

THE RICO GROUP MAGAZINE

# INSIGHTS

ISSUE 2018

## NEXT EXPANSION STAGE

In Thalheim the new buildings of RICO and HTR are taking shape.

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## SQUEAKY CLEAN

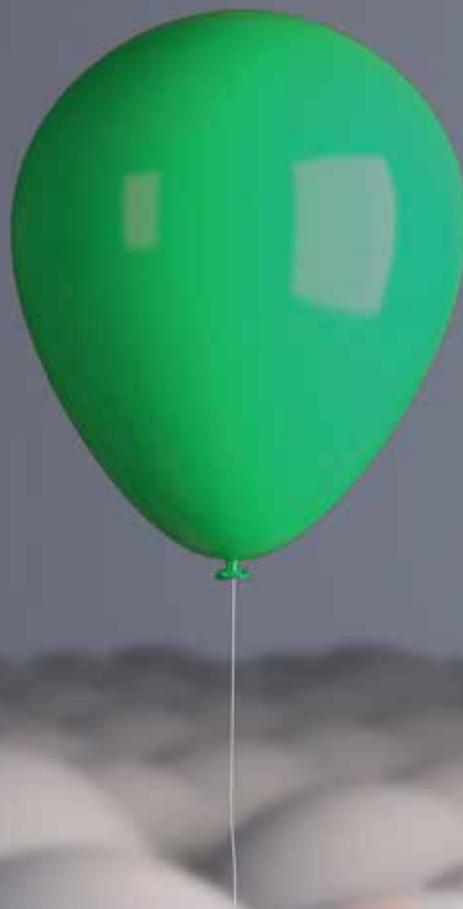
SIMTEC has responded to feedback from numerous customers by building a certified, class 8-compliant clean room.

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## EVERYTHING IS ISO AT SILCOPLAST

The swiss injection molder is happy about the ISO 14001 certification and has further plans for the future.

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**TO GROW BEYOND  
YOUR SELF**

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For readability, INSIGHTS refrained from using gender-specific phrasing.

Insofar as personal terms are given in masculine form, they refer to men and women equally.

#### Impressum

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## EXPANSION, EXTENSION, ENLARGEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, NEW INSTALLATION, GROWTH

### EDITORIAL INSIGHTS 2018



There are lots of ways to describe recent events at the RICO GROUP. But one strand of our DNA will always stay the same: our determination to make improvements for the benefit of our customers.

How can we deliver even stronger performance to our customers – to you? How can we establish partnerships and drive them forward? And how can we serve as a pioneer for you? These are subjects that we address constantly.

This edition gives you an insight into the world of the RICO GROUP, as we strive to achieve continuous improvements. Find out more about our focus areas, the projects we are working on, the events at which we hooked up with you and where – hopefully – we can look forward to meeting you next year.

Recent events at the RICO GROUP have been shaped significantly by extensions at RICO's and HTR's facilities, both in Thalheim, Austria, as well as at SIMTEC's Miramar plant in the US. Based in Wolfhalden, Switzerland, SILCOPLAST aims the ISO 14001 certification and now also has 3D printing capability. The first graduates from the RICO Academy talk about the experience they have gained during their training, while we also give you the low-down on 2K injection molding of rain sensors. And of course we look ahead to the highlights that will be on show at the RICO GROUP stand at Fakuma 2018.

To sum up, we would like to say thank you for challenging us and spurring us on with a steady stream of fascinating new projects. Because as someone once said:

„If you stop trying to become better, you stop being good.“  
Philipp Rosenthal

I hope you enjoy flicking through the stories in this edition of INSIGHTS from the RICO GROUP.

**Alfred Griesbaum**  
Managing Director, RICO Elastomere Projecting GmbH  
Managing Director, RICO GROUP



## EXCEPTIONAL VALUE ADDED

# RISING DEMAND FOR TWO-COMPONENT INJECTION MOLDING AND LIQUID SILICONE

**Outstanding thermal properties, completely plasticizer-, taste- and odor-free, and fully biocompatible: liquid silicone rubber (LSR) is an increasingly popular material.**

Thanks to its versatility, various industries and market segments are now turning to LSR components. These are used in medical technology and the life science segment; in the food, electrical engineering and automotive sectors; in mechanical engineering, and even in sanitary installations and the sport and leisure segment. The technology behind the material is still relatively new – LSR application only took off in the early 1980s. In particular, the combination of this high-tech material with thermoplastics such as PC, PEEK, PA and PBT has increased sharply in recent years. And the Wels-based RICO GROUP – more specifically its subsidiary and technology leader RICO Elastomere Projecting GmbH – has been instrumental in the development of two-component (2K) injection molding using LSR over the past two decades.

### PRODUCT DESIGN WITH SCOPE FOR CREATIVITY AND OUTSTANDING FLEXIBILITY

Initially, development focused on mechanical bonding for the combination of LSR and thermoplastics, but chemical bonds quickly turned out to be more effective. “In order to create a mechanical bond, additional elements need to be mounted on the component to achieve the necessary ‘grip’. With chemical bonding, there is no need for these additional elements. This means that production takes up much less space, which in turn has a positive impact on surface balance,” explained Martin Rapperstorfer, sales director from RICO. Chemical bonding for 2K injection molding was introduced towards the end of the 1990s, and enthusiastically received by buyers worldwide. Developers were in a position to give their product design ideas free rein – previously, this was heavily dependent on the degree of connectivity of the materials concerned. New high-tech

options for combining materials also resulted in numerous innovative products coming onto the market. Customers were able to offer high-end products, and also had greater flexibility when it came to developing individual parts and in terms of their appearance.

### A TECHNOLOGY PIONEER AND STRONG PARTNER

RICO is a trailblazer in 2K injection molding, and offers clients a comprehensive modular system of 2K technology tools. Its experts support business partners throughout the development and production cycle, all the way to series production. The service portfolio also includes an in-house materials laboratory. “We offer our customers design tailored for production, and suitable molds and mold concepts, as well as meeting their specific requirements and integrating the necessary functions into the component in question,” commented RICO sales director Rapperstorfer. “Material use is another of our priorities. Cutting-edge materials like LSR and engineering plastics are expensive, and thanks to our extensive experience we can calculate optimum material use, which in turn helps us to avoid waste. At the same time, this also guarantees that several functions can be built into a component in the most practical way possible,” Rapperstorfer added. This generates savings in assembly as well as in the production of individual parts. In order to ensure cost effectiveness, RICO integrates components into existing concepts, working on the basis of realistic scenarios from the outset and selecting the right material in line with those scenarios, which results in efficient production. RICO also assumes responsibility for determining surface balance in production, and component post-processing in the event of changes.

### MULTICOMPONENT INJECTION MOLDING WITH HIGHLY TRANSPARENT PLASTICS AND SILICONES

RICO also leads the way in terms of implementing LSR and thermoplastics in a single mold. This method enables the processing of both materials to be monitored. A 4+4-cavity mold with inserts is used. The best example of this method in practice is the rain and ventilation sensors for cars, for which RICO produces the tool for automotive supplier Kostal. Transparent parts made from PA are inserted into the 2K mold and pretreated at the same time – in other words, during insertion – in order to ensure adhesion with the optical LSR. The parts are then overmolded with PBT; the housing for the component is also produced during this step. After that, highly transparent LSR with a low Shore A hardness is injected onto the component. The stand-out feature: a 2K mold for PBT and LSR with inserts is used, and the process is fully automated. As a result, there are countless options for multicomponent injection molding of parts with highly transparent plastics and silicones, which are used in various sectors, including medical technology. “We act as a dependable partner to our customers at every stage of the value chain. We can make changes and modifications at any time, no matter what the requirements are,” said RICO’s Martin Rapperstorfer, sales director.

#### MARTIN RAPPERSTORFER

„Because of RICO’s expertise in the two-component injection molding we use material saving solutions, which reduce costs for our customers”, maintains RICO sales manager Martin Rapperstorfer.





## GLOBAL PLAYER

# EXTENSION SETS NEW STANDARDS

As a technology leader, RICO is a dynamic and innovative player in the industry, and is constantly striving to move to the next level. Our focus on the future, as well as steady growth in production revenue mean that expanding our facility is absolutely essential. This autumn, the latest extension to our production plant – with 5,500m<sup>2</sup> of new space – will be completed and commissioned. It was designed to accommodate the latest technology and provides more room for existing operations, as well as opening the door to completely new activities.

From an initial staff of just three, over the last 24 years RICO has developed into a global player in the silicone sector. Constant growth and increased productivity requirements have made expansion of the company's plant essential, and the facility has been extended several times in recent years. Based on the latest technology standards the expansion should offer more space for the implementation of total new areas. The new building is due to open in early November 2018. Until then, a number of new projects that we will be able to implement smoothly thanks to the additional capacity are already in the pipeline.

### NEWS FROM RICO

Work on the sixth expansion of the facility began in early summer 2017 and is scheduled for completion this fall. At the end of this 18-month period, RICO will have an additional 5,500m<sup>2</sup> at its disposal in order to boost production capacity. Thanks to investment of around EUR 8 million, the extension meets the latest technological standards, with state-of-the-art air conditioning, ventilation and fire safety measures.

In addition to a new production plant, the extension includes a company logistics center with high-bay warehouse and an add-on to the chemical development laboratory, while the quality assurance lab is set to double in size. There is also a separate area for packing and assembly stages, which enables us to further enhance vertical integration and meet customer requirements even more effectively. A new area for mold maintenance and storage including a cold room will also be included.

In addition a dedicated "Secondary Operation" unit will be set up in order to offer further fabrication-steps which are economically of advantage for our customers. Assembly of units, component specific packaging as well as integrated printing operations or post curing, just to name a few, will be part of this additional integration in the value chain. RICO is therefore in the position to offer added values which are normally beyond the customer's core-competence.

### PRODUCTION SPACE WITH CONTROLLED AREAS AND IN-HOUSE HIGH-BAY WAREHOUSE SYSTEM

It was only a matter of time until RICO added a production space with controlled areas of its own. Sharply rising demand in the medical, baby care and food sectors means it is vital that we can offer production in line with the relevant hygiene requirements at the Thalheim site. Although RICO has been using in-house clean zones for some time, construction of the production space with controlled areas will enable us to manufacture such sensitive products under strict hygiene standards. SILCOPLAST already has the relevant expertise in products that need to be manufactured under special conditions, with two ISO 7-compliant clean rooms, and SIMTEC is due to follow suit in the near future. This means that the RICO GROUP is ideally placed to produce any products with highest requirements in cleanliness.

The new extension also features a cutting-edge high-bay warehouse system that provides easy access to raw materials and parts. With space for 2,700 pallets, the warehouse has sufficient capacity to guarantee rapid project implementation.

### TOP-LEVEL PRODUCTION

The new extension will enable RICO to continue manufacturing to its customary quality standards and to implement customer projects as effectively as possible. The company's innovative strength and forward-looking approach are also key aspects in this regard. The RICO production operates fully automated, which allows to work with so called ghost shifts at night and to offer employees day shifts only. Industry 4.0 is an important cornerstone of RICO's operations. Production is fully automated, with human intervention kept to a minimum, which allows for seamless, 24/7 production runs where necessary.

In turn, automation helps RICO to implement the zero-error policy that is part and parcel of its day-to-day work. Both of these factors play a major part in promoting faster and more effective project execution.

The new extension will also be instrumental in driving forward the digitalization process at RICO. A control console system is currently being implemented which allows for permanent monitoring of production and networking of machinery. Automated data collection, minimized machine downtimes and reduced set-up times will also help to optimize product and process quality. This ensures customers benefit from maximized and reliable availability.

A quality control system collects and evaluates data, which enables the company to produce billions of parts to the highest possible quality standards. These measures support RICO's efforts to ensure outstanding quality.

### EXTENSION CREATES NEW JOBS

RICO's strong growth in recent years has also had a positive impact on the regional job market. The company has been a stable employer for many years, and currently employs over 200 people in its various departments. The extension will create another 50 or so new jobs. The construction project has paved the way for the plant to handle projects requiring higher capacities while at the same time meeting RICO's strict quality expectations.

"Customers appreciate our company's exceptional quality. The new extension, coupled with solid foundations built on digitalization, will enable us to carry on producing to the same high standards," explains Markus Nuspl of the Management Board. "We are pulling out all the stops to complete the extension, and our ability to handle projects using this additional capacity from November is something we are extremely proud of."





## CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT ADDITIONAL CAPABILITIES AT SIMTEC

In recent months, the companies that make up the RICO GROUP have shown that they are constantly evolving. Every single location has expanded its capacity and capabilities. SIMTEC has not only built a clean room, but also extended its mold manufacturing operations. This will enhance the company's responsiveness and service portfolio, which in turn will ensure a bright future.

Set up in 2001 by Enrique Camacho, SIMTEC joined the RICO GROUP in 2016. The company currently employs 50 people and supports a number of the world's leading companies in the development and production of high-end, customized LSR and multi-material components. Becoming a member of the RICO GROUP two years ago has put SIMTEC in a position to expand its market presence and prepare effectively for continued growth.

Based in South Florida, in 2018 the company plans to build a class 8-compliant clean room and increase the mold maintenance shop. In order to take another step towards boosting efficiency, in particular by shortening response times, the expansion is due for completion in the final quarter of this year. The focus is on upping internal capacity, in particular for mold repair and maintenance operations. The company will concentrate primarily on CNC milling, EDM, grinding machinery and new CAM systems. In parallel, the company will also invest in training mold engineers. RICO experts have visited Florida and a mold engineer from SIMTEC is currently spending several months on a training program at RICO in Thalheim, in order to enhance his theoretical and practical know-how.

Extending its mold production capacity will also allow SIMTEC to widen its expertise. By adding to its mold technology capabilities, SIMTEC can generate significant added value for its customers. Maintenance cycles will be shortened and mold maintenance simplified. In addition, on-site changes can be made more quickly and more often, prototypes can be developed more rapidly and the availability of molds maximized.

This extra mold-related know-how will give SIMTEC an even stronger customer focus. The ability to better satisfy customer needs is another reason behind the investment in extending mold production. This will leave SIMTEC ideally placed to live up to expectations and take its customer relationships to the next level.

"The combination of advanced technology, a talented and inspired team and our customer focus are the cornerstone of SIMTEC's success. We are extending our resources and service portfolio in order to satisfy our customers' needs even more effectively. This is in line with our goal of serving as a strong partner to our customers and making a significant contribution to their success."

**Franz Dilly**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SIMTEC



New babies in the machinery parc of SIMTEC.



## OPTIMAL CONDITIONS SQUEAKY CLEAN IN SOUTH FLORIDA

SIMTEC has raised the bar with construction of a class 8-compliant clean room. This will allow the company to manufacture products for the medical, baby care and food sectors in accordance with certified hygiene standards. And it also means that SIMTEC is perfectly placed to enjoy success in the life science segment.

SIMTEC has responded to feedback from numerous customers – who have already given glowing reports on the cleanliness and hygiene standards at the modern production plant in South Florida – by building a certified, class 8-compliant clean room. This new capability will mainly serve to raise SIMTEC's profile in the life science industry.

Highly automated production cells with controlled, hygienic conditions are used for liquid silicone and multi-component injection molding. This enables production and packing processes that largely take place without human involvement. The high-quality injection molds that are essential for smooth procedures come from Thalheim-based RICO Elastomere Projecting GmbH. They have been specially developed for fully automated, high-performance and high-capacity production, in line with the exceptional standards that RICO is dedicated to meeting. This allows for volume parts production with strict tolerances and maximum availability.

Construction of the clean room primarily reflects the growth in LSR and 2K applications that SIMTEC expects in the life science and medical sectors in the next few years.

According to Frank Dilly, Managing Director of SIMTEC, "...we've been receiving increasing requests from our customers encouraging us to invest in a clean room. We've been ISO 13485 certified for years so hygienic molding was the next logical step increasing our presence in the life sciences industry."

Customers will benefit from the new facility, as well as SIMTEC's comprehensive expertise, advanced technologies and exemplary, top-quality LSR and 2K injection molding

procedures. SIMTEC expects to complete the clean room and obtain the related certification in the third quarter of 2018.

SIMTEC encourages visits to their facility, to see first-hand the technology in action and to have the opportunity to meet with the knowledgeable and experienced team. "We have something pretty special here and we're proud to show it off whenever we can!" added Dilly.





## ISO 14001

# ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION FOR SILCOPLAST

ISO 14001 is an established, internationally recognized standard for environmental management systems. Certification in accordance with the standard shows that a company's operations are environmentally friendly and sustainable, and that they are legally compliant and conform to statutory and social requirements connected with the environment. Following in RICO's footsteps, SILCOPLAST has obtained its latest ISO certification; it is already certified under the ISO 9001 and ISO 13485 standards.

ISO 14001 provides guidelines on introducing and refining an environmental management system, and enables companies to be assessed and certified by an external body. The aim is to identify and evaluate a company's impact on the environment, as well as ensuring that it continues to comply with the standard and continuously improves its performance. As a result, ecofriendly operations make a contribution to enhancing sustainability, which benefits companies as well as their various stakeholder groups.

ISO 14001 delivers a host of benefits. An environmental management system facilitates implementation of steps designed to cut emissions, waste and resource consumption. Prudent use of resources also helps to save costs and improve business processes. As a consequence, the system reduces negative impacts on the environment and promotes a company's reputation as a responsible organization.

SILCOPLAST has been certified in accordance with ISO 9001 (quality management) since 2000 and with ISO 13485 (quality management systems for medical devices) since 2015. In light of the company's strong growth and commitment to protecting the environment, SILCOPLAST's management has set a target of obtaining ISO 14001 certification in 2019. The certification process is already under way.

"The certification phase is due to take place in 2019, and preparations are in full swing. We will be identifying the status quo in the course of the third and fourth quarter

of 2018, so that we can implement the project without a hitch," says Philipp Gaus, CEO of SILCOPLAST. "One of our employees completed the project management course required for certification in August. So now he is more than prepared for the audit which precedes actual certification."

SILCOPLAST plans to secure ISO 14001 certification in the third quarter of 2019. This will ensure compliance with statutory environmental provisions, as well as enhanced communication of internal environmental initiatives to customers and other stakeholders.



## 3D-PRINT

# THE THIRD DIMENSION

3D printing has grown in importance in many sectors in the past few years. Numerous industries now use it and in some cases it is indispensable. SILCOPLAST is one of the businesses that has adopted the technology. But one factor sets the 3D printer in Wolfhalden apart: the company developed the machine itself.

SILCOPLAST has adapted 3D printing technology to the exact requirements that are important to the company and its customers. Used for thermoplastic materials, the printer has a wide variety of applications. It can produce thermoplastic dies, from which prototypes are then produced using a manual casting process. The printer is also used to manufacture very small batches of thermoplastic parts for special applications, including in automation.

The idea behind the printer was developing the ability to quickly and independently cast prototypes from the original LSR. But before this can happen, a thermoplastic die needs to be produced using the 3D printer. In order to fine-tune the technology, tests were carried out in an oven on dies from the 3D printer filled with LSR.

The printer entered operation only a few months after completion of the design. Thanks to this process, SILCOPLAST is now capable of producing plastic parts for handling grippers, assembly devices and other equipment quickly and cost effectively. Another benefit is that the company can provide customers with attractively priced prototypes made from any LSR material thanks to the combination of thermoplastic dies and manual casting. At present, only ABS dies are produced, but in theory other thermoplastics could be used. All of the LSR materials that SILCOPLAST uses can be employed in the subsequent casting process.

"Our 3D printer enables us to produce customer components rapidly and cost effectively," notes SILCOPLAST CEO Philipp Gaus. "So prototypes are quickly available and we can adapt them easily. What's more, from day one the customer receives the prototypes in the desired material. Prototypes made from various thermoplastics don't pose a problem either."



Components of up to 280x180x300mm (LxBxH) can be produced, so the printer is suitable for making large parts and microcomponents.

The technology has put SILCOPLAST in a position to produce prototypes and small batches for special applications, without the need to manufacture aluminum molds for injection molding. This makes 3D printing an attractive proposition for SILCOPLAST and its customers, in terms of both price and time.



## THALHEIM/WELS SITE EXPANSION AT HTR

HTR Rosenblattl GmbH has gone from strength to strength since it was set up in 2000. Steady growth over the past few years has brought with it the need to expand the company's site in Thalheim/Wels. Extensive area expansions in the production, the office building and the goods acceptance area are going on. The new facility will also make HTR a one-of-a-kind in Austria.

Hardening technology specialist HTR Rosenblattl GmbH was set up 18 years ago and provides the members of the RICO GROUP as well as other toolmakers and machinery building companies in Austria and Europe with high-quality heat treatment services for mold steel – a pre-requisite for a properly functioning mold. HTR employs state-of-the-art process and plant technologies.

### EXTENSION ESSENTIAL DUE TO CONSTANT GROWTH

HTR has continuously invested in new plant and equipment over the past few years, allowing the company to further enhance its capabilities in terms of factors such as speed, precision and flexibility. These characteristics have made the company a popular hardening technology partner.

"We've reached the limits of our capacity, so now we need to invest in general expansion and not just in new equipment," explains HTR's CEO Helmut Jan. The plans include an additional 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of production space and an extra 450m<sup>2</sup> for administration, while the goods acceptance section of the plant will double in size. A new nitriding facility and two new furnaces (a vacuum hardening furnace and a protective gas tempering furnace) will be installed in the vacuum department.

### FIRST OF ITS KIND IN AUSTRIA

The company is taking a significant step by opening its new induction hardening department.

High-efficiency induction heating technology has a wide variety of industrial applications, and is mainly used for partial hardening, which involves only bringing certain

sections of complex parts up to the requisite hardening temperature. Afterwards, the parts are quenched. The sections to be hardened are partially heated over a period of time using induced current. This process has a number of benefits, including increased wear resistance and the possibility of enhancing the mechanical properties of precisely defined sections of a part. HTR has purchased leading-edge hardening equipment with two frequency generators, each with a high frequency of 100 kW and a medium frequency of 200 kW.



"The new hardening facility – the first of its kind in Austria – will allow us to meet our customers' inductive hardening requirements. Together with our capacity extensions and the company's core principles – speed, precision and flexibility – we are ideally equipped to handle any financial challenges that the future may bring," Helmut Jan adds. The extension work at HTR is due for completion in mid-2019.



## SPECIAL THANKS TO ENRIQUE CAMACHO SIMTEC SILICONE PARTS COMPLETES TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP TO THE RICO GROUP

SIMTEC Silicone Parts, an innovative solutions provider of Liquid Silicone Rubber (LSR) parts and high-precision LSR Multi-Shot components, announces the completion of the leadership transition of SIMTEC to the RICO GROUP, a global network of businesses focused on Liquid Silicone Rubber molding technology.

The RICO GROUP fully acquired SIMTEC in 2016 and, on August 1st, 2017, appointed Mr. Franz Dilly as Managing Director – Sales and Engineering. The operational transition period has now ended and SIMTEC's Co-Founder and President, Mr. Enrique Camacho, will transition away from day-to-day operations on August 31st, 2018.

SIMTEC was Co-Founded by Mr. Camacho in 2001 in Wisconsin and the company relocated operations to Miramar, Florida in 2013. "It has been an exciting past few years, we have grown SIMTEC at an aggressive rate, gained the trust of world-leading customers and suppliers and have assembled a terrific team of associates to guide the company to further successes. I am incredibly proud of our team and the excellent operation we have built," said Mr. Camacho.

"Looking to the future I plan to continue my entrepreneurial journey and develop innovative solutions for a new business venture. I bring with me exposure to world leading corporations and the valuable knowledge and experience gained throughout my global career."

The owners of the RICO GROUP thank Enrique Camacho especially for his exceptional work in growing SIMTEC and the yearlong outstanding cooperation. We wish him all the best on all his future ways!





## SPOTLIGHTS NEWS FROM THE INSIDE OF THE RICO GROUP



### NEW OPENING

The new hall at SILCOPLAST was opened in 2017. On an area of 150 m<sup>2</sup> the focus is put, separated from the production, on all surface works and optimized processes and a high cleanness could be achieved.



### ABOUT ANNIVERSARIES AND RETIREMENTS

Besides RICO, SILCOPLAST could also bid farewell the two first pensioners on their well-deserved retirement. Ernst Lutz and Peter Albrecht worked 5 and 10 years in the company. Dalila De Abreu has already been working for ten years at SILCOPLAST. Production manager Markus Reuteler celebrates being 30 years at the company. Machine setter Markus Rohner can already look back on 40 years of company affiliation.



### RICO CELEBRATES FIRST PENSIONER

Franz Pröll has been an integral part of the RICO Team since September 2002. He was the first employee that RICO Elastomere Projecting GmbH could bid farewell on his well-deserved retirement this year. At his farewell party the management and the employees thanked him for the long lasting good cooperation.



### SIMTEC AWARDED NEW SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR AWARD MTNA

Moriroku Technology of North America (MTNA), an automotive industry leader, named SIMTEC Silicone Parts New Supplier of the Year for "outstanding performance" in 2017. Mr. Christian Roesslthumer, SIMTEC VP of Technology, and Mr. Bilal Rafiq, SIMTEC Application Engineer accepted the award at MTNA's North American headquarter, and participated in their 2018 Supplier Conference.



### SIMTEC WELCOMES ZENO WEIDENTHALER

Zeno Weidenthaler has joined SIMTEC Silicone Parts in Miramar, Florida as VP of Finance, Human Resources and Marketing. He was born in Germany and grew up in a small town near Munich. He moved to the U.S. to attend East Carolina University, where he graduated with his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Accounting. Zeno Weidenthaler, a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), began his Accounting career in Charlotte, North Carolina where he worked as an auditor for Roedel & Partner for two years before joining the Time Warner Cable accounting department. Mr. Weidenthaler then served as Controller for STEAG Energy Services in Charlotte before moving to South Florida to accept a position as Controller for Bluewater Crew Training prior to joining the SIMTEC Team in August 2018.



### RICO DONATES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

In the course of the yearly employee-led fundraising, in which the employees can donate for a good cause, EUR 6,000,-- could be handed over to the organization MOKI (mobile pediatric nursing). We would like to thank the staff and the management for the generous donation.



### SIMTEC RECEIVES IATF 16949 & ISO 9001 QUALITY CERTIFICATIONS

SIMTEC has received its IATF 16949:2016 and ISO 9001:2015 certifications, passing both audits with flying colors. The IATF 16949 certification, along with the ISO 9001, is mandatory for organizations that manufacture parts for the automotive industry. The IATF 16949 replaces the former ISO/TS 16949:2009, and defines the requirements of a quality management system for organizations in the automotive industry. The goal of this new standard is the development of a quality management system that provides for continual improvement, emphasizing defect prevention, and the reduction of variation and waste in the supply chain.



### HONOR TO RICO-TRAINER OF APPRENTICES

Markus Stoiber was honored for his thorough dedication to the training of apprentices by the president of the Landtag Viktor Sigl in April 2018.



## GLOBAL PLAYER EXHIBITION APPEARANCE FOR RICO

Accessing new contacts and information is essential for a company like RICO. The Fakuma trade fair gives us the opportunity to profile our company and gain insights into the latest trends and technologies. RICO will be putting in another appearance this year, and visitors can pick up information as well as details of a new application from its stand.

RICO will once again be showcasing its expertise at Fakuma in Friedrichshafen from 16-20 October 2018, one of more than 1,800 exhibitors attending this year's event. Fakuma is one of the top international fairs for the plastics processing industry, and provides a comprehensive overview of the latest plastics technologies. In terms of injection molding, Fakuma is one of the leading events worldwide. Visitors can obtain specialist information about plastics processing procedures, technologies and tools.

The RICO stand (A5-5004) can be found in hall A5, where members of the sales and project teams will be on hand to provide information and advice. RICO sees the fair as an industry get-together and expects to welcome numerous existing customers as well as prospective clients. Visitors can also watch a demonstration of RICO's core competence at the Arburg stand (A3-3100) in hall A3, where a new application will take center stage. More details will be available at the RICO stand.

Working in collaboration with Arburg, RICO has developed a duckbill valve, which has been designed for use primarily in the life sciences sector. Production takes place in a manufacturing cell using a fully electric Arburg Allrounder 270A injection molding machine with a clamping force of 350 kN. The machine is equipped with a size 5 microinjection unit and a RICO four-cavity mold. During the production process, Elastosil LR5040 liquid silicone with a shore A hardness of 40 is pre-mixed using a cartridge and then injected using an 8mm screw. The temper-free material removes the need for post-processing. During production, a valve gate mini is used for direct injection, meaning the process is waste-free. A Multilift H 3+1 is available for

handling.

After injection, the parts are automatically removed before moving on to the slitting process. The parts are then placed separated by cavities. During the process, a camera checks whether the full part has been injected and all parts have

been removed from the mold by the gripper. This ensures that the injection mold is protected against damage and the right number of parts have been removed. Defects can also be spotted in individual components, which are then separated from the parts that meet the specifications.

The production cycle for the duckbill valve lasts about 20 seconds. The finished component has a volume of 0.034cm<sup>3</sup> and a diameter of 5.5mm, and weighs 0.038g.

Such microinjection applications impose strict requirements in terms of automation and the manufacturing process. Mold development, process stability and the quality standards for components pose a particular challenge. The RICO mold makes a significant contribution to optimizing component production.

Our appearance at Fakuma is very important for the company. Specialist events like this represent an opportunity to pick up information and forge new contacts. We also have a chance to gain new insights into the latest trends and developments and the constantly changing technological state of the art.



We look forward to welcoming numerous customers and prospects to the RICO stand (A5-5004) in hall A5, and to the microinjection demonstration at the Arburg stand (stand A3-3100, hall A3).



## CUSTOMERS, BUSINESS PARTNERS AND PROSPECTS REVIEW AND OUTLOOK, 2018/19

Throughout the year, you'll find RICO employees in all four corners of the globe. They give presentations on topics related to silicone at countless conferences and events, and these talks are always extremely well received. RICO GROUP representatives will again be on hand at various trade fairs this autumn and they are looking forward to holding exciting discussions with customers, business partners and prospects.

### THE YEAR SO FAR

"We don't leave anything to chance; we plan our appearances down to the last detail," explains Markus Landl, the RICO GROUP's International Business Development Manager. Targeted presentations of the Group at international trade fairs and conferences bore fruit, in the shape of exciting new projects connected with silicone.

RICO has attended the following events so far this year:

Arburg Technology Days, Lossburg/DE  
Mar. 14-17, 2018

International Silicone Conference, Akron/USA  
Apr. 10-11, 2018

Chinaplas, Shanghai/CHN  
Apr. 24-27, 2018

NPE, Orlando/USA  
May 7-11, 2018

Plast Milano, Mailand/IT  
May 29-Jun. 1, 2018

Kraus Maffei Kompetenzforum, München/DE  
Jun. 6-7, 2018

Medical Fair Asia, Singapore/SGP  
Aug. 29-31, 2018

LSR 2018, Anaheim/USA  
Sep. 11-13, 2018

### UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2018/2019

With a large number of fairs taking place in autumn 2018, the RICO GROUP will be working hard to deepen its customer relationships. A number of event appearances for 2019 have also been finalized:

Fakuma, Friedrichshafen/DE  
Oct. 16-20, 2018

IZB, Wolfsburg/DE  
Oct. 16-18, 2018

Compamed, Düsseldorf/DE  
Nov. 12-15, 2018

Materiautech® - Innovation, St. Pölten/AT  
Sep. 19, 2018

LSR + Medical Seminar 2018 with PIDC (Plastics Industry Development Center), Taipeh/CHN  
Dec. 11-12, 2018

MD&M, Anaheim/USA  
Feb. 5-7, 2019



## RICO ACADEMY GETTING YOU UP TO SPEED

The shortage of skilled workers in Austria is forcing companies to look beyond conventional recruitment methods. Especially in the silicone industry, where the complex requirements and the need to provide specialist training make it even more difficult to find suitably qualified staff, innovative approaches are the order of the day. RICO has taken the initiative by deciding to train its future experts itself – at the RICO Academy.

RICO is training technology enthusiasts to become fully-fledged elastomer professionals, with a total of 40 modules spread across three levels. The Academy focuses on technological subjects, with a strong practical emphasis. During their courses, trainees become familiar with RICO's business operations, as well as taking an in-depth look at the LSR market, production and the production environment, quality management, materials management and mechanical engineering. The program also covers personal development and management skills. Besides receiving theoretical training from experienced RICO employees, the trainees also work in various departments at the company. This enables them to build up their practical know-how and put their new knowledge into practice.

### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

"I decided to apply for a place on RICO's training program because I liked the look of the practical focus and it gives me a smooth introduction to the world of plastics processing," comments Philip Treiber, one of the first Academy trainees. Philip studied metals and plastics engineering at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria in Wels, and now he is putting his extensive knowledge to use at RICO. "I really like the trainee program because of its rich variety, with a mix of theoretical modules and work in a number of

different departments," he adds, underlining the benefits of the RICO Academy.

Volker Stadler already had ten years of professional experience under his belt when he joined the Academy. He had completed a dual apprenticeship in plastics technology and IT at a major Austrian company. "I chose the RICO Academy because I want to expand my knowledge and develop personally as well," Stadler explains. "Every day you're presented with new, exciting challenges and that suits me right down to the ground."



Continuous improvement of its products and solutions, and sparking its employees' passion for LSR has always been a priority for RICO. And this passion is another aspect that the RICO Academy is designed to put across. The training facility is part of RICO's strategy of sharing its extensive expertise and developing program participants so that the company is constantly in step with industry trends. The trainee program offers a portfolio of training and development courses that is second to none in the industry. This promotes dynamic corporate development as well as enabling Academy participants to make progress on a personal level. They have the opportunity to expand their knowledge, develop their expertise and take their career to the next level – by bringing their knowledge up to speed!





**RICO GROUP**

»» transforming business to partnership



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