

INFORM

SIMPLE IS EASIER.

Portrait of the WIP Group in Aleksandrów Kujawski, Poland, with CEO Michał Skonieczny. [3](#)

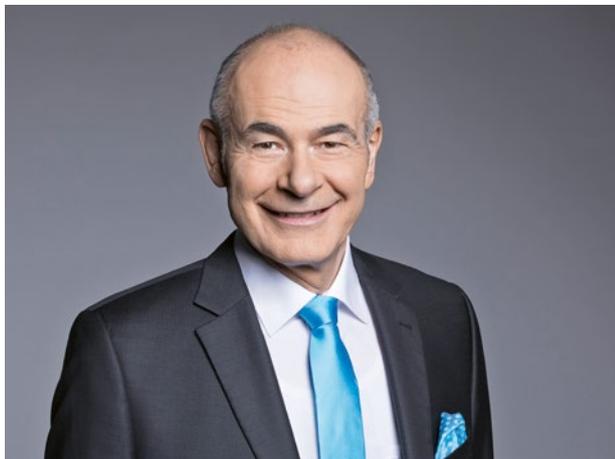
NOT SO DUSTY.

New technology of Otto Hofstetter AG to remove PET dust particles. [7](#)

MORE THAN CARTRIDGES.

Interview with Cihan Tanik, General Manager of Iz Baski, the Turkish market leader for cartridge production. [10](#)

HIGH LEVELS OF ACTIVITY IN THE EU.



European industry is very busy. Enterprises from all branches report full order books. The number of unemployed, accordingly, is at the lowest level since the end of 2008. About seven million jobs have been created in the EU in the last four years. These are the positive aspects of the upswing. The booming demand, however, also brings suppliers to the limits of their capacities. Delivery problems for certain materials and limited transport capacities make work difficult. Delivery problems are unavoidable.

Sixty per cent of our business comes from the countries of the European Union. We, too, observe the very high levels of activity in these industries. I sometimes have an uneasy feeling about it. I'm pleased, of course, with the success of our customers and partners, but at the same time the market seems to me to be overheated. We monitor the developments in the European countries carefully. In whatever direction the pendulum swings, we want to serve our customers with the right solutions.

One measure in this context is the foundation of our subsidiary in Luxembourg. Since 1 November 2017, Otto Hofstetter Luxembourg S.A. has been operational. Thanks to this new daughter company, we are closer to our customers in the EU, and can act faster and reduce reaction times. This step also makes the design department at the headquarters more flexible and clearly shortens implementation times.

In parallel to the above, we are working on a standardisation system for our packaging moulds. The objectives are to reduce delivery times markedly and to be able to offer our products at a lower price level. Moreover, the new technology should further improve the ecological footprint of our moulds and make the total cost of ownership yet more attractive. The first test results are extremely satisfactory. In a few weeks we will report more about this milestone in the history of Otto Hofstetter AG.

In the meantime, I wish you successful business transactions and much enjoyment on reading this issue of our customer magazine.

Yours
Stefan Zatti



Title page.

Iz Baski, the leading manufacturer of cartridges in Turkey, runs its own training programme to ensure a skilled and professional workforce in the future.

Imprint.

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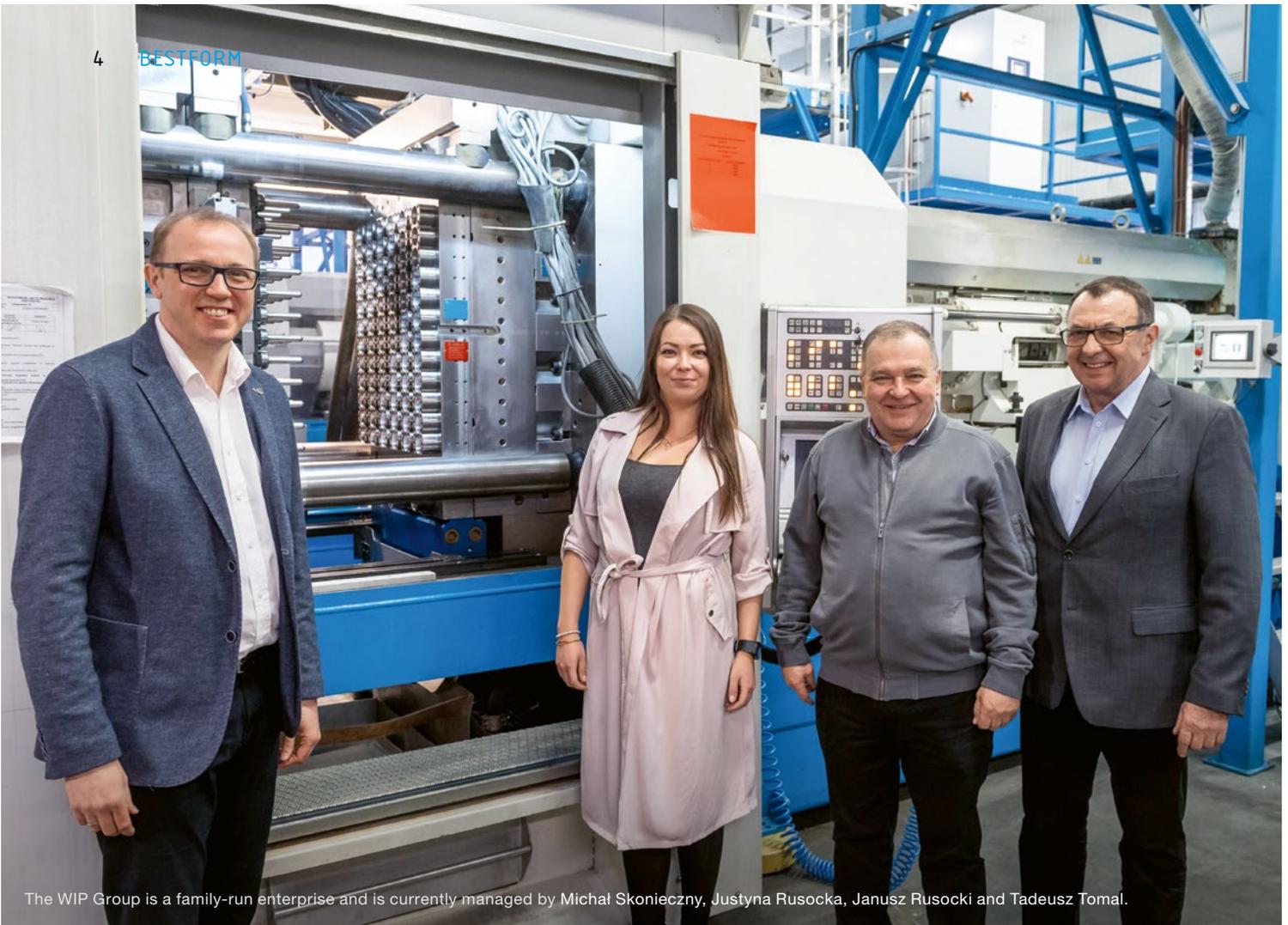
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A photograph of four clear PET bottles held in a person's hands. The bottles are arranged in a row and show iridescent, rainbow-like colors due to light refraction. The background is dark and out of focus. The text 'SIMPLE IS EASIER.' is overlaid in white at the bottom of the image.

SIMPLE IS
EASIER.

The **WIP Group** is one of the most important enterprises of the **PET industry in Poland**. In its 25-year history, the company has developed from a manufacturer of blowing machines to a versatile, forward-looking and highly qualified supplier of bottles, preforms and films. *inform* met **CEO Michał Skonieczny** in Aleksandrów Kujawski for an interview.



The WIP Group is a family-run enterprise and is currently managed by Michał Skonieczny, Justyna Rusocka, Janusz Rusocki and Tadeusz Tomal.

Mr Skonieczny, your company celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. What did the enterprise look like at the beginning?

Taja, the producer of beverages, was unable to buy enough PET bottles on the free market and therefore resolved to produce the necessary containers itself. Our company was chosen to manufacture the required blowing machines. Production started in June 1993. At the end of the 1990s, WIP sold twenty blowing machines per year.

**"AS A FAMILY-RUN ENTERPRISE,
WE ARE ABLE TO REACH DECISIONS
WITHIN 48 HOURS."**

Michał Skonieczny, CEO WIP Group

Today, WIP is one of Poland's most important producers of PET bottles and preforms. How did this change happen?

There are two stories. First, the bottles: Taja didn't need twenty blowing machines per year, which prompted WIP to go on the free market. The more presentations the company had to make, the more bottles it produced. To avoid recycling them unused, we started selling PET bottles officially. Today,

we sell about 40 million bottles for milk products, wine and cosmetics.

Now to the preforms: At the height of the season our sister company Taja was short on urgently needed PET preforms. This caused the management to decide that WIP would take up production. We are now at approximately one billion per annum, corresponding to about one fifth of the Polish market.

But this isn't all. WIP offers also film of RPET. What made you take this step?

We looked for a way to use the reject PET preforms and found the solution in the production of PET film for the FMCG market. To this end we started an operation in Zwoleń, in Eastern Poland, in 2013.

What do the figures of WIP look like today?

Here in Aleksandrów Kujawski we have 50 employees, and in Zwoleń we also have about 50 employees. WIP consists of the segments pharma, cosmetics and packaging. In these highly specialised areas we offer a wide range of preforms, bottles and films for beverages, milk products, FMCG and cosmetics. Ten Netstal-Otto Hofstetter AG lines run for the preform production. Seen over all segments combined, our annual sales amount to EUR 50 million.

Which are your most important markets?

The domestic market is our strength, in principle. As regards exports, the distance from our production plants is the criterion. To be competitive, we can only serve markets within a radius of 1000 to 1200 kilometres, which means Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. Some exports go also to Russia.

“THE PRESSURE ON PRICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS WILL INTENSIFY THE EFFORT TO REDUCE RAW MATERIAL USE.”

Michał Skonieczny, CEO WIP Group

Are the markets further east a possibility for WIP?

We have tried to get a foothold in these markets with some of our products. However, we find it difficult to achieve marketable prices with our top-quality products. In a mass market it will always be a problem for us to hold our own. For cosmetics it is a little different. In this area the possibilities appear to be quite positive – for example in Russia.

Major brands are among your customers. Why did these companies favour WIP?

On the one hand it is no doubt the previously mentioned safety which we can offer our customers. On the other, they appreciate our flexibility and our personal engagement. As a family-run enterprise, we are able to reach decisions within 48 hours, in spite of our size. And last but not least we watch the developments in the market very carefully and keep asking our customers what they need. This makes us a reliable partner who also thinks in the long term.

What potential does the PET business in Poland hold?

We see a saturated market as far as water, non-alcoholic beverages and milk products are concerned. Since ever more money is available to Polish households and they can afford more and more, the market will keep growing for some time. But it will be a rather reluctant growth. With the packaging articles for the cosmetics industry, on the other hand, we expect a two-digit growth rate. The industry has discovered the properties of PET and is increasingly advancing in this direction.

What developments and trends will challenge you most in future?

In the case of food packaging and bottles, our customers will intensify their efforts to reduce the quantity of raw material

used. The pressure on prices and environmental aspects are driving this development. Looking at preforms, the activities will concentrate on the bottle’s neck and base. The fillers have already optimised the bottle body as far as possible. Some years ago, the trend went away from PCO 1810 to PCO 1881. We still have preforms with a 30/25 neck, but the demand for the 29/25 version grows daily.

The public is discussing the use of PET more than ever. What is the future of this material?

As already pointed out, polyethylene terephthalate has outstanding properties. Many application areas have not even been discovered yet. It doesn’t surprise me at all that the cosmetics industry is entering the field now, because PET is glossy, transparent, offers a lot of design freedom and, on top of all this, is less expensive than other types of plastic. The last and increasingly important factor is the possibility of recycling this material.

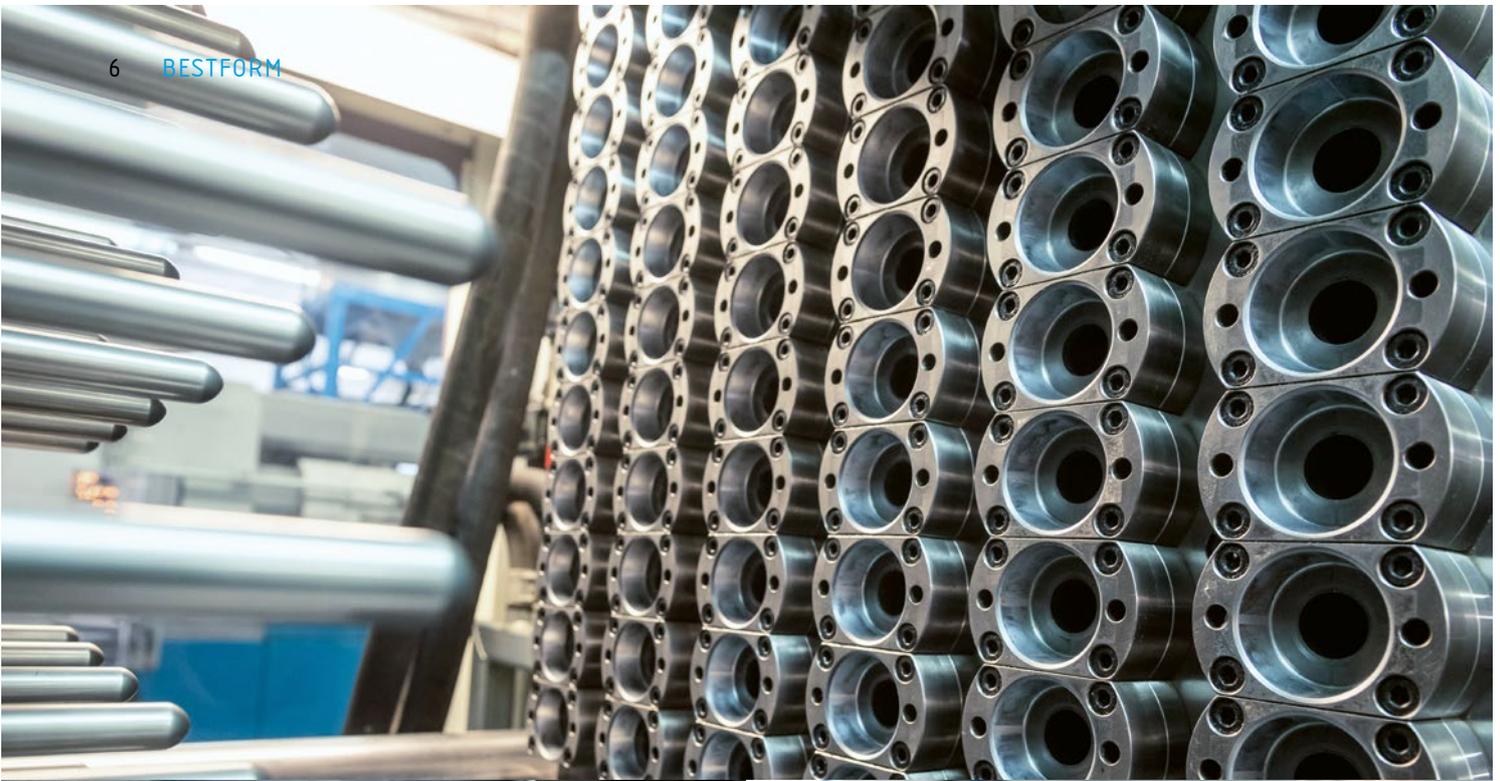


WIP attaches much importance to quality, but it has its price. What are the arguments with which you convince your customers?

Certain customers don’t actually agree that quality has its price. In these cases we draw their attention to facts which they often overlook, such as availability, care and attention, delivery times and reliability. Moreover, we draw from 25 years of experience in blowing bottles, which gives them additional safety. Of the ones we fail to convince in the first meeting, some contact us again after a few months.

Quality is also the main focus of Otto Hofstetter AG. Is this why the Swiss enterprise is your partner?

Our cooperation started in 1998. The Italian mechanical engineering company BMB recommended us Otto Hofstetter AG.



We discovered much common ground already in our first meeting. Both companies are family-owned, rely on simple structures and can decide very quickly. What's more, in Albert Weber we have a contact person who understands our business and takes our needs very seriously. We see him much more as a partner than a salesperson.

In the twenty years of cooperation we have come to appreciate not only the precision of Swiss moulds, but also their reliability and durability. In addition to that, Otto Hofstetter AG supports us in the detection of market trends and informs us of latest developments. If innovations need to be translated, we can count on our Swiss partner.

What will WIP look like in five years' time?

Our owners rely on long-term and sustained growth. This means that we will continue to get bigger. My hope is that we can get established in the surrounding markets, since Poland

is already now too small for us. We will not rest and will keep developing new products for our customers in the areas of PET, film and cosmetics. Maybe I'm not quite as optimistic as I could be, but I foresee a bright future for WIP.



WIP Sp. z o. o. Spółka Komandytowa

Founded: 1993

Branches: foodstuffs, cosmetics and pharma (WIP Cosmetics)

Products: preforms, bottles and film from PET

Areas: water, juices and beverages, milk and dairy products as well as packaging articles for foodstuffs and consumer goods

Works in: Aleksandrów Kujawski and Zwoleń

Production: 1 billion preforms/year

www.wip-group.pl

NOT SO DUSTY.

With immediate effect, Otto Hofstetter AG is offering a new, integrated dust-evacuation solution. OH-Xtract® is a unique system that removes the PET dust particles directly in the hot runner, so that their spreading in both mould and machine is clearly reduced. The result is a four times longer maintenance interval, i.e. a considerable increase of the production time.

The prime objective of the engineers and designers of Otto Hofstetter AG is to bring the efficiency of the manufactured moulds to the maximum. This is why a utility of more than 95 per cent is not unusual in many production plants of Otto Hofstetter AG customers around the world.

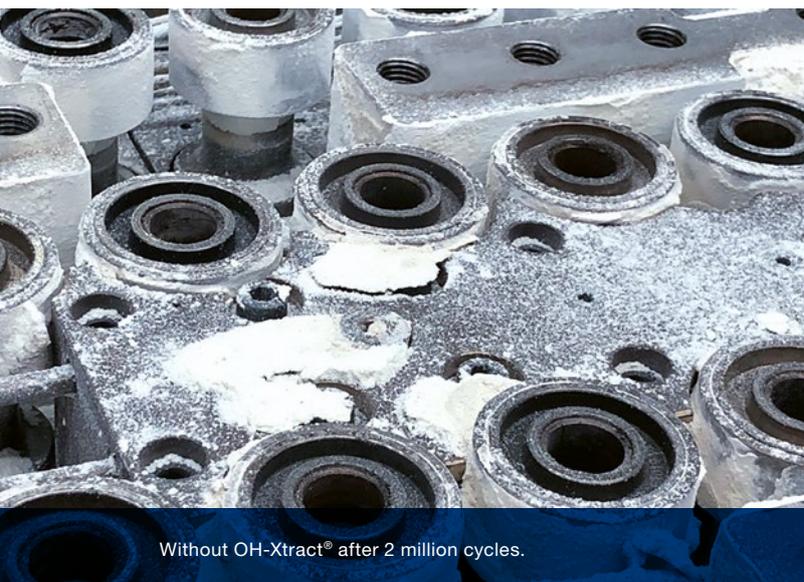
Efficiency thanks to quality.

Design and function concepts optimised a thousand times over and materials of maximum robustness, coupled with the highest precision during processing, contribute very substantially to the moulds' effectiveness. But there is more to it! Numerous in-house technical developments with which the moulds from Uznach are equipped in their standard format further increase the already high basic productivity.

**"DUST CAN BE REMOVED OR
MINIMISED BEFORE IT CAN SPREAD
TO OTHER PARTS
OF THE MOULD OR MACHINE."**

Availability continuously optimised.

Take OH-Xtra[®], for example. This designation stands for an entirely new concept for the surface treatment of cores. A special process applies it directly to the mould component and leads to positive effects for both mould and preform. On



Without OH-Xtract[®] after 2 million cycles.

the one hand, fewer dust particles settle on the actual moulding surfaces, which markedly reduces the necessary cleaning effort, increasing the availability of the injection mould. On the other, tiny scratches in the gate area are prevented and, as an extra benefit, less ejection force is required.

OH-Xtreme[®] is another example of an invention of Otto Hofstetter AG which leads to a higher utility of the moulds. This is an amorphous metal-carbon layer which stands out through its dark colour and reduces wear to a major extent. For ten years already, the special coating has been proving its worth in daily use. It protects against seizing and fretting corrosion, and enables the dry running of moved parts such as ejectors, slides and cores.

New recipe for yet more efficiency.

Only a few weeks ago, the development team of Otto Hofstetter AG launched a further new development which is available as from now: OH-Xtract[®] is a specific dust evacuation for moulds used in the production of PET preforms. It is integrated directly in the mould and can be adjusted individually over a timer, i.e. the feature is gentle on resources.

PET dust is everywhere.

Degassing and thereby the occurrence of PET dust is unavoidable wherever PET is processed. This dust contaminates primarily the hot runner, but unwanted deposits also arise on the cold side of the mould, and even some parts of the moulding machine suffer from it in continuous production.

Remove the dust where it arises.

OH-Xtract[®] developed by the engineers of Otto Hofstetter AG acts where the dust particles are generated: in the hot runner. Thanks to extra vent bores in the head plate and an ingenious



With OH-Xtract[®] after 10 million cycles.

suction system, the dust can be removed or minimised before it can spread to other parts of the mould or machine. This positive effect has been substantiated impressively in comprehensive tests in production at full capacity.

Almost four times less maintenance with OH-Xtract®.

The integrated dust evacuation of Otto Hofstetter AG means that a much higher number of cycles can be performed before the equipment needs cleaning. The concrete figures show how efficiently the system works. In the test run, production only had to be interrupted for hot runner maintenance after 10 million shots. This means that OH-Xtract® allowed production to run for 144 hours longer before a production stop for maintenance was required. On a 96-cavity mould with a six-second cycle time, this would result in 8,294,400 more preforms being produced during the same period.

Example:

Number of moulds:	96
Cycle:	6 seconds
Preform:	8 gram
Maintenance interval without OH-Xtract®:	after 2 million cycles
Maintenance interval with OH-Xtract®:	after 10 million cycles

4 maintenance stops = 144 hours
 1 hour's maintenance = 800 EUR*
 Savings = 115,200 EUR

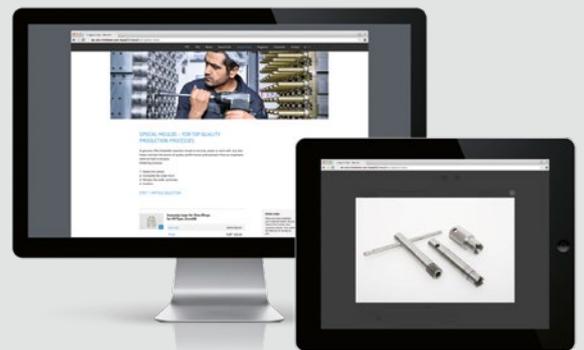
*Industry standard costs per hour for system downtime.

115,200
 EURO

Impressive savings.

The new development from Uznach also allows for significant savings to be made. If you multiply the 144 hours that would be required for maintenance work by the industry standard costs of EUR 800 per hour of system downtime, the potential savings created by OH-Xtract® within the first 10 million cycles amount to EUR 115,200 – an impressive sum.

ONLINE SHOP FOR SPECIALIST TOOLS.



Now you can purchase specialist tools easily, quickly and at any time of day or night. Our new online shop has all the moulds you need for your daily work.

The specialist tools are perfectly adapted to our moulds to ensure efficient and impeccable functionality. Order now at

shop.otto-hofstetter.swiss



Cihan Tanik is **General Manager** of **Iz Baski**. The enterprise is market leader in Turkey, but supplies its **cartridges** to the entire world. The young entrepreneur intends to hold the course for growth with quality and client-specific new **product developments**, about which he informed us in an interview.

Mr Tanik, Iz Baski was founded in 1987. How did the enterprise develop?

The company was set up by my father's earlier business partner. At the beginning, they printed small containers for medicine. The range of products was expanded in 1992 and they started to print cartridges. Only one year later, they started also making the cartridges. Our family acquired first shares of Iz Baski in 2001 and took over the complete business in 2006. We initiated an investment programme, which meant, for example, that we bought the first mould from Otto Hofstetter AG in 2008. And in the last ten years we've grown steadily.

My father, however, had already ventured into the plastics industry in 1978 and dealt in raw materials. Through our sister company on the European side of Istanbul we are still active traders and import raw materials from Europe, which we sell in Turkey.

What do the figures of Iz Baski look like?

When our family started its involvement in the enterprise in 2001, the total production reached one million cartridges per month. At present we make 13 million each month and have a total production capacity of about 200 million per year. With currently approximately 140 million sold cartridges per annum we lead the market in Turkey and, as far as I know, have the biggest capacity available in the Middle East, Turkey and Eastern Europe.

With what sort of production infrastructure do you achieve these numbers?

Right now we run twelve lines with 8 to 16 cavities each. We work on six days per week around the clock in three shifts. On Sundays we rest, with a few exceptions. To maintain the operation at this intensity, we employ around 90 persons in production and about 25 in development, sales and administration.

Iz Baski has grown impressively over the last ten years.

Which were your father's decisive steps?

Let me state in advance: My father says of himself that he's not exactly an expert in matters of production. His heart beats for trading. And I'm not a technician, either. After we had taken over the company ten years ago, we became aware of the immense potential in both the home market and exports. But it was clear to us: to be able to take advantage of it, we had to improve the quality. An Italian competitor with which we have been on good terms for years, recommended that I change the mould maker. On receiving this advice we got in touch with Otto Hofstetter AG. We knew that the moulds would be more expensive than our current ones. But our objective was

to become a leading supplier, and we started to cooperate with the Swiss company. This changed our understanding of quality completely.

What made the change evident?

When we initiated it, we served practically exclusively Turkish customers. Now, 80 per cent of our clientele is made up of big European enterprises. This change brought more volume and enabled us to grow from 1 million to 13 million cartridges a month. In addition, we are more professional and able to meet the increasing needs of our customers.

**"THE COOPERATION
WITH OTTO HOFSTETTER AG
DID CHANGE OUR
UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY."**

Cihan Tanik, General Manager Iz Baski

When did you take over you company's management from your father?

In 2003, while still at the university, I entered into the company. After the complete takeover by our family, they made me General Manager. Seeing that my father's strengths are on the financial side, I started to devote myself to the technical aspects. I'm still not a technician, of course, but my understanding of the production is now clearly better.

What does it feel like to take over your father's company?

It isn't always easy. Especially in a country like Turkey, where family is very important and the rules very clear. Over the years, however, the father-son relationship has become more like a friendship. My responsibility grew year after year. Today I have a free hand and he only keeps an eye on the financial side of things now. When I hear of the generation changes in some other enterprises, I think that our baton change went quite smoothly.

In 2014 you founded Iz Baski Europe in Slovenia. Why?

The delivery times from Turkey to Europe are six to seven days. Our competitors supply within 24 hours. The works in Slovenia allow us to transport faster and cheaper. Our production plant is located in Tolmin, in the north-west of Slovenia, directly on the border to Italy.

You say that Iz Baski is market leader in Turkey. How big is your domestic market, then?

We estimate the monthly demand to 20 to 22 million cart-

ridges. We share the market with three competitors. One produces only the cartridges, the other two fill them as well. A portion of the monthly need is imported from Europe.

Why do companies pick Iz Baski as their partner?

The most important reason, in my opinion, is that we maintain good customer relations in the long term. Apart from this we are reliable and support our clients, and are always at their side whenever they need something. We see ourselves as one family with our customers. In this way we develop the market and achieve mutual growth.

What about your exports?

The export volume fluctuates between 20 and 25 per cent, but increases gradually. We are also optimising our quality in

this area and cooperate with globally active customers and their works in the Middle East and on the African continent. Smaller quantities go to South America. We're progressing very well in Morocco, Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia. We've also been selling in India for some months.

Where do you see the biggest growth potential?

In Turkey we grow in step with the market and our customers. Our sales figures increase from year to year because hardly any new suppliers come up in the home market. Our focus, however, is clearly on the international brands and new markets – India, the Gulf States, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, for example. We see opportunities for us wherever the transport costs and import duties allow it.



"IT SHOULD BE EVERY ENTREPRENEUR'S DUTY TO OFFER TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE."

Cihan Tanik, General Manager Iz Baski

Does this mean that your sales division will grow?

This is happening already. In the last few years, sales were one of my responsibilities. Our sales division will already be bigger next year. It expands in parallel with our range of products.

In what direction will your range of products develop?

Our philosophy is to be able to offer our existing customers a wider spectrum of products. Since last year we've been participating in a government programme aimed at reducing imports. Thanks to the financial incentives of the project we have a reduced risk for new developments. This has encouraged us to expand our development department and intensify our partnerships with universities.

How do you cope with this growth and development?

Growth is good, of course, but the quality must follow under all circumstances. When it comes to injection moulding, we cooperate with the best. We now have to invest on the printing side. Our visual inspection system on the printing machines will be commissioned in the near future. Each individual cartridge will be checked during the process. Apart from this, we will start with a new printing technology next year, something completely new in Turkey. The innovation will enable us to serve our customers just in time in top quality and with smaller quantities.

"GROWTH IS GOOD, OF COURSE, BUT THE QUALITY MUST FOLLOW UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES."

Cihan Tanik, General Manager Iz Baski

Iz Baski stands for high-quality, first-class machines and moulds. How do you ensure a sufficiently trained workforce at all times?

It is indeed difficult in Turkey to find qualified professionals and technicians. When I visited Switzerland and saw the apprentices department of Otto Hofstetter AG, the route was clear to me. We now have agreements with technical universities in Turkey which inform us of qualified school leavers whenever possible. We also try to get in touch with the students at an earlier stage and offer them practical work placements. Ten young people are currently with us to familiarise themselves with practical everyday tasks. In my view, it should be every entrepreneur's duty to offer such training programmes.

Iz Baski commissioned the first mould from Otto Hofstetter AG in 2008. What other advantages has it brought you,



apart from the mentioned quality?

A major gain for us was the know-how which the Swiss passed on to us. After the start of our cooperation, we discovered how little we knew of the production of cartridges. Both sales team and technicians of Otto Hofstetter AG gave us very valuable tips that allowed us to improve. You could definitely say that we have become a family.

To what extent is it beneficial that Otto Hofstetter AG is also a family business?

They know how difficult it is for a family business to cope with the competition. Accordingly, they support us not only on the technical side of things, but also on the financial side. Otto Hofstetter AG plays an important role in our growth. If, for example, we visit our European customers and explain that we produce with moulds from Uznach, they feel safe right away.

Many thanks for the interview, Mr Tanik, and we wish you continued success with Iz Baski.



Iz Baski A.S., Tuzla/Istanbul

Founded: 1987

Branch: construction industry

Products: cartridges, plungers and nozzles

Employees: around 115

Works in: Tuzla/Istanbul and Tolmin

Production: approximately 200 million cartridges a year

www.izbaski.com

NEW PLASTIC MATERIALS.

The New Plastic Economy Initiative is devoted to a new future of plastics. Last January, the initiative recognised five projects within the framework of its Innovation Prize which – thanks to inventions – make the materials more ecological.



The Innovation Prize of the New Plastic Economy Initiative was awarded to a total of eleven projects. Already last autumn in Malta, the prizewinners of the Circular Design Challenge were chosen for their achievements. At the last World Economic Forum, staged at the winter-sports destination of Davos in January, the winners of the Circular Materials Challenge were selected as well.

A new solution for everyday objects.

More than eight million tonnes of plastic pollute our oceans every year. All stakeholders are called upon to find solutions so that plastics don't become waste in the first place. This is the objective of the New Plastic Economy Innovation Prize launched by the Ellen MacArthur fund in May 2017. The contest searches for new solutions for the small plastic objects which are either too small or too complex to be recycled. Among them are 30 per cent of the plastic packaging articles currently produced worldwide. The New Plastic Economy Innovation Prize is funded with USD 2 million and contested in the categories Circular Design Challenge and Circular Materials Challenge.

A contest in two categories.

The first category focuses on the countless small plastic products such as shampoo bottles, caps and covers, drinking straws and lids of coffee cups, etc. They account for ten per cent of the waste which is neither collected nor reused, i.e. which often ends up in the environment. The aim of the second category is to look for ways and means to reuse all plastic packaging articles. Scientists and researchers all over the world are asked to develop alternative materials which can be fully recycled or turned into compost.

Big enterprises participate.

The initiators of the Innovation Prize realise that the inventors alone are unable to introduce the developed solutions in the plastics economy. This is why they request the involvement of all producers, governments and investors. The list of leading brands, retailers and producers which intend to use nothing but reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging articles by 2025 already comprises eleven major enterprises, among them Amcor, L'Oréal, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Unilever and Walmart. These eleven jointly produce six million tonnes of plastic packaging parts per annum.

The winners of the Circular Materials Challenge.

University of Pittsburgh

Thanks to nanotechnology, the team of the University of Pittsburgh is able to produce a multilayer material suitable for recycling. This makes it possible to make packaging bags for foodstuffs from one single material. Thanks to modification of the structure on a nano scale, each layer can display different properties which, in combination, result in a much better material. It can even be coloured without the use of pigments.

Aronax Technologies of Spain

The Spanish team developed a magnetic additive which improves the air and humidity insulation of a material without impairment of its recyclability. The additive – small, plate-shaped particles of silicates and iron oxide – improves the barrier to gases such as oxygen and can be combined with recyclable and compostable plastics. As a multilayer application, it could replace, for example, toothpaste tubes or bags for foodstuffs and beverages.

Full Cycle Bioplastics

Jointly with two partners, Full Cycle Bioplastics developed a multilayer packaging film. It consists of PHA derived from organic waste, and materials on a cellulose basis. The film is an equivalent alternative to oil-based products. Seeing as the PHA comes from organic sources, it can be composted and used again later for the production of new plastics.

VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd

The VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd has developed a compostable three-layer film. VTT derives two kinds of transparent wood cellulose from by-products of agriculture and forestry which display complementary barrier properties, and combines them in three layers. The resulting film is similar to a plastic product and suitable as packaging for muesli, rice, cheese and dried fruit.

Fraunhofer Institute for Silicate Research (ISC)

The Fraunhofer ISC has developed a coating which optimises the performance of bio-based and biodegradable packaging products. This improves the storability and shelf life of the foodstuffs packed in it in a lasting manner, thereby clearly increasing the application possibilities of compostable materials. This makes it possible to dispense with non-recyclable multilayer films.

LUXEMBOURG IS HERE.



Otto Hofstetter **Luxemburg** S.A. has been active since 1 November 2017. Taking stock after the first six months, things look very positive. The **four designers** and the **General Manager** cooperate actively with the mother company in Uznach, and delivery of the first mould designed by them is due in the very near future.

59, route de Wasserbillig, Mertert: This is the address at which you find the new company in Luxembourg. Our latest subsidiary is located approximately 30 kilometres outside the city of Luxembourg and about 15 kilometres from the German city of Trier. This new domicile is a further milestone on our route to a stronger international focus. After India, Hong Kong and China, the branch in Luxembourg expands the network with our physical presence in the European Union.

**"THE OPPORTUNITIES TO
CONTRIBUTE OUR SPECIALIST KNOW-
HOW ARE MUCH GREATER NOW."**

Gerhard Weinandy, General Manager
Otto Hofstetter Luxembourg S.A.

Strengthening the team.

Otto Hofstetter Luxembourg S.A. started with a team of six professionals. The core competences of the subsidiary's specialists are mould design and customer care. All members of the team draw on decades of experience in the PET branch of the industry. After the first six months, entirely positive results are evident to both the parent company and the subsidiary. Stefan Zatti, Sales and Marketing Manager at the headquarters, sees the reason for this in each individual's vast knowledge of the trade. "Our motivation to integrate this long-established team of PET experts in our enterprise was to increase the capacity and design know-how in a single move, and it is already proving to be a success now."

Inspiring exchange.

According to Gerhard Weinandy, the fellow workers in Luxembourg are in daily contact with their colleagues in Uznach. "At the outset we went through a three-week training and familiarisation programme. In the meantime we meet regularly for an exchange of views either in Uznach or here in Mertert." The designers in his team are on excellent terms with their workmates at the headquarters. "Our new colleagues in Luxembourg contribute many ideas for new solutions and suggestions to further improve the technology of Otto Hofstetter AG," adds Stefan Zatti. For him, a new era has started. For example, the Luxembourg team has already developed a first side-entry mould for an Otto Systems system. It will be delivered to the customer in May. Apart from this, discussions are under way for further optimisations of the existing moulds of Otto Hofstetter AG. Gerhard Weinandy adds: "My colleagues and I are fully booked with customer and internal projects for the months ahead."

Partners at eye level.

Some months ago, a situation occurred which he didn't dare dreaming of: "When we had to look for a new employer, we regarded Otto Hofstetter AG as our ideal partner right from the beginning. With the PET branch so easy to have an overview of, we knew both the moulds and the company behind them already for a long time." The short decision paths and the parallels as regards technology and quality accelerated the advances considerably. Moreover, the management in Switzerland never questioned our location, which made the project a perfect solution for Gerhard Weinandy and his colleagues. It marked the start of a new phase. "Since we now design moulds for different platforms, our job is much more varied and the opportunities to contribute our specialist knowledge are much greater."

Stronger in the EU.

In Stefan Zatti's view, the four experienced mould designers are not the only big plus of the new subsidiary in Luxembourg. "The new location is right in the middle of very important markets to Otto Hofstetter AG. This means we are even closer to our numerous customers in the Benelux countries, in France and in Germany." In Gerhard Weinandy we have also gained an experienced man for the sales team who benefits from a broad network in the PET trade and a good reputation. "Anyone striving for success these days has to be flexible and solution-oriented, and maintain close contact with the customers." It is clear to Stefan Zatti that Otto Hofstetter AG can meet these requirements even better with the subsidiary in Luxembourg.

**"WE HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY
INCREASED OUR DESIGN
CAPACITY AND KNOW-HOW IN
ONE SINGLE STEP."**

Stefan Zatti, Sales and Marketing Manager,
Otto Hofstetter AG

A wider spectrum of products.

When it comes to design and technology, the engineering team in Uznach and the new colleagues in Mertert operate at the same level. "Of course, the newcomers had to come to grips with the world of Otto Hofstetter AG first, with which they weren't familiar yet. But with more than twenty years of experience with PET, it didn't take them long." To Stefan Zatti, the high level of technical competence is a perfect bridge in all areas of the business. The fact that the plates and many other parts of the moulds are made at the company's own works in Uznach was new to the Luxembourg designers.

Gerhard Weinandy sees important pluses for the customers in this. "Without question, the quality is better than it would be if the parts were bought in. The subcontractor produces according to drawings, but is familiar with neither the whole mould nor the individual functions. Moreover, the entire mould manufacturing process is better controlled, which in turn is beneficial to the quality and production time."

"THE ABILITY TO ENGINEER MOULDS FOR DIFFERENT PLATFORMS LEADS TO COUNTLESS OPPORTUNITIES."

Gerhard Weinandy, General Manager,
Otto Hofstetter Luxemburg S.A.

Access to new talents.

If everything progresses as planned, the management of Otto Hofstetter AG intends to expand the Luxembourg location in the medium term. "We can imagine making our Mertert

subsidiary a place to train young mould designers in one to two years' time." Until this materialises, trainee designers from Uznach will join Gerhard Weinandy and his team for several weeks at a time. "This gives the up-and-coming mould designers a good insight into mould making outside the Otto Hofstetter AG world already during their training. A world which, as we all know, is not unimportant in the market."

More platforms, more possibilities.

To Stefan Zatti, member of the management of Otto Hofstetter AG, the objectives for Otto Hofstetter Luxemburg S.A. are clear: "In the market, nobody will notice whether a mould was designed in Switzerland or in Luxembourg." Moreover, all our moulds continue to be made and tested at the works in Uznach, from where they are delivered. "The ability to engineer moulds for different machine platforms leads to countless opportunities." Gerhard Weinandy is convinced that the growing industries in Poland, Russia and the Baltic States, as well as the increasing interest of leading enterprises in cooperating with several partners, will result in attractive prospects.

"OUR NEW LOCATION IS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF VERY IMPORTANT MARKETS TO OTTO HOFSTETTER AG."

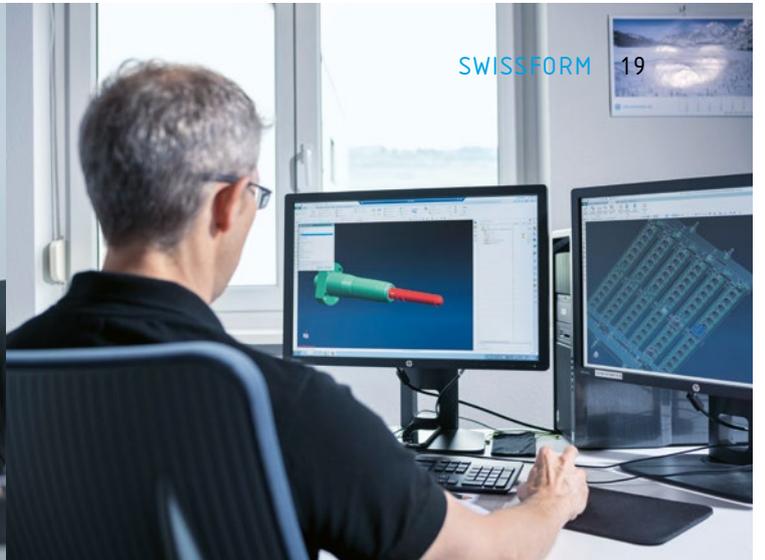
Stefan Zatti, Sales and Marketing Manager,
Otto Hofstetter AG

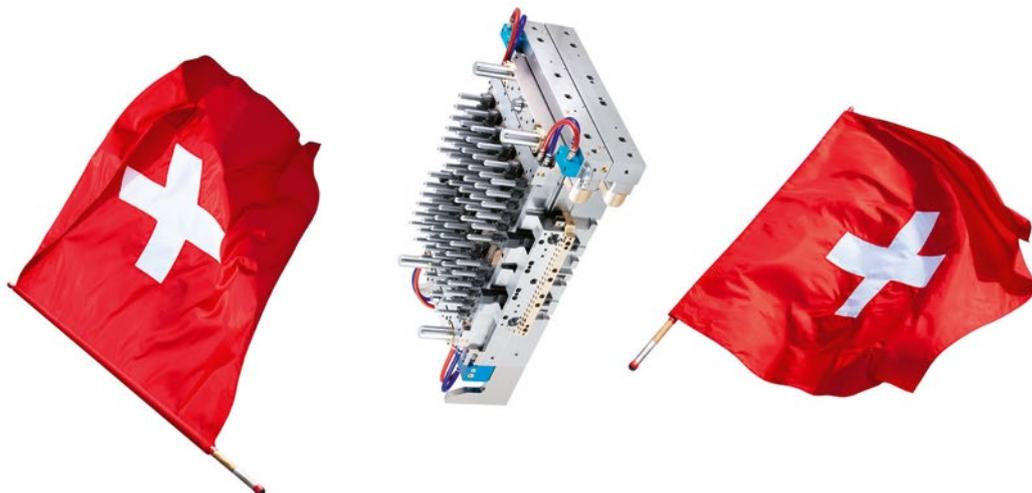
Strengthened for the future.

Gerhard Weinandy and Stefan Zatti agree: "If the integration continues as smoothly as it has gone so far, the new subsidiary in Luxembourg can look forward to a great future." For the crew in Mertert, the prospects are even better. "After a phase of uncertainty we are happy, firstly, to have been received so openly and in such a friendly manner by our colleagues in Uznach. Secondly, we are delighted to have found in Otto Hofstetter AG an employer who gives us and our families long-term perspectives again, and thirdly, we appreciate that we can offer our know-how to a company with which we have good chances of mutual growth."

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