

## Schieffer History

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## Foreword

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This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of our family business – a good opportunity to pause for a moment and immerse ourselves in history, even in a challenging period. What motivated the founder Anton Schieffer, how did the original technical dealer become a modern and internationally oriented industrial company and what "tools" will the company need in order to be able to survive in the coming decades truly following its slogan "shaping the future with a system". Who were and are the people behind the success of the medium-sized company, what "character" did they pass on to their descendants and what will be necessary today and in the future to perpetuate the success?

Join us on a journey through history with its stories and anecdotes, to the factories and the family, to the machines and people, to the traditions and innovations. A technical dealer who concentrated on rubber and plastic in the beginning, who recognized at an early stage the need to set up a production facility and was thus able to lay the foundation for future success.

We would like to thank the loyalty, the commitment of our employees and their families, today as in the past, the trust and the fair partnership of our customers and suppliers, without which it would have been inconceivable to enable the development and transformation into today's Schieffer Group.

Lippstadt, spring 2023

## Chapter 1

### **1923 to 1945; from the foundation to the new beginning**

In the summer of 1923, Anton Schieffer came up with a plan to become self-employed. Born on May 5, 1897 in Düsseldorf, he had originally planned to put this into practice immediately after the 1st World War together with his brother Jakob, who was 2 years older, but he was killed in action much too early as a pioneer in 1915.

Anton was very much influenced by his parents' home: His father Martin Schieffer, born in 1865, was a native of Cologne, fun-loving, serious and a subject of the emperor. After the turn of the century, he moved to Düsseldorf, where he started a business on his own - a wine shop. It was here that he met his future wife Maria Elisabeth Haschenbrink. The Schieffer family, which was founded with the wedding, could probably count themselves among the bourgeoisie. Martin Schieffer profited from the stormy upswing of the German Empire's economy that began in 1896. Industrialization was considerable; Under Kaiser Wilhelm II, Germany rose to become the leading industrial nation in Europe.

(Inset: In 1887, the British in particular had enforced a worldwide designation of origin for export products in order to assert themselves against supposedly cheap German products. In just a few years, "Made in Germany" had become a recognized quality mark that continues to set standards and has gained worldwide recognition to this day.)

The two sons, Jakob and Anton, were raised strictly Catholic. Like his brother, Anton Schieffer had attended the Ober-Realschule am Fürstenwall, later switched to a Realgymnasium with a focus on natural science subjects. The focus of these schools was on knowledge that was practically applicable to the profession; this seemed to the parents to make a lot of sense for their sons in times of rapid industrialization. Anton began his commercial apprenticeship at the Oberbilk Stahlwerke.

After the 2nd year of apprenticeship, Anton was offered a position as head of department, which he was able to hold for a year before he too was drafted "into the military". His older brother had volunteered on the first day of mobilization and was killed in action in 1915. Anton was deployed in France on various sectors of the front and later seriously injured in Verdun. He received the Iron Cross 2nd Class and was taken prisoner of war by the Americans in 1917 after recovering from his wound.

There he was employed as an interpreter for French and English. After the war, he found a good job at the technical wholesaler Kempchen in Oberhausen and cycled from Düsseldorf to Oberhausen every week. There he lived in a furnished room. He spent the weekends in Düsseldorf and made the acquaintance of Else Keusen. Both were born in Düsseldorf and belonged to the same parish of St. Peter in Friedrichstraße. Else's older sister, Emilie (Lia) Keusen, was well acquainted with Anton Schieffer, as they were both the same age. In 1922, the couple married; they then lived with their parents-in-law Berta and Peter Keusen in Talstraße.

Ironically, in the summer of 1923, at the height of the currency crisis in Germany, Anton Schieffer's long-cherished plans were implemented and he founded a "husband-wife business" with the support of his wife Else. On November 1, 1923, the business activities of Schieffer & Co. began. The handwritten official entry in the commercial register (company number HRA 7524) at the Düsseldorf District Court is dated 9.11.1923. Two good friends of Anton's acted as silent limited partners and initial financiers, each with an initial contribution of 1000 billion marks, which, however, were almost worthless. From the outset, the focus of sales activities was on technical products for industry and mining. An incredibly courageous decision. Would Anton and Else Schieffer have made the same decision if they had known that 6 days after the company was founded, the complete devaluation of money would come?

After the company was founded, they continued to live with their parents-in-law. The first company telephone was installed in the private apartment. After a year in 1924, Anton and

Else moved into Immermannstraße 67 together with Anton's parents Martin and Elisabeth Schieffer. Anton had to take care of his parents, who had lost everything in inflation and were dependent on support.

(Inset: Martin Schieffer, a successful wine merchant, gave his belongings – invested in gold – to the fatherland as a patriot at the beginning of the war. Could he have guessed that a few years later the necklace with the inscription "I gave my gold for iron" was no longer worth anything and that he had to close his flourishing wine trade? From then on, Anton's father was destitute and the state, which had financed the money for the expensive war from the citizens through loans, could not repay its debts. In order to get a grip on reparations payments and the shortages in the food supply, more government debt was taken up and inflation was the logical consequence.)

The eldest 3 children of Else and Anton, Herbert 1923 (later killed in WW II), Egon (1926) and Joachim (1927) were born at home in Immermannstraße.

In the basement of the house, Anton had set up a small warehouse; on the mezzanine floor were the offices and on the 1st floor the private apartment. Initially, Anton Schieffer rode his bicycle to his customers, later the first vehicle was an Opel 'Laubfrosch', a small 2-seater convertible. This was followed by the well-known Aga C 6/20, which produced 20 hp as a passenger and delivery car with 4 cylinders.

As early as 1926, the young company presented itself for the first time at an exhibition: The "Gesolei" in Düsseldorf brought a noticeable upswing. Was the local trade fair responsible for the first bestseller in Schieffer's range? At least the "Gold Snake", a black rubber water hose with yellow stripes, manufactured as a branded item by Paguag, the Pahl rubber and asbestos factory in Düsseldorf, proved to be one of the best-selling products at that time.

The technical trade continued to develop rapidly, especially due to the good personal contacts of the company owner. Anton Schieffer had the ability to combine his skills as a merchant with his keen sense of technology. From his own professional experience, he knew about the versatile product and market possibilities of a technical dealer. In this way, he found the market niches, ran a well-stocked warehouse and soon took his first steps into further processing with a small workshop. A punch and ring cutting machine were purchased in 1924. For some of his articles, he created his own brand names, which he had patented as registered trademarks. At that time, materials were mainly natural and synthetic rubber types, leather and asbestos. Increasingly, industrial customers were added, so that Anton was also able to supply technical rubber parts to the equipment and vehicle industry and its suppliers. Since customer-specific tools or vulcanizing molds usually had to be built for them, this resulted in follow-up orders, a close relationship with the customer, call-offs and planned requirements. Customer protection has been agreed with the suppliers, e.g. Continental in Hanover. Anton Schieffer played a leading role in such general agreements in his voluntary association activities (at the VTH, the Association of Technical Dealers).

In 1930, the first apprentice was hired and trained. When Margareta Caspers took up her position at the age of 16, she certainly had no idea that Schieffer would become her life's work. "Cäski" remained loyal to "her company" for the rest of her life – with joint power of attorney since 1941.

In 1932 it had become financially possible to acquire a house at Kurfürstenstraße 15 for the company and family. It was a narrow 3-storey house; the 3 boys Herbert, Egon and Jochem had their rooms at the top, the parents lived below, the grandparents lived on the 1st floor and the now larger offices were housed in the Souterrain. Margareta Caspers and 4 other ladies worked there; Company boss Anton and his sales representatives were constantly acquiring new orders, so that an external warehouse also had to be rented. In 1934 the 4th son and descendant Hermann was born.

With the transfer of power to Adolf Hitler as the new Reichskanzler by Reichspräsident Paul von Hindenburg, the end of the parliamentary-democratic system of the Weimar Republic was initiated. Like most citizens, the Schieffer family behaved in a wait-and-see, reserved manner, but also politically passive. The bourgeoisie avoided the new "process" and Anton Schieffer did not allow himself to be co-opted either. He had his principles and pride; was a nationalist, but not a Nazi, nor did he actively resist.

The Schieffer family liked to spend their free time, especially in the summer months, in the countryside near Lippstadt with their Westphalian relatives and friends. They were often on the farm of Bernhard Laumeier, a friend and war comrade, in Benteler. There, the Schieffers turned into farmers, Anton and the children became horse lovers or helped with the grain harvest on a daily basis (photos).

Meanwhile, his wife Else liked to stay alone in Düsseldorf, looked after the business and enjoyed her home environment - freed from family duties.

At the beginning of the war in September 1939, Anton Schieffer was immediately drafted as a reserve officer and was stationed first in the Eifel, later in East Prussia and deep into Russia. After various war injuries ("unfit for the front"), he was later deployed as a commander in Essen. With Else Schieffer and Margareta Caspers, the management of the company was now completely in the hands of women. Due to the war, more and more orders came in which had to be processed. The eldest 3 children graduated from high school one after the other and were drafted in 1940 (Herbert) and 1943 respectively Egon and Jochem. Herbert, who was later destined to succeed the company, was (presumably) killed in 1944 in a cavalry regiment on the Eastern Front. The company was considered an armaments important company and so Anton Schieffer was able to apply for working leave on a daily basis to check that everything was ok. During an air raid on 10.9.1942 family home suffered partial damage, on 12.6.1943, the factory and the house were completely bombed by the Royal Air Force.

What do people do who have lost all their personal belongings overnight, and who have also lost most of their professional livelihood? Anton Schieffer quickly obtained the official paper "ID card for aviation victims". It confirmed homelessness and offered the possibility of accommodation in an emergency shelter with 5 people. This was associated with subscription rights for immediate needs, entitlement to communal catering and ration cards. Anton Schieffer's friends, the Laumeier family, took in the Rhinelanders in Westphalia and so Else Schieffer took on the task of getting the company back on track under the most adverse circumstances. Husband, sons Herbert and Egon were already accommodated in the war, Jochem and Herbert with relatives. After a few months, a vacant furniture and coffin warehouse with a rear building was found in Lippstadt on today's Langestraße and they were able to move into their new home at short notice. In the countryside - in the peasantry - the company quickly became known as GUMMI SCHIFFER in good Westphalian terms. Rubber products such as work boots, gloves, drive belts and V-belts were quickly in demand and so Schieffer quickly built up a market niche in its new home.

After the end of the war, business activities were forcibly suspended, even though efforts were made to make contact with the old suppliers – now spread over 4 occupation zones. Telephone and letter mail hardly worked, some businesses were destroyed or relocated, and their addresses were sometimes unknown. No less difficult was the contact with the long-established customers. The Rhineland and Ruhr regions were too heavily bombed. In the network, as it were, information was given and received reciprocally, creating a current situation that became enormously important for the reconstruction. Gradually, the children Egon and Jochem returned from captivity; Herbert, the eldest, was still missing, presumably was killed in action on the Finnish Jade Bay on the Eastern Front. He was supposed to support Anton Schieffer, who was clearly in poor health, as the future junior boss. Egon and Jochem joined the company after completing their training and later became limited partners. The youngest son, Hermann, studied medicine after graduating from high school.

## Chapter 2

### 1945 – 1962: The reconstruction of the Schieffer Company

The first weeks and months were spent under the most difficult circumstances. Egon, who had tried unsuccessfully to obtain a volunteer position with a veterinarian with the later goal of veterinary medicine, was summoned to the employment office in August 1945, drafted, found fit and conscripted by order of the English occupying power in the coal mine. Father Anton "saved" him with an apprenticeship contract at Schieffer & Co. on 1.7.1945, which was confirmed by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Jochem, returning from captivity as a prisoner of war a little later, seriously ill, was first "nursed up" and also began an apprenticeship in the family business on 1.7.1945.

At that time, the company consisted of 2 employees: Margareta Caspers, Hellmut Keusen, the brother of Else Schieffer and the 3 apprentices Egon, Jochem as well as Maria Henning, who came from Essen and had been doing the apprenticeship since 1943. Else Schieffer kept all the bookkeeping, went to the post office every day for years to empty the mailbox and bring business mail with her (photo original envelope from 1945?). For years, it was also hoped that this mailbox would be used to receive a message from the missing son Herbert. In the front building at Lange Straße 20, a shop with a shop window for pick-up sales had been set up (photo), behind it was the office for accounting and typists and on the 1st floor the living space of the family. In the backyard, a warehouse was set up over 3 floors. Jochem later described this as a very modest new beginning with a blessing in disguise, as there were only minor food supply problems in the barely destroyed provincial town. Without serious competition, it was therefore possible to serve the peasant clientele quickly and at the same time had all the agricultural barter goods that were so urgently needed. The product range then also consisted of a wide range of technical articles, mainly made of rubber. Hoses and V-belts, rubber and leather drive belts, conveyor belts, rubber plates and gaskets. The latter were cut or punched in the adjoining workshop to the customer's wishes and dimensions. Very interesting and groundbreaking for many decades were rubber, water and hydraulic hoses, which were delivered to the various hardware and household goods stores with appropriate screw connections or later press sockets. A short time later, occupational safety items such as workwear, leather aprons, safety shoes and various types of rubber, leather or textile gloves followed, analogous to many technical dealers. "Tön", as he was also called by his friends, quickly had the right instinct and recognized that industrial companies, craftsmen and almost every farmer needed these products in the development phase after the war. Everything was in short supply and Schieffer & Co was obviously the only dealer and garment manufacturer with such a wide range of products in the region. Therefore, it was not difficult to get customers from South or East Westphalia; rather, it was problematic to maintain an ever-widening range of goods with safety stocks or stockpiling.

The old "pre-war contacts" with strategically important suppliers such as Continental or Pahlische Gummiwerke were therefore invaluable. Delivery times could be significantly shortened using natural products from Westphalia (such as butter, eggs, potatoes, cabbage, vegetables, sausage, ham and whole pork halves) and the Auto-Union Wanderer, which had been rescued during the war, was increasingly used as an additional means of transport (photo). Later, a small truck with a wood gasifier was used, which had been made available to Schieffer by the head of the Trockenmilch-Werk in Lippstadt. They, too, urgently needed goods from the Rhineland and Ruhr region and used Anton Schieffer's connections. After passing his driver's license, Jochem also drove and became increasingly "purchasing" in addition to order processing, while Anton and Egon were more responsible for selling the products. Since initially only compensatory goods were traded, the controls of the occupiers along the way were the most precarious situations. Thus, in the post-war period, a virtual form of accounting had emerged. Although everything was settled and booked in Reichsmark, wages and taxes

were paid, but in reality the first means of payment were in kind, tobacco and cigarettes. Even private tutoring sessions were rewarded with a sausage or a pound of butter.

At the end of 1946, after a crop failure and the beginning of one of several consecutive harsh winters, Germany could no longer provide for itself. Import and export were still prohibited for the "outlawed" nation and there was a shortage of fuel. In the cities, people starved and froze to death; Millions of people continued to live in barracks or ruins and the crime rate skyrocketed to unimaginable heights. Help finally came from the United States, which initially supplied grain, and later laid a foundation for the establishment of a stable democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany as part of the Marshall Plan. In 1948, Schieffer & Co, including the two sons, again employed 14 people, including 2 stenographers, 4 warehouse workers, 3 apprentices and a salesman in the counter operation.

On 20.6.1948 the currency reform followed in the English, French and American occupation zone. Bartering had to come to an end if it could not produce a stable economic system. On the cut-off date, there were long queues at the food stamp offices, where everyone could exchange 40 new DM for 40 old Reichsmark. In one fell swoop, the black market collapsed, because the compensation transactions that had been customary until then stopped. Debts were converted at a ratio of 10:1, wages and rents remained at 1:1. Cash was exchanged at the rate of 100 Reichsmark at 6.50 DM; those who had cash or savings were among the losers, those who sat on debts were almost rid of them in one fell swoop. Thus, in a positive sense, the currency reform was the most striking experience of the West German population, because it was associated with the almost complete abolition of rationing. All of a sudden, there was everything!

In 1950, Egon and Jochen became limited partners and became members of the management of Schieffer & Co (photo: legitimation card, Conti? Merchant's assistant letter 1947 IHK, photo Helmut Keusen, ES). Economic growth increased rapidly with the market economy and the situation of a large part of the population also improved significantly. Marshall Plan funds boosted the construction industry and this became the decisive engine of the upswing. Ludwig Erhard, Minister of Economic Affairs and later Federal Chancellor, is still regarded as the father of the economic miracle. Of course, the German economic miracle also had global political causes; the increasing demand, many cheap but qualified workers due to numerous refugees from the eastern territories, low wages and a six-day week. Therefore, German goods were initially not expensive and could be easily exported. "Made in Germany" quickly became an international trademark again and the automotive industry soon celebrated its first successes.

In Schieffer's contracts, "our normal office hours" were specified from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. 48 hours a week were standard at the time and (paid) overtime was often worked.

Affairs as well as production increased steadily. Responsible for all work on the punching and ring cutting machine was Paul Otten, an "all-rounder", whom Jochem described 'grumpy' outwardly but inside 'good-hearted'. The customer base was gradually expanded in the region and strategic customers such as quarries and cement plants were acquired through Egon. Meanwhile, father Anton took care of the old customers and visited the mining companies in the Ruhr region as well as the large industrial customers in the Rhineland. The juniors divided the tasks; while Jochem was in charge of the office with the support of the experienced Margareta Caspers, Egon was responsible for sales and field service.

In 1952, permission was granted for the reconstruction of the Düsseldorf building at Immermannstraße 67; after its completion, a sales office was set up there.

Despite all difficult circumstances at the beginning of the 50s, company parties were held regularly. At one of these parties, authorized signatory M. Caspers was secretly poured schnapps into her glass by a colleague. Of course, the effect did not fail to materialize and

together they drove home in a handcart in a tipsy mood after the party (photos of celebrations). In such an atmosphere, there was no room for hierarchical scuffles.

The miracle of Bern on 4.7.1954, winning the World Cup against the highly favored Hungarian team under national coach Herberger did go down in German sports history. It also triggered a great frenzy of joy in Germany, which 9 years after the end of the 2nd World War tore almost an entire nation from the deprivations and depressions of the post-war period. The victory created a spirit of optimism, the former losers gained new self-confidence.

10 years after the end of the war, Schieffer & Co had returned to the sales volume it had before the war. The senior's wise decision to bet on his two sons and give responsibility to the younger generation at an early age turned out to be an invaluable advantage. 2 generations pursued the same goal, but each from its own point of view. The conservative attitude of the senior, who is very frugal and reluctant to invest due to the small equity capital, was well complemented by opportunity-oriented sons.

In the social field, Anton Schieffer was ahead of his time; as early as the 50s, he and his sons created facilities and services that were future-oriented and only partially became part of the collective bargaining partners' years later. Mention should be made, for example, of the "Anton Schieffer Support Fund", which was founded at time, from which many company employees could be helped in emergency situations.

In 1955, the growing number of orders led to the company moving again to Bahnhofstraße 19 (photo). The premises could only be acquired with the addition of a clause, which was obviously unusual even by the standards of the time, from an annual increase in turnover. In this regard, Jochem reported that the Schieffer family as well as their lawyer apparently forgot to agree on a "cap" on the premium in the contract modalities. The initially envisaged "supplementary pension" then developed into a princely appanage for the former owner due to the almost explosive growth of the company. The new headquarters quickly developed into a strategic location, because goods could be picked up and shipped easily near the freight and bus station, and the location was also very central for customers. The Lippstadt original "Flöten-Ewald" (photo), the porter who always whistles operetta melodies, often appeared in front of the company and brought incoming goods with him. Just as cleverly, Ewald liked to double his fee when he slyly converted two packages tied together into 2 individual pieces for one fee and thus doubled his fee. When caught, he whistled a funny song, free of charge, of course...

The senior boss soon had to withdraw from day-to-day business due to his health restrictions. His sons took on more and more responsibility. It was very important to set up the service areas of the city of Lippstadt, the Westphalian State Railway and the Westphalian Union as customers, because they also needed rubber shuttle doors. Later, the Uhli-Feinstrumpfwerke (merged into Falke Strümpfe), the WMI Westfälische Metallwerke (Hella) and the Rothe Erde (today Thyssen Krupp) were added. The strategy was clear: what do these large OEMs need outside of the merchandise, the operational supplies that Schieffer & Co was already able to supply at that time? Where could one strengthen the in-house production with self-manufactured technical parts, rebuild it or bring oneself into play as a supplier through future technological developments? Both juniors visited industrial trade fairs and emerging trade fairs, maintained contact with manufacturers of machine tools and processing machines, the upstream rubber industry and also established contacts with the chemical industry, the producers of rubber and plastic raw materials (granules). Here, the basis for future industrialization was already laid, which required high investments, but was intended to gradually reduce interchangeability with other dealers and upstream suppliers.

It was therefore only logical that the new orientation would gradually eliminate marginal products of the technical operating requirements. In Bahnhofstraße, space was therefore created in the Souterrain for another swivel arm punch and two new hose ring multi-spindle

machines. With the end of the occupation on May 5, 1955, the Federal Republic of Germany became sovereign, the economy boomed and a period of full employment began. This gave rise to the first "wave" of rationalization and automation. The first electric forklift t, the Ameise 55 from Linde, caused a sensation and became the epitome of in-house transport.

Inevitably, the transport routes in the factories between production and logistics also had to be improved. The mostly rigid wooden door leaves in the swing doors were increasingly replaced by rubber panels with fabric inserts. This was the beginning of a strategic product group that became particularly important to Schieffer, even though at that time no one could have guessed how much the name "Schieffer" would be associated with swing doors and gates on an international level. The first order was an export order for AEG in Vienna, delivered at the beginning of 1958.

Inset:

Adenauer's trip to Moscow in 1955 was considered a spectacular event of his chancellorship, as it marked the beginning of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany, which had just become sovereign.

At the same time, the most important goal was to force the release of 10,000 prisoners of war and political prisoners from the Soviets. Incidentally, it was the last time that the Schieffer family hoped that the missing son and brother Herbert would be among the returnees.

To address 3 x 'Mr. Schieffer caused increasing confusion. This was too much for the still lean organization, whereupon a family form of address prevailed, which was to last permanently: for the senior and patriarch Anton remained "Mr. Schieffer", the sons were addressed to as Mr. Egon and Mr. Jochem. (Photo: Excerpt from the commercial register 1959, 'Speeder' Egon with criminal mandates)

Inset:

At the end of the 50s, a tremendous pent-up demand of domestic consumers drove the economic miracle to new heights. Only 5% of German households owned a refrigerator, 3.5% a washing machine and just under 10% an electric stove or car. A television was also still in short supply.

At the same time, a youth culture developed with Rock 'n' Roll, blue jeans and half-strengths, which made the hair of adults stand on end. Elvis Presley's first LP was released and street battles broke out between young people and the police in big cities.

Anton Schieffer taught his sons a rule at an early age: only those who are extremely frugal will be successful. Whether in the family or in the management, the following applies: a lot of cash to spend was not allowed. The two junior bosses paid each other about 500 DM per month, little more than an average wage. Growth means investment, and money was needed for that. From this time came the 3 "n", which classified the investments as "necessary, useful and nice". Necessary purchases were mostly approved, useful occasionally and nice almost never!

Frugality was a distinctive principle of life for Anton - perhaps also due to 2 world wars. When Anton Dreier, later head of application technology, expressed the desire for a new pencil shortly after joining the company as a young technical draftsman, the company founder replied: "I can see, Mr. Dreier, you still have to learn how to save. Here you have an extension cap for your pencil which makes you use it for another 14 days". Anton Wübbe, the long-time logistic manager, also "enjoyed" a Spartan upbringing. When he cut the twine for incoming packages, Anton explained to him that the cords at the knot had to be opened so that they could be reused.



But despite all the frugality, there was also a second side to Anton. On certain occasions, he did not let himself be lumpen in order to remunerate good performance of his employees, e.g. with 50 DM extra in the pay packet.

At the end of the 50s, things went well at Schieffer and the senior boss was able to withdraw from the operational business with a clear conscience and full of pride in his two sons. With his retirement, he founded the Anton Schieffer Unterstützungskasse, which still exists today, a legally independent company that provided funds for social needs for the benefit of needy employees.

### Chapter 3

#### **1962 – 1984: Industrialization at Schieffer**

At the beginning of the 60s, the company building on Bahnhofstraße was bursting at the seams. The courtyard area, which had been converted into a workshop with a canopy, and the outsourcing of the accounting department led to the company's transformation from a dealer to a manufacturer being driven forward more energetically. 40 years after the company was founded, the construction of its own production hall outside the city centre on Goethestraße marked the beginning of the necessary organisational structures in production and sales. The production halls were opened during a ceremony. The ceremonial address was given by the family's long-time friend, retired Major General Martin Bieber. At the same time, he was also head of the Schieffer branch in Düsseldorf's Kurfürstenstraße, which reopened in 1957. As part of the ceremony, Hermann Girkens, who joined the company as an apprentice in 1952, was then granted joint power of attorney as a commercial employee, later as a personnel manager (photos of buildings, celebrations, and gi). He was to hold it until 1997.

With the inauguration of the company building at Goethestraße 55-57 at the end of 1962, a modern production site was created. Together with Dipl. Ing. Tschätsch and assistant F. Holtschneider, the first organizational structures for the technology department were laid. Initially, production was divided into the areas of "technical rubber parts with stamping and automatic hose cutting machines" and "vulcanization of rubber conveyor belts". A short time later, with the plastics technician A. Knittel, the company entered the field of plastic injection molding processing, consisting of injection molding production and the production of PTFE parts (better known under the trade name Teflon). It was then also necessary to have its own tool shop, in which the first toolmaker Henke (hourly wage 3.90 DM) was involved. There was also enough space in the new industrial hall for the "swing gates" area. In 1963, a completely new swing door was developed by the hired mechanical engineer A. Dreier, which later led to ushering in the age of electrically opening and closing doors. The later technical director W. Höhl was considered a tinkerer and inventor and together with A. Knittel the first patent for a "motor-driven" swing door was registered in 1969. Meanwhile, hose assembly also continued to develop; they served local small original equipment manufacturers, the agricultural machinery trade and regional farmers with spare parts for their fleets.

Since 1967, it has also proven to be "spot on" to regularly present itself at international trade fairs with its own stand. The "Hanover Fair" stand was legendary with a "Schieffer cube" placed on top, which rotated and guided interested visitors to the stand from afar. This world's largest industrial trade fair attracted so many foreign visitors and trade visitors for over a week every year in April that it was essential for an export-oriented company to present itself there. And in the truest sense of the word, not only could there be an infinite number of news, world premieres and patented products on display, but also companies and, above all, their employees "present" themselves. At Schieffer, too, there was a great desire to be assigned to the trade fair service. It was exhausting, but a huge "contact forum" and established connections (the exchange of business cards obligatory) could often be used for years for one's own "network". Especially on the weekends, many employees from Lippstadt came to

the fair and, of course, to the Schieffer stand at lunchtime, because there was also a beer to go with hot Bockwurst with mustard and rolls.

As an aside, the situation in the 60s, but also the "innate frugality" in the Schieffer household, did not allow a hotel in the initial phase. Trainees, employees and managers initially spent the night with a very hospitable Dobat family at the gates of Hanover (in Hemmingen-Westerfeld). There was a lot of cramped, in the morning you stood in line for the one bathroom, but you were spoiled for breakfast with individual wishes. Because of the good atmosphere, the Schieffer trade fair crew continued to come to the well-known private quarters for many years. The international flair at the fair had something special for most visitors: different languages and cultures were motivation enough to "escape" from the dreariness of everyday life for a few days.

In the beginnings, the Schieffer booth was finally completed at the "last second". This was mainly due to new products or prototypes, which were often "knitted with a hot needle" and literally finished with the "trade fair gong" due to final corrections or adjustments. Jochem later reported on the improvised beginnings, where they had been on their knees with the upstream supplier Dynamite on the eve of the opening for a new type of swing gate and still had to make corrections to door leaves. This literally "welded together", because a stand service often had to cope with a 14-hour day in a confined space (with arrival and departure). Later, at the K-Messe in Düsseldorf (leading trade fair for plastics and rubber), at the Intern. Construction trade fair BAU and various other regional and international trade fairs exhibited with their own booth (div. photos of booths)

At the end of the 60s and beginning of the 70s, the product areas of swing gates, rubber and plastic parts as well as packaging developed significantly. The sales department was further separated, in the meantime more technically, and experts for one or the other area were also sought or trained in production and design.

From this time, for example, came a significant further development with the Lippstadt Eisenwerke Rothe Erde (later Hoesch and then Thyssen-Krupp Rothe Erde). These were known worldwide as manufacturers of sometimes large-volume slewing rings for e.g. construction or ship cranes, trams or battleships. The slewing ring is responsible for all rotating movements and must function trouble-free under all weather and temperature conditions. The rotational movement was carried out by hardened steel balls, the balls in turn were separated from each other by intermediate pieces for guidance and lubrication. These steel intermediate pieces repeatedly caused malfunctions and unpleasant material breaks, so that Schieffer was given the chance to test a suitable material (highly abrasion-resistant, high- and low-temperature resistant and yet elastic). After intensive research and with the help of the development engineers of Rothe Erde, a new type of polyurethane from Continental (Dannenberg plant near the zone border) was able to deliver the best test results in 2 years. After the construction of prototype tools and extensive tests on the first slewing rings, the first series tools for ball spacers were built. Gradually, the product portfolio was expanded, self-developed and manufactured window and radial spacers made of polyethylene were created in a 2nd development stage and this product portfolio still exists today in a modified form and is an integral part of today's production facilities in Lippstadt and Lugosch in Romania.

At the end of the 60s, unemployment in Germany increased. Background: The most important turning point in post-war financial history was the Value Added Tax Act of 1967 introduced by F.J. Strauss with the transition to the system of value added tax with input tax deduction. The newly created value-added tax weighed so heavily on private consumption that sales in the economy declined again for the first time and Germany experienced the first post-war recession.

Astonishingly, Schieffer's development was in the opposite direction, as participation in trade fairs and greatly expanded sales led to stronger growth in export volumes amid declining domestic demand. More and more employees were hired. However, it turned out that the spatial separation between the newly established production in Goethestraße and the

commercial organization in Bahnhofstraße was an obstacle to further development. The amalgamation of the two parts of the company in 1968 was the declared goal, but the risks also increased with rapidly increasing sales, rising liabilities, financing and loan repayment. With Reinhard Schulte, the head of accounting could be found, who was also significantly involved in the renaming and founding of Schieffer & Co Verwaltungsgesellschaft. Anton, Egon and Jochem Schieffer became managing directors and limited partners of the new legal form and the company name was expanded by the "GmbH" to Schieffer GmbH & Co KG.

In October 1968: the completion of the new office and warehouse building was completed and everything was united under one roof. The production had been expanded again (photo). On more than 1000 square meters, a fully air-conditioned open-plan office had been created - unique for Lippstadt at that time (photos); incidentally, it was a forerunner of its time, when in the 2020s, mainly in office buildings, individual offices were no longer built, but modern "open space" offices were talked about as a novelty.

Senior Anton Schieffer, who endured his Parkinson's disease in an admirably disciplined manner, no longer had an office in the new building. After a difficult head operation of the senior, the two sons had practically taken over the management on their own. The workforce had grown to over 110 employees and yet a good, almost family-like working atmosphere was achieved. While Jochem continued to improve the internal processes, the internal and external sales structure was built up under Egon's direction with field service and sales representatives at home and abroad. "Travelling Staff", as the contractually customary job title for sales representatives was at the time, visited customers in their respective contract region with their VW Beetle (later an Opel Kadett) company car. In addition to the fixed salary, there was a sales commission and travel expenses. Despite specializing in one or the other product, they still looked after the entire product range. Increasingly, however, some were overwhelmed by the need to competently represent the full range of technical rubber and plastic products, including hoses and swing gates, despite many in-house training courses. Neither did they have the necessary basic knowledge of structural engineering, nor did they have enough time for detailed advice. Gradually, therefore, more and more experts were hired for individual areas or even poached by the competition in order to build up competence "in depth". For example, a separate technical field service was set up for the "Flexible Doors" sales management; gradually, "centres of excellence" developed for all essential areas.

Further expansion forced the company to undertake another construction project in the early 70s. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary, it was announced that a 25,000m<sup>2</sup> plot of land "Am Mondschein" had been acquired and that the first construction phase was immediately triggered in autumn 1973. About 200 people were employed and in the commemorative publication Schieffer described itself as a producer of technical products made of rubber and plastic and also traditionally operates the technical trade.

Some of the main points of the programme should be singled out: "Quotation from the anniversary commemorative publication Panorama of 23.11.1973:

PALLAFLON is the company's own trademark for semi-finished and finished parts made of PTFE, an expensive material whose processing and application advice requires a high level of technical expertise from our employees.

Technical injection molded parts are made of plastomers and elastomers. With satisfaction, our production group has already designed and produced many complicated parts.

Schieffer plastic swing doors have found their market at home and abroad. Our designations "plast" – "net" – "top" are a household name in professional circles. An extensive distribution network in the EC and EFTA area provides advice and support. But orders to Persia, Poland or South America are also common. Patent property rights at home and abroad protect our own ideas and developments.

Technical rubber molded, cut and stamped parts of any shape are supplied tailored to customer requirements, and foam rubber and cellular rubber are also processed. Our stamping shop does not stop at any material that is required by the customer.

The product range is presented to the customer in a clearly arranged catalogue. This includes a full range of technical hoses, with particular interest in the hydraulic hose business. High-pressure hose lines pressed in in a special process are assembled in large and small series. The extensive range of conveyor and drive elements group is tailored to modern conveyor technology. Through technical advice and full assembly service, a real after-sales service is offered. Hoses on rollers or drums are composed by our experts according to own 'secret recipe'. A well-stocked warehouse of rubber sheets, especially many technically high-quality elastomers, is maintained. Our ASA sales group sells workwear studied and improved for occupational safety and prevention of accidents.

In the company itself, a cooperative management style appropriate to our time has been introduced, which serves the development of employees and the delegation of responsibility. The company management, in the hands of the managing directors Egon and Joachim Schieffer in the 2nd generation, also intensively promotes training and further education, in order to promote qualification of employees. Within the framework of the annual budget, external seminars, internal training courses and training meetings as well as lessons for trainees are actively organised and attended. A large proportion of employees in leading positions come from within the company's own ranks.

In sales activities, the focus is on distinctive technical advice. The sales force, consisting of our own travelling staff and representatives throughout Germany, is mainly made up of technicians and engineers. The use of design, testing and control, which is indispensable for professional customer service, is particularly important for a medium-sized company. Through the interaction of office and field service, the industrial customer is offered a close technical consulting service as early as the development phase. At many international trade fairs, our company has presented itself to the professional audience. Technically flawless documentation, often from our own in-house print shop, and information brochures support the consultation. The use of EDP for the necessary figures is always "up to date".

Preservation of style and tradition, but also the use of new knowledge of progress, that is the common thread of the company in the past decades. After 50 years of existence, however, parallels to the founding year are unmistakable: Then as now, it is not made easy for medium-sized companies in particular. Nevertheless, the focus is on the future! (End of quote)

Anton Schieffer, the founder, experienced the celebrations for the 50th anniversary together with his wife Else very emotionally. However, both seniors were very restrained and proud of their juniors and the management team, who had mastered the transformation into an industrial company in various efforts. But Egon and Jochem were also young enough to give the company their own imprint in future development, even without the support of the founder. The reorganization in 1972, which was based on the foundations of the "Bad Harzburg Model" and states that the management of tasks is delegated to the employees, but that they also take responsibility for their behavior, contributed to a further positive development in the coming years.

In June 1974, after completion of the 4000m<sup>2</sup> new production building "Am Mondschein", all technical departments (work preparation and design) as well as production moved to the new, 8 m high halls. A short time later, our most important long-standing employee and advisor to both generations of shareholders, Mrs. Margarete Caspers, is awarded the 'Bundesverdienstkreuz' of Federal Republic of Germany. This is in recognition of her extraordinary performance as an employee (since 1930) and as an authorized signatory (since 1941) in the most difficult times for the Schieffer company.

Despite all the successes in exports, the oil crisis also affected Schieffer in the mid-70s; Layoffs of the almost 200 employees can be avoided, but for the first time in 1975 short-time work has to be registered for some time.

In 1976, founder Anton Schieffer died on June 10 at the age of 79 after a long period of disease. Even though he was no longer actively involved in the company in recent years, he was regularly brought up to date by his sons and was still available with advice or impulses. The chairman of the 'Verbände der Technischen Händler' wrote in his letter of condolence to the sons: "Anton Schieffer was an outstanding personality. Also and especially for our association! J. Marx, his companion at the time of the construction, said of him that he had done more than anyone else for the professional organization of technical trade. And Anton would have replied that the reputation of the association was just as much a heartfelt need to him as the rise of his company. Those who knew your father feel what you have lost!"

At the end of the 70s, Egon and Jochem made the decision to take over the long-established technical specialist shop "Rau & Kurjo" in Ludwigsburg with 10 employees and a turnover of approx. 2.5 million DM. Originally founded in Bautzen in 1920, the company was relocated to Baden-Württemberg after the war and served at Friedenstraße in Ludwigsburg.

At the same time, the groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of Facility II "Am Mondschein" was decided. 2000m<sup>2</sup> of additional space was needed to relocate the remaining part of the production (rubber processing and stamping) as well as the tool shop from Goethestraße. (Photos). According to the new motto "Schieffer makes many things easier... With a well-engineered product range, we solve technical problems in a practical way – individually, precisely and quickly." In 1980, more than 300 people are employed at all locations, the turnover amounts to approx. DM 40 million and the course continues to grow.

But that wasn't all... because at Schieffer they like change and especially like to build... only a short time later, the next planning phase was tackled: after all technical activities and production had been brought together, the construction phase of administration, dispatch and warehouse is now taking place. After completion of all activities, almost 9000m<sup>2</sup> will be built on the 25,000m<sup>2</sup> plot "Am Mondschein", plus around 11,000m<sup>2</sup> of courtyards, paths and parks as well as a further 5000m<sup>2</sup> of green areas for potential expansion. The company has grown so much in the last 15 years that organizational changes are (must) be announced. In 1983, preparations were in full swing in addition to the day-to-day business, but the management team joined forces to support the change in the organization.

#### Chapter 4:

#### **1984 – 1996 Divisional organization**

1984 goes down in the history books of the Schieffer Company. Initially, the unification of all production facilities, administration and logistics was seen and celebrated as a milestone. It was a real feat of strength that the shareholders and many employees had implemented together. The production processes have been optimized and logistics and shipping have now also been significantly improved; the shuttle service between Goethestraße (now a purely residential area) and the Am Mondschein industrial estate in the immediate vicinity of Bundesstraße 55 was almost completely eliminated. The office buildings were modern and forward-looking - in essence, these are still the buildings of 2023. No one could have guessed that another 6 construction phases would follow in the next 40 years. The management continued to be in the hands of Egon (58) and Joachim (57 years); both shareholders had taken out large loans for the new buildings in Schieffer GmbH & CO KG and had taken on massive debt for the future. Mother and former partner Else Schieffer was 85 years old and celebrated her birthday with 11 grandchildren, among others.

The groundbreaking strategic change in the organizational structure was crucial for the future development of the company. In cooperation with Dr. Eberhard Kossack, head of a renowned Munich-based management consultancy, experienced and successful in the design of corporate concepts, a division of the company's image into 3 autonomous operational business units and a joint administration was designed. The various product groups from the past were bundled and assigned to the 3 business units. They represented a structure of production, purchasing and sales, which were completely independent of each other in terms of market orientation and yet worked very closely together. 01 Gate and Protection Systems (TS) Division, Head Joachim Schieffer. 02 Rubber and Plastics Technology (KK) Division, Head Egon Schieffer. 03 Hydraulic, Hose and Conveyor Technology (HSF) Division, headed by Egon Schieffer and Johannes Wulf. The distribution of sales between the divisions was 36% for TS, 38% for KK and 26% for HSF.

The operational units should be exempted as far as possible from administrative tasks; therefore, a joint administration was founded, which included, among other things, legal, finance and accounting, data processing, human resources and training as well as general business administration with shipping and warehouse management. Reinhard Schulte and Hermann Girkens took over the management. Several objectives were associated with this organizational change, which was unusual for the time (also retrospectively): - the preservation of independence and the continuation as a family business (up to the handover to the 3rd generation) - the two managing partners were actively involved in their business areas - by transferring the management to proven employees, the principle of the form of leadership, the transfer of tasks, competence and responsibility according to the principles of the "Harzburg Model", was fully preserved. In order to be able to correctly classify this change in the organizational structure of the Schieffer Company, one may or must dare to look back on the 100th anniversary.

In 1984, very few family businesses were prepared to structure their operational structures so clearly and to hand over responsibility outside the circle of shareholders. Even many large corporations were still very hierarchically organized at that time or were not clearly structured in their product portfolios.

Egon and Joachim had the courage and the will, perhaps also shaped by their very different characters, to go this way. The operating divisions concentrated on their respective markets, specialists with a high level of core competence developed, they also competed with each other and yet worked together intensively. For example, information or requirements were passed on to customers or suppliers because they could also be helpful to the other business unit. Cost types and cost centers were examined in detail, and apportionable expenses from administration were renegotiated every year. Down to the copy paper, the allocation was broken down to the business units and thus the responsibility of costs at all employee levels was made transparent. Perhaps a bit exaggerated, but transparency led to cost responsibility and the operating accounting sheet (BAB for short) became a symbol of success every quarter.

In 1984, the new KK division was able to take over the Deventer Company in Munich and thus expand the product range in Schuhgräfstraße of the new Schieffer branch. The long-established company had existed since 1918 and had a good name far beyond the borders of the Free State, especially for molded articles. The "first man" from the team with 6 employees was Ferdinand Titze, a somewhat odd, kind-hearted, loyal expert with exceptional expertise in rubber as a material. And... the only employee at Schieffer who consumed and celebrated snuff. Occasionally, a small breeze would get stuck in his moustache and cause cheerfulness. Ferdi was also known and loved for sayings about the term "rubber" that were not quite suitable for young people. With him and his deputy Heiner Lammers, contacts in northern Italy with various rubber producers expanded significantly.

Within the KK division, a young man made a name for himself who had developed into a rubber specialist through his training in 1970, later in purchasing, but then for the sales subject area "Technical Rubber Parts" 02. Dieter Goertz, gradually became the Lippstadt counterpart of Munich's Ferdi Titze. Both developed a special feeling for Italian suppliers in the extrusion or molded article scene. Companies such as Tosini, the forerunner of Italy Gasket, Orobica (i.W. customer Kreis-Truma), Argomm or Comelast came into play. The significant increase in business trips to the Bergamo region was also recorded in the following years... on y soit qui mal y pense, because apparently the good Italian cuisine, excellent wines and the consistently pleasant climate had spread all the way to Lippstadt.

In the months that followed, other employees with management responsibility were granted joint power of attorney: Johannes Wulf for GB HSF and Ferdinand Holtschneider for GB TS. In addition to the two former authorized signatories Hermann Girken and Reinhard Schulte, the 270-strong company with a turnover of DM 60 million was represented by 6 people in the management team. (Photos)

In 1986, Schieffer appeared on television on the occasion of a major Nixdorf, Paderborn reportage. The filming in Lippstadt caused excitement and a certain tension, because on 24.4.1986 the company and some employees at WISO came on the screen on ZDF.

On September 1, 1986, Wilfried Adick joined the company as Head of Organization and Data Processing after completing his studies and several years of professional experience at IT consulting companies in Heidelberg and Aachen.

And another special feature that Schieffer was proud of: it was voted 'Training Company of the Year' several times (photo). Over the years, the company achieved a training rate of over 10% and was therefore able to recruit growth mainly through self-trained young people... Incidentally, this is also a special achievement that has been retained to this day and, due to its long-standing image, has contributed to the fact that it is still possible to fill enough trainee positions.

At the end of the 80s, Schieffer had also increased significantly in the number of sales and employees due to further increasing foreign contacts. As a regular exhibitor at international trade fairs such as the Hannover Fair, Constructa, Intech, K in Düsseldorf or BAU in Munich, more and more trips and flights abroad became necessary. Whether Persia (now Iran), Korea, Scandinavia ... without English as a foreign language, you couldn't get anywhere. Our "Continuing Education" department also had the appropriate training for this. It was reported in Schieffer's in-house magazine that Mr. Holtschneider, Mr. Goertz, Mr. Wulf and Mr. Laux stayed for a while for intensive language training at the Inlingua School in Gütersloh. Quote: "there they were awaited and cared for by female language professionals who were as pretty as they were capable... The four of them must have digested this tough fare charmingly, because our foreign contacts have strengthened even more since then!" A good 35 years later, a sexism debate would probably have been inevitable.

However, a Normandy proverb from this period is still relevant:

"Once you succeed, it can be a coincidence.  
If you succeed twice, it can be luck.  
If you succeed three times, it is diligence and efficiency."

On 6.5.1989 Else Schieffer celebrated her 90th birthday in good health (photo). At that time, an incipient mass exodus of citizens from the GDR to Hungary attracted great attention in Europe. What effects would the reform movement initiated in Eastern Europe have on the Federal Republic of Germany and thus also have an influence on Schieffer? On November 9, 1989, SED functionary G. Schabowski triggered the fall of the Berlin Wall with his slip of the tongue in front of the cameras. At 6:53 p.m., he was questioned by journalists about the new draft travel law and the entry into force between the GDR and the Federal Republic. Otherwise

eloquent, Schabowski nervously leafed through a stack of documents, only to reply: "As far as I know, this occurs ... it's immediate, immediate." What euphoria!

1990, the year of German reunification, also brought a special boom for Schieffer. The development of the "East" and new markets released additional forces. In order to be prepared for future growth, additional proven employees have been given joint power of attorney. Dieter Goertz and Wolfgang Stammen for the GB KK and Wilfried Adick for the GB TS. Hans Willi Bilstein became head of ODV, today's IT department.

Due to the strong growth in volumes of prefabricated washer hoses (main customer Kärcher in Winnenden), but also interesting original equipment manufacturers in the hydraulic hose segment, the HSF division was renamed Flexible Line Systems. At the same time, the SCHIEFFER logo was redesigned - at first somewhat controversially - so that the two "FF" were now placed at an angle parallel to the diamond frame (photo), provided with an addition: "Shaping the future with a system".

Due to the strong construction industry in the new federal states, but also increased demand for injection molding, production capacities were no longer sufficient. Considerations arose as early as 1989 to outsource the production of the doors. After tough negotiations with Timmermanns heir administration, but also with the city of Lippstadt (there was a very attractive offer of land from the Erwitte industrial area), an acceptable result was finally achieved. 32,000 square meters could be purchased and a short time later it was built again! The new building VII covered approx. 10,000 square meters in its final stage; as with several previous buildings, Wilfried Reckmann was site manager and was able to inaugurate the administration building on schedule and within budget. At the same time, the 500th employee was hired. The production building of approx. 8000 square meters was added in mid-1992.

At the end of 1992, Wilfried Schieffer-Adick, now married to Britta, Jochen Schieffer's youngest daughter, took over the management of GB TS. The company achieved a turnover of DM 142 million across all divisions with 558 employees, including 227 salaried employees, 232 wage earners, 81 trainees, 18 part-time employees and over 160 home workers. At the same time, Dieter Goertz (initially in personal union with Egon), later with overall responsibility for the GB KK, Johannes Wulf became responsible for the GB FL. This marked the beginning of the generational change of Egon and Jochem, but both remained active in the company as managing directors at the age of 66 and 65 for a few more years in order to accompany the transition in a very difficult economic time (the worst recession since the end of the war). One of the effects was the closure of the Fluor production facility in 1994 with 7 employees, who found their new place in the plastic injection molding production. Cut-throat competition across Europe among commodity producers and processors limited competitiveness, as there was an oversupply from Italy with unfavourable currency parities (lira to DM). However, the PTFE product line remained available in sales and, through acquisition and trade, became cheaper than investments in the millions in production in Lippstadt. The cooperation partner in Italy was the company Prodeflon in Castelli Caleppio. Shortly before, the stamping shop, which in the past had been the absolute core business for stamped parts and hose rings, had been closed and the business had been transferred to the supplier Späh in Scheer. Dieter Birkenhauer, who had been on board at Schieffer for many years and was responsible for Unit 04, joined Späh as a sales representative.

In 1995, Ekkehart Schieffer (eldest son of Egon) joined the company at the age of 30 after completing his studies and various professional experiences and, after an initial trainee period at GB KK, became responsible for plastics sales. The branches in Ludwigsburg and Munich were gradually closed and converted into sales offices.

On 29.8.1996, after a few months of negotiations, the GB gate and protection systems were sold to the Albany Corporation in the USA with immediate effect. The spin-off affected 174 persons as well as all land and buildings belonging to TS, customers and suppliers as well as



trademarks and property rights. For strategic reasons, the sale was also linked with the generational transition in both family lines, as high investments were due in all 3 product areas and growth would not have been possible from own funds without another high level of further debt. Together with Wilfried and Ekkehart, Egon and Joachim had already worked out this step as a strategic realignment of the company before the start of negotiations and carefully determined personal interests as well as future prospects for the remaining business units KK and FL in the direction of increased value creation.

Both became junior managing directors in a transitional period, while the era of the 2nd shareholders generation Egon and Jochem ended at the end of 1997 after more than 50 years. At that time, Joachim was 70 years old, Egon 71 years old. An impressive lifetime achievement of which they could both be proud, which was only made possible by the foresight of the founding generation Anton and Else, but which also became the success story of Schieffer GmbH & Co KG through clever and trend-setting decisions such as the introduction of the division organization or employee management according to the Harzburg model. But, and both seniors would still write that way today... it would not have been possible without the many loyal employees, but above all without the management team that has proven itself over many years (photo). At the beginning necessarily Margarete Caspers, then extremely important and indispensable Hermann Girkens, (both received the Bundesverdienstkreuz of the Federal Republic of Germany in their careers), later Ferdinand Holtschneider and Reinhard Schulte, in the final phase also Johannes Wulf, Dieter Goertz and Wilfried Reckmann. Together, they led the company into the new millennium and it was up to the new management team not only to manage the legacy, but also to carry it on.

Inset: Rise and sale of a product line – "around the world with gate and protection systems"  
The beginning of the field of "gate and protection systems" was created in 1957 with the change in internal transport routes. At the time of the first electric forklifts and hydrostatically driven vehicles for in-house goods handling, the idea developed to replace the wooden swing gates available on the market with swing gates made of especially suitable rubber sheets with fabric inserts. The in-house experience of the past few years in the field of fabric-reinforced rubber conveyor belts and the personal assessment of a lucrative product niche were decisive points for the beginning of the shuttle gates.

The first swing door was delivered to AEG in Vienna at the beginning of 1958 and quickly brought the division national recognition. This awareness was further strengthened by various advertisements in industry-known trade newspapers and the greatly expanded sales force. The first swing doors were made entirely by hand. The production time was one day at the beginning.

In the early days of the division, the product portfolio was limited to three variants. There was the possibility of obtaining the rubber curtains with transparent portholes, with transparent open spaces or as a completely transparent curtain. This product portfolio was supplemented in the mid-70s and expanded with registered brand names. The "Schieffer swing door" of the "travimatic" brand ushered in the age of electrically opening and closing swing doors and showed the technical development in-house. At that time, Schieffer's move away from pneumatic opener systems to electric drives gave it a competitive advantage. In order to be able to serve customers who did not yet support this technical development, the "travipneu" was developed, which differed from the "travimatic" only in the type of drive (pneumatic opening).

The introduction of both types of drive enabled Schieffer to achieve a surge in sales and awareness for the corresponding business area. This development was patented in 1966 and thus protected. In 1967, the first official announcement of the "Schieffer swing gates" was made at one of the world's largest industrial trade fairs, the "Hanover Fair".

The technical development of the well-known gates took place at the end of the 70s, when the original material of the door leaves was replaced. The existing transparent PVC material had the disadvantage that the thermoplastic did not always react in the same way under different climatic conditions. In winter, the material became hard, and in summer it became very soft. The mesh fabric insert optimized the climatic resistance of the original PVC while improving the lateral stability and pull-out strength of the products.

In the course of the 70s, the swing door business was supplemented by flexible strip curtains, which were manufactured in-house. The custom-made products had to be delivered within three working days, so there was a separate working group for them.

In June 1977, Schieffer expanded its portfolio in the field of gate and protection systems to include door barriers. The product development of the "travistop" gate barrier resulted from the requirements of the regional market in the direction of access control. More and more companies wanted to fence off their entire site and regulate access for cars and trucks with the help of barriers. The control of the barriers could be largely taken over by the existing gate control.

In September 1978, the expansion of the in-house product portfolio was presented at the ISO 1978 sound insulation trade fair in Düsseldorf. In addition to the stainless steel version of the swing door, it was now also possible to purchase sound insulation systems from Schieffer. A combination of sound-absorbing plastic foam pyramid panels and flexible strip curtains resulted in a new business area. The new development was registered as a trademark under the name "traviphone". Companies from large-scale industry use the noise barriers to shield workplaces with higher-frequency noise levels. Volkswagen was one of the biggest customers.

Various new developments in the door product line attracted international attention at several trade fairs attended by Schieffer in 1980. The ever-increasing interest in the "Schieffer gates" ensured that the number of sales offices increased significantly and the republic was divided into sales areas.

The development of the flexible high-speed roller shutter "traviroll" as a vertically opening roller shutter with flexible curtains opened up completely new sales markets for Schieffer. At the Hanover Fair in 1987, Schieffer was the only manufacturer of flexible doors to receive the designer award in the "if- Die gute Industrieform" competition. Due to various different safety regulations in the different countries of Europe, many specific types were initially available. It was not until the EU Machinery Directive was introduced in 1995 that diversity of products was reduced. The high-speed roller shutters in the product groups "traviroll" and "travisprint" (horizontally opening roller shutter) gradually developed into the high-tech product of the business unit.

In September 1991, the subsidiary "Schieffer Skandinavien A/S" was founded in order to conquer the increasingly interesting market of Northern Europe. In Arhus, in the north-east of Denmark, Wilfried and a personal contact with a senior employee of a competitor in the region founded a public limited company functioning under Danish law, which dealt with the sales, installation and service of gate and protection systems for the entire Scandinavian region.

The years 1993 and 1994 were marked by a number of patent disputes with various market competitors, some of which were positive and some negative for Schieffer. The market for high-speed doors was increasing. Major industrial door manufacturers discovered the market potential. These market competitors were spending more and more hours on the analysis of time-limited property rights and their expiry dates.

On August 30, 1996, after a year of negotiations with several national and international interested parties, the sale of the "Gate & Protection Systems" division to the American company Albany was announced.

## Chapter 5 1997 – 2023 Internationalization

The "juniors", Wilfried at 41 and Ekkehart at 31, could rely on the experienced management team of the "seniors Egon and Joachim". Reinhard Schulte and Hermann Girken, together with Wilfried Schieffer-Adick, managed the administration, while Johannes Wulf (FL) and Dieter Goertz (KK) were responsible for the operating divisions together with Ekkehart. And it got exciting right away... First of all, labour court proceedings initiated by the IG Metall trade union to determine collective bargaining jurisdiction were brought to the Hessian Regional Labour Court in Frankfurt - in 2. Instance terminated by an accord. For Schieffer KG, the responsibility of the wholesale and foreign trade tariff area remained in the future. Among other things, the weekly working time of 38.5 hours instead of the agreed 35 hours at IGM continued to apply; a significant competitive advantage over the companies that were affiliated in the metal or chemical industrial tariffs. In international competition, this success was an important building block in securing Lippstadt as a location - later, in a further stage, weekly working hours were put back to 40 hours. Further strategic measures related to the continuation of the product group streamlining. After 50 years, the pick-up shop, which had been set up since 1945, was closed due to a change in structure and customer target groups. The formative name was "Meister Mende", which was synonymous with Schieffer V-belts, seals, boots and hoses in the peasantry and among end customers for at least 20 years. A short time later, the production area for conveyor and drive technology was dissolved on June 30, 1998. A traditional part of the technical dealer Schieffer, which was continuously expanded with the relocation of business activities from Düsseldorf to Lippstadt in 1943. The product range included conveyor belts made of rubber and plastic in all other variants, including packaging and assembly services. Due to the globalization of markets and the increasing direct sales of conveyor belt manufacturers to industrial customers, sales and profitability declined. Since sales negotiations to potentially interested companies related to the industry failed, the dissolution took place in such a way that stocks were sold off, and the assembly service became independent under the new company management of long-time senior fitter Hubert Engelmeier.

And the following changes also affected the FL division. In 1998, a legally independent company Schieffer USA was founded in Dubuque, Iowa by the juniors (photo foundation, photo building). The co-partner was Jeffrey Theis, who, as a long-standing specialist in washer hoses, but also a sales representative for Kärcher USA, was to build up and manage the company. The company's business activities were focused on the manufacture and sale of high-pressure hoses, as U.S. companies increasingly only bought supplier parts if they were also manufactured in the U.S. ("Buy local, Buy American"). As the export of washer hoses to the USA came under increasing pressure in the FL division, a "mirror-image assembly" was set up in Iowa and the business was managed directly by Jeff. This reduced the sales volume in Lippstadt, which was to be strengthened by a further strategic decision. Effective July 1, 1998, Schieffer KG acquired a 40% stake in the Magam Enterprises Group in Caesarea, Israel. Since it was a listed company whose majority ownership belonged to one of the largest investment companies (Clal Ltd.) in Tel Aviv, the procedure had to be precisely coordinated in order to possibly influence the price. In addition to conveyor belts and V-belts, Magam was a long-standing supplier to Schieffer KG as a manufacturer of hydraulic and washer hoses, but also had a 2nd location for military security products (such as Sodiak inflatable boats, lifesaving jackets and islands, parachutes and safety nets) made of plastic and rubber. The chairman of the supervisory board, later chairman of the advisory board, was Naftali Blumenthal, a very experienced, recognized financial and economic expert, former Knesset member, who was to

accompany Magam and the Schieffer Group for over 2 decades and became a close friend of the shareholders over the years.

The supplier area of hose production, which is important for Schieffer, was included in the market as "vertical integration"; as manufacturer and developer of new hose products, the company had thus become a small but increasingly accepted supplier for international and national OEMs. The responsibility was taken over by Ekkehart, who was on site for about 1-2 weeks a month for a good 10 years and had to make production more efficient with the help of long-standing employees and external experts. The company worked closely with the FL division and in the following years not only continuously expanded Israeli production, but also sought out new sales structures for container volumes of hose in Europe and the USA. Sales for Europe were later relocated to Lippstadt, which was managed by Johannes Wulf. The previous General Manager Balfour Mor left the company at his own request. At the same time, Magam became an important supplier for the assembly sites in Lippstadt and Dubuque.

With these changes, Johannes Wulf, together with Wilfried and Ekkehart, had significantly changed the product portfolio of the GB FL in just over 2 years and laid the foundations for future growth at the locations in Lippstadt, Caesarea and Dubuque.

The growing molded rubber and extrusion business was essentially based on a long-standing familiar supplier structure, most of which was based in northern Italy. In addition to Ferdinand Titze and Dieter Goertz, Ludger Kleine had also increasingly taken up this business. He was responsible for elastomer sales at GB KK and had a special feel for technical applications. Unfortunately, the consultation and preparation of offers, including prototypes and tool concept, was particularly complicated if it was not possible to approach our own experts in production and application technology. One of the trustworthy partners in the Bergamo/Brescia region was the owner-managed company Italian Gasket (as well as sister company Italian O-Ring) with the shareholder Managing Director Roberto Bergomi. In 1998, at the suggestion of D. Goertz, lengthy negotiations were concluded with the aim of establishing a strategic partnership. Schieffer took a 25% stake. The aim is to jointly expand the market position in Germany and neighbouring countries by combining Schieffer's market knowledge, customer relationships and distribution system with Italian Gasket's manufacturing know-how. Schieffer sought manufacturer status because, in times of Google or search engines, it became increasingly difficult for non-manufacturers to justify a corresponding "premium" to the competitor. Italy Gasket needed to open up the market to the German-speaking area, as the major automotive suppliers were based there.

In August 1998, our first authorized signatory and right-hand man of the company founder, Margarete Caspers, died in retirement at the age of 84. At the end of her activities for Schieffer, she was responsible for the entire internal service management and administration. She was also responsible for training for many years and was a member of the IHK examination board for commercial professions for many years. The first and formative "Grande Dame" in the Schieffer Company also received the 'Bundesverdienstkreuz' of Federal Republic of Germany and, as the longest-serving employee, earned an indelible entry in the history of the company (photo).

In November 1998, Schieffer celebrated its 75th anniversary and invited to a press conference at "Am Mondschein". Topic: Globalization as a strategic goal, information on all foreign participations and investments as well as not only the preservation but also the expansion of jobs at the domestic location.

A short time later, authorized signatory Reinhard Schulte left the "Kommando-Brücke" as Head of Accounting with Finance, Taxes and Insurance and went into well-deserved retirement. He was 'on board' for 32 years, 26 of them with joint power of attorney. In his farewell, the "juniors" paid tribute to him as a knowledgeable and highly trustworthy head of accounting, and personal financial advisor to the seniors, but also emphasized the company's always solid financing and

the development or entry into data processing with a Siemens-Nixdorf system that is oversized by today's standards. Reinhard Schulte had always kept a solid eye on the strong expansion of the company, the relocation of the location from Goethestraße to Mondschein, including the financing of the 7 construction stages, all material and machinery investments. He had a distinctive deep expertise, analytical and structured thinking skills as well as a balanced and diplomatic nature. His personality was characterized by typical Westphalian down-to-earth but also a pinch of "stubbornness - all qualities that were of great importance for the fulfillment of his tasks in cooperation with the management over 3 generations. Wilfried Schieffer-Adick, with the support of Mrs. Ingrid Deifuß, his "right-hand man" for many years, took over this task on an interim basis for many years.

And another change heralded the generational change outside the shareholder structure. Wilfried Reckmann as head of the operations administration, who stayed with 2 interruptions since 1953, known to everyone as "Mr. Bau", was one of the "veterans" of the company. Initially hired as an apprentice, he first took over sales area 07 (industrial hoses) in order to later set up and expand central purchasing. He became known for his support of all construction stages in the company administration. After the spin-off of the gate and protection systems, he ended his career in Dieter Goertz's GB KK as Head of Logistics (photo).

The change in the company continued. While KK's automotive supplier business was limited to a few customers until the 80s, mainly characterized by the belt restraint system manufacturer Autopflug, later Autoliv, it was possible to win a first order for molded rubber articles in the door seals segment through personal connections between Ekkehart and the BMW Group Purchasing Manager Klaus Wenzel. Dieter Goertz personally took care of the new customer and, together with his team, ensured that the first series business and follow-up orders with 0 ppm (parts per million) were carried out completely flawlessly and "under the radar" at the BMW plants in Munich and Spartanburg, USA. Further business and the expansion of contacts to other buyer groups were the result! BMW became a "reference customer"; strategically enormously important, because many potential interested parties expected conditions at Schieffer that were not yet given (in depth). The company quickly "retrofitted", especially in the development and key account areas, in order to prepare for the new requirements in terms of personnel. Against the background of an absolutely customer-oriented and quality-related business philosophy, Schieffer was one of the first medium-sized companies in Germany to obtain certification according to the specific requirements of QS9000 and VDA 6.1 of the German automobile manufacturers for both the plastics and rubber sectors. In 1999, Ludger Göke, Technical Director KK, and Kurt Rummel, TL FL, were granted power of attorney and Franz Schniedermeier took over as Head of Human Resources (he had already had power of attorney since 1993). At the same time, Ferdinand Titze, surrounded by his colleagues, was given his well-deserved retirement as branch manager in Munich. A significant turning point was then associated with the farewell of Hermann Girkens. No other employee had "served" in the company for so many years, had so much influence and imprint in the Schieffer family business. After 47 years, his deep personal attachment and his decades of extraordinary professional commitment were honored by the management in a special ceremony. The name Hermann Girkens is inextricably linked with the development of the company from a small family business to a modern medium-sized industrial company. Hired as an apprentice by Anton Schieffer in 1952, he was appointed to the management board by Egon and Joachim in 1971. As Head of Administration and Human Resources with power of attorney, he was particularly concerned with all employees of the company, in particular the development of qualified junior staff. A calm and level-headed manner with an open ear for everyone characterize his view of personnel management and responsibility. With this in mind, he placed the necessary trust in everyone and knew how to motivate them to achieve common goals. In gratitude, he was also awarded the 'Bundesverdienstkreuz' of the Federal Republic of Germany; in 100 years Schieffer next to Margarete Caspers as the only person! (Photo)

An absolute personality, to whom everyone in the Schieffer house heartily granted the honor and was proud with him. 'At the Schieffer-Treff' 2000 on May 20, many employees, pensioners,

family members and employees of partner companies from Italy, Israel and the USA met in Lippstadt. In addition to a tour of the company, company show on large screens, numerous activities were carried out on the outdoor area such as clown giants, comedy, children's circus, raffle or goal wall shooting. Another highlight of the event was the prize puzzle, where the employees had to guess the total weight of complete management from Lippstadt, Israel and Italy.

In October 2000, Schieffer was able to "detach" the Israeli plant from the TEL Aviv stock exchange by acquiring 100% of the shares. It was then continued as a private company Schieffer-Magam-Industries (SMI) with only one location in Caesarea between the major cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa (photo). Strategic and market-oriented considerations (i.e. primarily securing the supply of Schieffer Germany and Schieffer USA) were at the heart of this decision. The plant was essentially "trimmed" for the production of high-pressure hydraulic hoses; the production of conveyor belts was also expanded, as it was the only manufacturer in Israel. In order to expand the core products, profile extrusion and rubber mixing had to give way first, and later also V-belt production and the industrial hose division (low-pressure hoses). Good, reliable suppliers were found for all outsourced sub-areas and it was possible to set up the remaining production much more efficiently.

At the end of 2000, one of KK's long-standing sales representatives, Karl Brendel from Offenbach, responsible for the diverse rubber program, later also plastic injection molded parts in Hessen, retired after a fulfilling working life. The contact with this experienced and loyal employee, who worked mainly with Egon and Dieter Goertz, continues to this day.

With the retirement of many "Warhorses of Sales Representatives" such as Mr. Strunz, Mr. Roscher, Mr. Streib and Mr. Kleinhans, the sales strategy in both business areas increasingly changed. Dieter Goertz's main focus at KK was increasingly on in-house production (rubber articles by Italy Gasket, plastic articles by Lippstadt), which were controlled inside out by project managers or engineers. Thus, office and field service were merged and one and the same person was responsible for its projects. As a result, it was possible to intensify customer advice, now almost exclusively for original equipment manufacturers, and at the same time ensure customer loyalty through the "one face to the customer" principle.

The FL division acted in a similar way, whereby in addition to the sale of hoses sold by metres from Israel, it also wanted to sell more assembled hoses. It was enormously important to no longer have to operate with the image of a technical dealer, but to achieve manufacturer status through "vertical integration". As a result, consultation on hose-fitting assemblies and respective information regarding impulse- and burst pressure test were more important and became priority. Corresponding test equipment was located in Lippstadt and Caesarea. During their visits to Israel, customers were not only able to get a good impression of the increased competence, but also used the business commitment for a private detour to the Holy Land. Accompanying guests to the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem or in the evening to the Old City of Tel Aviv (Jafo) was very common habit. The highlight was often the conclusion in the Arabic-influenced restaurant "Abulafia", with spectacular view over the city and bay of Tel Aviv, where the day ended with a "water pipe" on a beautiful roof terrace. Occasionally, it was rumored, the intensity of the evening session had an impact on the annual negotiations scheduled for the next day. It is certain that it did not become a "mere formality". "Commodity deals" usually leave limited space for profitable margins... (Photos Abulafia Restaurant).

The first years of the new millennium brought with them some changes in management positions. Josef Stallmeister became head of design at KK, Ralf Priefer sales manager for plastics, Volker Simon took over as head of toolmaking and Karl Heinz Heinze became production manager at FL. Mr. Reinhard Dehmel, Sales Plastics, Martin Richartz, Sales Rubber and Andreas Schmidt were given power of attorney for the QA management.

Inset: On September 11, 2001, as a sign of sympathy for thousands of victims of the terrorist attacks in the USA, the flags of Schieffer flew at half-mast. Boundless mourning for numerous victims, caused by an unprecedented series of attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, covered the whole world. After the devastating terrorist attacks, airlines around the world had suspended their flight operations or were ordered back to the United States on their way to the United States. When Wilfried called Ekkehart in Israel that afternoon about the precarious situation, he was in Jokneam in a tank mount production for hose negotiations and knew nothing about the attacks. An oppressive situation. In the following days, air traffic was suspended, as attacks were also suspected in Israel and the stay in the Holy Land was involuntarily extended for many guests.

At the K-Fair 2001 at the end of October, Italian Gasket and Schieffer KK presented themselves for the first time as joint partners of a strategic alliance. Dieter Goertz, Ludger Kleine and Roberto Bergomi, as well as many sales staff from both locations, were able to make many existing and new contacts, because the symbiosis of both material groups brought Schieffer closer to the strategic goal of increasingly relying on hard/soft assemblies. Where seals were needed, there were often adjacent plastic parts. At least as important in the KK division was the image change "away from the technical dealer" to the manufacturer and developer. This was accompanied by the entry into the 2-component injection molding technology as well as the acquisition of the first wire EDM machine in toolmaking. A short time later, IT was able to activate the new Schieffer intranet.

Shortly before the start of the 1st Gulf War, representatives of Schieffer-Magam, Schieffer USA and Schieffer Lippstadt met in Caesarea to coordinate the future strategy, but also the capacity utilization for the following years. In addition, new developments for the American market were required and the latest investment in an extruder line was discussed - it was to be invested in a plastic sheath before vulcanization, which could produce "smooth cover" hoses. This created the conditions for a future product expansion (photo).

In Lippstadt, an "upgrade" of the quality management system became necessary due to the significant increase in the automotive business. Necessary certifications were carried out, the DIN ISO 9001, which had been acquired over many years, first became VDA 6.1/QS9000, later ISO TS 16949, and currently IATF 16949 certificate. Porsche, BMW, Autoliv, Huf and many other key customers regularly audit the specifications. Visible to the outside world, our logo has also been changed. Schieffer – "Shaping the future with a system" became Schieffer International Group (Photo: Logo)

In 2004, the management began to leverage the first synergy aspects between the KK and FL divisions. As the first department, the maintenance department was merged, which was spatially enlarged and organizationally subordinated to the production of plastics.

Overall, sales and employee development did not change significantly at all locations for several years. Personnel and strategic changes, the integration and realignment of the "Schieffer Group" took longer than expected. Differences in mentality, different point of views and expectations meant many additional conversations and meetings. Within a few years, a classic medium-sized company, down-to-earth and also Westphalian frugal, met due to the partnerships entered into with "rather oriental" Israelis, with always self-confident, extroverted Americans, and this was paired with a proud, spirited and (also outwardly documented) successful habitus of northern Italians. A real challenge for all managers in Lippstadt, which also led to personal friendships over time, opened up the worldview, promoted tolerance and patience. All attributes of a globalized world came together in the "microcosm Schieffer", but helped a lot to sharpen understanding and the ability to compromise. Without good and solid partnerships, it was and is difficult for a medium-sized company to survive in the global structure - Schieffer as a group of companies, but also many employees and management learned enormously in this process.

And as if this had not been enough, the management also decided on a new KK production site in Romania. The main reason for shortening the lengthy decision-making process on location and shape was the imprint of our key customers. Motivated by an increasingly transparent and globalized world and the need to establish lower production costs (who still knows the former chief buyer of VW, Lopez, who exerted massive cost pressure on the entire supplier industry in media, but also in direct discussions with the supplier?), smaller suppliers were asked to follow the big "players in the market". Presumably, it was a huge advantage for Schieffer to have gained experience abroad for almost a decade. Whether the Romanian people, who had fled from communism (or liberated themselves), were already prepared for the competitiveness of the Western European states?

In coordination with Wilfried and Dieter Goertz, Ekkehart undertook his first business trip together with the GF assistant Ileana Kasper, who comes from Transylvania and understood the language and mentality. They visited several locations and potential customers with many years of experience in Romania, such as Dräxlmeier (one of the largest German employers in Romania for wiring systems with over 15,000 employees). The decision of the shareholders was made not least through negotiations with the Hella management for a joint location in Lugosch near Timisoara (photo Lugosch). During the construction phase in 2005, we were able to welcome the first employees from the Lugosch area to Lippstadt for trial work and first training (photos) and got to know each other better on weekends during leisure activities. The construction phase of 3000 square meters of production area and approx. 200 square meters of office wing in front of it were completed in 2006 and the first 7 injection molding machines started (photos). When it came to equipping the site, two concepts were discussed; like many other medium-sized companies, it was possible to build older machines that had already been written off at a low-wage location and thus produce them at the lowest cost without much automation. The alternative concept, favored by technical director Ludger Göke, was based on a mirror-image production to Lippstadt, completely identical manufacturers for all systems. Significantly more expensive, easier to train, you could access online, but it needed employees on site, some of whom had to learn "generational leaps" of 30 years to the old Eastern European systems. Highly motivated, because the colleagues were trusted, a lot of knowledge was transferred quickly. Due to the high degree of automation, the personnel cost structure could be set up similar to that in Lippstadt. Here, too, Schieffer's expensive but demonstrably more successful strategy proved to be the right one. Although considerable (also private) loans from Britta and Ekkehart were necessary (Romanian banks were initially not prepared to take risks with the company from South Westphalia, which was completely unknown to them), after a short time the first approvals of production were made surprisingly easily through customer audits. It was done; Thanks to the intensive training of many production colleagues from Lippstadt, accompanied by QA (Rainer Schmolke stayed in Lugosch for over a year!) and many other departments, the construction of the production site was successful. Over the years, special thanks were expressed several times on several occasions by the superiors up to the management, as most of the employees had mastered this development work for Schieffer Romania voluntarily, but in parallel with their actual task (photo). Parallel to the development in Romania, Wilfried, together with the IT manager H. W. Bilstein and his team, had a real mammoth task to complete – the decision had been made to introduce SAP, which could be implemented successfully and, above all, as scheduled with the cooperation of the service provider aii 2006. Many companies, including much larger ones, had started with massive disruptions, so that Schieffer could be proud to have achieved this without major disruptions.

Insertion: But when everything was going well and the economy reached its peak in 2007/8, an unprecedented financial crisis rolled towards companies in a shock wave. Triggered by a speculatively inflated real estate sector in the USA, the major American bank Lehman Brother, among others, collapsed. Other banks had to be nationalized worldwide and were closed later.

Schieffer felt massive effects; trust in each other got lost, orders were completely removed from the ERP system and within a few days the overheating of the market resulted in a massive oversupply. At the end of the 2009 financial year, Schieffer was more than 30% short of sales



compared to the previous year. The existence could only be achieved through consistent savings, through a spending freeze limited to the bare essentials in combination with short-time work across almost all departments and employees. The management waived salaries and promised bonuses for individual employees were postponed into the future. Everyone moved closer together and you could feel how important safe jobs were. The works council and management pulled together so that even in the crisis phase, the holiday and Christmas bonuses could be paid out. The other plants were also able to survive the extremely difficult phase.

In October 2008, after a long and serious illness, the older brother and senior partner Egon Schieffer died at the age of 82 (Photo: Schieffer flags at half-mast).

From 1945 to 1997, he - like his younger brother Joachim - put his commitment, creativity and inspiration at the service of the family business for 52 years. After the 2nd World War, both brothers left their mark on events, first with their father Anton, later for several decades with various executives, and prepared the solid platform for their company and the next generation and all employees.

In addition to his wife Anemone, Egon left behind the children Ekkehart, Alexander, Roland (deceased in 2002) and Armgard as well as 9 grandchildren; Joachim died in 2017 at the age of 88, his wife Bärbel died shortly after him. Both left behind 3 children, Jutta, Angelika and Britta with 7 grandchildren (photo 3 generations).

The financial crisis left its mark; some customers and suppliers disappeared from the market or were bought up by potent competitors. Thanks to the measures described, the Schieffer Group as a whole came out of the difficult situation stronger (in retrospect). Sustainable management and flexible (medium-sized) action seemed to be a plus, especially in the often "quarterly-thinking" automotive industry. Customers such as BMW, Hülsbeck & Fürst or Autoliv apparently trusted the acting contact partners at Schieffer and placed the first small development orders for plastic/elastomer assemblies (such as the first generations of buffer heads, which secured the closing process of the tailgate). For the first time, the KK division assumed full responsibility for a multi-part assembly, including complete assembly and leak testing. In the course of the project, Ludger Göke was strongly committed to the automated variant, because production and assembly were to take place at "SRO" (Schieffer Romania) and the "human influence on error possibilities" was to remain low. Never before had KK bought an automatic assembly machine for about 300 thousand euros and then relocated it to the subsidiary shortly after the start of series production. The project was successful after strenuous initial difficulties and in 2023 4 of these expensive machines will be running in both Lippstadt and Lugosch. Unfortunately, Ludger Göke did not live to see the final state of affairs, because he died much too early of a heart attack. While the hydraulics activities at FL - the "bread & butter business" - developed only with difficulty and under massive price pressure, a niche was able to score points. Mini-hydraulic applications, mainly plastic hoses with an inner diameter of 2-4mm, found growing interest in the control of filigree segments. Initially, mechanical engineering for miniature measuring instruments, but at the same time the automotive supply industry for convertible folding top applications had also become an application. The department, which today calls itself "Media-Carrying Systems", or MFS for short, was able to supply the first applications to the hydraulic pump specialist Hörbiger, which in turn supplied the complete convertible mechanism for major customers such as BMW and Mercedes. These first solutions led to the development of other interesting items, for example automatic opening of an air bag integrated into the backpack of a skier, which was supposed to bring him to the surface in the event of an avalanche. Subsequently, applications were specifically sought directly from the car manufacturer BMW in order to expand the current product range. The first projects for exhaust pipes (blow by) were created, where emissions were reduced by reintroducing the exhaust gases into the engine. That was the reference needed to be able to attract other OEMs. A short time later, the first prototype orders for Porsche Motorsport followed; the second OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) and

extremely prestigious was won! Many a project planner has already been thinking about the first 911 GT3 RS as a company car... but first Porsche had to be persuaded to order series parts on a permanent basis via the development parts. And here, too, Schieffer had to be careful, because the complexity of the assemblies and the necessary tests and safety precautions have so far only been rudimentary. As is so often the case, Schieffer was "courageous" in accepting new projects without having considered all eventualities in detail. According to the motto "The way is the solution", all parties involved then sat down together and so a satisfactory solution was always found for the customer. At about the same time, however, the management decided to separate the media-carrying systems (now also bent plastic pipes) from the FL division and integrate them into KK's automotive-heavy segment. The background to this was essentially the necessary certifications and more structured processes, which were not yet necessary in the supply of classic agricultural technology and mechanical engineering at that time. Initially, both divisions were not happy about the decision (FL did not want to give up the successful sub-segment and KK could not do much with the products up to that point), but Dieter Goertz took on the task quickly and successfully with his management team.

Standing still is lagging behind; true to wisdom, other important milestones developed in the 2nd decade of the new century. In the FL business unit, a completely new "flexible manufacturing system" was initially set up as a pilot project due to the "lean management" experience of the technical manager Stephan Lanhenke. The aim was to achieve a significantly more process-optimized and flexible assembly of hydraulic hoses while at the same time reducing production times per piece. Likewise, batch sizes of 1 piece should be passed through the systems just as easily as a batch size of 1000 pieces. In the course of time, many ideas were brought in by the production colleagues and led to further optimization, before later 10 series production cells "Made by Schieffer" were built. One of the most experienced hose pressers, Arthur Litke, first became a foreman, later production manager FL and continues to optimize the systems today.

At the same time, a fundamental change in sales was decided in the KK area; After an in-depth analysis of the existing customer structure of well over 1000 customers, the management team under Dieter Goertz decided to concentrate more on a few large customer associations and to support them more closely. At the same time, this meant paying less attention to C-customers and introducing a minimum margin there. In each workshop, the "man for the numbers, statistics and Qlick View", Wilhelm Eickhoff, had the task of presenting updated trends. Astonishingly, KK was able to increase sales and margins in return, despite significant customer losses. Even today, this trend continues - although significantly reduced - but ensures individual and more qualified care.

Autoliv, one of the most important automotive customers in the KK division, the global market leader for restraint systems, launched a "Zero defect" quality offensive due to increased recalls from a competitor in the USA. They expected, no, demanded, massive support from their most important suppliers. Schieffer supplied about 200 million parts with conspicuously few missing parts from an estimated 100 active tools (nevertheless, an estimated 25 ppm's added up to an extrapolated 5000 potentially defective articles). This was clearly too much for Autoliv, especially since tiny mistakes by suppliers could lead to a seat belt buckle or airbag system not deploying in an emergency. This "educational process", accompanied by an internal "task force", lasted almost 12 months across all areas of the company and was associated with considerable investments in error-free process organization and production. The efforts paid off, as the division was later awarded as a "model supplier" by the top quality manager in Sweden.

The growth generated in the aftermath led to the fact that the Romania location had to be further expanded to over 6000 square meters. Today, SRO manufactures on about 55 injection molding machines and automatic assembly machines with almost 200 employees and is once again bursting at the seams. The production site in Lippstadt now has approx. 60 machines;

the clamping force sizes in the 1- and 2-component range now reach 35-650 tons. This means that shot weights of over 2 kg per part are possible and have already been realized.

How quickly the 10th decade of Schieffer's history passed by was shown by the many long-standing employees who retired. Without them, the described development of Schieffer and its subsidiaries would not only not have been possible, it would certainly not have been so (sustainably) successful. A few colleagues should be mentioned as examples and representatives: Ludger Kleine, with a good 25 years of affiliation, a tenacious, highly successful and exceptionally hard-working sales manager for rubber, should definitely be mentioned. He is still regarded as a role model for the next generation, bore responsibility until the age of 71 and also ran "his laboratory and model workshop - Druffel branch" again and again for customer requests.

Also worth mentioning is Johannes Wulf, who built up the FL division over more than 40 years, managed the Ludwigsburg branch in between and supported Schieffer-Magam with his expertise. Karl Heinz Meyer, formerly working in the production of PTFE, later head of logistics at KK, but is known throughout the company as a powerful veteran and chairman of the works council for almost 30 years. With the indomitable will to stand up for all employees, he always managed to strike a balance between management and individual interest groups, but always for the company.

Last but not least, "Mr. KK", Dieter Goertz, should be mentioned. Having reached his well-deserved retirement age at the end of 2018, he left the bridge of command of a business unit that was not only built on solid foundations, managed for 25 years and developed extremely successfully. His special instinct was for the market, the customers, the personal support and the ability to bind them to him, to the company. In difficult times, however, the company was also the focus for him, the car-savvy manager of the BMW and Daimler brands, and he managed his KK division like an entrepreneur. What counted first was the preservation or continued existence, then personal interests took a back seat. But he would not be a successful businessman if difficult negotiations with the relevant shareholders were not "fought" at the right time. In the farewell ceremony in front of more than 100 colleagues, Ekkehart was also able to report on many company car negotiations, which had already been provided in advance by strategically well-prepared, illustrated e-mails or high horsepower indications (photo). In the end, they always came together and Dieter Goertz, who was oriented towards "displacement and design", "delivered". For the 3rd generation of shareholders, he is led to Margarethe Caspers and Hermann Girkens on one level for his life's work.

For the time being, the last strategic innovation concerned the founding of a new company called "Silicone Innovation" in Wangen im Allgäu in 2016. "In good times, you have to review your business model and initiate changes"; Management took advantage of this maxim and searched both outside the automotive supply industry and in materials areas that would complement the existing portfolio well. It was a coincidence that they met Peter Klarmann, a manager who had been employed in the silicone processing industry for many years and was willing to start his own business together with Schieffer. Injection molded parts, extrudates and pressed parts made of solid and liquid silicone (LSR) in a clean room environment were the goal and, in addition to the medical industry, the focus was on mechanical engineering and the packaging industry. Again, how could it be otherwise - all beginnings were difficult... the basic requirements for clean room production were complicated. Premises to be converted, permits, reliable and experienced employees, the provision of capital (banks did not want to support financing) or even just reliable supplier structures; each individual sub-item turned out to be challenging and demonstrates the frustration that start-ups or potential young entrepreneurs have to face when it comes to start-ups or venture capital in medium-sized companies. Discussions and negotiations with potential new customers were initially the "easiest exercise" in this growth market. Today, looking back, many hurdles have been overcome, and new tasks have to be mastered. With about 40 employees, however, the critical line has probably been overcome.

Shortly before the anniversary, the Corona crisis struck with full force, not only at Schieffer. For the first time, the group considered a nationwide closure; Together with the leading staff of administration, Wilfried developed a concept that could be implemented with the approval of the operational departments. As a result, a temporary mask obligation, cross-departmental home office regulations, disinfection for almost 3 years, but also high sickness rates with disproportionate stress became part of everyday life. Fortunately, no dramatic course of this infection has become known until the anniversary year.

The company's development was significantly clouded, not least by Corona, but also by Russia's terrible war of aggression on Ukraine with many horrific images and the accompanying massive increases in energy and raw material prices as well as fears of inflation. We all hope for an economic recovery at short-terms!

And so, in just a few months, the "100" will be on the modified Schieffer lettering. After so many historical changes, the head office 'Am Mondschein' is 100 years young, the subsidiaries or independent companies between 6 and 26 years old. And what will the future be? It is not easy to look ahead, but there are wishes, ideas and future market requirements....

Chapter 6:

### **A daring outlook into the year 2040**

The good news is that the company is still existing! The 3rd generation Schieffer (Wilfried and Ekkehart) have long since retired, the 4th generation with new management teams established for many years. The product groups plastic, rubber and silicones also still exist, because weight reductions and the transformation of steel, metal and sheet metal into ultra-light materials, for example, have long been more advanced. The demand for new components and assemblies to be developed has increased further and forced the company to specialize much more than was considered necessary in the 20s. Hybrid assemblies with several materials to be combined have become part of everyday life, and development expertise has increased massively. The change from generalist to specialist (in the niche) has become an absolute standard in the supplier industry (for original equipment manufacturers) - whether hose, pipe or molded article.

Classic injection molding has probably become the exception, plastic products are more likely to be printed and tools are hardly needed anymore. Classical production no longer exists, but specialized production cells with the ability to produce batch size 1 without serious set-up time. Individualization in traffic and transport has increased, and private transport is probably only to be found on designated routes. Electric scooters differ only in the interior; in road traffic, everything is networked with each other, different speeds, speed limits and similar regulations are controlled via data transfers. Individualization no longer takes place via KWs under the bonnet, but at most via the battery range and especially via the comfort in the interior. The feeling of freedom to be able to intervene independently in traffic has long since given way to the freedom to pursue working or stationary activities during the "remote-controlled" journey. Presumably, you will no longer follow the ride and spend your time in swivel seats or deck chairs.

The range of parts to be manufactured in the interior area will become more sophisticated, but the variety of parts in the exterior segment will probably decrease (due to the drive). Seals - especially components that are more resistant to temperature and ozone - will increase, as comfort "trumps" the former sportiness. Presumably, we will have lost our status as a direct supplier to motorists such as BMW, Porsche or John Deere. The trend of the 20s continued, not to allow any more granular suppliers in the future and to buy only module units from globally operating corporations. Incidentally, medium-sized companies will probably find little or no insurance cover for liability or warranty settlements with the major OEMs in the future.

Classic industrial hydraulics will probably no longer exist either. Construction and agricultural machinery will also be battery-powered, and hydraulic oils will also be banned for environmental reasons. But that doesn't mean that there are no hose lines or cables to assemble... the change to new products and assemblies will take hold and bring enormous challenges for people in terms of knowledge transfer, training and flexibility in different tasks. In logistics, self-propelled transport systems and specialized robots are likely to perform certain packaging or repacking activities. The world of work will still predominantly specialize in planning or monitoring activities – all non-value-adding tasks will be automated.

Why, then, can a group of companies like Schieffer "survive" the transformation process at all? What does this mean for the interaction of the individual plants or locations? What does this mean for employees and employers?

Presumably, the speed and adaptability of a company, its shareholders, managers and employees will show who deserves a right to exist in the future. Preparedness for lifetime learning and transformation, recognition of trends and their immediate integration in development and production processes will dominate everyday work.

Employers will acquire qualified staff only to a limited extent by salaries or wages, but have to offer employee tailored concepts oriented on individually required freedom for family, education, and parental care or leisure activities.

The typical "class conflict", if it still existed sporadically at the beginning of the 21st century, has disappeared. Schieffer's future has to be bound to act as a community and team, open-minded and above all 'service-oriented'. Different mentalities, cultures or manufacturing principles can also be combined across locations and will give each production or development facility individual freedom.

Why shouldn't we be successful? Schieffer is prepared and has all possibilities to face the challenges of forthcoming decades. Balance sheet and capital are solid based and future-oriented. The ability to recognize customer wishes and requirements, but also a broad-based development and production know-how, are to be improved (from a self-critical point of view). This will succeed if we stay focussed on our customers and on how to work out added value or additional benefits. Quality is above all, but also services and concepts offered will give crucial input whether we will be able to win an order - even if more expensive regarding competitors.

"Small and medium-sized enterprises are an attitude" - this is the slogan of the SME Association; we hope that this will be preserved, that politicians will not set-up more "bureaucratic monsters" but that family-run companies will "let them do it" with social responsibility.

Let us do utmost to ensure the present of Schieffer Group is also 'systematically shaped in the future', truly following our long-standing motto.

Sources: Documents and partial quotations from the writings and memoirs of Egon Schieffer, book Joachim Schieffer (memoirs of a medium-sized company), Schieffer company chronicle and Schieffer company albums, plus annual reports of Schieffer GmbH & CO KG as well as Ekkehart's own records