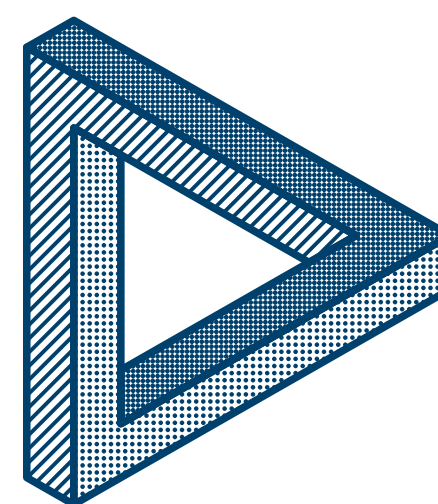
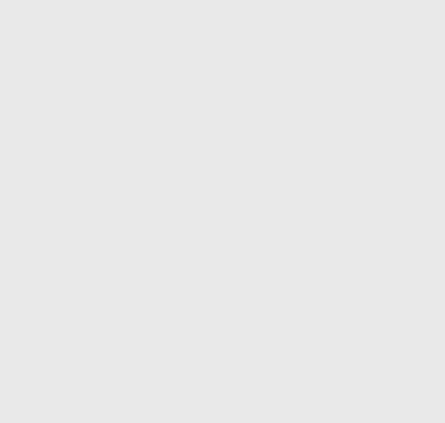


**hagergroup**



# **Powering up with education**

**Hager Group  
Annual Report 2022/23**



**“Only those  
who know the past  
have a future.”**

Wilhelm von Humboldt



**I have always believed** in Wilhelm von Humboldt's famous quote: "Only those who know the past have a future." The Prussian philosopher and linguist was a student in his early twenties at the time of the French Revolution.

This pivotal moment in history inspired his life's work, which resulted in an educational concept that remains the foundation of education in Germany. In the end, Humboldt helped shape an era of great enlightenment.

Like Humboldt, I strongly believe that education is essential if we want to be the masters of our own future in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Perhaps we even need a new educational revolution.

The modern era is fraught with challenges, from demographic changes, migration and climate change to political upheaval, global tensions and even a war on European soil. At times, we allow these challenges to overshadow major opportunities and future solutions.

New technologies and digitalisation offer unimagined possibilities for a future that is electric. Our industry is just one of many that is experiencing a technological revolution. I believe this revolution will change the world for the better.

We must seize the opportunities to shape the electrical world of tomorrow together with other courageous people. That aim could be greatly facilitated by ever-closer interaction between universities, businesses and society as a whole. Together, we can be stronger and more agile.

Today's graduates are building our future globalised world – whether they are developers, technicians, architects or electricians. We need their expertise and creative power to shape our future. Our success hinges upon finding outstanding talents

in the wider field of engineering, yet never before have there been so many vacancies for electricians and other specialised talents in our field. The fight for talented employees is in full swing.

At Hager Group, we have always been serious about education. Our people and our industry have a responsibility to train and lead the way for new developments.

This year's Annual Report focuses on the people and educational systems in place that are making these changes happen despite the strong competition for talent and financial flexibility. The following chapters show the direction we are taking, our initiatives for lifelong learning, and how we are shaping the electrical world of tomorrow.

Our sixty plus years of experience stand us in good stead. We know who we are and where we are going. Following Humboldt's example, I believe we have everything at our fingertips to create a bright future. We just need to make it happen.

I hope you enjoy reading our latest Annual Report.



Daniel Hager

**Daniel Hager**  
CEO Hager Group

**“Education is  
fundamental  
to mastering  
our future.”**

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Interview with Daniel Hager

# Confessions of a life-long learner

To kick off our Annual Report and learn more about powering up with education, we spoke with Chief Executive Officer and life-long learner Daniel Hager.

**Daniel, you are quoted as saying: “Training has made Hager Group great.” What did you mean by that?**

In addition to the many different training initiatives for our employees so they can do a better job and grow as professionals, our success is built on our interaction with customers and training we have offered from our very beginnings. From day one, we have acted as a partner to the electrical industry, working with all stakeholders to develop solutions to new challenges, introduce installers to new technologies, and enable them to successfully apply new norms and standards in their everyday work. It has never been a one-way street. Input from contractors in the field and the trade has been instrumental to our own product development.

**Was this just a business strategy for Germany?**

This strategy was key to our international growth. We have followed an identical path internationally – everywhere we went – even on the other side of the world in Australia. What set us apart from the competition was the unparalleled expertise paired with the grassroots connection that we offer the industry. For instance, the focus in the 80s was on the incorporation of electronics in distribution boards, while in recent years electric mobility, digitisation and energy management have been at the forefront.

**Hager Group goes on the offensive when it comes to training. Is that the result of a skills shortage?**

Yes and no. As I pointed out, Hager Group has always been committed to training. Particularly in the early days, it was difficult to recruit people with the specific skills required. In fact, many employees came to us without any training at all. Basic training, supplemental training and continuing education have therefore been a top priority at Hager Group. The setting up of our own corporate university “Hi!” was a masterpiece in this development. Furthermore, we partner with

Daniel Hager, Chief Executive Officer, shares his conviction about the importance of life-long learning.



universities, such as the University of Applied Sciences “htw saar” or the “EM” Management University (Ecole de Management) in Strasbourg. We also have such a strong commitment to dual study programmes. We transferred the know-how of this system to France by founding the Tooling School in Obernai.

**Which is indeed a very unique and specialised programme, is it not?**

Yes, we believe that toolmaking expertise is the key to long-term success in the procurement, application, maintenance and care of tools. There is little demand for toolmaking apprenticeships these days since most tools are manufactured in

the far east. Yet, the skills of toolmaking are still needed, especially for the manufacturing business we are in. We therefore provide this training to colleagues with an interest in the subject. In general, colleagues in this programme have already been with us for many years and have completed training in different areas. Our Tooling School has been so successful that we have opened it up to other companies with similar needs in the Obernai region. This is just one of the many initiatives we have taken to sustain our expertise.





**Technical advancement is accelerating, apprenticeships are changing and new skills are required. How can we develop these?**

Lifelong learning is the answer. What this means, first and foremost, is continuing to develop our expertise along with technical progress. Keeping our skills relevant also improves job security. It's becoming increasingly common for employees to learn things they had never encountered before during their apprenticeship or studies. Today, we must continuously acquire new skills and understand the application of technologies; lately understanding and working with artificial intelligence to leverage its potential.

**Would you say that personal development plays a similarly important role to professional development in lifelong learning?**

Definitely. It's not just about refreshing your skills; it's about developing them. And that is not an end in itself. As my father and uncle used to say: "Training and education are tools of freedom. With knowledge and skills you can provide for yourself and your family. You become a free agent." Free people can improve their professional and private circumstances and change the community around them for the better. This is the key to a free society.

**Freedom in the sense of personal responsibility is not a popular notion at the moment, is it?**

Following great economic success in recent years based on liberal ideas, the pendulum now seems to have swung too far in the opposite direction. During the pandemic, the state attempted to exercise control and restrictions; an infringement on people's everyday lives. The state, and not always with good intentions in mind, has leaned towards taking the power to decide away from the individual and the actual problems. As a consequence, it has also taken away the ability to act with common sense. It could seem comfortable at first when others make decisions, having to decide for yourself is often uncomfortable. In my opinion, this is dangerous and a costly mistake. My hope is that people will once again start to see that the problems of our time cannot and should not be fixed solely by the state and yet more laws and regulations. It is trust in individuals who are free and who have the knowledge that will come up with the right solutions.

**Daniel Hager**  
**CEO Hager Group**

**“Training and education are symbols of freedom. With the right tools, you can provide for yourself and your family.”**

**Are we victims of our own success?**

Yes, and it's not that easy. With the economic boom of the last 20 years, adverse developments are inevitable. High energy costs, high taxation, a growing bureaucracy and high social security contributions do not make us particularly competitive. The dream of becoming a civil servant is highly developed in Europe. Yet we are lacking entrepreneurs. We have let the situation deteriorate, like our infrastructure or our savviness for new technologies. Reforms and new approaches are urgently required to overcome the challenges of the current decade. There is no doubt in my mind that training plays a central role in our recovery in the medium term.

**You run an international company and have a lot of international experience. Is there anything Germany can learn from international experience, particularly for education?**

We should always try to learn from one another. The German education system has many strengths. Our dual vocational education system is rightfully the envy of the world. The diversity of training is also a strength. Yet our weaknesses in school maths and physics needs to be addressed. It is simply unacceptable that we are failing to spark more enthusiasm for science, technology, engineering and maths – the STEM subjects. Besides significantly improving the range of courses in some subjects, shouldn't we raise the bar in many areas? Why are we not challenging our youngsters more and going for the smallest common denominator? Perhaps we

I always looked for and found people to talk to who were able to give honest feedback. Not everyone feels comfortable giving the boss honest feedback. I am grateful to those who did not hold back.



need to take a closer look at what other countries are doing. Why is France so far ahead of us in STEM subjects and in enthusiasm for technology in particular? How does the Netherlands differentiate students very early in schools and offer them future professional perspectives?

**What is your personal experience of lifelong learning in your professional life?**

**What were the positives and what would you have done differently in hindsight?**

In hindsight, I would have liked more work experience outside Hager Group. After finishing my studies, I spent three years at other companies and became CEO at the age of 35. More time at other companies would have probably prepared me better for my role as CEO. Experience makes all the difference, especially in management. What I was lacking had to be compensated for. I was fortunate to have found the support of a great many experienced colleagues.

**What were your positive experiences?**

Well, I always looked for and found people to talk to who were able to give me honest feedback. Not everyone feels comfortable giving the boss honest feedback. I am grateful to those who did not hold back. My wife also played an important role in this regard. I challenged myself and worked with coaches on many occasions, too. I have no doubt that development is about questioning yourself more than anything else. It's important to reflect on your experiences. This is key and contributes to the learning process. That's why I also think so highly of peer learning. Interacting with colleagues at the same level, even from other companies can give valuable insights.

**What then are important sources of learning for you?**

The best way to learn is from failure – when it is dealt with openly and with a willingness to learn. Surrounding yourself with people who are better than you is also extremely valuable. Progress happens with the help of someone who is ahead of you. This requires confidence and the ability to be honest with yourself. It is something you should always bear in mind when choosing your team. You certainly don't need a room full of carbon copies of yourself. Top management can also grow with the right mix: bringing in people from outside the organisation, as well as by developing people from within the company.

**The need for action on education is about to become more pressing because of the shortage of skilled workers we are facing due to shifting demographics.**

We are countering this with a wealth of new initiatives, including: increasing our dual study offerings; plans for the structured transfer of knowledge; the involvement of experienced colleagues even after retirement; and much more. We will need to get even more creative in the future. I am extremely optimistic in this regard. I believe training and ongoing education are genuinely part of our Hager Group DNA.

**What advice do you have for your colleagues at Hager Group on the subject of lifelong learning?**

If we recognise that lessons are learned from the experiences that we acquire when we leave our comfort zone, then all that remains to be said is: welcome every opportunity to learn, step out of your comfort zone, believe in yourself and be brave. If you do this, development and continued professional success will follow almost automatically.

**Thank you for talking to us.**

**Daniel Hager**  
**CEO Hager Group**

**“The best way to learn is from failure – when it is dealt with openly and with a willingness to learn.”**





# Powering up with education

**Traditionally, a good education is meant to improve your opportunities in life when you're young, but it can also serve as a catalyst for change at any stage in life.**

Hager Group has always been driven by the conviction that education is important for everyone and the best way to create a good future for our business. Right from the start, we set values and priorities that reflected that and became a part of our company DNA.

As a family-run business, our past, present and future all contribute to who we are. The past offers us counsel and advice, which is what the founders of the company had in mind for future generations when they wrote their treatise about being an entrepreneur in 1977. Even then, the value of education and training was apparent.

Today we are more proactive, we stay up to date with upskilling, reskilling and cross-skilling. We understand the challenges in today's working world. One of them being a lack of skilled workers. Conscious of what's at stake, the value of learning and further development for our employees and customers is all the more essential. That's why we never tire of looking for new inspiration to challenge us, to stay ahead and actively shape the working world of tomorrow. Our people are our best asset – their combined skills and dedication continue to make us who we are and bring even greater value to the electrical world.

Recruiting and retaining talent is one of the great challenges for businesses today. Our company will only thrive if we can attract and keep the right people – who feel motivated to perform as well as able to fulfil their potential with us. Without future generations excited about work at Hager Group us, there can be no future business, no sustainable development. We don't provide opportunities and training for the sake of it. We do it as part of a carefully orchestrated process to ensure the success of our business in line with our performance culture. Our ambition is to offer an inspiring environment for everyone.

**"The confessions of two entrepreneurs"**  
**by Dr. Oswald Hager**

**"Special skills regarding systems, thinking, decision making methods and unconventional planning are now essential."**

**"For us, the development of our employees is an indispensable condition for the business to develop and it is part of our performance culture. This is why our employees are at the heart of what we do."**

**Franck Houdebert**  
**Chief Group Human Resources Officer**

Workplace learning takes many different forms and offers a multitude of benefits for employees and their organisation. Asking a colleague for help on a software you're using. Dipping into on-line resources to build your soft skills. Or grabbing a coffee with your mentor. Learning doesn't just build skills, it motivates people, too.

Future-proofing our workforce, customers and company can be challenging and complex. It demands constant adaptation and humility. Innovations, trends and market changes require us to identify important skills and drivers early on, and secure them within the company. Employees want a workplace that is a good fit for them and in line with their own values; if the company culture is appealing, employees will be more driven and motivated – they will perform better.

Part of this culture is for both employers and employees to ask themselves questions such as: What skills will be needed in the future? What skills do we currently have and how can we improve them? How can we retain qualified employees long-term and provide transparent internal opportunities? And, of course, am I competitive?

Amid all the difficulties that have affected nearly every industry over the last few years, there have also been positive developments inside businesses that are helping lay the groundwork for the transformation of the workplace. One of the biggest involves how organisations like ours tackle the challenge of learning and development.

At Hager Group, we've known it from the beginning. Education powers us. That's why we're seizing opportunities to upskill and reskill employees at a faster pace than ever, particularly in light of the digital and technical transformations in our industry.

In this Annual Report, we address the challenges facing education and take a look at the different learning structures available, the people who make it possible, those who have benefitted from the learning methods and opportunities in place, and how everything we're doing contributes to the bigger picture: shaping the electrical world of tomorrow.





Having 24/7 access to learning encourages motivation, new ideas and innovation by empowering our employees.



# Empowering employees

Since its founding year in 1955, Hager Group has been in a permanent state of transformation, promoting a culture of continuous learning. To shape the electrical world of tomorrow, every employee needs the right skills to perform and to strengthen

the entire group – after all, a company is a living, breathing entity that every employee contributes to. Having 24/7 access to learning encourages motivation, new ideas and innovation by empowering our employees and, with them, the business.

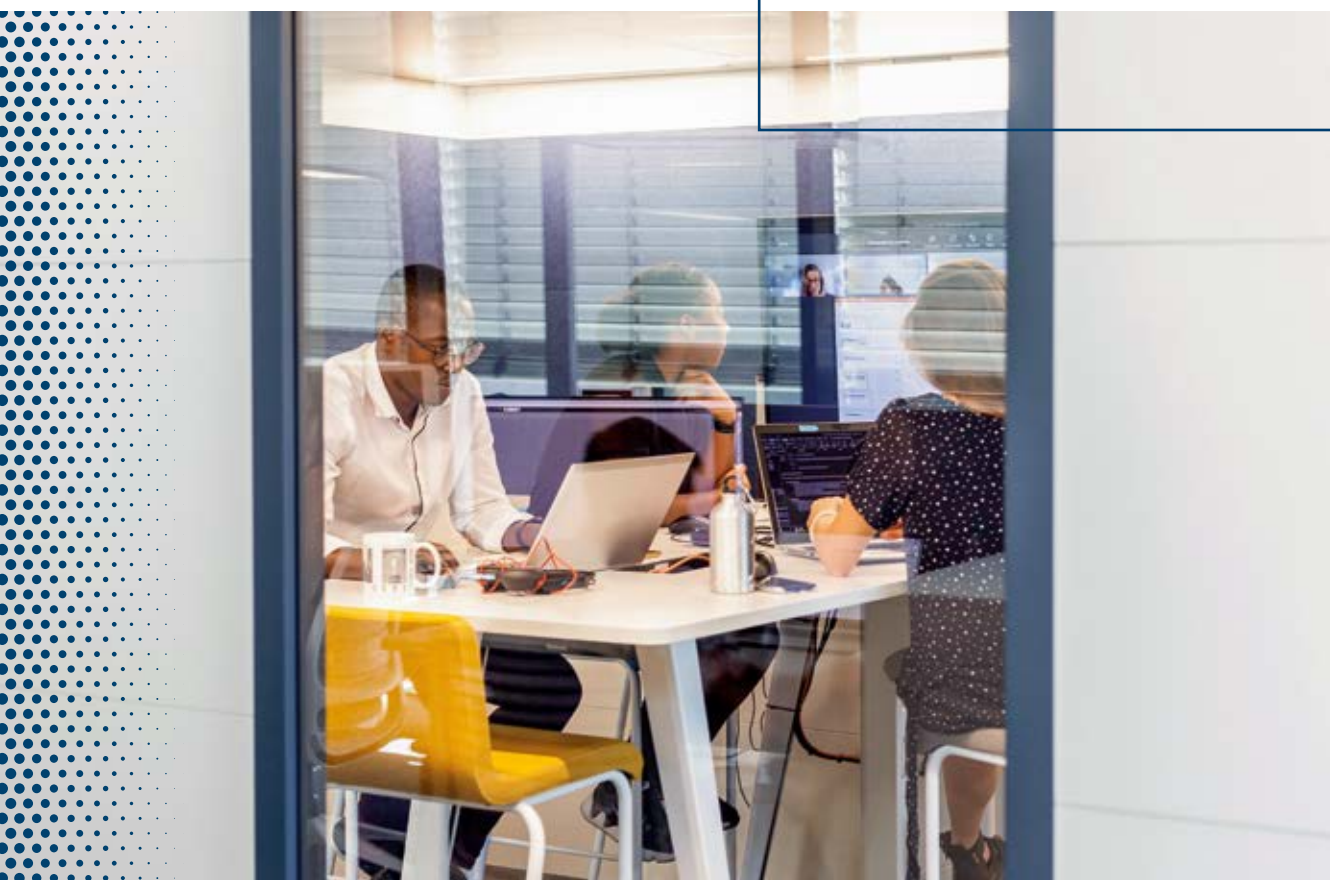


**Topics like digitalisation, technical skills, enhanced project management and soft skills are competing for priority in the workplace. We need to train and retrain our employees to fit the bill, but how? Our flexible solution is our in-house university, “Hi!”.**

### **Anchoring learning in the heart of our business for success**

Here at Hager Group, learning has never been siloed off as the sole responsibility of Human Resources. We have made it a fundamental part of what drives the business.

Businesses embrace online learning, empowering employees to develop skills – wherever and whenever is best for them. We do offer the traditional instructor-led training model; however, we encourage and offer self-directed and peer-to-peer learning for employees.



### **Making the difference**

Our company project clearly states that we intend to focus our collective efforts, so that we can grow as a group and shape the electrical world of tomorrow. We strive to provide relevant training and the necessary knowledge to make a difference.

grow. Hi! offers many opportunities, such as leadership development, project management training, language skills training and official certification programmes. It bundles all existing training courses together, making it easier for employees to obtain the knowledge they need for professional and personal development.

# Hi!

**We fit, we structure, we deliver, we measure. We impact the business!**

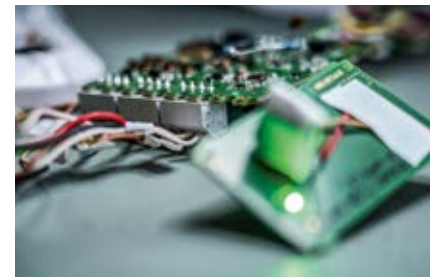
Hager Group’s university is a modern, digital and personalised learning journey for every employee. It’s officially known as “Hi!”. It provides a plethora of development opportunities with academies, online courses and communities. It is open to absolutely everyone in the group who is curious and wants access to knowledge, as well as learning and growth opportunities.

Companies that want to grow need to adapt their corporate learning goals in order to cultivate each employee’s ability to explore, learn and

The Hi! experience is about encouraging people to pursue their learning goals and dare to try something new. To get an idea of some of the many opportunities it offers, we take a closer look at the Project Management Academy below.

The **Project Management Academy** is the place to develop effective and efficient project management skills, not only for project managers but also for everyone working on projects. The offer is made up of four learning journeys. The methods, approaches and tools were all harmonised to suit the needs of the business. We started with a question: how can we innovate to create relevant knowledge for our employees and at the same time address some of the pain points of project management? The focus was creating a standardised and harmonised learning package to measurably improve performance in project management. The first target group was chosen – Engineering and Offer Project Manager Officer (in Solution Development and Marketing Organisation).





Jean-Noël Paillard, Engineering Director Connected Buildings, a member of the core team that created the curriculum (above) and Yushan Waechter-Zhao Engineering Product Leader, an avid learner and participant of the first cohort (left)

## People and business growing together

In-house learning specialists and an external team of experts came together to create four learning journeys focussed on project management. A pilot group of experienced programme and project managers took the modules for a test drive to help improve the process and content. A growing number of external partnerships require a certain standard (PMI, Project Management Institute) be used to further validate the content and its pertinence to the business and the wider world.

### Develop myself, develop others, develop together

Our in-house expert, Jean-Noël Paillard, Engineering Director Connected Buildings, was part of the core team that created the project management curriculum. He expressed to us the need to enhance powerful project management by ensuring accountability to contribute effectively to the company's project and business needs.

"It is important for our project managers to possess the assertiveness and decisiveness needed to drive projects and external partners. To help them in this, we need a customised learning programme, which covers both, state-of-the art technical skills and interpersonal skills. Both are needed to address our mission of delivering on time, with the right level of quality and at the right cost."

### A structured development path with clear steps to learn and grow

Yushan Waechter-Zhao is an Engineering Product Leader who completed the project management curriculum. Part of the first cohort, she had just started a new position and desired a customised learning path to develop her competencies and learn from colleagues with specialised knowledge. "Of the many project management tools and techniques we acquired in this course, the most impactful was the Work Breakdown Structure, which establishes the critical path in a project. When scheduling a project, we must generally make assumptions when estimating duration and workload. When it comes to workload estimation, opinions often differ. To have a more accurate and analytical approach, we learned the PERT-Technique (Program Evaluation and Review Technique) to create better timeline estimates by considering multiple scenarios. Better planning means that projects are run efficiently and on time to ensure that the promises we make to our customers are realistic and fulfilled."

# "Better planning means that projects are run efficiently and on time."

Yushan Waechter-Zhao  
Engineering Product Leader





**Hannelore Kolb**  
Hager Group learning specialist in charge of setting up the project management learning journeys. All modules are created with high-performance and business needs in mind.

# Learning by doing

Hannelore Kolb is a Hager Group learning specialist in charge of setting up the project management learning journeys. She explained how these modules and others are initiated and implemented: “It’s all about a high-performance project management that responds to business needs.” Hannelore – and all the co-creation team involved in designing customised learning journeys – start from the same premise: courses must be specifically created with each department’s business needs in mind. The stakes are high. There is a lot of research and preparation with internal and external experts, and the learning offer must be relevant. To ensure that relevancy, there is always a pilot session where feedback is gathered from managers and session participants. Afterwards, the session can be further adapted according to their suggestions.

“It’s a continuous improvement cycle measured by KPIs set at the beginning of each learning programme to measure the impact and success of our learning activities. I personally test the modules myself to give feedback and suggest adaptations and improvements, which was particularly the case when we set up the Project Management Academy.”

Project management in an international environment always requires cultural sensitivity and efficient language skills. After all, our DNA is Franco-German, so we fully understand the importance of working in a cross-cultural context.

## Effective and cutting-edge language learning to support business targets

Hi! provides tailored and off-the-peg solutions with the cloud-based online language learning solution Speexx.

**Sprechen Sie français?**  
Learning a language isn’t just about grammar rules and pronunciation. It’s about being able to effectively communicate in a language so that we can work with and understand our colleagues better. A language can never be dissociated from culture and, as an international company, we work across cultures. English is, of course, the main language in the corporate world, but sometimes we can meet each other halfway by understanding our colleagues’ culture and language. Isabelle Wiedemann, in charge of language learning programmes, shares that “with Speexx, employees can hone their skills in English, Spanish, German, Italian and French.

This open, blended learning platform can be particularly useful for those managing projects across borders – perfected language skills can drive productivity and boost employees’ communication skills.”

### Going the extra educational mile in Poland: supporting language and cultural understanding in Poland

Another recent language addition within the group is Polish. Over the last year or so, Hager Poland has been providing Polish language training for displaced Ukrainians living there. The training helps them adapt not only linguistically but also culturally. We are also offering training so they can become part of the production team. Many of the technical files for machines have been translated into Ukrainian to ensure optimal learning and understanding. Over one hundred Ukrainians have been welcomed in Tychy and Kórnik.

We encourage self-directed and peer-to-peer learning for employees







**Arnaud Atibard, a Hager Group Digital Learning Specialist,** was part of the team who got the module up and running. He said, “Considering environmental aspects in our daily work makes Hager Group a more sustainable business, more competitive, more resilient and more attractive. The environmental training module is a learning journey on sustainability. Its ambition is to make sure everyone understands the stakes and discovers our Blue Planet Commitment strategy. If we collectively understand the major environmental challenges, we can learn tips to adopt good practices throughout the group.”

# Setting up specific on-line learning modules for all Hi! users

## Spotlight on learning best environmental practices

Environmental considerations play a major role at Hager Group whether you are working in purchasing looking for raw materials, or in Sales, where customers are increasingly sensitive to environmental aspects, or in a hiring position, where attracting new talent also means showing a responsible environmental approach. A team determined to put environmental concerns at the forefront came up with a new approach to educate employees about our **carbon footprint and measures to reduce it, virgin plastics reduction, fossil fuel use, carbon neutrality** and much more.

The one-hour online training module on Hi! gives colleagues the opportunity to explore the group’s approach to environmental sustainability, known as the Blue Planet Commitment. Topics covered in the modules address what Hager Group’s environmental strategy is and what we can all do to tangibly contribute to reducing our carbon footprint.

Experts from the environmental sustainability department, learning and development and an external partner all bumped heads together to come up with an inspiring and informative training package.

**Samir Rouini, Sustainability Reporting Manager,** not only completed the training; he was one of the pilot testers. “The implementation of this module is totally in line with Hi!’s learning strategy and, in this case, it shows the importance of educating to address climate challenges. The information and take-aways help employees to better understand and address the impacts of the climate crisis, empowering us with the needed knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to act as agents of change.”

## Awarded for innovative training

Hi! itself has won two awards: the **Gold Brandon Hall Award** and the **Global Council of Corporate Universities Award**. The Brandon Hall Award is a prestigious American award that recognises the best innovations in training and learning technologies. The GlobalCCU awarded Hi! gold for “Best New Corporate University” at a ceremony in Bangalore, India. Proof that Hi! continues to shine and impress and the learning programmes have a positive impact for the learners and organisation.



Facts & figures  
Hi! university

7,950

learners can access  
the Hi! platform

96.7%

of learners have  
connected once  
or more

68.37<sub>k</sub>

total learning  
hours on the  
platform

187,2<sub>k</sub>

connections to  
the platform

8.89<sub>h</sub>

on average  
per learner

317

courses  
available

Six academies are currently available:

Agile	Sourcing	Sales
Leadership	Project Management	Sourcing and Supply Chain



**Carole Colin**  
Talent and Change Senior Manager  
Carole comments that “it is particularly important to pay special attention to internal growth opportunities. Managers who promote growth and mobility are talent magnets for the organisation.

Retaining and  
regularly  
re-recruiting

In the current job market, the best candidates are hard to find, hard to lock in and hard to keep. If we want to compete for talent successfully, specific strategies are needed.



**Enormous interest in growth opportunities**

Employees today are keenly interested in opportunities to grow. They're looking for pathways to acquire new skills, perform and boost their status. Part of the reason that certain jobs are chosen – and others aren't – lies in the growth opportunities at a company.

Unfortunately, many candidates, never get an interview or even hear back from a potential employer. Hager Group on the other hand, a forward-thinking company, offers the ability to grow with customised in-house learning methods and internal mobility. We believe that promoting internal mobility creates a win-win situation. The company retains their valued employees who know the ins and outs, and the employee avoids some of the stress associated with applying externally. Employees know their company, their colleagues and the culture. In general, they would prefer to continue their journey within a structure that is familiar and that they can continue contribute to. Read our portrait of Valérie Saumon below to find out more.

**Re-recruit employees regularly**

It's always more cost and time-effective to retain customers than to acquire new ones, and the same goes for employees. It is vital to create a culture and a place where employees can thrive and where they feel supported in achieving what's important to them professionally and personally. This, and employee feedback from cross-departmental working teams, inspired us to embark upon setting up an all-encompassing mobility charter sponsored by senior leaders. Its purpose is to help employees develop within the structure, improve cross functional working and break silos.

Carole Colin, Talent and Change Senior Manager in charge of the project, explains: "It is particularly important to pay special attention to internal

growth opportunities. Managers who promote growth and mobility are talent magnets for the organisation. Employees can advance their careers in a familiar environment, and a carefully crafted internal mobility charter also provides structure."

A previous Hager University Senior Manager, Carole has benefitted from the internal mobility process herself. She knows only too well the importance of having a structured approach with commitment from everyone involved, from managers to employees and the Human Resources team. "At Hager Group, we believe that internal mobility is a lever for growing together sustainably. Changing perspectives and positions internally is a powerful way to learn and grow. At the same time, it improves our collective effectiveness within the group."

**Internal Mobility is a powerful lever for growing together sustainably and a powerful way to learn and grow**

-  **Learn and grow together**
-  **Work hand in hand: employees, managers and HR**
-  **Improve retention and engagement**
-  **Boost career development**
-  **Better understanding of the whole organisation**
-  **Expand cross-functional work**

**“A change of perspective will not only transform you: it is an important step on our path to shaping the electrical world of tomorrow.”**

**Daniel Hager**  
**CEO Hager Group**

**Portrait: Valérie Saumon**

**Performance and agility in production**

**Team spirit, enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge**

After three CQPMs\* and four in-house training sessions, Valérie Saumon still thirsts for knowledge.

Valérie Saumon has always been keen to work closely with others, and within two years she was part of a team where she oversaw some of the automated production machines. In 2008, Hager Group wanted to boost the skills of personnel in production. As a result, the company offered a voluntary CQPM qualification to anyone who wanted to become a machine operator. She signed up immediately. Over an 18-month period, she participated in one week of on-site training every month. Maintenance technician colleagues contributing to the programme offered their specialised knowledge as tutors. She explained that the tutors' motivation was to make sure that colleagues become

sufficiently independent to confidently troubleshoot the various machines on their own. In the end, participants received an official qualification to prove their new skills. Enthusiastic about her 18-month learning adventure, Valérie wanted to pay it forward and became a tutor herself. This turned out to be just one of many opportunities for her to share her knowledge. She has always been very aware of the importance of internal support from specialised colleagues. "I am technically-minded, so taking the next step seemed logical, and it meant I could continue to work in a team and put my skills to the test for the benefit of the company".

What stands out most when speaking to Valérie is her enthusiasm to learn and help others reach their potential. She joined Hager Group almost 30 years ago in Factory 3 in Obernai. At her job mounting switches, she became fascinated with the production environment. She watched colleagues carrying out other tasks and, being technically minded herself, she wanted to know what they were doing and

how their machines worked. Coming from a technical training background, it was all familiar to her.

Always striving for advancement, she volunteered to replace team facilitators from time to time in 2011. She enjoyed the role so much that she decided to take her learning journey even further and participate in Autonomous Production Unit Leader (GAP CQPM) training. "This training helped me grow. I constantly need to test myself and hone my skills. I get a lot of satisfaction from helping others. I have experienced many of the jobs in production, so I know the sticking



**Valérie Saumon**  
Valérie is keen to point out that training has helped her grow. She constantly needs to test herself and hone her skills. She gets a lot of satisfaction from helping others.

**\*CQPM**  
Certificats de Qualification Paritaire de la Métallurgie (Metallurgical Qualification Certificate).

Metallurgy: the domain of Hager Group's collective agreement.

points and where people may need help and encouragement.” Following a year of managing her own team, Valerie wondered if she had bitten off more than she could chew in 2019 when she was offered the position of Line Manager. She bravely shared that she wasn’t sure if she was ready for the challenge. In the past, she had actively pursued her new positions, but she didn’t see this one coming. When her manager recommended her for the job, which resulted from a new organisation concept, she was both surprised and pleased. When asked whether she regrets accepting it, she responded: “Never! It was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. The trust the company has placed in me has been a driving force throughout my career; I carry the team and they

carry me. It’s a two-way street. We help each other, they know I am there for them, and I know I can count on them to carry out their tasks to the highest standards.” She is particularly proud of being a tutor and being able to recruit colleagues internally, giving them the same chance to change, grow and evolve. “It’s so important to capitalise on people’s abilities and potential. If we don’t, they won’t grow, and neither will the company.”

Interview Eugénie Vegleris and Franck Houdebert

There is an increasing need for collective intelligence

From academic education to tomorrow’s jobs and artificial intelligence, philosopher Eugénie Vegleris and Chief Group Human Resources Officer at Hager Group, Franck Houdebert, discuss the issues around education and training at the company.

How do you two – the philosopher and the Chief Group Human Resources Officer – view knowledge acquisition today?

Eugénie Vegleris: Academic education attracts considerable criticism for being too fragmented and compartmentalised with too many “silos”. The French Renaissance philosopher Montaigne wrote that children’s education should serve first to awaken their minds and create a taste and aptitude for learning, so that they can think freely and be open to everything the world has to teach them. For philosophers, there is a difference between knowledge and understanding. The rapid changes taking place in society today mean that interdisciplinarity is the new paradigm of understanding. Education and training are no longer enough. The big problems are cross-cutting, transnational, and multidimensional. It is only by communicating knowledge that we can understand this plurality and grasp contemporary issues.

Franck Houdebert: I’d like to qualify that idea. Academic education is essential as it provides the fundamental knowledge and sound basis that people need to progress in the company. Becoming proficient in a particular field provides a set of core skills and knowledge that allows us to move forward in today’s world by being open to other perspectives. Indeed, the more complex the subject, the more we need an interdisciplinary approach. The increasing number of joint honours degrees and training programmes that combine two or three disciplines are a move in this direction. These open up more opportunities for young people, who are able to satisfy their curiosity and desire to learn once they are freed from the constraints of traditional education. Our R&D engineers, for example, are developing solutions and incorporating other areas of expertise into their design studies, such as ergonomics for future production staff and the concept of use for installers and operators. Human sciences are enhancing technical specialisms. Taking the right decisions for your organisation not only requires business expertise but also, now more than ever, the ability to analyse and understand your environment. At Hager Group, we see open-mindedness and empathy as examples of the kinds of behaviour we want to encourage. Adaptability and the ability to anticipate change are key factors for success and resilience. That means we need employees who can ride the wave of a changing environment, be resilient and deal with uncertainty.



**What would you say are the skills that people need to develop?**

Eugénie Vegleris: Knowledge ceases to be academic as soon as you join a company. That's when you have to learn to "despecialise", detach yourself from the familiar, be open to new worlds and explore the unknown. For myself, I would rather talk about "aptitudes" than "skills". Curiosity, generosity, the ability to cooperate and listen to points of view other than your own are key. It is important to develop a critical mindset, i.e., the clarity to identify problems and the creativity to come up with solutions, as well as the ability to take a step back from the knowledge and information passed on to you. Joining a company means questioning your existing assumptions and being open-minded and willing to learn. The problems that a dynamic company like Hager Group has to address and the solutions it needs to develop go far beyond electrical installations. Increasingly, vocational training aims to develop situational intelligence and the ability to listen and relate to other people, other sectors, and other profiles.

Franck Houdebert: At Hager Group, we firmly believe that everyone is in control of their professional development. Our role is to create an environment that allows individuals to develop a sense of responsibility. These types of approach, and the learning opportunities they provide, are found in organisations that are increasingly horizontal in structure and which exist as part of a network that includes

their customers, suppliers, schools, and universities. The manager's role has changed as a result. They are no longer the person who plans and schedules the work, but a facilitator who motivates and coordinates. Their position has changed from someone who holds power to a leader who supports a collective dynamic. This fact was made clear and further amplified by the pandemic and remote working. Nothing can replace human interaction and teamwork. As new technologies develop, there is an increasing need for collective intelligence.

**Artificial intelligence in particular is on the rise and set to impact both education and training. What are your thoughts on this?**

Eugénie Vegleris: Artificial intelligence is revolutionary, comparable to the invention of writing and the printing press. Both these technical inventions were decisive in communicating and furthering knowledge; they triggered an anthropological revolution, changing people's relationship to the world, each other, and themselves. The notorious ChatGPT, whose influence is feared by many, could be a remarkable information and learning tool. Innovations should always be explored and embraced, not simply rejected. In my view, what matters is ensuring

that technology serves humanity. The danger lies not in robots but the robotisation of people and their potential inability to step back from an increasingly automated and artificial environment. If we rely too heavily on a technical and technological approach, we risk losing our capacity to analyse, listen and self-reflect. Although we're not there yet, the development of artificial intelligence calls for a degree of philosophical, ethical and political reflection on what it means and how it might be regulated.

Franck Houdebert: Technological progress opens up opportunities and the role of artificial intelligence should be to serve people. To achieve this, there is an argument for teaching technology in a business, as you would in a school. It is more essential than ever for people to maintain a critical mindset. Artificial intelligence is already driving advances in learning and training processes. It's a knowledge accelerator and an incredible opportunity, provided one has the ability to step back. Given the rapid changes in technologies and methodologies, it is our capacity to adapt to these technologies and willingness to learn throughout our careers that will make the difference. Hager Group is a learning company that strives to capitalise on collective knowledge and a willingness to take the initiative, both individually and as a team. We want to make empowerment a reality in our organisations.

**Training has always driven excellence and innovation in the business. Where does the strength of the Hager Group model lie?**

Eugénie Vegleris: Having worked with Hager Group for many years, I've witnessed first-hand the importance it places on both vocational and managerial training. The group positions itself not only as a technical business,



**Franck Houdebert**

Adaptability and the ability to anticipate change are key factors for success and resilience. That means we need employees who can ride the wave of a changing environment, be resilient and deal with uncertainty.

**Franck Houdebert**  
Chief Group Human Resources Officer

**“We are a learning business, with a focus on taking the initiative to tackle change more effectively.”**



Philosopher Eugénie Vegleris has worked with Hager Group for many years.

Eugénie Vegleris  
business philosopher

**“Knowledge ceases to be academic as soon as you join a company. You have to learn to ‘despecialise’ and detach yourself from the familiar.”**

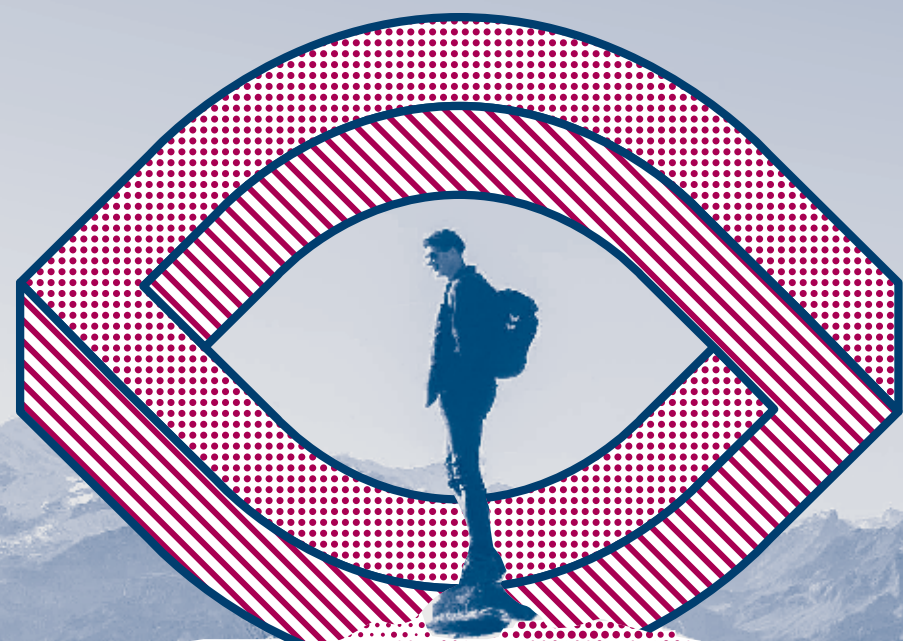
but, above all, as a company with a human face. This is part of the DNA of its directors, who are committed to fostering positive interaction and supporting the group’s collective vision. It began with the founders and continued under both Alfred Bricka and now Daniel Hager, who have both worked closely with the Chief Human Resources Officer. It can be seen in our university partnerships but also in our annual seminars, which attract some very diverse, high-calibre speakers. I myself have often had the opportunity to take part in surveys and workshops on themes such as innovation, responsibility, culture and the gap between stated values and lived experience, and I have witnessed the intellectual openness of the company’s key players. Hager Group’s strength lies precisely in its willingness to reflect, supported by the friendly relationships between employees, customers, consultants and partners. Every effort is made to reach decisions jointly, try taking risks and encourage employees to feel confident and involved. The various aspects of the company’s development are within everyone’s reach, creating a virtuous circle.

Franck Houdebert: Our training model is deeply embedded in the business. Hager Group was created after the war. Its founders were part of the European reconstruction process, which relied on education to convey positive values after a dark period in history. These beliefs are still with us today. We are not only training electricians and company employees, but also global citizens.

Our strength lies in helping everyone identify with our corporate values and culture. That’s the promise we make as an employer in our “learning and growing together” strapline. These commitments have practical applications, including our Hi! corporate university, our academies, which focus on our various disciplines and areas of expertise, our dedicated language-learning platform and our TAI Community network, which is designed by and for trainees and apprentices. This illustrates the model of the future: communities of trainees who inspire one another and take a cross-disciplinary approach to training. Not to mention the ceremonies and communications celebrating colleagues who have gained a qualification or professional certificate. These communications are an insight into an entire ecosystem, from operators to tutors, managers, social partners and external training organisations. These are all cultural melting pots where we discuss and advance our company project. Hager Group’s products and solutions are designed to contribute to a safer, cleaner world and a better environment for its citizens through electrical energy. We remain convinced that this ambition is based on its human energy and the development of our teams and colleagues.



# 360° inspiration



**Yves Peters**  
Yves joined the company as the very first technical trainer in Germany for Hager products and solutions over 30 years ago.

## Fostering a culture of commitment & contribution

### **Focused on the customer**

#### **Blending your learning**

Every customer has different training preferences. Are you more of an online learner? We invite you to go fully digital with one of our live webinars or consult one of our many e-learning modules and how-to videos. Or are you more of let's-get-together-seminar type of learner? We are happy to host you at one of our training centres in

Blieskastel, Ottfingen or Heltersberg, Germany. We can also come to where you are. Our eleven regional trainers are close to most locations in Germany. Or perhaps you would like to have a combination of both? Our teams are eager to come up with a learning package that suits your needs. We also offer our customers training on new rules and norms within the industry, as well as certified training.



Our training offers go back a long way. 30 years ago, Yves Peters joined the company as the very first technical trainer in Germany for Hager products and solutions. At the time, he was based in the factory in Blieskastel. Over the years, customers wanted to learn more and other colleagues became more knowledgeable about our products and solutions. The logical next step was to set up a specific department for training and information. So Yves has gone from a one man show in 1992 to heading a specialised team with over 20 trainers who serve almost 50,000 customers each year.

Like the department, the training offer has been adapted over time to become a blended one. While our digital training is a great hit with customers, our trainers are still delighted to meet face to face with trainees. Ideally, they do this at one of our custom built centres, where you can literally get hands-on experience with products and see how they fit into an electrical installation, from the smallest of products up to the colossal “unimes H”.

## Who do we train?

The target groups for our specialised training range from installers and wholesalers to planners, building specialists and architects. Each training is adapted and fine-tuned to specifically meet the needs of the target group in both commercial and residential markets. Dedicated workshops in Blieskastel, Heltersberg and Ottfingen mean that training can take place in real-life situations, e.g. so installers can handle the products and test how they all fit together on the job. These centres of excellence are invaluable places for trainers and trainees to work together, profit from direct feedback and discuss what could be improved or adapted in specific situations.

You name it, we'll train you on it!

### Our training dream team

Andreas Salzmann  
Dirk Fritscher  
Katharina Wille  
Yves Peters

**“In the past two years, it has been difficult to hold face-to-face seminars. We have made a virtue out of a necessity.”**

**Yves Peters**  
**Leader Hager Studio**



Every training session is different. It depends on the customers, their knowledge level, the type of training needed – there are so many variables.

### Andreas Salzmann

Andreas has over 30 years' experience at Hager Group and has been training customers for over two decades.



## Coming back for more

Andreas is the go-to man for anything you need to know about trunking systems for underfloor, walls or ceiling. He has over 30 years' experience at Hager Group and has been training customers for over two decades. His role is to help installers, planners and architects better understand our solutions, so they come back wanting more. He creates how-to podcasts and videos, runs webinars, visits customers and welcomes them at Blieskastel and Heltersberg. Some of the topics he covers are LED lighting in cable management, how to mount the latest trunking systems for socket and data outlets, the complexities of underfloor systems and new regulations for cabling. For example, when he trains customers in person, they get hands-on experience testing different trunking options for flexibility in their installations – and profit from his sharp eye for detail.

“I am in contact with quite a wide range of customers, which is great because I really enjoy working with people. Mostly, I help installers with the hands-on stuff, while architects are more on the lookout for new ideas and innovations. I simply love giving customers new ideas and tips for installation practices.”

Whatever Andreas does, the challenge remains the same: making something technically complex easy to mount and use. Helping customers get a handle on trunking systems is indeed his source of inspiration. “If I do a good job training them, they'll come back for more. Which is ultimately what we want.” It is also important for Andreas to make sure his direct colleagues benefit from his specialised trunking knowledge, so he regularly trains them, too, and keeps them up to date. “Transferring knowledge benefits everyone. We are a team, we help each other to be better and I still learn something new every day, even after more than 30 years in the industry.”



# A digital day in the life of Dirk Fritscher

**A KNX Technical Training Officer for the German market.**

**Interviewer: Dirk, I'm guessing there is no such thing as a typical day for you?**

Dirk: Correct, it just doesn't exist. Every day is different. It's the nature of the job. I am a KNX communication protocol trainer, so I am specialised in technical software training. I provide certified training, electrical planning software hagercad training to plan electrical infrastructures, and specialised training for domovea solutions in smart homes. Every training session is different. It depends on the customers, their knowledge level, the type of training needed – there are so many variables.

**So one-size-fits-all isn't an option for you?**

Certainly not. Training customers is all about adapting to their needs and skill levels. Sometimes I can skip a section in my training session and sometimes I have to really go into the details or get back to basics. Also, it depends on whether the training is face to face or in a webinar. The advantage of a webinar is that customers can simply "click and learn" the basics and the theory at their convenience, but we need a hybrid model with the option for face-to-face training so customers can get their hands on the products and learn from trial and error with my help.

**When you say "customer", what type of group are you specifically referring to?**

I mostly train installers for the commercial and residential market. KNX is compatible with any type of building, be it a small family home or a large shopping centre. I also train planners, particularly with hagercad for its technical possibilities and specificities and sometimes architects.

**You mentioned hybrid solutions. Tell me a little more about this digital offer.**

Before Covid, most of our training sessions were run on site. But then with all the various lockdowns we had to adapt our offer, make it attractive and easy for customers. We already offered some digital training. The last couple of years, though, were really an opportunity to push the boundaries further, so we took our WBT Web Based Training to the next level. It was a bit of a no-brainer as my line of expertise is technical and IT based anyway, so offering online training solutions was a natural progression in our increasingly digitalised world. Installers can attend live webinar sessions at their convenience, come back to them later and then combine with some how-to tutorials and hands-on sessions once the basic information is understood. Before 2019, we trained about 2,000 customers digitally a year, now it's around 25,000. It's a much broader reach. We are one of just a few companies to offer this type of extensive specialised training. Our customers recognise this and are impressed by the extent of our training solutions. At first, some of the installers were naturally a little unsure about online learning, but once they started it, they saw the many advantages. It is easy to attend and absolutely adapted to their needs.

**How do you adapt to differing levels of expertise when you run the webinar session. Obviously not everyone has the same needs?**

Take the KNX webinars, for example. Over a three-month period, we build up gradually and have different modules that cover different aspects of the knowledge one needs to successfully install and use the system. A session on switching. Another on dimming. Then, step by step, we consolidate competencies so installers feel comfortable. It's totally flexible with some sessions being run in the morning and others as an after-work option and, of course, they don't have to attend them all. The number of customers per session is quite variable. And then, of course, we have hands-on sessions, which are essential to take the system for a test drive. When it comes to software solutions, it takes a lot of trial and error to really get up to speed with it.

**So, who trains the trainer? How do you keep your skills up to date?**

Well, it's part of my job to make sure I stay up to date. When there are new products and solutions, internal market managers or sometimes the product managers help us, depending on the product. And everyone in the training department is a certified trainer.



**Dirk Fritscher**  
Dirk is a KNX communication protocol trainer, he is specialised in technical software training.



# Starting early with e-volution

Calling all trainees, master students, teachers and instructors: e-volution is a unique Hager Group programme to provide knowledge about electrical engineering. The German Marketing Department is in charge of the initiative, which is open to a broad spectrum of learners. As with many of our learning solutions, this is an online offer which takes advantage of the many possibilities of digitalisation to bring people even closer to the world of Hager.

## Innovative, informative, entertaining

The e-volution knowledge platform and programme are designed to accompany a person throughout their professional career – be they an apprentice, a master trainee, a teacher or instructor. e-volution offers learning aids, videos, webinars, podcasts and teaching materials. Users can log on whenever they want to consult practical learning tips and helpful methods for exam preparation. Teaching materials and exclusive web-based training and learning

projects are at the fingertips of instructors and electrical engineering students, whether at the apprentice or masterclass level.

As the link between teachers and apprentices in schools, Katharina Wille is more than familiar with all aspects of imparting electricity knowledge. She wears many hats in her line of work. She has created a “Zukunft elektrisch” (Future Electric) podcast for apprentices to tune into. She accompanies, organises and manages in-house training sessions. She also actively participates in trade fairs with a special stand aimed at encouraging apprentices to take up the Hager product challenge, i.e. they get to use the products and see how they work in installations. Katharina is all about accompanying apprentices in their learning journey to becoming tomorrow’s technicians, electricians and electrical experts.



## The importance of education and adapting knowledge to tomorrow’s working world

Part of Katharina’s job is to make sure that apprentices stay within the industry and that their teachers have the knowledge they need to help them progress and acquire relevant state-of-the-art skills. She wants them to become, as she puts it in her own words, “the expert customers of tomorrow”. The e-volution programme ensures that teachers have everything they need to teach. Her daily work includes creating videos, managing our social media presence and organising training sessions given by our German Sales force in local schools. “I know what teachers need, so I make sure that the relevant people are available to answer any questions and give them the best and most up-to-date knowledge. We provide webinars and seminars, and our website is always up to date. When we do our job well, everyone benefits!”

What she particularly likes about her work is being the voice of her target groups. She listens to them to understand what they need, adapts the learning offer accordingly and works closely with the teams in charge of training. It is an opportunity to help modernise vocational schools, especially regarding what is taught and how. “We need to make sure teachers have up-to-date knowledge and are using the best products and solutions. If the teachers’ skills are up to date, it improves the reputation of the school, which in turn makes it more attractive. Then more students will want to learn there and specialise in the skills needed for tomorrow’s electrical world.”

**Katharina Wille** is 24 years old. Her dual studies from 2016 to 2019 saw her specialising in economics and trade in the electrical industry. She now works in the German Marketing Department as Marketing Manager, and since 2019 has been the coordinator of the e-volution programme. Within the context of this e-volution initiative, she is in charge of four target groups: apprentices, masterclass students, teachers in vocational colleges and installation instructors.

# 25,000

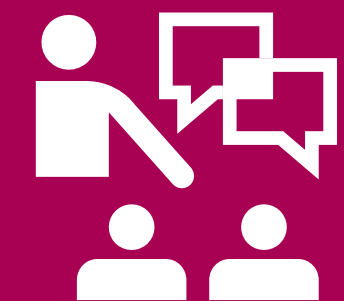
trainees received digital training in 2022 from the Hager Group team in Germany

# 20

in-house and regional trainers

# 46,000

apprentices in the electrical industry in Germany





# A strong culture of continuous learning builds successful businesses

## LeAP

Leadership Acceleration Programme – reinforcing our leadership culture

The LeAP programme was developed to reinforce our leadership culture to better attain our company project goals, as well as to continuously develop participants. The key themes are focusing, growing and shaping our business. The programme accelerates individual leadership development for employees with strong leadership potential. To date, two sessions have run. More are planned. Criteria to be part of the 15-strong LeAP cohort include high performance, willingness to be mobile and a strong commitment to Hager Group. It is an opportunity involving training, coaching, workshops and conversation to demonstrate authentic and accountable leadership, proactively prepare for change and future career moves, as well as understand, appreciate and apply different leadership methods.

## LIFT

Leading Into the Future Together – making the company future-proof

Our Hager Group LIFT programme was initially designed to shape the leadership culture we needed to reach our company project ambitions in 2017. It was a common ground programme for leaders to meet, discuss and receive specialised leadership training from in-house and external experts. It was about anticipating, discussing and sharing the skills necessary to support teams and get the best from everyone. Over 350 managers in four cohorts were trained by the end of 2022, and we are currently adapting our leadership programmes LIFT and LeAP in a continuous improvement spirit to further support our group's ambition.

## The Future Council

Encouraging intergenerational cross-working and learning

The idea for the Future Council came from the Young Professionals Club, an initiative to facilitate and support young professionals in their career path. In 2021 a pilot scheme was set up for a trial run. The Future Council is a sounding board where identified young talents and the Board of Directors meet up to discuss and understand mutual challenges and pain points. In a two-way discussion, the Board listens to the future generation to learn about their aspirations. In turn, the younger generation can make first contact with senior managers. The 10-member pilot group run in 2021 was such a success that, in 2022, a 15-member Future Council group was set up. Possible candidates for the council are carefully selected by Human Resources Talent Managers and the candidates create a presentation video. The first official cohort of 2022 discussed sustainability, development possibilities within the group and how to resolve some of the issues that companies may be facing, such as backlogs.



**Natalia Bugaj-Gebalas**  
Talent management specialist  
Natalia is based in Poland and keen supporter of continuous learning.

# Weaving connections and preparing talent

There have been and continue to be many programmes and initiatives in place at Hager Group to develop talent and prepare the electrical world of tomorrow. Here are just three of them that have proved successful in the past. They are currently being adjusted to reflect evolutions within the company.

Talent management specialist Natalia Bugaj-Gebala oversees the organisation of these meet-ups. She also coaches and trains younger colleagues on how to present themselves, share ideas and communicate in a different environment. "It's very much about making them future-ready and coaching them on soft skills. We all come from different walks of life and operate in a multicultural, multigenerational and diverse world. Each member brings new ideas and a freshness to help the company evolve. The fact that the group is so mixed encourages the openness, innovation and creativity which are integral to our success as a company. The Future Council builds bridges and deepens connections between the Board and younger generations at Hager Group." It also challenges perspectives on both sides and strengthens the voice and perception of the next generation within the company. The entire 2021 Future Council were invited to the 2022 Management Summer School to give the next generation another chance to be heard.

# Making learning an event

Can events help us learn, enhance our skills and learn new ones while broadening our knowledge base? Whether physical or virtual, they serve as enablers and provide food for thought. Events let us foster interpersonal relationships, share achievements and honour successes, while improving our motivation and mood at work. Ensuring success and even happiness are important goals for any business as they are linked to our ability to evolve and learn. However, no organisation or person is immediately successful, and learning is a life-long process with pitfalls along the way. Success is often preceded by a lack of it.

**Making mistakes – does practice make perfect?**  
Mistakes lead us to success as our failures make us examine what worked, what didn't and why. Unsuccessful endeavours could even be considered more important than successful ones as they reveal issues to address. When we feel comfortable talking about failures or shortcomings, we can work together, focus and think analytically. While practice might not necessarily make our skills or the organisation perfect – or even help to eliminate mistakes – it certainly is an important piece of the learning puzzle. As we have already seen with different learning options and hands-on practice, balancing methods is a key factor of success. Exploration is another interesting way to optimise skills development. Exploring and experimenting are important to the process of learning and helping us to remain relevant.

**Unlocking potential through event participation**  
Let's focus on just three of the many events at Hager Group that are contributing to our life-long education journey.

Exploring and experimenting are important to the process of learning and helping us to remain relevant.



## Inspiring, innovating and sharing

2022 saw the first Hager Group Awards ceremony, a more global version of our Continuous Improvement Ceremonies of the past. This one-day event is a get-together, shining a light on colleagues whose projects contribute to building the electrical world of tomorrow. The most innovative projects, technical excellence, success and all those who make it possible are rewarded. The event is a source of inspiration, innovation and best-practice sharing to keep looking for new and better ways of doing things.

## Awards

**Reflecting the growth mindset with awards**  
Collective events give participants the freedom to learn, test, evolve and yes, sometimes even fail. Testing a new method or training programme will not always be 100% successful, even if it sometimes all goes horribly wrong, that failure doesn't define us. Rather it promotes a growth mindset, it helps us improve the way we work and think. Our Hager Group Awards are a good case in point, colleagues submit projects according to the different categories and a jury analyse and vote on the best projects – ones that have an impact on the company and help us develop. All those involved would agree that running a project, creating a product, installing a system or simply working with others never runs smoothly, there are bumps along the road. It is these bumps that help us look at things from a different angle.

**Awarding best practices to shape the business**  
For example, the 2022 Excellence Award went to the Hager Production System (HPS) 2.0 excellence programme team. Their project is a group wide system to ensure world class manufacturing. This system takes the best internal and external expertise for each process and converts it into a new standard for the group. It unifies excellence across all sites by reinforcing benchmarking and collaboration. To get there, various systems and methods had to be tried and tested before finding a way to harmonise working practices where employees gain a clear path to progress, and customers profit from even greater reliability.





A former journalist and writer, Fabrice Amedeo has made his passion for sailing his profession. At Hager Group we believe that passion and true dedication are the keys to success. The French skipper has proved to be a partner of choice and was a speaker at one of our Hager Forum Talks.

## Unboxing our minds

Unbox your mind with Hager Forum talks; a series of inspiring lectures and discussions, designed to present new and exciting ideas for our working lives. Recognised experts in their field – both internal and external – share their insights with attendees be it virtually or in Hager Forum itself. There is always plenty of food for thought to go around.

# Hager Forum Talks for learning and inspiration

## Garnering expert knowledge

Hager Forum Talks are a series of inspiring lectures and discussions, designed to present new and exciting ideas in the context of our working lives. Colleagues, customers and even sometimes the public can attend. The talks raise and answer various questions covering topics ranging from innovation to entrepreneurship from environmental sustainability to new ways of working together. Our internal experts share their knowledge along with external recognised experts in their field. These events are also an apt alternative for people wanting to study a topic in depth who do not particularly enjoy reading or participating in traditional training sessions. Alternatives such as having experts sharing their real-life experiences and tips are equally as valuable as formal learning situations. Our Hager Group talks have the advantage of being available to all via a streaming platform on the day with an easy-to-access recorded recap just in case you were unable to attend.

Let's focus on just two of the many talks.

## Being resilient for the long haul

One of the 2022 talks dealt with the topic of resilience and empowerment. How can we deal with stressful situations, recover from failure and stay on point during difficult times? These were just some of the issues addressed by a panel of four experts who shared tips, answered questions and spoke about their own experiences. From various walks of life, the experts ranged from a high-performance athlete to a Leadership and Mental Fitness Coach. All four agreed that some core competencies help us deal with what life and work throws at us. These can be learned to better cope with both expected and unexpected challenges.

## How to boost innovation – turning today's weaknesses into strengths

Another of the talks addressed innovation and entrepreneurship. An internal expert discussed with a masterclass lecturer from the University of Amsterdam about what it takes to innovate. Listeners learnt about the generation of new ideas and how to improve success when launching new products, solutions or business models. Discussions ensued about best practices, how to deal with innovation and of course bouncing back and learning from failure.

# Management Summer School

## Legacy and culture – back to school with our Management Summer Schools

Right from the start, the company founders Hermann and Dr. Oswald Hager along with their father, focused on the future and generations to come. Their legacy lives on as we continue to leverage the engagement and competencies of our people. More than a decade ago we decided to revisit our investment into leadership development and launched several learning and development programs, one of which was our first Management Summer School in 2012.

## Exploring, learning and finding the right solutions

Our Management Summer Schools are all about sustainable leadership and growing together. With top managers, young talents and special guests, over the past ten years we have explored how to shape our future, innovate and digitalise, to name but a few topics on the agenda. Our vision is that “we are a family business shaping tomorrow’s electrical world to make people’s life on our planet safer, cleaner and more enjoyable” and our belief: it starts with our people, customers and stakeholders. We listen to understand, and together we explore, learn and find the right solutions.

## External inspiration

Since 2012, over 50 renowned guest speakers have shared their transformation and change experiences. “Learning expeditions” have also been integrated into the summer school programmes, their purpose being to connect to and be open to the external world. Over the years, participants have been inspired by outstanding locations, got creative in various workshops and capitalised on this unique learning culture, with of course a little bit of fun thrown in for good measure.

Hager Group Management Summer School (MSS) was set up in 2012. The purpose of this four-day event is to promote sustainable leadership and grow together. Networking and benchmarking are also staples of the MSS; participants are multi-generational and multi-departmental. External guest speakers are always present for inspiration and best practice sharing. Whatever the topics discussed, the ambition is always to look at the status quo and work on ways to improve.

## Our insights

We understand that learning together, being inspired by others and reinforcing a common learning mindset are elemental to success. The 2018 Management Summer School (MSS) is a particularly good example of the importance the group places on learning and looking for fresh new ideas externally. The entire event was organised as a learning journey; companies were toured and guest speakers extended insights and inspiration. Event participants visited companies whose specific fields deliver outstanding results, ranging from handheld power equipment manufacturers, to robotics specialists and to an automotive leader. Although the brands and companies were quite different, the participants benefitted from specialised knowledge with a potential for duplication in the Hager Group world.

## Intergenerational learning and leadership

Since with new participants come fresh authentic ideas, every year the mix is shaken up to provide the benefits of mixing a range of experienced managers and a younger generation. This intergenerational approach is fundamental to working together with energy and motivation on redesigning our electrical future.





# Preparing today for tomorrow

Planting the seeds  
for the future





# Laying the foundations for success with a two-track system

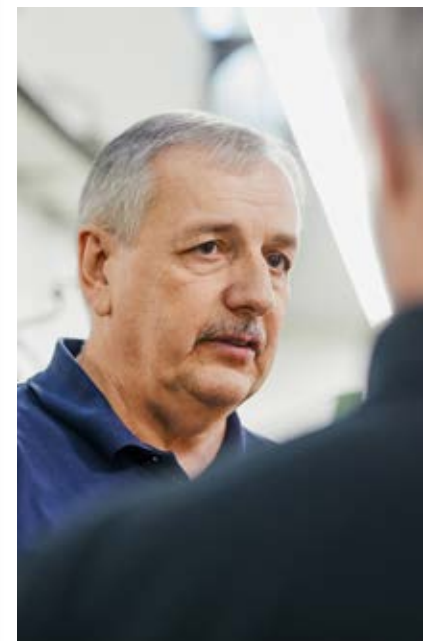
## Do you know about the dual vocational training system in Germany?

Dual training combines theory with practice: apprentices learn the theoretical basics of their industry in a vocational school and in a company. In other words, they really convert their knowledge into practice.

The system is more than just an alternative training arrangement. It is a tried, tested and proven way to ensure that both employees and employers are a good fit, and that the necessary skills go beyond theory to become practical, hands-on expertise.

## Providing excellent qualifications and training that is applicable in the working world

Some credit this system with fuelling the German work economy. Could it also be a solution to rising youth unemployment? Fred Hess, technical training manager, insists that right from the outset, “we offer our apprentices exciting training. The apprentices are specifically prepared for their later professional life. Only by providing very good training and offering attractive apprenticeships can future skilled positions be filled by applicants from the region.”



Fred Hess (left), Sven Pfirrmann (above) and Andreas Gundacker (top picture) are part of the instructor team in Heltersberg.

Is it worth the hype?

From theory and practice

This system is present in all our sites in Germany. Since 1974 in Heltersberg, for example, 502 students have benefitted from the programme and the percentage of students hired upon completion is 95% – and 62% are still with the company. They follow a programme of technical vocational studies. The specialisations run from electrics to mechanics, from plastics to maintenance and to tool making. Although the dual vocational training programme is available at all our sites in Germany, Heltersberg is a particularly interesting example due to the local challenges with recruiting specialised workers. The town of Heltersberg is quite isolated and rural; the average age of the population is over 50; and local infrastructure is somewhat lacking. Enticing and retaining apprentices is a challenge, but three men and their colleagues rose to that challenge. Fred Hess, Sven Pfirrmann and Andreas Gundacker are part of the instructor team in Heltersberg. They are supported by Andreas Fuchs from Blieskastel, who supervises the engineering students. Sven deals with mechanical training. Fred focuses on plastics, and Andreas Gundacker handles electrical training. Their apprentices follow theoretical classes in local training colleges in parallel to workshops in our training centre with our instructors before entering a real-life Hager

Group factory situation. During apprentices’ first two months, Sven, Fred and Andreas train them, tools in hand, on how to handle different equipment stations, machines and the materials they will find in the factory. Then it’s time for practice, practice and more practice – where theoretical knowledge and skills practiced in the workshops are put to the test.

Getting back to basics

It sounds good on paper, but it can be challenging. Both Sven and Fred agree that they are training the future of Hager, but as the years pass, training young people is becoming increasingly more complex. The technical side of the job is training apprentices in the techniques applicable to maintenance, tooling machines, plastic injection and extrusion. Here, the trainers have to add quite a bit of their own theory to the practice. Sven, more of a plastics specialist, comments that he often has to go over the theory that is supposed to be learnt in school, in particular, the mathematics. The hard skills are really what is missing, Fred chips in to say that in terms of soft skills, the apprentices are on top of their game. They are there to learn, they are polite and courteous, work well in a team but the trouble is their lack of skills in maths and German. Both men agree that standards have been slowly dropping over the past ten years. It isn’t just a question of age – apprentices can range from the age of 15 to 30 – it’s the lack of basic education that stands in their way. The basics are key. Andreas Fuchs says the situation for commercial apprentices is the same.

The dual vocational training programme

Dual vocational training programmes offer plenty of opportunities for on-the-job training and work experience. The combination of theory and practice gives students and employers a head start: by the time training is complete, both technical knowledge and hands-on experience have been acquired. Programmes usually last from two to three and a half years and consist of theoretical and practical elements. On average, apprentices spend one or two days a week, or several weeks at once, at vocational school where they acquire the theoretical knowledge needed for their future occupation. The rest of their time is spent in a company, where they directly apply their newly acquired knowledge. This can be at the workplace or at an internal training centre. They get to know what the company does, learn how it operates and find out if they can see themselves working there when they complete their training.

“We are training the future of Hager Group.”

Sven Pfirrmann and Fred Hess

Apprentices follow theoretical classes in local training colleges in parallel to workshops in our training centre with our instructors before entering a real-life Hager Group factory situation.







## “Techniques and jobs develop, we need to adapt.”

**Frank Reinhardt**  
Training & Development Manager



### Light at the end of the digital tunnel

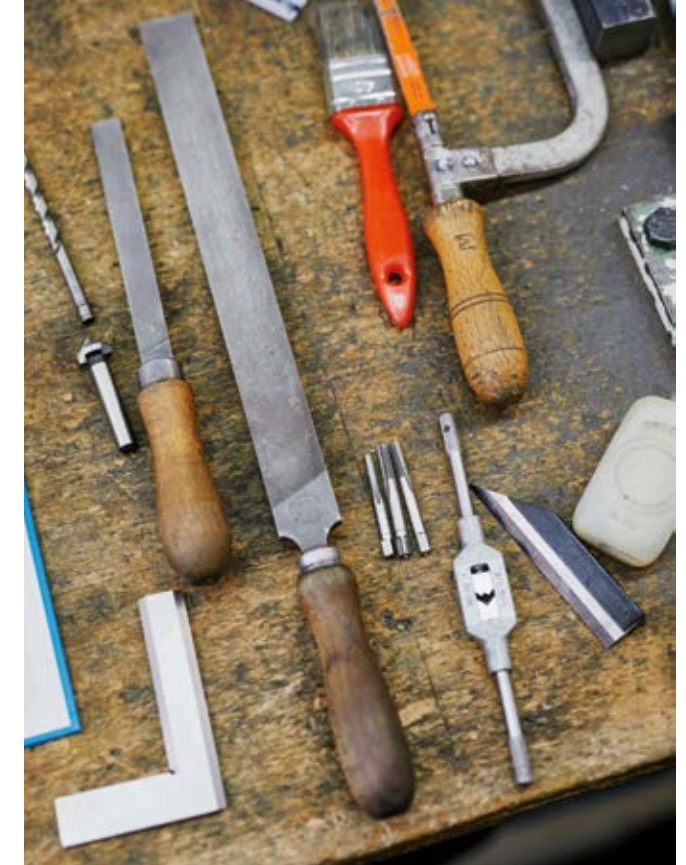
Between the four of them, they have accumulated almost 100 years of experience. They know what they are talking about. When questioned as to why they think the quality of basic skills is dropping, they are unanimous: a change in the German school curriculum led to a drop in standards and the level required to pursue further studies. Smart phones are a disruptor too. Plus, parents are less involved with their children’s education. All together, these factors make the challenges to educate and train very real.

To avoid any cliché that young apprentices may be more interested in the digital rather than the practical world, the question was asked: are young people less interested in this type of technical training because using a hammer isn’t as cool as a tablet? They were quick to dismiss this idea, because an iPad is a tool like any other when it comes to training. In any case, the programmes on offer are constantly adapted to industry trends and requirements. Digital media is an integral part of the vocational training programme in Heltersberg. There are many reasons for this. Covid was an accelerator, but the use of digital tools seems to make the training more interesting for apprentices, and it’s also the general trend in the industry. In their future jobs, the apprentices will need to work with iPads and the like. In the tooling department, for example, there are no more paper plans. It’s all computerised and they need to learn how to make digital adaptations.

### Training the trainers

And how do they keep their skills up to date? The trainers all agree that their job requires them to be self-driven and ensure that their skills and expertise never falls behind. They all learn by doing – very much like the apprentices – and attend trade fairs and technical training sessions run by external companies. The trainers are always at the leading technological edge, so they know what the needs of the company are, what

**Andreas Fuchs**  
Andreas, Apprentices & Interns Manager, is based in Blieskastel, and supervises engineering students.



the apprentices need, and how to match the two and improve. They are also on the front line when it comes to training colleagues who need to broaden their technical expertise, because the training centre welcomes apprentices and colleagues alike. Frank Reinhardt, Training & Development Manager Germany in the Talent Management department, says: “regardless of age and experience, people need to be retrained and reskilled. Techniques and jobs develop. We need to adapt. What was learnt on the job 20 years ago may not be relevant today. It’s no longer state-of-the-art. To retain, we need to re-train. Fortunately, experience and know-how can never be unlearned. What we can do to develop our people is to help everyone stay up to date.”

To offer interesting training and a future-proof package to apprentices Fred points out: “...to counteract the shortage of skilled workers, we must train our qualified professionals ourselves. Since our reputation for training is very good, our trained specialists are often poached by competitors. That’s why we try to offer our apprentices good perspectives for the future at an early stage.”



Interview with Christian Koehler

# The proof is in the pudding

“An iPad is no different to a hammer – it’s a tool.”

Christian Koehler  
Head of Quality and the Plastics  
Laboratory in Heltersberg

**Interviewer: You went from apprentice in Plastics Technology to Head of Quality and the Laboratory in Heltersberg. That’s an impressive career.**

Christian: Well maybe, but there were several steps in between. It didn’t happen overnight and there were a lot of colleagues involved in the training and knowledge-sharing process. It’s been 16 years now, but who’s counting? It started with my vocational training in school and at the Heltersberg site. Then I went on to do a bachelor’s degree in Plastics Technology, followed by a master’s degree. And, yes, I now have a dual role: I’m Head of Quality and the Plastics Laboratory in Heltersberg.

**Tell me a little about your training journey and how Hager Group was involved.**

I started at Hager Group with vocational training in the injection moulding department. This was through Germany’s dual system. I learned theory at a local school and did my training at the Heltersberg site. I immediately asked the company if they would accept me as a paid apprentice. I was even motivated to work over the holidays, because I know that the best knowledge comes from on-the-job experience. Basically, I wanted more practice, and I wanted it on-site at Heltersberg.

**I’m assuming the answer to your request was yes. So, what happened next?**

It was. So, I did my apprenticeship, attended workshops and applied my freshly learnt skills in the factory. During

my holidays, I worked on small projects. I never forgot my goal of putting the theory into practice. Doing my bachelor’s degree was three and a half years of study. Then I did another two on top of that to get a master’s degree. Throughout the whole time, I was working at Heltersberg. My studies took a long time, so it helped being financially independent. After my training was finished, I was taken on as a junior engineer in the industrialisation department. I got a contract to work for six months in Heltersberg and six in Arenzano, Italy, because there was an exciting new project being set up for processing plastic for corrugated pipes in the Arenzano factory. I put my skills to the test at two different sites and, to cut a long technical story short, after a while I took over the plastics laboratory. Then, four years ago an additional mission came up – being quality manager for the site. I jumped at the chance. It’s a challenge having this dual role, but it means I have a great overview of what’s happening and what the factory’s needs are in terms of skills and workforce. Partly since I am in a management position, but also because I know first-hand what skills are needed on the floor thanks to my vocational training.



Preparing today for tomorrow

## Internal solutions to future shortages

To maintain the level of skills within our workshops and alleviate the difficulties of recruiting young toolmakers, Hager Group inaugurated its own tooling school in December 2013 at its Obernai site in France. This strategic core competency – tooling – is essential in production as it guarantees the design, manufacture, development and improvement of cutting tools and moulds for plastic injection. The tooling school was created in anticipation of the retirement of over twenty skilled employees by 2022 and in consideration of the shortage of trained candidates on the job market. It preserves and above all passes on unique know how.

The Obernai factory boasts a specifically fitted out class-room and workshop. It is entirely dedicated to providing the best working and learning conditions for trainees and teaching staff to ensure the success of this unique tooling training programme.





# Cross border inspiration

Laurie Schaeffer Liess, Human Resources Business Partner Senior Sourcing & Supply Chain Group, is more than familiar with the advantages of the German system. Her recruitment duties cross the border between France and Germany. She comments: “with regards to the dual system, the big difference between France and Germany is that we can offer jobs to all our apprentices in Germany thanks to workforce and succession planning. This is a real advantage: when apprentices finish their training in Germany, they know that there will be a job available that they have specifically trained for. Fewer apprentices are ultimately hired as employees in France.”

The same energy and effort goes into training and helping apprentices in both countries, but in Germany those efforts pay really off for the company in the long term. To capitalise on the benefits of this win-win system, it was decided to take inspiration from the German model and establish a specialised in-house Tooling School in Obernai, France, in late 2013. Laurie remembers well the team that over-

saw the establishment of this highly specialised and ambitious project. “The strength and reputation of our company is built on the quality of its employees and this quality is based on their skills. Skills are acquired through training. The tooling school aims to enhance the value of our employees and thereby develop our company. Apprentices learn the requirements of this profession and enable Hager Group to maintain its strategic tooling skills in France within our own production unit.”



**Laurie Schaeffer Liess**  
Laurie is Human Resources Business Partner Senior Sourcing and Supply Chain Group.

## Did you know?

One reason for the **dual vocational training system’s** success in Germany is a culture of apprenticeships that stretches back over decades. The practical component of study is so prevalent in German education that some young people even opt for semi-vocational courses at universities. For many young Germans, a standard bachelor’s degree with no hands-on experience is simply not an option.

Currently, 32 young people are being trained for a wide range of professions in our very own technical training centre.

The number of new apprentices related to required job profiles are planned on an annual basis by the Human Resources department.

In addition to the official qualifications, personal and social skills, apprentices learn all the specialist skills they will need in their future careers during their training.

Unskilled workers can also obtain officially recognised qualifications thanks to their on-the-job experience.

The training department is known beyond the German borders as a ‘talent factory’. In fact, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce awards us and our trainees the ‘best in the region’ award almost every year.

Since  
**1974**

a total of **502** young people have completed apprenticeships to become: Tool Mechanics, Process Mechanics, Industrial Mechanics, Industrial Electricians, Energy Electronics Technicians, Mechatronics Technicians, Technical Product Designers.

**62%**

of these skilled workers are still working with us today.

**2** of our  
in-house  
trainers

were trained in-house: Andreas Gundacker and Sven Pfirrmann. And several of our former trainees are working as department or group leaders.

**6** members

of the Management Team are alumni of the dual system at Heltersberg.



Dr. Udo Götschel, Deputy Chair of the Board at the "Meister-Gründerpreis" ceremony. The Master Founder Award is a prize for start-ups in German electrical industry. It is awarded once every two years in the form of three individual prizes.

## Objectives & purpose – detecting talent

The Peter und Luise Hager Foundation concentrates on developing, supporting and implementing its own projects and the projects of young aspiring non-profit organisations. The overall framework for all projects is guided by the Foundation's goal to support the development of competencies and sustainable education in all areas.

However, it takes more than the desire to help if the goal is to properly and sustainably educate people. Professionalism and responsible handling of the Foundation's resources guarantee that assistance is provided exactly where it is needed. Resources are not scattered thinly.

Concentrated efforts and support are provided to ensure that results can be evaluated by the Foundation.

As education and learning are the pillars of social development. A commitment to children, adolescents and young adults is one of the main concerns of the Foundation. Only those who actively attend to the needs of children and young adults are able to detect aptitude and talent, and then steer it in the right direction to enable future generations to contribute to and integrate successfully in the working world.

## A look at projects shaping the electrical world of tomorrow:

### EnerTec student laboratory at Saarland University

The Foundation's goal with the EnerTec student lab is to familiarise students with the hot topic of renewable energies. The Foundation supports the laboratory in the Faculty of Automation Technology responsible for training future renewable energy experts.

Education and knowledge-sharing starts at an early age. The basics of renewable energies are communicated to children from primary schools, comprehensive schools, children's groups and participants in events such as Girls' Day or the Uni Camp. A new hands-on innovative approach to learning serves as an appropriate medium for teaching them about innovative technologies, such as the generation and conversion of renewable energies, and the technologies used in the process.

### Meister-Gründerpreis – Master Founder Award

The "Meister-Gründerpreis" (Master Founder Award) is a prize for start-ups in German electrical industry. It is awarded once every two years in the form of three individual prizes of €10,000. Since 2016, the Peter und Luise Hager Foundation has been awarding this Meister-Gründerpreis to three successful electrical entrepreneurs in Germany. Candidates all over Germany can apply to win. It rewards master craftspeople in the electrical trade for their courage, business concept and the success associated with it. The seven-member jury comprises representatives from business, politics, technical education and the electrical trade – and it includes one of our own: Gregor Wille, expert in standardisation. "This prize is important for spotting talent and for encouraging innovative approaches and entrepreneurship in the domain of electricity, as well as award competencies specific to the electrical industry. It is today that we prepare, train and encourage the experts of tomorrow."

### A selection of previous winners

With his master craftsman's certificate awarded in 2018, Kevin Breuer founded BG Elektrotechnik GmbH & Co. KG in Ratekau, Schleswig-Holstein. His company's services include electrical installations of all kinds: from street lighting, e-charging stations to event power supply.

## The joy of starting something meaningful

It all started with an idea: that Hager Group could do something charitable. What could we achieve by bundling our forces for the society we live in?

These were the founding ideas of the Peter und Luise Hager Foundation. Based on the values of solidarity, public spirit, sustainability, authenticity and humanity, the foundation started with small steps followed by increasingly larger and more international projects as time passed. The foundation currently supports around 50 projects, including many the foundation initiated itself.

Our own lives can be enriched by doing something for others. The foundation is tremendously proud of its success stories.



As education and learning are the pillars of social development; a commitment to children, adolescents and young adults is one of the main concerns of the Foundation.



Jan Liesche and Steven Kolbe also won an award in 2018 for their company Likosys GmbH in Berlin. Their speciality: management of electrical systems for industrial and commercial facilities of all kinds.

Recent 2022 winners include: Jakob Kanzler and his Stuttgart-based company Kanzler Elektrotechnik; Nils Kußerow from Kusserow Elektrotechnik GmbH in Waltrop; and Paolo Raimondo, H & R Elektrotechnik GmbH in Saarbrücken and Kleinblittersdorf.

Both Jakob Kanzler and Nils Kußerow founded their companies at the young age of 22. Nils Kußerow is very involved in the electrical industry in his region. He is the deputy head of the Recklinghausen Guild for Electrical Engineering, and also a brand ambassador for the German ZVEH (Central Association of the German Electrical and Information Technology Trades). All three of them engage in social activities, for example Jakob Kanzler and Paolo Raimondo supported the citizens affected by the catastrophic flood in the Ahr valley. Nils Kußerow made his company's vehicles available to vulnerable citizens during the Covid pandemic so they could do their food shopping. He has also set up a collection point for Ukrainian refugees at his company and carries out free renovation work in their flats.

Development of early excellence

The foundation promotes education and learning for children at the earliest possible stage. In the case of the kindergartens “Melanchton” in St. Arnual, Saarbrücken, Germany, and the “Haus des Kindes” in Neunkirchen, Germany, it offers specific assistance in developing early excellence by financing programmes and training staff.

One of the guidelines of the “Early Excellence” concept is the belief that each child is unique. They are treated with high regard and respect for who they are. The focus is on their strengths and talents to be developed and encouraged. The foundation firmly believes that parents are the first and most important experts for their children. Parents’ abilities should be supported and integrated in their children’s education processes.



“Boundaries often blur between the domains we are active in and which reflect the philosophy of Hager Group. We don’t think in stereotypes, but rather think about the people we can help.”

Evi Hager  
Chair of the Board

Sailing for science and education

Hager Group and Hager Energy (E3/DC) joined forces in 2021 to become the official sponsor of the French skipper Fabrice Amedeo. In 2017, Fabrice let his serious passion for sailing get the better of him. He left his career in journalism behind him to go pro. He is a skipper on a mission. He isn’t sailing for the competitive spirit alone: he is sailing to raise awareness about the importance of preserving our oceans. As an educational by-product of his transatlantic voyages, he wrote an informative awareness-raising book for French school children called “cétacé”.

Fabrice is a big believer in setting a good example: “I think it is important to share the knowledge that we have and make people aware of the importance of protecting our oceans. Last year, I wrote a book about this and was able to reach 80,000 children in French schools”.

**Seriously fun learning for future generations**  
It’s never too early to start educating people. Today, young children are very aware of the threat of climate change and pollution. Fabrice wanted to accompany his sailing exploits with a project to raise awareness among school children, which eventually took the form of a partnership with the Fondation de la Mer and the French Ministry of Education. The result: an educational kit that comprised a 64-page booklet with exercises, games and activities, where young readers learn more about the oceans and discover how fragile they are.

He now has plans to take his quest to share knowledge and raise awareness to the next level and go beyond French borders. One of the reasons for choosing to partner with us was the Peter und Louis Hager Foundation, which is also very engaged in actions to educate children and increase awareness about the impacts of global warming.

Going pro with passion

Until 2017, Fabrice Amedeo was a journalist for Le Figaro, a French newspaper, but he also had a serious passion for sailing. That same year, his passion won, and he became a professional skipper. Fabrice completed his first solo transatlantic race in 2010 and four years later he finished 9th at the Route du Rhum race in Class 40. In 2020, he sailed around the world in the service of science.







# Portraits in production: staying relevant

Flexible and up to date: well-trained employees are a boon for competitiveness.

## Self-assessment and gap filling

The top-down approach of telling people which skills to acquire is no longer valid. People are more engaged in learning and have much better retention when they pursue skills that interest them. At Hager Group, for our employees and our customers,

we provide training and guidance on the skills that are critical for both the company and individuals to succeed. Our employees can re-assess their skills and make decisions about which skill gaps they want to close. This way, they personalise their development while also helping the organisation.

Two colleagues in production shared their learning journey with us.



# Neugul Cinar

Neugul Cinar’s career at Hager Group spans almost 20 years. She started in January 2004 doing temp work. Her first experience was sorting parts on a conveyor belt, a task she openly admits wasn’t so interesting. What really caught her eye was the company itself and the possibilities that it offered. She confided that she was a little frustrated not to have been able to finish her studies when she was younger, but she knew she had found a winning opportunity with Hager Group. She instantly identified the company as a place where she could pursue her ambition of learning more and evolving professionally.

We asked her three questions.

**Can you share with us your employment history at Hager Group?**

I started off temping in 2004. Within a year, I was part of a team with a permanent contract. I made it clear to my manager at that time that I wanted to develop my skills, learn more and help others. Soon after, I took on the role of Team Facilitator and, when I felt I had learnt all I could, I applied to become a Team Leader. I was so proud to be the first person to make such a move within the factory. Over the years, my confidence and knowledge grew, and I became a Line Manager. In 2018, a Line Manager position came up for a new and much more strategic sector in the factory, and I applied because I love challenges. I got the job, and now I’m in charge of 70 people.

**You have changed roles every three years or so. What inspires you to do this?**

As I said, I love a challenge, I love what I do, and I enjoy working with people. And when you enjoy what you do, you give it your all. Every day I learn something new. I might not be the most technically minded, but I really appreciate working with people and helping them. My role now is to bring the mix of technical experts together to make sure everything runs smoothly. It’s important to listen to everyone and give them the autonomy to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities. Respect and trust are essential when working with people.

**I’m sure it wasn’t all smooth sailing. Have there been any pivotal moments that sparked change?**

In 2007 – I remember it clearly as if it was yesterday – I was asked to present what I had done in terms of team organisation to the factory management. I was nervous at first and insisted on presenting my work in my own way. It went very well. I really felt listened to as a member of the production team, and that my opinion and my work mattered. Doing this presentation was a building block for the future. So, when in 2019 I became Supervisor for a new line, in a new sector, with a new team and at the same time studying at Nancy University, it was complicated. There was so much to do and build. To be honest, it was a little overwhelming. But then I recalled my presentation, and the support and encouragement I received, and that motivated me to use everything I had learnt to date – and help us all make the new production line a success.

**Neugul Cinar**  
Neugul instantly identified the company as a place where she could pursue her ambition of learning more and evolving professionally.

“When you enjoy what you do, you give your all.”

**Neugul Cinar**  
**Line Manager Hager Group**



Portraits in production







# Krystyna Pacyga

Krystyna has over 20 years' experience in the manufacturing industry. With a degree in Plastics Processing Technology in hand, her first job was as a process engineer. She quickly progressed to production manager, and her current job is Operations Manager for two sites in Poland. For Krystyna, continuous improvement, courage and learning are the name of the game. These three elements have guided her throughout her career, which has involved participating in continuous improvement projects, managing production line transfers, launching new production lines, visiting other facilities to learn, participating in training herself and training others, taking courses, participating in workshops and doing postgraduate studies.

Krystyna explained that she met the Board of Directors back in May 2022 when they visited Hager Group sites in Poland. It was an enriching experience for her to talk with them about the factory. She was particularly happy to share not only best practices in Poland but also what could be improved. Afterall, any job, whatever the context, is a permanent learning journey and work-in-progress. "To me it is important to belong to a big group and play by company rules, but to be successful at home, we also need to play by Polish rules too. The two are not mutually exclusive and can be complementary, giving us the best of both worlds."

As with Neugul, we asked Krystyna three questions too.



**Krystyna Pacyga**  
Krystyna has over 20 years' experience in the manufacturing industry. She is keen to learn best practices from others and also share with the group ones from Poland.

## What can you tell us about your career at Hager Group?

I started my career with the company 16 years ago as production line manager. It was an interesting time as the plant was expanding and developing. We were launching new production lines while optimising ongoing processes. After some years, I took on the challenge of managing the entire production department in Tychy. In fact, it was my great pleasure to create an Autonomous Production Unit (UAP) which coincided with launching new industrial projects, such as the MCB (Miniature Circuit Breakers) and RCBO 4PP (Residual Current Breaker Overload) lines.

After taking on the role of coordinator, I later went on to manage production at both Tychy and Sosnowiec. My assignment was to systematise and optimise all production departments. It was especially important to me to break down operational silos; everyone has a role to play, and hierarchy should not hinder progress.

## You are now Operations Manager. Please tell me about how you reached this position and any training you had to help you get there?

I am convinced that it was my experience and values that allowed me to become Operations Manager. Courage, respect and reliability are crucial when you are responsible for people

and production. With this mindset, nothing is impossible. Working on our self-development is a never-ending process, and I'm convinced that continuous improvements in production are similar in many ways.

Hands-on experience in the factories and the LIFT training programme which gave me deeper insights into aspects of management, leadership and strategic thinking, have both contributed to my work-in-progress learning path and being able to adapt to the company's needs and those of my teams.

## The war for talent is universal – how do you attract and retain workers in Poland?

Hiring new employees with an unemployment level of 4 to 5% in Poland is challenging. We are doing our best to make Hager Group more recognisable as an employer of choice on the local market, and our efforts are paying off. I think that our employees are the best representatives of the entire Hager Group brand. Our people stay because of actions that we have implemented, such as on-the-job training and comprehensive onboarding programmes to help new recruits adapt quickly to the new workplace. The nature of a production site is constantly having to adapt to supply and demand, which we have successfully managed over the last six months despite difficulties to increase the retention rate in our factories. It is only natural to give our employees the opportunity to improve their skills. The growth of the company as a whole and Poland in particular means that our employees can continue their careers within the organisation.



# Addressing the challenges in education

To know more about education in Germany and the status quo in Saarland, we spoke to Professor Dr. Ing. Dieter Leonhard, President of the University of Applied Sciences in Saarbrücken (htw saar).

**President Leonhard, climate change is considered the number one challenge in Germany and Europe. As it will be particularly affected by the consequences, the younger generation is demanding action from politicians. Is this also reflected in the number of applicants to the university and the types of courses attracting interest?**

Yes and no. Yes, because we have a lot of students on our Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) courses who are very engaged in exploring solutions and ideas to protect the climate. Overall, though, we are currently seeing a decline in applicants. In the classical technology subjects, we have had 30% fewer applicants in the past three years, 25% fewer in electrical engineering, and we are even seeing fewer applicants in subjects related to renewable energies.

**Does that mean this is generation is all talk and no action?**

I wouldn't like to single out and criticise a particular generation. Young people very often make very rational decisions. And the numbers are not definitive. In IT, applicant numbers are very robust. We have had very strong growth in civil engineering and even technical disciplines in healthcare are experiencing growth across Germany.

**It is more of a shift in interests among applicants, or is the decline primarily due to the drop in university applications?**

It is without doubt both. We have experienced fluctuating applicant numbers in the past. This is normal, but it could quickly become cause for alarm. It is something we experienced in the late 90s. Back then, there was a significant slump in applicant numbers in mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and civil engineering, particularly after news of widespread redundancies among engineers. This is not currently a problem, but cyclical fluctuations can be quickly triggered if companies don't mind sustainability when it comes to planning their human and other resources. That's why I always stress to our industry partners the importance of thinking long term and taking responsible action when it comes to their training programmes.



Professor Dr. Ing. Dieter Leonhard is President of the University of Applied Sciences in Saarbrücken (htw saar).

**The current trend in applicant numbers is not encouraging. How can you help ensure enough experts for the industry in Saarland if the pool of potential applicants continues to shrink?**

Here at the university, we have already initiated many necessary countermeasures with a focus on "more internationalisation", "more women in STEM" and "more dual study programmes". However, such advances cannot be achieved purely through a package of organisational measures. What we are talking about is a transformation of the university, the likes of which we haven't experienced in 50 years.

**Can the university surmount this challenge on its own?**

Certainly not. Social trends play a critical role. Anything we do as a university can only succeed if society as a whole steps up and regains an interest in technology. Human progress is always the result of new insights, new technologies and innovative solutions. This is something we talk about far too little in Germany. And we are not honest with ourselves. An economy without raw materials and an increasingly knowledge-based society has no future without technology-driven innovation.

**That sounds like an appeal to politicians.**

It is an appeal to all of us to act urgently. The social climate is an important motivating factor



**Professor Dr. Ing. Dieter Leonhard**  
**President of the University of Applied Sciences in Saarbrücken**

**“Anything we do as a university can only succeed if society as a whole steps up and regains an interest in technology.”**

for the decisions young people make about their futures. We need to find the courage to create an environment in our society that rewards experimentation. We need to inspire people to find technical solutions to problems and challenges. This is an area where I see considerable potential for Germany and for every individual. I'll tell you now, anyone who completes a degree in electrical engineering today will not, by anyone's standards, need to worry about a job or income for the rest of their lives.

**Let's talk about what the university is doing, starting with internationalisation. What are your objectives in this regard?**

With our geographical location, structure and 16% of our students coming from outside of Germany, we already have a clear international focus. This is a strong foundation that we want to keep building on.

**The French-German cooperation with the University of Lorraine, which offers twelve study programmes, and global partnerships with universities in China, Mexico, India**



**and other locations already set you apart today. You are also the German university with the most French-speaking programmes.**

Yes, that is true, but we can do more. Until now, our international English-speaking programmes have focused strongly on master's students, for example. We are now also looking to attract undergraduates who do not yet speak German to join our bachelor's degree programmes. The idea is to provide a curriculum that lets students begin their coursework in English, while also becoming proficient in German, so that, by the end of their studies, they can go on to work in a German-speaking environment. Attracting English speakers alone will not be enough to fill our spaces with good students. That's why we developed a "Fit for Study" programme that prepares applicants from outside of Germany for their studies and officially admits them to the university. We are also currently working with companies to develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at French speakers, because there are many candidates of interest in France and Francophone countries.

**Is it fair to say that an internationalisation strategy of this kind requires support from politicians?**

Germany is the fourth most popular destination for international students. That is a good starting point. In reality, however, politics and society both have a role to play. Are we ready for the open-mindedness that such a strategy demands? Are we a country that welcomes foreign students? Are we known for our friendliness and willingness to help?

**Germany is perhaps more well-known for rigorous demands, red tape and protectionist policies ...**  
 And we see many examples of this in our daily lives. We recently had huge problems getting work permits for the Ukrainian university lecturers we are hiring. Our rules are not flexible enough for the real world.

**Becoming "more international" was just one of your three areas of focus. How is it going with "more women"?**  
 In Germany, there is still too much gender disparity in course choices.

While the figures today are certainly considerably better than they were 20 years ago, we can't be satisfied with a 20% share of women in STEM subjects when other countries such as Spain or France or countries in Scandinavia or Eastern Europe achieve around 30% or even 40%.

**What do you suggest?**

I'm afraid I don't have a silver bullet. I think we need to free technical subjects from any association with soldering, tightening screws and welding. We need to place the reasons for engaging with technology front and centre. "Smart building" not only sounds better, it also says a lot more than "technical building systems". When we promote international courses of study, we also automatically attract a higher proportion of women. And the number of female applicants for dual study programmes is also always higher.

**Doesn't Germany need to take an even closer look at when and where we lose all these young women?**

As the father of three daughters, I can tell you unequivocally: yes. It is during the school years that we are losing the

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**President of the University of Applied Sciences in Saarbrücken**

**“Human progress is always the result of new insights, new technologies and innovative solutions.”**



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“Most employers have very positive experiences with dual study programmes.”

interest of young women. They are not encouraged in maths, physics, chemistry and technology and are instead scared away from these subjects. I'm afraid I don't have the answer as to how we are going to reverse this trend.

**Why do you think expanding dual study programmes will help combat the shortage of skilled workers?**

We are seeing a strong interest in dual study programmes. Being integrated in a workplace is particularly attractive to students who wish to start their studies close to home, and it offers the added security of a job. It also provides an exceptional opportunity for social mobility. The challenge in this area, however, is getting companies on board as, besides their involvement and influence, it also requires financial commitment. Most employers have very positive experiences with dual study programmes.

**Would you say that these three measures are enough to reverse the shortage of skilled workers in the region?**

Unfortunately, not. I believe that Saarland is at the start of a major transformation. It will be an uphill battle, however, as the region has seen the lowest levels of business investment in research and development nationwide. Despite this, we as a university have been able to attract twice the national average in third-party funding. But we cannot manage this transformation with young people alone.

**Do you mean that the university should also involve itself in continuing education?**

Yes. It is becoming increasingly clear that the things we learn at the age of 20 are no longer enough to take us through our working life, which is likely to last until our late 60s. The development of technology and new trends in digitalisation and electrification are fundamentally changing our working lives and the demands placed on us. Therefore, continuing personal development is becoming increasingly important for us all. In this area, too, we now offer a number of attractive part-time study options that can be completed alongside work that we want to expand.

**Do you think that companies and politicians truly appreciate the gravity of the situation?**

I fear not, but the imminent shortage of skilled workers is sure to speed up their thinking. We have so much potential, we just need to use it properly.

**Thank you for talking to us, President Leonhard.**

# About Hager Group

Hager Group is a leading supplier of solutions and services for electrical installations in residential, commercial and industrial buildings with 12,900 employees, who generated €2.8 billion in sales in 2022. Components and solutions in 20 locations around the globe and are distributed to customers in more than 100 countries. Hager Group is an international, independent, family-owned and run company headquartered in Germany.

One of the industry's innovation leaders, Hager Group aims at sustainably shaping the electrical world of tomorrow and playing a leading role in the field of energy management and distribution. Customers rely on the group's safe and simple products and solutions which range from energy distribution, cable management and wiring accessories to building automation, security systems and energy management under the brands Hager, Berker, Elcom, E3/DC, Bocchiotti/Iboco and two recent additions Pmflex and Eficia.



# Our Executive Board

A five-member Executive Board of experienced managers is entrusted with running Hager Group. Together they set the company strategy in line with our ambition to lead in tomorrow’s electrical world. 2023 heralds changes to our Executive Board.



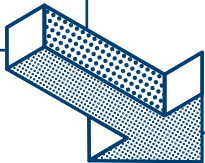
**Mike Elbers**

Mike Elbers is our Chief Marketing Officer. He is responsible for Solution Development and Marketing. Mike’s role is all about making sure that we develop the right portfolio, so we can best serve our customers’ needs – maintaining, renewing and deepening relationships with our existing and future customers is important to him.



**Daniel Hager**

Daniel Hager is our Chief Executive Officer, a position he has held since 2008. He chairs the Executive Board, and together they set the company strategy in line with our ambition to shape the electrical world of tomorrow. He also heads the Board of Trustees of the Peter und Luise Hager Foundation and is involved in numerous industry associations. In December 2023, Daniel, part of the third generation of the owner family, hands over operational leadership after 15 successful years. He takes up the position of Chairman of the Supervisory Board.



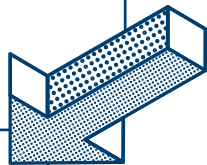
**Sabine Busse**

Sabine Busse, appointed as Chief Executive Officer by the Supervisory Board, succeeds long-time CEO Daniel Hager. Sabine is a highly experienced international executive in the energy, electrical and automation sector. She begins in Blieskastel end August 2023. For a three-month period, she and Daniel Hager will jointly lead the company. On 1<sup>st</sup> December, with Daniel Hager’s transition to the Chairmanship of the Supervisory Board, Sabine assumes full responsibility in leading the company.



**Philippe Ferragu**

Philippe Ferragu is our Chief Group Resources Officer. He allocates financial resources effectively, ensures our financial goals are met and manages the financial & legal departments. Philippe has played a pivotal role in the company's financial success since 2006. His successor, Michael Flieger, was named as Chief Financial Officer in June 2023; their transition period starts in September and ends on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.



**Michael Flieger**

Michael Flieger starts his role as Chief Financial Officer, on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2023, succeeding Philippe Ferragu. Michael joined Hager Group in 2020 as Group Product Management Vice President and brings extensive experience in both customer and industrial environments within the electrical and lighting business.



**Dr. Ralph Fürderer**

Ralph Fürderer is our Chief Technical Officer. He is responsible for engineering and manufacturing as well as supply chain, logistics, group quality & environment. For him, the job is all about ensuring we are a reliable and trusted partner for our customers. He is convinced that our industrial carbon footprint can and must be reduced.



**Franck Houdebert**

Franck Houdebert is our Chief Group Human Resources Officer. He is responsible for people at Hager Group. He is also responsible for part of the sustainability department, Group Communications, the Asia-Pacific sales region and he supervises organisations in India and China.



# Our Supervisory Board

Our Supervisory Board, a team with a very wide range of competences and experience, is available to the Executive Board in an advisory capacity.

## Antoine Raymond

is Chairman of the international automotive supplier ARaymond Network. This family business of 7,200 employees produces fastening and assembly systems.

## Prof. Dr. Ing. Gisela Lanza

is a leading professor at the Institute of Production Science at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and lectures in Production Systems and Quality Management. Dr. Lanza, who joined Hager Group's Supervisory Board in 2017, has headed the Production Systems department at the Institute of Production Science (wbk) since 2003.

## Peter Hager

is a shareholder in Hager Group. He worked for many years in the German sales teams. He is the son of company co-founder Hermann Hager. Today, Peter Hager is particularly committed to supporting the next generation of those working in the electrical trade.

## Evi Hager

is a shareholder in Hager Group and Deputy Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board. The daughter of company co-founder Hermann Hager, she is also at the head of the non-profit Peter und Luise Hager Foundation.

## Günther Fleig

is the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Hager SE. An economics graduate, he has held various positions of responsibility during his professional career. Among others, he was head of Controlling at Mercedes Benz AG and a Board Member of Daimler AG from 1999 to 2009.

## Prof. Dr. Rainer Lorz

joined the Supervisory Board of Hager SE in 2014. He is a lawyer, and partner in Hennerkes, Kirchdörfer & Lorz of Stuttgart, a law firm which specialises in advising family and entrepreneurial businesses.



## Growth 2022

+6.8%

## Hager Group key figures



> 100 countries  
where our solutions  
are available



2.8 billion euros  
turnover



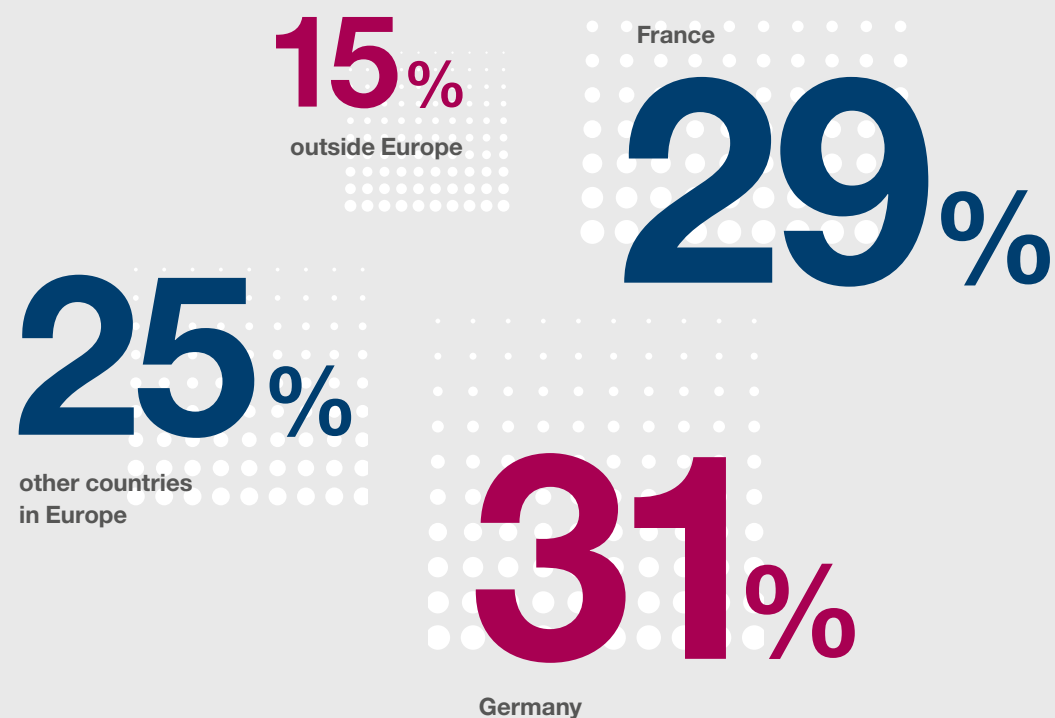
> 12,900  
employees



20 production  
facilities locations  
in 10 countries

## Committed and competent employees worldwide

Distribution of Hager Group  
employees worldwide



## Hager Group brands the specialists

**:hager**

Hager brand provides a complete range of products and solutions for electrical distribution in industrial and professional buildings as well as the home.

**B. Berker**

Berker switches and systems are used all over the world, making life easier, more beautiful and convenient.

**ELCOM.**

Elcom is a specialist in state-of-the-art communication systems and creative entryway designs.

**E3/DC**  
ENERGY STORAGE

Since 2010, E3/DC has been manufacturing innovative solutions for energy storage and electro-mobility in Germany/Switzerland.

**B. BOCCHIOTTI**

**B. IBOCO**

Bocchiotti and Iboco are specialists in production and distribution of solutions and services in the field of cable management and small distribution boards for domestic and industrial applications in France and Italy.



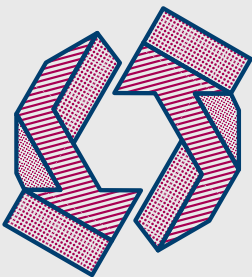
# About this Annual Report

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Malcolm X

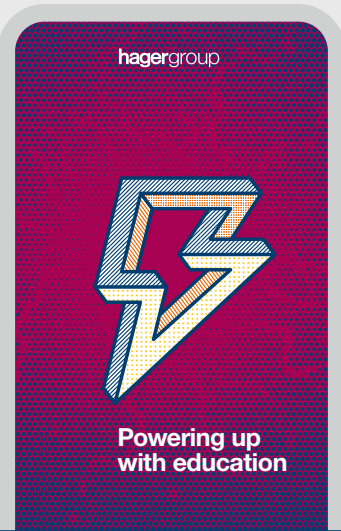
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## Digital report

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Cate is a member of the group communications team and author of this report.

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Nadja and Markus are responsible for the project management of this report.

### Anna Bielak

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## Imprint

Published by:  
Hager Group  
Hager SE  
Group Communications  
Zum Gunterstal  
66440 Blieskastel  
Germany

Overall concept, text and editing:  
Group Communications  
Design concept, layout and graphics:  
Superultraplus Designstudio  
Design concept and Art Direction:  
Group Communications  
Photos in proportionate order:  
Jan Ladwig, Markus Dietze, Christian Ernst,  
Jean-Marc de Balthasar, Erik Witsoe,  
Holger Kiefer, Manuela Meyer, Offenblende,  
Max Matissek, Stefan Kranz, Daniele Mattioli,  
Arnaud Meyer, Halfpoint/Adobe Stock,  
Blake Cheek/Unsplash, Gian Porsius/Unsplash  
Transcreation: Creative Culture  
Reproduction: mediaserv  
Printing: Krüger Druck+Verlag



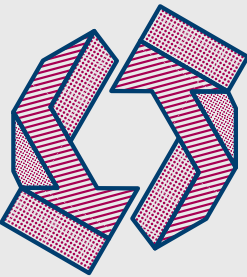
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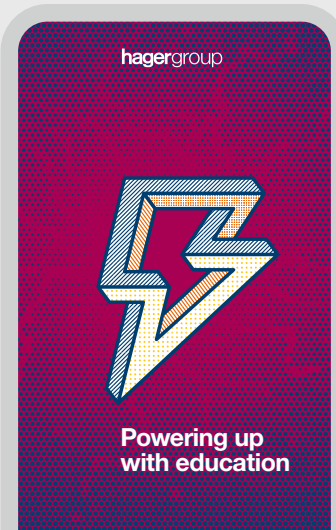
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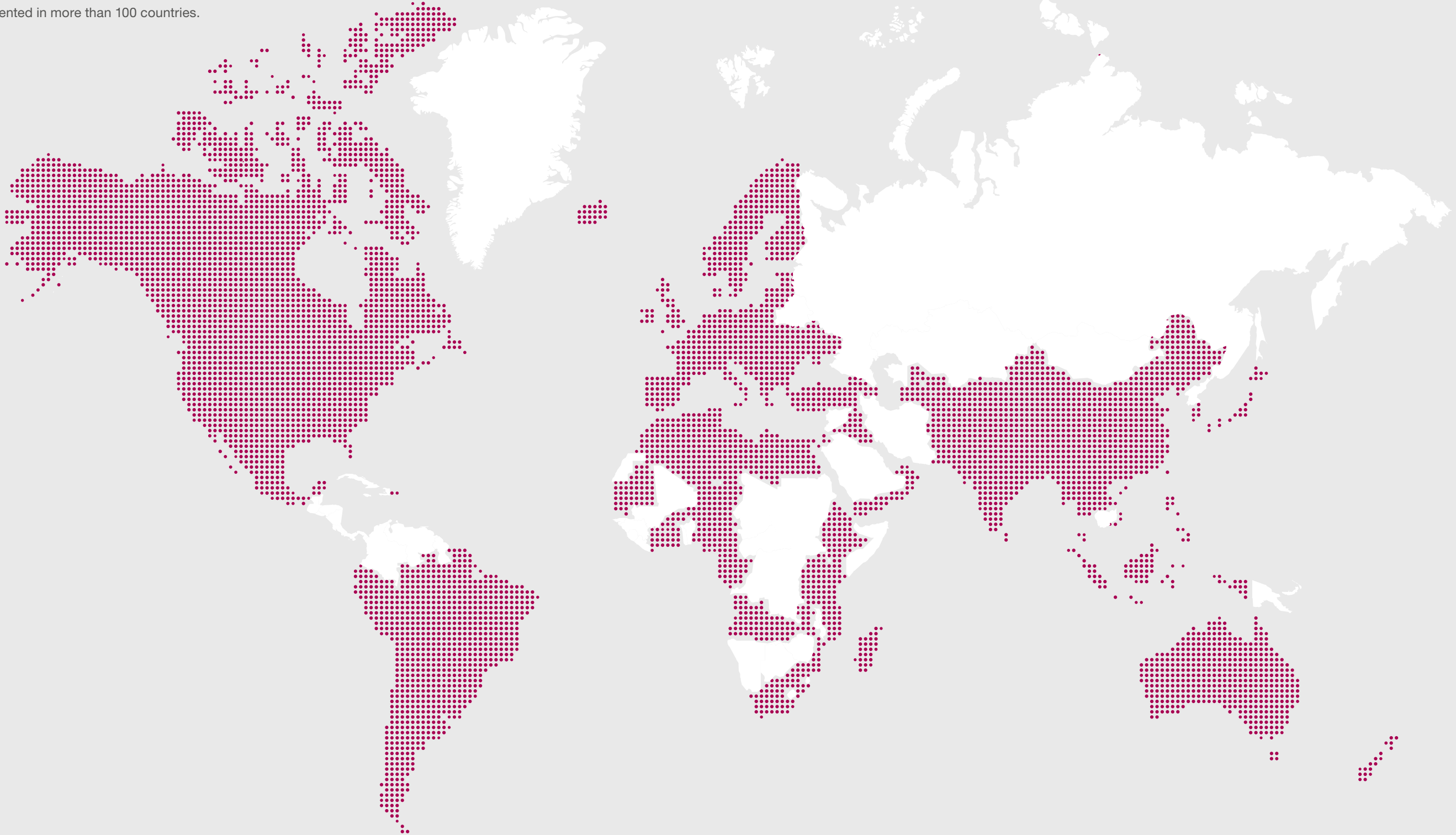
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Hager Group worldwide and contacts for customers

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