordering in production. Close coordination and communication with the customer is an essential part of this process step. The IT system also serves as an interface to production and logistics which efficiently reduces additional costs.

Full diversity of structural construction with timber

CLT is finding its way into all areas of construction: from customised single-family homes and municipal showcase projects such as kindergartens and schools to hotels and investor projects for multi-storey residential and office buildings. CLT guarantees a fast and economical way of construction for projects of this kind. In addition, the area of urban consolidation or addition of storeys is becoming increasingly interesting, especially in conurbations. In this field the pre-manufactured, dry construction method with short construction time yields massive advantages compared to traditional building materials. In addition, CLT scores in environmental terms as a renewable building material that can be easily recycled in a CO_2-neutral manner at the end of its life cycle.



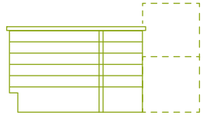
CLT scores with planning reliability and high aesthetic quality

The dry, precise construction is a great advantage

Prefabricated CLT elements are used as walls, ceilings and roofs

FACTS ABOUT THE CLT SUCCESS STORY

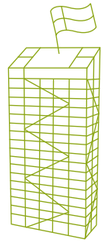
In Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and the Czech Republic, CLT production increased significantly in 2019 and will reach the 1 million m³ mark in 2020.



The greatest potential for cross laminated timber lies in urban consolidation and the construction of multi-storey objects up to 10 storeys.

© shutterstock: PHG Pictures

© shutterstock: PHG Pictures, ikorfo, Dominik Skeidl



The currently highest wooden building in the world is the 85.5-metre high, 18-storey Mjøsa Tower in Brumunddal, Norway.

The global cross laminated timber production in 2019 was around 1.7 million m³.

Around 60 industrial manufacturing facilities worldwide produce CLT.

No.1 for bio-fuel pellets

By expanding capacities, the annual pellet sales volume of the Pfeifer Group will increase to approximately 560,000 tons by 2024. As a result, the company's role as the largest pellets producer in Central Europe will also be expanded.

We believe that all the markets relevant to us will experience stable growth. Heating with pellets is continuing its upward trend and the benefits are undisputed.”

Michael Pfeifer, CEO of the Pfeifer Group

In 1998, when Pfeifer began producing wood pellets at the Kundl location, a modest 2,000 tons were produced at the end of the first year. Production volumes far beyond 500,000 tons seemed utopian even to the optimistic pioneers. But our success story progressed continuously: With a clever expansion strategy, a high willingness to invest and an uncompromising commitment to utilising 100% of the raw material wood, the Pfeifer Group has catapulted itself to the top of Europe's pellet producers. In 2018, our pellets contributed significantly to the success of the Pfeifer Group with a share of more than 12% of Pfeifer's total sales. CEO Michael Pfeifer sees its future importance even increasing in regard to the planned production volumes of the Pfeifer Group: “Our sales volumes will increase to 560,000 tons per year by 2024 – based on the 2019 budget of 430,600 tons – due to the positive market development”. Basis for this enormous growth is the trend towards heating with pellets in many European countries, which can be regarded as long-term and stable in view of the politically defined global climate targets. Throughout Europe, 20 million tonnes of pellets are currently produced, 16.7 million tonnes of which are for heating. In this segment alone, demand is growing by one to two million tons per year. The Pfeifer pellets, which are exclusively ENplus certified, meet the highest requirements for product quality.

© Uwe Mühlhäusser

The pellets made of sawmill waste wood are enjoying increasing popularity throughout Europe. Pfeifer responds to the enormous market demand by expanding its production capacities.

> *”The fact that wood pellets make up 12% of the Pfeifer Group's overall sales underlines their importance for the company.*
>
> Michael Pfeifer, CEO of the Pfeifer Group

Targeted expansion

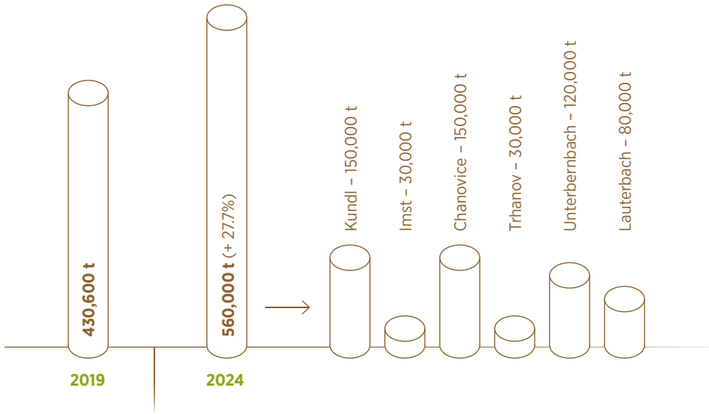
The Pfeifer Group is responding to the rising demand with extensive investments, especially at the most powerful pellet production sites in Chanovice and Kundl. As early as 2020, pellet production in Chanovice, Czech Republic, will be expanded to 120,000 tonnes per year. For this purpose, new pellet mills were installed and three pellet silos with a capacity of 4,000 tonnes built – in line with the requirements of complete raw material recycling: “We have thought well ahead,” is how Michael Pfeifer explains the strategic expansion of the production facilities. “By increasing capacity in pelleting, we are able to add meaningful ecological and economic value to the increasing amount of residual wood.”

Over the past five years, Pfeifer has also invested massively in the expansion of pellet production in Kundl in the Tyrolean lowlands, thus reacting to the high demand on the Italian market. With an annual capacity of almost 200,000 tonnes of wood pellets, the site is currently the largest pellet plant in Central Europe. We supply the regional market, but large quantities are also exported to the south, as Michael Pfeifer explains: “In the pellet country Italy, one of our most important markets, 3.5 to 4 million tons are now consumed annually. Our brand is very well known there, Pfeifer pellets made of pure spruce wood are considered to be of the highest quality”. The pellets, packed in 15-kilo bags, are mainly used in households, restaurants and hotels from the Brenner all the way to Sicily.

© West Werbeagentur GmbH

Output of Pfeifer's pellets plants

Development until 2024



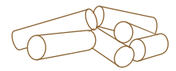
Internationally in demand

Stable sales of pellet boilers can be observed throughout Europe, with a trend towards pellet-fired stoves particularly in the southern countries. Climate protection-related legal directives such as the CO_2 tax in France or the planned ban on heating with coal and oil in some countries are also boosting demand. With 180,000 pellet-fired stoves sold in 2018, France has already caught up with Italy's sales figures for stoves, and the associated annual growth in consumption of around 200,000 tonnes is also sparking the interest of the Pfeifer Group: “We are closely monitoring the markets in France and Spain,” Michael Pfeifer reveals. The Balkans, too, are undergoing a major rethinking process in the direction of abandoning fossil fuels, as is evident from the ready sales of pellet boilers. In Austria, boiler manufacturers are talking of a turnaround in 2019, which is reflected in a significant increase of 30% in sales compared to the previous year.

20,3 million tonnes of pellets

Annual production of 2018 in Europe

The “Big Players” in production:
Germany 2.4 million tonnes,
Sweden 1.8 million tonnes,
Russia 1.7 million tonnes,
Latvia 1.6 million tonnes,
Austria 1.35 million tonnes



The biggest consumers:
Italy (3.2 million tonnes),
Denmark (2.5 million tonnes),
Germany (2.2 million tonnes),
Sweden and France with 1.6 million tonnes each

With **740,000 tonnes of pellets,**

German wood pellet producers set a new record in the third quarter of 2019 (an increase of 9% or 71,000 tonnes compared to the second quarter of 2019 and 21.7% or 132,000 tonnes compared to the same period of the previous year).

In the first quarter of 2019, **30% more pellet boilers were sold in Austria** than in the previous year.

A PERFECT FIT

for timber construction

They are versatile and highly sought after on the market: the 3-ply panels with tongue and groove. Launched in 2016, the product represented a major step forward in the development of the Pfeifer Group's product line.

© West Werbeagentur GmbH

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH

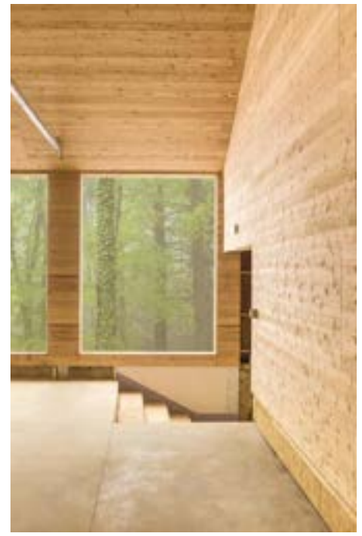
Demanding architectural challenges in interior and exterior construction can be elegantly solved with the innovative tongue and groove ply panels. There are obvious product benefits: They are easy to work with, multifunctional and thus meet 100% of the current requirements in timber construction. Due to the positive market development, the Pfeifer Group has invested in a state-of-the-art plant for the production of ply panels – a so-called double-end profiler – at the Chanovice location. This ensures increased performance and output capacity while maintaining the highest quality and precision during processing. “The double end profiler allows for a clean perpendicularity. Thanks to the wedge-groove tongue, the panels slide better into each other during laying or can be mounted more quickly,” explains Andreas Walter, Area Sales Manager Holzbau Germany, whose feedback from customers has been absolutely positive.

Success is in the detail

The new generation of panels is offered as lengthwise panels and 4-sided laying panels, both with wedge groove and wedge tongue. European spruce (quality B/K) or larch (quality AB/C) is used as top layer, while the middle layer is out of coniferous timber. Both sides of the surface are smoothed, with continuous cover layers as standard. Bonding is waterproof (SWP/3) according to EN 13353, a wood moisture content of 10% +/- 2% on delivery and the professional processing of the top lamellas and middle layer guarantee dimensional stability and low cracking. Production complies with EN 13986, the new tongue and groove panels are tested for harmful substances and PEFC, CE and LGA certified.

Leading through experience and know-how

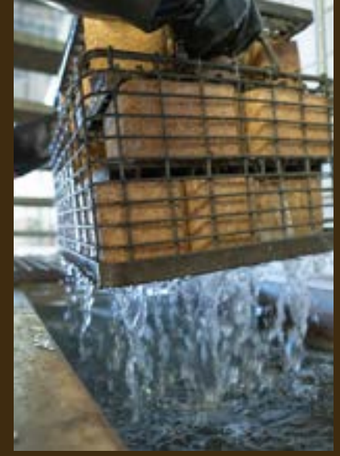
Single and three ply panels have been produced at the Imst location since 1985 and since 2016 at the Chanovice location, for versatile applications in modern furniture construction, interior design and structural timber construction. A production capacity of 3.3 million m² of ply panels annually illustrates the dimension and status of Pfeifer as one of Europe's leading manufacturers. Our round timber is sourced from sustainably and exemplary managed forests. The basis for success is precise wood drying and the highest sorting standards. Modern, environmentally friendly process technologies and systematic quality assurance from round timber to the finished panel guarantee consistently high quality. The production capacities and an intermodal logistics mix ensure high availability and rapid delivery to more than 90 countries around the world.



Elegant solution for architectural challenges in interior design and exterior areas

> *Thanks to the wedge-groove tongue, the panels slide better into each other during laying or can be mounted more quickly.*
>
> Andreas Walter, Area Sales Manager timber construction Germany

In order to remain one step ahead of its competitors in the highly competitive wood industry, Pfeifer makes full use of all quality control and assurance measures. In addition, since 2019, a three-person team has been focusing on the entire value chain in order to optimise processes and products and establish a high level of quality awareness on all levels of the company.



Pfeifer actively participates in research with product trials and test series

© Gerhard Berger

© hoch3, Dominik Steindl

Andreas Schmid, head of the Quality Management department, and his two team members Diana Mehlan and Lucia Wolkersdorfer serve as a link between production and sales and strive to achieve a sustained improvement in product quality within the company on a daily basis. One of their tasks is to guarantee product quality in accordance with customer expectations. In order to meet qualitative requirements, it is necessary to identify weak points and potential for improvement at the various stages of the processing areas. To achieve this, methods and tools from quality management are applied. In accordance with the principles of business viability, implementation is carried out jointly with the departments concerned. Our professional data management and systematic documentation make every step traceable across all locations. “The main goal of our department is to establish an understanding of quality at all levels – from production staff to management”, Andreas Schmid sums up. While he is pulling the strings and encourages exchange between the plant managers, Diana Mehlan and Lucia Wolkersdorfer have split the demanding product portfolio: While the former acts as quality manager for wood chips and chip blocks, the latter contributes her expertise in sawn timber and further processing products.

Everything to produce the best block

The effort Pfeifer puts into ensuring lasting outstanding quality is demonstrated

→

“The main goal of our department is to establish an understanding of quality on all levels – from production staff to management.”

Andreas Schmid

”

Together with our employees we want to develop standards and processes that are put into practice.

Diana Mehlan

”

Customer requirements have increased steadily over the last 10 years. For me, good quality management means meeting these needs, without neglecting productivity along the entire value chain. I look back at 25 years of experience in the wood industry which I will utilise in my new position.

Thorsten Kaiser, Head of Quality Management starting in 2020

© Matthias Brabetz, Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

© Inoch 3, Dominik Steindl, Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

by the example of the pallet block. “Our customers expect dimensionally stable, durable blocks for stable pallets. We are constantly analysing how to positively influence and guarantee these properties, for example by using different glue compositions,” Diana Mehlan explains. In order to be able to test new formulas independently of ongoing production, a separate test press and a separate glue mixing plant for product trials are now available in Lauterbach. “We put every test block through its paces to see how it behaves in terms of water absorption, nail extraction resistance, etc. At each of the three block production sites we have a laboratory for production control and further test series. We also work together with an external test laboratory for large-scale tests.”

With these efforts, Pfeifer is moving away from pure manufacturer status and positions itself as a source of know-how that is actively involved in research and development. Andreas Schmid underlines the advantages of starting right at the product development stage: “The quality of a chip block depends, among other things, on the type of wood, drying, swelling, gluing and additives. Our test facility allows us to vary with pressure and additives, and in the laboratory in Lauterbach we analyse shrinkage, swelling and evaporation. This enables us to quickly derive results, draw conclusions and optimise the product from day one in terms of customer requirements”. →

Diana Mehlan

completed the master’s degree in forestry and wood science at the TU Munich and gained first insights into the Pfeifer universe as an intern. In October 2017 she joined the Unterbernbach site as a trainee. She spent a year and a half there, gaining insight into all departments, including the Block division, for which she has been responsible as Quality Manager since spring 2019. She also brings her passion for future-oriented thinking and acting to the newly formed hybrid Innovation Team.

The product is optimised in our in-house laboratories to suit the customer’s needs

How to: Sort and refine

The latest scanner technology is used in the sawn timber sorting plants to ensure consistent and uniform quality from all plants. The scanner enables precise detection of wood defects such as discolouration, cracks or insect infestation at top speeds. The sawn timber is then divided into different quality classes according to its qualitative appearance. So far, so good – but it is still people who take a wide range of parameters into account to ensure that the machine is set correctly. At the new production site for cross laminated timber (CLT) in Schlitz, Lucia Wolkersdorfer and the production department have worked out quality criteria for the colour and X-ray scanner used for quality and strength grading. Both in the area of machine-assisted sorting and in the area of purely visual sorting by highly qualified sorters, random checks, so-called re-sorting, must be carried out. Our aim is to always comply with the sorting sheet that is valid throughout the Group. “If the evaluations show that certain sorting errors occur particularly frequently at a location, we can react with specific training courses”, Wolkersdorfer explains the approach of accompanying the employees and providing methodically competent support.

Andreas Schmid believes that scanner technology is the key to optimum material yield and maximum quality. Thus, the technology can already be used to optimally feed the round timber into the sawing unit. Such a controlled quality right from the first working step has a positive influence on all further processing products, as Schmid explains: “The aim is to use the right product for the appropriate finishing stage in order to optimise machine utilisation, produce fewer rejects and obtain a homogeneous end product. This benefits all customers and puts us ahead of our competition.”

Lucia Wolkersdorfer

After her bachelor's degree in forestry at the TU Munich, she went on to study for a master's degree at the University of Applied Sciences Salzburg / Kuchl, and wrote her master's thesis in cooperation with Pfeifer (graduation in June 2019). As a recent graduate engineer in wood technology, she came to the BSH plant at the Imst site and participated in quality management projects before taking up the position herself. Her area of responsibility includes sawn timber and the entire range of finishing products.

”

When everyone involved understands that quality brings great benefits, we take that decisive step forward.

Lucia Wolkersdorfer

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbanner

© Matthias Brabetz, Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbanner

Andreas Schmid

graduated as a sawmill master in Rosenheim and continued to become a technical business economist. After a 4-year stay abroad as production manager, he spent 13 years working for a well-known German sawmill group in the position of plant manager and later managing director. After two years as plant manager at Pfeifer in Unterbernbach, he became the plant manager of the Lauterbach site in June 2019. He is particularly interested in targeted location development, integrating the ideas and potential of all employees. As head of the saw experts' circle, he promotes the regular exchange of information between all plant managers in order to take advantage of synergy effects. The experience gained from this in terms of plant optimisation, know-how transfer and market observation are of great benefit to him as interim head of Quality Management.

Starting in 2020, Thorsten Kaiser will take over as head of Quality Management.

Combining man and machine power

Pfeifer is committed to the implementation of modern quality management based on holistic principles. Errors should be detected early – even before a possible complaint. “It is important to us that work is carried out based on the results of our analyses. When everyone involved understands that quality is not just work, but also brings great benefits, we take that decisive step forward,” Wolkersdorfer explains. Her colleague Mehlan has a similar point view: “We do not want to set standards and processes that are not put into practice. This is why we also talk directly to the employees in production about proven and improvable processes.”

Despite the great potential for optimisation through technical innovations, wood remains a natural product and people are an essential factor for economic success and satisfied customers: “For instance, we rely on product training for the sales office and field service to increase employees‘ awareness of realistic product descriptions across the entire product range,” Wolkersdorfer explains. Technology and people are closely intertwined in this understanding of quality management. Upgrading technology to keep pace with modern times is also becoming a sine qua non in the wood industry, which will result in a fundamental change, especially in long-established organisations. The increasing proportion of women and the need for family-friendly working models will also have a strong impact on the timber industry in the future. However, the most important prerequisite for quality is and remains the passion for wood as a raw material, the “Passion for timber”.

Export destination China on the rise

In addition to rising sales of timber construction products, the Chinese sawn timber market is becoming increasingly interesting for the Pfeifer Group. Hongjun Wu, member of the Sales team since 2014, is creating the necessary on-site presence.

Hongjun Wu, Sales team member

In order to build long-term customer relationships in China, intercultural competence and precise market knowledge are required.

Products from Pfeifer are in demand in the growth-oriented, resource-hungry Middle Kingdom. Just an example: In 2019, the company supplied large quantities of glulam and ply panels for a new conference centre in Chengdu, capital of the Sichuan province. The market potential in the timber construction sector is far from being exhausted, emphasises Hongjun Wu as a profound expert and observer of the market. The development in the sawn timber segment, which is showing a furious upward trend in China, is also remarkable. In the first five months of the year alone, imports in China increased by 17%, with 60% of imported sawn coniferous plywood coming from Russia. Canada also made strong gains.

Great demand for sawn timber

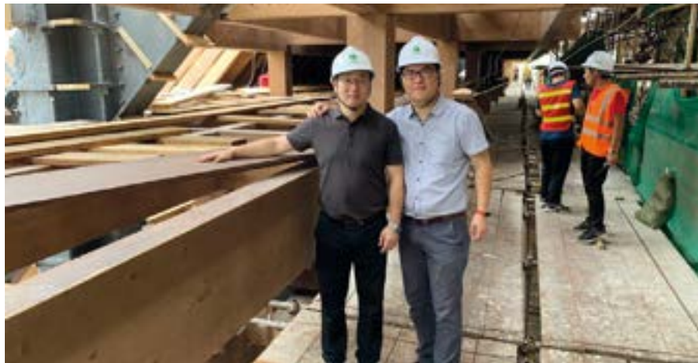
Sawn timber has various applications in China. The booming construction industry uses by far the largest quantities, while the production of furniture, wooden packaging and pallets also boosts demand. Sales professional Hongjun Wu does not see increasing environmental awareness and correspondingly stricter controls in furniture production as well as rising real estate prices and the associated decline in the volume of new buildings as a slowdown for economic growth: “Despite all this, more and more sawn timber is being exported from Germany to China. For example, China received 320,000 m³ from Germany in the first five months of the year alone. This represents an increase of 460% compared to the previous year.” This makes China already the fifth most important customer of German sawn coniferous wood. With trade fair appearances, participation in congresses, active customer acquisition and contact maintenance, the Pfeifer sales team creates the necessary presence in this dynamic market landscape. “My goal is to establish long-term partnerships with customers,” confirms Hongjun Wu, who, with his Master’s degree in Wood and Forestry at the TU Munich and a great deal of experience in intercultural consulting, has the ideal prerequisites for achieving this goal.

© Illustration: West Werbeagentur GmbH

© Hongjun Wu

Complex economic policy

The high stock levels of sawn timber held by Chinese traders are currently posing a challenge for Sales. Since the beginning of the year, an oversupply has resulted in overcrowded ports and trade centres. Hongjun Wu explains why: “The commercial war between China and the USA plays a central role. The Chinese government is adjusting exchange rates to keep exporters competitive, thus weakening importers. The extremely complex customs clearance of goods from the USA naturally also affects the customs clearance of sawn timber from Europe. While China used to purchase sawn timber almost exclusively from Canada, it now purchases from all over the world. Excess capacity from European sawmills is also increasingly being sought to be placed in China. “In this shift from a seller’s to a buyer’s market, the Pfeifer Group has the best cards with its consistently high-quality, certified products,” says Hongjun Wu, looking optimistically to the future.



Pfeifer supplies solid wod panels and glulam for renowned construction projects

PFEIFER INVESTS IN MARKET-DRIVEN WORKING CONDITIONS

Plenty of room for strategic development

With increasing administrative workload, new jobs are necessary to secure the strong growth of the Pfeifer Group and to react confidently to trends. State-of-the-art office buildings form the contemporary framework for interdepartmental exchange and demonstrate a far-sighted corporate strategy.

As lean as possible, as efficient as possible: At Pfeifer, too, these are the requirements for an optimal administrative structure. Despite the digitisation offensive, which is reflected in the B2B service portal, for example, the company is increasingly relying on classic face-to-face communication, as CEO Michael Pfeifer reports: “Even in the digital age, the personal exchange between employees remains extremely important. We want to create space for this and are bringing all departments back together again, for example at the headquarters in Imst. The new corporate headquarters in the Tyrolean Oberland will have another special feature: a separate strategy room, where future challenges, possible reactions and solution tactics will be discussed exclusively. These four walls embody the high priority that strategic considerations have in our company. The office buildings in Kundl and Trhanov, where Pfeifer has invested considerable sums in state-of-the-art workplaces and a pleasant working atmosphere in recent months to make the locations fit for the future, are further examples. The background to this infrastructural optimisation are changes in the labour market, which also affect the timber industry. In addition to the high level of bureaucracy, specific topics such as IT and exports are becoming increasingly important, requiring the expansion of the sales force and specialist staff.

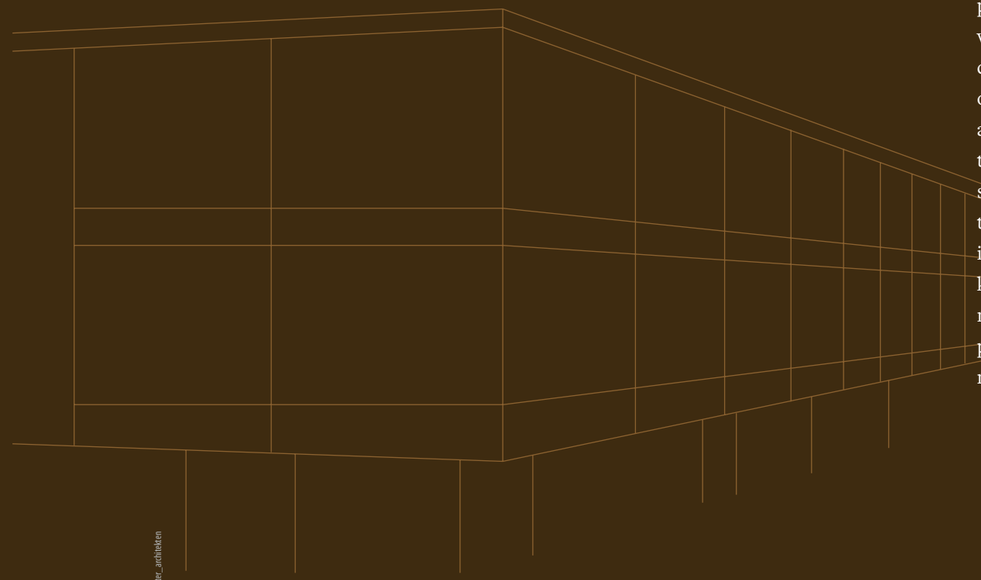
Strengthen growth and strengths

The declared aim of the corporate strategy is to continue growth in all product segments and, above all, to expand the good market position in the booming timber construction and pellets sectors. With reference to its own set of values, the company responds flexibly and dynamically to current conditions and market requirements: “Metaphorically speaking: We cannot stop at every stop sign and then restart, but rather have to plan for the long term. It is important to react to unforeseeable developments at an early stage and take advantage of the opportunities that arise,” says Michael Pfeifer. Cornerstone of Pfeifer's corporate policy is the clear commitment to the five product divisions, where we continuously build on strengths and eliminate weaknesses. “We know what we stand for”, Michael Pfeifer puts an exclamation mark behind this very promising focus.

”

The new office building in Imst brings the entire Pfeifer administrative organisation closer together again. This greatly improves and stimulates communication between the individual departments.

Günther Jaritz, authorised officer

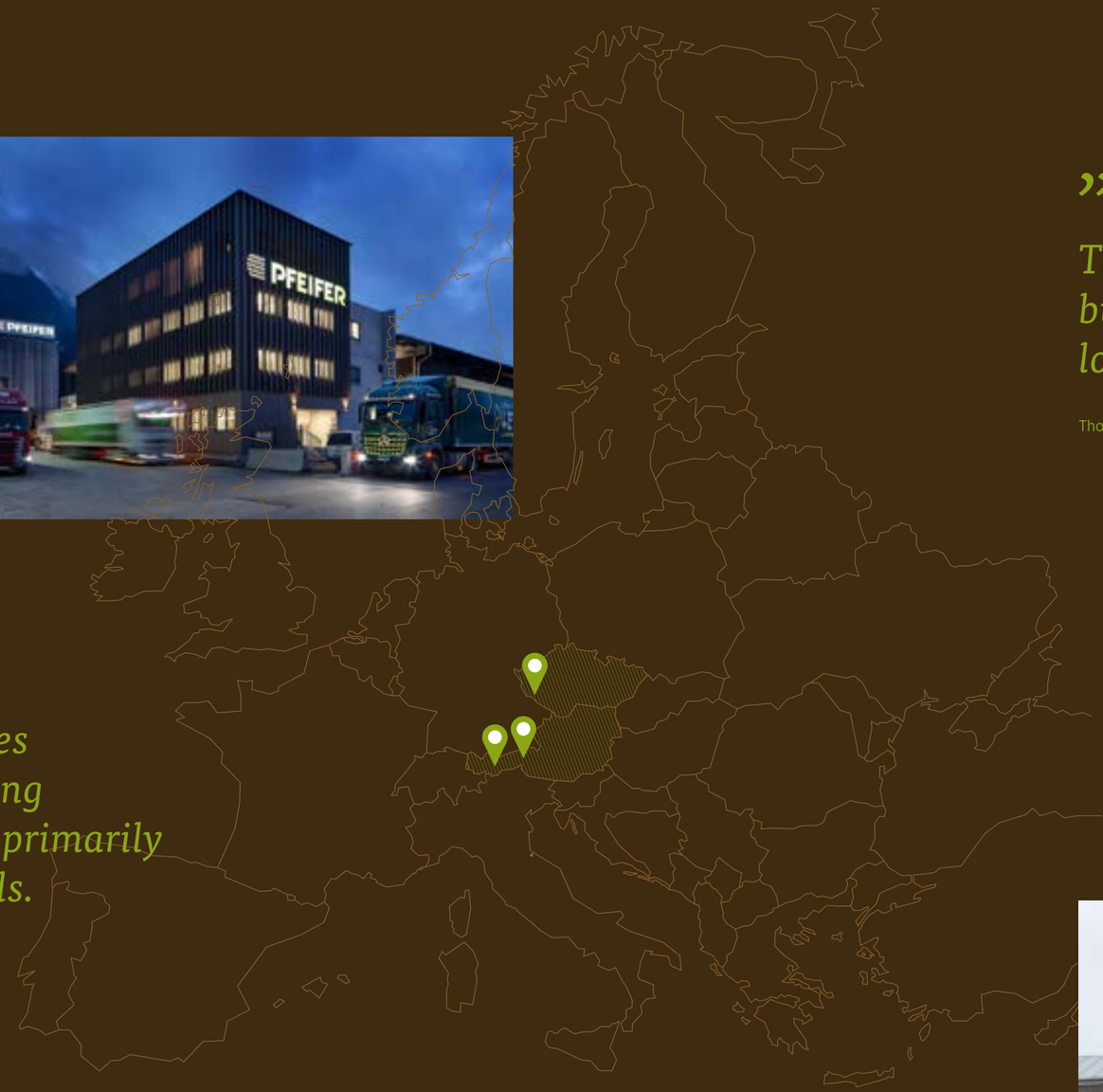


© reitter_architekten

Imst

The new office building located behind the existing headquarters in Imst will house 40 offices with approximately 75 workstations as well as meeting rooms and various recreation rooms. Around 60 car parking spaces are available, mainly underneath the building, which is enthroned on stilts and elegantly tackles the latent flood situation. The reitter architekten ZT GesmbH office from Innsbruck, which emerged as the winner of an invited competition, is responsible for planning. Only local companies were involved in the construction and interior design. Wherever possible, we used our own products, which makes the building a show piece of Pfeifer's timber construction expertise: “From our own concrete shuttering panels, glulam and ply panels to pellets for efficient, sustainable heating, this building contains a great deal of know-how and dedication of our company,” says Michael Pfeifer. Planned completion is in July / August 2020, Costs: 6 million Euros →

Kundl



”

Our modern workplaces create a positive working atmosphere and focus primarily on the employee's needs.

Michael Pfeifer,
Managing Director, Pfeifer Holz GmbH & Co KG

The four-storey office building in timber construction, completed in summer 2019, accommodates 38 modern office workplaces and meeting rooms. The ground floor accommodates the entire dispatch department and truck dispatch. On the first and second floors, spacious, bright offices have been set up for the plant management, production planning, various technicians as well as IT and round timber purchasing. On the fourth floor, architect and graduate engineer Klaus Ebner planned a conference hall for 50 people and a communicative meeting room for customer talks, seminars and visitor groups. The barrier-free building in low-energy standard is heated in an environmentally friendly manner with district heating from the company's own biomass cogeneration plant. Costs of the new building: 3 million Euros

© FOTO DOBROSTETTER

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

”

The completely renovated administration building improves the first impression of the location and enables a quick order processing.

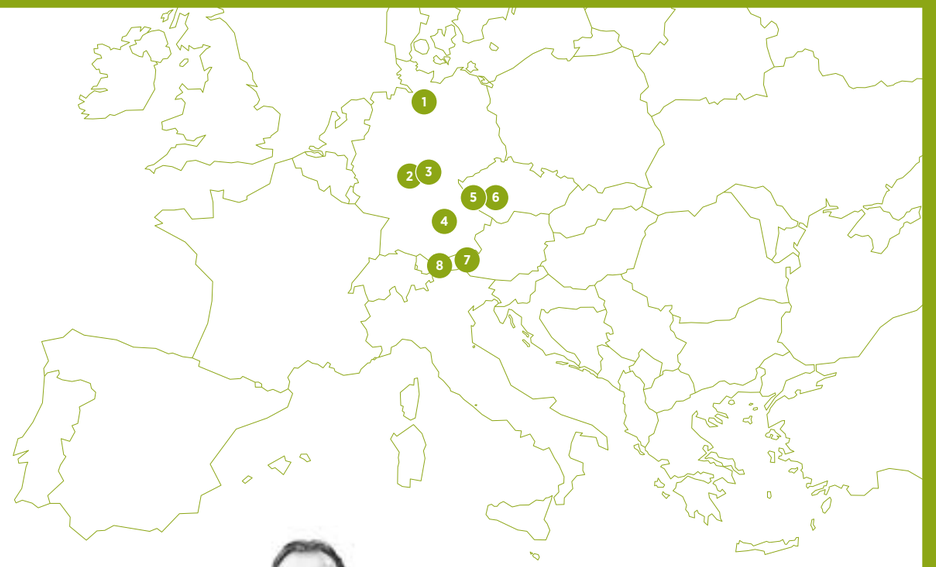
Thomas Wille, plant manager Trhanov

Trhanov

The office building at the Czech site in Trhanov was completely renovated by the beginning of 2020. Administration, dispatch, logistics, guard service and the new staff accommodation are now combined in terms of organisation, which enables fast and clear order and dispatch processing. Thanks to the new logistics system (truck weighing system), the working method could be adapted and simplified across all plants. The interior of the administration building designed for a total of 16 employees scores with a bright, friendly working atmosphere. A separate sanitary room for truck drivers was also included. The employee accommodation for 18 persons in the rear area of the administration building has high-quality equipped rooms and offers great flexibility for employees and Production. Total investment: 500,000 Euros.

Location emphases 2019

The eight plant managers provide an overview of important investments and current projects



1

Uelzen, **Marco de Gennaro**

In the course of the second expansion stage of the drying plant, a drying channel and a new sorting plant were purchased in the sawmill increasing the capacity to over 100,000 m³ . In the block plant, presses were converted to individual hydraulics and saws to non-contact sensors and mechanics. The objective is to inspire employees to be innovative. To achieve this, various tools such as Shopfloor, 5-S workstations and lean management will be implemented. Continuous site development and process optimisation are top priority.

2

Lauterbach, **Andreas Schmid**

2019 will also be marked by an increase in the volume of chip block production. The additional presses required various investments along the production chain such as the installation of an efficient and energy-saving chip drying system and the expansion of the handling and palletising system. This means that 100% of the waste wood produced can now be processed directly at the site. A new laboratory press enables innovative test series without restricting current production. The construction of an external gas heat source will begin before the end of 2019 in order to be prepared for increased drying capacities in the sawn timber sector.

3

Schlitz, **Roland Ritter**

In October 2018, work on the new building for CLT production commenced, and by mid-December the first machines including air conditioning were being installed in the new planing mill. The plant was commissioned on schedule in summer 2019. The current focus lies on the establishment of the CLT plant with a completely new product, new processes and employees. Order-related make-to-order production and “just-in-time” logistics require constant process optimisation and an increase in personnel for customer consulting and market support.

4

Unterbernbach, **Uwe Herold**

The new bagging plant for pellets is in operation and increases the pelleting plant's utilisation. New hall and chip extraction concepts as well as dust recirculation for pellets and blocks were implemented, in order to ensure employee protection. The car workshop was partially demolished and rebuilt. Currently, a new dry sorting plant with fully automatic film wrapping is under construction, the dispatch area is being converted and expanded into a logistics centre and the third and final conversion step for the automation of secondary product sorting is being carried out using the latest technology.

© Illustration: Werl Werbeagentur GmbH

© Illustration: Werl Werbeagentur GmbH

5

Trhanov, **Thomas Wille**

The thin-cutting systems with new patching station, which was commissioned in 2018, will result in timber savings, standardised work processes and consistent quality. In June 2019, the new employee accommodation for 18 people was opened. In the third quarter, a new gluing system for the surface gluing of shuttering panels was installed to improve quality, and a new boiler house with a capacity of 4.9 MW (gas burner) will go into operation by the end of the year.

6

Chanovice, **Radek Pecka**

In 2019, numerous investments were made in a complex plant conversion process. For example, saw production was tripled, the shuttering panel plant is now operating in three shifts and the pellet capacity is to be increased to 120,000 tonnes per year. The discontinued production of wedge-jointed KVH creates space for new projects. In 2020, the site is to become even more competitive through further investment in sawn timber drying and sorting as well as the planing mill. Always up-to-date: high-quality training and know-how transfer to our numerous new employees.

8

Imst, **Dietmar Seelos**

In the panel plant, the installation of a thin-cutting centre and the renovation of sanitary rooms are scheduled for 2019/20. Belt production is being optimised at the carrier plant. At the BSH factory, the finish timber planer is replaced and the quality standard of the product is optimised. It is also planned to replace the tapered finger jointing. A new logistics centre at a central location is going to make transport to and from the Imst plants easier.

7

Kundl, **Georg Walcher**

The new administrative centre, officially inaugurated in October, improves internal logistics and provides ultra-modern office workplaces including meeting rooms. The new, scanner-equipped sawn timber dry sorting system will go into operation at the end of 2019 and reach full operation in the first quarter of 2020. Committed investment programs are also being carried out in the sawmill and round timber area. In 2020 the existing Linck sawing line will be further rebuilt with the aim of establishing a strong timber sawmill.

OPTIMISATION AND EFFICENCY
ARE A TRADITION HERE AT PFEIFER

One does not work alone”

INTERVIEW CLEMENS PFEIFER

Clemens Pfeifer, CTO of the Pfeifer Group, in an interview about the company's core values, innovation culture and the need for user-friendly technology.

Mr Pfeifer, digitisation is considered to be the central economic revolution of our era. To what extent does this also apply to a raw material processing industrial company of traditional character?

Whenever processes become faster, more accurate and more targeted thanks to complex IT applications, we are obviously highly interested in taking advantage of such new opportunities. And we also apply them wherever it makes sense. It seems to me, however, that the term digitisation is sometimes used in a fashion-inflationary way. Actually, it is often about increasing efficiency and automation. In this regard, we have always cultivated a more or less digital way of thinking. Efficiency and cost sensitivity are in the very core of our company. Nowadays, only the tools with which these values can be realised have changed. The awareness that maximum efficiency and optimal use of resources are essential for success in a competitive environment is not a fundamentally new realisation for us.

Where does this particular focus of Pfeifer on efficiency come from?

These values were exemplified by our company founder Barbara Pfeifer and her three sons. Thus, we have not only inherited a legacy of concrete and steel, but also received a message from the preceding generation. Our family has given us a performance-oriented mindset and healthy cost awareness as fundamental principles.

How do you ensure that a corporate manifesto of thriftiness does not conflict with your culture of innovation?

Only a company that has its processes and costs under control can generate the funds it needs for sustainable innovation. In 2019, we will implement an investment program that is outstanding over the past ten years. Features are emphasised in the case of all locations. We have always placed a strong emphasis on the optimisation of processes and development topics in technology and production. Finding ideas and trying out new methods to improve our production processes as well as our products are fundamental for us. This is precisely why we tend to invest the most funds here. An ethic of budget compliance was never an obstacle at Pfeifer. On the contrary, the desire to operate efficiently has always been a decisive driving force for our innovations.

You said that you are using digitisation where it makes sense. Where do you draw the line in this respect?

Let me give you an example: We still cut wood with metal circular saws. In fact, the basis of what we do is very analogous. →

© Gerhard Berger

> *Even the best system will not work without the right operation.*
>
> Clemens Pfeifer, CTO of the Pfeifer Group

We use high-end technical concepts that take us to the limits of material stress. Many things, such as the vibration characteristics of a saw blade, are optimised by digital control. This prevents overheating, because change cycles can be defined more precisely. But essentially, we still process wood into higher quality products. Whatever we do, it is important to keep an eye on the product and on the needs of the markets. This is still a crucial point.

In recent years, the markets have increasingly demanded wood as a raw material, especially in the construction industry. To what extent does this increased demand facilitate your work?

This is, obviously, a very positive development. As a company with a high level of capital expenditure, we need almost full capacity utilisation to ensure strong earnings and profitability. But even in flourishing markets we are still facing competition and have to assert ourselves first. In recent years, we have succeeded in doing so because our employees are doing an outstanding job in the various areas. One does not work alone, especially not in a company like ours. The success of the Pfeifer Group is only ensured by the good and coordinated interaction of all departments, from raw material purchasing, production, logistics and sales to administration and finance.

How would you personally define business success?

I am not obsessed with the profit line of the balance sheet, although it is essential for a lasting existence. For me, other key figures and values are equally important, as they signal that we are taking the right path. This includes, for example, ensuring a constructive ability to take criticism and engage in discussion, which is what distinguishes us at Pfeifer. If we succeed in mastering challenges unerringly by means of critical analysis, deriving measures, concrete scheduling and thus creating sustainable jobs, then I consider this to be a great success.

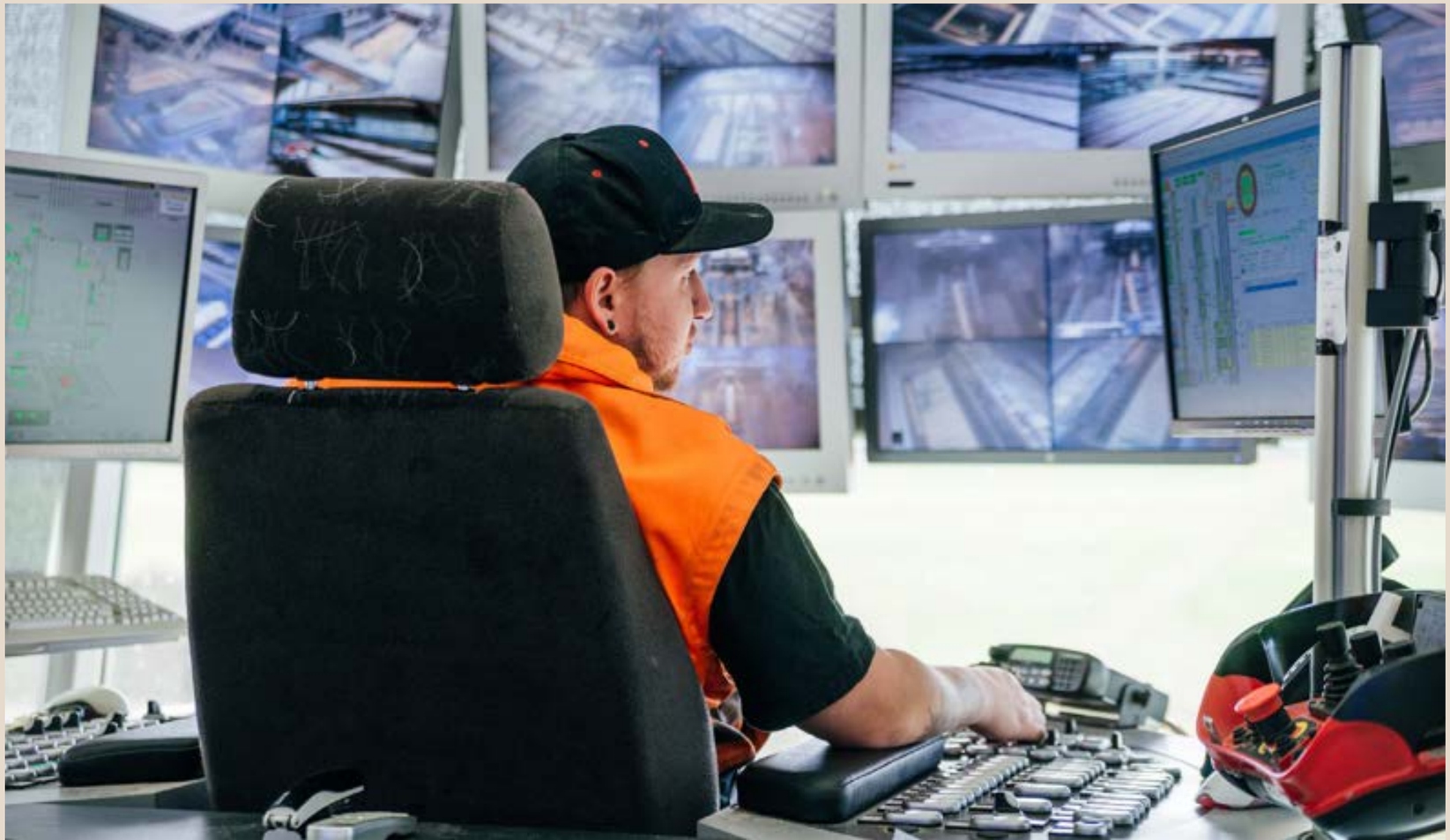
Speaking of jobs: Despite increasing automation, your company now employs more than 2,000 people. People appear to remain a decisive factor.

Our employees are fundamentally important. Even the best system will not work without the right operation. Especially in the Production and Technology division which is under my responsibility. We have to guarantee functioning production facilities on a daily basis in order to process this incredible amount of timber. Reliability forms an indispensable basis for this. This includes the functionality of our plants, but above all we need the loyalty of our employees. We are successful in this closing of ranks. As far as I'm concerned, this is proof that we are on the right track.

How much more difficult will this be due to the generally tense situation on the labour market?

It is certainly not getting any easier. After all, we need committed employees to operate and maintain our systems. I would also like to take this opportunity to formulate a message to the technology suppliers. I would like to see technology that serves the operator and not vice versa. User-friendly technology is essential in a tight labour market environment. It cannot be estimated exclusively with highly skilled personnel. First and foremost, we have to adapt to those people who are happy to go their professional way with us.

© Matthias Rabetz



Despite increasing automation, top trained, reliable employees remain a central factor for the success of a company.

Towards sustainable logistics

Pfeifer is promoting e-mobility in internal plant logistics and is shifting incoming and outgoing transport to the railways wherever possible. This promotes efficiency and is good for the environment.

Electrical forklifts prove their worth in daily use at several locations

Major trends such as sustainability and digitisation are also triggering fundamental changes in the field of logistics. Pfeifer's management is constantly investing in improvements to the logistics processes, both on-site as well as on the inbound and outbound side in cooperation with freight forwarders and railways. "All volume increases in production require correspondingly efficient logistics," emphasises Logistics Manager Herbert Stöckl, who is gradually putting the above-mentioned trends into practice. Pfeifer is currently setting an example by conversing from diesel to electric forklifts, which is to be carried out throughout the entire company in the medium term. From autumn 2018, a 16-tons truck was the first vehicle to be put through its paces in Kundl, and several 8- and 16-tons forklifts are now proving their worth in daily use at various locations. "The electric forklifts are more efficient, require less maintenance and are easier to maintain. This enables us to save large amounts of fossil fuels and reduce CO_2 emissions in the plants," is how Stöckl describes the advantages. The necessary infrastructure, e.g. sufficient charging stations, has already been provided; training for the personnel and ongoing training on the machines accompany the conversion. "We only retain diesel forklifts in exceptional cases, i.e. in those plants where long distances or inclines require and justify their use," says Stöckl.

Efficiency on rails

Since 2011/12, Pfeifer has relied on environmentally friendly transport by train. In the meantime, about 350 block trains (most of them in the entrance area) are in operation exclusively for the Austrian company every year. In terms of volumes transported, the trend is steeply upward, with further annual increases of 30 to 40% following 900,000 tons in 2018. The ability to redirect round timber transports to the locations Unterbernbach, Uelzen or Kundl according to the individual needs makes the Pfeifer Group the leading player in the timber industry in terms of logistics. In the future, rail transport is to be promoted even more, according to Stöckl: "Ideally, in future all plants will have their own railway siding to deliver round timber and transport processed products. In addition to traffic calming, flexible redistribution and a secure supply of raw materials, the extended loading times also speak clearly in favour of expanding rail connections." The company management underpins this commitment with investments in existing railway sidings as well as efforts to create new ones.

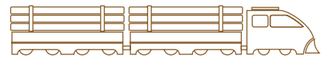
Uniform processes

A new logistics centre was set up in Imst by the end of 2019 in order to improve the management of internal processes and establish uniform standards. At the central registration terminal between the three production plants in Imst, the paperwork for incoming and outgoing truck transports is handled from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., while the loading of the goods continues to take place at the respective plants. A positive side-effect of the reorganisation is a noticeable reduction in traffic around the plants. This project marks the successful completion of the Group-wide standardisation of logistics processes that has been planned since 2010/11. Growing numbers of digitalised or automated processes from incoming to outgoing deliveries form the basis of optimised logistics, which require qualified personnel to manage and monitor them. "Our employees are involved in all processes or further developments to ensure that they understand the dimensions in which Pfeifer operates," explains Stöckl. And these dimensions are considerable: Every year Pfeifer handles 6 to 7 million tons – only in the outgoing and incoming goods areas. These quantities are moved many times from A to B within the plant area. Residual wood transport systems at several locations, for example, ensure more relaxed and efficient plant logistics, reducing the number of travel paths and machines on the plant premises.

Herbert Stöckl (r.) and his team manage all logistics processes

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH



900,000 t
Rail transport 2018

35%
Increase in rail transport 2017 – 2018

1.3 million t
Rail transport estimated for 2020

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH

DEVELOPMENT OFFENSIVE AS THE DRIVING FORCE OF THE ECONOMY

“The upswing in Chanovice is noticeable thanks to the Pfeifer Group.”

In 2016, Pfeifer took over the Chanovice plant in the densely wooded district of Klattau (Pilsen district) and expanded it into a fully integrated production site with an investment package of 60 million euros. Plant Manager Radek Pecka and Petra Moučková, Human Resources Manager Czech Republic, talk about the exemplary development of the site, the image change to an attractive employer and new challenges in the supply of raw materials in times of climate change.

In Chanovice, 480 employees currently process 560,000 solid cubic metres of high-quality spruce wood annually to full extend in a diverse range of products (330,000 m³ of sawn timber, 1.3 million m² of single and three-ply panels, 1.3 million m² of shuttering panels, 40,000 tonnes of pellets and 30 million kWh of green electricity). The saw line in Chanovice is the only plant of the Pfeifer Group that can be fed with round timber up to six meters long. Also unique: The entire round timber assortment can be processed from the smallest to the largest diameter (up to 70 cm) due to the various cutting techniques. In 2019 Chanovice celebrated 100 years of timber processing.

Could you briefly outline the biggest changes in Chanovice since the takeover by the Pfeifer Group?

Pecka: From the very beginning, Pfeifer invested enormous sums in infrastructure, in new production facilities and in the optimisation of existing production plants. The strategy that Pfeifer is pursuing here is based on a key strength: implementing all necessary measures in large steps and quick decision-making. In addition to the optimised technological processes and the expanded product range, the company culture has also changed for the better. The employees are highly appreciated, and Pfeifer is considered a reliable partner by both suppliers and the municipality of Chanovice.

Moučková: As HR manager of the Czech Pfeifer sites in Chanovice and Trhanov, I have been working on improving all personnel processes since April 2017. In addition to numerous internal measures, we were able to strengthen our positive image as a family business in the region through employee events such as the “Timber Day” and cooperation with local sports clubs, schools, kindergartens and cultural events. ⟶

Was the Pfeifer Group able to keep its promise of secure, high-quality jobs?

Moučková: Pfeifer constantly invests in personnel development. These measures bear fruit in motivated employees and an excellent reputation as an employer. Today we are highly recommended and contribute to the low unemployment rate in this area, which is only 2%. All optimisation processes are geared to the needs of the employees: In addition to the focus on occupational safety, we offer numerous benefits. An additional allowance for meals and a 3% allowance for voluntary pension insurance are just a few of the advantages from which our employees benefit. All in all, we guarantee secure, long-term jobs in an attractive working environment that is above average.

Pecka: To put the upward trend into figures: There were 350 employees in the company at the time of the takeover. Thanks to the aforementioned investments, this number has risen to 480 at the Chanovice location, and the expansion of the second Czech plant in Trhanov means that we already employ more than 620 people in this country.

Which infrastructure projects are currently on the agenda to increase the location's impact?

Pecka: A state-of-the-art plant for the production of concrete shuttering panels was already commissioned in 2017/18. As a result, the highly automated machinery in its final configuration will be able to produce an output of 1.3 million m² of shuttering panels per year. Thanks to a new, modern pellet plant, we were able to increase our pelleting capacity to 100,000 m³ per year from the beginning of 2020. We are also building another power plant and are introducing numerous optimisations to the sawmill. We intend to further stabilise and optimise production at the sawmill and the new shuttering panel plant this year and to implement all investments as planned. I enjoy management's full support in achieving these main objectives.

”

Our employees benefit from secure jobs in an attractive working environment.

Petra Moučková, HR Manager Czech Republic

Chanovice is located in one of the most densely forested areas of Central Europe, where the impact of climate change will inevitably be felt. What about the sustainable supply of raw materials?

Pecka: The severe drought is also affecting the Czech forest and presenting us with new challenges. Despite all this, the Czech Republic still has a lot of healthy forest areas and there will definitely be enough raw material at our disposal in the foreseeable future, as long as we take more care of the forests. Chanovice benefits from an absolutely advantageous location: In 2019, there was almost no major damage within a radius of 80 km around the mill and there are no other sawmills of our size. This is why we also play a vital role in local forest management, which is nowadays even more dependent on reliable partners.

To what extent does Pfeifer exercise its responsibility as the largest timber industry in the region?

Pecka: Not only wood damaged by beetles, but also large quantities of damaged wood due to the drought require immediate action. We are helping the Czech forest and forest owners by massively expanding sawmill capacity and significantly increasing output. Of course, the principle of 100% recycling still applies, because we can use the additional amount of sawmill by-products for the new power plant and the additional capacities in pelleting. In 2019, we will have cut approx. 560,000 solid cubic meters in the sawmill, and our medium-term goal is one million solid cubic meters. To achieve this, we need a new sorting plant, which will go into operation in the second half of 2020, and a new planing mill, which will also be installed later this year.

What does this ambitious expansion mean for the HR department?

Moučková: The lack of qualified employees in the vicinity of our sites is in fact our greatest challenge, which cannot be solved with a higher degree of automation of production. The work with wood, a unique raw material, requires a certain intuition, expertise and experience.
We would like to employ even more motivated employees who enjoy further training in our plants. People who embody our slogan “Passion for Timber”.

Wood construction and heating with pellets are becoming increasingly popular in the Czech Republic. What opportunities does this provide for the location?

Pecka: With its ecological and economic advantages, wood has a positive image in this country. The population is becoming increasingly aware of issues such as CO2 and climate change, and the government also feels compelled to take action. For example, heating with coal and oil will no longer be possible in the future due to new legal guidelines.
Our task now is to sustainably promote renewable energy in the form of wood pellets. It is also important for us to inform the local architects and builders about the advantages and provide them with the necessary know-how. In this context, Pfeifer's decision to take over and modernize the Chanovice site was absolutely right.
Using the best quality spruce wood, we manufacture high-quality products that are fully in line with the latest trends. Thanks to the available expansion space and the high investment propensity of the company management, Chanovice is extremely optimistic about the future.

What do you personally find attractive about working with wood and your position in the company?

Moučková: Wood is an incredibly versatile material that has fascinated me since childhood. As a HR manager, I enjoy working with people. I am able to contribute my interest in psychology and demonstrate creativity in the search for optimised solutions. It is an exciting area that will continue to demand the best of us in the future. Because despite progressive automation, the human factor remains essential for the success of a company.

Pecka: I am intrigued by the 100% closed value chain, which is anchored in Pfeifer's mission statement and consist-

© Illustration: West Werbeagentur GmbH

New online service portal paves the way for digital sales

This is what contemporary customer interaction is all about: In 2020, the Pfeifer Group launches the new B2B service portal, which is much more than a simple online shop. With just a few clicks, customers can quickly, securely and comprehensively access information, order Pfeifer products and much more.

Entire truck loads of EUROBLOCK pallet blocks and packaging timber in various dimensions can be ordered on the internet. Whenever desired, from the office, from home or even on the road via smartphone. Not an utopian dream, but a necessity in times when digitisation is affecting all areas of society. The new Pfeifer B2B Service Portal takes these developments into account, as Ewald Franzoi, CFO of Pfeifer Holding and responsible for IT and future affairs, explains: "It's the digital natives' turn. Today, almost half of all B2B decision makers or decision shapers are less than 35 years old, have grown up with the Internet and search engines and are more than familiar with digital research. 90% of B2B buyers search for key words on the Internet, 42% also use their mobile devices in their B2B purchasing process. 74% prefer information from the Internet. We responded to these radical changes in B2B sales in a timely manner. The B2B portal was developed as part of the future project "Pfeifer 4.0" and with its range of services and functional depth makes the Pfeifer Group an absolute pioneer in the timber industry.

Complement to the sales force

In his role as Head of Sales, CEO Michael Pfeifer talks about opportunities and a win-win situation: "Our B2B service portal merges the analogue world of the timber industry with digital innovation. Information on our products are now easy to access on the Internet, interaction with our customers greatly facilitated. This simplicity of access for customers will become a competitive factor in the future – the B2B area included. The automation of data exchange offers significant benefits for all those involved in the value creation chain." On top of that, the entire business model is up for scrutiny in the digital world: "This provides us with valuable input for our quality management processes and constant improvement of our customer service."

With the B2B portal, Pfeifer continues to address the trade explicitly, not the end customer. Despite the increased level of service in the online sphere, the proven support provided by contacts in the office and in the field should not be suspended. On the contrary: The modern portal makes the offer, order processing and administration easier, more transparent and fully comprehensible for both sales and customers. Above all, however, the personal contact between customers and employees is still the key to giving the Pfeifer Group its unique identity and a personal touch.

> *"Digitisation leads to radical changes in B2B sales.*
>
> Ewald Franzoi, CFO of the Pfeifer Group

Work in progress

The ambitious project is also state of the art in technical terms: The B2B portal comprises a separate website that is linked to the Pfeifer website www.pfeifergroup.com. The underlying commerce software was adapted to the company's own needs and those of its existing customers and meets the highest standards in terms of data and system security and

→

Easy online access for customers is also becoming a competitive factor in the B2B sector.

Michael Pfeifer

speed and quality management. Highly functional solutions have also been developed for Pfeifer's complex product range and individual interface requirements, as Florian Singer, Marketing Manager of the Pfeifer Group and project manager, reports. After an extensive test phase, which will continue throughout the first half of 2020, the B2B service portal will be launched during the second half of the year. Initially, pallet blocks and packaging timber will be available online, with further products to be added successively over the course of the year. Our goal is to expand the service offering to the entire product portfolio.

Self-evident and understandable: How the portal works

from initial contact to the e-bill

1 Existing and new customers get access to a secured customer area using a **user name and password.**

2 There, they use a few clicks to obtain **detailed information** on Pfeifer products and can view **all communication media** such as brochures, product data, photos, videos and more and can also order samples, for instance.

3 The portal's in-depth service quality begins with **information on the availability of products** at all eight locations and **customer-specific pricing including calculation** of expected shipping costs.

4 Common **shop navigation,** similar to B2C solutions, as well as a visually appealing **user interface** guide the user through the entire shopping process.

5 Once the order has been placed and/or the goods delivered, the customer can trace the **order history** in the **self-service area** or place a **follow-up order.**

6 On top of that, customers have access to **all documents regarding order processing** – from delivery notes to invoices – and can download them, if needed.

7 **Inquiries and appointment requests** can also be sent via this platform.

Trade fair dates 2020 -2022

Dubai Woodshow	*07/09 – 09/09/2020* **Dubai** / United Arab Emirates	**MosBuild**	*30/03 – 02/04/2021* **Moscow** / Russia
BaumaCTT Russia	*08/09 – 11/09/2020* **Moscow** / Russia	**Hispack**	*20/04 – 23/04/2021* **Barcelona** / Spain
Medwood	*25/09 – 27/09/2020* **Athens** / Greece	**Interzum**	*04/05 – 07/05/2021* **Koeln** / Germany
Saudi Build	*05/10 – 08/10/2020* **Riyadh** / Saudi Arabia	**Ligna**	*10/05 – 14/05/2021* **Hannover** / Germany
NAWLA Traders Market	*04/11 – 06/11/2020* **Columbus** / USA	**Smopyc**	*26/05 – 29/05/2021* **Zaragoza** / Spain
Bauma China	*24/11 – 27/11/2020* **Shanghai** / China	**Forum Bois Construction France**	*07 –2021* **Paris** / France
Fimma Maderalia	*November/December 2020* **Valéncia** / Spain	**Batimat**	*15/11 – 19/11/2021* **Paris** / France
Bau	*11/01 – 16/01/2021* **Munich** / Germany	**Bauma**	*04/04 – 10/04/2022* **Munich**/ Germany
Carrefour International du Bois	*03/02 – 05/02/2021* **Nantes** / France		

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

From the forest to the factory

Round timber buyers, forest supervisors and freight forwarders work closely together to ensure that the raw material wood reaches the sawmill via the quickest and shortest route. In an interview, two people involved in this logistics chain talk about the special requirements of their jobs and the importance of sustainable forest management.

Helmuth Paolazzi has been an independent log purchaser for the Pfeifer Group since 1993. His area of responsibility covers the entire Inn valley, all side valleys from the Zillertal valley to the Reschen Pass and the Außerfern. Wolfgang Huber has been in forestry service for 38 years. As a forest supervisor (district manager) and board member of the Association of Forest Supervisors and Forestry Inspectors of Tyrol, he is considered a proven expert in his guild.

Mr Paolazzi, your first meeting with the Pfeifer company was stormy.

HP: So to speak! I did my first purchase for Pfeifer on 4 July 1993. I still remember it clearly: A thunderstorm had uprooted about 80 ha of forest behind the Patscherkofel, which was about 5,500 solid cubic metres of wood. Since then, we have maintained a reliable and successful partnership. In order to supply the Pfeifer sawmills with high-quality raw material, I am in constant contact with the

⟶

3,650,000

The Pfeifer Group plans to process 3.65 million solid cubic metres of wood in 2020.

Sustainability

The processed wood is sourced exclusively from sustainably managed forests within a radius of 150 km around the saw mill (beeline).

”

The wood has to be quickly removed from the forest. This requires efficient, reliable companies.

Helmuth Paolazzi, round timber purchaser

forest supervisors. They are an important link between buyers and forest owners, especially in Tyrol with its small-scale property ownership structure.

How can you, as a buyer, score with the forest supervisor?

HP: Correct handling, trust, loyalty and a proper preparation of the dimensional lists are indispensable as soon as the lots are ready in the forest. We basically keep in touch constantly and I am always available even outside normal working hours.

Mr Huber, you support forest owners in maintaining and using their forest “asset” in the best possible way. What are the challenges you face when selling wood?

WH: The main tasks of a forest supervisor or district manager are to maintain the economic, protective, welfare and recreational functions of the forest. For this purpose, the statutory basis serves as a tool. When purchasing wood, the economic component naturally plays a role. Wood has a considerable value and every landowner logically strives to get the best out of his or her trees. I support them in doing that. The small-scale structure of the property ownership structure mentioned above requires a high communication effort: For example, I look after a forest area of about 4,000 ha with 400 owners, with whom I would like to keep in touch. The smallest forest property ownership area is only 56 m². If we cultivate and use a certain area, I have to clarify and organise the necessary framework conditions in agreement with all the owners concerned.

Carriers transport the valuable raw material to a collection site or directly to the sawmill

And how is the wood getting from the forest to the sawmill?

HP: Usually the forest supervisor informs me by telephone that a lot of wood is for sale. Then I go there and inspect the trees, which are mostly still standing. After an initial assessment of the quality, the price is negotiated, which corresponds to the current market price. Then

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

Round timber from sustainably managed forests forms the basis for all finishing products

> *We have to carefully consider how we handle the forest in the future and contribute to its stabilisation.*
>
> Wolfgang Huber

I check how a removal is possible and whether it requires interim storage. Coordination with the forest supervisor and freight forwarder needs to run smoothly. Fortunately, we can rely on a well-established, professional network.

Are you also dealing with the climatic changes that will influence the future supply of wood as a raw material?

WH: I am actively involved in working groups, even though the forest in Tyrol is currently less affected. According to studies by the Austrian Research Centre for Forests, spruce trees in their native areas will sooner or later experience distress, as it is relatively difficult for them to get the necessary water as shallow-rooted plants. The prolonged dry periods also lead to increased beetle infestation. Whether the spruce can withstand these changes is currently being researched. The question is how we will deal with the findings.

HP: Climate changes cannot be detected within a few years. It takes much longer, decades. What I do notice, however, are very strong temperature fluctuations.

Forest supervisor Wolfgang Huber supports property owners in selling wood

What role does forestry play for the forest – and for people?

WH: We live in a man-made environment, our forests have been cultivated for centuries. If the forest is growing too old, trees fall over and erosion also occurs. We prevent this by utilising old trees in time and replanting young trees. If we stopped, at some point we would have a virgin forest again, without the so necessary protective forest function of our barrier woodlands. We simply can no longer afford this in Tyrol.

And what role do large timber companies like Pfeifer play in this effort?

HP: A huge one! There is enough raw material on the market to be processed. The impact is much faster today than in the past, the technology has improved considerably – and that's a good thing. Because the wood must be removed from the forest as quickly as possible in order to maintain its high quality. This requires efficient, reliable companies.

Mr Paolazzi, your wood is used to make products that are exported to 90 countries all over the world. Are you proud of the fact that it is then used, for example, in major projects overseas?

HP: I am definitely impressed. I frequently explain to forest owners in how versatile ways their wood is used and how much it is in demand on the global market. Most of them do not expect something like this. For a long time, wood was only used for personal consumption or sold regionally at most. Today I actually notice an increased interest in what actually happens with the raw material.

To wrap this up: What future challenges do you see?

WH: We have to carefully consider how we handle the forest in the future and contribute to its stabilisation. Key to this is, for example, a sensible, site-appropriate distribution of tree species during reforestation. The planted tree must always match the respective soil. Spruce monocultures are and will not be the answer.

> *There is enough raw material on the market to be processed.*
>
> Helmuth Paolazzi

© Pfeifer Timber GmbH

© Gerhard Berger, Pfeifer Timber GmbH, Anna Tiefenbrunner

With plant manager Marco De Gennaro, the northernmost location of the Pfeifer Group consolidates its reputation as an attractive employer. Moreover, he is involved in the Uelzen employer initiative to recruit potential specialists.

© Jan-Rasmus Lippelt / www.fotos-fotografie.de

The Group's largest "block factory" invests in quality and performance enhancement

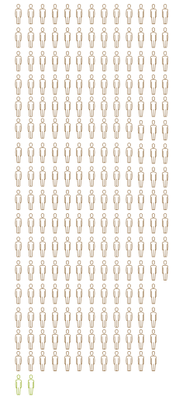
Uelzen focuses on further development

Since June 1, 2019, sawmill and timber expert Marco De Gennaro has been managing the processes at the Uelzen plant – from process optimisation to data specification and controlling. Most recently, as site manager of a large timber processing company, he had assumed responsibility for 220 employees and successfully demonstrated his leadership skills. These qualities are what De Gennaro contributes to Uelzen in order to continuously develop the location: "My strength lies in tackling things and motivating employees." His aim is to establish a new perception away from conventional sawmill thinking and to position the Uelzen site in the Lüneburg Heath as a modern industrial company: "This requires tools that enable staff to work safely to the highest standards while guaranteeing maximum utilisation of the facilities," says De Gennaro. For this reason, together with the company management, he is pushing the implementation of checklists in the individual work areas and is investing in 5-S workstations at all plants in order to create a working environment for the employees that is as stress-free and trouble-free as possible.

More visible together

Parallel to these measures, the site is also involved as a member of the Employers' Initiative Uelzen. "Like many other industries, we are also affected by the shortage of skilled workers. In addition, our 4-layer system requires a certain flexibility. In order to make our company visible to potential employees, we work together with other Uelzen companies from a wide range of sectors to promote the high quality of life, training and career prospects on site", reports Jill Schenk, head of administration at the Uelzen site. Specifically, the Pfeifer Group cooperates with schools, offers application training for prospective trainees and participates in AGI meetings and regulars' tables. "We are thus perceived as a competent business partner in the city of Uelzen and our concerns are listened to", concludes Schenk in an exceptionally positive manner after his initial experiences.

194
Employees



2
Trainees

11
Average years of company service

44
Average age of the team

Ewald Franzoi paid attention to a balanced composition of the team

Our new Innovation Team is ready

The Pfeifer Group is taking a promising path to actively address strategic future issues: Since the kick-off in June 2019, 8 employees from different departments and locations as well as members of the accompanying partner Philoneos have formed an innovation team to think ahead and outside of the box.

Acting with foresight is a tradition at Pfeifer. In order to deal even more specifically with challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing business world, the innovation agent position was created together with the Munich-based consultancy Philoneos. In March 2019, a Group-wide tender was issued inviting particularly motivated and inspired employees to join the newly formed Innovation Team. Ewald Franzoi, CFO of the Pfeifer Group, is pleased about the initiative and the positive response: "With the introduction of the innovation team we are taking a further step towards shaping the future. Numerous applications were submitted. When selecting the eight agents, we and our partner Philoneos paid particular attention to the quality of the execution and a mix of different corporate divisions and locations."

> *With the introduction of the innovation team, the Pfeifer Group is taking an important step towards shaping the future.*
>
> Ewald Franzoi, CFO of the Pfeifer Group

Management will grant employees appropriate time for their new activity as innovation agents. The coordination of meetings, both virtual and in person, is handled by the Philoneos team, which brings a solid expertise to the process of selection and implementation.

© Andreas Schatzl

As co-creators we give new impetus

In an interview, the two CEOs of Philoneos Dr. Maximilian Lude and Sebastian Bartling talk about what a "Bureau for Future Affairs" actually does, what innovation actually means for the Pfeifer Group and how the innovation team works in practice.

INTERVIEW DR. MAXIMILIAN LUDE SEBASTIAN BARTLING

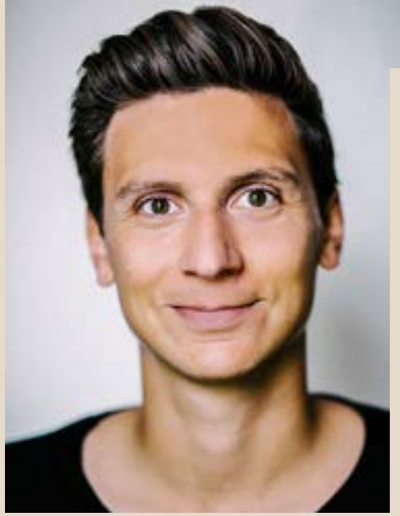
Who is behind Philoneos and which tasks have you committed yourself to?

We are a team with a background in practical experience, research and family business. We support family businesses strategically and operationally to ensure their own future viability, whether in innovations, marketing or digitisation. An office for future affairs guides, challenges and encourages its partners so that they can face the future full of confidence. We see ourselves less as consultants and more as "co-creators", since we develop and implement innovative ideas together with the relevant players – in the case of the Pfeifer Group with the innovation agents.

How did the idea for the Pfeifer innovation team come up?

It all started with the Pfeifer 4.0 project, which was set up jointly a few years ago. Over a period of three years, this involved bringing together a wide variety of people, departments and locations at Pfeifer and working together to develop challenges and sustainable solutions for the Pfeifer business model. The innovation initiative sees itself as a continuation of these activities with the primary goal of making the Pfeifer Group even more innovative and thus more sustainable.

→



Sebastian Bartling (left) and Maximilian Lude direct and inspire the new Pfeifer Innovation Team

Was the number of Innovation Agents determined by you?

We started with the target to nominate 6 to 8 agents together with the Pfeifer management. The outstanding quality of many applicants, especially with regard to their enthusiasm to boost innovation for the Group, convinced both us and the company management. That is why we agreed on 8 people eventually. This size allows us to represent a wide range of departments and locations and still be able to coordinate deadlines and joint work well.

Now innovation, literally "novelty" or "renewal", is a very broad term. What does this buzzword actually mean for the Pfeifer Group?

In order to find out more about this, we have put up posters at all locations where the HIT is represented with the statement “For me, innovation means ...”. All employees are encouraged to support us with ideas and to be creative. It is only through a common understanding of innovation that the entire organisation can be innovative and sustainable in the long term. This process begins in the minds of each individual.

Which areas should the company work on as a matter of priority?

We will not dictate what Pfeifer as an organisation should work on. Our task is to provide impulses and directions, based on joint discussions with employees, but also on intensive research, which we consider individually relevant for Pfeifer's future. Methodologically, we are always oriented towards the respective question. We followed a market-based view from the beginning of this project, i.e. we always want to view things from the (potential) customer side. In this context, a customer is not necessarily a customer who purchases a product or service from Pfeifer; an important (internal) customer is also the employees themselves.

> *A market-oriented perspective is the foundation for innovation.*
>
> Sebastian Bartling, CEO of Philoneos

In advance of the HIT, a survey was conducted among the employees. Does it indicate a mission for the future?

The survey shows that Pfeifer can be truly proud of many areas. This includes, for example, a very high level of job satisfaction, high motivation and the commitment to firmly established values. At the same time, potential areas for optimisation were identified, for example in areas such as information flow, transparency or resources for innovation. Initial ideas and approaches for action have already been developed. The HIT also deals with the results of this survey and develops ideas that intersect the above-mentioned topics.

Every team member is allowed and encouraged to contribute ideas

How did the first meeting of the innovation agents go and at what intervals does the team meet?

The kick-off event in June 2019 was important for all participants to get to know each other and for us to create a space of mutual trust. A common understanding of innovation was extensively discussed and the most effective and efficient mode of cooperation was clarified. The physical distance and the actual job are to be navigated in such a way that every team member has the opportunity to work on projects and ideas. Collaboration tools such as Pfeifer Connect or WebEx Teams are a great help to keep such an interdisciplinary team continuously at the same level of information. Nevertheless, no technology can replace physical meetings, which is why the team meets at least once a quarter at in person. Despite higher travel expenses, these meetings fuel the motivation and enthusiasm for the common cause.

> *With initiatives such as Pfeifer 4.0, the innovation team, the employee survey as well as lunch & learn, we operate at the interfaces between innovation and marketing.*
>
> Dr. Maximilian Lude, CEO of Philoneos

Personal interaction boosts team spirit and creativity

© Philoneos

© Pfeifer Group

PFEIFER CREATES EXCELLENT CAREER PROSPECTS IN PRODUCTION, TECHNOLOGY AND ADMINISTRATION

Desired work & opportunity provider

2,000
Employees

8
Locations

3
Countries

30
Apprentices or trainees

Pfeifer sees its more than 2,000 motivated employees as the foundation for growth and corporate success. Their willingness to perform and their know-how are rewarded with a high degree of job security and the best development opportunities – in the most diverse professional fields, from apprentice to executive.

Quality awareness and "passion for timber" are the most important traits of the Pfeifer team drive

We offer a wide range of professions with the best prospects.

Günther Jaritz, HR Manager of the Pfeifer Group

© Gerhard Berger

© Gerhard Berger

Our eight Pfeifer locations in Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic offer attractive jobs in a wide variety of fields and have established themselves as important employers in their respective regions. From production to technology to administration, committed employees at all levels of training are offered a wide range of opportunities. Constant further training and personal development according to individual interests are a top priority, while transparent corporate structures enable steep careers on an international level. With future-oriented programs such as "Lunch & Learn", Pfeifer conveys relevant topics such as innovation at the various locations in order to encourage the workforce to develop further. Potential new employees gain valuable insights into everyday working life through internships, trainee programs keep the next generation of personnel on their toes, and students have the opportunity to complete internship semesters or final theses at Pfeifer. For years, high scores in relevant rankings have attested that Pfeifer is one of the most attractive employers in the respective region in terms of personnel development and employer branding.

Professions in Production & Technology

The processing of wood as a raw material in industrial plants requires maximum precision, vigilance and quality awareness. With the aim of optimising all plant processes, technically experienced, reliable employees are deployed in such essential areas as Production, Production Planning, Quality Assurance, Electrical and Mechanical Maintenance and Technical Project Management. We also offer special positions with a focus on technology in the areas of Fire Protection, Timber Drying, Standardisation and Certification, Technical Purchasing or Scanner Technology. Our own power plant experts monitor the firing system and ensure the smooth operation of the biomass heating plants. Top safety standards have top priority in all plants.

Administrative professions

The continuous volume and efficiency increase in production results in a high demand for highly qualified employees in administration. They play a major role

→

Motivation and loyalty of employees are rewarded accordingly

in shaping central corporate structures in areas as diverse as Accounting, Controlling, the Legal department, HR, Marketing, Logistics, Round Timber Purchasing and Sales. Increasingly, specialists in the IT sector are also being recruited to deal with the highly topical challenges of digitisation. A broad range of IT staff is required, from helpdesk staff and IT administrators to network technicians and programmers with business management know-how as well as SAP specialists. An exciting field of activity for individuals who like to travel and are business fluent is the regional to international sales force. Language skills, communication skills and the ability to work under pressure are also indispensable requirements for the internal sales team. “Especially at the company headquarters in Imst, we offer a wide range of office workplaces in the above-mentioned areas”, reports Günther Jaritz, HR Manager Austria.

Apprenticeships with perspective

An apprenticeship at Pfeifer lays the foundation for a successful future. Apprentices and trainees receive a thorough vocational training by experienced, pedagogically trained employees as well as the best possible support in school and personality development. In addition, above-average apprenticeship salaries are paid during the entire training period and special achievements are rewarded with attractive bonuses. The promotion of personal interests as well as professional specialisation enables the acquisition of additional qualifications. Synergies across locations also benefit our junior staff. For example, a state-of-the-art CNC milling machine was installed in Unterbernbach, which is used for group-wide apprentice training. For its exemplary commitment to the apprenticeship system, the expert jury of the province of Tyrol awarded our company the title of “Excellent Tyrolean Apprenticing Company”. The German locations are also listed and awarded annually by the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce as recognised training companies.

Starting as an apprentice, all the way up to the management level: Modern, high-quality jobs are in demand

© Gerhard Berger

”

Further education is a top priority and is made possible according to individual interests.

Sarah Kathrein, Personnel Developer

APPRENTICESHIPS IN AUSTRIA

Metal Engineer
Focus: Mechanical Engineering
Duration: 3.5 years

Electrical Engineer
Focus: Plant and Industrial Engineering as well as Automation and Process Control Engineering
Duration: 4 years

Wood Engineer
Focus: Sawing Technology
Duration: 3 years

Mechatronics Engineer
Focus: Production Engineering or Automation Engineering
Duration: 3.5 years

APPRENTICESHIPS IN GERMANY

Industrial Mechanic
Speciality: Maintenance
Duration: 3.5 years

Electronics Engineer
Speciality: Industrial Engineering, Machine and Drive Technology
Duration: 3.5 years

Woodworking Mechanic
Speciality: Sawmill Technology
Duration: 3 years

Industrial Management Assistant (m/f)
Duration: 3 years

Management Assistant for Office Management (m/f)
Speciality: Marketing and Sales, Order Management and Coordination
Duration: 3 years

After years of crisis, the construction industry on the Iberian Peninsula is showing stable growth again. Thanks to the Domingo family, Pfeifer can count on experienced sales partners for Pfeifer and Euroblock products in Spain and Portugal. How this consistent partnership succeeds in a constantly changing market.

“We appreciate the long-term cooperation”

The Madrid-based family business Domingo Representative S.L. was founded 40 years ago as an industrial agency. Today it operates throughout Europe as a supplier and distributor of e.g. carbon steel components and products for timber construction, concrete shuttering and packaging (pallet blocks). The business is headed by the three siblings José, Alejandro and Celia Domingo, who form a dynamic and enthusiastic team and have obviously inherited the salesperson gene from their father. The senior partner contributes more than 30 years of experience as a representative and, together with daughter Celia, takes over the administration and management of the company, while the two sons focus more on the operative business. “This allows us to cover all relevant areas effectively and enables us to take care of each customer personally and attentively”, explains Celia Domingo and shows how the fundamental values of the family business such as mutual trust, commitment and dedication are reflected in the daily work. 15 years ago, when the younger generation joined the company, the business field was expanded to include timber construction products and the company’s specialisation was pushed forward. Today Domingo Representative is one of the most important representatives in this sector in Spain and Portugal.

Lasting partnership

The cooperation with the Austrian Pfeifer Group started in 2008. “Ever since, we have been able to establish a solid, close business relationship based on smooth processes and agility in our daily work. We also share the desire to offer a fast and professional service,” José, Alejandro and Celia Domingo explain. Through their intermediary, Pfeifer is mainly represented on the Spanish and Portuguese markets with glulam, three-ply panels, shuttering panels, formwork beams, sawn timber and pallet blocks. Within the import-dependent market of the peninsula, Pfeifer impresses with its core competencies: as a strong, solvent company with many years of experience, a broad product range and flexible, high-quality customer service. The Domingo family promotes the advantages of Pfeifer as a leading brand in the sector through personal customer contact, which is culturally of high importance in southern European countries. However, due to increasing globalisation strong arguments such as quality and competitiveness of the products are needed for a successful deal, emphasise the sales professionals. In addition to product diversity, Pfeifer is valued for its large inventory for just-in-time deliveries, combined with its ability to respond quickly to unforeseen events.

Market in motion

Historically, Spain has always relied heavily on the construction industry – with concrete as a mainstay. “Building houses out of timber or using pellets for heating purposes would have been unthinkable just a few years ago,” the Domingo family explains. Recently, however, more sustainable and environmentally friendly materials are also experiencing a great boom in the Iberian countries, above all the raw material wood. Climatologically, traditionally and economically, pellets and timber construction products are flourishing, especially in the north of the peninsula. The growing commitment of the population, especially the younger generation, to environmental and climate protection is reinforcing the ever-present change in mentality. Recycling and re-use of products is now a high priority, which is why more and more professionals and companies are striving to integrate these principles into their daily practice. Together with Pfeifer, the Domingo family is looking forward to future challenges with confidence: “The Iberian market is constantly changing, showing a very competitive and demanding profile. At the same time, this opens up great opportunities. The prospects for growth are positive if we maintain high quality and price levels, which will allow us to meet the increasing demand, mainly from Eastern European countries.”

We position ourselves among Pfeifer brand customers as a supplier for today and the future. Not just for a one-time deal, but for a long-term relationship.”

Celia, José and Alejandro Domingo

© Illustration: West Werbeagentur GmbH

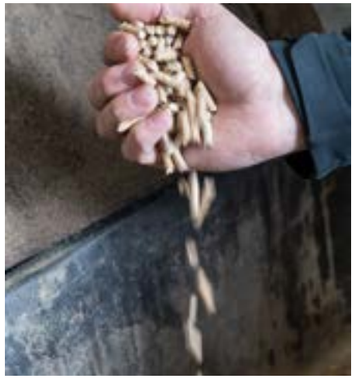
Newsflash

CLOSER TO THE CUSTOMER

Euroblock online presence

Euroblock is strengthening its online presence with a new, sales-oriented website. From spring 2020, www.euroblock.com will build a bridge to the interactive sales tool and B2B service portal. In accordance with Euroblock's quality standards, the site has a high-quality look-and-feel and includes microsites for detailed product presentation. An interactive globe and autocomplete function allow you to locate nearby sales partners. News and blog entries complement the strong corporate image.

www.euroblock.com



DISTRIBUTION IN ITALY

Website for pellet end customers

Due to the continuing high demand for quality pellets in Italy, Pfeifer created its own information and sales website for pellet end consumers in autumn 2019. The site provides information in German and Italian about the numerous advantages of ecological fuel, product details and useful tips for cost-saving heating with pellets. Interested people can use an inquiry form to contact dealers in their region directly and order certified Pfeifer pellets in 15 kg bags comfortably from home.

TOP TRAINING

Excellent apprenticing company

In November 2019, Pfeifer Holz GmbH & Co KG was once again awarded the "Excellent Tyrolean Apprenticing Company" seal of approval by the province of Tyrol. To receive this award, the company must meet strict criteria. The prize is awarded based on the recommendation of a jury with the approval of the Tyrolean provincial government. Authorised officer/HR manager Günther Jaritz and personnel developer Sarah Kathrein accepted the certificate and dedicated the award to all trainers, who contribute valuable work on a daily basis.

© Uwe Mühlhäuser, Pfeifer Timber GmbH

OPEN FACTORY GATES IN UELZEN

Congress participants visit

During the International FEFPEB Congress in Hamburg in October 2019, 90 participants visited the Pfeifer site in Uelzen. Leonhard Scherer, CEO of the Euroblock sales company, and plant manager Marco De Gennaro presented the company's key figures and success story. The interested congress participants, led by congress organiser Marcus Kirschner, Managing Director of the Federal Association of Wood Packaging, Pallets, Export Packaging (HPE), also gained exciting insights into the company's processes.

BRAND COMMUNICATION

"Pfeifer in Motion" established

By introducing a new communication channel, Pfeifer is reacting to the trend towards moving images. The section is located in the newsroom on pfeifergroup.com and is regularly updated with high-quality video content. Next to and in addition to the classic news and blog texts, the "Pfeifer in Motion" category shows a wide variety of image films, location-related clips, product videos and expert interviews. The different formats vividly combine information with entertainment and create an understanding of processes and backgrounds in the company through contemporary storytelling.

See for yourself at
pfeifergroup.com/de/newsroom/pfeifer-in-motion

© Pfeifer Group

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

10 years of our Lauterbach location

In May 2019, the largest fully integrated site of the Pfeifer Group celebrated its strong performance over the past decade with a large employee party. Among the 600 guests in the marquee located in front of the administration building in Wallenrod were the Pfeifer family, coming from Tyrol, the Pfeifer management as well as representatives from politics and economy. At the official ceremony, CEO Michael Pfeifer, on behalf of the entire company management, thanked those politically responsible for the great trust placed in him and the more than 200 employees in Lauterbach as well as a further 55 in Schlitz for their special commitment. With a total of 150 million euros, the construction of the Lauterbach plant in 2008/2009 was the largest single investment to date in the history of the Pfeifer Group. To celebrate the anniversary, an additional 10 million euros were invested to expand the pallet block production and modernise the dryer technology.

AFTER 47 YEARS OF SERVICE

Farewell to a veteran

Josefine Hiltner began her well-deserved retirement at the end of November 2019 after a unique 47 years of working for the company. On September 1, 1972, she began her training as an Industrial Management Assistant in pallet sales in Unterbernbach. She then experienced the company's upswing at first hand as a long-standing Executive Secretary and Assistant to Anton Heggenstaller. With her reliable, helpful and discreet manner, she also assisted all other CEOs and board members of Heggenstaller and Pfeifer (since 2005) and was responsible for insurance matters in the Pfeifer Group for many years. During a joint lunch, the management thanked Mrs Hiltner for her loyalty and the services rendered and wished her all the best for the future.

© Merci Fotografie, Stefanie Wittich, Pfeifer Timber GmbH

LEGAL NOTICE
Publisher: Pfeifer Holding GmbH, Fabrikstrasse 54, A-6460 Imst
Design & Layout: West Werbeagentur, A-6460 Imst
Editor: Agentur Polak, A-6460 Imst

Pfeifer Holding GmbH

Fabrikstraße 54 · A-6460 Imst
Tel.: +43 5412 6960 0
Fax: +43 5412 6960 200
info@pfeifergroup.com

www.pfeifergroup.com