

# TeroLab Surface

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## «You Can See The Future»

Since 2004 Henri Steinmetz has headed Sulzer Metco, a division of the Swiss technology corporate group Sulzer. With a staff of more than 1900 he has achieved a turnover of just under 400m Euros in the past financial year, supplying equipment, materials and services in the field of surface technology.

*How far have you got with your strategic aim of «Operational Excellence»?*

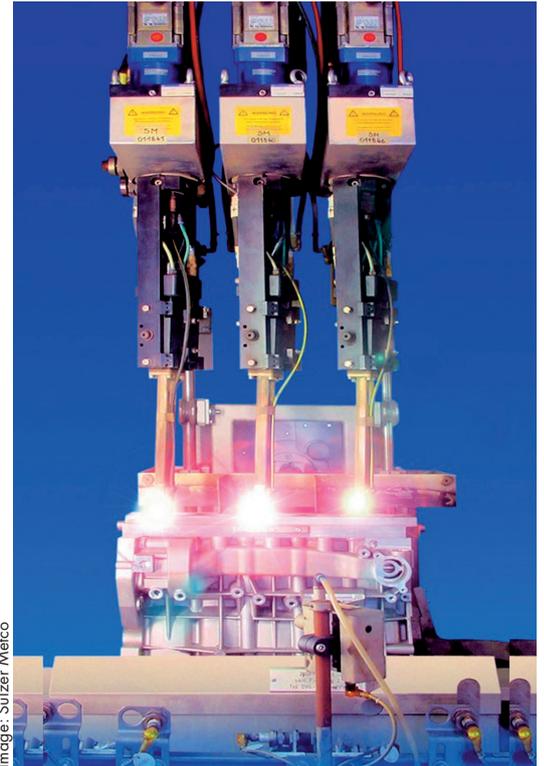
We launched our «Operational Excellence» programme three years ago, with the emphasis on customer satisfaction, process improvement and innovation. Our main objective in 2005/2006 was centred on customer satisfaction. Our evaluations and customer questionnaires showed us that we had made progress here. In keeping with our customer pledge we had been rating each delivery of materials, such as spare parts or powder. We have been able to increase delivery reliability from 80 to 95 percent. We are in the middle of a continuous improvement process. It involves both our operational procedures and innovation of processes and products. In the course of 2007 our efforts in research and development should also begin to bear fruit.

*In your estimation Sulzer Metco is the number one in the thermal spraying market. What position are you in services?*

In services and special applications we are very strong regionally, but haven't established ourselves nationwide in our markets. With our coatings services we are focussing on new applications and new markets. We are growing regionally where we can rely on an infrastructure, but right now we do not intend to expand geographically.

*In which directions do you see your business developing strategically?*

When customers have a surface problem we want to offer them not only a thermal spraying solution, but also a surface solution. This can consist of a thin thermal sprayed layer or a hardened layer. Another direction we are taking is that we are looking at the inflationary developments in materials and energy prices. We want to counteract this with increased efficiency, in spraying materials with reduced energy and gas consumption and improving productivity. Furthermore we have invested in new and more flexible facilities. We are currently focussing on the energy and aviati-



Surface technology shows its strength in car engine production: plasma coating of the cylinder bores has replaced the need for cast iron cylinder liners.

on industries and on new functional coatings using pioneering procedures such as thermal sprayed thin layer technology.

*Buzzword: takeover speculation. Are you more of a predator or a prey?*

From our division's point of view the market offers a lot of opportunities. Our philosophy at Sulzer Metco provides for acquisitions only where they are strategically useful and in so far as their size and scope fit our organisation. At Sulzer's, being a stock exchange listed company, this is not a decision of the management but of the shareholders.

*How do you overcome cultural differences resulting from external growth?*

We apply a clearly defined process. Whenever

*Continued on page 2*



**Henri Steinmetz, CEO of Sulzer Metco, a division of the Swiss technology corporate group Sulzer.**

*«The greatest motivation is advancing technology.»*

# SURFACE TECHNOLOGY

## Editorial

### My Dear Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a few thoughts beyond the usual business



management concepts. I try to apply them personally because I believe they have the potential to help lead a better life, both at personal and professional level.

We oppose too often private vs. professional life because we do not find the right balance even though they are closely linked and we are the same person. I find it important to put distance sometimes between the two in order to face daily stress due to lack of time or other pressures. Ignoring this stress is risking serious physical and psychological consequences. I personally try to achieve this balance by meditation, prayer, retreat. I also take time to plan free and family time, which are essential for this harmony.

More serene managers and workers are better prepared to face successfully the challenges of their private and professional lives.

Finally, I believe that the corporate enterprises who will succeed in the 21st century shall focus on the concept of the three P's: «Profit, People, Planet». TLS Group works in this direction.

*Christopher H. Wasserman  
President*

### Continued from page 1: «You Can See The Future»

a takeover is completed, management and staff will be integrated into Sulzer's corporate culture by an integration programme. This cannot take too long, as the task will become more and more difficult if not tackled in due time, and the prospects of success will be reduced.

#### *Regarding your professional experiences, what has been your greatest challenge in management so far?*

In 2004, while developing an understanding of what it means to be the market leader. This is not a matter of sheer size. The staff has to be convinced that being market leader means providing services to the customer and never being complacent. It was time to invest in innovation. In times when the market is growing everything is okay, but even then commitment is necessary to move a company forwards. Within one year we had to refill 100 positions, even though business was going really well.

#### *Does luck play a role in professional success?*

Some luck is always part of it. The period of change in our organisation was also positively influenced by a favourable market environment. If the market environment doesn't play along, things can't work out

well. But the most important thing is hard work.

#### *How do you motivate yourself in your daily work?*

When you work in industry the greatest motivation is working with advancing technology – even when you are number one. Motivation means a lot of things: being faced with a variety of new challenges every day. You can see the future – and also see success. You take on some difficult tasks and try to move forward. There might be an occasional setback, but success prevails. And when all the collaborators who are participating in a task pull together, everybody benefits and are happy.

#### *Which new technologies could substantially improve your private life in the near future?*

Clean energy. Buildings and energy are still relatively inefficient. More efficiency in communicating with cars and computers so we can make more progress in these two essential areas.

#### *Let's say Steven Spielberg offered you a role in his latest film. Who would you play?*

I would like to make my mark on the film, but it doesn't have to be the leading part. The role should suit my character or I wouldn't be any good.

*Interview: Ellen Gall*

## DFG and AiF Support New Research Cluster

The Otto von Guericke Federation of Industrial Research Associations (AiF) and the German Research Foundation (DFG) will be supporting several research projects within a new research cluster entitled «Thermal Spraying: a key technology for innovation and competitiveness – surface protection with the paper and printing industry as an example». In this cluster eight applications will be submitted: five of which concern three-year projects within the AiF, with three more being conceived according to the regular DFG procedures. All projects are cross-linked to each other, while each one remains a separate project in its own right. Each one has an individual objective, which will contribute to the over-all cluster objective.

### 10 – 13 September 2007

EUROMAT 2007  
Nuremberg, Germany  
[www.euromat2007.fems.org](http://www.euromat2007.fems.org)

### 16 – 18 September 2007

DVS – The Joining Specialists 2007  
Major welding technology conference  
Basle, Switzerland  
[tagungen@dvs-hg.de](mailto:tagungen@dvs-hg.de)  
[www.dvs-ev.de](http://www.dvs-ev.de)

### 6 – 9 October 2007

Cold Spray 2007  
Conference at the  
Crown Plaza Quaker Square  
Akron, Ohio, USA  
[www.asminternational.org/coldspray](http://www.asminternational.org/coldspray)

What's Up

# TECHNOLOGY

## Quality Certification – GTS Honours Langenfeld and their Staff

TLS sets high value on quality and on the training of their staff. Consequently, the company and workforce get regularly inspected by the Thermal Spraying Association of Germany (GTS)

In order to fulfil the high quality needs of their customers, TLS submit themselves regularly to be examined by independent trade boards. Hence their Langenfeld location has received the GTS certificate for three more years last November. As an appendix to such well-known quality management systems such as DIN EN ISO 9000, GTS has been developing special quality standards for thermal spraying, which also implies people, processes and products. The top priority is to maintain constant layer quality.

Against the backdrop of a pronounced lack of skilled workers and the fact that the special technique of thermal spraying cannot be acquired as part of any acknowledged professional formation, it is of utter priority to TLS to qualify our workforce ourselves and have them certified by an independent organisation like GTS. The great number of newly qualified personnel testifies the success of these measu-



Image: TLS

A successful team: production manager Georg Phlipsen, Hubert Ptok, Manfred Hochkeppel, Alois Schattka and Manuel German (from left to right).

res. Thanks to their convincing achievements, Messrs. Manuel German, Hubert Ptok, Jörg Sandig and Alois Schattka have successfully passed their

exam as thermal sprayers, and team leader Manfred Hochkeppel has proved his qualifications as spraying supervisor.

## TLS TeroLink – Know-how by Mouse Click

To provide their clients with a service of the highest quality, TLS have integrated their comprehensive knowledge about coating solutions into TLS TeroLink, a newly set up database.

The flow of information at TeroLab Surface has no set boundaries. According to the motto «One Company, One Market, One Sales Force» the field staff has now instant access to the collected expertise at the push of a button at any possible place. For instance, a French staff member can easily retrieve the coating know-how, which has been gathered in Austria, or his German colleague will get an instant overview of the latest knowledge at the TLS Medical headquarters near Paris in a matter of seconds.

The fast information flow throughout the whole TLS group was made possi-

ble by Internet technology and the new web-based TLS TeroLink databank. The resulting competitive edge and overall productivity gain are considerable.

The TeroLink databank contains all relevant information on components, strain profiles, coating materials, processes and coating solutions. Thanks to the clearly arranged input masks it is not only easy to retrieve data, but also to input into the system – no matter where the knowledge was generated within the TLS group.

Everybody participating benefits. The field staff has now a group-wide sales instrument at hand. And all the other

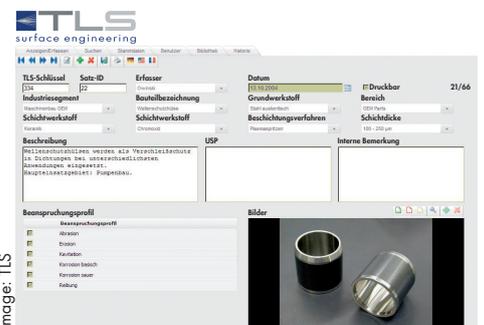


Image: TLS

Access to an expertise up to the highest level: the TLS TeroLink database.

staff who are concerned with technical questions can keep their know-how up to date.

## The ITSC 2007 in Beijing – a Gateway to New Market Opportunities

With over 200 lectures and 45 exhibitor stands the participants of the ITSC 2007 learned about the latest developments in thermal spray technology.

From 14 to 16 May the ITSC 2007 took place for the first time in Beijing, China. With over 400 participants at the conference and over 300 visitors to the exhibition the trade fair got off to an excellent start. The conference participants found out about current developments in the realm of surface treatment by thermal spraying in over 200 lectures. A special series of lectures addressed the characteristics and requirements of biocompatible coatings. With his contribution «Biocompatible plasma-sprayed coatings on Peek implants», Dr. Sébastien Beauvais presented the latest discoveries of TLS Medical and drew wide attention. Scientists from Shanghai demonstrated again the growing dynamism of Chinese research with their studies on ceramic coatings.

The representatives of the 45 participating enterprises em-



Image: TLS

*In Beijing at the core of innovation: The TLS delegation with the organisers of the ITSC: Dr. Klaus Middeldorf (DVS), Thom Passek (ASM), Christopher H. Wasserman, Prof. Xiaouu Huang (TSCC), Michaël W. Sombart, Dr. Sébastien Beauvais and Johannes von Spee (from left to right).*

ploying thermal spray techniques – including ten Chinese companies – obtained deeper insights through their direct discussions. For the first time the TLS group were flying their colours at an Asian fair with their own stand. «The ITSC 2007 has not just provided us with an excellent overall view. With our parti-

icipation we have also marked our presence in China, the largest and fastest growing market in the world», said Michaël W. Sombart, President of the TLS Executive board.

During the supporting programme many of the participants took the opportunity to take a detour to Shanghai to visit Bao Steel, the largest Chinese steel group, which has been successfully applying thermal spraying technology as an innovative tool.

After having made halts in Northern America (Seattle) and Asia (Beijing), the ITSC will be returning to Europe on 2 to 4 June 2008 – in the Euroregion town of Maastricht.

### Insider Views

- The medium-sized German spray equipment manufacturer GTV has extended its China activities by setting up some large-scale plants in Beijing and Guangzhou, among other places.
- Two organisations are the promoters of thermal spray technology in China. The internationally orientated TSCC (Thermal Spray Committee of China Surface Engineering Association) stays in contact with foreign partner organisations through president professor Xiaouu Huang as intermediary. The CTSA (China Thermal Spraying Association) on the other hand operates domestically.

### TeroLab Surface

#### Editor-in-Chief

Dr.-Ing. Gregor Langer

#### Technical Editors

Dr.-Ing. Lidong Zhao,  
Sébastien Beauvais PhD

#### Editor

Ellen Gall

#### Publisher

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Image: TLS

*A platform for know-how: the Beijing International Convention Center.*