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INDUSTRY europe

The world of European manufacturing



SPECIM MAKES THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

VETREX INVESTS IN PRODUCTION CAPACITY

EMMEGI EXPLORES NEW MARKETS

EUROPEAN AEROSPACE IMPACTED BY BREXIT



Dorfner functional fillers act as a key component in modern composites, functionalised particles in intelligent paints or in industrial flooring systems.

INNOVATION FROM TRADITION

The Dorfner Group is a supplier of industrial minerals and REFINERALS® that are used as highly functional fillers and additives in a variety of applications. The company has secured a leading position in several of its target segments. Due to their extraordinary features, some of which are unique on the market, many Dorfner products can be found in a vast array of daily-use items around the globe.

Founded in 1895, the Dorfner Group specialises in the extraction, processing and refining of industrial minerals that are used as functional fillers and additives in many industries. The starting point was one of the most important German kaolin and quartz deposits located in the Upper Palatinate region in Bavaria and access to highly versatile mineral raw materials. Dorfner recognised the potential of these resources early on, and has consistently expanded the operation ever since.

Today Dorfner is a successful family-owned company headquartered in Hirschau, Germany, with approximately 300 employees and five subsidiaries worldwide. Dorfner's products have allowed it to attain market leadership in many industrial sectors. Their functional mineral fillers provide valuable services in numerous segments, and open up new opportunities for many industries – for example in construction materials, ceramics, paper and glass. Due to the recent market developments, Dorfner now focuses on the strategic segments of composite materials, paints and coatings, and construction

chemicals. Here the filler systems can act as a key component in contemporary kitchen sinks and bathroom elements, or as functionalised particles in intelligent paints. Industrial flooring systems are a major segment in construction chemicals. Within this segment many decorative and resistant surfaces consist of Dorfner GRANUCOL® coloured quartz sand. New and innovative Dorfner products offer low-dust or conductive solutions for the industry.

Early this year, Dorfner launched a full range of fillers for sanitary elements, like washbasins or bathtubs. These new products open up new opportunities in design and resistance for producers of Solid Surface (ATH). The entry into the sanitary world provides a second mainstay in the important segment of composite materials, along with the kitchen industry. Kitchen sinks and countertops made of composite materials with mineral-based functional filler materials are more in demand than ever before. Dorfner has transitioned coloured functional filler materials to market maturity, and is a market leader in this field. Customer-specific coloured sand mixtures with significant



Dorfner supports e.g. the paint & coatings industry with solid application know-how.



Sophisticated particle technologies, as well as modification processes, turn the raw materials into high-quality functional materials.



With the in-house casting facility for composites experimental processes can be tested under real conditions.

technical performance and a broad variety of colours are developed from a range of more than 150 pure colours. A particular new website (www.dorfner-composites.com) gives an overall impression of the portfolio focusing on the industry and designers.

Elaborative refinement processes and sophisticated particle technologies

The quality of the products is ensured through the processing and further refining of the raw materials. The raw materials undergo an elaborate refining process, where they are separated into their components and get cleaned. The result is pure crystal quartz sand with a uniform colour and of the best possible quality.

With sophisticated particle technologies, as well as through modification processes, Dorfner knows how to finish the raw materials into exceptionally high-quality functional materials, such as industrial minerals and REFINERALS®. Most of the products are manufactured on a tailor-made basis for customers, which ensures the technical and economic perfection of the final product.

Customer service and innovation

Dorfner primarily sees itself as a partner for its customers – a partner who cooperates with them to facilitate expansion of added value, supporting them in a goal-oriented manner to successfully create innovative and marketable products. In order to achieve this, Dorfner has built up a professional R&D department and solid application know-how, as well as product and market-oriented consulting for production and processing.

Along the customers' process chain, new formulas, or experimental and upscaling processes, can be tested under real conditions, e.g. with investment in an in-house casting facility for composites. In this way, it is possible to quickly identify problems and solve them accordingly using suitable formulas and an adapted process execution.

Dorfner's philosophy makes it stand out in the market of filler manufacturers. Dorfner is different and is perceived differently in its field.

In Hirschau and around the world

Internationalisation is a clear focus point in Dorfner's strategy. The latest acquisition of ACS International Products, based in Tucson, Arizona, USA, in August 2017, represents another important step forward. With revenues in the double-digit millions (USD), ACS has been one of the US's top manufacturers of decorative, non-mineral filler systems for some years. The products are primarily used in the production of bath and sanitary products, furniture and other cast polymer and spray applications. In addition to both being family-owned, Dorfner and ACS also uphold similar company philosophies with a focus particularly on product innovation and individualisation.

The company started its worldwide expansion in September 2014 with the establishment of a new sales subsidiary in Dubai to strengthen its position in the market of the Middle East. The major system manufacturers for flooring systems in the region are supplied with GRANUCOL® sands and DORSIMIX® blends. Many flooring projects of thousands of square metres have been finished in the meantime. The next goal is to convince the companies operating in the paint industry in Arab countries of Dorfner's competence and products.

This has already been achieved in Australia. Since the beginning of this year, one of the market leaders in the paint industry in the Pacific region has been continuously supplied with DORKAFILL® products. In the course of supplying products to this client, the company's R&D specialists are constantly learning about the user- and climate-specific requirements in the local markets. □

For further details about Dorfner filler systems and services visit: www.dorfner.com or www.dorfner-composites.com





SUCCESS SQUARED

Thanks to its instantly recognisable square pack and constant introduction of new, innovative varieties, Ritter Sport chocolate has become a firm favourite in households around Europe. Industry Europe looks at how the company has achieved its iconic status, as well as its commitment to sustainability and social responsibility.

Alfred Ritter GmbH & Co. KG is a traditional family enterprise which today employs around 1400 people, has an annual turnover of €470 million and is active across 100 companies.

Ritter was established in 1912, in Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, where the master confectioner Alfred Eugen and his wife Clara Göttle, a sweet shop owner, started their own chocolate and sweets factory. Chocolate was in high demand, and the company grew quickly, until in 1932 Clara observed that rectangle-shaped chocolate is a poor fit for the pockets of spectators at local sport-

ing events. The revolutionary square shape and the name 'Ritter Sport' were born and in 1960 the company decided to focus on the square shape exclusively.

The building of a global brand

The slogan 'Quadratisch.Praktisch.Gut' (Quality. Chocolate. Squared) was used in nationwide TV advertising during the 1970s and quickly became a strong brand identifier in the German market. This, coupled with the characteristic colour coding of each >



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flavour and the user-friendly design of the ‘snap’n’open’ packaging, rounds off the unmistakable identity of Ritter’s chocolate.

The product range includes 27 varieties of the 100g square bar, five large format (250g) bars, various mini-varieties as well as seasonal ‘limited edition’ bars as well as the popular ‘Choco Cubes’. The company continues to innovate and introduce exciting new lines in order to keep its range fresh and interesting to consumers.

Sustainable ambitions

Environmental responsibility has always been a driving factor behind Ritter’s corporate strategy. As early as 1991 the company replaced aluminium and paper packaging with a one-component packaging material made from fully recyclable polypropylene. It also owns and operates a block power station, which provides energy and heat for production.

Since 1990 the company has been supporting cocoa farming in Nicaragua with the project ‘Cacaonica’, aiming to improve living conditions for farmers and using the premium cocoa for its organic range of chocolate. There, it produces cocoa by means of agroforestry – i.e. cocoa trees grown with companion crops: shade trees and plants which both produce compost and promote soil fertility. In 2012 the company took this programme a major step forward with the purchase of land in the country and the establishment of its own plantation for the sustainable cultivation of cocoa.

Ritter’s aim is to achieve CO2-neutral production by 2022. In 2015 it was certified in line with the DIN standard 50001. According to the company: “By 2025, the cocoa for all of our Ritter Sport chocolate will come from sustainable production; by 2020 the figure will be at least 75 per cent. ‘Sustainable cocoa’ means cocoa certified according to internationally recognised standards such as the Rainforest Alliance, fair trade and UTZ. Working together with all the departments, possible ways to save energy will be elaborated and measurable targets set. In this context, we find it particularly important to involve and train all our staff.”





Quality first

The price of quality commodities such as cocoa and hazelnuts varies from year to year but Ritter always chooses to maintain its high product quality rather than compromise owing to price pressures.

“Quality has its price,” said a company spokesperson, “and as a family-owned enterprise we have to work to healthy business principles. When it comes to a product that stands for pleasure and a bit of luxury, the price should be secondary to the enjoyment that the product brings.”

The founder’s grandchildren, who are today leading the board and executive committee, are carrying on in the family tradition: Ritter Sport will remain square, colourful and of uncompromisingly high quality. □

