

Now in St. Georgen as well: The "ebm-papst energy scouts" trainee project

Alena Gebhardt
Marketing Assistant
ebm-papst St. Georgen

Phone: +49 7724-81-1311
Fax +49 7724-81-1459
alena.gebhardt@de.ebmpapst.com

A touch of Hollywood settled over the ebm-papst factory on Industriestrasse. A camera team on a special two-tyred car whirred around between the high-tech machines in order to observe the energy scouts doing their important work.

Contact for Group Press Office

Phone: +49 7939 / 81-7105
presse@de.ebmpapst.com
http://twitter.com/ebmpapst_news
<http://facebook.com/ebmpapstnews>
www.ebmpapst.com

Energy scouts – that is a new project from the motor and fan specialist: dedicated trainees are investigating workflows and the production process to identify potential for savings. The motor and fan manufacturer has defined energy efficiency as an important topic many years before. "The GreenTech philosophy reflects a simple but clear attitude that goes back to the founding of our company. Each new product we develop has to be better than the last one in terms of economy and ecology" is how Managing Director Dirk Schallock expresses it.

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But not just the products are to be more and more energy efficient – the company itself wants to use as few resources as necessary. For the trainees Tina Girrleit, Kathrin Hildbrand, Stephan Lorbeer and Dennis Moosmann, this means looking closely when fans are coated, motors are wound or conveyor belts are set to operate continuously. "It's very interesting work," the quartet says enthusiastically. Every two weeks the quartet sets out on an expedition of sorts through Production to identify potential improvements.

Environmental protection through energy savings – a matter of course for the four trainees for quite some time now. "I try to lower consumption when driving all the time," says Hildbrand. "We put our interior lighting on motion detectors so the light's only on if someone's in the room," reports Lorbeer. "At my home all of the devices are connected to one switchable power strip, so I can turn off devices that would otherwise run on standby," adds Girrleit.

"We don't regulate the energy efficiency philosophy from the top; instead we want it anchored in the staff as much as possible. This project is outstandingly suited for that," emphasizes Martin Zeeb, Environmental Management Officer at the location. The trainees question processes with a thermal imaging camera on the spot, and changes that lead to energy savings may come after a thorough discussion. "Everyone can identify with such improvements, and that can also lead to a change in awareness," observes Zeeb.



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For Hansjörg Kaltenbrunner, the Training Manager at ebm-papst, the project constitutes an important milestone for wide-ranging training in the company. In addition to professional development, trainees can develop themselves personally in such projects as well, "since sensitivity, reasoning and persistence are needed to change long-standing, dug-in processes with the participants."

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Each trainee takes on the function of an energy scout for one year, then the baton is handed off to a trainee in a lower training year. "The young people advance from the role of a learner to the role of a teacher – an important experience and pedagogically valuable," is how Kaltenbrunner describes another positive aspect. The initiative for the energy scouts project came from the trainees in St. Georgen alone: "During a joint event with the trainees from the Mulfingen location we learned about the project there and immediately agreed that we wanted to implement it at home in St. Georgen as well," reports Moosmann.

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During filming, trainees may show how they do their work, what is going on and what results are possible. They were all unified in saying "A great experience and awesome variety." Why the material was recorded remains a mystery for now. Only this much has been revealed: the film will be presented during the Hannover Messe in April of 2012. It's quite clear that the project is creating quite a furor; the energy scouts were together in saying "Everything that's being done during training at ebm-papst has been really cool."



Figure 1: The energy scouts at work



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About ebm-papst

The ebm-papst Group is the world's leading manufacturer of fans and motors and is a pioneer and pacesetter for ultra-efficient EC technology. In the last fiscal year 10/11, the company generated turnover of over 1.3 billion EUR. ebm-papst employs over 11,000 people at 17 production sites (including Germany, China and the USA) and 57 sales offices worldwide. Fans and motors of the global market leader are represented in many industries, including ventilation, air-conditioning and refrigeration technology, household appliances, heating engineering, in IT/telecommunications, in medical technology and in applications in automotive and commercial vehicles engineering. The St. Georgen location has the Herbolzheim Plant in Germany, two Hungarian plants in Vecsés and Celldömök and a plant in China. ebm-papst St. Georgen GmbH & Co. KG employs a total of 3,400 employees.

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More information can be found at www.ebmpapst.com or is available from
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