**Press information**

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StrikoWestofen Group (Gummersbach)

**StrikoWestofen mourns the passing of Joseph Koch**

Melting technology pioneer dies at 84

**Deceased at 84: the StrikoWestofen Group mourns the passing of its co-founder and long-standing managing partner, graduate engineer Joseph Koch. Under his leadership, pioneering technical achievements were made in the light metal casting industry. Koch’s ideas and influences laid the foundation for the development of resource-friendly melting technology. “With him, the sector loses a great entrepreneurial personality filled with passion for the métier, incomparable energy, devotion, charisma and care for the employees,” StrikoWestofen manager Rudi Riedel explains.**

As early as 1960, after completing his time with the then industrial group DEMAG, Joseph Koch started at “W. Strikfeldt & Co. GmbH”. When he took over the management in 1967, the company was renamed “STRIKO W. Strikfeldt & Koch GmbH”. Even then, the company concentrated on energy-saving furnaces for aluminium under Koch’s management – and the first “StrikoMelter” came into being. Also, the expertise of Joseph Koch allowed the “Strikomat” dosing furnaces to be developed in the 1980s. They were produced in response to the “Westomat” product of the competitor Westofen. Finally, in 1998, the competitors merged to form “StrikoWestofen GmbH”, which has now moved its headquarters from Wiehl to the neighbouring Gummersbach (North Rhine Westphalia, Germany).

**His lifework in good hands**

Joseph Koch always set his heart on a suitable arrangement with regard to his successors in order to safeguard his life’s work. Although the Koch family no longer had shares in the company after 2002, Joseph Koch remained connected with the company all his life. “During his retirement, too, his advice was sought after to the end and highly appreciated,” the current manager Rudi Riedel explains. In fact, Mr. Koch visited the international foundry trade fair “GIFA” just last year in order to meet StrikoWestofen management and shareholders at the fair booth. “He was always stressing that he knew the company was in good hands – even though it was now onto its third financial investor as majority shareholder,” Riedel adds. In particular financial investors specializing in medium-sized companies often showed respect for the life’s work of the entrepreneur and a willingness to preserve the corporate culture. In addition, they safeguarded the economic substance – for difficult phases and for investments in growth projects. The decision to sell the company to a financial investor significantly promoted the internationalization, technological improvement and expansion of the product range in the course of the last decade.

Today, StrikoWestofen has 240 employees and a turnover of around 70 million euros per year. The company is part of the LMCS (Light Metal Casting Solutions Group), a network of manufacturers of production plants for light metal casting, which has about 450 employees and an annual turnover of approx. 170 million euros. The person of Joseph Koch and the products made by his company still embody the virtues of excellent engineering, which makes German middle-sized companies respected all over the world. As Rudi Riedel says, “Koch’s work was a model for generations of engineers and for ecological advances in the light metal casting industry. For the employees of StrikoWestofen and for our industry, he will always be an innovative entrepreneur and a much-admired pioneer”.

Joseph Koch died on 10 September 2016 at the age of 84 in his home town of Wiehl, Germany.

**Captions**

**[16-12 Joseph Koch]**

*Joseph Koch, co-founder and long-standing managing partner of the StrikoWestofen Group (Gummers­bach, Germany).*

Image: private.

**[16-12 Succession]**

*Lifework preserved, succession accomplished: seen here during a meeting at the international foundry trade fair “GIFA 2015” are (from left to right) Dr. Nicolas Himmelmann (Auctus Capital Partners), Joseph Koch, Rudi Riedel (StrikoWestofen) and Thomas Lott-Stroe (Auctus Capital Partners).*

Image: StrikoWestofen.

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