

## Why the plastics industry is struggling to maintain its reputation

*Kraus & Naimer presents its new cooperation with WIFI St. Pölten*

*Vienna, August 5, 2021:* The plastics industry, which counts among the major industries worldwide, is currently struggling to maintain its reputation. Each year, more than 400 tons of plastic are produced. However, in Austria, only 25 percent of plastic waste have to be recycled. Microplastics accumulating in our oceans present a serious problem. The abrasion of tires is the number one cause of microplastics (approximately 62 percent).<sup>1</sup> As a plastics processing company, we believe that the general fear concerning plastics is greater than it should be. There are plenty of reasons why plastics are an excellent material that should not be regarded solely as harmful.

“Our company pays special attention to environmental protection as well as sustainability and we always endeavor to keep our ecological footprint to a minimum. We achieve this mainly owing to the responsible procurement of our products and our waste management. Thanks to our intelligent process technologies, we can utilize or recycle most of the material residues ourselves. Our sorted disposal ensures a smooth recycling process. We also attach particular importance to teaching our young apprentices to understand the correct use and handling of plastics as well as its correct disposal. Environmental protection is an important element of our apprenticeship training. 349 apprentices are currently working in the plastics industry. However, due to its bad reputation, other apprenticeships become more and more attractive, even though plastics engineers are highly sought after on the job market”, says Herbert Preuhs, apprentice trainer at Kraus & Naimer.

Generally speaking, it can be assumed that a great number of plastics processing companies ensure the correct disposal of waste and recycling. In accordance with section 9 of the Austrian Waste Management Act 2002, products have to be manufactured and processed in a way that makes them highly durable and repairable. The major part of remaining waste should be utilized or recycled.

Another reason why plastics have become a sustainable material is the establishment of a plastics recycling economy. The recycling economy encompasses much more than mere recycling, however, for it to work, the plastics industry has to be very well connected to the waste management industry.

Plastics are a very versatile material, suitable for everyday consumption. Its bad reputation is thus incomprehensible, as plastic is only harmful if it is not disposed of correctly or if there is a lack of understanding with regard to its proper use. Correct processing plays a major role in this regard.

### **Investing in proper training has to be the top priority**

Kraus & Naimer supports the plastics workshop of WIFI NÖ by providing a tool for the manufacturing of plastic components with hot runner technology. This procedure allows for resource-saving and eco-friendly manufacturing and is mainly used for mass production. In the future, WIFI NÖ will use the donated tool for injection molding machines in the course of various plastics engineering trainings. Those will include inter-company apprenticeships, skilled-labor training and further training and education programs. “The tool provided to us is a valuable contribution to our practice-oriented education and training at WIFI “, Peter Krippel of WIFI says gratefully.

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<sup>1</sup> Fraunhofer Institut, [Kunststoffe in der Umwelt: Mikro- und Makroplastik \(fraunhofer.de\)](https://www.fraunhofer.de/en/press-releases/2018/06/20180601_kunststoffe_in_der_umwelt_mikro_und_makroplastik), study published in June 2018 [available in German only]



From left to right: Ing. Peter Krippel (product manager at WIFI NÖ), Mag. Karin Schneck, Bakk. Phil (Communication Manager at Kraus & Naimer), Christoph Brandauer (workshop manager at WIFI), Ing. Franz Langwieser (trainer at WIFI)  
Photo: WIFI NÖ

### **About Kraus & Naimer**

Kraus & Naimer Produktion GmbH, founded in 1907, is a manufacturer of electrical switchgear, with its headquarters in Vienna. The company's design mark is the Greek letter 'Phi'. Kraus & Naimer is a strong partner for industrial customers in the fields of transport (railways, vehicles, ships, etc.), conveyor systems, lift systems, mechanical engineering and power generation and power distribution. The family business is the global leader in the field of cam switches and even invented the world's smallest cam switch. Kraus & Naimer has six manufacturing plants (the largest plant is in Weikersdorf in Lower Austria) and 18 Group-owned consulting and sales companies. Kraus & Naimer Group has a total of 900 employees all over the globe.

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