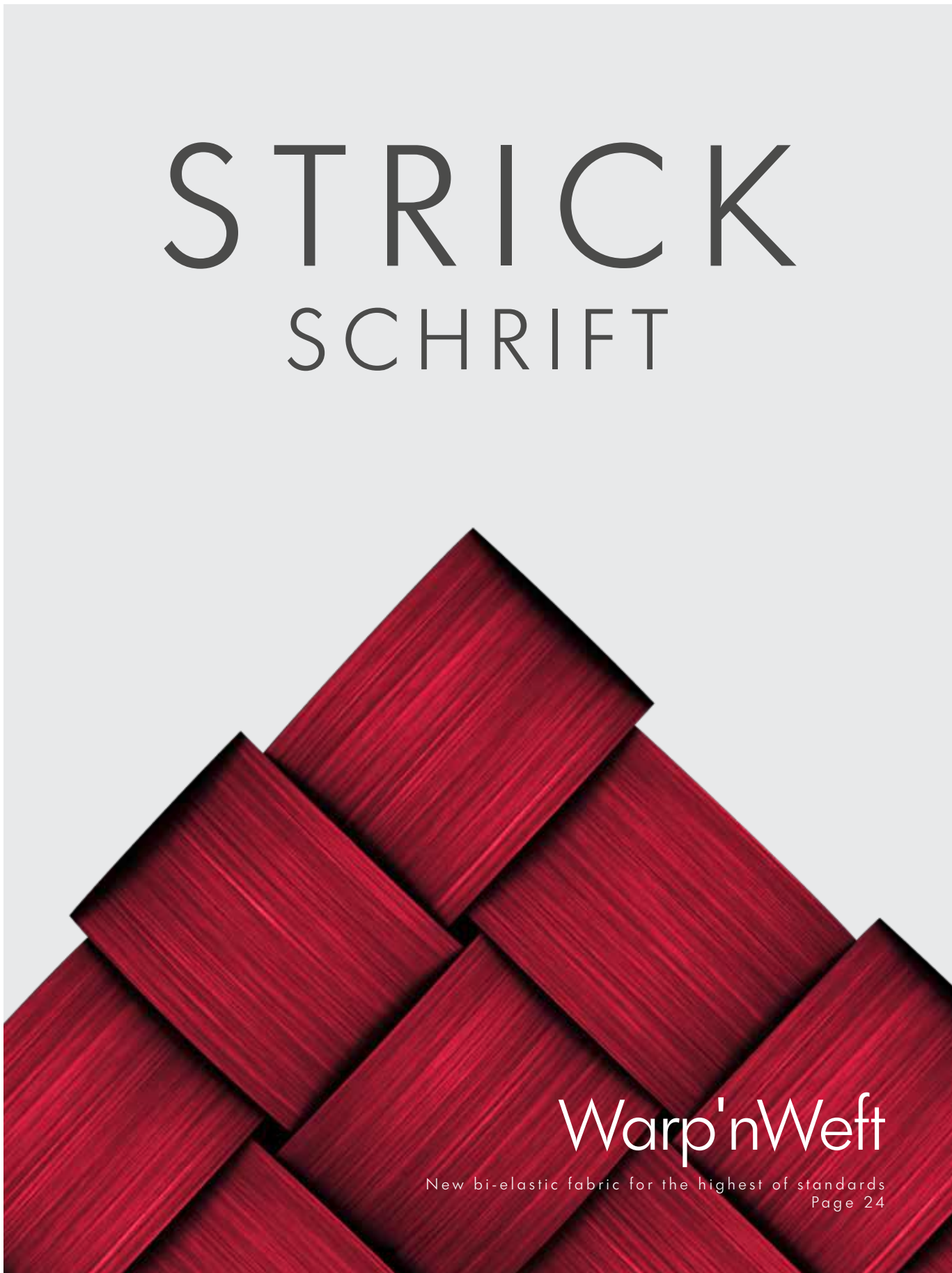


# STRICK SCHRIFT



Warp'nWeft

New bi-elastic fabric for the highest of standards  
Page 24

# EDITORIAL

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## LONG TIME NO SEE

Welcome to the slightly belated anniversary edition of Strickschrift 02 on occasion of 40 years of Hero.

At first, we actually planned to present you this second edition of our customer magazine on the date coinciding with our company founding 40 years ago in 1980. We wanted to use this occasion to celebrate with you and let you read about how we already had a blast internally.

But this was not meant to be! Things turned out completely different. Instead of making preparations for the anniversary, we have been busy day and night to produce urgently needed cuffs for OP gowns. It was only a short time later when we developed special mouth-nose masks and produced these in large volumes. Just like you, we introduced a hygiene concept and also faced the challenges of working with contact restrictions. Unfortunately, there was no way even to think about carefree meetings in person or even a big anniversary party.

But we surely don't want to complain.



Together with our great employees and business partners, we managed to come out of the crisis unscathed. There is more! We made optimal use of the time!

By entering a directional merger with the knitting manufacture of Paul Übel and by developing our Warp'nWeft woven fabric.

With these additions up our sleeves, we now want to accomplish more. Find out what these things are in this edition of Strickschrift 02, which also takes a look back here and there at the past 40 years. But it does so only to get started to turn then directly back to the look ahead into the future.

Sounds good? Then start reading right away. We are happy that you are interested and you are welcome to contact us if you have any questions about any of the topics.

We hope to see you soon again in person!

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'CU' or similar, representing Christoph Ulrich.

Christoph Ulrich, CEO of Hero Textil AG

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# A STRONG BOND



from left to right: Hubert, Paula, Christoph and Marie Ulrich.

## THREE GENERATIONS OF ULRICHS IN THE INTERVIEW

Hero is a family-owned company. Hubert und Rosi have been building it up since 1980. Their two sons took it over in 2000. The younger son, Christoph, has continued running it with a new management since 2015. And 2021? The twins Paula and Marie are talking with their grandfather and father about four decades of Hero Textil. Not perhaps to recommend themselves to fill the corner office. This is not really an option (yet). Instead, it is about an informal exchange between the past, present and future. With an open end.

// There is a kind of Hero DNA,  
which is rooted deeply in our company. It shows  
in the way in which your grandfather has  
managed the business and how I do so now.

CHRISTOPH ULRICH



**Marie:** Hello dad, hello grandad, we're here. What's up?

**Christoph:** 40 years of Hero is what's up, my dears. And this gave me the idea that it is plenty of reason to have an intergenerational conversation. Perhaps there is something that interests you especially, of the past, for example.

**Paula:** Ah, I see. Good idea. Or perhaps grandad wants to tell us a little about himself. Isn't that so, grandad?

**Hubert:** Yes, I would like to do so very much. But not the same old stories. Instead, I want to let you know that I can hardly believe what has become of this company. It's nice to have certainty in hindsight that you did everything right 40 years ago when you decided in favour of independence and taking risks in business – even if not everything went smoothly from the start. Today, when I look at the company, I can say, the effort was worth it.

**Christoph:** Definitely. At this time, I find it quite fascinating by the way again to see how flexible this company is to adjust to new things time and again. Not just our knits are super adjustable but we ourselves are too. The COVID crisis is the best example of this. Our knit cuffs for medical protective clothing have never been in higher demand than since March last year.

And when from one day to the next people needed mouth-nose masks, we quickly developed and sold masks made of pre-shaped spacer fabric.

**Hubert:** One of the company's strengths from the start was that it has always hatched new ideas and implemented them wherever possible. But this is only possible if you acquire your customers as partners and thereby forge long-term and close relationships.

**Marie:** Haha. Yes, that is quite true indeed. This is really characteristic of Hero Textil. Typical of you grandad and dad. The way you deal with business partners and then see to what they need.

**Christoph:** You may very well be right, Marie. There is a kind of Hero DNA, which is deeply rooted in the company. It shows in the way in which your grandfather has managed the business and how I do so now. We both have the drive of always wanting to improve something. Not by ourselves, but in an open exchange that is 100 percent honest with people who think along the same lines as we are. Together we always put the customer's wishes first and practice a strong service culture. Sometimes this can be exhausting. But it is also incredibly satisfying. As an entrepreneur as well as father and human being, you always need a reason to do things. A drive. Perhaps you have something that drives you? Think about it.

**Marie:** I'm driven by goals, my dreams and sure, also my family. Regardless of what I do one thing is true: it must be fun. I am most easily motivated when it's about theatre and books.

**Paula:** I'm motivated by my family. They make me strong. Besides this, creative projects where I can contribute a part of myself. I can also get enthusiastic about ground breaking trends in design, fashion and media management.

**Hubert:** Funny, you say this, Paula. My idea back in the past was precisely to not develop any fashionable items but technical products. The work, medical and security sector were obvious choices for this. The challenge meanwhile was that precise technical requirements had to be observed to be able to comply with all necessary technical regulations in the end. This may not have been the easiest way perhaps, but it was a successful one, since we were able to satisfy a demand or close a supply gap with knits for work and protective clothing.

**Marie:** What do you want to tell us with this, grandad?

**Hubert:** Well, if I should conclude by giving some advice from this to all of my six grandchildren, it would be – even

// After all, there are many, who  
have completed their job training here and  
some who have been with us for more than  
20 years.

if it is the easiest thing to do to give in to your tendencies and take up a certain profession, while you should, however, always also consider if this profession has a future and if it can also pay for your living.

**Paula:** Yes, sure. But Hero itself is the best example that fun, self-fulfilment and good prospects for the future do not exclude each other. I myself frequently talk with dad about Hero and he gives me the chance to contribute my ideas. You know, grandad, I did an internship at Hero for one month and before then, I worked an after-school job occasionally. I experienced then that people here at the company feel familiar like friends and family. It is just so much fun to work here. The working atmosphere is simply great. I always like to come to Hero and I feel really good here. And I am probably not the only one to have this opinion. After all, there are many, who have completed their job training here and some who have been with us for more than 20 years.

**Christoph:** This is a truly good sign. I must say that. Even during the high phase of COVID, it became once again evident that we have a creative, fantastic team, who can together take on and resolve problems very well. The team's willingness to work beyond the usual measure in special times is truly tremendous. In 2020, we produced as many cuffs in three months as we normally do in one year.



But that is not all: Our employees additionally told us that they are willing, in case of a 14-day quarantine, to stay on the company premises in order to keep up the production. That is extraordinary and gives me good assurance that we can master anything. Over the years, together with our employees, we have brought the company in the ideal position and in the future, we want to stand on an even broader base.

**Marie:** Not that I have had the chance to see lots of companies so far, but... Hero is truly special I think. When you consider that some even go on holidays together, I'm impressed. By the way, I have made the same experience as Paula. During my internship, I was allowed to do lots of things on my own from the start because the others thought I could do it.

For example, I had the chance to learn a lot over a short period of time, and then I also added my own ideas. For example, making the Sting Bag from old yarn.

**// In addition, we consider our employees also to be our family, for whom we are ready to take responsibility.**

**Hubert:** Well, I must say that I'm very pleased to hear how you already contribute and also what a positive impression the two of you have of Hero. Perhaps your future place may later even be in this company, who knows? That would be very nice. But we won't make you do this of course. And besides, it would also be necessary that you decide to get a meaningful education and complete relevant training.

**Paula:** Yes, we will see. There's still time and first of all, I naturally want to think thoroughly about what my interests are. However, at this point I can already say for sure that I am very proud of my grandpa and my dad because they have built a really great company.

**Marie:** Yes, totally, so am I.

**// Foremost honesty. This is probably the most essential value of all, which is passed on from generation to generation.**



**Christoph:** Thanks, girls. This conversation today shows to me again that it is very hard for us to differentiate between family and company anyway. What happens in the company is always also a subject at home for the family. Besides, we also consider our employees to be family for whom we are ready to take responsibility. Just like for you. And not least, the same values are practiced here as they are practiced there. Foremost honesty. This is probably the most essential value of all, which is passed on from generation to generation.

**Marie:** Come to speak of honesty. Paula and I need to go soon. We want to meet up with our friends.

**Hubert:** Alright. Then off you go. It was really interesting to talk with you.

# WHY HERO?



**Annette Lechler**  
has been with Hero  
for 23 years.



**Angelika Horn**  
has been with Hero  
for 13 years



**Peter Wegener**  
has been with Hero  
for 5 years



**Nicole Regehr**  
has been with Hero  
for 25 years

## THE YOUNG BOSSES MADE THE DIFFERENCE

// Although it was quite a long time ago, I still remember exactly how I came to Hero. At the time, I worked as a seamstress at another company when suddenly four colleagues changed to Hero Textil. They were totally excited about the young bosses, who were very open-minded and easy going. After my employer's bankruptcy, I also applied for a job there and got it. After a very short time already, I felt quite at home at the company. And I still do so today. Even after 23 good years, I still enjoy being a Hero employee.

## YOU CAN SIMPLY ONLY FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THIS COMPANY BUILDING.

// I joined Hero Textil in 2008. I still enjoy my work in the administration as much as ever because it is so varied. There is never a dull moment at Hero anyway, because our colleagues always put new ideas into practice and surprise us with great product innovations. Last year, for example, they did so with the mouth-nose masks, which were a hot-selling item to say the least. And, yes, there is our state-of-the-art building which we moved into in 2013 and which of course also does its part to everyone feeling very comfortable here.

## HERO HAS MANY INTERESTING TASKS FOR ME.

// I had worked for Hero Textil as an external IT service provider for more than 20 years when I got the offer by complete surprise five years ago, to switch into permanent employment. After a minute of intense consideration, the decision that I accept the offer was final. Since then, my tasks include the planning, configuration and servicing of the entire IT infrastructure. In addition, I am developing and programming a platform-independent ERP extension. All in all, it is a role with responsibility with interesting and varied tasks that I am happy to take on.

## HERO IS LIKE A SECOND FAMILY TO ME.

// Hero Textil has become like a second family to me in the course of the years. I have a job here, which I enjoy and where I can contribute my ideas and suggestions, which are then also taken into account or even implemented. Besides this, I have great colleagues working with whom each day is lots of fun and who ensure that you like coming to work even in difficult times.

Hero Textil is a company with low workforce fluctuation. Many of our employees have been loyal for a long time. Others only joined us recently but we cannot really imagine working without them anymore. So, we seem to do some things right as an employer. But what are those things really? We asked all around among our own staff.



**Susanne Henz**

has been with Hero for 10 years.



**Roselinde Heisswolf**

has been with Hero for 11 years.



**Georg Hauser**

has been with Hero for 18 years



**Fariha Pop**

has been with Hero for 6 years

**I WOULD NOT HAVE STAYED FOR AS LONG AS I HAVE, IF I WERE NOT AS HAPPY AS I AM HERE.**

// I'm a tailor by training. When my former employer had to close shop, I luckily received a job offer from Hero Textil. I quickly decided to accept the new challenge. Initially, it wasn't entirely easy for me, because I switched from a small to a large company where there were lots of new responsibilities for me and where I also had to get to know the new colleagues first. But by now, I have already been here for 10 years – and that is the best proof that I have long been very happy.

**OPTIMISATION SUGGESTIONS OR PRIVATE WORRIES: BOTH WILL BE HEARD AT HERO.**

// Before I joined the Hero team in 2010, I had worked for more than 20 years at a spinning and doubling mill. My area of responsibility at this company presented a new challenge, which I wouldn't want to miss by any means. Up until today, I have had the opportunity at Hero Textil to contribute my wealth of experience. Suggestions for the optimisation of workflows are heard here just as much as private worries and fears of each individual.

**IN SPITE OF MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, THE WORK NEVER GETS DULL.**

// My school principal pointed me toward Hero Textil at the time. In the job interview already and then also during my internship week, I found that I like the work at the company and that I get along well with my colleagues. What I also liked: After my apprenticeship, I could pass through all career stages at the company and learn a lot from others in the process. By now, I have been 18 years with the company continuously with all my passion. Although I now have lots of experience and much is routine, I think the work is still very varied.

**HERO REALLY DOES A LOT FOR THE WELFARE OF ITS EMPLOYEES.**

// Since November 2015, I have worked for accounting and purchasing. I enjoy the varied work tasks with lots of interpersonal contact very much. To me, Hero stands for H as in 'heartily' in the relationship with the great work colleagues and supervisors. E as in 'especially' regarding what we as employees receive: fruit, drinks, celebrations, premiums. R as in 'respectful' in the sense of understanding and being family-friendly. O as in 'optimal' in terms of the work environment and atmosphere.



**Julia Thumm**

has been with Hero for 5 years



**Jochen Schick**

has been with Hero for 2 years.

**HERO BELIEVES IN ME AND TRUSTS ME. I APPRECIATE THAT.**

// After completing my apprenticeship in the textiles industry, I found the idea of getting to know a further textiles company to be very exciting. In my job interview, I met open-minded and friendly interviewers, who immediately convinced me of their work and gave me the feeling that I had come to the right place. I appreciate in Hero especially much that I can work independently in my own responsibility and that a lot of confidence is placed in me. But I also find the cooperation with my colleagues is extremely good, regardless what departments and divisions they work for and this is a great value added.

**MY EXPERIENCE AND THE COMPANY'S VISION – IT'S A MATCH.**

// I decided to work for the company Hero in 2019 because I was certain that my knowledge and experience relating to tubular knit and the company's visions are a good match and that we can help us get ahead together. After two years, I can say that it is exactly like this. It is good for me to contribute my know-how here and we also continuously develop further.



PAUL ÜBEL AND  
HERO TEXTIL ARE  
MERGING INTO ONE.



In July 2021, it became public and three months later, it also became official: Hero Textil AG is taking over the business of Paul Übel Wirk- und Strickwaren GmbH, which will take the company name Hero Textil AG Limbach effective immediately. This makes Hero Textil a company with two strong locations. The merger renders numerous synergies and advantages for all involved.



*„I am looking forward to pulling together with the expanded team. The experiences and competences at both sites will result in great synergy. I’m sure of it!“*

ANNA SOPHIE GÖGGERLE



Mathias Meyer and Christoph Ulrich

In the Saxon town of Limbach-Oberfrohna, the Übel CEO Mathias Meyer convened his 14 employees in July to announce historic news. The Hero management in Crailsheim also informed all employees in person about the step, which is definitely a milestone in the history of both companies.

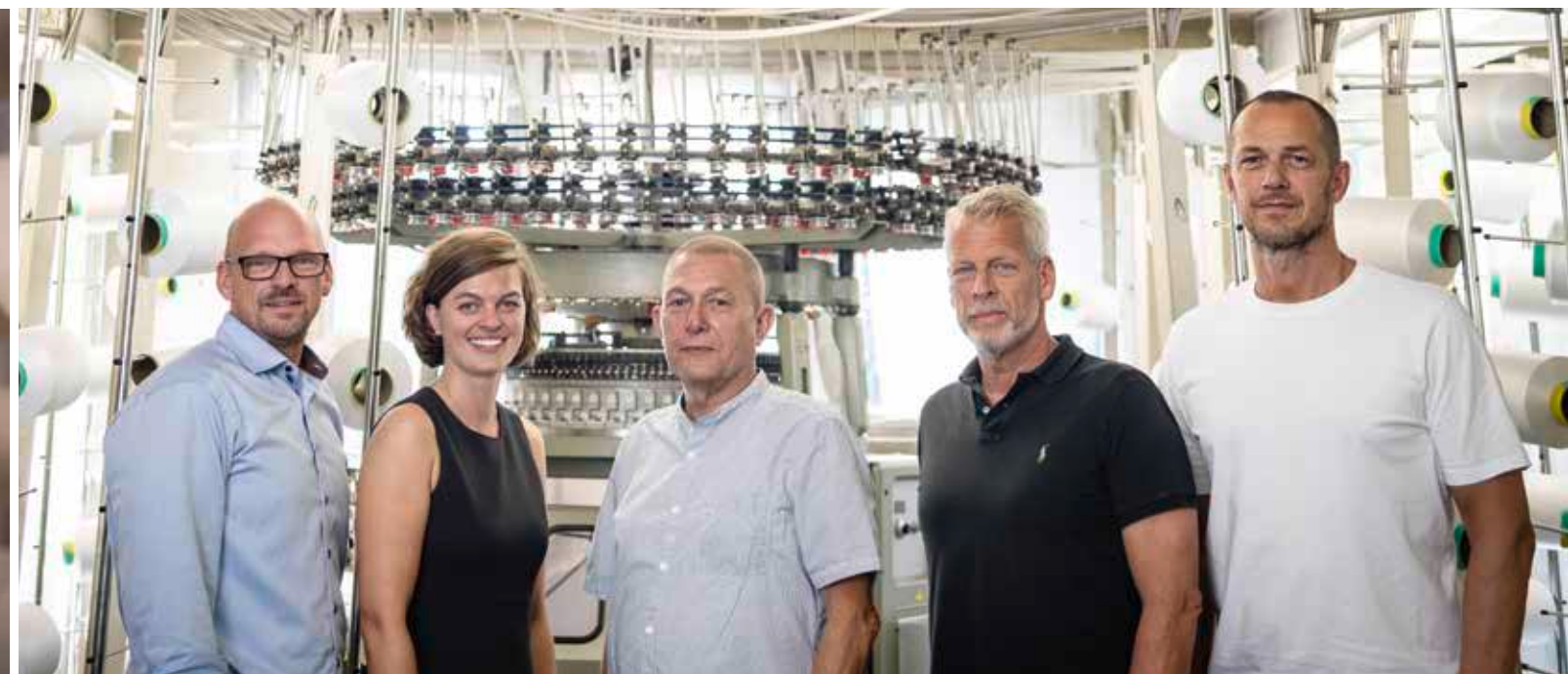
The reactions at both locations were entirely positive. The statements by the CEOs quickly made clear that the merger maximises the benefits for both sites.

#### Expanded capacities and competences for Hero.

By integrating its contracted manufacture of many years, Hero Textil AG is successfully securing and expanding its own production, while also moving toward a 3-shift operation. Limbach is regarded as a textile centre that has since always trained and attracted qualified specialist personnel. Übel itself is a true manufacture with long tradition and high-capacity tubular knitting machines and experienced knitters. Together with Hero, the opportunity presents itself to develop and sample new products and thereby tap new markets.

„In the beginning the merger of the two companies was merely an idea but it then became more and more concrete very soon because everyone realised: It's simply a match!

CHRISTOPH ULRICH



Growth and further development in Limbach.

There are also many advantages from the merger for the Limbach site. Plans envision an increase in personnel and spatial growth with the creation of new training jobs and a new building. Existing resources will be modernised and developed further.

**A secured future for everyone.**

All existing jobs will be saved. And Mathias Meyer, as well, will not be lost for his people. He will be available for two years as a consultant and continue to be a fixture in the company's operations. Together with further employees, he is a member of a cross-site taskforce, which will ensure that materials management, department structures, and business processes in Limbach and Crailsheim will merge efficiently. There is plenty to do for everyone. And the good thing about it is that everyone can contribute and help proactively without exception to shape the future of the newly formed Hero Textil AG together. More frequently, this will also be done both here and there in joint meetings, which are to actively promote getting to know each other and exchanging our know-how.

**„The merger is the right step at the right time. For the Limbach site, it means growth, advancement and viability for the future.“**

MATHIAS MEYER

Former Übel CEO and presently  
consultant of Hero Textil AG

HERO TEXTIL AG

LIMBACH SITE

Hohensteiner Straße 2

09212 Limbach-Oberfrohna



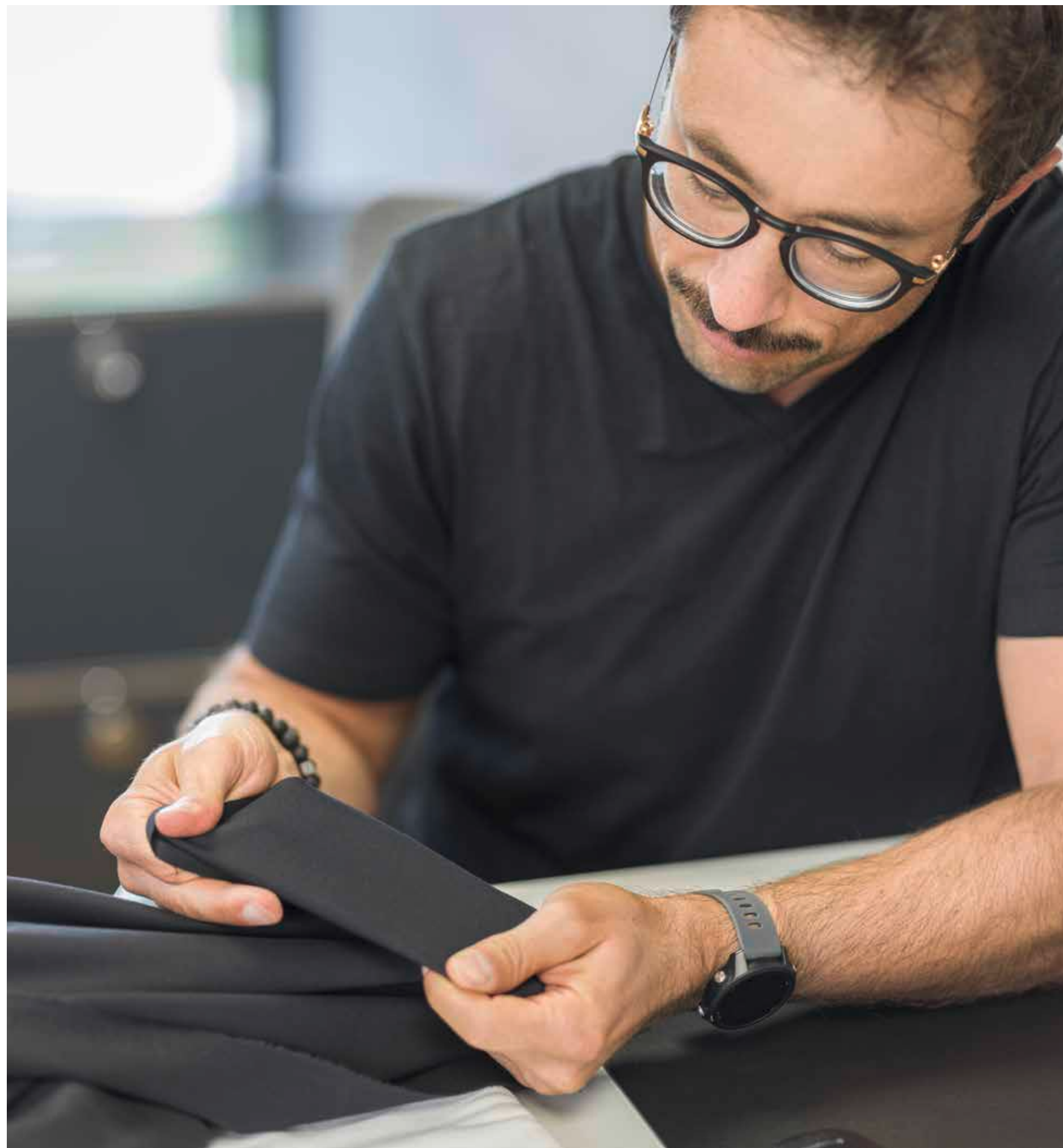
Warp'nWeft

#### TITLE STORY

## NEW BI-ELASTIC FABRIC FOR THE HIGHEST OF STANDARDS

Those who know Hero Textil exclusively as a specialist for elastic knitting inserts has to reconsider now. "Stretch your mind, please!" That is because since last year, we have also been producing woven fabric under the label Warp'nWeft.

This is to say, primarily bi-elastic woven fabric to be precise. We thereby expand our portfolio by a completely new competency. And we accommodate all those customers, who want to go one or two steps further when it comes to stretch workwear. To ensure that we know what we are doing, we brought a true woven fabric expert to our company in Matthias Hummel in the middle of 2019. Before joining Hero, the 41-year-old held a managerial position at a full-range German textiles manufacturer. He is now planning to achieve great accomplishments with us. Exactly as we do with him.





Greetings to the home office in Waldshut-Tiengen, Matthias. And happy birthday belatedly.

Haha, that's right. My birthday was a few days ago. Thank you. Home office is true, too. At the moment, this is still a good solution for anyone whose job permits. At any rate, it is for me. I live near the border to Switzerland but I communicate closely with my colleagues at Hero each day and I can therefore also initiate and push ahead a lot of things from here. This works flawlessly.

Your new employer is totally thrilled about you. How come?

I'm probably simply the right man at the right time. I have a university degree in textiles technology and management with more than 13 years' professional experience at a full-range textiles manufacturer with spinning mill, weaving mill, dye mill and machinery, which produced textiles for workwear. I now have the great opportunity of course to bring my skills as laboratory director, director of products and development, and product manager to the job at Hero.

How do you ensure that the subject of woven fabric picks up steam at Hero Textil?

What is crucial is the regular and intense exchange with our German partner companies, which currently manufacture woven fabrics for Hero Textil – from the yarn maker to the grey woven fabrics producer and the woven fabrics processor. The aim is to reach a high process reliability for existing products. Because rising demand is already foreseeable at this point, I am trying to scout for further partner companies at the same time, who meet our requirements for quality and sustainability. In addition, I see to the organisation and procurement of materials for production and woven fabric development, respectively, and I bring up Hero to potential customers as an innovative woven fabrics manufacturer.

How does the market respond to Hero diversifying?

Very well, I must say. Hero's focus has always been on the manufacturing and sale of elastic knitted fabrics, which are used as stretch zones by clothing manufacturers.

The expansion of the portfolio by elastic woven fabric is therefore simply a logical consequence to many. The trend in fashion and consequently also in the workwear industry is clearly going in the direction of more elasticity anyway. If someone like Hero now appears, who can offer both stretch knit as well as woven fabrics, this someone holds all the aces as a collaborating textiles manufacturer. Besides, the bi-elastic woven fabric means reaching the pinnacle of textiles manufacturing. Many competitors don't cover it and offer only cross-elastic woven fabric.

Warp'nWeft, in contrast to knitted fabrics, lets you design larger surfaces elastically, right?

Exactly, but knitted stretch zones also continue to be essential nonetheless.

This is alone for reasons of price

already. As a customer, you must be able and willing first of all to afford yourself work overalls that are completely made of bi-elastic woven fabric. In addition, also optics and qualitative reasons support that elastic knits and woven fabrics continue to be needed. The mix will make the difference. And we can offer it.

What else speaks for Hero Textil as a woven fabrics manufacturer? We can definitely score by virtue of our bi-elastic woven fabrics being suitable for industrial laundry. It applies in general: Our knit inserts have a number of outstanding product features. If we can transfer these to the elastic woven fabrics, we will fill a real niche in the market. Another plus on the side of Hero is furthermore the fact that we, compared to the large manufacturers, can also deliver customised woven fabrics in small quantities. This point, as well, makes us very interesting to one or the other customer.

Christoph Ulrich thinks it is revolutionary that Hero now also produces woven fabrics. What does he mean by that or why is that so?

(laughs) You of course would have to ask him yourself. But one fact is: Christoph is a person, who compared to competitors often thinks outside of the box and therefore

sees beyond his own horizon. Years ago, he expanded his flat knitting mill by tubular knitting machines and now he goes a step further and produces woven fabrics on his own accord. Many would say, cobbler, stick to your last. But I see it differently.

What should be so different in the production of woven fabrics?

The effort to manufacture a woven fabric is many times greater. Woven fabric is really a thing for big industry. It therefore also doesn't make sense for Hero Textil at this

point to start its own weaving mill. The costs involved would be too high. Instead, we pay more attention to a careful selection of our partner suppliers.

MATTHIAS HUMMEL

Hero Textil procures weaving, dyeing and equipment exclusively

from German sources. Is that correct?

Absolutely. "Made in Germany" is an important quality criterion, which is essential and more important to us than some of the certifications are. In times when sustainability is a big issue, we fulfil this requirement quite automatically by keeping processes inside of Germany alone because of the strict rules and regulations that apply here.

In the area of stretch knit inserts, Hero is appreciated by its customers and business partners, especially also as a source of ideas and solutions.

And this is precisely where we also want to get with the woven fabrics segment. We will also implement our own ideas there and manufacture prototypes. At this time, we have two articles in production. We currently use them for sample inspections by customers. Additional product developments are in the pipeline. We are generally always happy when a customer involves us as early as possible in a project because we can then contribute the most to come to an innovative solution.



The Warp'nWeft story is available as a video at [hero-textil.de/fabric](https://hero-textil.de/fabric)



I can tell you are really eager about this subject matter.

Yes, I am. I come from a company that used to be one of the most innovative manufacturers in the industry. I decided to come to Hero Textil, among other reasons, because the company has a good reputation with the customers: If you want something innovative, then go to Hero. My motivation is to strengthen this image and push ahead with the innovative power in the company.

Sounds promising. Would you dare in conclusion to give us an outlook on how the woven fabric production will develop at Hero Textil?

I quite generally believe that we will offer at most ten different woven fabrics in the long term, which will then regularly also be available in eight different colours ex warehouse. A lot of things are feasible beyond this. Especially as relates to custom solutions, we are capable of doing things that are not practicable for large woven fabrics manufacturers. The most important thing to me is that Hero Textil and Warp'nWeft – have great potential. We have the right product line to offer at the right time. A lot will be possible and I am extremely looking forward to it.



# WITHOUT WORDS

The Hero management works together hand-in-glove. Or at least without using words between them. But does non-verbal communication also work beyond the inner circle? We asked Guido Günther, Anna Sophie Göggerle, Sascha Bertram and Christoph Ulrich (from left to right) three questions each about the company. The answers are impressive.





SASCHA

HERO IS MORE AND MORE DEVELOPING PRODUCTS ON ITS OWN OR IT CONTRIBUTES TO CUSTOMER PROJECTS IN THE EARLY STAGES ALREADY. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?

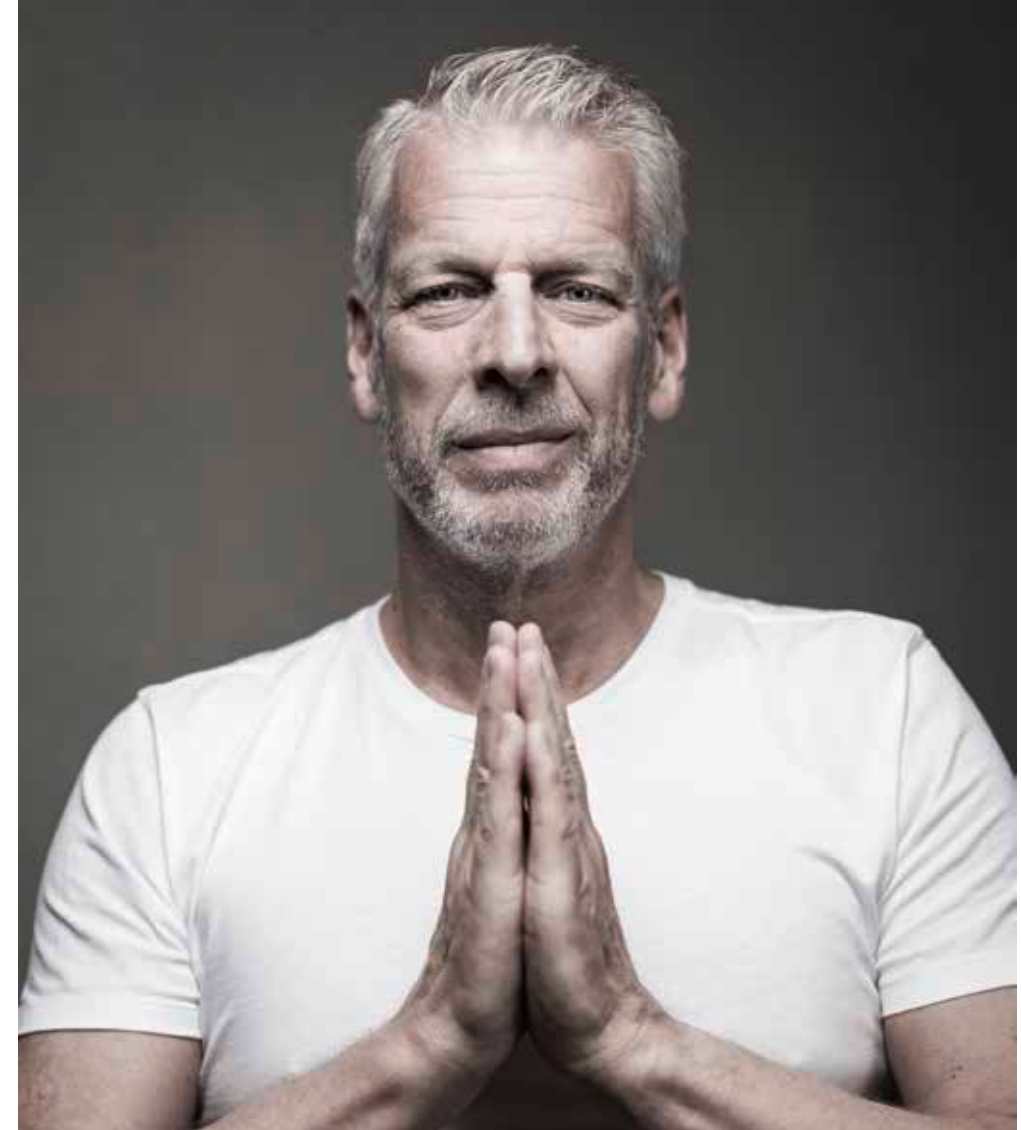
GUIDO

WHAT EXCITES YOU THE MOST ABOUT THE HERO KNIT FABRICS?



ANNA

HOW IS THE WORKING ATMOSPHERE AT HERO?



CHRISTOPH

IS THERE SOMETHING THAT YOU WANT  
TO SHARE WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES?

SASCHA  
WHAT IS GOOD MANAGEMENT  
TO YOU?



GUIDO

WHAT GOALS HAVE YOU SET FOR  
YOURSELVES FOR THE COMING YEARS?





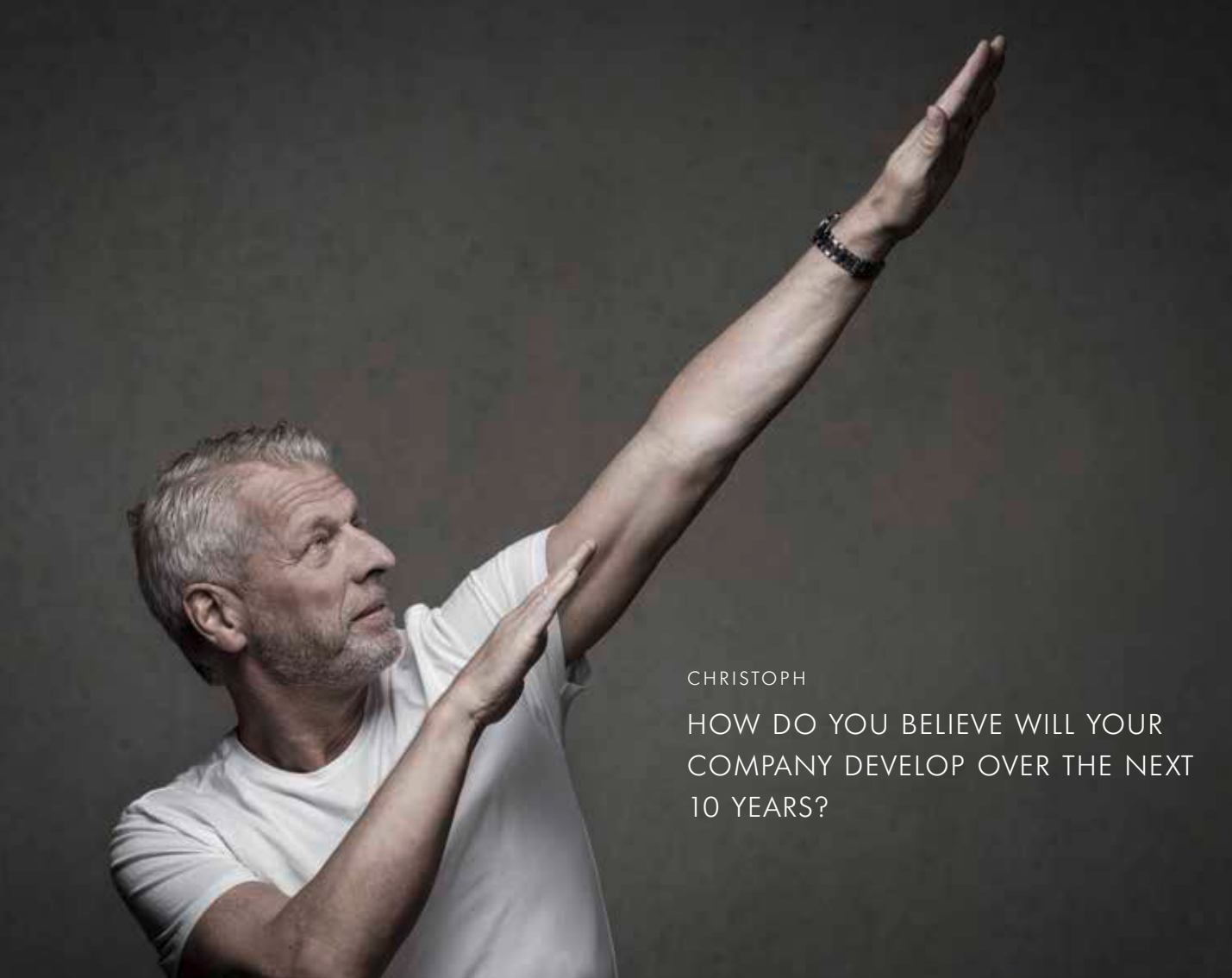
CHRISTOPH

HERO ADJUSTED TO COVID REMARKABLY WELL AND FLEXIBLY. IS THE COMPANY WELL EQUIPPED FOR FUTURE CRISES?

ANNA

HERO INVOLVES GREAT EFFORTS IN THE PURSUIT OF MORE SUSTAINABILITY. WHAT PROGRESS ARE YOU MAKING?





CHRISTOPH

HOW DO YOU BELIEVE WILL YOUR  
COMPANY DEVELOP OVER THE NEXT  
10 YEARS?

SASCHA

HERO NOW ALSO PRODUCES WOVEN FABRICS.  
HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM KNIT FABRICS?



ANNA

WHAT IS HERO'S ATTITUDE TOWARD  
RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION?

GUIDO

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH COMPETITORS?





Guido Günther, Anna Sophie Göggerle,  
Sascha Bertram and Christoph Ulrich (from left to right)

WHAT DOES THE MANAGEMENT LIKE  
TO DO BEST IF THEY AREN'T AT WORK?



# NO TIME TO STAND STILL.

AN INTERVIEW WITH NICOLE KIEFER, TREND SCOUT FUTURE TEXTILES AT MEWA TEXTIL-MANAGEMENT IN WIESBADEN

MEWA and Hero Textil have shared a partnership over many decades. Time and again, exciting projects bring us together where we inspire and support each other, and push other ahead. What we admire very much in MEWA: Our customer rigorously pursues the aim of being the best textiles management firm in Europe – while sustainability and innovation have always been the key components from the start. As Trend Scout Future Textiles, Nicole Kiefer is responsible for finding ever new environmentally safe and simultaneously trendsetting textiles solutions and getting them started. How successful is she in doing so, and what challenges come with the job? We asked about it.

Since when has your exciting position existed at MEWA and how did you come to it?

The position “Trend Scout Future Textiles” has existed at our company since mid-2017. At that time, I had already worked for a few years as the head of product development at the company, because MEWA is one of the few textile services providers who co-develop lines of clothing internally. This way, the demands of customers and novelties in fibres woven fabrics and cutting techniques, and trends on the textiles market can directly flow into the design of our work and protective clothing. Because MEWA has made a commitment to being a leader in innovation, we wanted to think far beyond our own backyard.

We wanted to include factors that have potential for change in our work at the point when they just appear on the horizon already. For this, you continually have to proactively discover new trends and analyse them closely in terms of their significance for our industry. Our company management so came to decide to give the future more importance in this area. The “Trend Scout Future Textiles” position was created and I transferred into it.

Why is it so important to MEWA to constantly be on the lookout for new trends?

“Our standards for our service are high, which is why we are among the market leaders in our industry in Europe. And we want to stay there, too, of course. So we have no time to stand still because we help our customers clothe their employees well, safely, fashionably and according to the state of technology. However, because we do not simply sell professional clothing, but also provide care for the clothing for our customers, the claim of innovation is coupled with the claim of high suitability in practice. Before we market new clothing, we therefore test it intensely. This is how we ensure that it can be used over a long period of time. The sooner we discover a trend, the quicker we can consequently evaluate its significance for us and, if applicable, use it for the further improvement of our offer.”



What are currently the most important and most pioneering trends in the textiles industry?

Work clothing has seen a true renaissance. It is moving away from overalls toward dynamic clothing, in some cases with very athletic cuts, which in terms of fashion is clearly oriented on casual clothing. This boosts the demand for innovative, lightweight and nonetheless fully functional materials. By now, there are clothing lines, so-called hybrids, which combine functionality and wearing comfort in a mix of several materials so well that the people who wear them could keep the clothes on even after the end of work. This blurring of the line between job and private outfits is one of the huge trends in our industry.

In addition, the aspect of producing sustainably is gaining increasing importance: over the course of recent years, society has become aware that our resources are finite and that there are fibres and materials that have a negative impact on the environment. It is essential here to continue on the path to making modern work clothing, which is suitable for everyday life and provides protection, with creativity and intense research, while at the same time becoming more sustainable. We must close the cycle and work with resources that can be treated and recycled in the end.

To realise this goal, there must be room for unconventional solutions that may be surprising at the first glance. This includes, for example, the use of additional non-textile features of work clothing. They create an added value for the person wearing it – for example, more protection – without the look of the clothing suffering because of this.

**What role does Hero Textil play at your work?**

Hero is a great partner to us. We share a long and good partnership. We inspire each other. One reason for this is the professional curiosity that is prevalent at Hero. Our contacts are open to new things and have creative ideas. Knit is one of the oldest textiles products, but Hero reinvents this method of textiles manufacturing all the time. The experts there develop techniques and looks that we can use in our modern professional clothing lines. We have a partner in Hero that doesn't shy away from taking up new things, daring to break ground, and pursue ideas that go far beyond the known solutions. The projects with Hero are fun because Hero accepts new challenges with enthusiasm.

MEWA develops its own professional clothing for a variety of industries. What is the strength of your lines of clothing?

All of our lines of clothing combine a modern look with a high measure of ergonomics and industry-specific functionality. We offer production workers, craftspeople, workers in the service and healthcare industries stylish work clothing, which is suited for their work and underpins their professionalism. With our sales organisation, we are in close proximity to our customers and we know their industries and requirements for work clothing. I believe this is something that lets us stand out: that we contemplate the working worlds of our customers in depth and, based on this knowledge, develop clothing that is made for their work.

This also involves that we compose our lines of clothing from diverse lines and articles that are matched to each other. This is how employers can clothe their teams uniformly even if the employees' tasks are very different or they need clothing with protective features. MEWA Dynamic line of clothing is a good example of this. It includes clothes for craftspeople, industrial workers as well as PPE for employees, who must protect themselves against chemical hazards or heat or who work in the public places and need reflective clothing as protection.

Not to forget of course, we do all of this according to the motto "using instead of owning." We offer professional clothing and professional care to our customers.

As of now, Hero Textil offers knit fabrics and woven fabrics in combination. Is this interesting to MEWA?

You bet! The combination of knits and woven fabrics is exciting and in line with current trends. Whenever, for example, the fit has to be combined with freedom of movement, such hybrid models can be the solution. The combination is highly interested also when it comes to future topics, especially if additional functions are to be integrated in the work clothing. MEWA and Hero communicate closely about this matter.

**MEWA is the inventor of textile sharing. What actually stands behind this?**

Now, we all have learned in recent years: in order to use goods and products, you do not have to own them but you can also share or rent them. This trend is sustainable, efficient and in line with the times. It started, among other things, with the successful business model of car sharing. The benefits are obvious here: members can hop in a car that is ready for driving at any time. They don't have to take care of the whole rest of it – repairs, general inspection, workshop, insurance, paperwork.



„Hybrid models comprising knit and woven fabrics play a highly interesting role in the future of work clothing.“

This saves them costs, time and effort, and they do something good for the environment. This concept can be transferred to the supply with work clothing, because the matter is similar with textiles sharing: those who use the service can take fresh, modern work clothing out of their closet at any time and simply put it on.

The outfit itself is clean and ready to wear. The customer does not have to take care of anything because the textiles service provider performs these duties. It picks up the worn clothing from the customer, washes it in an environmentally safe manner, mends it if needed, replaces worn out pieces and returns all of it clean and punctual to the customer. But there is one difference to car sharing: At MEWA, everyone gets back their “own” pants or jacket, because they are marked with a barcode.

#### What is better? Renting or buying work clothing?

Renting of course! You get clothing that meets current standards and you save time, effort and storage room because you can delegate the outfitting of your employees to the service provider. In addition, you get hygienically flawless clothing. This cannot be neglected especially in current times of the pandemic. Professional textiles service providers such as MEWA offer clothing for rent and we employ treatment methods and control systems that satisfy the requirements of the healthcare sector.

The entire process of collecting the clothing to washing and returning it is subject to a strict hygiene and quality control system. The laundering processes are performed according to the European standard EN 14065 and certified with the wfk seal for textile hygiene. This means: Customers can rely on receiving hygienically flawless work clothing.

#### The past two years have been special. How did you and MEWA fare during this time?

All of us had to adjust to the circumstances, which had been unfathomable to us before then. But: When I look the extent of the challenges, which COVID-19 presented to businesses, I think that MEWA has navigated the crisis very well. There was the switch from office work to mobile work, for example. Those at MEWA, who work from home, have worked out of their home offices, living rooms or from their kitchen tables since March last year. The required IT infrastructure for this was provided within less than days and meeting and co-working platforms make teamwork possible without restrictions.

But MEWA is a service provider. Contact cannot be avoided in many places. In this respect, our stringent hygiene management proved to be a success, which was introduced at the laundering businesses many years ago. It was functional in the pandemic from the start with just a few readjustments. This was also true for picking up and returning the clothing to the customer, which also or especially in times of the COVID-19 pandemic must work flawlessly. After all, we must not forget:

Many systemically essential businesses rely on our textile sharing. For example, we clothe teams in food production and food retail, we equip workers in waste disposal companies with protective clothing and the producing industry needs our rags to keep machinery and equipment clean. Overall, MEWA was able to adjust well to the currently applicable framework conditions due to the existing strong will to innovate.

However, probably like anyone else, I too am hoping that the pandemic will end soon. My wish is that all of us stick to the applicable rules, so that real meetings and travel will soon take place again without restrictions. Until then, all of us will push through and pull together at MEWA!

#### MEWA TEXTIL-MANAGEMENT

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Phone 0800 4500300

info@mewa.de

# QUITE BUSY AT OUR PLACE!

## GOOD THING

Three new tubular knitting machines with fine splitting have rounded out the Hero production since 2020. Our customers can therefore also look forward to an even greater repertoire of fine fabrics.



100%

## CLIMATE NEUTRAL

Hero Textil is 100% climate-neutral. This confirms the certification from Climate Partner, representing a milestone in our 40-year company history. We reached our goal of "zero emissions in 2020", among other, by operating our 225-kWp strong rooftop solar system, by implementing numerous efficiency measures in production, and by supporting a forest conservation project in Sierra Leone. By means of the support, we compensate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 606,300 kg and thereby make an active contribution to curtailing climate change.



New products and memberships, interesting personalities and commitments: a lot is changing in a short time at Hero Textil. As the following news proves.



## "YES!" TO DIVERSITY

Hero Textil stands for diversity and openness. Whenever possible, we take a stance against racism and discrimination. Our signing of the Diversity Charter in 2019 was consequently just a logical next step. But an important one!



## MAXIMUM SUSTAINABILITY

Since January 2020, we have been a member of MaxTex, the network for sustainable textiles. Together with other actors, we have since then done our share to ensure sustainable trade in the textiles sector throughout the entire value chain.

More about this at [www.maxtex.eu](http://www.maxtex.eu)



## TRAINEES IN STORE

Hero Textil offers job training, and since September 2019 also for a warehouse specialist. Our apprentice in this field is John and he is doing really great.



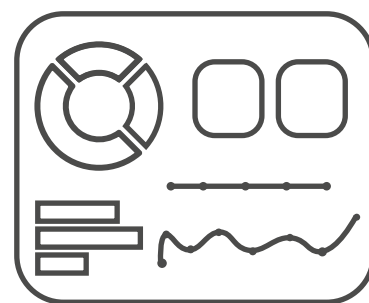
## DONE IT!

Yippee! Stefanie and Markus have successfully completed their two-year apprenticeship at our company. Both of them were taken over into employment and they are now working in the knitting mill.



## DRUMROLL, PLEASE

We made a hall available to local brass instruments music groups free of charge last autumn and winter so that they wouldn't have to skip a beat. Due to the COVID distancing rules, their own spaces had become too small.



## DIGITAL DASHBOARDS

The bigger our company gets, the more important it is that we have keep full control over central figures, data and facts. So that this works smoothly, we have developed digital dashboards for every department. They are just one proof that Hero Textil is increasingly positioning itself in a digitalised and viable manner for the future by using modern tools.

## DONATION OF MASKS TO REFUGEES

The hygienic supply is often poor in refugee camps and the risk of getting infected with COVID-19 is high. We therefore decided to donate a total of 14,000 of our mouth-nose masks to the camp in the Greek town of Ritsona through the Lighthouse Relief organisation.

The delivery was made in 2020 and thus at a time during which there was still urgent need for non-medical masks. We hope that we could help the people in site a little with this.



## FOLLOW US ON INSTA!

News on this page is a really great thing. But you would like to be more up to date when it comes to things worth knowing at Hero Textil? No problem.

We have been on Instagram since mid-2020. With lively posts and stories, we have already generated more than 600 followers. We owe this to Kyra, who made the design of the channel the subject of her Bachelor's thesis. It is definitely worthwhile to follow us! Quite certainly also for you.

See you soon!



## STRONG TOGETHER

Since 2020, Hero Textil has been a member of German Fashion – the German Fashion Association – representing the interests of the protective work clothing and professional clothing industry. The association offers an interesting platform for communication and the possibility to exchange ideas among experts. This is exactly our thing.



## PULL THE STRINGS

Practical, cool and often liked with a stitched-on logo: those who want to make a fashionable and simultaneously personalised gift to their employees or customers have come to the right place here: Hero Textil has for some time knitted String Bags, which are ideal to customise.

More information on request!



# ON THE RIGHT PATH

Mother Gisela Rehbach (74) and son Timo (42) about their relationship with Hero Textil and what really matters.

Timo Rehbach started his professional career in 2003. At that time, it was important to him to finally leave the quiet town of Crailsheim to work for a well-known company and earn good money. Now, 17 years later, he changed to Hero Textil to take over as the Head of Purchasing. As before, he still has vigour and he is eager to achieve change. But his focus has shifted. With some professional experiences more, he increasingly values interpersonal skills. "With this attitude, he is a great fit for Hero Textil," says Timo's mom. Gisela Rehbach is the one to know. After all, she was the first employee of the company 40 years ago and was for more than 30 years right in the middle of all the action..

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Well, tell us, Timo, where have you been all this time?

Timo: If you are trying to get at where I worked before Hero Textil, then the answer is from 2003 to 2011, I was a sales representative for adidas eyewear/Silhouette and from 2012 until the end of 2019, I worked as store manager and authorised officer at 11teamsports.

**Exciting. How has the time with these employers shaped you as a person?  
Can you tell?**

Timo: Yes, actually I can. In the beginning, my focus was definitely on a good salary and the possibility to climb the career ladder quickly. Today, I know that it's more important that you are always true to yourself and stay on your path.

**What path have you been on since you started work at Hero Textil in early 2019?**

Timo: As the Head of Purchasing, I am responsible for the procurement of all items for the whole company. In addition, I lead supplier interviews and negotiations, I'm responsible for the fleet management and I see to the management and organisation of our land and buildings. My job is extremely varied and it gives me the chance to apply my skills in a broad area and always in communication with my colleagues.

**You have not only known the company Hero Textil since recently, have you?**

Timo: Correct. Hero Textil has always been a part of my life. I was one year old and the youngest of three children, when my mom began working at the company.

**This is quite a long time ago, Mrs Rehbach. Do you even remember the time of the beginning?**

Mrs Rehbach: Sure, I do. Shortly after Christmas 1979, I had my job interview, in which Christoph Ulrich was already sitting in as well. On 21/01/1980, I then signed my employment contract.

At first, I worked from home at a desk in my eat-in-kitchen. Hubert Ulrich brought over tapes with dictations in the evenings and picked up the finished letters the next morning. I typed them on the typewriter. The great challenge with the PC hit me only in 1985.

**You stayed a total of 30 years at the company and went through three company relocations.**

Mrs Rehbach: That's right. For 20 years, Hubert Ulrich was my boss and it had always been my plan really to retire some time whenever he retires. But when the time came, I added another 10 years with Hero Textil AG.

**How is your personal relationship with the Ulrich family?**

Mrs Rehbach: Christoph became dear to me, like a fourth child. We worked together as a great team from the first to the last day. He was a fantastic junior boss who has earned my respect. I have a very friendly and respectful relationship with the Ulrich family. Having three children, I could never have worked a job if Hubert Ulrich had not been so considerate of my family. At the same time, he could always rely on me completing the work diligently and on time – regardless if at night or on the weekend.



**What does it mean to you that your son works here now?**

Mrs Rehbach: After initial scepticism, I am by firmly convinced now it was the right step because Timo has a strong character and he is a responsible person. He deserves the same trust as I have been given for 30 years.

**And how did the change to Hero even come about?**

Timo: It all got started by private discussions in passing while we weren't even talking about changing jobs. Christoph was telling me what values Hero Textil stands for and about the culture that is practiced at the company and that was when the thought was ripening in me that I would like to be a part of it.

**Did the decision to go to Hero come easy to you?**

Timo: It was less about Hero's pros or cons but rather a personal decision on principle. I had a great time at 11 teamsports, wonderful colleagues and fascinating responsibilities. But it was time to go in a new direction. The final decision in favour of Hero was not hard to make for me because I find a lot here what is important to myself: trust and straightforwardness, for example.

**Do you think that this will also stay this way as the company keeps growing? Where do you see the company in 5 years?**

Timo: In 5 years? Hopefully, it'll be in just a familiar and open-minded atmosphere as right now. If the management keeps acting as people as they always have and if the employees keep appreciating this as their greatest good, then we will develop further healthily and continue this successful company for a long time to come. I firmly believe in this.

**Speaking about history, Mrs Rehbach, the closing remark should come from you. What comes to your mind when looking back at the past 40 years of Hero Textil?**

Mrs Rehbach: The company has constantly developed further and built a trusting relationship with the customers based on quality and reliability. Christoph has always been a person with lots of ideas and creativity. Although he continues the company according to his father's ideals, he didn't freeze in time. Together with his employees, he always finds a solution for the customer's demands. Regardless of how unusual they are.

GOOD SHEPHERD HOME IN CAMEROON:

# VALUABLE HELP IN SPITE OF CIVIL WAR

In our last report in Strickschrift 01, circumstances have become worse for the Good Shepherd Home. In September 2017, civil war broke out between government supporters and rebels in the English-speaking part of Cameroon, which also impacts the orphanage in many ways. One direct effect is that the 150 children cannot make the way to school safely. Home schooling is also not an option due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please note: This photo of our Head of HR, Anna Sophie Göggerle, was made during her visit to the orphanage in early 2019, when travel abroad was still possible without restrictions.



# WHAT COMES NEXT?

“ It hurts me a lot that I can still not travel in person to see the children in Cameroon because of COVID. Fortunately, however, we also have two association members of Cameroon at SEAD, who ensure on site that the project makes good progress.

LARISSA MAYER

Leaving the children and war refugees to their own devices in this situation is not an option – not for the great founder of Good Shepherd, Sister Jane, and of course not for us as her supporters either. Quite the opposite: In February/March 2019, Anna Sophie Göggerle travelled together with Larissa Mayer of Crailsheim to Cameroon to get an understanding of the situation and help out with their own hands.

To be able to help even more and in a more professional manner under the given circumstances, the two and five other young people founded the association SEAD e. V., which could count on the full and regular support from Hero Textil AG from day one. The acronym SEAD stands for Sustainability, Education, Agriculture, Development and it holds the claim to offer help for self-help. This also works well already in a water project, which secures the water supply for the Good Shepherd Home and 300 nearby households. Information on all further aid projects is available at [sead-ev.de](https://sead-ev.de)

“ I have great respect for everyone who helps out on site and ensures that our money can really make a difference. I thank them for this.

CHRISTOPH ULRICH



“ My vision is that in the long term we will be able to help not only the Good Shepherd Home but also all people in the vicinity. We have accomplished this to some extent with the water project.

ANNA SOPHIE GÖGGERLE

## OUR COMMITMENT IN FACTS & FIGURES:

- 2002** Founding of the Good Shepherd Home by Sister Jane
- 2013** Larissa Mayer completes her social year in Bamenda and tells us about it
- 2014** Hero Textil begins with the regular and sustainable support for the orphanage, making education and healthy food possible
- 2016** Building of a fish pond, chicken farm and pig breeding
- 2018** Purchase of a car for getting supplies and trips to the doctor
- 2019** Professionalisation of the aid by founding SEAD e. V. February/March: Personal visit by association members Anna Sophie Göggerle of Hero Textil and Larissa Mayer on site in Cameroon, implementation of the water project and further projects, see [sead-ev.de](https://sead-ev.de)
- 2021** The founder Mother Jane has passed away, which is a great loss to the children. We give our best so that the work at the home can be continued in her spirit.

Those who want to support SEAD and through it, the Good Shepherd Home is welcome to do so: PayPal via [sead-ev.de/unterstuetzung/spenden](https://sead-ev.de/unterstuetzung/spenden) or bank transfer to the following account: GLS Bank  
SEAD e. V.  
IBAN: DE11 4306 0967 7931 4714 00  
BIC: GENODEM1GLS

The HAKRO Merlins Crailsheim:

# WE STAY TRUE!



What the HAKRO Merlins Crailsheim and, in consequence, we too, being their long-time team sponsor, have experienced in the 2019/20 BBL season is simply unbelievable. It has been an emotional rollercoaster ride with an inebriant 15 victories in 21 games – among other, against the multiple German Champions Bamberg and Berlin. An abrupt end came to the season landing the team in 4th place of the league. It ended in an unusual COVID final tournament, which the team finished as the winner of hearts. And then?

Like most clubs of the Basketball Bundesliga, the HAKRO Merlins Crailsheim were in a pinch for quite some time. The matter of letting spectators back in could not be resolved reliably until shortly before the start of the 2021/22 season. The top aim is preserving the Bundesliga location with national broadcasting. As are, of course, also the playing and training operations, which are essential for the future of the club and the entire Hohenlohe region.

Which fan would still stand by his team in this situation? Which sponsor would go through all of this?

It is certain to Christoph Ulrich: “We of course! As a long-time sponsor, we have been firm supporters of the Merlins in the most difficult of seasons in the club’s history.

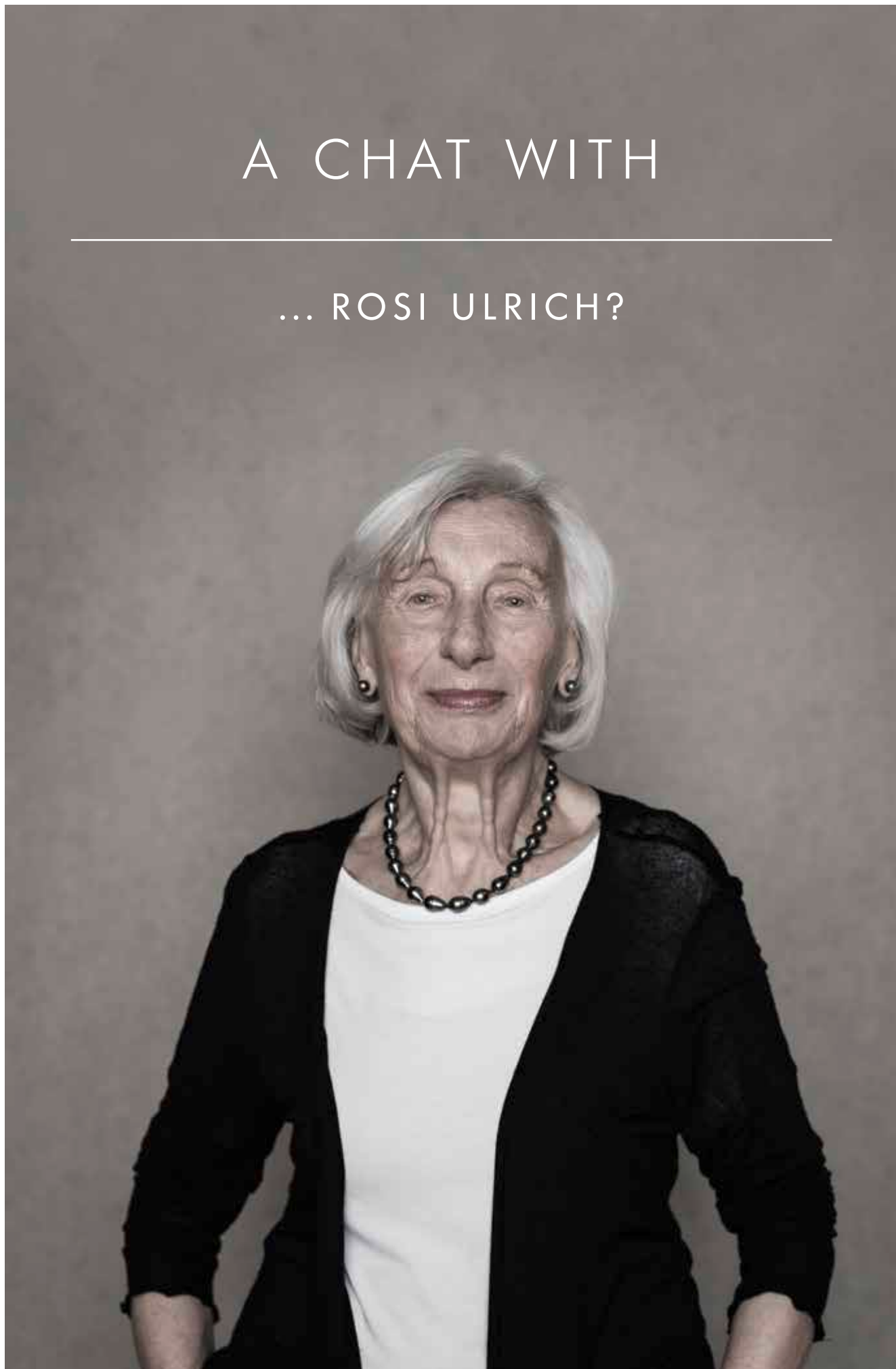
And we have renewed our commitment for the new season. We are now looking forward to a magical season with spectators. And even games at the European level for the first time.”

Martin Romig, CEO of the HAKRO Crailsheim Merlins, is excited: “For a long time, we didn’t know how things would continue. But we knew one thing from the start: We have the most fantastic sponsors of the league. Hero Textil has stayed true to us for a long time. They think like us and understand that it is not about a few pros paying here. It’s about integration. Social responsibility. Pure magic. Our BBL team is our driving force – clear the case. But behind them is so much more, which we must now be sure to preserve with united efforts.”

When you read this article, the new BBL season of the Merlins has long been underway. You can find out the current standing of our ballers at [www.hakro-merlins.de](http://www.hakro-merlins.de)

# A CHAT WITH

## ... ROSI ULRICH?



Rosi Ulrich helped her husband Hubert to found and develop Hero Textil starting in 1980. Today, the 82-year-old is enjoying her retirement as wife, mother, sextuple grandma and as of recently, also as great-grandmother. She still has time for her manifold hobbies alongside the family as well.

Mrs Ulrich, first off the plain and simple question:  
How are you?

I'm in good health at this time, still sticking to the COVID rules and I move around carefully. But I also go on longer walks in the forest every day. It makes for a nice change and gives me energy.

**By the way, I am also responsible for the RO in Hero with my first name being Rosi.**

How are you currently spending your daily life?

Last year, I stayed at home a lot due to the distancing rules. Now, all of us are vaccinated and fortunately, we can get together again. It does me real good.

What hobbies and passions keep you going?

My regular rehab gymnastics and my two regular's groups. But I also like to travel very much. In recent years, we took a lot of trips abroad. I keep fond memories of them.

Do you spend much time with your children and grandchildren?

Of course. We do a lot of things together. We have a lot of catching up to do.

Do you sometimes still stop by Hero Textil?

At the moment unfortunately only rarely so, but people always keep me up to date on what is happening.

When you take a look back to the start of Hero Textil, how would you describe your role in building the company?

I was a part of it at the founding already and worked alongside my husband in the management. I enjoyed preparing the accounting for many years. By the way, I'm also responsible for the RO in Hero with my first name being Rosi.

What thoughts and emotions come to you when you look at Hero Textil today after 40 years?

I am happy that first of all, my two sons and then my son Christoph continued running the company in my husband's spirit after he retired. I am proud that the company has developed so positively in 40 years and that it has a professional and modern profile to the outside. It would be nice if the successful history of Hero Textil could also be continued in the next generation.

Do you still have goals for the coming years? Something that you absolutely want to do or reach?

I wish that my family and I stay healthy and that we see each other as much as possible. If my health permits, I would like to travel again.

Mrs Ulrich, we wish you all the best and thank you very much for this interview!

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## WE WON'T GIVE IN!

The following projects and organisations, respectively, can  
continue to rely on the lasting support from Hero Textil AG or  
do so from now on:



Kulturwochenende Crailsheim  
(Culture Weekends Crailsheim)  
www.kulturwochenende-crailsheim.de



„Mitmachen Ehrensache“ der Jugendstiftung Baden-Württemberg  
("Contributing is a point of honour" of Youth Foundation  
of Baden-Württemberg)  
www.mitmachen-ehrensache.de



Beschützende Werkstätte für geistig und körperlich Behinderte  
Heilbronn e. V. Werkstatt Crailsheim (Protective Workshop for  
People with Mental and Physical Disabilities)  
www.bw-heilbronn.de



Unternehmer-Initiative Bleiberecht  
(Business Initiative for the Right of Residence)  
www.unternehmer-initiative.com

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