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# CASTING

Plant and Technology  
International

## Reducing costs with innovative feeder systems



### Interview

GTP Schäfer manager Jörg Schäfer on his GIFA experiences, innovations and international plans

### Quality Assurance

Full surface 3-D measurements facilitate pattern making

### Plant Construction

Sand preparation plant in the smallest of spaces for pneumatic nodule transport

## “GIFA is a springboard into other markets”

Jörg Schäfer spent five days running an information campaign at GIFA with his sales and customer care team, and representatives from the agencies: the company's products were explained, negotiations were carried out with customers, and international foundrymen and suppliers were shown around the stand. The graduate in business administration, who is responsible for the commercial areas, exports and sales at riser producer GTP Schäfer, discusses the company's participation in the trade fair and describes its products, innovations and international plans with CP+T

**CP+T: GIFA 2011 is over now. Are you satisfied with how it went?**

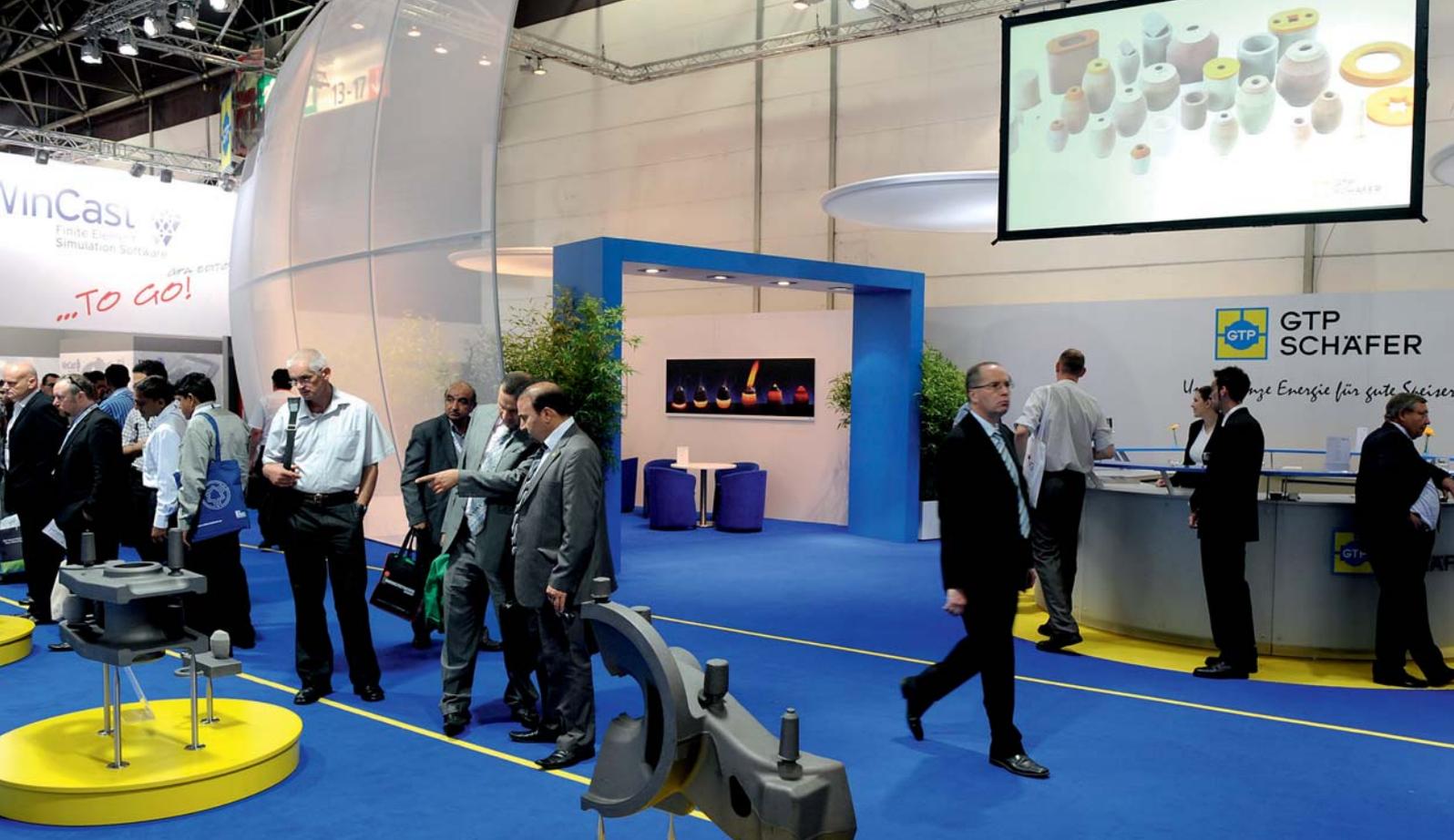
Yes, it went extremely well for us. It provided precisely the platform we need to present our products to specialists. And the customers' positive mood was clearly noticeable. They really want to improve processes and collaborate on solutions – like those provided by our products. As a result of the increasingly complex geometries of the castings and the continuous optimization pressure on production processes, customers expect solutions for problems and want more efficient auxiliary materials. Our innovative and solution-oriented products can eliminate problems. Our Point-risers, for example, for feeding hot spots in areas of the casting that offer little surface space, are riser systems that are individually customized to the particular application. In addition, metal penetrations, say, on core areas facing high thermal loads, can be prevented with the help of Ceratec, our synthetic moulding material.

**CP+T: Were you able to close many deals?**

We do not expect direct concrete business (like that found in machine construction, for example) in this sector because technical applicability has to be verified in advance. It is more important to show customers the various possibilities and first discuss approaches which we can then implement together in a subsequent project. In addition to providing advice and enhancing existing business contacts



Jörg Schäfer is responsible for the commercial areas, exports and sales at GTP Schäfer. Before joining the company in 2006 he worked for different international investmentbanks in the field of mergers & acquisitions (Photo: R. Piterek)



Fair booth of GTP Schäfer at GIFA 2011. The company used its presence at the fair to demonstrate its riser systems and to establish business contacts (Photo: Messe Düsseldorf/ctillmann)

here, it is particularly important for us to be able to talk to potential customers who we do not yet supply, in order to initiate exchanges. Thus both sides can rapidly gauge the extent to which any future collaboration could be fruitful.

**CP+T: You offer the so-called Point-Risers. How did customers react to the product?**

The product is already available on the market and has become firmly established. The response is still very good. The Point-Risers that we are exhibiting here have been optimized and now have an even larger range of applications. In addition to increasing the number of variants – regarding the feeding modulus and geometries – the range of accessories, in particular, has also been systematically expanded. The aim of the Point-Risers is to be able to offer customers a riser system that can be adapted to the concrete application with a proven modular principle. It is therefore possible to optimize the entire process, from moulding to fettling.

**CP+T: How exactly have the Point-Risers been optimized since their introduction on the market?**

We have continuously expanded the modular principle. For this purpose, the properties and bore cross-sections of the individual accessories have been optimized and the optional feeder neck geometries expanded. We can now also offer customers oval (20 x 30 mm) bore diameters (ME metal sheet) within a module range of 1.4 to 3.5 cm.

**CP+T: How can your risers improve the production process?**

We can offer our customers a riser system that is optimized along the entire production process. As a result of the minimal contact area on the patterns, which can almost be reduced to the feed neck diameter, application engineers have many more possibilities for directly feeding the hot spots. The moulding of the feeder is easy with the help of the pin technology used, without slowing the production cycle. In the fettling shop, the riser residues can be rapidly removed, almost without extra work, as a result of the predetermined breaking edge directly above the surface of the casting.

**CP+T: What innovations did you exhibit?**

The Eco-Riser. This riser was developed together with Thomas Baginski from Georg Fischer in Leipzig. On our side, the project was managed by my brother, Thomas Schäfer. This is a riser system that has been optimized with regard to its energy efficiency. The principle works by conducting the heat – which is normally radiated outwards into the surroundings – inwards. Although the product is just at the start of series maturity, we presented a study at the trade fair and discussed the application possibilities with our customers. We got positive feedback for this.

**CP+T: Can you already tell us what new application possibilities the Eco-riser offers?**

The Eco-Riser offers a considerably higher modulus with the same external geometry. Moreover, the riser heats up the casting and core areas around it far less than conventional exothermic risers. As a result risers can, for example, be applied within temperature-sensitive core areas or located closer to neighboring casting zones without having any negative effect on them.

**CP+T: What distinguishes your products from those of your competitors?**

Our approach is to offer a high-quality service in addition to value-added products, and to be available for our customers as a dependable and competent sparring partner.

**CP+T: GIFA is an international stage for the foundry industry. How has this affected your business?**

More than 40 nations exhibited their products and innovations at this year's GIFA. And at this GIFA, for the first time, there were more foreign visitors than German ones. This international presence provides much

greater access to the international markets. On the one hand, we get to meet our customers from all over the world at the GIFA and, on the other hand, we are approached by casters from countries in which we do not yet have any presence. The ideal conditions, therefore, for a meaningful dialog with one another. We believe that GIFA is a springboard into other markets.

**CP+T: How is GTP Schäfer positioned internationally?**

We currently export about half of our production. The individual markets are either supported directly or by our

agencies, e.g. in Poland, Italy, France and Scandinavia. We have built up a broad network of partners worldwide.

**CP+T: You say that GIFA is a springboard into other markets. Do you plan to position yourselves even more broadly internationally?**

We continuously examine which markets are attractive for our products, and develop them accordingly in order to achieve the particular critical size that is necessary. In our opinion, a healthy diversification on both the product and the regional level is necessary in order to ensure sustainable corporate development.