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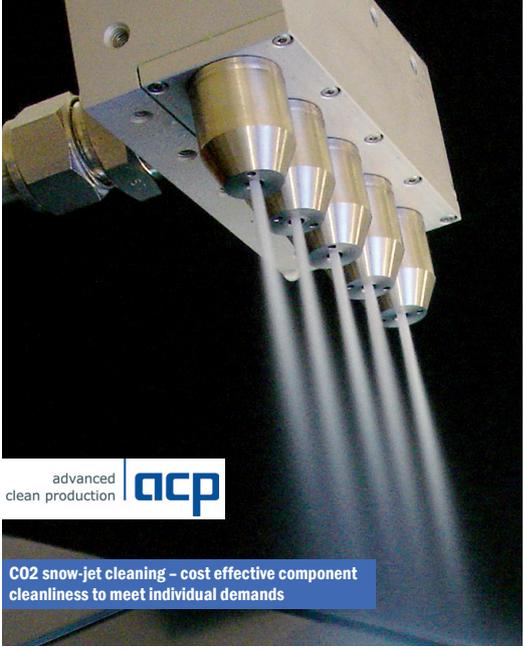
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Interview with Dipl.- Ing. Volker Fischer, owner of Fischer GmbH,
Dillenburg, Germany and Export Manager Hans-Heiner Sochurek

Plastic Media Blasting, a Tradition for 30 Years



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Plastic Media Blasting, a Tradition for 30 Years

An interview with Dipl.- Ing. Volker Fischer, owner of Fischer GmbH, Dillenburg, Germany and Export Manager Hans-Heiner Sochurek.

(?) MFN: Since when is the Fischer GmbH manufacturer of Plastic Blast Media (PBM)?

(!) V. F.: We started our activities with PBM already in 1979. From the very beginning we concentrated our efforts on the, at that time, so called Type II which seemed very promising to us. We are thus Pioneers in that type of product. Other types of PBM have already been in use a long time before.

(?) MFN: Kindly explain the differences between the Type II and the other types of PBM.

(!) V. F.: The Type II is a blasting medium which is manufactured by strictly using completely hardened parts out of UREA formaldehyde material. Other types are made out of polyamid 6 or of polycarbonat. Furthermore there are also blasting media in use which are made out of acrylic or melamine formaldehyde.

(?) MFN: What are the advantages of the UREA-type material?

(!) V. F.: If it is manufactured "professionally" the UREA-type material has exactly defined technical features which make it an ideal blasting medium for a large, continuously growing number of applications.

(?) MFN: Why do you emphasize that it has to be manufactured "professionally"?

(!) V. F.: A lot of mistakes can already be made by selecting the wrong initial product. We process material only which is free of fillers like minerals, glass fibre or cotton. Already in the year 1988, the Fischer GmbH introduced the trade mark Fischer JET plast® and got it registered at the German Patent Office. By this we have, in a way, set a very high internal standard of quality.

(?) MFN: Which other technical criteria have to be met by a professionally manufactured UREA-type blast medium?

(!) V. F.: Just to name a few: There should be zero percent of contamination by ferromagnetic particles as well

as of so called heavy particles such as minerals. Furthermore, the media should contain an efficient antistaticum, otherwise it would be of no use for quite a few applications. It should also be nearly free of dust. Last but not least, the particle sizes should be exactly within the specified limits. Needless to say Fischer GmbH pays great attention to all these technical details.

(?) MFN: Are there any official standards for Plastic Blast Media?

(!) H-H. S.: The U. S. Air - Force has set up very precise standards for Plastic Blast Media. All suppliers to the defence forces have to meet these standards. Nowadays there are standards set for the PBM Types 1-7. For the UREA Type II medium and also the other types it is the MIL-P-85891A. Many customers, worldwide, even in the commercial sector request their suppliers deliver PBM according to that standard.

(?) MFN: Could you explain that in more detail?

(!) H-H. S.: As mentioned above; in order to manufacture an excellent product, one has to pay attention to many technical details. The MIL-P-85891A specifies over 20 technical criteria which a product has to meet before it can be MIL-certified. Many customers in the commercial sector just use the MIL-standard in order to be sure to receive a technical perfect product.

(?) MFN: Does the Fischer JET plast® Type II meet this specification and is Fischer automatically supplier to the defense forces?

(!) H-H. S.: Our product Fischer JET plast® Type II meets all of those criteria and exceeds some of them impressively. However, to become supplier, in particular to the Air-Force, a company has first to qualify itself.

(?) MFN: How is that done?

(!) H-H. S.: After a successful test and certification of his products, the supplier himself is checked. A qualified team of experts is delegated by the U.S. Air Force to the supplier in order



Volker Fischer, owner of Fischer GmbH in Dillenburg, Germany (right) and Export Manager Hans-Heiner Sochurek (left)

to check his quality standards, his documentation and sample registering system for MIL-standard products and checks his long-term delivery capability. In short, product must be o. k. and supplier must be o. k. Only after that is all done can a company be listed as an approved supplier.

(?) MFN: In which time interval have all these tests to be made?

(!) H-H. S.: Such tests and qualifications have to be passed every two years. The procedures are rather complicated. A detailed explanation would be beyond the scope of this interview. In any case it is a considerable investment in time and money.

(?) MFN: Is the Fischer GmbH an approved supplier?

(!) H-H. S.: Yes, we have received the official confirmation that we are listed as "approved by type and supplier" on January 4, 2008.

(?) MFN: What are the most frequent applications for Fischer JET plast®?

(!) H-H. S.: These are mainly: Paint stripping of vessels, aircrafts, engine parts, oldtimer, wheels, high quality cases and components of all kinds. Cleaning of extruder screws, engine parts, facades (removing graffiti), monuments, memorials, objects of art, ships hulls, press moulds etc. as well as deflashing of parts of any kind such as of composites, aluminium and titanium, electric and electronic components.

(?) MFN: Which markets are most important for Fischer GmbH?

(!) H-H. S.: Our definition of a market is not geographically but it is more a definition of application types. As already mentioned, it is the shipbuilding and aircraft building industry and the suppliers to the car manufacturers. Furthermore there is the rubber and plastic processing, the electric and electronic component manufacturer the protection of monuments and many other branches. Once we are in business with customers in our home market

our product Fischer JET plast® is usually also used in partner companies or branches of such customers in other countries.

(?) MFN: How is Fischer GmbH preparing itself for the challenges of the future?

(!) V. F.: Flexibility is our strength today and will also be our strength in the future.

1. We have put our procurement of the initial products on a broader basis. That means we buy our initial material not only from the local market but more and more from European countries and from Asia.

2. We are in the process of installing a completely new product line which almost doubles our capacity and allows an even higher flexibility in production. We thus can react faster and more efficiently to changes in the market demands. With this new technology we can switch production much easier to different types of product, different mesh sizes and different levels of upgrading.

3. We have in our company considerable self know how in mechanical and electrical engineering. Therefore we don't need external assistance in planning, developing or installation of new machinery or systems. This saves a lot of time and money and enables us to offer very competitive prices.

4. We usually have a quantity of 6000kg of all types of our products on stock in total over 200 tons. That means we can deliver within 12-24 hours after receipt of order.

(?) MFN: You mentioned that you are flexible in producing different types of Plastic Blast Media. Which are these types and what are the main differences?

(!) V. F.: We offer three types of UREA- and one type of MELAMINE-blasting media. They are different in hardness, price and in way of packing. Our website www.fischer-durotech.de contains all important information about our products and services.

(?) MFN: Which new applications do you foresee for your products in



future?

(!) V. F.: Beyond the a. m. application we expect a big potential in the treatment of composite materials (GFK, CFK). As the application of such materials is ever increasing in many key industries we will have an increasing demand in Plastic Blast Media such as Fischer JET plast®. For these materials in the smaller mesh sizes we expect an increasing market in the electronic and semiconductor industry. We see also an increasing demand for our products for wet-blast application such as monuments, memorials and for removal of graffiti.

MFN would like to thank Volker Fischer and Hans-Heiner Sochurek for this interview.

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