

STRICK SCHRIFT

STRETCH YOUR MIND





EDITORIAL

KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP

Welcome to Strickschrift 01, the first edition of our brand-new company magazine.

We've created it to show you that Hero Textil is far more than products and services. Hero Textil, that's 50 people. Each of them with their own story. All together, we can look forward to a promising future. We evolve and live by shared values – not detached from the rest of the world, but in the midst of a dynamic industry environment and in constant communication with innovative business partners.

Things are happening at Hero Textil. And we want you to experience this first-hand! Our aptly named magazine Strickschrift (German for 'knitting pattern') is structured like a traditional knitting pattern: row by row, it creates a complete picture for you.

Sounds good? Then read on! And most importantly, if you have any questions at all, want to share an idea or simply wish to talk to us, please get in touch! We appreciate your interest and are always there for you.

Until next time! Kind regards,

A blue ink handwritten signature, likely of Christoph Ulrich, written in a cursive style.

Christoph Ulrich, Director of Hero Textil AG

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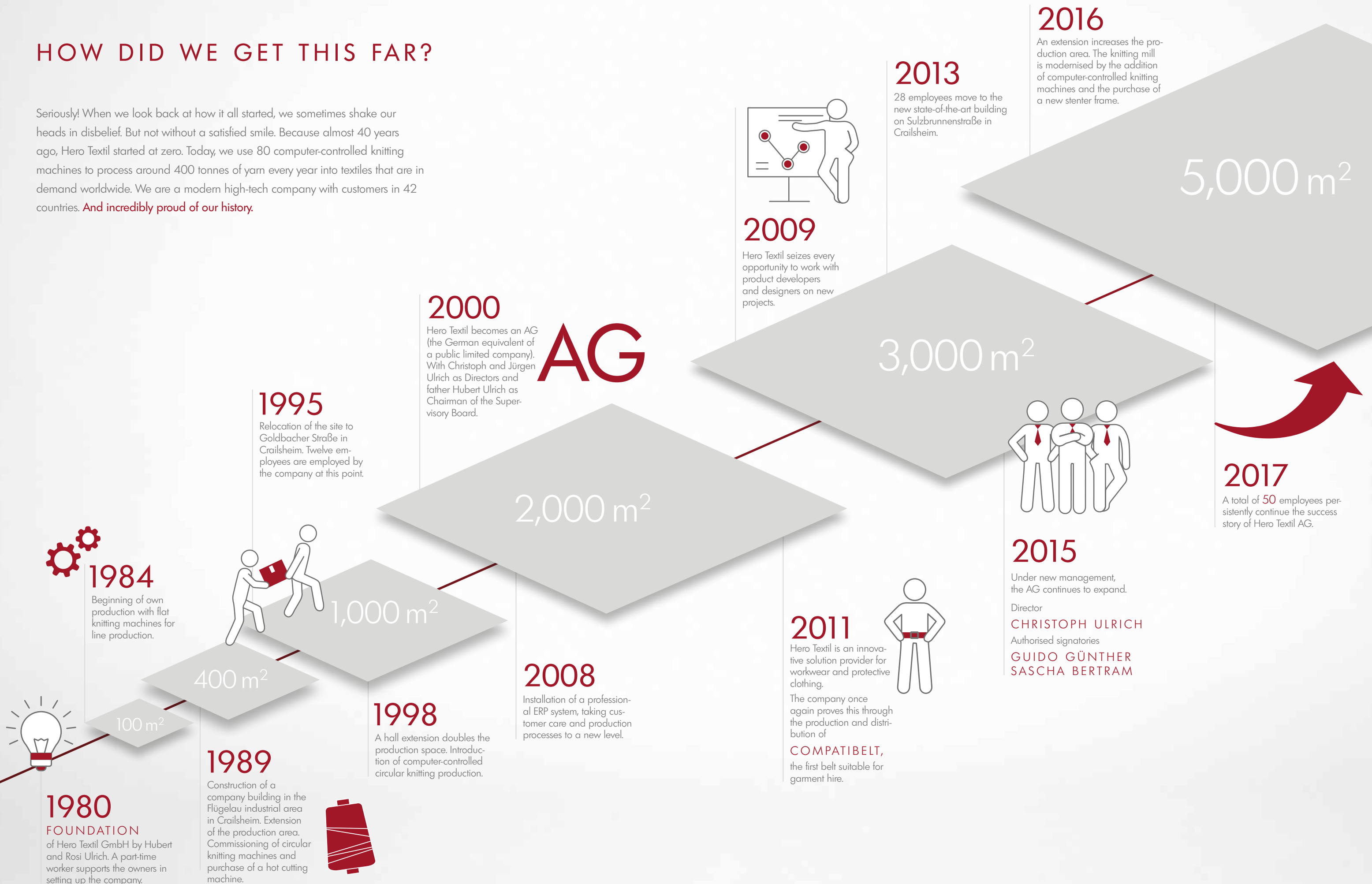
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A CHAT WITH
COMPANY FOUNDER
HUBERT ULRICH

HOW DID WE GET THIS FAR?

Seriously! When we look back at how it all started, we sometimes shake our heads in disbelief. But not without a satisfied smile. Because almost 40 years ago, Hero Textil started at zero. Today, we use 80 computer-controlled knitting machines to process around 400 tonnes of yarn every year into textiles that are in demand worldwide. We are a modern high-tech company with customers in 42 countries. **And incredibly proud of our history.**



A photograph of two men sitting at a table in a meeting. The man on the left is wearing a black sweater over a white shirt and is looking towards the right. The man on the right is wearing a grey vest over a white shirt, has a beard, and is gesturing with his right hand while speaking. They are in a room with a light green tufted wall. In the foreground, there are blurred hands and a glass of white wine on the table.

A SEASONED TRIO

HERO TEXTIL AG'S THREE COMPANY MANAGEMENT MEMBERS ARE A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN. WE'LL TELL YOU WHY.

Out of the office, away from the usual working routine. The Hero Textil AG management meets privately every three months in order to discuss things for which there is otherwise little time. This time, director Christoph Ulrich has invited his sales manager Guido Günther and his production manager Sascha Bertram to his home. In a casual atmosphere, they cook, engage in discussions, philosophise and eat together. But how did the three of them actually meet? How did their business partnership come about? That's quite a long story, but we'll try to make it short.



25 years ago, Hero Textil consisted of Hubert Ulrich, his two sons and two employees. When one of them left the company, her position in sales had to be filled. Even then, the human element was crucial for the staff selection process at Hero Textil. That's why Hubert Ulrich and his sons first considered potential candidates among their friends and family members before posting a public job advertisement. "We quickly thought of Guido, my sister Barbara's long-time partner. At that time, he was almost a part of the family, so my father and I decided that he was the perfect choice", explains Christoph Ulrich.

And so it happened that Guido Günther received a very unexpected call.

In 1992, after a retraining as a computer scientist, Guido had just started to send out applications. "To this day, I still remember how I was at my parents' apartment when the phone rang and Hubert Ulrich was on the line. This wasn't discussed. That came as quite a surprise for me." Still, he didn't need to think twice. Guido seized the opportunity and started right away. He went on to attend the Reutlingen University School of Textiles & Design to acquire the specialist knowledge he was lacking. His sales know-how, on the other hand, was gathered on business trips and in the course of

the daily business – in a "learning by doing" approach.

"Sascha Bertram would be just awesome", reckoned Christoph Ulrich.

But it wasn't until many years later that the paths of Sascha Bertram and Hero Textil actually crossed. The current production manager and authorised signatory first came to Crailsheim in 2008. At that time, as an IT consultant tasked with implementing the new ERP system. "In this role, he quickly learned a lot about our structures although he was an outsider. He was deeply involved in our processes in no time at all," recounts Christoph Ulrich. It was a critical time for Hero Textil's development. In order to be able to capture and intelligently evaluate IT data, processes had to be reconsidered and the entire workflow had to be redefined. "That's how problems came to light which we wanted to discuss in a leadership workshop, and we chose Sascha to host it. He did a really great job, so I said to my brother afterwards that it'd be amazing to have Sascha work for Hero full-time." Initially, however, they weren't at all sure that this would ever happen. After all: "Who on earth would move from Stamberg to Crailsheim? That would only happen if mountains started to grow here, not a moment sooner!" But Christoph Ulrich was wrong.





When Sascha Bertram's wife fell pregnant, he began to look for an office-based job. This quest led him directly to Hero Textil, where he took over the job as a production manager in 2013, despite having no industry experience at the time.

Numbers person, customer whisperer and lateral thinker.

Christoph Ulrich, Guido Günther and Sascha Bertram have been working together in this management trio constellation since 2015 – with great success! “Yes, things are going really well for us”, confirms Sascha Bertram. “Probably because we're pretty close in age and complement each other well. Guido is intimately familiar with our customer wishes and knows just how to deal with them. Christoph, on the other hand, is a perfectionist. He sets high standards, and he is driven and won't let us rest.” Christoph Ulrich adds: “And you, Sascha, are our bureaucrat. You're very analytical. So in a nutshell, you could say that Sascha is the numbers person, Guido the customer whisperer and I'm the creative lateral thinker. And all three of us are excellent networkers in our respective areas. This is a strength that definitely unites us.”

Steadfast yet versatile.

“Sometimes our unique blend is a bit like fire and water. But that's why it works. We share the same values and foster a sound discussion culture. Sometimes it takes a while to reach consensus, but we always do. That's what counts”, says Guido Günther. The most important thing, however, is that the company has broadened its base by establishing a management trio. In contrast to the earlier days, there are always three people in the company who are aware of all key issues. In addition, human resources manager Anna Sophie Göggerle is involved in strategic matters, while Sascha and Guido have authority to act as directors. That provides a sense of security – for the management itself, but above all for employees and customers.

For Director Christoph Ulrich, this is the key point:

“The entire textile industry is currently undergoing some significant change. The dynamics at work are just incredible. It was important to me to safeguard the company and not make it dependent on just one person. Our team of three is very steadfast, and at the same time versatile. Together, we can master any challenge.”



SPAGHETTI À LA HERO

Ingredients for 4 servings

6 garlic cloves
2 dried red chilli peppers
6 to 8 pickled dried tomatoes
2 bunches of rocket
500 g spaghetti
Salt and pepper
Pinch of nutmeg
100 ml olive oil
100 g Parmesan

Preparation

1. Cut garlic into thin slices, finely chop chilli, roughly chop rocket. Cook spaghetti in plenty of boiling salted water according to pack instructions.
2. Heat olive oil in a pan. Fry the garlic, dried tomatoes and chilli in it for 1 to 2 minutes. Add approx. 100 ml of the spaghetti water. Add salt, pepper and a pinch of nutmeg. After adding the spaghetti water, bring to a brief boil 3 to 4 times.
3. Drain spaghetti and put in a bowl while still wet. Then mix the sauce in with the spaghetti. Finally, sprinkle the shaved Parmesan (grated with a vegetable peeler) and the chopped rocket over the spaghetti and serve.



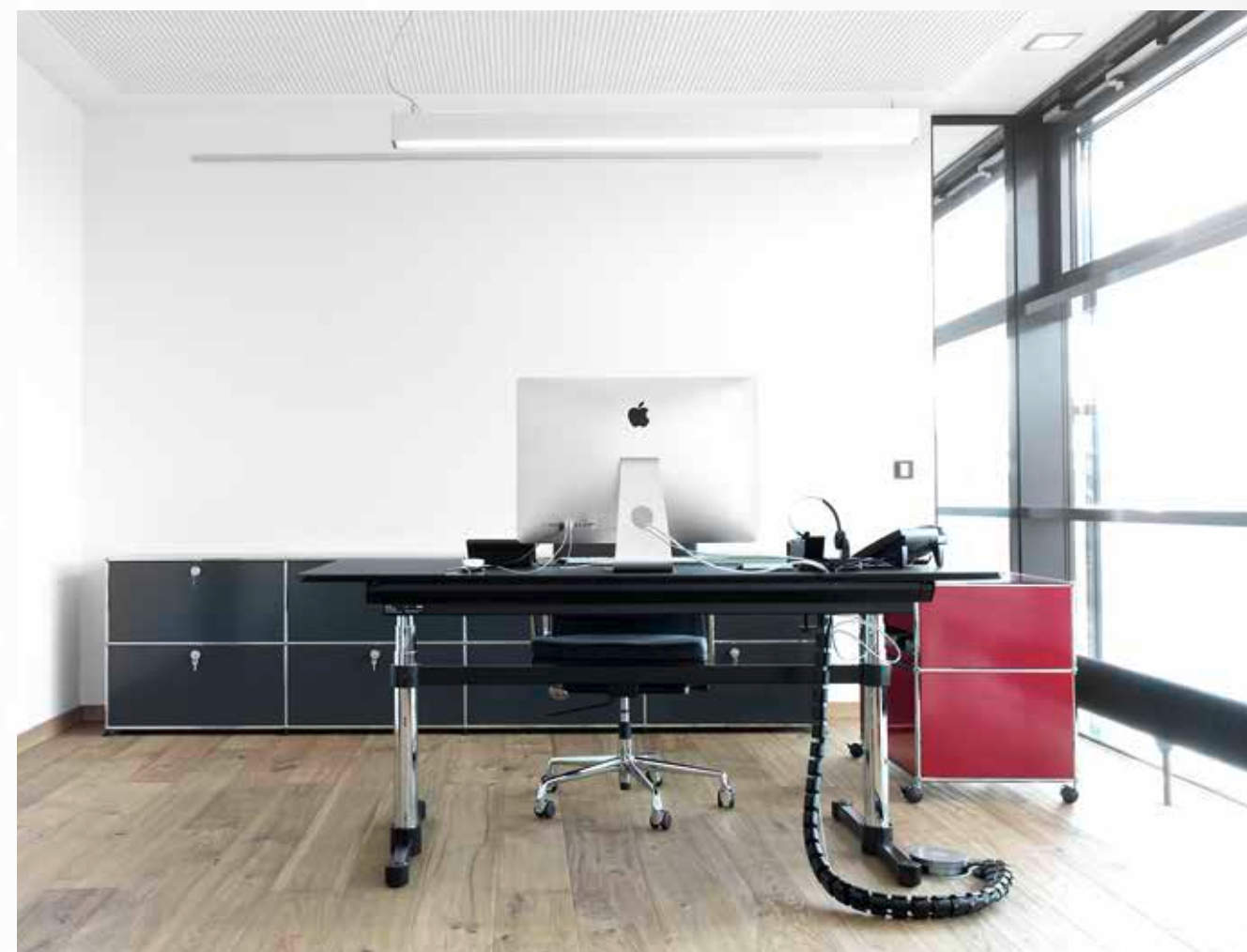
OUR PRIDE AND JOY

Do you have a moment? We've got something to show you. Namely some exciting glimpses into our new headquarters in the Crailsheim Industrial Park East, where we have been brainstorming together since 2013 in order to manage, knit and distribute our products all over the

world. Here we feel completely comfortable and also enjoy the best working conditions to advance Hero Textil further. Curious to see more? Then quickly turn the page ...



Right! Here we are in the administration building. It houses a number of offices entirely in Hero Textil CI (see picture on the far right), the reception, common areas and – up the stairs and to the left – our meeting room.



And now we can offer you a first glimpse into our production hall. Here, circular (left) and flat knitting machines (right) process about 400 tonnes of yarn into high-quality elastic textiles each year.

// HELLO, WE ARE HERO.
WE'RE GLAD YOU'VE
DECIDED TO COME
VISIT US HERE IN
PRODUCTION.

Ilhan, Joseph, Hassan
und Kristina (f.l.r.)



Let's move on to quality management.
Here you can see Maria (top left) checking the
elasticity of a knitted fabric.



In the picture above right, a 50 x 50 cm square is cut,
which is later shrink-tested in a washing machine (below).
The picture on the left is also about quality: here Silke is
checking the thickness of the knitted fabric. Meanwhile,
Constantin uses a mesh counter to check the density of
the material.





Our knitter Gerhard (left) checks the needles in the needle bed of the flat knitting machine. The goods on the equipment machine (right) are also regularly inspected. That's Constantin's job too.

Would you like to come join us on a live tour?

No problem! Please contact us at info@hero-textil.de to arrange an appointment for a visit.



A PERFECT DECISION



HERO TEXTIL HUMAN RESOURCES
MANAGER ANNA SOPHIE GÖGGERLE
TALKS ABOUT HER PLANS AND
PROJECTS.

A young woman from Crailsheim studies international economics and development. She completes internships at the German Association for International Cooperation (GIZ), travels to New Zealand, does charity work in Nigeria and Tunisia. Her dream is to graduate and go on to work on global issues of the future whilst advancing the sustainable development of the world. So she applies to companies around the globe – only to end up in her hometown. Bad luck? Not at all. Because Hero Textil promoted her from holiday worker to human resources manager without batting an eyelid – simply because she is a good fit on a personal level and Director Christoph Ulrich felt he could trust her from the very first time they met. Anna Sophie Göggerle is now 28 years old and thus unusually young for an HR manager. But she is also uncharacteristically confident, dynamic, straightforward and open – as you can see in the following interview.



Anna, what brings you to Hero?

After completing my studies, I wanted to earn a bit of spare cash while I went about sending out job applications. So I applied to Hero Textil as a holiday worker. Production manager Sascha Bertram then invited me to an interview and asked me if I was ready to muck in. A short time later, I found myself in the warehouse, peeling off glue, rolling up belts and moving machines around.

But it didn't stay that way, did it?

No. After a few weeks as a holiday worker, Christoph Ulrich came up to me and asked me if I could imagine becoming a human resources manager. Totally crazy, when you think about it. Especially since my degree is in a completely different field. But I felt extremely comfortable in the company right from the outset and was really impressed by the trust placed in me. So I took a little time to think it through – and then accepted. After almost a year in the company, I now know: it was a perfect decision!

Yes, absolutely. And, after all, you can do some peace work here too ...

At the very least, my master's degree in social science conflict research doesn't exactly impede me in my work as human resources manager. That's pretty obvious. Because wherever people meet, there is interpersonal communication and therefore sometimes conflict. Although there's not a lot of that at Hero Textil. Here, people of different ages from ten different countries work hand in hand very peacefully.

Did you understand from the outset what it means to take on this job?

No, not really. At first, I really had to think about what's being asked of me. Especially since my job didn't exist in this way before. But after nearly a year of "learning by doing", I'm coping very well. In addition to my day-to-day work, I'm involved in various personnel projects. Some of these were initiated by myself and others the result of exchanges with the management or colleagues. The management and I have a good relationship, and my suggestions are always acknowledged. That's something I really appreciate.

What are your main responsibilities as a human resources manager?

Well, I'd say they're quite traditional, namely managing all application processes from recruitment to onboarding of new employees. I issue references, take care of personnel development and monitor the holiday planning. Contract and salary negotiations are also part of my job. In addition, I am involved in strategic management decisions, run the entertainment committee and organise trips for our trainees. However, my most important task is to be a direct point of contact for all employees.

Into which projects do you channel most of your energy at the moment?

This year, from October onwards, we'll have employee appraisals for the first time. Their purpose is to compare self- and external assessments and find out more about how satisfied our employees are. If we want the whole process to be useful, it must be well prepared, e.g. with coherent evaluation sheets and so forth, which is what I'm currently spending a lot of time on.

Which other HR issues are you or Hero Textil AG dealing with?

The shortage of skilled labour is, of course, a central issue. Everything revolves around the question: how can we attract well-qualified staff to the Crailsheim site? After all, we are the only textile company that produces here, so finding fully trained professionals is almost impossible. And because that's the case, we obviously also put a lot of effort into looking for apprentices and thus training our own people. Another area we are currently tackling head-on is the development of guidelines and corporate values.

Are you doing this to determine which employees are a good fit for Hero Textil?

To some extent, yes. For only if you know who you are and where you want to go, will you understand who is right for you. Sure!



// FOR ONLY IF YOU KNOW
WHO YOU ARE AND
WHERE YOU WANT TO GO,
WILL YOU UNDERSTAND
WHO IS RIGHT FOR YOU.

For example, we are a very liberal-minded, multicultural company where plenty of ideas circulate and a lot happens on an ad hoc basis. So whoever joins us should be flexible and as open as possible. They should have dreams and visions and a desire to be part of a community that wants to make a difference.

The question is, then, is there a limit to how high your own standards can be?

Well, the fact of the matter is that the human component is very important. When the technical knowledge is there but there is no interpersonal connection, then it's probably not going to work out. Therefore, it makes more sense to wait a little longer to fill certain vacancies. Until we find someone who is a really good fit for us.

Incidentally, Hero Textil also has a lot to offer its workers. Oh yes, great working conditions, for example. Light and airy premises with state-of-the-art equipment. Our production staff work on innovative machines. And our offices are very luxurious. There is plenty of space for everyone, and

we have attractive common rooms. And what's more, our staff enjoy complimentary drinks, fresh fruit and chocolate. We also have a partnership with a gym for those who are interested. All staff members receive a share in our turnover in the form of Amazon vouchers and much more. Finally, we regularly come together to enjoy activities and celebrate.

That sounds like a very social company.

Absolutely. If that wasn't the case, I wouldn't feel as comfortable as I do. Hero Textil attaches great importance to always being there for its employees and being very understanding of their problems and concerns. For example, Sascha and I walk through the production hall every morning and ask people how they are doing. This is how we find out where our employees are experiencing issues. This also works because we have very flat hierarchies in our company. Everyone here deals with everyone. While working, but also during the breaks in our "dining room" where everyone gets together and chats – the management included.

That sounds great. Are you currently recruiting for specific roles?

We are always looking for textile technicians, engineers and knitters. In other words, we'll always consider skilled workers with appropriate qualifications. Oh, and we're also still looking for commercial and technical trainees for the coming year. Anyone who's keen to find out more can contact me directly at any time. I'm always happy when great people are interested in us and perhaps end up joining the company.

Okay, then good luck with the search. Thank you for the interview and keep enjoying being a part of Hero Textil!

FEEL FREE TO CALL US
OR WRITE TO:
ANNA SOPHIE GÖGGERLE
HR MANAGEMENT
+49 (0)7951 969 714 OR
ANNA.GOEGGERLE@HERO-TEXTIL.DE



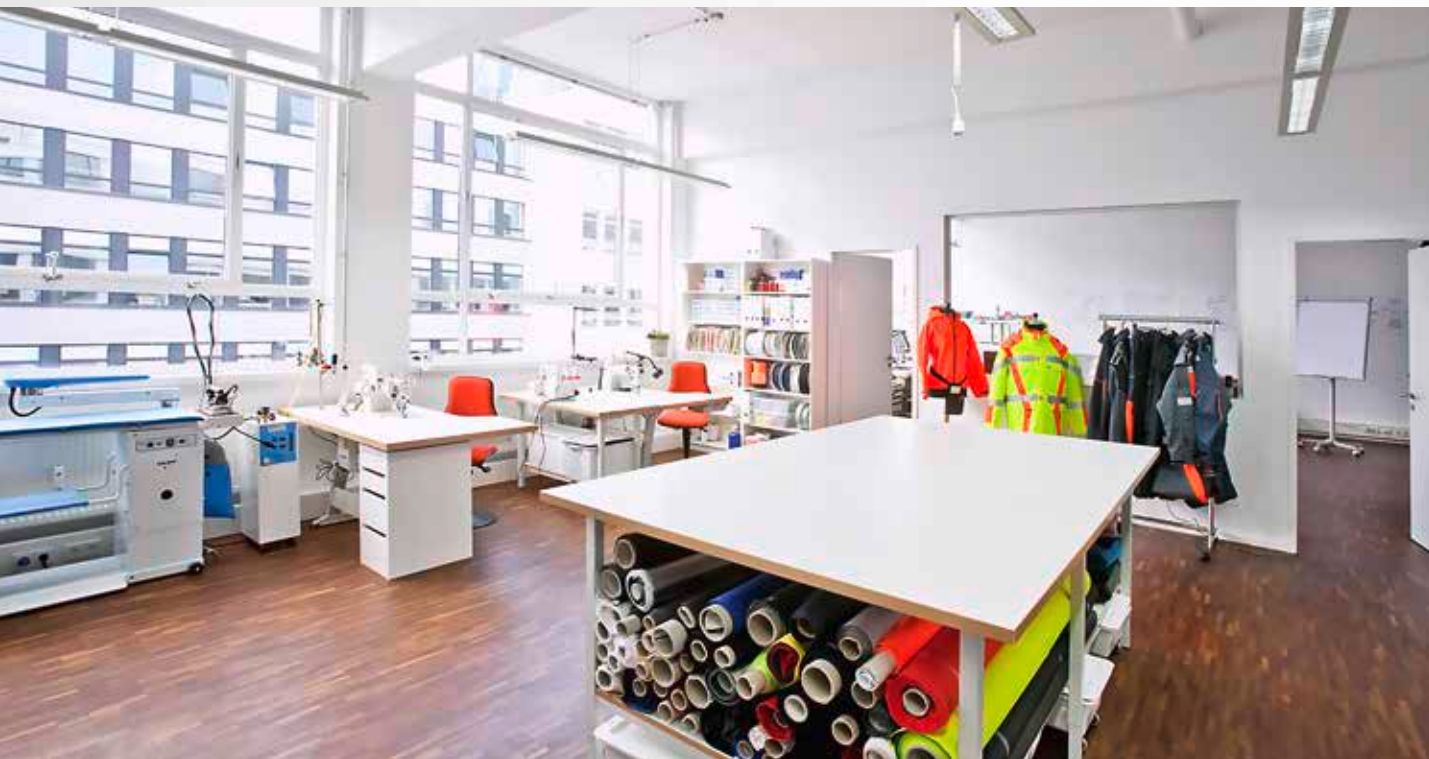
Picture: Felix Kempf

//STRETCH ZONES – THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINE JÄGER,
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE TEXTILE CONSULTING
AGENCY KREATIVCONTROL IN MUNICH.

Have you noticed how good your postman has looked in recent years? Despite you keeping him busy with heavy packages in any weather? That's thanks to KREATIVcontrol from Munich! Since 2002, the internationally operating textile consulting agency has been assisting major companies, such as the Deutsche Post DHL Group, in the development of PPE, functional, professional and sports clothing. In 2009, its paths started to cross regularly with Hero Textil. At first by chance, and later scheduled. Much to the delight of Hero Textil Director Christoph Ulrich.

"Because KREATIVcontrol is extremely skilled in understanding and implementing customer needs. Apart from that, we just get along well." And what is KREATIVcontrol owner Christine Jäger's stance on this? We'll tell you! Because we spoke to her for Strickschrift.



// THE WORLDS OF WORK AND LEISURE HAVE BECOME MORE AND MORE CONNECTED.

Hello Ms Jäger, Hero Textil and you: a long-term relationship?

Oh, yes! It's been eight years since we first dealt with each other. At the time, the TEMPEX company wanted to increase the quality of its cold-store clothing, and I was on site as a coach. Guido Günther came to show us how Hero Textil cuffs and suspenders can help solve problems in this area. Our second meeting was in 2011 at the Hero Textil stand at A+A. Christoph and Guido presented the CompatiBelt, and I thought of a potential use on the spot. Hero immediately offered me free samples.

So Hero Textil is your supplier?

More than that. For the CompatiBelt, we turned into a development partner over time. And more recently, we've even been a customer of Hero Textil too. For example, we developed a part of Hero Textil's A+A trade fair collection, which is worn by dummies at the stand. This enables Hero to present their products much more vividly and show where stretch zones work well and make sense.

How long has KREATIVcontrol been around, and how did everything start?

Since 2002. It all started with the first generation of postal delivery and counter staff clothing for Deutsche Post. The idea of depicting the post horn on a yellow polo shirt with a black knit collar was still revolutionary at the time. Until then, employees didn't want to be walking advertising columns. But then everything changed and the post horn became an overnight cult hit. The worlds of work and leisure became more and more connected.

How come the wearers changed their minds so dramatically?

For one, employees recognised the financial advantage of corporate clothing. And since the clothes suddenly looked really good and were comfortable and form-fitting, a sense of pride and identification came into play. Today, street styles like cargo pants are all the rage. Tradesmen no longer wear uniforms, but corporate fashion. This is adapted to the individual needs of each trade and made from high-tech materials that were formerly used only for leisure or sports fashion.

Why are businesses suddenly willing to spend more on workwear?

Good protective clothing helps companies achieve their zero accident rate. Constantly changing specifications and standards must be adhered to. Hazard analyses have long been the norm. And as occupational safety continues to play an increasingly important role, there is of course nothing better than employees who enjoy wearing their now very high-quality workwear.

If a customer comes to you with a request for new clothing, where does your support begin?

From the design of clothing concepts to CAD cuts, digital cut control with fitting through to prototypes from our own workshop: today we are positioned in a way that allows us to cover the entire textile chain. We create technical specifications, grade cuts, find suitable producers, control production, organise wearing tests, draft textile CI booklets, accompany the entire tendering and production process right up to the delivery of the goods, and support the launch with fashion shows, photo shoots and workbooks. We have evolved from a design agency to an external workbench for our customers.





And you do all that for some pretty large customers. Hats off to you!

Yes, absolutely, because it was above all the larger companies that recognised the connection between corporate identity, employee motivation and occupational safety at an early stage. In corporations, the needs of employees are constantly reviewed and incorporated into our work and clothing development. That saves us time because we don't always have to start from scratch. What's more, large companies simply cannot afford to skimp on occupational health and safety. With our work, customers have control over the entire know-how and are thus independent.

Do you have a special way of approaching a new project?

Individual customer needs are essential for us. That's why each project starts with getting to know the field of application first-hand on site. We clarify the company's membership in professional associations, ask for specific regulations, specifications and standards within the company, establish direct contact with the safety officers and so forth. This preliminary work can sometimes be very extensive and some customers find this hard to understand at first. Because initially, this makes our service seem more expensive compared to many competitors. But in the end,

this investment in time and money pays off many times over. That's because it leads to a good result for the customer and also makes them independent by providing them with a valuable dataset.

What role do suppliers such as Hero Textil play in this early project stage?

I was just about to get to that. After all, dealing only with the customer is no longer enough nowadays, and this is exactly where our in-depth and sometimes very close collaboration with all relevant suppliers comes into play. We usually have a good sense for who to call and where to get support. It's precisely this expertise that rounds up our offer because it sets new standards.

How important would you say stretch zones are in workwear?

More important than ever! Because, you know, when I started to look beyond design and grapple with fit, cut and industrial production, Sunday suits were still a thing. That's not the case anymore. Nowadays, stretch zones are the be-all and end-all. And that's where Hero comes in. Because through our partnerships we manage time and time again to incorporate pleasant surprises in the clothing, without using intricate and old-fashioned elasticated band

designs. We can supply our customer with garments that give in places where they were previously a bit tight. You might think that's just a trifle, but it's a differentiating factor for people who have to live or work with it every day.

Are there any other industry trends that are currently on everyone's lips?

Wearers and decision-makers increasingly think holistically. That's why layering has become a big thing, i.e. dressing in layers that are functionally coordinated from the inside to the outside, taking into account breathability, heat retention, etc. In addition, I've started to see a trend towards more recycled polyester and organic cotton. More than ever before, customers demand fair production conditions and fundamentally sustainable thinking and acting.

What impact has digitalisation had on your industry?

With the advent of digitalisation, the entire process chain has picked up speed. Our job is to keep up. That's why, from January 2018, we'll be able to create our design and development modules in excellent 3D quality. This enables us to virtually replace a large part of the prototypes otherwise laboriously manufactured in our workshop, so to speak. This saves a great deal of time and, together with our electronic body measurement, offers a range of options

for individual design and production. The initial results are very promising and have truly amazed us.

How do you think Hero will develop over the next few years?

Positively! Anyone who is committed to flexibility and trend-setting will win in the market. This approach makes you a driver, rather than driven. The people working at Hero are extremely flexible and excellent networkers. They see challenges as opportunities and not as existential problems. That's why we very much look forward to seeing what novelties and surprises Hero has in store, and to continuing our exciting cooperation!

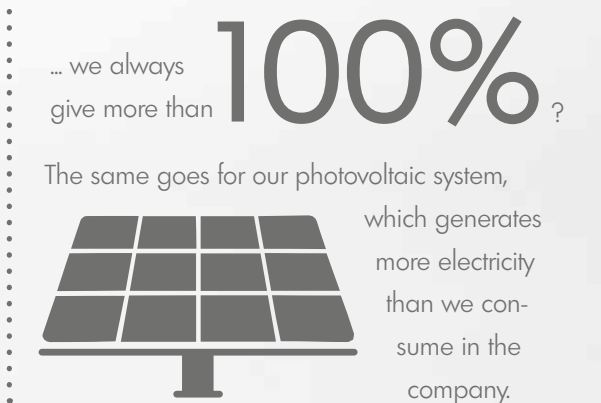
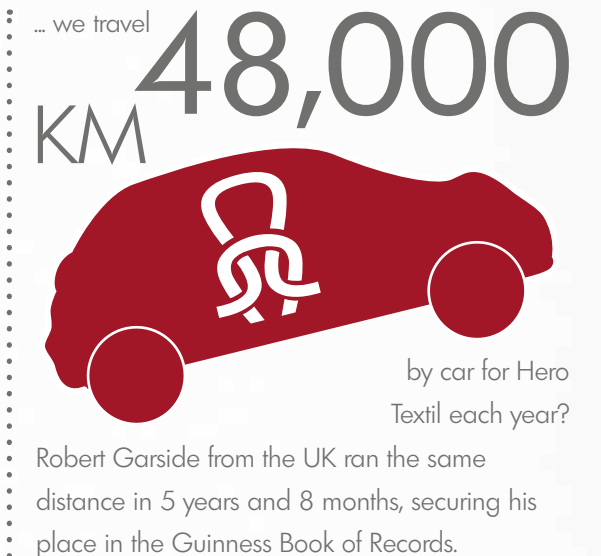
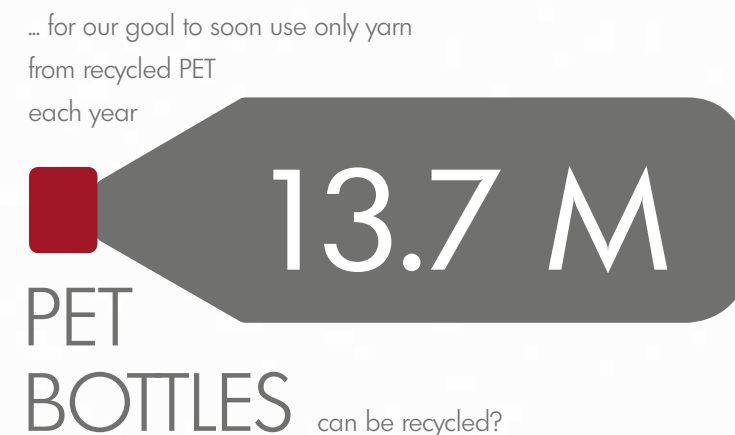
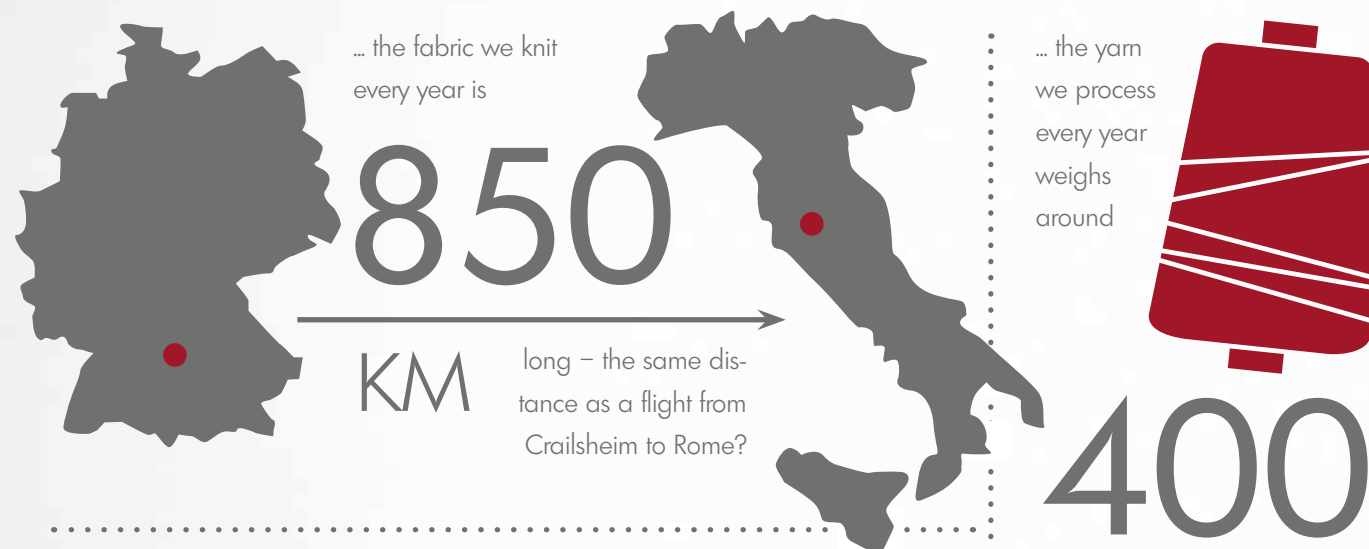
KREATIVCONTROL
BALANSTRASSE 73
81541 MUNICH
PHONE +49 (0)89 6420 8289
INFO@KREATIVCONTROL.COM

FINGER IN THE AIR

THE FIGURES IN OUR BALANCE SHEET ARE ONE THING. THE ONES HERE TELL A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT STORY. SEE FOR YOURSELF!

What does our knitting mill have to do with elephants? Why do we prefer to drink our coffee rather than pour it into bathtubs? Why do the Hero Textil employees look so unusually young? The following numbers related to Hero Textil shed some light on these questions – at least to some extent.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ...



WHY HERO?

WHAT MOTIVATES CUSTOMERS TO WORK WITH US?
WE WERE KEEN TO FIND OUT, SO WE SET OUT TO INVESTIGATE.
WE ASKED THOSE IN THE KNOW: OUR CUSTOMERS!



“In our industry of workwear and corporate wear, high quality is crucial for the durability and thus for the success of collections. We produce exclusively in Europe and can count on Hero Textil AG as strong German partner by our side. Our collaboration is excellent both on a professional and a human level, and the result is always innovative products, such as those in our new “Hero Flex” workwear collection.

Felix Blumenauer, Weitblick



“Eight years pass in the blink of an eye when a partnership is as successful as that between Hero and FHB. Open communication and mutual trust have characterised our relationship from day one. Hero listens carefully in order to fulfil our wishes and requirements. Christoph and Guido are so reliable, competent, innovative and individual that our collaboration is very enjoyable and set to continue for a long time to come. We look forward to it!

Peter Hoffmann, FHB



“In Hero Textil AG, I have a partner who offers us innovative products and solutions, no matter how unusual our ideas are. Hero’s flexibility makes it possible to implement ideas and concepts quickly and easily.

Dascha Guttenberger, MEWA Textil-Service



“With Hero Textil AG we associate an innovative partner in terms of quality, reliability, new developments and great service, which is ensured by the expertise of the employees.

Rainer Günther, CWS boco



“Hero has been a reliable partner for our products for more than 20 years and stands for quality, functionality and flexibility.

Elger Bergmann, Pionier workwear



“In recent years, we have completed many small and large customer projects together with Hero Textil AG. Our cooperation has always been professional, efficient and friendly and therefore very successful. In recent years, we have increasingly been using Hero as a source of ideas in product development because we value the consulting expertise of the Crailsheim team.

Carl-Matthias Bardusch, bardusch



“What we appreciate about our partnership with Hero is the fast, straightforward order processing and the high quality standards. In Hero we have a competent and experienced partner at our side. We look forward to continuing our long-standing partnership at eye level.

Nadine Dell, HB Protective Wear



“For me, Hero is not only a reliable supplier of highly specialised products, but also a development partner with creative solutions and flexible implementation approaches.

Fabian Kusch, BP



“Over the last few years, Van Moer NV, affiliate of Williamson-Dickie Mfg. Co. has gradually increased its cooperation with Hero Textil AG for industrial launderable workwear collections. We highly value close and trust-based long-term partnerships with our suppliers, and Hero can offer us the right quality, flexible solutions and, most importantly, dedicated and driven contact persons throughout the whole organisation. Hero supports us in building our brand!

Kenny van Riel, Van Moer



“Hero Textil AG is a very innovative and dynamic company, which is always open to challenges of any kind and gladly accepts them. There’s no such thing as can’t. Hero is reliable, fair and cooperative.

Tobias Beverung, Weitblick

THE HERO TEXTIL PRODUCT RANGES

FULL FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND HIGH WEARING COMFORT:
HERO TEXTIL PRODUCTS DO EVERYTHING YOU WANT THEM TO. THEY ARE MADE
AT OUR COMPANY LOCATION IN CRAILSHEIM, GUARANTEEING THE ULTIMATE IN
QUALITY, FLEXIBILITY AND SERVICE.



ComfortAble

Comfortable stretch zones for clothing.
Many indispensable details found in workwear and outdoor clothing bear the mark of Hero Textil. Our products make a crucial difference in all the right places and still maintain their shape and permanent elasticity, even when subject to extreme wear and tear, including frequent washing. Knitted by Hero Textil. Made in Germany.



CompatiBelt

A belt for all requirements.
Our belts are as versatile as the requirements of our customers. All our products are characterised by comfort, resiliency, garment hire suitability and flame retardancy. Developed by Hero Textil. For workwear, PSA, outdoor and fashion.



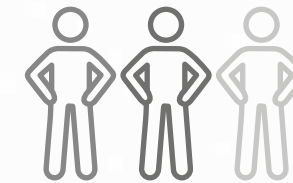
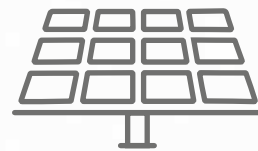
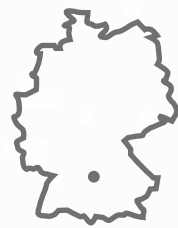
CompeTence

The first industrial-grade TENCEL® piqué.
Natural and sustainable, breathable and hygienic, durable and high quality. CompeTence has been developed to meet highest requirements and to be suitable for garment hire. It is the first TENCEL®-polyester knitted fabric to be certified in accordance with the Hohenstein quality standard 704 and with PRO8 suitability for tumblers and finishers. Implemented by Hero Textil for polo shirts.

TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT!

THE TERM CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS CURRENTLY ON EVERYONE'S LIPS. WE AT HERO TEXTIL ARE ALREADY VERY ACTIVE IN THIS AREA – WITHOUT TALKING TOO MUCH ABOUT IT.

That's about to change. Not to boast, but to make a commitment – to our customers, our employees, our suppliers, the environment and last but not least our children and all subsequent generations. You may wonder whether we've thought this through. Yes, we have indeed. And that's why we have formulated a few key statements and we invite you to hold us to them in the future:



WE CONSERVE RESOURCES.

The goal of Hero Textil is to recycle valuable raw materials. That's why we are working hard to switch our own production to yarn made from recycled PET bottles. The basic material of these plastic bottles is polyester (PES), which in turn is extracted from oil – a resource that is becoming increasingly scarce and expensive in this world. Please watch the following video for more information about recycling at Hero Textil:



[www.hero-textil.de/
produkte/recyclinggam](http://www.hero-textil.de/produkte/recyclinggam)

WE DELIVER QUALITY "MADE IN GERMANY".

Here at Hero Textil we are firmly committed to our in-house full-scale production in Germany. It assures maximum quality and flexibility as well as top service for both our customers and ourselves. At our Crailsheim site, we exclusively process yarns of EU origin and with Oeko-Tex® certification.

WE SUPPORT THE ENERGY TRANSITION.

With our 200 kWp solar system installed in 2013, we are producing more environmentally friendly energy than our company consumes. In this way, we make ourselves completely independent of energy suppliers and, moreover, still do our part to make the energy transition possible.

WE PROMOTE YOUNG TALENTS.

Hero Textil wants to give young people a future. In 2018, we will therefore strengthen our role as an innovative employer. We will increase our available commercial and technical training places and offer five different apprenticeships. For more information, please visit www.hero-textil.de/jobs.

Beyond our training programmes, we always listen to young, committed people, take them seriously and promote them to the best of their abilities. It has always been like that and it will stay that way in the future too.

WE CONDEMN DISCRIMINATION.

Hero Textil is committed to a cosmopolitan Germany. We believe in a peaceful coexistence of different nations, cultures and religions. We just need to give each other the chance to do so and join forces to fight for it together. In this context, we are taking a clear position on the outcome of the German general election on 24 September 2017. On our website and on Facebook, we publicly and categorically distance ourselves from the AfD and the almost 13 % AfD voters in Germany.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO SOCIAL CAUSES.

On pages 50–55, you can see what's close to our heart and read about the organisations and projects we support. We want to uphold this commitment in the future too and, if possible, continue to expand it. Everyone who wants to support us in doing so is very welcome.



HOPING FOR A HAPPY ENDING

50 PEOPLE WORK HERE AT HERO TEXTIL. BEHIND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM IS A DIFFERENT LIFE STORY. THAT OF OUR WAREHOUSE WORKER HASSAN BARBARI IS PARTICULARLY SPECIAL.

He came to Germany as a refugee from Iran via Turkey in 2014 after a six-month odyssey. After a long fight with the German authorities, we were able to hire him in 2016, because the so-called priority test¹ was suspended. Since then, the 30-year-old has been doing an excellent job. He speaks German and moved from a refugee home to his own apartment. A great example of successful integration. Notwithstanding, Hassan is scheduled to be deported, which we are trying to prevent with the help of a lawyer. Hopefully, we'll succeed.

¹ The priority test states that refugees may only be hired if no German or EU citizen is eligible for the role in question.



“Those who leave their entire life behind are highly motivated. That’s exactly what we need here at Mercedes and everywhere in our country,” said Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Management of Daimler AG, some time ago. And he’s right! Yet, in 2016, the 30 largest DAX companies together hired just 54 refugees.² Small and medium-sized enterprises in this country are also only moderately successful when it comes to bringing refugees back into employment. But why is that?

² Source: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/unternehmen/welcher-konzern-stellte-fluechtlinge-ein-14322168.html>

Hassan keeps on smiling.

“Too much paperwork, too little security,” explains Christoph Ulrich, Director at Hero Textil. “It is often inconvenient for employers to hire refugees. That’s a real shame. Because I can honestly say that we haven’t regretted our commitment to employing Hassan for a single second. He is an asset

to our company.” If you meet Hassan, that’s immediately obvious. Although his rejected asylum application was a bitter disappointment for him, he is all smiles. “How are you doing, Hassan?”, we greet him, and he answers with a wide smile and a charming local accent: “Fantastic!” “I really enjoy my work here in the warehouse. Hero Textil is a wonderful company.”

German causes headaches.

A cheerful Hassan gives us an insight into his tasks in the warehouse and tells us that he will soon switch to circular knitting. Today, he finds it easy to hear and speak German all day long. “In the beginning that was different. Back then, I had major headaches in the evening.” He puts on a suffering expression, looks at us with wide eyes and adds: “That was a disaster. It really was. But now it’s fine.”

Dialect dilemma.

Hassan works with colleagues from a total of ten different countries. Some hail from Poland, Romania or Croatia. But

no one speaks Farsi or Persian like Hassan. “During work, I often ask my colleagues to write down the words that I don’t know yet. At home, I then look them up in peace and quiet.” Some expressions need a couple of attempts to understand them. Especially in the local dialect, where unfamiliar expressions have already led to some hilarious misunderstandings!

Silence is eerie.

In general, Hassan is someone who always needs a bit of action around him. After all, he comes from a large family where something was always going on. “I just can’t walk past someone without a little chat. I usually have to crack a joke or two, but always in a good spirit.” Hassan rarely holds back when it comes to sharing his views. We ask him if there’s anything that could be improved at Hero Textil. He nods. “In some parts of the company, it’s almost too quiet at times. In the hallways. In the offices. I’d play music everywhere! Not hip-hop or rap, but beautiful tunes. Classical music. It’s so relaxing and doesn’t distract you from work.”

// BUT I CAN ALWAYS EAT RICE. AND I REALLY MEAN ALWAYS.

Rice, rice and more rice.

And what does Hassan do when he's not navigating from storage racks to knitting machines and back? At home in his apartment he breeds dozens of cacti and enjoys watching videos on YouTube. He also loves to cook and eat. "I cook a lot in my apartment and then I take something to work with me the next day. At the beginning, my colleagues were always amazed and asked me how I can eat so much. And they wanted to know if I'm not tired of always eating rice. But I can always eat rice. And I really mean always."

Uncertainty wears you down.

Hassan burns a lot of calories at work. Nevertheless, he still often hits the gym across the road in the evenings. Here, he tries to clear his head because: "This deportation issue is always playing on my mind." "Does it scare you?" we probe carefully. "No, it's not so much that I'm scared", he tries to explain. "My problem is more that I can't plan anything right now. I'd love to get a driver's licence. Or travel. But I just can't do anything at the moment. That's what wears me down. You just lose all hope and perspective. I am just lacking the things that usually motivate people. Does that make sense?" Yes, it does. And we'd love to change Hassan's situation as soon as possible. But patience is the order of the day. Unfortunately.





CLOSE TO OUR HEART

HERO TEXTIL ON ITS COMMITMENT TO THE
GOOD SHEPHERD HOME IN CAMEROON
AND THE CRAILSHEIM MERLINS.

Should we support people locally or abroad? Sports activities or rather a charitable project? Children or the elderly? In our view, social commitment should never be a question of either-or. Because there simply is no right and no wrong. Many people in this world need help and support. Nevertheless: as a company, in particular, there comes a point when you have to decide where specifically you want to

help and get involved. Directly and wholeheartedly. And that's what we did. We are pleased to present two completely different organisations: the Good Shepherd Home and the Crailsheim Merlins. We've been supporting both of them for years. Because we love what they do and have a very personal relationship with them.



THE GOOD SHEPHERD HOME IN CAMEROON



// I IMMEDIATELY GREW ATTACHED TO THEM ALL AT MY VERY FIRST VISIT.

OUR CONNECTION TO GOOD SHEPHERD HOME, A LOVING SANCTUARY FOR 150 ORPHANS AND ABANDONED CHILDREN IN CAMEROON, CAME ABOUT AT THE END OF 2014 THROUGH LARISSA MAYER, A YOUNG CRAILSHEIM CITIZEN.

Larissa got to know the orphanage, led by Sister Jane, through an American friend during her voluntary social year – and quickly knew she was in for the long haul.

"I saw how urgently the Good Shepherd Home needed support. That's why I went there regularly, twice a week after my actual job. I also spent my weekends there to help out and play with the children."

When Larissa told Christoph Ulrich about the orphanage in 2014, he was immediately keen to help. "I was deeply impressed with what Larissa told us, and I saw it as a unique opportunity to support a facility where a person I know personally is involved. My wife Elke already looked after Larissa and her sister when they were still babies. Later, Larissa worked for Hero Textil during the holidays. And now we support her involvement in Cameroon. She tells us exactly where our money ends up and what is achieved with it on site. It just doesn't get any better than this."

Larissa is currently studying "International Social Work" in Freiburg. She still uses her term breaks to visit Sister Jane and her children. Only recently, she returned to Cameroon to further advance the Hero Textil AG projects, such as the construction of a fishpond, a chicken farm and a pig farm.

For Sister Jane, the regular financial help from Crailsheim is very important. She confirms: "Before we received monthly support from Hero Textil, many children were malnourished and meeting the basic needs of the children was a daily challenge. Now, I can buy enough milk powder for the babies and food for the children every month. I can also pay electricity bills and school fees. Hero Textil's commitment has really changed a lot here. I can finally provide the children with a healthy diet, but also with education and thus a future."

Are you keen to support Larissa and Sister Jane too?

What a great idea! Visit www.goodshepherdhome.org or info@hero-textil.de to find out how you can help.



THE BASKETBALL PLAYERS OF THE CRAILSHEIM MERLINS



Saturday, 30 September 2017. The Crailsheim Merlins are playing at home against the Niners from Chemnitz. Some of our Hero Textil employees are in the thick of it and suffering. Because "our" team isn't on top form and deservedly behind. Then, three and a half minutes before the end, the comeback begins. The announcer spurs on the audience, and their desire to win is carried over to the players. The Merlins deliver a 16:0 finish and win. The crowd goes wild.

Evenings like this one explain why it's great to be a Merlins fan.

"But that's not the reason why we support the Crailsheim basketball players financially", chimes in Christoph Ulrich, who has been a Merlins fan since 1999, a sponsor since 2002 and a shareholder since 2015.

"It's the success story behind the team that has been inspiring us for years."

He continues: "The story of how the former student and current manager Martin Romig managed to turn a student club into a Bundesliga team in 30 years is unparalleled. Today, the Crailsheim Merlins are an organisation with its own sports hall, permanent employees, great coaches and an incredibly strong generation of young players. They are kind of a second family to hundreds of children from the region and beyond, conveying values such as respect and tolerance, to which Hero Textil is also committed."

Merlins manager Martin Romig agrees.

He thinks it's a good thing to be able to count on Hero Textil as a long-term sponsor because: "As a small Bundesliga team you'll only get noticed if you have a distinct profile. That's why we're happy to have partners who help us convey our values. And Hero Textil and the Merlins have quite a few things in common."

Would you like to find out more about the Crailsheim Merlins or attend the next game in person? Then please visit: www.crailsheim-merlins.de.

AND DON'T FORGET:

The following projects and organisations have also been supported by Hero Textil AG on a long-term basis:

- Kulturwochenende Crailsheim (Crailsheim Culture Weekend), www.kulturwochenende-crailsheim.de
- "Mitmachen Ehrensache" initiative of the Baden-Württemberg Youth Foundation, www.mitmachen-ehrensache.de
- Beschützende Werkstätte für geistig und körperlich Behinderte Heilbronn e.V., Crailsheim workshop, www.bw-heilbronn.de



HERO ON TOUR

At Hero Textil, we love to network, meet with interesting people and work together to come up with new projects. To do that, we like to get out there at every opportunity. To Düsseldorf, for example.



A+
2017



From 17 to 20 October we were represented with a stand at the A+A. Under the motto "Stretch your mind", we became entangled in visions of an elastic future together with our visitors.



Conducted many promising and inspirational discussions at the fair: the Hero team (f.l.t.r) with Christoph Ulrich, Patricia Walinski, Nicole Kulik, Maike Ruck and Guido Günther.

A CHAT WITH

COMPANY FOUNDER



HUBERT ULRICH

Company founder Hubert Ulrich (82) built up Hero Textil from 1980 onwards and played a major role in the company right up until he decided to withdraw from the operational business in 2000. To this day, he is involved in the company as Chairman of the Supervisory Board.

Mr Ulrich, let's start with a rather mundane question: how are you? I'm very well, thank you.

You've been a successful filmmaker for years, is that correct? That's right; with a hobby like this, I certainly never get bored.

I completed a lot of projects for the city of Crailsheim, mostly as part of a film crew. For my services, I have also been awarded the highest honour of my hometown Crailsheim, the "Golden Horaff".

What else do you enjoy doing in your well-deserved retirement? Apart from filmmaking, I still play tennis.

You have a wife, three children and six grandchildren. That's bound to keep you fit, right? We have an excellent and close relationship with our children and grandchildren – that obviously keeps us in good shape. We like to attend

their various sports and cultural activities as their "away supporters".

What do you think of how Hero Textil AG is developing today? I am delighted that the company has developed

so well from its humble beginnings as a one-man operation. My two sons deserve all the credit for that. The company lives off the fact that new products are constantly being designed which are tailor-made to customer requirements. This has created close business relationships

that have been going strong for many years.

Are you still involved in projects and strategies of Hero Textil, and are you still being asked for advice? As Chairman of the Supervisory Board, I am still involved in all important decisions. In general, I like to make my expertise available wherever there are technical problems. But I don't push myself on anyone. Apart from that, I am rather proud that even today, after almost 40 years, our range still features products that I developed. That's something truly special.

// I AM DELIGHTED THAT THE COMPANY HAS DEVELOPED SO WELL FROM ITS HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AS A ONE-MAN OPERATION.

LEGAL NOTICE

Publisher

Hero Textil AG
Sulzbrunnenstraße 21
74564 Crailsheim
Phone +49 (0)7951 96970
info@hero-textil.de
www.hero-textil.de

Responsible according to press law

Christoph Ulrich
Director

Overall management

Christoph Ulrich
Guido Günther
Nicole Kulik
Sascha Bertram

Concept and design

Sikorski & Friends GmbH
Spitalstraße 19
74564 Crailsheim
Phone +49 (0)7951 963 090
office@sikorski-friends.com
www.sikorski-friends.com

Concept and text

Jutta Zielosko
www.juzifer.de

Specialist editing

Anne Fries
Proofreading and translation
www.anne-fries.de

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Stefanie Präger
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www.schoppel-wolle.de

Photo credits

Pages 30–31
Felix Kempf
www.fx68.de

Pages 32–35

Christian Willner Photographie
www.christian-willner.de

Pages 52–53

Larissa Mayer

Pages 54–55

Philipp Reinhard
www.philippreinhard.com

All other pictures

Jörg Sikorski
www.sikorski-friends.com

Hero Textil AG
Sulzbrunnenstraße 21
74564 Crailsheim
Germany
Phone +49 (0)7951 96970
Fax +49 (0)7951 969 798
info@hero-textil.de
www.hero-textil.de