

A FOUNDRY HISTORY

ZIRL GUSS, situated in Graz, looks back on more than 100 years of history. DDI (Master of Engineering and Economics) Hans Zirl, direct descendant of Martin Luther, has led the company into the modern world with a worldwide network of partners.

German Text by Werner Ringhofer

Being on the road in e.g. Austria, you will have a high chance to get in physical contact with a piece of "Zirl". Just take a look on the street – you will probably find the name ZIRL stamped on the next manhole cover.

After World War I the first Zirl, Ing. Johann Zirl, joined a foundry at Karlauer Gürtel 29 in Graz, established 1889, and thus created the family-owned company, which has been existing now for three generations. In 1921 a new foundry was built in Graz, Alte Poststraße 391. Craftsmanship and entrepreneurship have a long tradition in the family, and in the long line of ancestors there were tinsmiths and porcelain



LONG TRADITION. ZIRL GUSS with more 100 years of history to look back on.

manufacturers. One man in the family's history, however, was particularly outstanding: the Protestant reformer Martin Luther. DDI Hans Zirl, the current CEO and owner of ZIRL GUSS, is his direct descendant in the thirteenth generation.

After having studied at the University for Mining, Metallurgy and Materials in Leoben/Austria and economics at the University of Munich, he joined the company as a trained foundry specialist. He modernized the company by introducing the electrofusion process and largely converted the production to steel casting. However, Hans Zirl recognized the signs of the changing times when, in 1989/1990, the competition from the formerly communist neighbouring countries became keener and keener. In 1992 he closed his own production. Now he supplies his customers with high-quality castings, which he orders worldwide. "I am a bridge builder. On one side is the manufacturer, on the other the customer – I am in between with my expertise."

For many years, Hans Zirl has established an extensive international network of foundries throughout Europe, including Turkey as well as India and China.

The company's philosophy is based on two key elements: 1st the customer and 2nd the product: **If you take care of your customers, they will come back, if you take care of your products, they will not come back.**

Hans Zirl relies on values which today are more important than ever:



RELIABLE. Barbara Moder and Barbara Hojas, Officemanagement



SUCCESSFUL COURSE. DDI Hans Zirl, founder of ZIRL GUSS and procurator Mag. Eva Tarjan.

reliability, handshake quality and continuity. A crucial question always marks the beginning of a business relation: “Are you sure that your product is technically and economically mature?” If not, ZIRL GUSS provides an alternative that may be cheaper or technically improved. “We are providing a solution for your problem.”

In addition to all expertise, one thing is crucial to Hans Zirl: client relationship. “Conversation is very important for me. If required, we are immediately present.” Only in November, Hans Zirl travelled to his suppliers in China, accompanied by Eva Tarjan, his charming partner and authorized procurator.

As with their clients, Hans Zirl and his team also maintain long-term partnerships with their suppliers. This ensures a constant exchange of know-how.

ZIRL GUSS also personally checks the supplier’s facilities and conducts quality management in order to grant the best quality. This benefits customers in many different sectors, e.g. automotive-, mechanical- and component engineering, power generation and the steel industry. Product examples include rope pulleys for elevators or shifters for the automotive industry.

It is very important for Hans Zirl to keep the company future-fit for the 21st century and for the next

generation. Nephew Philip is eagerly studying commercial law in Vienna.

Business meets culture: ZIRL GUSS also acts according to this principle. As president of the Lions Club Graz Hans Zirl initiated a charity event with opera singer Herwig Pecoraro and his son Mario.

The young Kenyan actress Mercy Otieno is also supported by Hans Zirl. She was the first dark-skinned actress to successfully graduate the Reinhardt- Seminar.

“The company is doing well,” explains Hans Zirl, “That’s why I feel the obligation to provide in return a contribution to the society.”