





### Dear reader,

Time travel is possible. Actually, it's really easy, at least on paper. Take this ESSENTIALS issue and travel in time – through decades in the past as well as to the present and the future of EschmannStahl. We show you, where the company comes from and how it has grown during the past decades: from a small steel trader to a specialist for tool steel and the related refining and machining processes. We also talk about prospects: another milestone in company history is coming up next year (see page 10). While we cannot look into the future, we can already set the stage for having a bright future. That is what we have been working – for decades.

Enjoy reading and time travelling.

Your Markus Krepschik (Managing Director)

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## From Shorthand to Email

Since its founding about 60 years ago a lot has changed at EschmannStahl. Despite the speed of transition, staff has always ensured that essential things persist: the core values of the company.

"Certain things don't change, and that is good: In our company this means thinking in the long run, a friendly demeanor, and reliability both internally and externally. That was the case in the past and remains unchanged today", Gudrun Tinzmann notes in looking back. She has been working at EschmannStahl for over forty years. When she talks about "the past" she is referring to the initial years of the company, which was founded in 1953.

About 25 years after founding EschmannStahl took over the company "Idealstahl Breidenbach" in Gummersbach-Dieringhausen in 1977. Shortly thereafter, the two business locations were merged, creating larger, joint facilities. After expanding further production halls and continuous growth, the new location in Reichshof-Wehnrath was opened in 1998. This step was a consequence of the growth in the 1980s and 1990s – the Dieringhausen location had become too small. The previously existing rented external warehouse was liquidated and re-established at the new location, which offered additional warehousing and sawmilling capacities. In the following years, the company set up a lab in Wehnrath – with more space and new options.

Additional extensions such as vacuum heat treatment, which came into operation Wehnrath in 2008, supported the idea of becoming an "extended workbench" for customers: from delivery of simple steel blocks to mechanical pre-processing, for example, of frames for injection molds. "We have continuously expanded our portfolio because we kept asking ourselves: What does the market want? How can we support customers with product innovations and extended services?", Markus Krepschik, Managing Director of EschmannStahl, stresses. "Despite all these innovations, it is very important for us to retain our values. Further development is good and important, but you should never forget the reason why you are appreciated beyond the products themselves."

### Retain the character of a medium-sized enterprise

In 2001, EschmannStahl became a full subsidiary of Böhler-Uddeholm AG, which itself became part of voestalpine AG in 2007. After the integration into the corporation EschmannStahl continued to expand its activities worldwide. Voestalpine AG is a globally active corporation with several state-of-the-art steel producers and a global presence of distribution companies in over 60 countries that is unique in the steel industry.

The future course of the company is set: All departments will be relocated to Wehnrath, the Dieringhausen location will be dissolved in favor of an easy-to-access scenario (detailed story on page 10).

Whether shorthand or email, whether family-run enterprise or corporate subsidiary: the values have remained unchanged – and thus the personality of the company (more in the interview on page 6).

## **HISTORY**

1953	Founding of EschmannStahl GmbH & Co. KG by Herrmann Eschmann Senior
1977	Takeover of "Idealstahl Breidenbach" by EschmannStahl
1998	New business location Reichshof-Wehnrath
2001	Subsidiary of Böhler-Uddeholm AG
2007	Böhler-Uddeholm AG becomes part of voestalpine AG
2008	New business area: Vacuum heat treatment
2011	Investment in enhanced capacities of mechanical processing
2014	New building and location merge in Wehnrath



Gudrun Tinzmann has worked at EschmannStahl for 40 years. In the interview with ESSENTIALS she talks about change and continuity during the past four decades.

ESSENTIALS: Ms. Tinzmann, you have now been working with the company for more than 40 years and are one of the staff members with the longest tenure. Please give us a short description of what your tasks looked like in those early years.

After completing my apprinticeship as a commercial clerk specialized in wholesale and foreign trade in 1970, I initially worked mostly in purchasing. At first, of course, my typewriting and shorthand skills were in high demand – after all, back then letters were still often dictated word for word. Nowadays, most of our communication is of course via email.

ESSENTIALS: If you compare your earlier tasks with those of today – in what way is your daily work different?

It was different in a very fundamental way. As requests and orders were dealt with on paper, we had a very high administrative workload, even if certain things could be done via teletype. From an overall perspective, employees were more of a "jack of all

trades" back then than we are now. Not only did we deal with the – then much larger amounts of – mail and handled orders, we also took care of all banking issues. Today, me and my colleagues are much more specialized. But this is also related to the increased size of the company.

I myself have in the meantime changed my area of work a little and have moved from purchasing to inhouse sales/customer support. I really enjoy working with customers.

ESSENTIALS: Besides the changes pertaining to your tasks, a lot of other things have also changed in the company over the years. Looking back, what milestones do you see?

At first, this was surely the integration of Idealstahl into the company EschmannStahl. Quite a lot happened there: the very first computers were introduced for electronic communication and data processing. The introduction of computers made our daily busi-

ness a lot easier. EschmannStahl also introduced new and more modern structures. The organization became evermore professional. We could simply consult stock lists, for instance, which hadn't even existed before.

With the take-over and ensuing developments we obviously started expanding: on the one hand, in terms of additional buildings and locations, and on the other, in terms of staff numbers. In addition, the international growth of the company and its markets had a strong influence on my work.

## ESSENTIALS: If we take the expansion of buildings and locations, what are the concrete implications?

With the Wehnrath location the individual departments have significantly more space. There, besides steel purchasing, material procurement, and quality assurance, you can also find production planning as well as the warehouse and the sawmill.

# ESSENTIALS: We have talked a lot about changes and development. What has remained unchanged since the early years?

A very visible constant is the friendly and pleasant way people treat one another – both things I have noticed since the beginning at EschmannStahl. The congenial relationship between staff members and the readiness to assist one another have been a constant characteristic of the company. We have had a friendly and nice working atmosphere both back then and today. That's why I myself can say that I have

enjoyed going to work for more than forty years. In more general terms, longevity is an important value, and this holds true for our relationships to customers and suppliers. This leads to trusting partnerships that lay the basis for open and honest exchange – and always in the sense of achieving best-possible results. We as staff members have the goal of always being reliable and available and providing customers with their solution – which is usually all about quick and

## "For more than 40 years I have enjoyed going to work."

on-time delivery of the required material. Despite today's fast-moving times, constants as well as reliable processes and customer service contacts are things people like about us.

ESSENTIALS: Ms. Tinzmann, thank you very much for talking to us.



Continuity despite fast-moving markets: Gudrun Tinzmann past and present



The new sales manager at EschmannStahl, Gerd Ehrmann, talks from personal experience in the ESSENTIALS interview: about the tasks of a sales manager, the difference between construction steel and tool steel as well as perspectives in mold making.

After beginning his career as a trained retail salesman and then moving into the technical marketing of automotive components, Gerd Ehrmann, in his own words, entered the world of steel "by chance". Initially working for a supplier of construction steel, he today concentrates on the product tool steel.

ESSENTIALS: Mr. Ehrmann, please describe your tasks as a sales manager at EschmannStahl. How do you think you can support the company in your new position?

The most important task is leading, coordinating, and supporting the colleagues in our external sales force as well as in our internal customer support service. Based on market trends as well as user feedback, we undertake continuous improvement measures in terms of qualification and advisory service. For that it is of particular importance to be close to the market – especially at trade fairs or via customer visits. I also head projects in which we

focus on select topics such as the pressure die casting market. In doing this, we try to shed light on how we can understand and support users in this industrial sector even better than we already do. In addition, together with colleagues from other departments, I work on optimizing processes, for instance, in the ordering system.

# ESSENTIALS: You used to work in construction steel sales. In what way did your work profile differ from your present job?

Basically, we are talking about two completely different markets. Tool steel is a specialized niche product: tool steel adds up to about 0.1 percent of the total volume of the steel market. Often the material itself is only half the story if you look at the performance of a mold. Mechanical pre-processing, heat treatment, and coatings are also important. In comparison with construction steel, this of course gives us more options in dealing with competitors.

Thus, we as steel suppliers have to look at the bigger picture. In comparison with my earlier job in construction steel, this job has significantly higher technological demands – so that we have to go much deeper in our advisory work.



Sales Manager Gerd Ehrmann talking to ESSENTIALS staff

ESSENTIALS: What does this imply for young people working in sales at EschmannStahl?

For us it is important that our new colleagues come on board with a good mix of technical expertise as well as strong advisory skills to deal with questions such as: What does the customer need beyond the product itself? How can we improve their processes, for instance by way of logistical support and reliability? My colleagues need to be in a position to answer questions coming both from the shop floor and management. We know that we earn the trust invested in us only because of our continuously high-quality products and services. And this will be the case in the future too.

ESSENTIALS: Regarding the topic "future": Where do you see the challenges EschmannStahl faces with regard to the markets? Based on your experience, what are currently the most important issues driving your customers in their day-to-day business?

Our role as a solutions provider is gaining evermore importance, the keyword is: "one-stop shop". Particularly in times of high capacity utilization, the customers more and more frequently ask for services in the area of further mechanical processing such as turning, milling or deep-hole drilling, so as to optimize their machine utilization and concentrate on their core competence, namely moldmaking itself. The demands moldmakers are exacted to have changed and will continue to change in the future. I look forward to the new tasks linking us to these developments.

ESSENTIALS: Mr. Ehrmann, thank you very much for talking to us.

# Common Perspective – New Building and Relocation



Wehnrath location today

This is a well-planned step after the Wehnrath location had already been extended with a new building for the steel warehouse and the sawmill in 2011. Managing Director Markus Krepschik explains: "The sale of our business premises in Dieringhausen generates the funds required to both expand Wehnrath without reducing the scheduled level of investments in machinery." Production and administration will now be located closer to each other – supporting lean management and improved process chains. Doing this we are using the opportunity to optimize overall logistics processes.

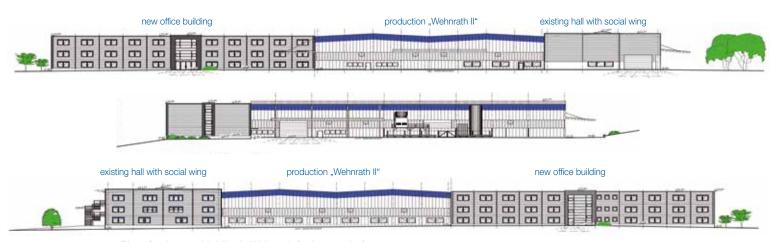
### **Bundling expertise**

The company is concentrating its services and expertise in Wehnrath: administration, the extensive warehouse, the sawmill, the mechanical milling and grinding line, the capacities for vacuum heat treatment as well as the lab.

To get production and administration in closer proximity, EschmannStahl is extending its Wehnrath site. The new administrative building will be ready for occupancy in late 2014 – and all departments will then be concentrated in one location.

EschmannStahl is taking this longterm decision to secure jobs and further increase productivity. The present situation with two business locations was not ideal due to the distance between administration and production. The plan is to connect the new office building directly to the existing "Wehnrath II" production hall and thus embed it seamlessly into the existing structures. These structures and their easy-to-access location were important reasons underlying the decision in favor of Wehnrath.

Markus Krepschik: "As the saying goes: If you don't go forwards you go backwards. We are keeping on the move and thus developing a common prospect for the whole company. Dynamics and flexibility have always been and still are core values of EschmannStahl."



Plans for the new biulding in Wehnrath (various angles)



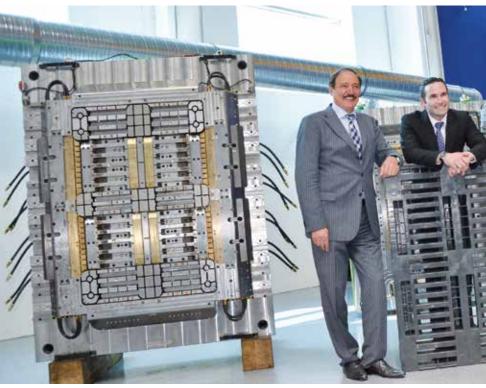
# A Very "Special" Portrait

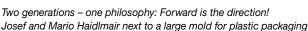
Haidlmair GmbH Werkzeugbau is a specialist for complex pressure die casting molds and large injection molds.

Haidlmair GmbH Werkzeugbau is located in the rural town of Nußbach in the Upper Austrian foothills of the Alps. The present premises have grown around the old "Property No. 3", which the Haidlmair family had bought as a blacksmith's shop over 100 years ago. Now, on the same location, there is a globally operating medium-sized enterprise that has developed from a smithy to a successful tool and moldmaker.

In the entrance area you feel welcome right away. This feeling repeats itself when you move in to get to know the company more closely, its other buildings, production facilities, and staff. Around the company garage, in which Josef Haidlmair established moldmaking operations with only five employees in 1979, assembly and production halls as well as office and production areas have grown that offer more space for specialist personnel and machines.  $\rightarrow$ 









A look at Haidlmaier's production facilities

The commitment within staff confirms this concept", says Mario Haidlmair. Just several years after founding the company, Josef Haidlmair established a training workshop in which still today apprentices take on real tasks effectively, thus productively contributing to manufacturing. To move further training of personnel ahead in a targeted way, staff regularly takes part in seminars and visit national as well as international trade fairs.

### Inventive talent and visionary

Innovative zeal is a continuous engine moving ahead the company and its way of thinking. This zeal had also spurred on Josef Haidlmair as well as his son Mario to retain visionary thinking and its transfer into reality as well as remain open to new things. "We cannot allow ourselves to come to a stop. Life is about change – and this is the only reason life is so interesting", Josef Haidlmair explains. That he actually puts this idea into action can be seen in the design of his own car, the HAI E3. This very first electric roadster in Austria with a wheel hub motor was designed and constructed by Josef Haidlmair in collaboration with other companies.

### Design expertise in moldmaking

Own technical developments are very important in the Haidlmair company. This not only shows in the construction of the electric car but also in the calculation software developed for the company, with which case molds and technical tools for big-part und pressure casting components are designed. "Our core competency is all about 'box-like' plastic parts, regardless of their size or shape, as well as the development of injection die mold solutions for that", emphasizes Josef Haidlmair.

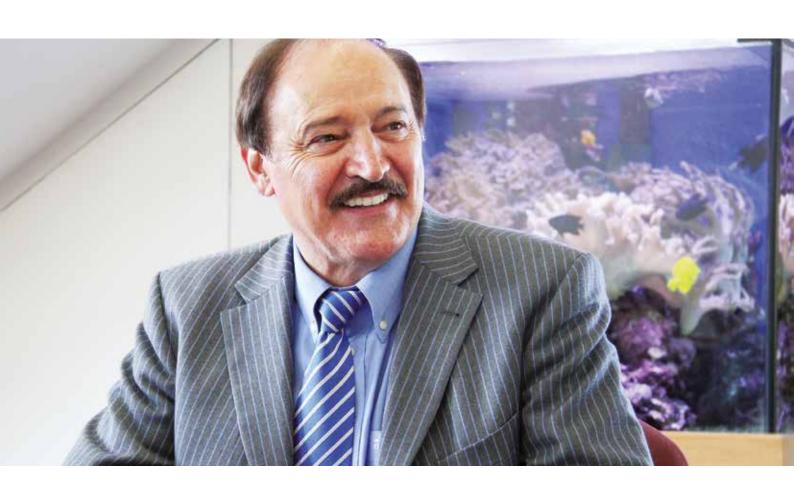
The focus within injection die molding lies on mediumsized to large molds up to a maximum weight of 70 tons. Toolmaking in terms of pressure die molds is specialized on multi-cavity molds as well as mediumsized molds. The longtime close collaboration with manufacturers of pressure die casting is the basis for an expert processing of special steel qualities as well as special design know-how.

Haidlmair GmbH is, in the words of its founder, particularly proud to have among its customers renowned companies from the telecommunications, plastics, and automotive industries as well as from the domestic and electrical appliance sectors. The fact that these companies are successful and have continued to grow in the past several years is very important for him.

In the interview on the next pages, Josef Haidlmair describes the nature of the collaboration with the tool steel supplier EschmannStahl.



More information on Haidlmair



# Using Expertise in an Innovative Way

In the interview, Josef Haidlmair, founder of Haidlmair GmbH Werkzeugbau, speaks about flexibility and innovation as well as the longtime collaboration with EschmannStahl.

ESSENTIALS: Mr. Haidlmair, an important principle of yours is "Forward is the direction!" To what extent is this guiding principle a reality and what does it mean for the company and its products?

We at Haidlmair move forward and live from change. In doing so, of course we do not neglect our existing know-how but, instead, utilize it and further extend it. It is important to live an open company culture and retain the zeal for the new.

The intention behind our guiding principle "Forward is the direction!" is to move ahead and keep the goal of striving for ever better solutions. We look into the future with intent and use the opportunities at our disposal.

ESSENTIALS: What sets Haidlmair apart from other companies and what makes the company competitive on the market?

The fact that we are a family-run enterprise puts us in a position to react quickly and flexibly both with respect to our customers and our suppliers. In this way we can work productively and implement projects with a high-quality edge. Our image is also an important factor. But this shouldn't just be an empty signature. The image presented to the outside world has to simultaneously correspond to internal meaning and needs to be lived by the company.

ESSENTIALS: You say that, as a family-run business, you can react flexibly and quickly to changes. How

can you gain from this advantage with respect to your suppliers? To what extent do you rely on your suppliers in this process?

To keep this flexibility we need to work with suppliers who are just as flexible, deliver quickly, and accompany us in new developments. This puts us into the position of being able to continuously guarantee to the customers punctual deliveries as well as high-performance products.

ESSENTIALS: You buy most of the tool steel for your injection molds and pressure die casting molds from EschmannStahl. What makes the partnership special and what advantages does EschmannStahl's steel offer regarding the production and quality of your molds? And what is your overall judgment of the support you receive from EschmannStahl?

On the first part of your question: We have been collaborating with EschmannStahl for 15 years and have always received competent and innovative advice. We value the diversity of their product portfolio and the quick availability of materials ideally aligned to the diverse implementation scenarios. Moreover, EschmannStahl continuously expands its portfolio, as you can see if you look at EschmannStahl steel grades. The main focus should always be on customer value and not only costs, which allows us to enhance quality and improve the longevity of our molds. EschmannStahl knows this too and supports us with competent personnel.

It is extremely important for us to have a reliable company such as EschmannStahl as our supplier. Besides flexibility and best-possible service, delivery reliability is a criterion of utmost importance to us as a customer and as a supplier. A supplier such as EschmannStahl at all times fulfils our requirements on the highest quality level. A natural openness of all participants in this process provides for a long-term collaboration marked by mutual respect.

## ESSENTIALS: Mr. Haidlmair, could you give us an outlook on the future of your company?

When I look at future developments I am very optimistic and relaxed. We have had some positive changes in the company which have given Haidlmair GmbH additional impetus. An example here is the takeover of company management by my son Mario as well as the entry into the company of my younger son Rene. We are getting a lot of new stimuli which are important for continuing to be able to act in an innovative and progressive way within a market that is developing at

a fast pace. This allows us to keep the company's expertise and the quality of its products on a high level.

ESSENTIALS: Mr. Haidlmair, thank you for the pleasant conversation.



Josef Haidlmair talking to Christin Schatz from the ESSENTIALS editorial staff

### PORTFOLIO & COMPETENCIES

- Mold and toolmaking
- Medium-sized to big molds up to 80 tons
- Multi-cavity mold production
- Two-component injection molding for multi-colored bottle crates
- In-mold labeling technology
- Rapid prototyping
- Professional processing of special steel qualities
- Molds for two-component soft-touch handles
- Gas and water injection technology
- Mold-flow analysis

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## **Around the World** with Football

Boujemaa Allaoui has seen and experienced a lot through football all around the globe. After his professional career in Morocco, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore, he started working at EschmannStahl's sawmill and is now a foreman.





Stations of a global career in Africa, Asia, and Europe

Four professional stations in three continents – despite the globalization of football, not many players get to see so much of the world as Boujemaa Allaoui did. The fact that he today works at EschmannStahl in Gummersbach, Germany, is pure coincidence. But he has not ever regretted this step.

Via his contacts to advisors many football clubs from across the world became aware of the athletic center forward from Morocco. His first station away from home was the Swiss first divisionist FC St. Gallen, back then trained by Uwe Rapolder, well-known from the German Bundesliga. Just like for many players from Africa, this was the steppingstone to the big leagues and clubs in Europe. But knee injuries and the concomitant operations were setbacks against this ambition.

So, a season in Saudi Arabia followed before Boujemaa Allaoui decided to return to Morocco to help his home club MAS de Fès, which had in the mean had been relegated, get back to the top. He had already played for this team during his youth while he was still at school. Because his performance at school was good he was able to pursue his hobby, which later became his profession. "Those were already very professional conditions, as even the juniors often trained twice a day", reports Boujemaa Allaoui referring to his time as a youth player.

The station in Singapore was special, where he played in a team that consisted of local players and professionals from across the world. Language barriers did not exist for Allaoui. He learned the most important words for everyday life from the respective mother tongue speakers. His good knowledge of English, French and later German were usually enough to get by, even if he had to sometimes communicate using his hands and feet.

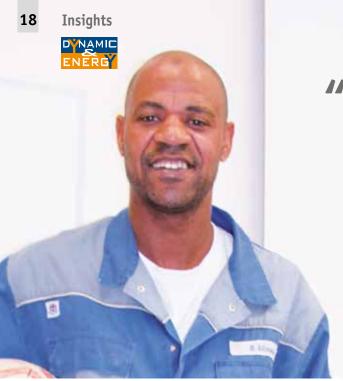
The attempt to gain a foothold in Germany's highest leagues after Singapore failed, again due to a knee injury. Thus, at the beginning of the new millennium he moved to the Siegerland town of Betzdorf in the Oberliga Southwest, which was back then the fourth highest German league. Following a few years as a coach in the amateur area Boujemaa Allaoui ended his active club career in 2012.

Today he is a foreman in EschmannStahl's sawmill. In the ESSENTIALS interview on

the next page he talks about his life as a professional, as a football-playing world traveler, and as a late entrant into "normal" business life.

## **TITLES AND SUCCESSES**

- Moroccan top goal scorer (First Division)
- Moroccan Cup winner
- Participation in the African CAF Confederation Cup for club teams
- Over 100 official match goals as a professional
- Moroccan Vice Champion
- Moroccan Junior Champion (A, B, and C-youth)
- Approx. 300 goals as an amateur (after ending the professional career)



"Enjoying Work is the Most Important Thing."

In the interview Boujemaa Allaoui describes his life as a professional football player.

ESSENTIALS: Mr. Allaoui, after playing football professionally on three continents you now work in a relatively normal job. Please describe how you ultimately ended up at EschmannStahl.

Obviously I could not foresee that happening when I started playing club football in Morocco at the age of eight. My path to where I am now led me through various clubs. In such a professional career, coincidence also has an influence on where you end up. If I hadn't moved to Betzdorf then I probably wouldn't be working here now. And you could go back in my life history step by step. Maybe it is also destiny. But regardless of how it came about: I am glad that things came this way and really enjoy working with the company. Even if to a "normal" job was initially difficult – today I cannot imagine a life without the job.

## ESSENTIALS: What is different in your present job in comparison with your time as a football player?

Obviously there are a couple of differences. But, basically, playing football is also an occupation, a job you work in day by day. Of course it is great to make your hobby to your job. But there are also days when you're sick and tired of it. For me personally the positive sides overweighed the negative. You get to travel the world, meet a lot of people, and learn new languages. It is an indescribable feeling when the fans cheer on the team. Those are very special moments you never forget and which, as a rule, you don't get to experience in a regular occupation.

ESSENTIALS: What are the most special moments you experienced?

At the top of the list is a meeting with the Moroccan King Mohammed on the occasion of a cup final. Surely, I only had this opportunity because I was a professional football player. I'm also particularly proud when the media reports on my successes even after my active career. Then you see that you have succeeded in doing things nobody can take away from you: one is popular and respected and held in good memories. That is a nice past. Today I have found my new role at EschmannStahl and am just as proud of what I have achieved here.

## ESSENTIALS: What else do your "two careers" have in common?

Performance is rewarded. When I started working as a miller I knew: Regardless of how nice the colleagues are – at the end of the day everyone has to perform. Then it is also fun, and one feels, just like in football, like being part of a successful team. If you start work in the morning with a smile it rubs off and incites others too. Enjoying work is the most important thing. Of course there is also a degree of competitiveness, but, ultimately, everyone wants the team to perform in an optimal way. In that situation everyone is important and everyone feels homelike. I get this feeling at EschmannStahl – and I am particularly thankful to my colleagues Axel Maerevoet and Andreas Höller for that.

ESSENTIALS: Mr. Allaoui, thank you for the conversation.

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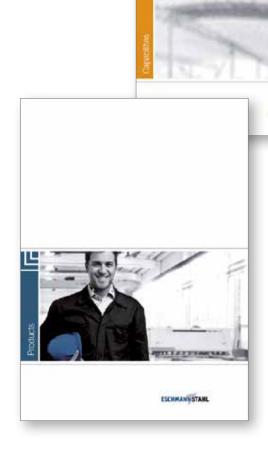
## IN BRIEF

### Ready to Launch: New Website and Brochures

"With the new website as well as with new overview brochures we will give our customers an even better overview of our portfolio. The revised structure shows at first glance our products and services: from special alloys to our extensive warehouse to further mechanical processing", is how Sales Manager Gerd Ehrmann explains the innovations. The newly designed and structured website will be launched in the course of the year. Supplementing that are the two new brochures "Products" and "Services", which will be available shortly. "Of course personal contacts cannot be digitalized or printed. But it is important for us to hand over to existing and potential customers something that they can hold in their hands and take along to peruse on occasion", Gerd Ehrmann explains.

Should you have any questions on the product or service portfolios please do not hesitate to call either your field service contact or dial this number:

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## PREVIEW ESSENTIALS 2/2013

### **Planned Topics**

Initial, Further, and Advanced Vocational Training: More Than an Obligation Talents for the Future – Young People with Prospects



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