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# MOVING FORWARD.



Dear readers

In September, PepsiCo introduced its new corporate strategy, pep+, or “PepsiCo Positive”, and Unilever and Danone have joined many other prominent partners in the New Plastic Economy initiative, including plastics manufacturers Alpla and Greiner. Indeed, it seems not a day goes by without some player in the food or plastics industry declaring their commitment to improved environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) performance. Our industry is clearly ready to contribute to a more sustainable economy.

At the moment, companies can still act on their own instead of having to react to regulatory measures. The European Union’s directive calling for the universal use of tethered bottle caps by 2024 is just a foretaste of possible government interventions that could have a big impact on the plastics industry.

The thread of sustainability runs through this issue of Inform. We interview the heads of two companies that we are proud to count as customers, sântis packaging ag in Switzerland and the Gotmar Group in Bulgaria. Both of these successful companies are family-run and, a rarity in our industry, both are led by women. As they determine the strategic course of their companies, both women are targeting significant improvements in all three ESG factors, as well as the active cultivation of the next generation of skilled employees. Many of our customers are engaged in similar activities, and I am convinced that as an industry we have come to accept our responsibility for a more sustainable future.

The employee profiled in this issue of Inform, Bruno Bischof, will soon start a new chapter in his life. After 24 years with us, for which we are very grateful, he’s about to begin his well-deserved retirement. In our conversation, Bruno Bischof impressively demonstrates that this step need not represent an end, but rather a new beginning.

I hope you find this issue of Inform stimulating. And I also hope that, thanks to the slow normalisation, I will soon be able to visit you again, or welcome you here in Uznach.

Yours, Stefan Zatti

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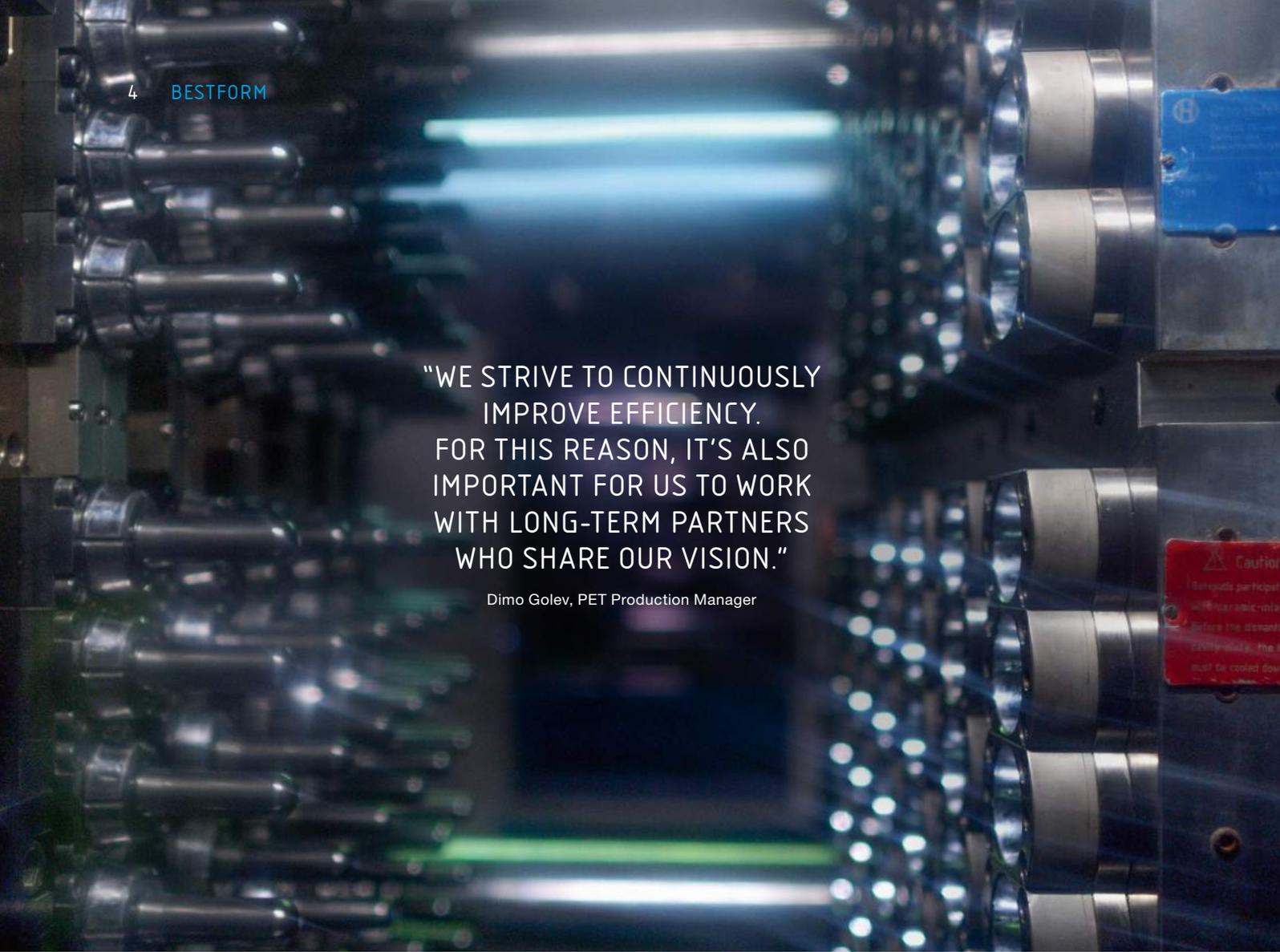
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# FAMILY MATTERS.

After spending several years in Paris and London, Mariya Tucheveva is back in the family business and setting the tone for its sustainable future.

The **Gotmar Group**, based in **Saedinenie, Bulgaria**, will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2022. In this short time, this **family-owned business** has become a major European plastics processor. **Mariya Tucheveva**, Manager, **Svilena Simenova**, PET Division Manager, and **Dimo Golev**, PET Production Manager, tell us about what **family values** and ESG criteria have in common and how Gotmar wants to drive future growth by emphasising quality.



"WE STRIVE TO CONTINUOUSLY  
IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.  
FOR THIS REASON, IT'S ALSO  
IMPORTANT FOR US TO WORK  
WITH LONG-TERM PARTNERS  
WHO SHARE OUR VISION."

Dimo Golev, PET Production Manager

**Gotmar was founded in 1992. What was the company like back then?**

**Mariya Tuchevea:** Gotmar was founded in 1992 by my father, Georgi Tucheve. In the beginning, the company concentrated on the trade in sunflower oil in our neighbouring countries, which inevitably led to the idea of entering the production of plastic packaging. Initially, the company was located in a small office in the town of Saedinenie. A few years later, my father bought the premises where we are today. Initially there were three buildings, now our company occupies more than 100,000 square meters and new projects are being planned.

**How is the company structured today?**

Georgi Tucheve holds 100 percent of the company. He is an active managing director and lives abroad. Each of our production facilities has its own structure. The Gotmar Group divides its activities into different business areas: packaging for beverages, food and cosmetics, technical parts, toolmaking, mineral water and soft drinks. The group employs around 2300 people at three locations and had total sales of over EUR 120 million in 2020. Gotmar Ltd., the plastics division, has around 1300 employees and had a turnover of almost EUR 90 million in 2020.

**Next year you will celebrate your 30th anniversary. What are the most important milestones in your history?**

As a family business, we value and celebrate every milestone. To pick out a few of the more significant moments in our history, in 1998 we bought the first automatic blow moulding machines for PET bottles in Bulgaria. Then, in 1999 and 2000, we installed our first PET preform production line (by the way, with OHAG moulds). In 2007 we started producing technical plastic parts for electrical appliances and set up our workshop for the production of blow moulds and injection moulds. In 2008 Gotmar ventured into luxury cosmetics. In 2019 we celebrated our billionth preform, and a year later our investment yielded several moulds that we produced in-house for the perfume and luxury cosmetics industry.

**Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007. How did this political development affect the Gotmar Group?**

In the 14 years since joining the European Union, Bulgaria's economy has been very successful. Our country is undoubtedly experiencing rapid growth without being hit by a serious economic crisis. And that transpired in a favourable international environment. We have managed to find several partners and position ourselves on the European markets, which has

led to an increase in our production volumes. Access to EU funding was also very important for Gotmar, helping us to realise two projects and enabling our group to successfully position itself among the major European companies in the sector.

**How is your PET preform and bottle production currently positioned?**

With moulds from 2 to 96 cavities, we currently produce over 60 different preforms, from 5 to 700 grams, thus covering almost all common applications. We use injection moulding, single-stage injection stretch blow moulding and blow moulding machines. Our current capacity is more than 1.5 billion preforms, over 2 billion closures and over 50 million bottles per year.

**Which industries do you serve in the field of packaging?**

We mainly supply the food industry, but we are also very active in the chemical and cosmetic industries. We recently invested in two single-stage machines. On the one hand, we make small bottles for shampoo, and on the other, we make bottles for cosmetics such as rose water, mouthwash and soap.

**In which markets are you active and what is the division between domestic and export business?**

We currently export to around 48 countries, concentrating on our neighbouring countries. And we are also very active in Europe and Africa. We export quite a lot to South Africa. The ratio is around 40 percent domestic and 60 percent export business these days.

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**"GOTMAR HAS MANAGED TO POSITION ITSELF ON THE EUROPEAN MARKETS."**

Mariya Tucheveva, Manager

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**Where do you see geographic and sectoral development potential?**

In terms of sectors, thanks to our diversified portfolio, we have stable positions in the food and beverage, chemical, medical, technical parts and luxury cosmetics sectors. We strive to expand our product portfolio with our existing partners and at the same time to conquer new markets, such as



**"MY FATHER ENCOURAGED ME TO RELY ON MY OWN JUDGEMENT AND TO FOLLOW MY DREAMS."**

Mariya Tucheveva, Manager

the automotive industry. Our long-term strategy is to expand our geographic presence, focusing on Northern Europe and expanding into the African markets, with the aim of also entering the Asian market in the near future.

**Gotmar is deeply involved in ESG issues. What motivates you to do this?**

We are a family business, and we believe in family values. That's one of the reasons the ESG themes aren't that difficult for us to accept. We are motivated to be successful and at the same time to create value for everyone – for our customers, our employees and our suppliers, as well as for the general public as a whole. This, of course, includes the environment. ESG factors are a way for us to differentiate ourselves from our competitors as a well-run and socially responsible company, and to make more informed investment decisions that take into account the environment and society as a whole.

**You are ISO 9001-, 14001- and FSSC 22000-certified. How do you ensure that these requirements are met in the daily workflow?**

Over the years we have found that it rarely works to prescribe something specific to employees – it's just human nature to resist being told what to do. That is why we have decided to convey the background of ISO certifications and their advantages to our employees. On this basis, they are not simply following instructions. Instead, they understand the benefits these processes bring to all of us and they are ready to adhere to them.

**In addition to – let's call them – everyday certifications, you have aligned your company with ISO 50001. What are the goals of this standard?**

Essentially, ISO 50001 is about monitoring the company's energy consumption and registering deviations from the specified limits. In connection with energy management, we are constantly improving our systems and optimising our production processes. For example, a heat recovery system was installed to heat one of the administration and production buildings. Through our own in-house energy policy, the management is directly and actively involved in promoting the sustainable use of electricity.

**Gotmar is also ISO 26000-certified. What is this certification about?**

That was actually my project when I came back to Bulgaria. With this certification, we wanted to show all our customers that we have good working conditions and that we are so-

cially responsible, not only towards our company and its staff, but also towards society as a whole and especially towards the environment. We run many charitable initiatives in our company and we are very committed to our neighbouring communities. That's what ISO 26000 is all about.

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**"WE BELIEVE IN FAMILY VALUES. THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS THE ESG THEMES AREN'T THAT DIFFICULT FOR US TO ACCEPT."**

Mariya Tucheveva, Manager

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**Gotmar promotes itself as offering outstanding quality. How do you define quality?**

**Dimo Golev:** Each individual production unit has its own quality department, which is adapted to that specific area and which meets global standards. We check for quality at every step of the production process – from inspecting incoming raw materials to the dispatch of the finished products. This is how we ensure that we can offer our customers the highest levels of quality and service.

**To what extent do your partners play a role in achieving the quality you are aiming for?**

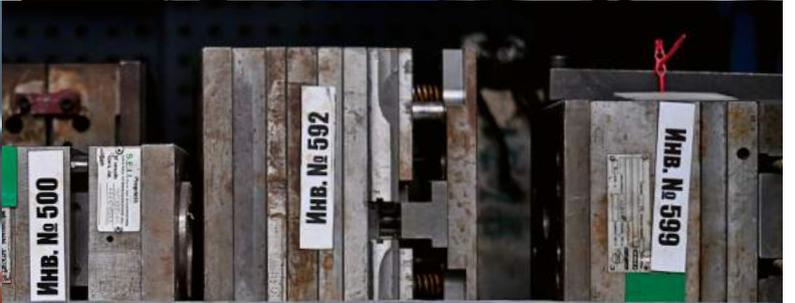
**Svilena Simenova:** Our partners are an important factor for the development of our company. They help us achieve ever higher quality on a global level. We have to be sure that they can deliver a product to their customers that meets the highest standards. In this way we build reliable, rewarding and lasting partnerships together.

**What criteria do you use to choose a partner?**

**Dimo Golev:** First and foremost, we don't compromise on quality. We strive to continuously optimise our production and improve efficiency. For this reason, it's also important for us to work with long-term partners who share our vision. Of course, the price and lead time can't be underestimated, as we naturally have to adapt to the competition and developments in the market. Guarantees and the quality of service after the guarantees have expired are also important factors for us in selecting partners.

**How would you assess the strengths of Otto Hofstetter AG?**

**Dimo Golev:** The first impressions we had when we saw the moulds from Otto Hofstetter AG were good, and we made



our first purchases of OHAG moulds over 20 years ago. We also appreciate that they have standard shapes. That makes them very versatile. And this helps us to better serve our customers, because we have a wide range of customers globally with very different requirements. Thanks to using standard shapes, it's easy to fit spare parts when they're needed, and that gives us confidence. If we have a problem with a product, we can quickly replace the defective part and get back to production. We really appreciate how quickly production can be restored with OHAG moulds.

**"THE FACT THAT OTTO HOFSTETTER IS ALSO A FAMILY BUSINESS MAKES EVERYTHING A LOT EASIER."**

Svilena Simenova, PET Division Manager

#### Where can Otto Hofstetter improve?

**Svilena Simenova:** We don't have much to say on that topic. Maybe the price? We appreciate your flexibility and understanding on this point. The conversation with you is always open and never long and drawn out. The fact that Otto Hofstetter is also a family business, and therefore has short decision-making paths, makes everything a lot easier. We appreciate that. With larger suppliers, you sometimes hardly know which boss to turn to.



For PET Division Manager Svilena Simenova, business partners are an important factor in Gotmar's overall performance and qualitative enhancement.



Dimo Golev is the responsible PET Production Manager and values the standardisation of Otto Hofstetter AG's moulds which provides both a high degree of flexibility and safety.

#### Where will the Gotmar Group be in 10 years?

**Mariya Tucheve:** That's a difficult question to answer, and I trust my colleagues will agree with me. We hope that we will still be a family-run company that maintains its leadership position in the market and continues to grow its production volume. And last but not least, we hope that the management of the company will be passed on to the next generation of the Tucheve family.

**Thank you for sharing this interesting insight into Gotmar. We wish you all the best on your way to a thriving future.**

# GOTMAR®

Gotmar Group  
www.gotmar.com

Worldwide supplier of plastic packaging for the beverage, food and cosmetics industries, as well as technical parts for the electrical industry and also producer of mineral water and soft drinks.

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# EVERYONE WINS.

**Second Life**, the innovative mould brokering service from Otto Hofstetter AG, offers mechanically sound moulds that no longer match one producer's needs to other producers whose needs they better fit. Before going to its new owners, the mould is **completely overhauled** at the factory in Uznach and comes with a **one-year guarantee**. This program is a good example of the **circular economy in action**.

Today, sustainability is at the top of everyone's agenda in the food and cosmetics industries. Many of the biggest names have publicly announced their aim to have a balanced, net-zero carbon footprint in the next five to ten years. To reach this target, they are carefully examining all of their activities and looking for ways to minimise their environmental impact.

### Outside pressure

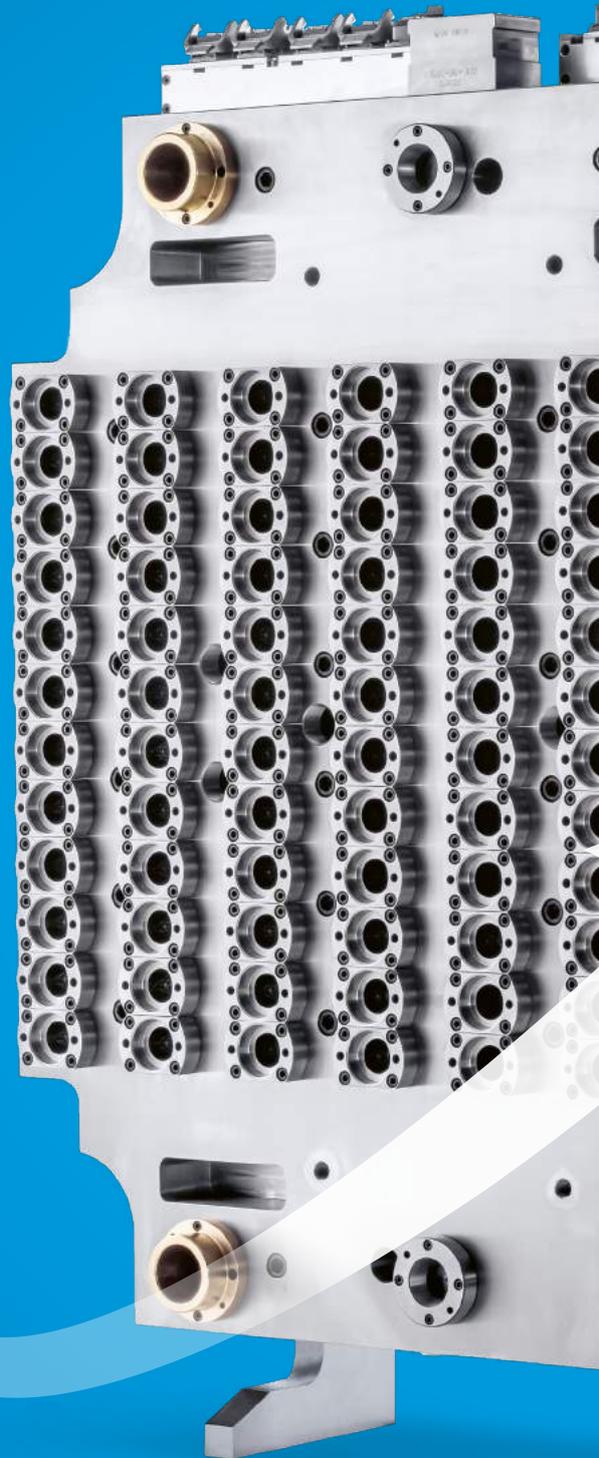
Consumer pressure on companies and brands is mounting. Fanned by social media, activist environmental organisations and vocal celebrities, consumers are demanding more sustainable products, and companies are listening. In order to remain credible with consumers, many of the biggest players are joining ambitious global initiatives such as the New Plastics Economy, which counts Coke, Danone, Mars, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Unilever and Walmart among its core partners. And product packaging is often more important than its origins or its manufacturing processes because the packaging is what the consumer sees first. Sustainability is becoming increasingly important to investors, too. More and more investment decisions are already being made based on the investment's ESG (environmental, social and governance) merits.

### Closing the materials cycle

The circular economy is a model of production and consumption that aims to minimise waste by reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products. Companies are increasingly weighing the costs of simply disposing of valuable raw materials. Right from the beginning, in the product development stage, the selection of materials increasingly focuses on recyclability. The goal is that the raw materials used can remain "in the cycle" and can either be used again or sold on for reuse in other forms.

### Preserving value instead of destroying it

Recycling certainly applies to steel. The moulds from Otto Hofstetter AG are rightly praised for their quality, durability and reliability. These properties reflect not just our skill as precision toolmakers but also the quality of the materials we use in our moulds. The fact is, these Swiss-made moulds produce packaging – whether for PET, packaging or medicinal products – that deliver the highest quality, with a life cycle far longer than that of the products they contain. Unfortunately, later on in their service life, these high-end moulds all too often end up in a warehouse and are increasingly forgotten. At some point, they are sold to a scrap metal dealer who buys these still usable moulds at the current spot price for scrap. In fact, they are far more valuable.





### High quality, second-hand

With Second Life, Otto Hofstetter AG aims to support the industry's efforts to reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. It recognises the value of the mould and the raw materials used to make it. Due to the design, which is more than 90% standardised for PET moulds and around 80% for PAC moulds of the S-Line, existing components can readily be reused in whole or in part. With PAC moulds, which have been designed uncompromisingly to the original customer's specs, only small adjustments are possible, or some of the components can be reused if the requirements are similar.

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"SECOND LIFE HELPS CUSTOMERS MATERIALLY REDUCE THEIR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT."

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The Second Life platform is free to use for buyers and sellers. Second Life simply mediates between them. If a mould has been taken out of production, its owner can place it on the platform. If it finds a buyer, it is completely overhauled and, as necessary, modified at our headquarters in Switzerland. The new owner receives a 12-month guarantee, which underscores how confident Otto Hofstetter AG is about the quality of the repurposed mould.

### Shifting the ecological balance

As is typical for products from Swiss companies, durability has always been a priority for moulds from Otto Hofstetter AG. Their energy-use and cooling water performance have always been exemplary, and their exceptional durability is well known. Thus, in sum, the products from the Uznach factory generally have a very favourable eco-balance. Second Life reinforces this effort, supporting producers in their efforts to keep their environmental footprint as small as possible. Otto Hofstetter AG takes its responsibilities to its customers, to the industry and to the environment seriously. We will continue to support the shift towards net-zero emissions with further innovations.



# IT'S ALL IN THE MIX.

**säntis packaging ag** pioneered the production of **coffee capsules** and today is one of the most important capsule manufacturers in Europe. This **family-run** Swiss company is actively engaged in meeting the challenges of sustainability and is also taking extraordinary steps to train the next generation of skilled workers. **Dr Bettina Fleisch** joined her uncle at the firm over 25 years ago and is now owner and CEO of this dynamic and successful company.

**At the end of February 2021, your company took over Swiss Prime Pack AG, a longstanding client of Otto Hofstetter AG. What “synergetic forces,” as you described them in an interview, have developed since then?**

It has only been a few months since the takeover, which is why I can't make any concrete statements about synergies yet. We are currently in the process of examining various possibilities in depth. Of course, many synergies are already evident. Both companies work with thermoplastics, both are very active in similar markets and both use comparable technologies. And both companies are intensively engaged with the topic of sustainability in packaging. In addition, our proximity to one another offers an immediate synergy, granting us more flexibility in how we use our resources and know-how.

**How would you describe sântis packaging ag today?**

sântis packaging ag itself employs 90 people, and together with Swiss Prime Pack we have a total of 220 employees. Sântis focuses on barrier packaging and coffee capsules, 95 percent of which are exported. For Swiss Prime Pack, the relationship is precisely the opposite. Its products mainly go to the domestic Swiss market. sântis's strength in export markets and Swiss Prime Pack's strong domestic market position made joining forces very attractive for both companies.

**What would you call your flagship products?**

At sântis, coffee capsules are clearly our premier product. We've been involved in the production of capsules since the 1990s. Our first client was Migros, one of the biggest retailers in Switzerland. The large German coffee and consumer goods retailer Tchibo joined the list later, along with suppliers for Lidl and other retailers. Today, sântis is one of the top players in Europe in coffee capsule production. With Swiss Prime Pack, we've now added a strong injection moulder for food packaging to the family.

**You joined your uncle's company in 1995. What were your ambitions when you started back then?**

I originally studied communications and specialised in marketing. This was my role when I joined the team at my uncle's company over 25 years ago. He was a traditional company boss in the classic sense and recommended that I not only familiarise myself with the products but that I also learn how the machines worked. The technology quickly fascinated me and its appeal has continued since then.

**Which area are you more interested in today, technology or marketing?**

The technology, of course! There are probably only a few

trade fairs each year that I miss, and I closely follow developments in machine design through all available channels. I am convinced that my uncle would not have entrusted the future of his company to me if he had not felt that I could develop it further. And in this business, this requires constantly dealing with technology. In addition, as a woman, I knew I would have a hard time in the man's world of the plastics industry if I couldn't demonstrate a high degree of technical competence.

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**"SÄNTIS PIONEERED  
THE PRODUCTION OF COFFEE  
CAPSULES AND TODAY WE ARE  
AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT  
CAPSULE MAKERS IN EUROPE."**

Dr Bettina Fleisch, owner and CEO of sântis packaging ag

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**In 2019 you received the Rheintaler Wirtschaft Prize, a prestigious business award in a region with many renowned, innovative companies. What do such awards mean to you?**

The award came as a complete surprise to me. But of course I was happy about it. The recognition goes to everyone in the company, all those who contribute to sântis's success every day with their work. Nothing like this happens without great employees. The prize is both a motivation and a reward. And it also helped our company to become better known locally, which is also a great thing.

**Your company's roots go back to 1922, when Sântis J. Göldi AG was founded. What does the history of the company mean to you today?**

First and foremost, the company is and was a family business, and tradition means a lot to us. We are now on the way to the fourth generation as we face an era of extreme change and unprecedented challenges. Completely new issues need to be addressed, and today the pressure on plastic as a material is very high. Our family and our history with the company form a stable foundation and that sends a strong message to our clients of stability.

**How important is Switzerland as a home base for you?**

Our small country offers many advantages. We often hear the opinion that the financial possibilities are better in other countries, but we think the tax and labour law frameworks are in fact often less favourable abroad. As a native Austrian

and as something of an expert on Germany, I can also state that the mentality of Swiss workers is unbeatable. They are flexible, committed and empathetic. All in all, I am convinced that we can continue to excel in Switzerland.

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**“CONTINUALLY PUSHING THE ENVELOPE, ACTING ON FACTS, WITH COURAGE AND AN INFORMED INTUITION – THAT’S THE BEST RECIPE TO KEEP SÄNTIS SUCCESSFUL.”**

*Dr Bettina Fleisch, owner and CEO of säntis packaging ag*

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#### **Why do customers choose your company?**

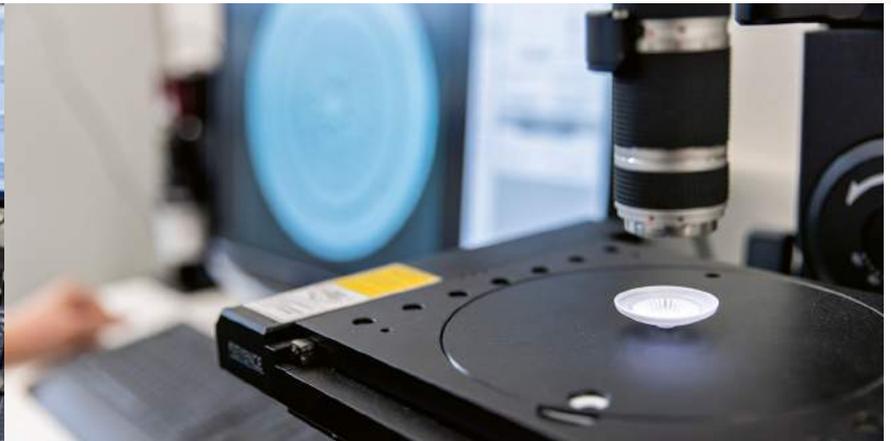
First and foremost, our pioneering work in the plastics industry is a convincing door-opener. Säntis was the first manufacturer to work with plastics in the 1940s and thus gained a head start in the market. Today, our Swiss roots, with the as-

sociated attributes of reliability, innovation and quality, make a sound argument for working with us.

#### **In an interview with the Rheintaler Bote newspaper you said that the most important thing is to find out what the customer and the market need. How do you do that?**

This is actually our secret. No, seriously. On the one hand, one of the tasks of the marketing department is to track how needs change, which trends are growing and in what direction a market is developing. But the most important thing is being close to the customer. A partnership-like relationship helps to keep your finger on the pulse, as does information from trade magazines, trade fairs and seminars. One thing is certain: these days our industry is being forced to open up a lot.

**Looking at the development of coffee capsules, you seem to have succeeded brilliantly here. The division has grown by 30 percent in the last 10 years. Was the decision to enter this product sector 30 years ago based on what you called intuition earlier?**



"MY UNCLE WOULD NOT HAVE TRUSTED ME WITH HIS COMPANY IF HE HADN'T FELT THAT I COULD DEVELOP IT FURTHER."

Dr Bettina Fleisch, owner and CEO of sântis packaging ag



The decision to commit to this product was based on a mixture of factors. Some factors were known to us, plus a bit of courage and, yes, we listened to our gut feeling. All this was in the mix. If all three ingredients are right, the chances of success are good. It can be dangerous for a company to lose its entrepreneurial spirit. I remember well when I kept suggesting new products to my uncle. He told me to sell things we were already making. In times of great change this attitude can be problematic. If it doesn't venture into new areas, a company runs the risk of no longer being competitive. For me, the urge to push the envelope, acting on facts, with courage and an informed intuition are the best recipe for keeping sântis on the road to success.

**Around ten percent of your workforce are young people in training. Why are you so involved in vocational training?**

The main reason for our engagement is the current shortage of the kinds of skilled workers we need. Companies are being called upon to train their new employees themselves. I see a second reason, too: to expose young people during their training to the values that we uphold at sântis. Unfortunately, a strong emphasis on transferring values to young people is often lacking in vocational training, in my opinion.

**Last spring, six 10-year-olds spent two days with you to soak up the atmosphere of working at sântis. At that age they are still far too young to choose a career. Why did you invite them for this visit?**

Within the regional employers' association, where I am a board member, we are concerned with the shortage of skilled workers. We have seen that young people often choose the profession of their father or their uncle. In addition to this familial factor, gender also influences their career choices. In order to reduce the influence of these two factors, we offered the trial days to very young boys and girls. The primary goal, however, was not about choosing a career, but about putting them in touch with the fascination of technology at an early age. The project seems to have been successful. None of the six young people intended to study mechanics before visiting us. After the visit, half of them want to.

**In addition to your commitment to the next generation, you run many activities and programmes related to sustainability, for example, your 4Green Strategy. Can you tell us about the latter?**

The 4Green Strategy comprises our sustainability strategy, which we are currently working on. For us, "Design for Recycling", for example, means that before a product comes onto the market, we endeavour to think about how it can be recycled. And further up the production chain, we are working on how production waste can remain within the cycle, and so on. It is also about sustainability among employees and our commitment to trainees. The 4Green Strategy covers all areas of our company.

**Your company is also a member of the Swiss Energy Agency. What effects does this voluntary commitment to climate protection have on your production?**

As a member of the Swiss Energy Agency, a company undertakes to invest in sustainability every year according to a defined plan. In return, considerable sums flow back if you have fulfilled your obligations. Reducing energy consumption and emissions are of great economic interest. In the meantime, we save a lot of energy and use waste heat to heat our premises. I can only recommend every Swiss company become a partner of the Energy Agency.



**To what extent will digitalisation, automation and artificial intelligence change your company's production and ways of working in the next few years?**

Sustainability is a first priority in our production. Then comes digitalisation. It is no longer a catchphrase, but something that is also crucial when it comes to securing our future viability in a tough market. Digitalisation will enable us to better analyse and document and optimise our use of resources in every respect, all along the production chain. The key is to familiarise employees with these tools.

**"REDUCING ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND EMISSIONS IS ECONOMICALLY INTERESTING."**

Dr Bettina Fleisch, owner and CEO of [sântis packaging ag](https://www.saentis-ips.com)

**sântis packaging ag has been working with injection moulds from Otto Hofstetter AG for two years now. Why do you rely on the mould manufacturer from Uznach?**

Otto Hofstetter AG was of course well known to us. We also

knew that it had many years of experience with moulds with a large number of cavities and that it enjoyed a good reputation. Two years ago, when we came up with a project that required a mould with a large number of cavities, I recommended my team to talk to the people in Uznach, and we know the result. One mould led to a second one. We are happy to have chosen Otto Hofstetter AG.

**To what extent do you expect your mould partner to support you in your efforts for resource-efficient production?**

Assuming that sustainability is also an issue at Otto Hofstetter AG, I of course welcome any innovation in this direction. For example, optimal cooling with low energy consumption, or other improvements to the machine would be very welcome. In order to achieve the best solution, it's best to work closely together early in a project. In addition, I would appreciate being regularly informed about new developments in and around the moulds.

**Where do you see room for improvement for Otto Hofstetter AG?**

The interfaces between partners on a project are a constant issue. Different partners are involved in the details of a project and unfortunately all too often they tend not to think outside their own narrow box. If a problem arises, the buck is passed around. That creates an uncomfortable situation for us, because the problem still remains unresolved. As I said, I would like everyone involved to work together early on in the project.

**Thank you very much for this frank conversation, Dr Fleisch. We wish you continued success with sântis packaging and Swiss Prime Pack.**

**SÂNTIS+**  
innovative packaging solutions

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# TRASH ART.

Brazilian **artist Eduardo Srur** reproduces the **most famous works in art history**. For this, the artist, known for his “interventions in public spaces”, uses **coloured plastic bags** that he collects in the streets and on the riverbanks of São Paulo. With his idiosyncratic art, he wants to draw attention to the **environmental pollution caused by plastic**. His latest series, “**Natureza Plástica**”, will be exhibited in São Paulo in the second half of 2021.

Works of art such as *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* by Katsushika Hokusai, *The Scream* by Edvard Munch and the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci are well known around the world. Even if it is not always obvious to the viewer at first glance, these pictures always contain much more information than just the desire to document a person, a landscape or a situation. Whether a roaring sea and a tranquil mountain, a mystical smile and calm posture, or an agonised face below an orange sky, the artists always choose their pictorial elements with clear intention.

This problem shapes the artistic work of Eduardo Srur. In order to raise public awareness of pressing environmental issues, he has been using public space for his works since the early 2000s. Srur sees his art as conceptual criticism. It is intended to awaken awareness and point the way to a new aesthetic and a new understanding of the visual arts. His work has generated a lot of interest, as evidenced by the numerous exhibitions he has held in various European cities. His recognitions are also impressive, including many awards and invitations to global events such as TED and Sustainable Brands.

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**"WITH MY ART, I WANT  
TO RAISE THE PUBLIC'S  
AWARENESS ABOUT URGENT  
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES."**

Eduardo Srur, artist

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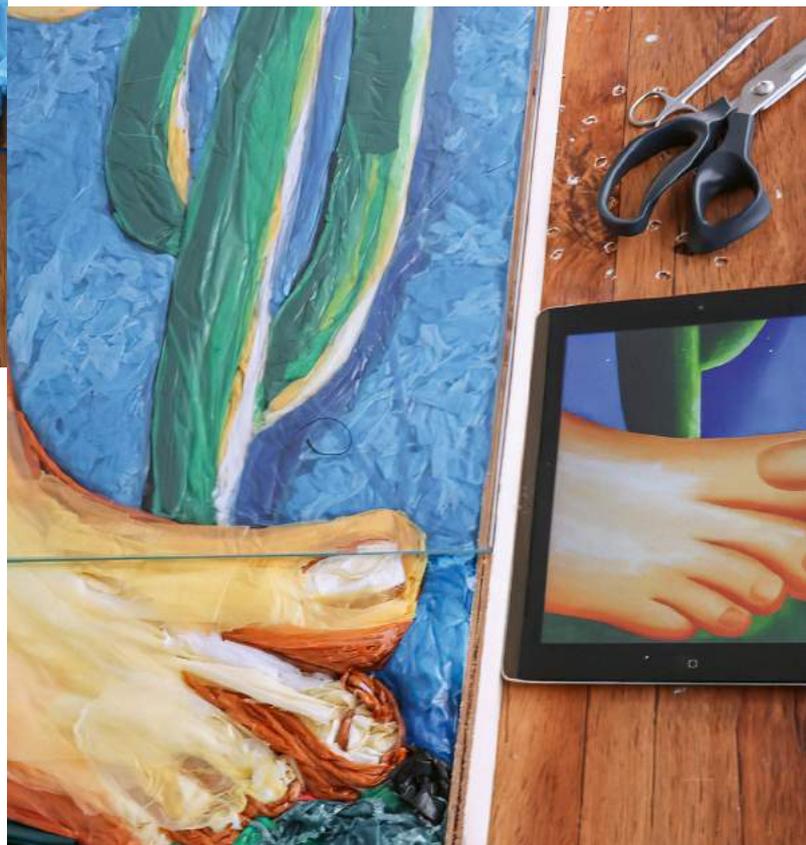
#### **Masterpieces made from plastic waste**

His latest series is entitled "*Natureza Plástica*". With plastic bags collected on the streets of São Paulo, Srur reproduces world-famous works by Munch, da Vinci, Hokusai and other masters. When asked what his motivation is, he often says, "The masterpieces that I use as models are mostly over two hundred years old and will probably outlast humanity. Just like the plastic that we thoughtlessly throw into nature."



#### **Art to raise awareness**

So does Eduardo Srur. He was born in São Paulo in 1974, where he lives and works today. With a population of over 12 million, his home town is the largest city in Brazil. It is also the economic and financial centre and the largest industrial area in the country. However, the great attractions of this sprawling city for businesses and people presents São Paulo with numerous environmental problems. The two rivers, Rio Tietê and Rio Pinheiros, are heavily polluted and garbage is piling up in the streets.






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**"THE MASTERPIECES WILL PROBABLY OUTLAST HUMANITY. JUST LIKE THE PLASTIC THAT WE THOUGHTLESSLY THROW INTO NATURE."**

Eduardo Srur, artist

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Eduardo Srur doesn't need a brush or paint for his creations. He collects plastic bags of different colours from the rivers, streets and parks of his home town. He tears them into strips and fixes them onto a pre-drilled wooden board. Without glue, paint or other auxiliary materials, he drapes the fragments onto the frame with tweezers and presses them into

three-dimensional reproductions of the most famous works in art history.

#### **From the idea to exhibition**

Eduardo Srur went public for the first time with this new combination of art and environmental commitment as part of an ad campaign for an international beer brand. Some of his works were exhibited in an open-air gallery on Paulista Avenue, one of the most prominent streets in the Brazilian metropolis. Indeed, public space is the appropriate arena for his challenging works of art.

The series "Natureza Plástica" will be exhibited in São Paulo in the second half of 2021.

[www.eduardosrur.com](http://www.eduardosrur.com)

# EXCITING



## **What is your job at OHAG?**

During my now 24 years at Otto Hofstetter, I've had various functions. My main task at the moment is to organise hotrunner refurbishments. Customers contact me directly. Together, we decide whether replacing or rebuilding makes more sense. We can do a replacement in two to three days, and a complete overhaul in our factory takes four to six weeks. In addition to the revamps, I handle spare parts sales. For 20 years, I've kept a record of what's been replaced on which hotrunner and when. This record helps us avoid sending a customer an unsuitable spare part or giving one to a service technician. In all of my roles at Otto Hofstetter AG, I've always had close contact with our customers all over the world, which has been a great experience for me.

## **What does OHAG mean to you?**

Before I joined the Otto Hofstetter AG team, I was an entrepreneur myself. As an employee, I wanted to stay true to this mentality and get involved as if it were my own company. That is probably the reason why I identify so much with the company today. I think it's a great privilege to have been working here for almost 25 years and to have experienced being a trusted member of the team.

## **What do you do outside of OHAG?**

Nature is very important to me. That's why I pitched my tent in the foothills of the Appenzellerland region in Switzerland. I live practically at the edge of a forest, which allows me to observe nature closely, especially birds, and listen to their concerts.

# FUTURE.

**Bruno Bischof has worked at Otto Hofstetter AG for 24 years. He told us he is equally proud and grateful to be part of the team of one of the most successful companies in the plastics industry. Starting in the workshop, he moved into sales and then went on to be responsible for hotrunner refurbishments. In that role, he has recorded every spare part that was installed in refurbished OHAG hotrunners. It's safe to say that there is hardly an OHAG hotrunner in use today that Bruno Bischof does not know well. He will retire next year and start a new chapter in his life that he is looking forward to with great anticipation and many plans.**

I can usually identify the voices I hear, and I also know whether they are just passing through or live here permanently. I've also made a study of butterflies and other insects and can identify most of them too. My house and large garden require maintenance, of course, which also keeps me busy. Beyond that, I like to hike a lot and to travel to southern Europe in my mobile home. I'm more of a sun person.

#### **Why is the mountain Gupf your favourite place?**

From up here I enjoy a great view of the Alpstein massif with a vista that includes four countries: Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and of course Switzerland. With the fantastic view up here, I can switch off, breathe deeply and let my soul be inspired.

#### **You live in Rehetobel, the third-highest community in the canton. Are you drawn to heights?**

As a sun person, it's important for me to live above the fog line during the foggy season. According to Wikipedia, Rehetobel enjoys the most hours of sunshine per year in Switzerland! And pure nature is all around us here. Hiking trails right outside the front door, cow bells ringing and the chirping of birds. Many people might find this boring, but for me it's perfect.

#### **What made you move from Uznach to Rehetobel?**

Before my time at Otto Hofstetter, I owned a car dealership within sight of my current job. With the sale of the business and employment at Otto Hofstetter AG, I made a completely new

start. In the Uznach region, I couldn't find a house that met my requirements. In Rehetobel, I found one that was perfect for me.

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## "TRADITION CREATES A SHARED SENSE OF SOLIDARITY FOR ME."

Bruno Bischof, responsible for hotrunner refurbishments

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### Your daily commute to Uznach is no short hop by Swiss standards. How do you use your travel time?

When I joined Otto Hofstetter AG, the English language was completely foreign to me. Until then, I had no need to learn it. But as an employee of an internationally active company, that quickly changed. I used the daily journeys on the train to address this shortcoming. I also learned how to type while on the train. Today, I mostly read the newspaper, travel stories or articles about birds and nature.

### On your way to Uznach, you pass through a part of Switzerland that's fit for a postcard. What does Switzerland

### mean to you? What is tradition for you?

Traveling every day through this beautiful part of Switzerland and being able to live in Appenzellerland is a great privilege for me. The variety of well-tended landscapes and the distinct local cultures and dialects are part of what makes Switzerland so appealing to me, and all this happens in a very small space. Excellent medical and social care, a good educational system as well as clean drinking water, good food, hygiene and high-quality craftsmanship are big pluses of living here. This is all very enriching for me and gives me the feeling of security. For me, tradition creates a feeling of togetherness. But it also has to be exemplified and renewed again and again.

### What does it mean to you to feel rooted?

Being deeply rooted in my living space and in my family means a lot to me. This also applies to my work at Otto Hofstetter AG. There, I feel I'm a valued part of the team. By the way, my relationship with the company began long before I became an employee. Otto Jr. and I were schoolmates and we spent a lot of time in the workshop when we were kids. So the company and Otto have been with me for most of my life.



## "WORKING AT OTTO HOFSTETTER AG FOR ALMOST 25 YEARS HAS BEEN A GREAT PRIVILEGE."

Bruno Bischof, responsible for hotrunner refurbishments

In sunny Appenzellerland, Bruno Bischof can switch off, take a deep breath and let his soul be inspired as he gazes at the Alpstein massif.

**Your former industry is facing a profound change as a result of electromobility. To what extent are you still following this?**

Although I haven't worked in it for many years, the automotive industry is still very close to me. Accordingly, I actively follow how it's developing. With electromobility – and possibly other new technologies as well as new business models – the auto industry is going through a radical upheaval. The future will definitely be exciting.

**What changes do OHAG and the plastics industry face?**

The discussion about plastics is very emotional today and it is often not based on facts. If it were more objective, plastic wouldn't have such a bad reputation today. That makes me feel a little uneasy since Otto Hofstetter AG is completely geared towards this material. What happens when the pressure on plastics producers increases and the packaging industry turns to other materials? Running such a company in these challenging times seems very difficult to me, so Otto Hofstetter Jr. enjoys my fullest admiration.

**When you retire at the end of January 2022, you personally will face a radical change. What will your main occupation be from February onwards?**

I often hear or read about people going into retirement with mixed feelings. I have absolutely no concerns. I'm interested in many things. There are countless mountain peaks I've never seen, and my motorhome has not yet stood in many beautiful places in Europe. So my programme is already full of attractive prospects. Beyond that, I would like to improve my language skills and learn Italian.

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**"SOME EMPLOYEES SEEM UNWARE OF THE OUTSTANDING REPUTATION OTTO HOFSTETTER AG ENJOYS AROUND THE GLOBE."**

Bruno Bischof, responsible for hotrunner refurbishments

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**How do you prepare for retirement?**

There is nothing to prepare for. I'm looking forward to it. I believe that I have done my part for the good of our society. It seems only fair to me to be able to focus more on myself in the coming years.

**How can Otto Hofstetter AG fill the void when you leave?**

Basically, I am of the opinion that nobody is irreplaceable, including me. Of course I have built up a lot of knowledge and expertise over the past 24 years, which I will now pass on to my successor, who's been by my side for almost a year now. He's already doing very well. Sometimes I feel like I don't have the time to really convey all the knowledge I have to him. That's why I will always be available for advice after my retirement.

**What advice would you give your employer for the future?**

Given Otto Hofstetter AG's record of success over almost 70 years, I don't think the company needs any tips from me. However, there is one point where I see potential for action. Sometimes I have the impression that my colleagues are not aware of the excellent reputation the company and its moulds enjoy around the world and how important it is to continue to deliver quality. Informing employees about how we're seen by others could certainly remedy that deficit. I am proud to have been part of the Otto Hofstetter AG team. I hope all employees feel that way too.

**Thank you for this interview, Mr Bischof. We wish you all the best for the future.**





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