

Career builder voestalpine moves forward with a new management generation heading its four divisions

The technology and capital goods Group voestalpine invests EUR 50 million each year in training and continuing education for its approximately 47,000 employees. A significant part of this amount is invested in its management team. Seven of the ten positions on the Boards of the four divisions—Steel, Special Steel, Metal Engineering, and Metal Forming—were most recently filled by new candidates or will be filled by new candidates in the near future. Together with the existing divisional Board members, Robert Bauer and Reinhard Nöbauer (Special Steel Division) and Helmut Punz (Metal Forming Division), the new candidates, Peter Bernscher, Wolfgang Mitterdorfer, Hubert Possegger, Markus Potzinger, Martin Reisetbauer, Pauline Seidermann, and Hubert Zajicek, will constitute the second management level of the Group. There are big plans for the five-year tenure of the Management Board of voestalpine AG that begins on April 1—continuing under the leadership of CEO Wolfgang Eder.

Highly qualified employees have always been the crucial component that has guaranteed the success of the voestalpine Group. The trainee programs and the international high mobility pool, project-related international assignments, and job rotations provide a host of career opportunities worldwide. What provides the basis for careers in management, however, is the “value:program,” a four-phase internal leadership training course, which has already prepared 600 participants for their further career advancement. With an average employee age of 41, voestalpine is a “young” corporation for the industrial sector and has no recruitment problems. In 2013, it was chosen from among 520 employers as Austria’s best recruiter. The last business year saw a ratio of 35,000 job applications for 1,342 job listings.

New Board members: broad-based management knowledge for future challenges

The three new members of the Board of the voestalpine Steel Division, the largest division with revenue of EUR 3.9 billion and headquarters in Linz, possess extensive international management experience.

Wolfgang Mitterdorfer (43), Board member for Sales beginning on June 1, began his career in the company in 1996 as a sales trainee. Subsequently, he held positions as managing director in Austria, Denmark, and Great Britain. Most recently, as Automotive Sales Manager, he substantially expanded the market share in the European automobile industry. “I was given the opportunity from the very beginning to take on responsibility in the Group and create change,” says Mitterdorfer.

Pauline Seidermann (47), the future CFO of the Steel Division, is the first woman in the Group to hold a divisional management position. After completing her university degree in 1991, she chose voestalpine and from 2003 on held executive positions in Finance and Corporate Accounting. As head of Finance and Controlling, Seidermann most recently very successfully spearheaded “Future,” the earnings improvement program. “After more than 20 years in the voestalpine Group, I identify very strongly with the company and can actively advance the development of the division in my new position,” Seidermann states.

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“We want to consistently continue to implement voestalpine’s successful strategy by way of innovation and specialization,” says Hubert Zajicek (45), who will be responsible for Technology on the Steel Division’s Board in the future. He began his career in 1993 as engineer for mechanics in the Group, later played a significant role in the successful realization of the major investment program “Linz 2010,” and then in the following years, rose to the position of head of the corporate area Technical Services and Energy. Since 2010, he has headed the sector cold rolling mills and processing and refining operations.

On the path to being a global player

The consistent internationalization strategy of voestalpine highlights the qualifications of the new leadership team.

Peter Bernscher (45) heads Sales, Marketing, and Procurement on the Board of the Metal Forming Division, which is headquartered in Krems, and is also responsible for the Automotive Body Parts business unit. Just a few years after he began at voestalpine in 1986, management responsibilities followed in Italy and Austria. From 2007 to 2012, Mr. Bernscher was entrusted with the repositioning of the voestalpine Polynorm Group in the Netherlands, a task that he fulfilled very successfully. “We are pursuing a comprehensive globalization strategy in the automotive sector and are currently investing more than EUR 100 million worldwide in new sites,” Bernscher explains.

Markus Potzinger (42), the new CFO of the Special Steel Division, which is headquartered in Vienna, has broad-based international experience. After attaining his degree in business administration, Potzinger worked for seven years for the Magna International Group in various positions and locations, including Mexico and the USA. The Graz native lived in Shanghai during the last three years, where he was CFO of the largest plant of the AT&S Group. “I would especially like to implement my international experience to the best of my ability in the area of cost optimization and lean management at voestalpine,” he says, explaining his core objective.

The new members of the Board of the voestalpine Metal Engineering Division in Leoben/Donawitz, Martin Reisetbauer (47) and Hubert Possegger (56), both have their professional roots at voestalpine AG. While Reisetbauer will be primarily responsible for Finance, Controlling, and IT as the division’s CFO, Possegger will be taking on Legal and Compliance as well as M&A in the currently most successful division at voestalpine. “Sharing responsibility for railway infrastructure, wire, seamless tubes, and welding technology and 10,400 employees worldwide at a company that is a global player is an exciting and challenging task,” says Reisetbauer, who began at voestalpine in 1990 and, after being in management positions in finance, was CFO for the previous Automotive Division.

Hubert Possegger, whose personal career highlight thus far has been the coordination of the successful Böhler-Uddeholm takeover in 2007, began in 1981 in the Legal Department of the “old” VOEST-ALPINE AG; since 1994, he has headed Legal and Investments for the Group and since 2009, the Group’s Audit Department. He enjoys the reputation of a recognized expert for global M&A projects that extends beyond the voestalpine Group. “I am looking forward to undertaking responsibility for operations in such a future-oriented area as the Metal Engineering Division,” says the new Board member.

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The voestalpine Group

The voestalpine Group is a steel-based technology and capital goods group that operates worldwide. With around 500 Group companies and locations in more than 50 countries and on all five continents, the Group has been listed on the Vienna Stock Exchange since 1995. With its top-quality products, the Group is one of the leading partners to the automotive and consumer goods industries in Europe and to the oil and gas industries worldwide. The voestalpine Group is also the world market leader in turnout technology, special rails, tool steel, and special sections. In the business year 2012/13, the voestalpine Group reported revenue of EUR 11.5 billion and an operating result (EBITDA) of EUR 1.45 billion; it had around 46,400 employees worldwide.

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