

# verbinder

The staff and customer magazine of the binder group



## New building

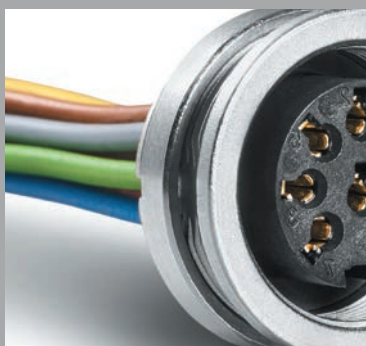
An update

## High contact count

M16 connector

## Anniversary

10 years of  
binder Sweden



# Time for change

Change marks the beginning of something new.

The current situation demands that changes be made that have an impact on our everyday lives, on our work, on how we spend our leisure time and on us personally.

Every change comes with a new set of challenges, which forces us to step outside our comfort zone. This requires an active effort on our part.

We believe in the importance of change. Change is necessary in order to grow and develop, and we have to be open to it.

On that note!

## Marketing

### The verbinder is also online

Missed the last issue of the verbinder? No problem – the digital edition brings the magazine's topics to your smartphone, tablet or PC.

[www.binder-connector.com/de/news-presse/kundenmagazin-verbinder](http://www.binder-connector.com/de/news-presse/kundenmagazin-verbinder)

### Your opinion counts

We are open to suggestions, ideas and every form of criticism – both positive and negative – because it is only by keeping a dialogue going that the verbinder will keep its dynamic quality.

So be brave and tell us what you think of the verbinder:

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# Looking forward

## Dear reader,

Orders have been very strong in 2021, which meant that staff who had seen their hours cut brought back to full-time duty. This gives us courage and confidence to continue on our charted course.

Sadly, we remain subject to the restrictions imposed due to Covid-19 both in our personal and professional lives. We have systematically adopted measures designed to protect our employees' health. Among others, we procured 15,000 self-tests before the German government issued a mandate requiring companies to do so (see page 10 for more information).

We are making excellent progress in moving staff into our production and logistics centre at the Neckarsulm site. Several departments have already begun working at the new building, whose unique design makes it an architectural highlight on Rötelsstrasse in Neckarsulm.

Another story that will be covered in this issue of verbinder is the 10th anniversary of binder Sweden. We'll also be reporting on our M16 connectors and the central role social media plays at binder. Finally, you can also find a fantastic interview with binder USA in this edition.

Let's work together to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

## Happy reading!

Kindest regards,



**Markus Binder**  
General Manager



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# Outstanding eye-catcher

The ceremony to mark the start of construction on the new building going up at binder headquarters in Neckarsulm was held on 29 March 2019.

Since then, several departments have started work in the new production and logistics centre. Keep reading to find the latest news, learn what steps are planned and discover special features of the new building.

**Text** Patrick Heckler

'I'm very excited that we were able to complete the first phase of construction more or less on schedule despite Covid-19,' states Markus Binder, General Manager of the binder group, adding: 'My deepest gratitude goes out to everyone who helped make this happen.' In follow-up, he describes the advantages

that the new production and logistics centre bring: 'The new centre will improve the workflows and processes at our company now and in the future. It will make us more competitive while also being an architectural highlight that helps clearly position us as a company.'

## Status update

In the first phase of construction, a 14,097-square-metre building, measuring 65.6 metres long, 68 metres wide and 26 metres high, was completed. In late 2020, the logistics and dispatch units began working in the ground floor, where a 27-metre-tall high-

bay warehouse with shuttle has been installed.

Moving into the new building was a complex undertaking since we had to ensure a smooth transfer with no disruptions to production. The task was completed to great success. Transfer of production from Plant 2 to the first

floor of the new building was completed in late April (read more on page 20). That means 11 departments with a total staff of around 300 are now working there.

## Smart energy concept

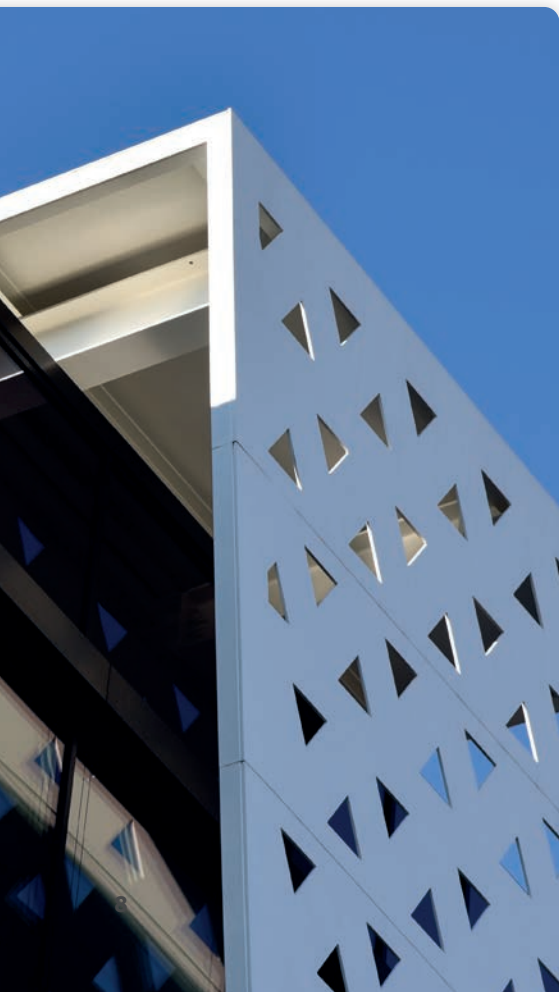
Sustainability and environmental aspects were key con-

siderations in the design of the new building. binder recognises its responsibility to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases it generates in production and is committed to prioritising the issue. An intelligent room and process cooling system as well as mechanical ventilation of the entire office and ►



production space were some of the items considered when drawing up the plans for the building. The use of sustainable building materials and rollout of digital processes also help make binder more a more environmentally friendly company.

This is great for the environment and for staff who now work under better conditions. There are a number of advantages first and foremost for production employees, thanks to improved lighting and air quality as well as a quiet work environment.



Having the administrative operations physically – not just metaphorically – so close to production means more efficient processes.

### High-quality architecture

The impressive modern design of the building's exterior catches your eye immediately. A total of seven custom-made sails, each one 20 metres tall, were affixed to the glass façade of the building, adding a new architectural highlight to Rötelsstrasse in Neckarsulm.

The Binder family came up with the basic concept for the distinctive façade. 'Our main factory on Rötelsstrasse is essential in shaping how we are viewed as a company. It was therefore really important for us to have an architectural design that is both unique and individual,' reports Kim Binder. The building's glass façade is the creation of Vollack, a company specialised in methodical building design concepts. Features like the perforated steel sails affixed to the front of the structure make the building stand out. 'From day one, we shared a common vision on what the building should look like – and this really played off,' states Kim Binder.



To match the impressive exterior, the interior of the building set new standards, with high-quality materials to go along with a sleek design. Ultra-modern offices with well-designed ergonomic workstations are complemented by innovative production facilities and stylish common areas. In short, the design of the new centre reflects the unique commitment to quality of the binder brand as well as the dynamism and innovativeness of the company.

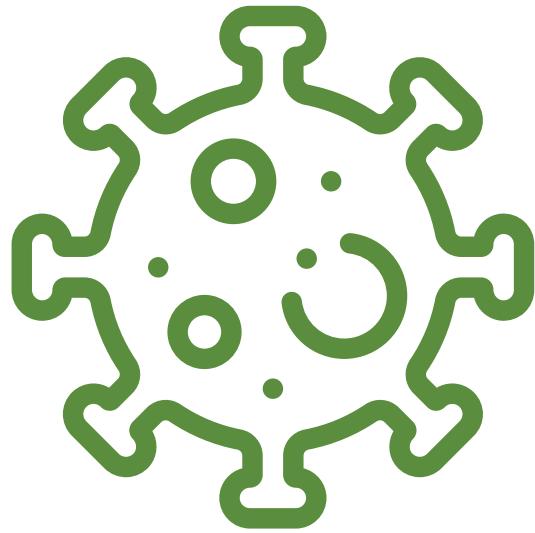
### The future looks bright

Now that the first departments have moved into the new building, other key milestones are to follow in the months to come. This summer, the new canteen, located on the second floor of the structure, will be ready for use, with a total capacity of 150. Fresh meals will be provided by an outside catering firm. When the canteen opens, the times for lunch breaks will be adjusted, and a shift system will be introduced. The second floor will also feature a green rooftop deck with seating options as well as a workout room that will be available for use starting this summer.

The new building, which combines sustainability and



high-quality architecture, is a clear signal by binder and helps set the company apart in a crowded marketplace. The first obstacles have been overcome and the first milestones reached, with many more to follow. ■



## To a job well done

The first verified case of Covid-19 in Germany was reported on 27 January 2020. Less than two months later, the first lockdown was imposed on 22 March. This article outlines the measures binder has taken to protect employees' health and reveals the role the company's products had in helping to treat Covid patients.

**Text** Patrick Heckler

Covid-19 has brought public life to a halt for more than a year now, and it's changed the way we live and act. The pandemic presents challenges for each of us – and for companies like binder, too. As an essential manufacturer and supplier of connectors used in the medical field, binder's products play a vital role in

fighting Covid-19. On the flip side, we face the challenge of providing the best protection possible to our employees by adopting proper measures and making smart choices.

### Strong sense of team as crucial ingredient

Medical technology accounts for roughly 15 per cent of the binder group's total revenue. The connectors it makes are deployed in respirators and infusion pumps, which are two key pieces of equipment used in the medical field.

Thermometers that are used to check a person's temperature before he or she receives the Covid-19 vaccine is another such example. 'Our employees and I are proud that our products could play a role in fighting Covid-19,' says Markus Binder, General Manager of the binder group. He firmly believes that one thing made this all possible: 'The strong sense of team that sets us apart as a family company makes it possible for us to take on this role.'

### Effective measures

With 1,000 employees at the Neckarsulm site, it should come as no surprise that there were a few isolated cases of Covid-19 at binder. The checks we carried out caught these quickly, however. 'In some case, we were able to start contact tracing immediately and ensure a fast flow of information to halt the spread and guarantee safe working conditions for our employees at all times,' reports Kristina Bitz, HR Director (K-PW) and official in charge in Covid-related matters at binder. 'It is incumbent on each and every one of us to exercise responsibility to ensure the measures are effective. It's a matter of solidarity and respect for others.'

binder has adopted a broad range of measures. Here are just a few examples to illustrate this. A Covid-19 plan, which set out rules of conduct and provided employees with a list of contacts, was already in place in late March of 2020. The hygiene concept drawn up by the company includes the procurement of a large quantity of hygiene products, regularly updated notices and a new policy to allow employees to work from home with the aim of reducing the risk of infection at the office. Along with this, binder was one of the first companies to offer free rapid antigen tests to its staff from November 2020. Up to 117 such tests were carried out by trained professionals at the Neckarsulm site daily. In addition, binder was early to

require all persons to wear an FFP2 mask when on company property, which was another step that proved highly effective in reducing the risk of infection. Markus Binder believes the crisis management policies adopted by the family-run business will continue to bear fruit. 'The health of our employees is our top priority. Over the past months, we did not panic and took considered action, which is something we will continue to do.' ■

### Hygiene products procured

September 2020 until April 2021

<b>50.320</b>	medical face masks
<b>35.800</b>	FFP2 masks
<b>15.000</b>	Covid-19 self-tests
<b>6.300</b>	medical gloves for Covid-19 tests
<b>4.100</b>	tongue depressors for Covid-19 tests
<b>2.800</b>	rapid antigen tests
<b>1.200</b>	disposable gloves
<b>700</b>	lab coats for Covid-19 tests
<b>120</b>	bottles of hand disinfectant
<b>90</b>	bottles of surface disinfectant



# M16 connectors

## The perfect solution for applications that need high pin counts

From its early beginnings in the audio industry more than 50 years ago – in fact the M16 connector was the first connector system binder manufactured – today's M16 connector is very much a "go to" connector solution for a huge variety of indoor applications. Thanks mainly to continuous development and refinement, the M16 connector is now the ideal choice for specifiers looking for a cost effective, robust screw locking connector that can accommodate as many as 24 contacts – with or without EMI shielding.

**Text** The Editorial team



M16 connectors were originally designed to meet the requirements of Deutsches Institut für Normung (German Institute for Standardisation) that defined the standard for circular connectors for analogue audio signals. These were used widely for many years and commonly known throughout the audio industry and to the consumer as DIN connectors.

### High pin count and protection up to IP68

"Although still available in its original unshielded IP40 DIN formats, the latest M16 connectors are far removed from the early audio versions," says Sascha Döbel, binder's Product Manager for M16 connector systems. "Driven by market demands for lower contact resistance, higher pin count and improved levels of protection, today's M16 connectors are capable of accommodating between two and 24 contacts. They are mainly housed in metal bodies, with or without shielding from electromechanical interference (EMI) and providing international protection up to IP67 or IP68 for certain versions," adds Sascha Döbel.

Versatility of application is assured as a range of alternatives are available for cable mounting with straight or right-

angled connectors terminated by soldering, with screws and crimp. Pre-moulded cables are available and the options are as equally comprehensive when it comes to the panel receptacles with front or rear fastening as standard for solder bucket versions and front-fastening for dip solder and pre-terminated flexible PCBs.

This connector style, along with the benefits of rugged design with good environmental resistance, have seen the M16 become widely used in instrumentation, measurement and sensors for indoor use where there is a need for a higher pin count than is offered by M8 and M12 sensor connectors. Other applications include pneumatic controls, gas and pressure measurement, torque sensors and motor speed regulators.

### Suitable for 5G roll out

The latest applications for M16 connectors include the impending roll-out of 5G networks where binder's AISG-compliant connectors are designed to provide high international protection for selected outdoor installations. The AISG (Antenna Interface Standards Group) defines standards for the control and monitoring of

antenna line devices in the wireless industry.

binder's Series 423 and 723 M16 connectors, for example, are available in 8-pin DIN variants, of which four to five contacts are used. The products are AISG C485 compliant and available as male and female shielded cable and panel mount connectors. The connectors, which can be used for all wireless networks, meet the requirements for protection class IP68 when connected, offering maximum reliability even under extreme external conditions.

### Data transmission up to 10Gbits/s

One of the latest additions to binder's M16 offering is an X-coded connector capable of handling the data speeds demanded by today's sensor-based automated production facilities. Data transmission figures are up to an impressive 10Gbits/s.

The combination of a high pin count with the compact size of nominally 18.5mm diameter and 60mm in length means M16 connectors offer an excellent alternative to more expensive connector systems. Special short versions and right-angled versions with ►

a height of only 37mm mean M16 can be used in applications where space is very tight.

M16 connectors accommodate cables ranging from 4.0 to 10mm diameter, are rated to 250V and can withstand an impulse voltage up to 1500V, with current handling of up to 7A (at 40°C). With increasing requirements from equipment manufacturers for shielding against EMI more applications now require shielded cable systems with the requirement for connectors with good shielding characteristics. For optimum results 360° shielding is required and this is achieved by integral shielding rings, providing a high attenuation over a large frequency band.

To sum up binder's M16 product offering, Sascha Döbel comments "At binder we have found that the flexibility provided by our comprehensive range of M16 connectors with the seemingly endless options at relatively low cost compared to other connector systems, has led to its popularity continually increasing and its application range has extended remarkably from the humble 1960s microphone to the latest communications and security systems that touch us all." ■

**Unparalleled reliability –  
even under extreme  
outdoor conditions.**

**'binder strives to  
develop customer-  
specific solutions for  
circular connectors  
in the automation,  
industrial and  
medical field.'**

Mission statement



binder creates flexible hybrid solution  
for complex applications

# New M12-A connector combines power and signal contacts

binder announces the first models in a new range of overmoulded M12 A-coded connectors. Its hybrid design means the single-cable solution contains both power and signal contacts.

**Text** The Editorial team



The versatility and flexibility of the new hybrid connectors makes them ideal for applications in industrial indoor and outdoor areas where both power and signal transmission is needed in the smallest of spaces. In addition to sensors, actuators and camera systems, this also includes motors, drives and control systems.

## Current and signal properties

The first available versions feature nine contacts – two gold-plated current contacts rated to 12A at 63V and seven gold-plated signal contacts rated 0.5A at 12.5V. The power conductors are inserted in a cable connector moulded with polyurethane (PUR) and feature a cross section of 0.75mm<sup>2</sup> (AWG 18). The signal transmission conductors are 0.14mm<sup>2</sup> (AWG 26).

As standard, the new connectors are supplied with 2m and 5m cables although custom cables lengths are also available from binder on request. For PCB applications, the connection to the printed circuit board is implemented using dip soldering technology (THR) for the power contacts and SMD technology for the signal contacts. The connectors

can be processed in modern reflow processes.

## Practical application and further development of the offer

The connector has been specifically designed for demanding outdoor applications. When mated, the connectors protect to IP67 and the operating temperature range is -25°C to 85°C. The screw connection of the M12x1 standard thread is made of stainless steel although an optional plastic version is available.

binder is also announcing a connector variant with six contacts among the other models that will soon follow. This combines two current contacts – up to 16A – and four shielded signal contacts for data transmission. This enables future DC applications with power requirements of up to a maximum of 1kW and with simultaneous data connection up to 100Mbit/s. ■

**Designed for  
demanding outdoor  
applications.**

A new type of M8 circular connector  
expands the binder portfolio

## Reliable EMC with 360° shielding: M8 cable connectors for sensitive applications

Industry knowledge and experience in industrial circular connectors are both recognized hallmarks of binder. The company operates in many fields of application thanks to its comprehensive range of products the latest of which is a molded M8 circular connector. Part of the 718 Series, the new connector provides high reliability under advanced requirements – even for customized specifications – with a new type of shielding concept.

**Text** The Editorial team



The newest version of the M8 cable connector is among the smaller sizes in the constantly expanding binder range and increases binder's presence into application areas where size and performance will constantly increase in the future. In addition to the basic properties of M8 connectors such as compact size and low weight, the new 718 Series connector, which is available now, differs mainly from other approaches in its application areas by a new type of 360° shielding.

### Fields of application and product properties

The shielding concept, used for the first time in this environment, ensures particularly reliable EMC shielding without interference. This property in the M8 format makes the circular connector useful primarily in applications such as sensor technology, laboratory equipment and drive solutions. As with many connectors in the binder portfolio, this product can also be implemented as a customized design. binder offers four versions of the new cable connector with 3, 4, 6 or 8 pins. Degree of protection IP67 is provided in all versions of this model as is a mechanical lifetime of more than 100 mating cycles.

The rated voltage and rated current differ depending on the number of pins. The 3-pin and 4-pin versions offer 60V and 2A up to 4A, depending on the conductor cross-section. The 6-pin and 8-pin designs can handle up to 30V and 1.5A. The cable is optionally available in PVC or PUR. In addition, the cable length can be configured to customer requirements.

### Important component of a growing spectrum

With the constantly growing portfolio of compact cable connectors, binder can provide enhanced products primarily to those application fields requiring a great degree of flexibility in a small space and whose importance in the future will continue to increase greatly. Finally, binder is developing a 12-pin M8 connector that has already proven itself capable in measuring equipment applications and in automation.

"With the continuous further development and expansion of circular connectors, even for the smaller sizes such as M5 or M8, we are very well positioned in the areas of factory automation and miniaturization," stated Guido Werner, Product manager in the Sales department at binder since 2013. ■

**New umbrella  
concept to set  
us apart.**



# Moving into the new binder building

Staff began to move into the new production and logistics centre at the Neckarsulm site early this year. This massive undertaking has now been completed. With it, the company opens a new chapter in its history.

**Text** Patrick Scheer

All the advanced preparations paid off. Months were spent planning for the transfer of production to the new facility. Production of miniature connectors was the first to be moved, with others to follow in stages. After nearly two years of construction, all production operations from Plant 2 could now be transferred to the new building.

## Timeline

Transferring production to the new building took a total of three-and-a-half months and entailed no disruption to operations. The move was carried out in three phases to ensure binder would be able to meet its production and delivery obligations to customers. Phase one took place between 11 January and

11 February, during which time the Miniature Connectors and Strand Production segments were relocated to the new building. The Automation segment was moved during phase two, which was completed between 19 February and 17 March. This was followed by the Power segment (29 March to 15 April), which preceded the relocation of production operations on 21 April with the closing of

manual production. This unit has since been integrated into other segments.

## Fantastic teamwork

Completing such a complex undertaking requires a team effort. An operation of this scale could not have been done without the active assistance of multiple departments. The unit in charge of removing the equipment from service was the Equipment department, which also prepared and carried out the transport of the machinery. It also installed, calibrated and restarted the systems. Once this was completed, a test run was carried out. Plant Maintenance provided critical support to the Equipment team during transport. They disconnected the machines from the media supply, power, compressed/exhaust air and the network and reconnected them at the new site. All network connections were set up according to the specifications given by the IT department, which was also placed in charge of allocation and patching of Ethernet outlets. The Production department had a major role in the relocation of production operations. It acted as an interface to other departments while also being given responsibility

## Relocation of production operations in numbers

85	manual assembly workstations
57	kanban racks/logistics rack systems with shuttle
24	fully-automated assembly units
16	standalone computer workstations
15	semi-automatic packaging machines
15	semi-automatic assembly machines and lines
10	installation workstations
2	fully-automated packaging machines
2	inspection stations
...	and numerous other machines and systems

for maintaining production, a task it completed with flying colours.

## Mission accomplished

Each individual department has an authorised coordinator who served as the central point of contact for external removal companies and provided support to them as required. The systems and processes underwent checks before the machines were approved to resume large-scale production. The Production and Quality Assurance teams worked closely together to agree on test materials, quantities and deadlines. The project was a success in no small part thanks to the efforts of the Operations Scheduling, Production Control, Process Organisation and Logistics departments. They worked

in the background, where they had general responsibility for master data maintenance and the provision of materials. ■

## About the author

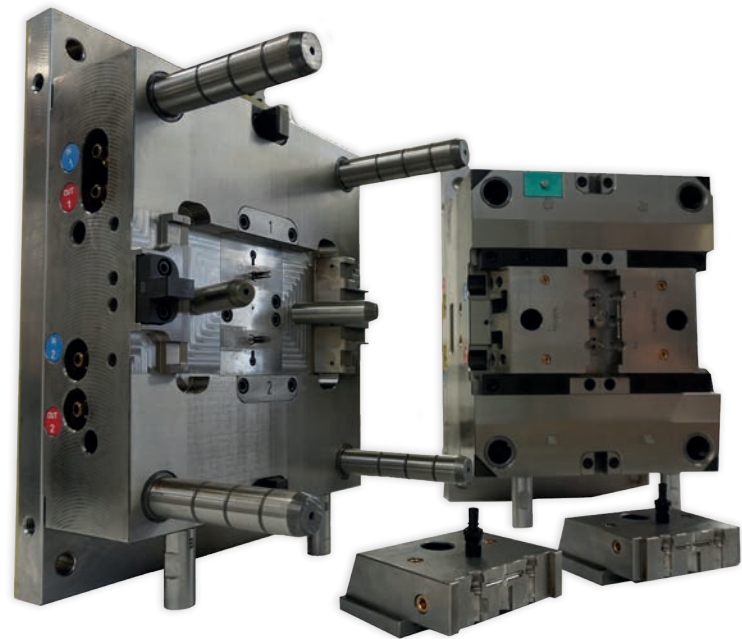


**Patrick Scheer** has been working at binder since August 2014 and is a Project Manager in the Value Stream Design Projects department (P-IE-WSP).

# Improvements in plastics production

The market for connectors continues to grow all the time, placing increasing demands on companies and the products they make. As an innovative company, binder has optimised the processes it uses to produce injection moulds that will allow it to play a central role in shaping the market.

**Text** Claus Burmeister



The injection moulding trial tool optimises plastics production

Connectors make it possible to create modular assemblies, devices, systems and machines. Product design is highly reliant on the development of these systems. As product

standards increase, the market today demands plastics that can adapt to meet the changing standards. During machining, there are numerous factors that complicate

production.

## Problem

Additives alter the properties of plastics. To meet the increa-

singly stringent requirements, especially in terms of flame retardancy, more targeted venting must be carried out on injection moulds. Special coatings are applied to tool steels that improve the wear properties and demoulding process. A vacuum is applied during venting to improve part filling and enable reliable production at sufficiently large batch sizes.

Connectors are becoming increasingly delicate and complex, especially in the area where they are plugged in or connected. Achieving reliable production results along with satisfactory component quality is only possible if the components are tested in terms of mould filling and optimised during this phase. The simulation cannot always be fully visualised especially in the border zones, however.

## Solution

To overcome the challenges outlined above, the most suitable solution was to design a test mould, which was used to carry out a full battery of tests, make tweaks and check how effective the changes were. This process would not have been possible using a mass production mould. Rather than using a mock-up product, an

existing one, which, due to its specific geometric properties, was ideally suited to serve as the test object, was chosen for the pilot project. The tests on the production model were fully documented in matching forms. While this was going on, Tool Design, Tool Making and Process Technology, the departments taking part in the project, coordinated activities.

Thanks to the project, the venting process required during injection moulding could be optimised. The findings and methods used to resolve the issue delivered with the test mould are now applied to all compatible tools. As a result of the project, binder was able to streamline its production process and reduce accompanying costs.

## Providing support to young professionals

binder's philosophy of fostering the talents of ambitious junior employees has paid off once more. While training to qualify as a technician, Stefan Schweizer was given a key research and organisational role in a project to create a test mould for connectors at his partner company binder. A team of technicians there was able to document the complex process, record the results in great

detail and identify solutions to the particular issue. ■

## About the author



**Claus Burmeister** has been with binder since July 2008 and works as a Team Lead in the Tool Design department (P-WK).



# Absolute precision laser welding at binder



Whenever laser beams are mentioned, cinema enthusiasts inevitably think of Jedi Knights. Laser technology has been a part binder's everyday work in tool making since 2013, with laser welding also becoming a regular occurrence since 2020. Of course, this has nothing to do with science fiction and mystery. But the use of the technology is always exciting.

**Text** The Editorial team

The Tool Making department (P-WB) at binder has 32 permanent employees and eight apprentices. It manufactures precision tools for plastics production in-house, under the leadership of Steffen Schmidt. Anyone familiar with how rich and varied binder's connector range is can get a rough idea of how multi-faceted the process for designing the tools to manufacture the products is. But the highly specialised injection moulds often remain in service for decades, which means the job is by no means done once they have been built.

The tools, which come in many varieties, constantly need to be cleaned, maintained, rebuilt and repaired.

## How the procedure works

When a material is applied to a surface by laser welding, it is referred to as build-up welding as the volume increases to a minimal extent. In laser welding, light is focused on a tiny spot using a lens. The welding wires used have a diameter of just 0.2 to 0.6 millimetres. The extremely high energy density melts the material to

be welded within fractions of a second, instantly creating a weld. The process is ideal for repairing and maintaining tools in particular. The object to be welded is positioned on a ball magnet table and precisely aligned. Using Leica binoculars with 16x magnification makes it possible to capture minute edges and recreate the original edge progression. Laser welding equipment allows the tools to be restored to their full functionality and quality while only needing a minimal amount of material.

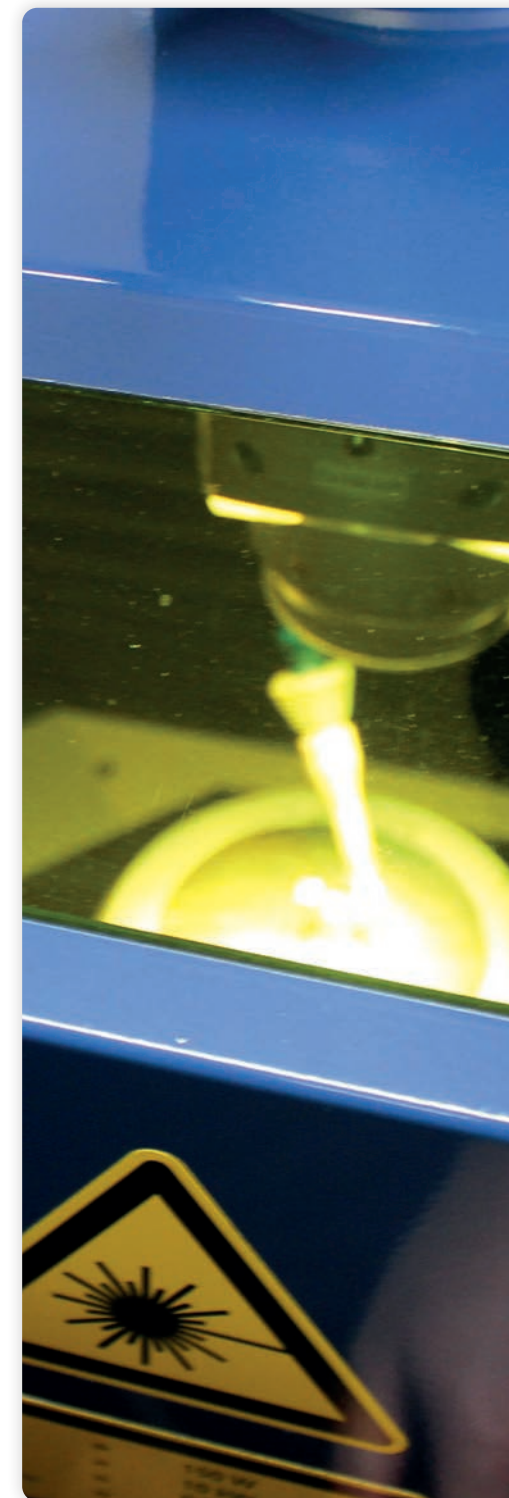
## The problems of using external contractors

Without laser welding technology, using the highly specialised tools that the company manufactures for decades wouldn't be a realistic option. That's why binder has relied on this method for such a long time. However, carrying out the welding work internally wasn't an option until 2020, which is why it was done by an external service provider. While this solution was a cost effective one, it also came with several drawbacks. The delivery time was often two days – valuable time in which the tools were missing in production. There were also transport costs to pay in addition to the maintenance costs. But that's not all: the external maintenance staff's lack of familiarity and training in handling the highly customised tools meant an extensive amount of communication was needed. This arduous back and forth didn't prevent time-consuming and expensive reworking from being required again and again.

## Acquire a laser welding unit, solve the problem

These problems were consigned to history after binder acquired its own laser welding unit – the ALPHA LASER ALV 150

G2 model – in 2020. Welding work can now be done in less than an hour. The state-of-the-art laser welding technology is now available whenever it's needed, meaning maintenance routines can be planned over a much longer period of time. The fact that the laser welding unit is operated by two highly qualified, internal employees means that even complicated welds are now possible, with a drastically reduced error rate. Even though the cost of purchasing a high-tech device such as a laser welding unit is high, the advantages clearly outweigh the disadvantages. As a result, binder's Tool Making department is significantly more flexible, and the added value remains within the company. ■



The ALPHA LASER ALV 150 G2 laser welding unit

A **brand** is more than just a logo.

style element





# 'You just have to want it'



Fabian Götz is just 27 years old, yet he can already look back on a whole decade of service at binder. Time has passed in the blink of an eye – ten years in which he has steadily developed on both a personal and a professional level, becoming a conscientious adult.

**Text** JAV



Fabian Götz has been at binder since he was an apprentice

Anyone who comes across the Deputy Head of Production Control at his workstation always finds him in a good mood and walks away with the impression of a thoroughly relaxed man. This isn't a given for a young man who is about to become a father for the first time and who is also completing further training to become a technical specialist on top of his responsibilities at work. 'I always say: where there's a will, there's a way. You can always get everything done; you just have to want it.' Fabian, whose surname back then was Senf, proved his will for the first time in 2011. As a recent school graduate, he seized his opportunity and began an apprenticeship as a tool mechanic at binder.

## A great apprenticeship

'To me, it felt like I was jumping in at the deep end. Today, the new apprentices are carefully integrated into company life. We didn't have any on-boarding programmes or careful support to help us acclimatise from student life into the world of work in our day. We arrived here and started working straight away.' Even though Fabian Götz is happy to see how the apprenticeship at binder is evolving and thinks it is a positive thing, he doesn't think he missed out on anything ten years ago – quite the opposite in fact. 'Eberhard Schmid was our instructor, a very inspiring person who was committed to looking after us and taught us a lot. We are all happy and also a little proud

that we were allowed to learn with him. Being able to do the internship in Vienna was another highlight – that was great!' Fabian's eyes light up when he talks about the ten days he spent at binder Austria together with other apprentices during his apprenticeship. 'It was a great experience. Although we were still quite inexperienced, we were allowed to really lend a hand at binder Austria and support the employees in their day-to-day work.'

## A golden future

The self-confidence that the teenagers built up during the internship also had an effect on the later years of their apprenticeship. 'At binder, you notice quite quickly that if you want to achieve something and make an effort, then every door is open to you. Realising that fact guaranteed that I applied for other internal positions just a year after the apprenticeship was over. That was in February 2016.' Fabian Götz demonstrated commitment and a sense of responsibility as an internal fitter in the automation segment of Plant 2, where he rectified faults on production machines and took responsibility for organising shift schedules. He also sho-

wed ambition right from the start of his time in Production Control, where he has been working since October 2017. 'binder places a great deal of emphasis on the topic of corporate digitalisation. You can really see how this makes the company structure even faster and more effective. I trained as an SAP key user for production and logistics so that I could also contribute to this development. The qualification I'm currently doing to become a technical

specialist is another serious step forward. In a company like binder, every path is open to you – you just have to want it.'

The JAV is very happy for Fabian; he has really achieved a lot in the last ten years. We wish him continued success and are curious to see how his story continues. ■

**Commitment and a sense of responsibility are decisive factors.**

## About the authors

The **JAV** (Youth and Apprentice Council) at binder includes **Rudolf Shmidt** (Chairperson), **Andrea Messer** (Deputy Chairperson), **Vincent Kühnle** (Secretary) and **Lucca Stoppani** (Backup Member). These four dedicated young professionals were elected to the board for two years on 22 October 2020.



# Social media: far more than just a trend



Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and countless more – most people can no longer contemplate a life without social media. Facebook platforms alone are used by around 2.5 billion users every day. Whether it's by posting a photo, uploading video or leaving a comment, they all exchange views on current topics, gather knowledge and share personal opinions and experiences.

**Text** Anita Hartwig and Evelin Minz

This is where it all comes together – private meets professional, exciting meets arbitrary and everyone meets everyone. While many users enjoy social media as something in their private lives, companies often pursue traditional communication goals. No wonder, seeing as there is hardly a better place to raise your own profile, attract new employees and customers and network with them.

## Why is social media so important today?

Even if some of us still don't want to admit it, we are in the middle of the new world of the digital age. Hardly anyone reaches for the newspaper or

the encyclopaedia any more when they're looking for the latest news and useful information. Research has shown that platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn are now treated as search engines just like Google. Only what appears at the top of the results is considered relevant. Nowadays, companies cannot afford to miss out on strengthening their own brand awareness on social media.

## Making sense of the social media jungle

Social media can generally be divided into three categories:



### 1. General social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Their broad user spectrum and high membership numbers make these networks particularly well suited to contacting (potential) customers and applicants, and to raising a company's brand awareness.

### 2. Professional social networks such as Xing or LinkedIn

In general social networks, people communicate about everything and everyone; professional social networks, however, are primarily used for professional purposes. Both Xing and LinkedIn offer companies the opportunity to present themselves in a professional environment, attract new employees, post job advertisements and participate in professional discussions.

### 3. Social media platforms such as YouTube and Pinterest

Compared to the networks in the other two categories, social media platforms are less preoccupied with networking or communicating, even if this is also possible in principle. YouTube and Pinterest are about creating and sharing

your own content and rating that of other users.

binder has recognised the signs of the times

Whether B2B or B2C – in the age of digitalisation, there is no way around social networks. binder has also long been aware of the potential offered by the Internet and has been leveraging it for several years. An ever-increasing number of different platforms have been launched in recent years and the company's presence on social media is being expanded constantly. In December 2020, for example, binder also joined Instagram, which is now the most powerful social network.

Given the current situation, we have to do without face-to-face meetings, visits to trade fairs and company events. Trade fairs are our most important way of communicating directly with customers. The needs of our target group have changed, especially during the pandemic, and have shifted further into the digital realm. The coronavirus pandemic has led to a real boom in social networks. This makes it all the more important to use digital channels to offer an alternative and added value.

On both the general and professional social networks, we provide insights into the company's everyday life, information about products, reports on current events and keep our followers up to date. In the future, it will also be impossible to imagine a marketing strategy without social media, especially in terms of international reach. It's worth giving it a 'like'. ■

### About the authors



**Anita Hartwig** (Category Leader Employer Branding, with binder since 2016) and **Evelin Minz** (Marketing Communication Apprentice, with binder since 2019) both work in marketing, where they are responsible for binder's social media channels, among other things.



# Pure identification

In 2008, binder USA moved into a new building with its own manufacturing facility. Eric Shiver, Production Manager of binder USA, has been part of the binder family for the past 13 years. He set the foundation for binder USA's growth over the following years by setting up the manufacturing facility. Eric Shiver is looking back on a fantastic journey with binder which is far from over yet. In the following interview, he talks about the steady growth despite the pandemic, manufacturing challenges and overall goals for the US subsidiary.

**Interview** The Editorial team



**Mr Shiver, you have been with binder USA since 2008. What do you enjoy about your job as a production manager and what makes it so special to work for the company?**

binder USA has been at different stages of growth. Being part of the growth and contributing to the overall development of the firm has made it very special to work for the company. When I first came to binder USA, we started with an empty facility. From my processing engineering production background, it was like a dream come true to have the operational freedom and financial resources of setting up the production process in an empty building. The support and the resources I got from Germany were amazing.

**What is motivating you to come to work every day?**

I still wake up in the middle of the night thinking about improvements and challenges. I enjoy the manufacturing game, hustle and daily challenges of hitting manufacturing numbers and increasing efficiency. Seeing my manufacturing decisions come to fruition is very motivating.

**What was your personal highlight throughout your journey?**

Every progressive milestone along the way has been a personal highlight. Jon Mangelssen, Production Supervisor of binder USA, and I set up the manufacturing facility with only two moulding machines while we were still waiting for



A section of the production hall of binder USA

tools to arrive from Germany. By August of 2010, we realised that we needed a second shift to keep up with the demand. This was a highlight since it made me realise how much the company has grown. We started with two machines initially and now we already are at six, with possibly two more coming in 2021.

**Looking back on 2020, it has been a difficult year for many businesses. How was binder USA impacted by the global coronavirus crisis?**

We exceeded our eight per cent growth forecast for 2020 and did almost \$1 million more in sales than expected. A main reason of binder USA's success

despite the pandemic in 2020 was the strategy of cutting costs where we could and keeping important inventory levels up. When the economy started to reopen, we were in a strong position and it paid off. This has been a constant effort by management and production. The people make the key difference since we have a very dynamic management and a great manufacturing team.

**How has the growth from 2020 going into 2021 been for the manufacturing of binder USA?**

There was a steadily growing demand from 2020 going into 2021. Currently, through April we have a backlog of \$1.5

million just in cables without distribution sales. Another sign of the manufacturing growth is the increasing number of employees. In 2021, we have already added eight new binder employees to the team. Currently, there are 96 employees working in three shifts including 46 binder workers and 50 guest workers.

**An increase in demand means a higher manufacturing volume is required. Are there any challenges coming with an increasing demand?**

Running three shifts requires great communication. The production employees play a key role and they are very ►

dedicated to hit the production numbers while keeping the quality high. Personally, I think it is very important to clearly communicate problems and keep everyone involved. Another important factor is to structure the workflow and make sure that all production areas for the next process operations are working to capacity to keep efficiency high.

**Are there any new manufacturing projects planned for 2021?**

Currently, we are in the process of rearranging the production floor. We recognised our bottlenecks were the test-and packaging station. This is why we are putting another test-and packaging station on the line as well as adding another crimping machine. Consequently, we have to rearrange the production floor to get a better workflow. For 2021, our goal is to increase overall production by 30 per cent.

**What are the production goals of binder USA and can you give us an outlook for the rest of the year regarding manufacturing?**

The short-term goal was to increase production to 15,000 cables a week by the end of February. We already beat that

number in January. The new goal is to hit 18,000 cables a week. Here, it is important to hit these numbers without using overtime. Our long-term goal is to increase the overall production by 30 per cent throughout the year. The implementation of the new test-and packaging station should help to increase our production capabilities. Generally, we plan to expand on the distribution cables and distribution sales. This is where our growth in sales will come from in the long term. ■



**‘For 2021, our goal is to increase overall production by 30 per cent.’**

**‘A good logo is memorable and distinctive; it evokes an attitude to life and everyone recognises it.’**

BrandBook





From left to right: Anna Sedström, Peter Sedström, Lars Andersson, Juan Törnbrand

## binder Sweden's grand jubilar 🇸🇪

This year marks a decade on the Swedish market and it is fantastic that we can celebrate that achievement. It goes without saying that we are incredibly proud of how far we have come, how the journey has unfolded and we are now looking forward to the next ten years with great excitement.

**Text** The binder Sweden team

## GLOBAL

To mark our ten-year anniversary, we wanted to take this opportunity to give you a glimpse into the world of binder Sweden – from how we were founded, to who we are, through to the challenges we face today.

### The past

Former binder salesman Bertil Elgestadt, who worked at EG Electronics, was the gentleman who first introduced binder connectors to the Swedish market. When his contract with EG Electronics came to an end, binder Neckarsulm was concerned about how EG Electronics would continue its work and remain committed to binder. So, he decided to establish binder in Sweden. A huge thanks has to go to Goran Uremovic for encouraging Peter Sedström to climb aboard the binder Sweden train and set off for the future. "Has it been ten years already?" he asks. "It feels like it started yesterday!" For the first few months, it was just us and the computer, but before long we had rented a spacious office with a warehouse and the first shipment of binder products landed from Neckarsulm – and with the first order, from the former distributor, binder Sweden was officially started. After a two day 'company' course

at binder UK, during which we received some excellent advice from David Philips, nothing could go wrong.

### The growth

Björn Jansson was the first salesman to join the company, who has since left. Shortly after, Anna Sedström started working at binder as "the brain of binder Sweden" (as Goran so wonderfully put it), taking care of all of the administrative work so her brother Peter, and Björn could concentrate on sales. The next step on the path to growth was to hire a warehouse worker – Juan Törnbrand – and when Björn left the company, we hired Lars Andersson to join the sales team, and he is still with us today. From one employee to four, from €1.3 million to €3 million, from a handful of projects to countless ones. From one customer to 200 customers. binder Sweden's growth is sustainable, and we are lucky to have started out in a big office space so that we still have some room to spare for future expansions.

### The present

Countries in the Nordic region – which consists of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland – are very different in terms of business and climate.

Norway has a military electronics and medical industry as well as with lots of offshore platforms for the oil industry and activities in the fishing industry. Most electronics for non-military industries are produced in the Baltic states nowadays. We have two distributors in Norway – T&G and Etm4U. Norway has the most electric cars per capita and over half of all cars sold there are electric. Even though Sweden is an expensive country, prices in Norway are even more expensive, so Norwegians like to visit Sweden to go shopping.

Finland is the land of a thousand lakes and the home of Nokia and the Moomins. The country has also handled the Covid-19 pandemic with great success, boasting some of the lowest figures in the EU. In Finland, we have ETRA Electronics as partner. Industry wise, electronics and forest machinery are strong in Finland. Chemical plants and ship- ▶



builders are also prospering in a young country, which is only 100 years old.

Denmark consists of several islands. Most of the industry is based in the western part in Jutland. Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark is on the eastern island called Zealand. The industry focuses mostly on renewable energy with companies like Vestas and there is a large food industry. We have two distributors in Denmark – Mikkelsen and ACTE.

Sweden is the largest country in the Nordic region and has the highest population. Sweden has been an engineering/ in-design country with production elsewhere for a couple of decades. However, we are active in the electronics and heavy industries thanks to the mining and steel production operations in the northern part of Sweden. For instance, our biggest customers are Atlas Copco, which provides electronic assembly tools for the global automotive industry, and Epiroc, which manufactures underground mining machines. Engineering skills that are second to none and cutting-edge technologies such as starting up the world's first fossil-free steelmaking plant HYBRIT (Hydrogen Breakthrough Ironmaking Technology), as well

as a sustainable production battery plant in the northern part of Sweden – Swedish business culture is largely based on consensus meaning it can take time until everything has been agreed.

#### The binder Sweden team

*Peter Sedström:* Peter is a technical salesman who loves nothing more than signing a new business contract, no matter the size. The diversity and scale of our day-to-day work that comes from all of the different tasks we have to deal with is something he appreciates greatly – not to mention the pleasure of being the MD of the best binder Sweden team!

*Anna Sedström:* Seeing as Anna has a master's degree in chemical engineering, it was a strange step for her to start working with purchasing, logistics and administration. But it's one that she's glad she took, and later this year Anna will be celebrating her ten-year anniversary of working at binder Sweden.

*Lars Andersson:* Lars started at binder Sweden in May 2015 and has a strong focus on technical sales. He is delighted to be part of the binder Sweden team and working closely with the customer during the

in-design process. He also loves nothing more than seeing the direct result of actions and making progress towards the end product.

*Juan Törnbrand:* Juan has recently become a father and we will miss him when he goes on his parental leave later this year. Juan has been with binder Sweden for about eight years.

#### Mastering challenges together

A recent challenge for binder Sweden was the implementation of SAP Business ByDesign last year. The ERP we had been using before was a simpler program, so that meant we needed a lot of extra training. But thanks to the wonderful support from Jürgen Lauth and Maru Neubig, we have cleared all hurdles and are now comfortable with the system.

If a customer has an urgent request and we do not have what they need in stock, we always check with Neckarsulm, but if the delivery time is a bit too long and we do not want to lose the sale, we know that we always have our affiliates to turn to. We have helped each other out of several tight spots over the years, and that is always appreciated, so thank you colleagues!

#### A grateful thought to all

We would like to say a massive thank you to each and every single one of our colleagues, wherever you are in the world, for being involved in supporting binder Sweden in one way or another and we would like to extend an extra special thanks to Sabine Schwandtner, Sylvie Hägele, Christina Taube and Goran Uremovic, who have helped us out many times over the years – once more, thank you all! ■

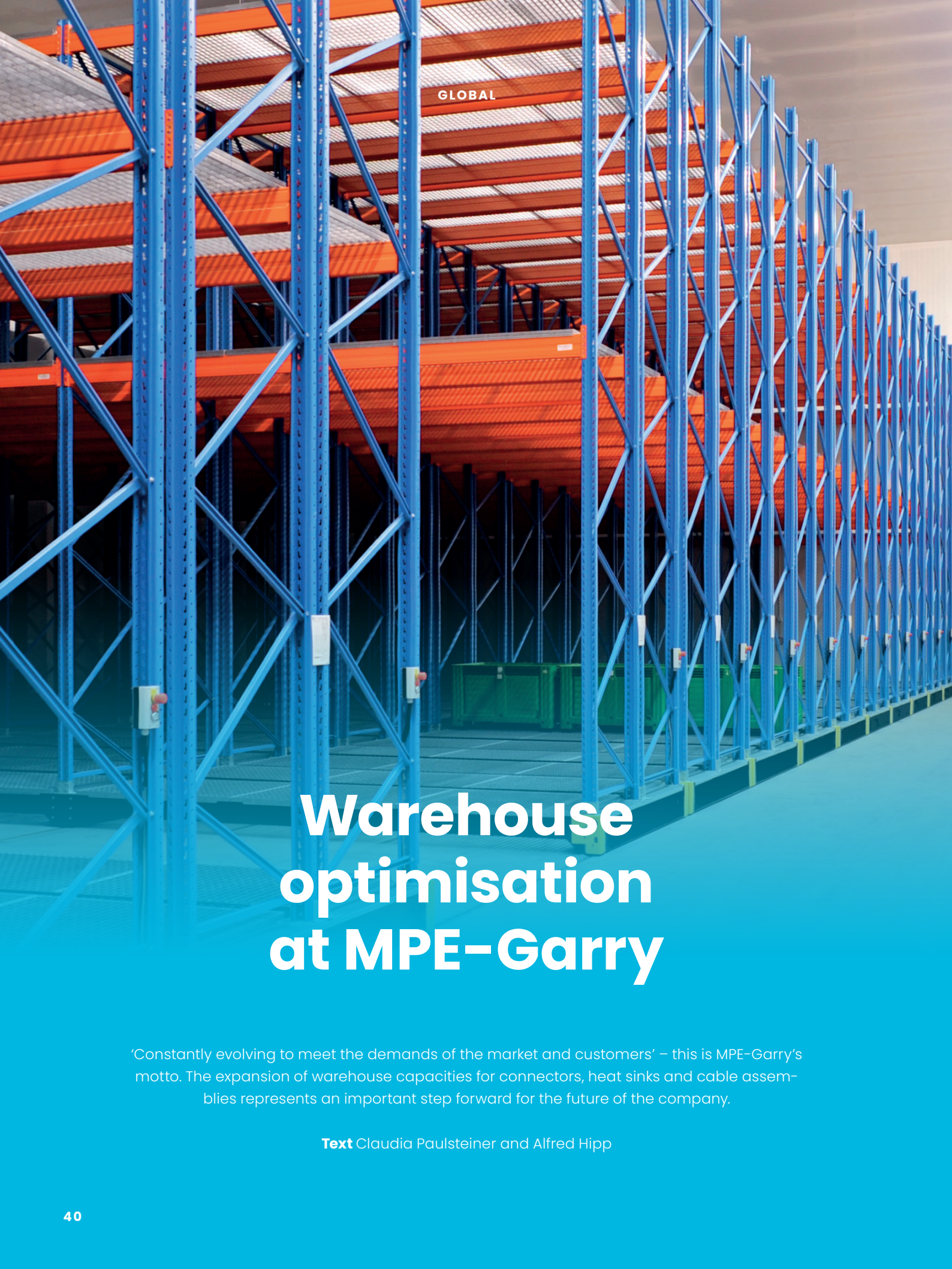


# Tack så mycket för ordet!

## Thank you for speaking with us!

# 100





# Warehouse optimisation at MPE-Garry

‘Constantly evolving to meet the demands of the market and customers’ – this is MPE-Garry’s motto. The expansion of warehouse capacities for connectors, heat sinks and cable assemblies represents an important step forward for the future of the company.

**Text** Claudia Paulsteiner and Alfred Hipp

Higher, faster, further: the turnover rate in the MPE-Garry warehouse has increased rapidly in recent years. So it is high time that capacity is also significantly increased. To achieve this ambitious goal, a combined solution was chosen, the components of which had already been tried and tested. A total of three new lean lifts and one storage lift were purchased; all of these systems had already been used previously to store stamping tools and stamped parts.

## Precise planning

The particular challenge was that the lean lifts were delivered before the strip foundations needed to install them were in place. Precise planning ensured that everything went smoothly – even though incoming goods and dispatch continued to run in parallel. MPE-Garry’s many years of project management and construction experience, which customers have always appreciated about the company, also pays off when it comes to internal projects.

Yet the question remained: where to put the extra pallets? A specialist for stow storage systems had the right solution for this with its mobile shel-



The newly acquired lean lifts at MPE-Garry

ving systems. This runs over guide rails cast firmly into the foundation and offers storage space for an additional 320 pallets. With the help of a new, semi-automatic film stretch machine, the pallets are now also protected from dirt and moisture.

## Perfect result

Increasing storage capacity wasn’t the only goal. New LED lighting systems were also purchased to optimise the process as a whole. Now, two employees can pick and pack goods at the same time in perfect lighting conditions. The result was that every challenge, including relocating the strip lighting, supply lines and fire alarms, was overcome within a short period of time. The result is impressive, as

MPE-Garry now works even more ergonomically and efficiently thanks to an increase in storage space of around 40 per cent. ■



## About the authors

**Alfred Hipp** is a Commercial Manager (K-L) and authorised signatory at MPE-Garry. He has been with the company since 1985. **Claudia Paulsteiner**, who joined MPE-Garry in January 2020, is Head of the Production Logistics Warehouse (PL-L) department.



# Success with EFQM



The EFQM model was developed in 1988 by the European Foundation for Quality Management and is considered a successful model among quality management systems. The key to this corporate model is a company analysing its own strengths and weaknesses in detail within the framework of evaluations to uncover areas that have the potential for improvement.

**Text** Rozália Felföldi

At binder cable assemblies, all production processes are standardised according to an international set of rules. This means that we have very high quality expectations of our production. There is an integrated control system that covers every company process to meet this demand on a daily basis. Thanks to EFQM, we can now apply another model to check every process from a management perspective, too. We in strategic management decided to evaluate our wishes, goals and expectations and to carry out a precise process analysis.

## Transparent

It's not exactly easy to take an unsparing look in the mirror, but we have taken up this challenge. Our project team joined the other companies in the Excellence Initiative. A total of twelve participants successfully completed the assessment training. Our first project goal was to establish a permanent, online performance measurement followed by a feedback session. The production targets were recorded in exact figures per shift using transparent daily totals. A uniform database was created using real production times to make recording and eliminating production

losses in the affected areas a swift process. This made it possible to redefine the production steps. Freely following the motto 'Give insight to gain insight', all of the members of the production team were able to take a look at the performance figures, analyse them and draw conclusions from them so they can take action themselves.

## Outstanding

Another objective of the project was to introduce a new logistics system in the supply area. Precisely recording times and using exact calculations for every production step should guide the restructuring. The



Logistics employee Zoltán Horváth with the logistics train at binder cable assemblies

review and redesign of the process layout should take place based on a Kanban supply with two-hour cycles, with the aim of creating free space for new projects. The project results were remarkable. Thanks to the new infrastructure, our employees can increase logistical production capacity by up to 50 per cent. Furthermore, 155 m<sup>2</sup> of additional open space was gained, 14 m<sup>2</sup> of which is already being used for a new project. Since work processes in a manufacturing company such as ours are always designed to last, we constantly strive to keep developing. Our

goal is to continuously achieve excellent results. Every employee is now involved in the optimisation process. This includes both the processes that have already been optimised and those that were picked up during the evaluation but could not yet be addressed. The binder cable assemblies team is delighted to have been awarded the 'EFQM Committed to Excellence C2E' certificate in 2020. ■

## About the author

**Rozália Felföldi**, who has been with the company since September 2000, is Head of Human Resources at binder cable assemblies.



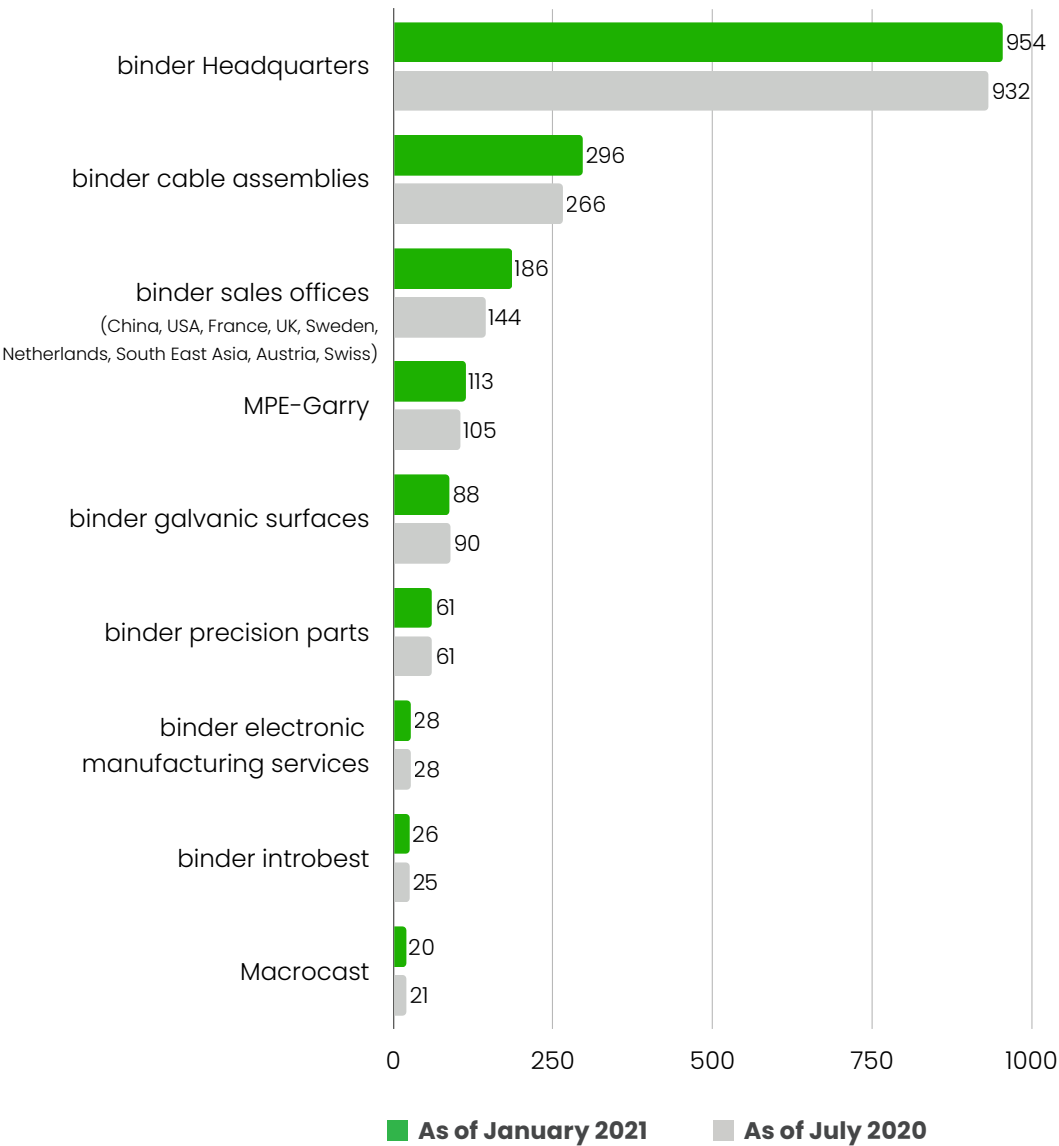


First global brand  
campaign **M16 Family**



# binder in figures

Staff deployment within the binder group



As of **1 Januar 2021**, the binder group employed **1,772 members of staff**.  
On **1 Juli 2020** – six months earlier – it employed **1,672 members of staff**.

## binder on Instagram



## A warm thank you to everyone who has written articles for this issue!

It is only through you that a magazine can come into being, only through you that ideas are generated, only through you that the verbinder comes to life. Feel like writing something? Then please send in your idea for an article – the moment one issue of the verbinder is finished, it's time to start the next one!

### The Editorial team

**Evidence** | **abcmedien GmbH** Illustrations from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com) p. 10, p. 24, p. 28, p. 30, p. 32, p. 34, p. 36, p. 39, p.42, p. 43; Graphic p. 30 | **Franz Binder GmbH & Co. Elektrische Bauelemente KG** Photos p. 6, p. 7, p. 8, p. 9, p. 12, p. 16, p. 18, p. 20, p. 21, p. 22, p. 23, p. 25, p. 28, p. 31, p. 32, p. 33, p. 36, p. 40, p. 41, p. 43 | **Steffen Walter Studios** Photo p. 3

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