

NEWSLETTER

For BILSTEIN GROUP partners and customers

Issue 1-2025

BILSTEIN | HUGO VOGELSANG | BILSTEIN CEE | BILSTEIN COLD ROLLED STEEL | SHEARLINE STEEL STRIP | INAC | BILSTEIN TRADING (SHANGHAI)

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Das Kaltband.

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Restructuring Strategic steps in challenging times

Rigorous decision-making is needed across all levels of the company to weather this crisis and safeguard the future of the BILSTEIN GROUP.
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**New senior management team:
New faces and new responsibilities**
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Marc T. Oehler
CEO
BILSTEIN GROUP

Dear Reader,

You are already familiar with the considerable impact the current economic and geopolitical situation has had. In the medium term, the prospects for the European metalworking and processing industry, and the German sector in particular, continue to look somewhat bleak overall.

At the BILSTEIN GROUP, we have to respond to this; we need to act quickly and deliberately and adapt our structures accordingly. But restructuring and cost cutting aren't the only way we're doing this; we're also pushing ahead with strategic initiatives that will lay the foundation for the future transformation of our company. We have the necessary financial means in place, we've introduced the right measures, and we're now executing them with purpose and intention.

And because our focus is firmly on overcoming the current crisis and adapting to the new market conditions, we have also made some significant changes to our senior management team, effective from 1 November 2024. Having worked closely with Bernd Grumme and Dimitar Yotsov for many, many years, I am extremely grateful to both of them for everything they did and accomplished on behalf of the company. Ultimately, the changes to the management team were based on the challenges we need to overcome in the coming months, to help us emerge from this crisis and adapt the BILSTEIN GROUP to these new and future circumstances.

Despite all the bad news, I'd encourage you to stay optimistic and take a moment to enjoy our latest newsletter.

I wish you all the best for 2025.

Kind regards,
Marc T. Oehler

Restructuring at the BILSTEIN GROUP

Making difficult decisions in challenging times

The job cuts rippling throughout the automotive and auto supply industry have finally reached us too. Tough decisions are needed to weather this crisis and safeguard the future of the BILSTEIN GROUP.

The BILSTEIN GROUP's balance sheet is still very solid. So why can't we avoid restructuring?

Marc T. Oehler: Because even though we have a good, future-proof transformation strategy, we can't pretend it's all sunshine and rainbows. Looking at the economic trend over the last few months, our agenda simply can't support all our employees. Our workforce numbers are too high given the current and foreseeable production volumes in Germany. The anticipated sales volumes no longer justify the size of our organization. That's why, as part of our transformation, we're also having to adapt our capacities and are being forced to implement difficult measures in places. As we've seen from the headlines these past few weeks, we're not the only ones affected by this. We can only stay competitive if we make structural changes, and fast.

Up to 300 jobs are being cut – what exactly does that process look like?

Marc T. Oehler: We can't avoid restructuring at times like this, but we want to approach it in a balanced way that minimizes the impact, by doing it in phases. First of all we want to extend invitations for voluntary redundancy. We agreed the conditions for this with the works council back in mid-November. The next step is now to negotiate the compensation plan and the various benefits that employees would get in the event of involuntary redundancies. We'll address this over the course of this year. And in the near term, in our negotiations for the new collective wage agreement, we're aiming for an outcome that aligns with the current situation the BILSTEIN GROUP and the industry finds itself in. We'll take a close look at the processes in all our departments this year and see where we can make things more streamlined and efficient. This work will be supported by clear communications and a fair and reasonable company culture. We're also pressing ahead with other strategic measures and activities that will future-proof our company.

In what way will staff changes take effect?

Marc T. Oehler: While the restructuring is taking place, we still need to make sure we can capitalize on a potential economic recovery. So we will only reduce our core structures to the extent that we can put them back into operation in very little time, when needed. The aim of all the measures we're implementing is to make sure the BILSTEIN GROUP is well positioned for the future.

There have even been personnel changes in senior management: on 1 November, Georgio Alexopoulos and Meik Forell became directors, in place of Bernd Grumme and Dimitar Yotsov.

Why is that?

Marc T. Oehler: This decision was made in the context of the challenges we're currently facing. The reconfiguration of the senior management team complements our restructuring and represents a new beginning for the BILSTEIN GROUP.

So, this decision is much more about looking forward than looking back?

Marc T. Oehler: That's exactly it. Looking back, I'm filled with gratitude. With their expertise and impact, both Bernd Grumme and Dimitar Yotsov brought lots of dedication, motivation and passion to their roles to help make the BILSTEIN GROUP what it is today. They've played a crucial role at the company these past 19 and 12 years, respectively. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for the many years of great teamwork and for all the success we've enjoyed together. This was personally an extremely difficult decision, but it was made with our eyes firmly on the future. The new senior management team structure is essential to ensure we can steer the current transformation as effectively as possible; it also reflects our new strategic focus. I wish both of them all the best for the future. And I also wish Georgio Alexopoulos and Meik Forell all the best in their new roles, as we strive to tackle the challenges that lie ahead together. ■

New faces and new responsibilities

New senior management team structure



CEO

Marc T. Oehler

- Human resources
- Legal and compliance
- PR and marketing



CSO

Georgio Alexopoulos

- Sales
- Hot strip procurement
- Order centre



CTO

Michael Ullrich

- Production
- Application and materials engineering
- Application development
- Plant and process technology
- Health, safety, environment and quality
- Rolling technology
- Sustainability/energy



CFO

Meik Forell

- Transformation
- Controlling
- Accounting
- IT
- Procurement

Company culture – a strong pillar in times of crisis

We can only succeed together

Rational, respectful and reliable communications are an important prerequisite of any type of transformation process. The BILSTEIN GROUP has a strong foundation consisting of its principles, identity and values.

Our principles

SPEED & FOCUS

I make informed decisions quickly and implement them with intention.

COURAGE & RESPONSIBILITY

I take the initiative and accept responsibility.

HOLISTIC MINDSET

My behaviours and actions take into account the needs of departments outside my own and are geared towards the success of the entire company.

AGILITY & ADAPTABILITY

I am flexible and adapt quickly to new circumstances.

ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

I reflect on my actions, learn from others and am committed to constantly developing and improving.

PASSION & DETERMINATION

I seek out challenges with passion and confidence and strive for success.

Our self-image

As an international, medium-sized family business, we work flexibly to keep our customers satisfied, and our employees and our technology leadership are the basis of our company's success.

Our employees

Our employees are at the heart of our company. We consider the whole person; not just their job or role. We treat each other as equals and with respect, whatever their level of seniority. For us, a mutual give and take form the basis for trust and growth.

Our values

APPRECIATION

We are attentive and interested in each other, we treat each other respectfully, we recognize our accomplishments, we give constructive feedback and we motivate each other to achieve great things together.

CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

Our customers are the focus of everything we do – making them happy is what drives us!

SPIRIT OF INNOVATION

We generate ideas and have our eyes fixed on the future, all while thinking about our customers, products, plants, know-how and, in particular, our own behaviours and actions.

SUSTAINABILITY

We act in a sustainable, future-oriented way in every respect – for our customers, for our current and future colleagues, and for the good of the company, society and the planet.

TOLERANCE

We respect each other's views, opinions and cultures. We stand up against intolerance and discrimination. We accept that mistakes happen, and we learn from them so we can continuously improve.

TEAM SPIRIT

Our group of companies can only be successful if we work together, which is why all our thoughts and actions are guided by our sense of community and team spirit.

COMMITMENT

We make decisions and agreements and respect them; we keep our promises.

WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE

We're open to new things and we proactively implement and support necessary change.

Digitalization – a crucial strategic initiative

Fit for the future

Our digitalization projects have two clear aims: to introduce new technologies to make the BILSTEIN GROUP more efficient and flexible in challenging times.

Cold rolling was invented over 210 years ago – and ultimately, not much about the process has changed since then. So what new opportunities and potential can be tapped into with process digitalization?

"The steel industry is a traditional industry," says Meik Forell, "and it certainly isn't among the early adopters of digital innovations." But in fast-moving times and uncertain market conditions, digital transformation is the only way to create new processes and business models that will take the company into the future. Which is why the BILSTEIN GROUP has a digitalization initiative.

System optimization: work that never ends

More efficient, streamlined processes, better systems, new opportunities and standards and improved security ... IT solutions are not only a means to achieve all these things, they are also increasingly defining the way we do business. For this reason, the BILSTEIN GROUP is continuously optimizing its systems and processes. "This is a never-ending project because the technology is always evolving and there are always new ways to become more secure, efficient and transparent," explains Meik Forell. Of course, the BILSTEIN GROUP wants to capitalize on these opportunities where it can.

From digitalization to digital transformation

The BILSTEIN GROUP started on the path to digitalization some years ago. Digitalization is a prerequisite for our digital transformation; but what's the difference between the two?

"Digitalization essentially means automating a process without fundamentally changing it," explains Meik Forell. For example, where stock lists used to be sent by fax, today the SAP system captures everything and digitizes it automatically. "But if I'm talking about digital transformation, I don't just mean the automation of existing processes; I'm talking about developing entirely new processes and business models." One good example of this from our lives outside of work: there didn't used to be a way to shop from home – now there's Amazon. "Two or three companies in the industry are now selling their steel online," says Meik Forell, who is working with his team to explore and capitalize on digital transformation opportunities for the BILSTEIN GROUP.

A whole new world: from chatbots to tracking systems

The customer platform Udina already provides the BILSTEIN GROUP with a direct interface, giving each customer any-time access to the status of their orders and documents. "IT now offers the opportunity to provide new services and communications channels to customers. As well as keeping our customers happier, this also makes processes more efficient," explains Meik Forell. Work is currently underway on a chatbot to unburden employees in procurement of some of their tasks.

Meanwhile, Microsoft Power Apps are helping to make everyday work easier for employees, especially when it comes to goods receipt, shipping, inventory management and certain control procedures. Our internal IT team has already deployed a variety of apps, with more in the works. A concept for asset tracking – i.e. monitoring the whereabouts of every single coil throughout the entire process chain – is also complete.

Our road map for a digital future

Thanks to the digitalization initiative, the BILSTEIN GROUP will be able to deploy tried-and-trusted business models in the future, all while seizing on new opportunities. And this is all happening against the backdrop of needing to become more efficient, flexible and robust in challenging times. ■

5 (+ 1) REASONS IN FAVOUR OF DIGITALIZATION

All the new systems and technologies being introduced serve the following aims:

1. Process reliability: we want our processes to run smoothly and be stable and secure.
 2. Efficiency improvements: implementing a new system can help make us better, faster and more efficient.
 3. Transparency: we need to be able to capture and compare key performance indicators (KPIs) and plant data more easily.
 4. Scalability: we want solutions that can be easily transferred to other areas of application.
 5. Data consistency: using state-of-the-art systems, we can ensure the quality of data and KPIs and simplify monitoring and control.
- + IT security: modern systems are more secure and less susceptible to unwarranted access, e.g. hacking.

MES implementation

The countdown has begun!

In early 2025, the new manufacturing execution system (MES) at HUGO VOGELSANG will go live.

MES
A key
milestone in our
digitalization
initiative



Employees from production and IT collaborated on implementation of the new manufacturing execution system (MES). The core project team (from left to right): Karl Meissner (IT project management), Mustafa Demir (syncos, systems expert), Nicky Strunze (syncos, systems expert), Thilo Schulze (BCRS), Frank Büttner (SCIO, project management), Kevin De Sanctis (systems expert), Tim Decker (systems expert, quality management module lead), Julian Herms (systems expert) and Alexander Weichelt (project management, production).

"The MES is one of the critical elements in the digitalization of our production processes, and it's an important milestone in optimizing them and making sure they're fit for the future," explains Meik Forell. The feedback from the team following the test phase was promising: they say the new tool is extremely intuitive and easy to get to grips with.

Standardizing systems landscapes

State-of-the-art systems can simply do more. They are also easier to use and score much higher in terms of data security. With the implementation of the integrative MES from SYNCOS, IT and production are optimizing the shop floor system, while simultaneously using the opportunity to link it up with the new quality management module. All of which means the old quality management systems are now obsolete.

"Our aim is to standardize processes across all our plants as much as possible and simplify our entire systems landscape," explains Meik Forell. "We also wanted to build a system that can be quickly rolled out for new business models like BILCUT and the new steel fibre STABIS." And the closer the team stuck to the existing software format, the easier it would be to achieve that.

So the new software brings enormous financial and strategic benefits, among others. In the first stage of the roll-out, around 220

production workers at HUGO VOGELSANG will enjoy the system's easier handling and the automation of more tasks in their day-to-day work. In this respect the MES implementation is more than an IT project; it is a critical change project for production, allowing the department to tackle new issues and transform its processes.

Rollout at other plants

2024 was dedicated to ensuring the new MES could go live at HUGO VOGELSANG in early 2025. "If you are looking to implement systems that are as identical as possible across multiple sites, you start with the location with the biggest plant portfolio. HUGO VOGELSANG is home to all the steps in the process chain: annealing, rolling, blanking, edging, polishing and hardening," explains Meik Forell.

Once the system is up and running smoothly, the team will turn its attention to implementation at BILSTEIN COLD ROLLED STEEL and BILSTEIN. This multi-stage approach means that learnings from prior, successful implementations can be fed into the new projects. Meik Forell: "The introduction of the new MES will not only make us more competitive, it will also provide the basis for other cutting-edge technologies and work around Industry 4.0." ■

Investments

There's a solution to every problem

The team overseeing the commissioning of the new strapping machine at HUGO VOGELSANG had to take a staggered approach to the project due to a delay in the supply of one of the plant's components.



The team behind the new strapping machine, which offers improved ergonomics, easier handling and is more user-friendly (left to right): Dirk Zecher, Karsten Bettinger, Patrick Kieferle, Turgut Kuru, Thomas Sauer, Sascha Kleinbrahm, Christian Steffen und Wolfgang Zihse (not all the employees who work on the plant are featured in the photo).

The new strapping machine for small coils commenced operations at HUGO VOGELSANG in May last year, as planned – but without the coil winding machine that wraps the coils in volatile corrosion inhibitor (VCI) paper. A supply delay lasting several months posed a unique challenge for the project team, which was made up of colleagues from dispatch and maintenance. HUGO VOGELSANG operated the new and old plants in tandem until the missing coil winding machine was delivered in August.

Currently, teams from dispatch and maintenance are working to fine-tune the plant, but everyone is extremely pleased with it so far: "Employee feedback about plant operation has been overwhelmingly positive," says deputy production manager Alexander Weichert. "The handling is better, it's more user-friendly and we've also seen improvements in safety. The ergonomics are just better overall." ■



Thanks to the new strapping machine, tasks that were previously manual, like transverse strapping, coil strapping and pallet stacking, are now fully automated.

Ongoing refurbishments

State-of-the-art production requires continuous optimization and fine-tuning, as well as ongoing investments in plant technology.

Pickling tub upgrade



Assembly of the new pickling tubs on one of the two production lines

Before rolling, hot strip coils are fed through pickling tubs to remove fine impurities from the surface. And every seven to 10 years, these tubs need replacing, since corrosion can cause leakages over time.

In August last year, the maintenance team replaced the pickling tubs on two lines, each with a volume of 6 m³. Roman David oversaw the replacement of the tubs, which included a new steel structure (and cover), a new brick lining and new rubber coating. The new pickling plant began operation at the end of August. ■

New 20-tonne crane for the rolling hall

In September 2024, BILSTEIN CEE began operating a new crane with a lifting capacity of 20 tonnes in its rolling hall, replacing the older, 12.5-tonne crane. A major advantage is that the new crane is strong enough to fill in for the crane on the annealing line in the event of a problem. Technical Lead Radek Turner was responsible for organizing the installation of the new crane. The installation ran smoothly and was wrapped up within a few days: on 4 September last year, the Czech crane manufacturer K-Technik delivered the new device to the production hall in Králův Dvůr, and by 16 September it was successfully installed and the team was able to disassemble the old crane. ■



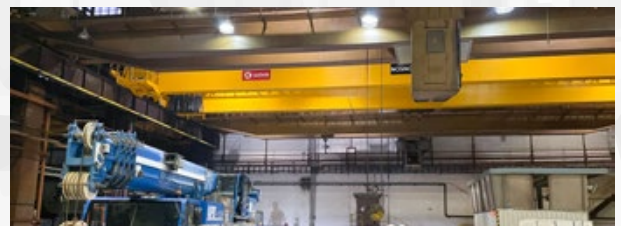
The new crane is delivered by heavy-duty transport.



Moving into the hall.



Two cranes lift the new crane into position.



Ready for action: the 20-tonne crane is assembled and in place.



The team (from left to right): Rainer Kocik, Project Manager, Wesley Duvall, Line Operator (Oscillator), Andreas Milke, Lead Project Manager (Germany), Robert Jager, Plant Manager, Cole Urhahn, Process Engineer for this project, Ben Choate, Team Lead Packing; missing from the photo are Francisco Ibarra, Lead Project Manager (US), and Nevin Hobgood, Line Operator (Oscillator)/Process Engineer.

BILSTEIN COLD ROLLED STEEL

Creating added value for our customers

On the growth trajectory: With the installation and commissioning of a jumbo coiler for the traverse winding of strips, BILSTEIN COLD ROLLED STEEL now stands out among its competitors in the US market.

The new jumbo coiler went into operation at BILSTEIN COLD ROLLED STEEL in late October 2024 – marking a huge milestone for both the US site and the entire BILSTEIN GROUP.

What's so important about this new equipment?

With this 2.5 million US dollar investment, BILSTEIN COLD ROLLED STEEL is tapping into an important niche. Oscillating coils have significantly longer strip lengths, as the large strips of the composite coil are welded together. As a result, one traverse wound coil can hold much more material than a traditional coil, which means the spool doesn't need to be replaced as frequently. This, in turn, saves our customers time in their own production processes. "Jumbo coiled material allows our customers to improve productivity and cut costs within their own manufacturing processes," explains Thomas Ettl, Chief Financial Officer at BILSTEIN COLD ROLLED STEEL. "It's going to open a lot of doors for us, not least because the US market is particularly cost-sensitive. What's

more, there are only a few companies here that offer jumbo coiling. And those that do often involve third-party providers, which further drives up costs. This service is now fully integrated in our portfolio."

Standing out among the competition

Offering such a speciality service will make BILSTEIN COLD ROLLED STEEL stand out even more on the US market. Jumbo coiled material has the potential to open up new sales opportunities in the traditional product segment and in more high-margin, niche areas. Expanding the portfolio at this point in time was a smart move; in the US, hot strip manufacturers are becoming competitive and beginning to offer products that sometimes overlap with the traditional product range of cold rolling companies. "We want to offer our customers more added value," highlights Thomas Ettl. "With this in mind, jumbo coiling fits in nicely with our strategy." ■

INAC, Italy

Increasing our stake in INAC

The BILSTEIN GROUP sent a clear signal when it significantly increased its stake in Italian firm INAC in July 2024.

Italy and southern Europe are key markets for the BILSTEIN GROUP's growth strategy, especially in these challenging times, so strengthening our presence there was a no-brainer.

"INAC has gone from strength to strength since we purchased a 30% stake in the company back in 2000," says Marc T. Oehler, happily. INAC's extremely positive growth trend in recent years and the excellent working relationship with the firm were key to the decision to increase the BILSTEIN GROUP's stake to 49%.

The move will not lead to any changes in INAC management; quite the opposite in fact: "The management team around Gianluca Lepratti has our complete trust and support, and was one of the main reasons we decided to increase our equity in the company but to leave majority ownership with the Lepratti family," explains Marc T. Oehler. "This decision was much more about pooling our strengths and setting ourselves up well for the future." Gianluca Lepratti, Member of the Board and Chief Executive Officer at INAC, comments: "We're delighted that, in a market environment that has seen massive changes, we'll be able to use our synergies more effectively in future and significantly grow our combined impact on the market." ■



Donations for Ukraine

Doing the right thing, together

Throughout September 2024, employees wanting to donate items to support the people of Ukraine could do just that at the side entrance to the administrative offices at the BILSTEIN GROUP in Hagen-Hohenlimburg. Donations included a number of everyday but urgently required items such as household goods, tools, school supplies, blankets, personal hygiene products, baby items and medical products.

"Every donation counts," says Heike Kötter, secretary to the senior management team. "And we filled up the 240-litre container four times over the course of the campaign. We're delighted that so many generous employees took part."

The BILSTEIN GROUP is supporting the donation convoys organized by Mustafa Celik, the owner and director of the Celik forwarding company, who we've worked with for years. Mustafa Celik has already organized 13 trips to Ukraine since the conflict began, and he continues to collect supplies as well as monetary donations to bring urgently needed food and other products to war-torn areas of Ukraine. ■



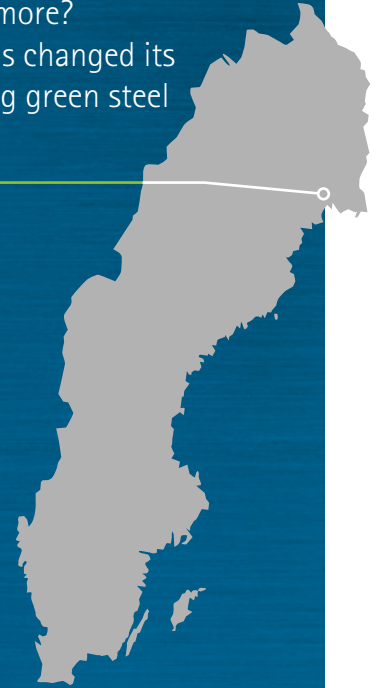
What's the latest from Sweden?

Why don't we hear people talk about H2 Green Steel anymore? Well, because the innovative start-up is now all grown up and has changed its name to Stegra! But its goal remains the same: to start producing green steel from its site in Boden, Luleå (Sweden) from 2026.

The H2 Green Steel project launched in 2021 with the goal of reducing emissions from the steel industry within an ambitious time frame. The start-up wanted to prove that, even in industries that are thought of as hard to decarbonize, things can change, and quickly.

Efforts to raise capital were successful, especially in 2023; the company now has a total of 6.5 billion euros to hand between equity and loans and is well on its way to becoming the world's first sustainable, large-scale steelworks. The first coil of hot strip steel is slated to be manufactured in spring 2026, close to the original timeline. After that, it's full steam ahead.

Since the company has now outgrown its start-up status, in mid-September 2024 the project name H2 Green Steel was replaced by a new name: Stegra. This is a play on the Swedish word for "elevate". It reflects the company's pioneering spirit and its ambitious goal to decarbonize energy-intensive heavy industry – not just in Boden, Luleå, but with projects around the world. ■



Heat recovery installation

Putting compressor heat to good use

Since October last year, the smaller of the two BILSTEIN plants in Hagen-Hohenlimburg has been heated using the process heat created during the production of compressed air in the plant's own compressor station. Both the concept and the piping were developed entirely in house.



Since the start of last winter, the smaller of the two BILSTEIN plants has been partially heated using the process heat created during the production of compressed air in the plant's own compressor station. The heat is fed via a heat exchanger into a boiler that provides heating in the social areas and hot water for bathrooms. The project's success is clear: thanks to the heat recovery system, the plant will save up to 200,000 kWh of energy and 40 tonnes of CO₂ each year. "We handled the implementation and installation entirely in house," says Christian Hagenkord, Head of Sustainability Projects and Energy Supply, who is delighted with the outcome. "Which of course was much more cost-effective for the project and for BILSTEIN." Martin Rinke, a trained gas engineer and plumber who has been with the AT Infrastructure team since September 2023, was hands on in supporting the installation of the new heat exchanger by Hamm-based specialist firm Air Industry in August 2024, and then installed the required pipes for the entire heat recovery system himself. ■

Martin Rinke (left), AT Infrastructure, and Christian Hagenkord, Head of Sustainability Projects and Energy Supply, oversaw the installation of the new heat recovery system at one of the BILSTEIN plants.

Our expert in ...

Marketing, brand image and trade fairs

When it comes to ensuring that the BILSTEIN GROUP's brand image and corporate identity are always clearly recognizable, look no further than Tina Prinz, Marketing & PR.

"That's so BILSTEIN GROUP!" Tina Prinz, Marketing & PR, is responsible for ensuring that all our information and promotional materials have a consistent look and feel and are aligned with our corporate identity – and the same goes for our presence at trade fairs and other marketing activities. She's also in charge of managing the BILSTEIN GROUP's social media channels, including LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

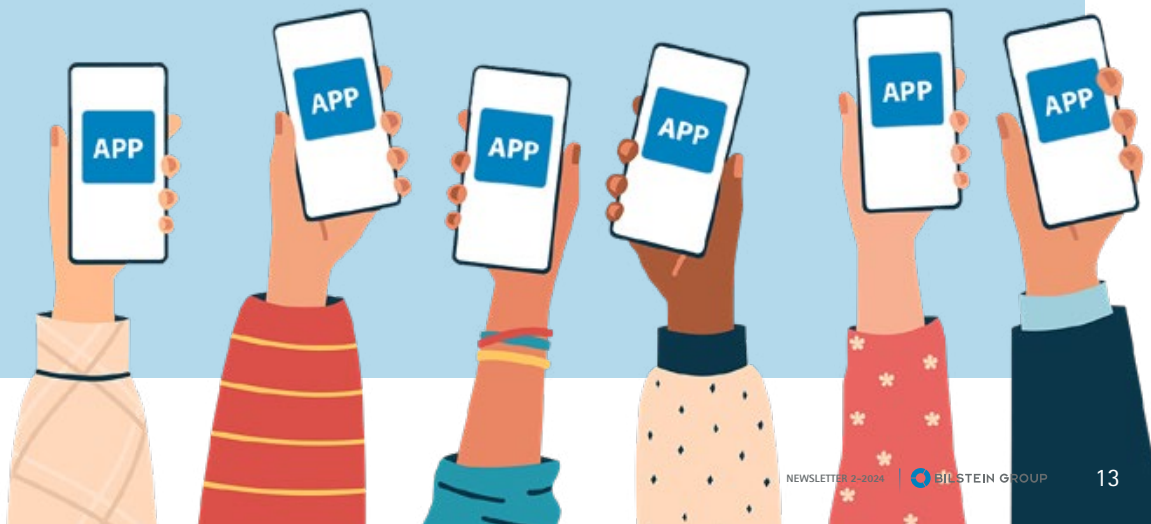
Having been with the BILSTEIN GROUP her entire career, Tina Prinz knows exactly what the company represents and what makes it stand out. The communications expert began training as a business manager at HUGO VOGELSANG in 1993. She then moved over to sales before becoming assistant to the senior management team in 2002, which is when she took on her first marketing responsibilities. Tina Prinz has been organizing trade fairs since 2004. And in June 2022, she was put in charge of marketing and PR for the BILSTEIN GROUP. In her current role, she is the first port of call for both external marketing activities and internal communication channels. Outside of work, Tina Prinz recharges by enjoying the outdoors with her horse and dog. ■

Communication should be a dialogue and exchange. So I'm always happy when I get feedback on things like trade fairs, events and smaller campaigns. ■ ■



Stay in the loop – with the new employee app!

Introducing the latest communications project: HUMANSTARSA app, a new employee app launching this year. "In my view this is going to be a massive asset for our communications," says Tina Prinz, Marketing & PR. "Not least because the app also has a translation function that means it can be used in all languages. Of course, you don't have to use the app; but why would you want to miss out?" ■



Meet our healthy workplace team

Keeping you safe and healthy at work

Since the new healthy workplace team was established at the larger of BILSTEIN's two plants in September 2023, its members have been working hard to make the work spaces and social areas safer, cleaner and more comfortable.

The new team took on the role of an "emergency taskforce" for all matters related to health in the workplace at the bigger of the BILSTEIN plants in Hagen-Hohenlimburg in September 2023.

A focus on health and safety

In addition to the plant's safety officers, the healthy workplace team is now on hand to help ensure that work spaces are kept safe, clean and ergonomic. Social areas and bathrooms also come under their remit. They've taken on these tasks voluntarily alongside their usual responsibilities because they want to create a safe and pleasant work environment for everyone.



The healthy workplace team (from left to right): Michael Mohr, Kristin Weldon, Sonja Tonat, Dirk Gehrke, Udo Steinberg and Jörg Wiesmann; not featured are Torben Karbe and Carsten Klein.

Their core tasks include evaluating the accident rate in accident "black spots" and coming up with measures to bring this rate down. The team also regularly discusses how they can support the implementation of suggestions from Health, Safety, Environment, Quality (HSEQ) on improving workplace safety on site. They also take the initiative on specific projects. ■



Improving our local region

We, the people of Lennetal

Based on its deep roots and close ties to the region, the BILSTEIN GROUP feels a responsibility to give something back to the Lennetal community.



200 years of trade and technology

The LWL Open-Air Museum in Hagen, which is home to the German Cold Rolling Museum, is always worth a visit. And it opened its doors once again in April last year. If you're in the area, why not pay it a visit?

www.lwl-freilichtmuseum-hagen.de



Student exchange with China

In summer 2024, the BILSTEIN GROUP supported an exchange programme between students from Hohenlimburg secondary school and its partner school in China. Programmes like this strengthen international ties and open up new perspectives for young people. "We're giving students access to valuable international experiences. The exchange programme not only promotes better understanding of other cultures; it also helps the participants develop their language and personal skills," explains Tina Prinz, Marketing & PR. ■



The exchange programme gave Hohenlimburg secondary school students the unique chance to experience life in China.

Cold rolling museum

On 14 April 2024, after a temporary seven-year closure, the German Cold Rolling Museum reopened at its new location in the LWL Open-Air Museum in Hagen, in what was formerly the Haus Letmathe restaurant.

One of the items on display could only be set up at the new location thanks to the team from the central workshop at Plant I: an old rolling stand was too large, so the colleagues shortened the motors along with the concrete bases. Other companies that the museum management approached weren't confident they could handle this task – which is how former director Dr Rolf Jansen ended up bringing the search to BILSTEIN's door. Andreas Reith, Maximilian Linnenlücke, Mirko Vogt and Lukas Fürstenberg took on this good deed alongside their other responsibilities – and made it possible for the exhibit to be included in the museum. ■

Stronger together: Iserlohn Roosters

The BILSTEIN GROUP is sponsoring the professional ice hockey team Iserlohn Roosters for the first time in the 2024–25 season. As well as highlighting our commitment to our home region, the sponsorship will help boost our image to potential employees during this critical skills shortage. ■



COLOURFUL MIX

New talent

Girls' Day

In 2024, the BILSTEIN GROUP once again hosted Girls' Day, building on the success of the event in previous years.

On 25 April, the BILSTEIN GROUP invited interested female students to the larger of BILSTEIN's plants to learn about the processes at a steelworking company and get a glimpse of what are traditionally thought of as "men's jobs".

Girls' Day can be a massive help to female students as they choose their future career. And the doors to the BILSTEIN GROUP are always open ...

"We see Girls' Day as a valuable opportunity to give young women an insight into the world of work; and we also believe it makes a significant contribution to promoting diversity and equality in the workplace," explains Adriana Krasevec, HR Officer and Apprenticeship Manager. "Events like this help get talented young people excited about a potential career at our company."

Production employees took the students on a tour of operations and were on hand to answer their questions. Apprentices spoke to them about their day-to-day work. And in materials testing, the students were able to try their own hand at a practical task. At the end of the day, they received a small bag filled with gifts as a small memento. "I'd like to thank everyone who was involved in Girls' Day and helped make it a success," says Adriana Krasevec. "We're already looking forward to the next one on 3 April 2025." ■

A warm welcome!

At the start of the new training year, the BILSTEIN GROUP welcomed a total of 19 apprentices to its locations in Hagen.



The 19 young people laying the foundations for their career with an apprenticeship at the BILSTEIN GROUP.



Apprentices do their bit in the community

Since 2023, twice a year – in spring and autumn – BILSTEIN GROUP apprentices have been doing their bit for the environment and helping to clear the streets, squares and recreation areas around Hohenlimburg of rubbish and waste. Around one-third of apprentices take part each time, and they organize the event themselves.

The most recent waste collections took place on 16 April and 23 September last year, with both focusing on Hohenlimburg town centre. "We're delighted that they're so engaged and they have our full support, including time off work for the event," says Adriana Krasevec, HR Officer and Apprenticeship Manager. ■



DURING THE WASTE COLLECTION IN APRIL IN HOHENLIMBURG TOWN CENTRE, THE APPRENTICES PICKED UP BAGS OF RUBBISH, INCLUDING LOTS OF CIGARETTE BUTTS.

Apprentice away days **MAKING LEARNING FUN**

The apprentice away days are a key element of all apprenticeships at the BILSTEIN GROUP and are attended by both business and trade apprentices alike. It is the ideal opportunity to help these young colleagues build on their knowledge and capabilities, improve their soft skills and strengthen the sense of community and team spirit between different departments. From 14 to 16 August 2024, all apprentices came together at Akademie Klausenhof in Hamminkeln for four different courses covering a variety of topics:



A TOTAL OF 52 APPRENTICES FROM THE BILSTEIN GROUP ATTENDED THE EVENT IN AUGUST, ENJOYING THREE DAYS OF LEARNING AND NEW EXPERIENCES AT AKADEMIE KLAUSENHOF IN HAMMINKELN.

- **Time-management and self-discipline:** the apprentices were given the task of building a soapbox car in small groups and then presenting it.
- **Rules and structure:** why are rules important, and what happens if we don't follow them?
- **Intergenerational learning:** what do younger and older generations have in common, and how are they different?
- **Team building and communication:** where better to practise both these things than with a canoe trip on the Bocholter Aa river?



To help improve their time management skills and self-discipline, the apprentices were given the task of building a soapbox car together and presenting it.



During a canoe trip on the Bocholter Aa river, the apprentices were able to showcase their sportsmanship and communications skills.

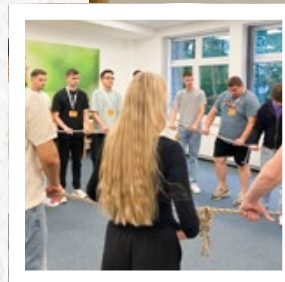


DIRECTOR MICHAEL ULLRICH WAS ON HAND DURING THE BARBECUE TO ANSWER APPRENTICES' QUESTIONS.

Brief introductions and an ice breaker game helped everyone get to know each other better and form a community. During their downtime, the apprentices could also enjoy games like pool, darts, bowling and foosball. Meanwhile, a barbecue gave them the chance to meet Director Michael Ullrich and his wife and ask questions. ■



The event kicked off with some shared learning, facilitated by a number of expert speakers.



The foosball table encouraged competition and teamwork.





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