





## Dear colleagues,

I am looking at 2021 as a new beginning. We will start our new Strategy cycle 2025 at GF in March. And we also want to take Globe to the next level this year. What topics are you interested in, and what do you think Globe should be like in the future? Please tell us in our reader survey. I am looking forward to your feedback!

“A healthy 2021, free of coronavirus” – this is a wish that many of you expressed in 3 × 3. To make that happen, we still need social distancing and digital communication. If you miss personal contact as much as I do, have a look through the current issue of Globe. It will introduce you to many new colleagues. They are closer than you think – in fact, they’re just a few clicks away.

Lena Koehnen  
Globe Project Manager



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One Day With



## Developing Solutions Through Dialogue

Stefanie Kölbl is Head of HR Management at GF Casting Solutions in Herzogenburg (Austria), where she is responsible for 572 employees. We tagged along with her for a day.

-----> [Discover now](#)

Globe Reader Survey 2021



## Globe Reader Survey 2021

Your opinion counts: Tell us what would be your vision for Globe in the future. There's even a great prize to win.

-----> [Take part now](#)

HELLO!



## HELLO!

Do you still remember what you were doing on 13 November 2020 at 11:45 a.m.? GF colleagues shared their personal HELLO moments with us, from e-learning at home and a lunch break with the dog to a wedding at the registry office. Have fun clicking through our team's moments!

-----> [Discover now](#)

Heart and Soul



## Fire and Flames

Hubert Fuxjäger is a safety expert at GF Casting Solutions in Altenmarkt (Austria) and fire chief of the company fire department. Find out how he and his team prepare for emergencies and why he continues to put his heart and soul into the company fire department, even after 21 years on the job.

-----> [Discover now](#)



## Two Points of View



## What Does E-mobility Mean to You?

Anastasia Kochina from GF Piping Systems in Moscow (Russia) and Edward Schick from GF Machining Solutions in Losone (Switzerland) share their thoughts on e-mobility and their favorite uses for electric scooters.

-----> [Discover now](#)

## Take Away



## More Bang for Your Book

Reading regularly doesn't just sharpen the intellect. Reading and reading aloud also boost social skills and offer inner peace. Here you will find some motivating facts to take away and share with others.

-----> [Discover now](#)

## My Home



## The Perfect Mix

Deepak MP lives in Bengaluru, India's third-largest city. He tells us about his home, which is also known as India's Silicon Valley. Curious about Bengaluru? Discover some exciting tips in this article.

-----> [Discover now](#)



Our Markets



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## Rapid Remote Troubleshooting

Using Symmedia SP/1 software, the causes of machine faults can be analyzed and remedied remotely. This saves users time and money. Together with GF Machining Solutions, Symmedia wants to conquer new markets.

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## 3x3

What's your wish for 2021? The Globe editorial team received numerous responses to this and two other questions from GF colleagues around the world. You can read a selection of the answers here. Thank you for participating!



**Hai Hoang**  
Sales Machining Manager at GF Machining Solutions, Hanoi (Vietnam)

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Commercial Assistant at GF Piping Systems, Mumbai (India)

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# Mona Vogt

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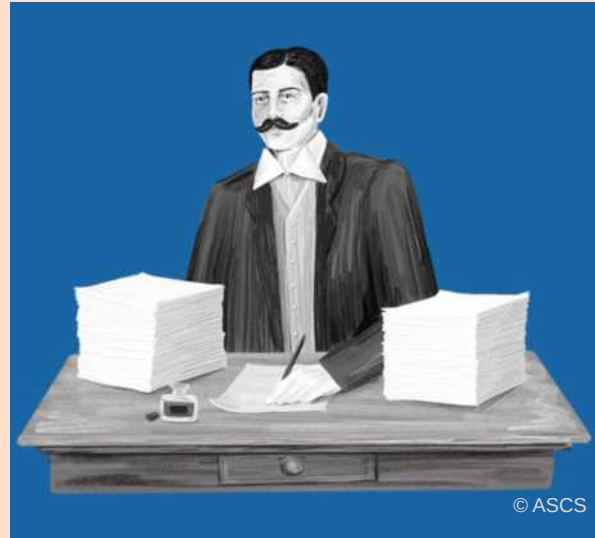
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## Product in figures: 4'500

4'500 historical patents – that is, patents that have already expired – are estimated to be held by the GF Corporate Archive. GF currently still holds around 1'910 valid patents (as of 2020) in some 50 different countries. These are managed by the Corporate Patent and Trademark department, which is responsible for all the patents and trademarks of GF. A patent is the officially guaranteed right to the exclusive use and commercial exploitation of an invention. GF has patents for products from all current and former business areas, such as textile machines, electrical fittings, agricultural machinery, or foundry equipment, as well as industrial property rights for vehicle parts, alloys, machine tools, and piping systems.

The first GF patent was registered in 1894 by the then company owner Georg Fischer III for his development "Innovation in Pipe Fittings." GF's first overseas patent followed in 1908 in the United States with the "Trap for Wastewater Pipes." Innovations have always been part of GF's DNA. Throughout its history, the company has recognized and helped to shape and develop the trends of the day – with the invention of malleable cast iron (1827), for example, or the production of malleable cast iron fittings (1864).



- + Year of the first patent registered by GF: 1894
- + GF registered as a trademark: 1903
- + Valid patents held by GF (2020): approximately 1'910
- + Validity period of a patent: maximum 20 years

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# Developing Solutions Through Dialogue

Stefanie Kölbl is a team player. She is Head of Human Resources Management at the GF Casting Solutions site in Herzogenburg (Austria), where she is responsible for personnel development programs, job profiles, organizational development, project management, workplace health promotion, projects with specialist departments, and internal communication at the die-casting site. Even during the pandemic, Stefanie is always available, with an open ear for all 572 employees.



6:00 a.m.



Name: Stefanie Kölbl  
Position: Head of Human Resources Management  
Division: GF Casting Solutions  
Location: Herzogenburg (Austria)  
Part of GF since: 2011

**7:30 a.m.**



[GF Casting Solutions](#) in Herzogenburg manufactures aluminum high-pressure die-cast components for passenger cars, trucks, and industrial applications using 22 machines. Stefanie regularly visits the production halls to speak with employees. Today, she is chatting with smelter Ayli Ömer about the upcoming training session for forklift operators.

8:15 a.m.



As she works her way back to her office from the production hall, Stefanie meets with Michael Hofstetter (left), who oversees lean management, and Production Manager Stefan Reiter (right) in the meeting room of the production halls. Employee health is a priority at GF, which is why ergonomic workplace design is at the top of Stefanie's agenda for this discussion.

## 9:30 a.m.



**Die-cast production** is located just a few steps from the administration building. Stefanie is on Microsoft Teams now, coordinating with Head of Marketing & Communication Tina Köhler at the division's headquarters in Schaffhausen (Switzerland). They typically talk about internal communication – whether local or division-wide – or interface topics between HR and marketing. These include employer branding and advertising – for example, for apprenticeship openings at the site.

**10:15 a.m.**



Since the spring of 2020, hygiene plans have become an essential part of work at the Herzogenburg site due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Stefanie tackles the current challenges of the pandemic in close cooperation with Works Council Heads Heidelinde Frost (second from left) and Leopold Kohzina (left), as well as Pandemic Officer Kurt Wostry (right). Today, they are discussing the introduction of a general rule to wear masks throughout the company premises.



**11:00 a.m.**



© Hans Hochstätger

**The HR team meets** in Stefanie's office, as they do every Thursday. They plan, evaluate, and develop topics. Today, the team is discussing two projects: the 2021 trainee program and an onboarding program for new employees. This involves holding development interviews and identifying participants.

11:30 a.m.



*Stefanie enjoys a coffee* in the break room – at a safe distance – with Martina Schildendorfer, Head of Personnel Administration. The two colleagues work closely together and talk about personnel topics such as payroll, shift models, and demand-oriented evaluations for production.

**12:00 p.m.**



**Spontaneous chats** are also part of Stefanie's work day. On her way back to the administration building she sees Martin Hagl, Head of Process Planning. There is not much time for a chat today, because she has an appointment with Managing Director Christian Heigl. The two meet regularly.

**2:00 p.m.**



© Hans Hochstätger

This two-hour workshop deals with new digital solutions. The cross-departmental project team is committed to having an open dialogue about process improvements via restructuring, such as when organizing business trips. (Left to right: Birgit Steinhauser, Nathalie Ebner, Stefanie Kölbl, Anna Maria Eckhard, Katrin Denk.)

4:00 p.m.



**Back in production**, Stefanie meets with Petra Höllerer from the quality department in the break room. The two colleagues work well together. They talk about the needs of employees and concepts for individual development, such as the 7 Habits training.

5:55 p.m.



© Hans Hochstöger

Before her working day ends, Stefanie checks the computer in her office one last time. Between all her appointments, she works through many e-mails dealing with up to 30 different topics and frequently has spontaneous chats. At 6 p.m. she clocks out at the plant gate, and can finally switch off.

8:00 p.m.





## Fresh water in the desert

Great teamwork turned certain defeat into a winning bid. It set the stage for one of GF Piping Systems' most complex projects ever: a new seawater desalination plant in Egypt.

In January 2020, GF Piping Systems finished one of its most challenging projects ever: a desalination plant near Port Said (Egypt), which will supply 150'000 m<sup>3</sup> of fresh water per day to consumers in the new city of New East Port Said, 200 kilometers northeast of Egypt's capital Cairo.

But this great success began with a setback: The first proposal from GF to provide piping for the plant was rejected by general contractor Metito Cementech in mid-summer 2018 – despite previous collaboration. “Metito wanted a partner with a bigger scope of supply – this time including steel structures and surrounding pipework,” says Paul Keetley, Regional Sales and Project Manager of GF Piping Systems International. Together with Jürgen Miklo, Group Manager for Custom Product Design and Pre-Fabrication, he mobilized expertise within GF to construct the right solution that could be delivered within the given time limits.



## Eleventh-hour save

Keetley and Miklo traveled from Schaffhausen (Switzerland) to Cairo (Egypt) in September 2018 to present a new concept with the extended offering to Metito. The new proposal's attention to detail and end-to-end solution elevated GF's proposal to technically preferred, even though it cost more than the competitors' offers. “Our presentation included elements of stress analysis while competitors took this for granted. We also included a concept design in our presentation,” Paul Keetley says.



## Facts about the Port Said project

- + The heart of the desalination plant is the Reverse Osmosis process, for which GF designed and produced the headers for the pressure exchangers and permeate collection.
- + The demand from the customer was to supply everything or nothing – which meant the GF Piping Systems team also had to design, paint and supply steel frames.
- + 6'000 valves were required in the complete project from GF Piping Systems and around 60'000 welds in total. The number of prefabricated joints was more than 30'000.
- + A total of 94 containers of material were delivered to Port Said; the total steel frame supplied exceeded 300 tonnes.
- + The biggest pipe supplied was 1.2 meters in diameter and weighed more than 4 tonnes per spool. Thirty of them were delivered by GF.

## GF Team mobilized

The manufacturing work started in winter 2018. GF were to provide every part for constructing the piping and supporting structures. “This kind of work is normally beyond our scope and therefore required a lot of coordination with third-party suppliers,” explains Keetley. The biggest pipe supplied was 1.2 meters in diameter and weighed more than 4 tonnes per spool. The mechanical stress from the weight and pressure of water and from the structure itself was an additional challenge. Miklo therefore consulted the GF Engineering Services Team to perform a stress analysis prior to detailed design stages and to design the supporting structure for the plastic piping system accordingly. “Within just three months, our team in Schaffhausen constructed, prefabricated and tested a prototype of the first ultrafiltration package,” Miklo recalls. Following the successful inspection by the customer, packing and shipment of materials could begin. Some 94 containers with GF products, spread over 19 shipments, were finally delivered to Port Said. In January 2020, just 14 months after the purchase order was placed, the water system was ready for testing. And it worked. “The Port Said project forced everyone to think outside of the box. We gained a lot of experience in managing production and delivery of standard, prefabricated and custom products from different sites, and integrating them into a megaproject like this one in a very limited time.” Now we are ready for the next one!,” says Keetley.

Teamwork is everything, including at the seawater desalination plant in Port Said. Experience the Egyptian success story of GF Piping Systems in the video.



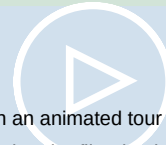
Works began on the plant in Port Said (Egypt) in 2019. Paul Keetley (left), Jürgen Miklo, and their expert team had to think out of the box to meet the customer's high standards. (This photo was taken before the breakout of the coronavirus pandemic.)

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## Ultrafiltration

Situated in the new industrial zone of East Port Said in northeast Egypt, the plant was ready for operation in spring 2020. It is one of Egypt's biggest plants of this kind and a key technology sets it apart: ultrafiltration as pre-treatment for the seawater. Water quality from this area of the Mediterranean demanded this innovative technology.

Ultrafiltration technology, as opposed to media filtration used in similar desalination plants in Egypt and around the world, demands a large amount of pipe, fittings, and valves, making this megaproject especially important to secure. In terms of scope, volume of material and complexity, the project eclipses other GF projects in the country and will be a foundation on which to expand further.



The video takes you on an animated tour of the desalination plant in Port Said (Egypt). In the ultrafiltration building (6:08–7:41), all the plastic piping and steel frames for skids was supplied by GF. For the reverse osmosis system (7:42–8:25), PE100 headers and a total of 1'680 PVC-U spools, each with a ball valve Type 546 from GF, were installed.



# Reader Survey 2021



# HELLO!

Recording new e-learning courses, a lunch break with the dog, and a wedding at the registry office: GF colleagues around the world documented their personal HELLO moments on 13 November 2020 at 11:45 a.m.



## Fire and Flames

Hubert Fuxjäger is Head of the company fire brigade at the Altenmarkt site of GF Casting Solutions in Austria. Production uses liquid metals that are highly flammable. Fuxjäger and his team train for emergencies, check escape routes, and several times a year make sure that the materials are processed safely.

Safety is his passion. Hubert Fuxjäger has become devoted to it. In all situations. He has been a fireman since 1983; he started with the voluntary fire brigade in his former home of Upper Austria. Seventeen years later, he joined GF's company fire brigade in Altenmarkt (Austria). He has been the fire chief there since 2012, and he cares a great deal about the safety of his colleagues. "It's important to me that everyone gets home safely at the end of the day." Fuxjäger knows from experience what's important when it comes to operational safety: "We work with liquid metals day in day out, and sometimes something happens or something isn't dosed correctly."

In his work as a safety expert, he makes sure above all that accidents don't happen at all. But he can't prevent them all of the time: "We're called out to incidents in which we have to put out a fire five to ten times per year," says Fuxjäger. The company fire brigade meets about once per month to prepare firefighting strategies and deployment scenarios. These include checking escape routes and guaranteeing the safe processing of hazardous materials.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the company fire brigade was forced to limit its training exercises between March and May of 2020. Now, drills may be performed in smaller groups and in compliance with the applicable social distancing and hygiene regulations. In his role as the fire chief of the company fire brigade, Fuxjäger appears in uniform every Wednesday to talk about the importance of fire protection. And safety is still on Fuxjäger's mind even once the working day is done: he is head of the local fire brigade in Altenmarkt.



Hubert Fuxjäger started at GF in Facility Management in 2000. In 2012, he moved from Upper Austria to Altenmarkt in Styria and works at the GF Casting Solutions plant there as safety expert and fire chief of the company fire brigade.



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## The Perfect Blend

Bengaluru is India's third-largest city, with a population of 11 million. Deepak MP, logistics manager at GF Machining Solutions, lives in the city. Here he introduces us to his hometown, which is not only lively and loud, but above all diverse.

Bengaluru is also known as the “Silicon Valley of India.” And rightly so. Our city, also called Bangalore, is the center of the IT and aerospace industries. Bengaluru is located in southwest India and is the capital of the state of Karnataka. Our city is very progressive, and the economy is growing fast even though growth has slowed somewhat in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Over the last two decades, the population has more than doubled. The outdated roads cannot cope with the masses of people and gridlocks are a daily occurrence. With 12 million inhabitants, Bengaluru is now the third largest city in India and its population density is three times higher than that of Beijing (China).

Although I grew up over 100 kilometers away from Bengaluru, the city feels like my home. I have lived here for more than 20 years. I’m still fascinated by how many different cultures and people blend together in Bengaluru. People don’t just come from across India to find a job here, but from all over the world – more than two million people work in the IT industry alone. The weather is mostly pleasant, but temperatures can reach up to 37°C in the summer months. But even then, you can always find a shady spot somewhere, like in one of the many parks. These parks also give Bengaluru its reputation as the “Garden City.” Bengaluru is also known for its nightlife. Countless clubs and bars mean that Bengaluru has the highest density of drinking establishments in Asia.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed life in Bengaluru. In March 2020, we had a nationwide lockdown that lasted three weeks into April. After that there were further regional lockdowns in Bengaluru. By and large, the population has adhered to the measures prescribed by the government: keep your distance, observe hygiene regulations and wear a mask. I myself have been paying more attention to hygiene than ever before. Most of the city’s bars and restaurants have now reopened, but the distance rules and hygiene regulations continue to apply. Overall, it has become a little emptier in the city. But we are not letting it get us down.



Deepak MP has worked at GF since 2012. He was the Service Manager for GF Machining Solutions in Bengaluru for six years before taking over a new role at the same site. As Logistics Manager, he monitors the transportation, distribution, and storage of spare parts.

## A Day in Bengaluru



### A spot of breakfast

Morning

An authentic Bengaluru breakfast with all the regional dishes is a must. I recommend trying dosas, which are similar to pancakes, and round, flat cakes called idli. The Mavalli Tiffin Rooms, one of the most famous and oldest restaurants in Bengaluru, does an excellent breakfast. It first opened in 1924. After a substantial meal, visitors should go for a walk through the Lalbagh Botanical Garden, which was constructed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and houses a wide variety of tropical plants.



### Cultural treasures

#### Midday

At around midday, I suggest paying a visit to the Bangalore Palace. The architecture of the palace is based on Windsor Castle in England. Inside, visitors can marvel at the wood carvings, floral motifs, and relief paintings on the ceiling. The furniture, including items in a neo-classical or Victorian style, completes the unique interior. The Bangalore Palace is an absolute must-see!



### Stroll along the promer

#### Evening

Ambling along the Mahatma Gandhi Road, or MG Road for short, is a simply delightful experience. This is where young meets old and tourists meet locals – and you can strike up a conversation with anyone. MG Road is also the perfect spot for some shopping – there are small boutiques, major labels, and traditional market stalls. And if your stomach starts rumbling, there are numerous restaurants to choose from, as well as lots of street food kitchens serving delicious and authentic Biryani – a hearty rice dish. I like to end the evening with a great view of Bengaluru from the Kaze Bar & Kitchen.

# Driving the Future Together

GF Casting Solutions is setting the course for the future. All employees worldwide – from Development through Production and Sales to all other departments – are crucial for the new - approach to innovation: innofactory1802. All teams have to pull together to make new ideas market-ready as soon as possible. To do this, from now on all processes and departments will be further intermeshed in terms of innovation.

Click the + icon in the infographic to learn more.





## Old But Gold

Since childhood, Daniel Marchet, Sales Assistant at GF Machining Solutions in Southern Brazil, has been passionate about vintage cars. He restores them, took a Volkswagen Kombi on a road trip to Patagonia, and his fondness for machines fits perfectly with his profession.

Traveling by road in the Brazil of the 1980s and '90s was wild, particularly in the heart of the country. It was common in those days to see cars packed with six or seven people, and sometimes as many as ten if there were children in the family. They would sit in the trunk with the tailgate open; safety belts were a mere decoration. That is how 38-year-old Daniel Marchet remembers his childhood trips.



"In particular, the visits to my grandfather's farm in Nova Milano were an adventure," Daniel recalls. His grandfather used to pick up the family in Caxias do Sul. This city has 500'000 inhabitants and is about 110 kilometers away from Porto Alegre, which is the capital of Brazil's southernmost state: Rio Grande do Sul. His grandfather would bring them to the small town of Nova Milano in the district of Farroupilha, where he operated a farm on the weekends. He would fill up the Marajó – a Brazilian version of the Opel Kadett Caravan produced by General Motors – with seven or eight family members at a time – adults in the front, and at least two kids in the trunk.

## Passionate about wheels

But it was not just this 1980s Marajó that sparked Daniel's passion for fixing and remodeling vintage cars. "I was born in Ijuí, an inland city in Rio Grande do Sul that is located about 395 kilometers from Porto Alegre and highly dependent on agriculture. There was a lot of advertising for tractors and combine harvesters on television. My mother jokes that my first words were "farm machinery,"" he says. His grandfather also took care of his own tractors on the small property. Daniel often watched him as a child and that is how he fell in love with the gears that moved them.

As a teenager, when he was not yet old enough to drive, he pursued his passion through bicycles. He and his friends would customize, build, and repair their own bikes. "We'd paint them and do the maintenance work at home," he recalls. But he already had his eye on engines. Daniel worked from the age of 15 to buy his first car: a Volkswagen Beetle, which is called a Fusca in Brazil. With the Beetle, his love of cars and engines grew even stronger. "Soon I met other Beetle fans, and together we founded the local Beetle club, the Caxias Fusca Clube. In the neighborhood where I lived with my parents in Caxias do Sul, everyone, friends and neighbors, owned a Beetle. We always repaired the cars ourselves, because it was difficult to find spare parts and auto mechanics. I spent hours rooting around scrap yards looking for parts," Daniel says.

### An Old Flame

## 2004



[His father's garage](#) was the meeting point for Daniel and his friends. One day, a neighbor bought a T1 VW Bus. Daniel fell in love with the vehicle.



## 2009



The neighbor did a bit of maintenance, but sold it to a friend who wanted to restore it. But this friend gave up, and Daniel took his chance. He bought the T1 himself.

## 2009



Daniel restored it bit by bit, with help from his friends. And off they went on their trip to Patagonia, with the restored T1 and other vintage cars.

## 2020



© private

The T1 is still with Daniel today, loved and cared for. When Daniel got married six years ago, he moved out of his parent's home, and the garage. Now he cares for the T1 in his friend's South Custom Garage.

## Improve and conserve

Today, Daniel has a 1984 Ford F-100 pick-up and a VW Bus, known in Brazil as a VW Kombi, which is ten years older and currently his favorite vehicle. After years of experience, Daniel is now capable of manufacturing his own parts for the cars when he is unable to find anything suitable in Brazil or abroad. For years, his father's garage was the meeting place for Daniel and his friends. But after he got married and moved out, their favorite spot became a common workshop in Caxias do Sul, 8 kilometers from his home.

Along with his friends, who are also passionate about vintage cars, Daniel can often be found at this workshop. With an area of about 380 square meters, the spot has room for up to eight cars and a big variety of spare parts. Over time, Daniel and his friends installed a hydraulic elevator, a paint booth, and a soldering machine. "It is a very professional place now. One of my friends from the club who works there full-time named it South Custom Garage," he says. In addition to cars and other equipment, the garage is filled up with spare parts for old cars, such as gas pumps

and wheel rims.



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During the week, it is run as a professional business, but on the weekends Daniel and his friends use it to work on new ideas and projects. There is always a lot of talk and chatter before the work begins. “We share our thoughts about new or ongoing restoration projects. Every one of us contributes and then we start,” says Daniel. “What I like about the garage the most is the collaboration between friends.” There are usually about five of them working in the garage at the same time, out of a circle of friends that numbers ten people. “Even if we are working in parallel on projects,” says Daniel, “everyone is ready to help out if someone else needs it. We offer each other tips or joke around – we’re especially good at that.” Building on their shared passion, the mission of Daniel and his companions is clear: “We improve the cars but conserve the original at the same time – it’s all about the essence of the vehicle.” Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during lockdown, the situation changed for a while in 2020. The friends didn’t go to work in the garage until the end of June 2020, and since then have been wearing masks when they work together.

© Tiago Coelho

Daniel's passion for technology started with working on two-wheelers and his passion for engineering grew. That sparked a love of classic cars.

## Great adventures on wheels

Even though Daniel still likes his Beetle a lot, his great love now is his Volkswagen Kombi. His greatest adventure with it was in 2010. Daniel and his friends from the Beetle club decided to set out on a road trip to Patagonia. They called the expedition "Fuscaustral." Patagonia is a territory that lies between Argentina and Chile in the most southerly region of South America – and nearly 1'600 kilometers from Caxias do Sul. "We spent a whole year planning the trip and all the necessary logistics."

The Volkswagen Kombi was not in perfect shape, but Daniel only discovered that during the trip. "As soon as we crossed the Brazil-Argentina border, a tire blew out. But that was OK, because I had brought six tires with me." Some 960 kilometers further on, there was a new challenge. The Kombi was not used to Argentina's pure gasoline – in Brazil, it is sold mixed with 27% ethanol – and it refused to start. Daniel had to readjust the engine on the road. A further 1'930 kilometers brought another setback. "The starter engine got messed up and we couldn't find parts or any other way of fixing it," he laments. So, during the whole of the rest of the journey, the friends had to push the Volkswagen Kombi every time they needed to start it up. Back home, over 9'600 kilometers and 23 days later, Daniel did not want to abandon his travel companion. Quite the opposite. "I had to rebuild the engine, so I decided to restore it all. I started with the floor and then resolved to remodel the entire vehicle," he says. The group's last adventure was pre-pandemic – in January 2020. Their destination was the Atacama Desert in Chile and they called this trip "Fuscatacama." This time, the Kombi stayed at home. Daniel took to the road with his F-100.



The classic cars line up against the backdrop of the Atacama Desert.



Daniel and his friends from the garage on their trip to the Atacama Desert in January 2020. The group is a tried and tested team. Almost 11 years ago, they took their cars on a trip to Patagonia, traveling 9'600 kilometers in 23 days. That was a bonding experience.

## Full speed into the future

In his job, Daniel is every bit as persistent as he is with his cars. He worked for 12 years at GF Machining Solutions in Caxias do Sul in technical support for the division's machinery. "Unlike the São Paulo unit, where every department had a specialist, here in the south I worked in all of them, I was a multi-skilled technician." Then Daniel's career veered toward the commercial area. Today, he is a Sales

Assistant at GF Machining Solutions in Southern Brazil and is now, in addition to his full-time job, taking a law degree in his spare time.



At the GF Tech Center he demonstrates the latest technologies to customers..



Daniel's day usually begins with a drive to customers or his office. Just as when tinkering in the South Custom Garage, Daniel is meticulous in his job.

© Tiago Coelho

Even with his work at GF and his degree course, Daniel still finds the time to indulge his passion for maintaining and remodeling vintage cars with his group of friends. The coronavirus pandemic put their weekend gatherings on hold for a while. In the first two months of 2020, his friend's workshop was closed to visitors – though the owner continued to work behind closed doors. The period of working from home



ended for Daniel in June 2020. “I started to leave the house and pluck up courage, so I began coming to the workshop on Saturdays to work on my cars. We no longer had the barbecues or the group gatherings, but the joint work continued,” he says, reminiscing about former times spent there having fun with friends and enjoying a chimarrão – a typical hot beverage from Rio Grande do Sul, but now an unthinkable pleasure as it involves sharing the same drink. “But when times are tough, friendship is what counts and we’re enjoying our time together,” Daniel affirms.



## The Startup Speed

To succeed in China's competitive market, emerging new electric car manufacturers like Aiyas require both knowledge and efficiency of its suppliers. That's exactly what GF Casting Solutions brings to the table.

The COVID-19 pandemic plunged the world economy into crisis – but it didn't stop Aiyaws from bringing its electric SUV to the EU market. In 2019, the U5 model was the first and only Chinese electric car to receive regulatory approval for the EU market. By the end of September 2020, the company has successfully imported more than 500 cars into the EU, the majority of them for France.

Aiyaws made a spectacular entrance into Europe. In July 2019, two prototypes of the U5 model embarked on a 53-day test drive from the Chinese city of Xi'an to Frankfurt (Germany) to participate in the International Motor Show. It was a journey of some 15'000 kilometers – not a typical distance for test driving, especially for electric cars. It set a new Guinness record for the longest trip by an electric vehicle in prototype. The journey led through 12 countries, following the ancient Silk Road.



### Facts & Figures

Founding year Aiyaws: 2017  
Start of the collaboration with GF: 2017  
Production capacity Aiyaws plant: 300'000 cars per year  
Development time of the U5 SUV: about 30 months



Aiways wants to take the market for electric vehicles by storm. That's why it is presenting the U5 at its location in Suzhou (China) in spectacular fashion.



Developing electric cars is an enormous challenge. GF Casting Solutions has provided Aiways with strong R&D support. On the GF Casting Solutions side, Steffen Dekoj (left), Head of R&D Asia, and Daniel Hu (right), Sales Director China, were responsible for the collaboration.

© Algirdas Bakas

## Lightweight features

Behind the SUV's outstanding performance lies a variety of cutting-edge technologies and products, including six lightweight structural parts produced by GF Casting Solutions. More specifically, they are two shock towers, two front torque

boxes and two rear torque boxes. Over less than 12 months, engineers on both sides worked tirelessly to overcome numerous challenges and ultimately managed to successfully develop and test those components. By the end of September 2020, GF Casting Solutions had produced more than 1'400 sets of the components for Aiways. That number increased to more than 4'000 by the end of 2020. Due to the standardized vehicle platform and thanks to the convincing product quality, Aiways is going to use the same GF components for the U6 model, which will be launched this year.

Aiways was founded in 2017 as a global intelligent new electric vehicle company and mobility provider. Its first offering – the U5 – features a battery pack of 65 kWh and can run as far as 460 kilometers on one charge. “For consumers, the number one concern about any new electric vehicles is their driving mileage”, says Wang Dongchen, Aiways’ chief Technology Officer. “So, it’s important for us to adopt a lightweight design to make the car more energy-efficient.”



The U5, which has been on the market since 2019, is 4.46 meters long, 1.88 meters wide and 1.68 meters high. The GF components play a crucial role for the vehicle. Due to their light weight, the U5 has a high energy efficiency.

## Overcoming the odds

For the permanent innovative design to work, Aiways needs R&D support to develop a series of structural parts the industry has never seen before. However, finding help was not easy in the beginning, Wang recalled the process. “Not many die-casting manufacturers in China have the technological know-how to develop and build what we need. Through research we found out that GF Casting Solutions is a leader in the space and could potentially help us achieve our goals.”

It took Aiways six months to finally decide that GF Casting Solutions is whom they wanted to partner with. It wasn’t the experience of the more than 200 years old brand that they were concerned about — it was whether this supplier can do things quick enough. For, compared with the traditional industry with a development cycle

from 24 to 48 months, new electric carmakers usually accomplish it in less than half of the time.

“I’m glad that GF and Aiways were able to work together to complete tasks in a very timely manner,” states Wang. An example is that they had started exploring manufacturing methods even before they froze the design. “And we were able to complete the trial production of five dies within five months, which was great support to the debugging process of our production lines,” Wang adds. Daniel Hu, Sales Director China of GF Casting Solutions, agrees: “Our communications are very responsive, which allows us to move and decide fast.”

Unlike traditional carmakers, manufacturers in the e-mobility sector need much more development support from suppliers because they face new technical challenges. “If you have enough resources and R&D capabilities, you definitely have a big advantage over low-cost, pure casting suppliers”, explains Steffen Dekoj, Head of R&D Asia of GF Casting Solutions. For GF Casting Solutions, there are currently 18 employees working in the division’s Asia R&D center in Suzhou (China) with similar capabilities as the company’s R&D headquarters in Schaffhausen (Switzerland) such as casting simulation, material testing, and the FEM calculation (Finite Element Method). FEM is used for example for noise and vibration analysis, component lifetime prediction, and crash test simulation during the development phase. Dekoj adds: “We do most of the work locally in China, and we can always consult with our headquarters in Switzerland and receive great support. So, we have both the speed and the knowledge which is very beneficial for us.”



At the Aiways headquarters in Shanghai (China), employees are driving forward something that is central to the company: AI (artificial intelligence) is on the rise.

## Growth Pie

China’s automotive sector has been cooling down overall, and the pandemic has weakened the market. But the country remains one of the fastest-growing markets for new electric cars. As the economy recovers, electric car sales have bounced

back – in August 2020 alone, more than 82'500 cars were sold, a 45% hike year-on-year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

In recent years, government subsidies have played an important role in the growth of the market. Today, as policymakers start to tighten financial support, the industry will likely enter a phase of consolidation. Daniel Hu believes that, despite these headwinds, China will continue to encourage and support the development of electric cars because of environmental and energy concerns.

According to an industry guide issued by China's top policymakers in 2017, 20% of all new cars sold in the country will be electric by 2025 – which translates to at least 4 million cars a year, more than double the 2018 figure. "This is obviously an important growth opportunity for us for years to come," Daniel Hu says.



The R&D Center of Aiways in Suzhou (China) has very similar competencies to the R&D Center at the GF Casting Solutions headquarters in Schaffhausen (Switzerland). Employees perform tasks such as casting simulations and materials testing.



The developers at Aiways have clearly focused on an extremely high level of driving comfort. This is expressed in a variety of details: the adaptive cruise control, the automatic dimming of LED headlights, the congestion assistant and parking assistant.



## “I really appreciate the support”

Wang Dongchen, Chief Technology Officer at Aiways, is an industry veteran. He used to run the R&D department at FAW, one of China's largest automakers, and joined Aiways in December 2016. In his 27-year career, Wang was responsible for the development of many popular vehicle models in China. Here he shares his views on new electric cars and the collaboration between Aiways and GF Casting Solutions.



### What's the challenge of making bodywork for new electric cars?

We have to achieve the balance among multiple factors, such as safety, weight and repair cost. Aluminum die casting is a great solution, but also a very complicated one. Not many suppliers have the capabilities to develop the products we need, in a very short period of time.

### How does GF Casting Solutions support you?

What we do is so new that even experienced suppliers need to work extensively with us on R&D. GF was involved in every stage of producing these parts, from design, die making, die trial, to testing and optimization. Together we overcame many difficulties and completed the task on time.

### What do you appreciate about the collaboration?

At first I was a little skeptical if a global company like GF could devote much effort into working with a startup company like us. I was surprised by how responsive, efficient, and accommodative GF's teams have been. I really appreciate the support we received in this very tight development cycle.

The body of the Aiways U5 consists of 52 percent aluminum and 48 percent extremely high-strength steel. Experience the U5 in this video (AIWAYS - Digital Press Conference March 3rd 2020).

AIWAYS



© Getty Images

# Rapid Remote Troubleshooting

The causes of machine faults can be analyzed and remedied remotely using SP/1 software from Symmedia. This saves users time and money. Together with GF Machining Solutions, Symmedia wants to conquer new markets.

Out of the blue, a machine in production reports a fault. Suddenly everything is on hold. Such a situation can quickly become expensive. While machine operators try to describe problems to customer service by phone or e-mail, valuable time is slipping away. If service employees have to analyze and remedy the fault on the machine itself, it becomes even more costly and time-consuming. “The most expensive machine time is unplanned downtime,” says Andreas Wehmeyer, Chief Sales Officer at Symmedia. Based in Bielefeld (Germany), the software company has been part of GF since 2017. Symmedia SP/1 software enables companies to prevent this costly downtime, because it makes it possible to analyze and correct the causes of faults remotely.



Andreas Wehmeyer is Chief Sales Officer at Symmedia, a GF subsidiary located in Bielefeld (Germany), and responsible for sales and marketing activities.

## Troubleshooting and prevention

Since 2000, Symmedia has been specializing in software for plant and mechanical engineering manufacturers in a wide range of industries – from tobacco processing to mold-making, from injection molding to packaging. German printing press producer Manroland Sheetfed and GF Machining Solutions itself are among Symmedia’s key customers. When using and marketing the software, machine manufacturers usually brand SP/1 under their own name. Customer service of GF Machining Solutions offers the software to machine operators under the name rConnect.

If a 3D printing, milling, laser texturing, or EDM machine supplied by GF Machining Solutions breaks down, the machine operator onsite can specify the fault step by step via the software on their screen: Is it a stoppage? Is the machine producing scrap? Is it running too slowly? The downtime message is forwarded to a central server, which the machine manufacturer’s customer service team can access via an rConnect box that is installed on the same network as the machine and communicates with the customer’s network. The central server acts as a hub for all the data collected by the software. Details such as the serial number of the machine and the time left on the warranty period are also available and support the customer service representative in troubleshooting all aspects of the problem.

## Another niche market

Almost 60 percent of companies operating in the plant and mechanical engineering industry in Germany in 2019 considered themselves outsiders or beginners when it comes to data-driven services. The German Mechanical Engineering Industry Association came to this conclusion in its Industry 4.0 Readiness Study.

## symmedia SP/1

- + Machine operators in 15'000 production shops worldwide use SP/1 software from Symmedia.
- + symmedia SP/1 software is used in more than 100 countries.
- + Symmedia has its software regularly tested by TÜV Informationstechnik GmbH (TÜViT) in order to ensure that the security standard is maintained. TÜViT is part of the TÜV Nord Group, an internationally active, independent testing and certification company based in Germany.

## Reliable analysis

A GF Machining Solutions customer service employee can access the respective machine remotely at the push of a button. A so-called digital tunnel is established for the duration of the analysis, through which the GF diagnostics technician can access the machine's control panel directly from their computer. If necessary, the screen can be shared so the technician can exchange photos or blueprints with the machine operator and mark locations where the cause of the fault might lie. "The fact that the system can be accessed externally means the issue of data security is extremely important to our customers and therefore also to us," says Wehmeyer. "We only receive access once the customer has granted their approval." If a fault cannot be remedied remotely, service employees can use the information collected during the analysis to ensure they are optimally prepared for their onsite work. Another advantage is that valuable information about the job is stored digitally – both in customer service and at the machine operator. "If the same fault occurs again later, troubleshooting is much easier and runs more quickly thanks to the information from previous jobs," says Wehmeyer. This benefits both manufacturer and operator.

The market for remote maintenance and repair services is growing because machines and plants are becoming increasingly intelligent, networked, and therefore more complex. "This is leading to more operator-induced errors," says Wehmeyer. "Demand has increased further due to the coronavirus pandemic, because in many cases diagnostic and service technicians are no longer allowed to travel." The merger with GF Machining Solutions offers both partners the opportunity to enter new markets together, he adds. "Digitalization and IT are challenging topics that aren't self-explanatory," says Wehmeyer. "GF Machining Solutions has a strong sales organization, with experts in machines, processing, and technologies. Symmedia is an expert in digital topics. So we are bringing together the best of both worlds." In the past, Symmedia's focus has primarily been on the DACH region. The partnership offers an optimal starting-point for international expansion. Wehmeyer believes that "the acquisition marked the beginning of a profitable partnership."

## Manroland case study

The printing press manufacturer has been working with Symmedia for more than 15 years in order to digitalize its service and maintenance management systems. The company completely overhauled its remote service and reorganized it by implementing the symmedia SP/1 software at the beginning of the cooperation. On the basis of this software, Manroland and Symmedia jointly developed further software products to minimize the risk of production downtime and enable fast and targeted remote machine service.

## Result

Thanks to the software, the printing press manufacturer is now connected to nearly 1'700 printing presses operated by its customers. Today, there are 220 ongoing service contracts in Europe alone. Manroland promises its customers a response time of just 20 minutes. Every new printing press supplied by Manroland is now equipped with Symmedia software as standard.







## Working in Touch with Nature

In the midst of a vast nature reserve, GF Piping Systems is creating a joint success story. Here, the Dutch headquarters of the Division, Georg Fischer N.V., and the production company Georg Fischer Waga N.V. share their campus, recently renovated offices and ambitions for future growth.

Imagine beautiful forests, lush meadows, small-town life and international flair: Welcome to GF Piping Systems in Epe, the Netherlands. Here, in direct proximity to the extensive nature reserve of the Veluwe, two GF companies are sharing one location and creating a joint success story: the production company Georg Fischer Waga N.V., known for its unique product range of MULTI/JOINT fittings, and Georg Fischer N.V., the Dutch representation of GF Piping Systems in the Netherlands, which sells the Division's entire product range in the country.

Among pine trees and the sandy landscape known as geest, most of the almost 80 employees live nearby and can walk or cycle to work – no traffic jams expected. However, they might catch a glimpse of the occasional deer or fox roaming the adjacent nature reserve. Unlike the rest of the Netherlands, Epe and the surrounding area is not densely populated, leaving people space to live and work peacefully in touch with nature.



The campus that the Dutch sales company Georg Fischer N.V. and the production company Georg Fischer Waga N.V. are sharing lies in the midst of a vast nature reserve.

## Holding up with a positive spirit

During a renovation in 2019, this tranquil atmosphere was introduced into the joint office building. Today, the office staff here enjoy an airy and spacious work environment that cultivates creativity. In total, the GF campus in Epe covers 11'000 square meters. It hosts three structures: a manufacturing building for Waga products with an integrated warehouse, a joint office building, and a separate warehouse for the products sold by Georg Fischer N.V.

Erwin Brouwer, Managing Director of Georg Fischer N.V., believes the location in Epe "is blessed with a very positive working culture" that not even the coronavirus crisis has managed to spoil. Luckily, there is sufficient space on the work floor and in the office building to allow coworkers to keep the required social distance while maintaining productivity. Additional precautions to ensure a safe working

environment include increased hygiene measures, GF-branded face masks, alternating shift and break schedules, and the possibility for office employees to work half their hours from home. Another reason why the crew has kept up a positive spirit is the unrelenting high demand both companies are registering despite the global economic difficulties caused by the pandemic.



Erwin Brouwer is Managing Director of Georg Fischer N.V. in Epe (Netherlands). He appreciates that the GF Piping Systems management gives him “a certain freedom to act as an entrepreneur.” Over the past 15 years, he has continuously built up the company and expanded the sales of all GF Piping Systems market segments.



Edwin Sonneveld is Managing Director of Georg Fischer Waga N.V. He has been working with Waga for 18 years. Sonneveld values the Dutch employees for being down to earth and unlikely to panic.

## Solid structure as a base

Luckily, turbulent times have never much bothered the people in the Netherlands. “The Dutch are very down to earth and not likely to panic quickly. That also goes for the employees of both our companies here in Epe,” says Edwin Sonneveld, Managing Director of Georg Fischer Waga N.V.. Sonneveld knows what he is talking about, having been with Waga for 18 years. The company itself, whose name is an acronym of the words WAter and GAs, has belonged to the GF family since 1965. Back then, GF acquired Waga from its founder Dick van der Meij and subsequently started selling its complete portfolio to the Dutch market through this branch. In 1994, a holding with two subsidiaries was created. This gave the company in the Netherlands the structure it still holds today, with Georg Fischer N.V. responsible for sales to the Dutch market and Georg Fischer Waga N.V. designing and manufacturing its specific products.

The latter has been doing so successfully, increasing both sales and EBIT every single year since 2013. Today, Waga's top product line is the MULTI/JOINT 3000 Plus, a range of fittings that allow maintenance-free connections of water and gas pipes, focusing on reliable fitting and longevity. The wide range fittings or couplers are used mostly for repairs in underground water transport lines, and water and gas distribution and service lines. If it concerns connecting, repairing or tapping, the MULTI/JOINT is a real problem-solver. The components are produced in various countries, while the final assembly of the fittings takes place in Epe. Thanks to a factory expansion in 2018, the coating process for the castings is completed here as well. Waga mainly sells to GF Piping Systems sales companies in Europe, but is also taking aim at the American and Asian markets, where it sees the biggest potential for growth. For this, Sonneveld considers the global set-up of the Division to be very useful. “Despite it being a multi-billion dollar global company, great attention is still paid to the people.”



**Gerrit Proper:** Gerrit holds two positions at Georg Fischer N.V. in Epe, where he has been working for a decade. As Market Segment Manager, he mainly visits and trains customers concerning chemical resistance. In addition, he is responsible for the market development of the Food and Beverage segment. Gerrit appreciates the beautiful surroundings of Epe's location and likes to spend his free time with his family, walking his dog, or riding his race bike.



**Katarzyna Babiarz:** When Katarzyna was hired at Georg Fischer Waga N.V. in Epe two years ago, she was the first ever female production worker. In assembly, she mounts fittings, organizes the workplace, and ensures the timely supply of components at the work centers. In her free time, Katarzyna likes to travel, read, and take long walks.



**Rudy Woudenberg:** Rudy is an Area Sales and Product Manager with Georg Fischer Waga N.V. in Epe, and celebrated his 15th work anniversary this year. He manages the MULTI/JOINT 3000 Plus portfolio and enjoys that his work enables him to be in contact with customers from around the world. When at home, he likes to spend time with family and friends – preferably at a barbecue.



**Wim Westenberg:** Wim has been with Georg Fischer N.V. since 2008. Currently, he works at internal sales in the Building Technology department, where he gives technical advice to colleagues, manages quotes, and does project calculations. He loves the new offices and spacious work environment in Epe. Wim's hobby is horology: he collects and repairs watches.

Brouwer most appreciates that the GF Piping Systems management gives him “a certain freedom to act as an entrepreneur.” And he has certainly made good use of this freedom, growing the company continuously over the past 15 years, covering sales of all GF Piping Systems market segments. In doing so, Georg Fischer N.V. has become the market leader in the relevant industrial and utility sectors, and is rapidly increasing sales of the building technology portfolio.

Throughout all market segments, sales cover the entire range of customers. In the industrial and building technology sectors, dealers are important routes to market, but the end-users are served directly in all other segments.

According to Brouwer, this makes selling rather labor-intensive but also very favorable in terms of margins. This is also true for the coronavirus year 2020.

“Although all the low-hanging fruit is long gone, we still see many opportunities to grow our company in the future. For this, innovation will be essential,” says Brouwer.



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## At a glance

- + Companies: Georg Fischer Waga N.V. (production company) and Georg Fischer N.V. (sales company and Dutch headquarters of GF Piping Systems)
- + Part of GF since: 1965
- + Employees: around 80 (25 in production)
- + Competencies in production: Georg Fischer Waga N.V. is unique for its MULTI/JOINT wide range fittings. This product range allows easy and reliable restraint and non-restraint connections suitable for all pipe materials (such as PE, PVC, steel, ductile iron pipes, etc.). The market segment is water and gas utilities, with a focus on pipeline repairs.
- + Competencies in sales: Georg Fischer N.V. is the Dutch representation of GF Piping Systems in the Netherlands, market leader in the relevant industrial and utility sectors, and growing fast in building technology portfolio sales. The focus is on adding value for customers through in-depth advice and support, prefabrication, and solution sales. Sixty-five percent of sales are delivered directly to end-users.



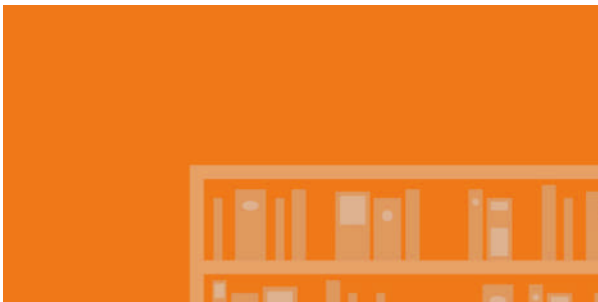
A view from above of the GF campus in Epe, which covers 11'000 square meters.

*A big thank-you to our colleagues in Epe for their friendly cooperation and taking so many wonderful pictures.*

# More Bang for Your Book

“Game of Thrones” author George R. R. Martin once said, “A mind needs books like a sword needs a whetstone, if it is to keep its edge.” In other words, if you take the time to read or have a book read to you, it will keep your intellect sharp. Here are six other benefits of reading.

Click the + icon in the infographic to learn more.



© Roberto Funke

# Which role does e.mobility play for you?

Edward Schick, EDM Sales Support at GF Machining Solutions in Losone (Switzerland)



Edward Schick started his career at GF Machining Solutions in 2013 at the Schorndorf Center of Competence (Germany) as an application engineer in Milling. After a further education as mechanical engineering technician, Edward Schick worked in Sales Support until the end of 2019. Since then, he has been providing support for the Technical Unit EDM in Losone (Switzerland).

In my everyday life I encounter e-mobility in many different ways. On the way to work and to the supermarket or when going out in the evening, for example, many people dash past me with e-bikes, e-scooters or e-cars on the streets and sidewalks. I have the feeling that there are more and more e-vehicles and that many people have bought e-bikes in recent months, due to having more free time as a result of short-time work during the coronavirus crisis.

Like everything in life, e-mobility has advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, I see that I can cover long distances in a short time, for example with an e-bike, and thus have the opportunity to discover places.

Even though I don't own an e-vehicle, I have already ridden an e-scooter, in the summer of 2019 on my city trip to Zagreb (Croatia). It was fun and worked out perfectly. After only a short time the scooter can be steered safely, not only on tarmac, but also over cobblestones. An e-scooter is very well suited to cover short distances while exploring, for example from a point of interest to cafés and shops. But I do not recommend to explore the whole city with an e-scooter, because while driving, your attention should always be on the road rather than on beautiful sights.

**Anastasia Kochina, Technical and Sales Manager at GF Piping Systems in Moscow (Russia)**



Anastasia Kochina has been working at GF Piping Systems in Moscow (Russia) for more than six years now. She is a Technical Specialist and Sales Manager in the Business Unit Industry and enjoys the variety of her duties: presentations and trainings about the entire GF Pipings Systems portfolio as well as helping customers in choosing the right solutions.

In Russia, e-cars can hardly be seen on the roads, as the whole infrastructure for this kind of transportation is underdeveloped. Compared to the price of electricity, the price of petrol is very low in my country. At present, we are aware that, compared to other countries, Russia is far behind when it comes to e-mobility, but we are slowly catching up. In March 2020, for example, Russia was quarantined because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But at the same time, when the government eased the restrictions, the old generation of trolleybuses in Moscow was completely replaced by new electric buses.

In addition, e-scooters are becoming popular in Russia. At first, they were available for private use only, but now there are also some for rent in the streets of big cities like St. Petersburg or Moscow. These cities with one million residents or more have one big problem: traffic jams. During rush hour, it can easily take one to 1.5 hours by car to cover a distance of about 20 kilometers—so e-scooters are a good alternative to cars. Personally I use e-scooters primarily when I travel in European cities. For instance, last summer I travelled to Malaga (Spain) and there I used this service to get around the local sights. That was fun!



Edward Schick, a member of the Sales Support team, provides information to the international Sales Companies at GF Machining Solutions. His work helps the Sales Engineers respond to customers' needs more effectively.



Anastasia Kochina joined GF in 2014 as a Technical Specialist in building services before moving to the Industry department two years later.



Even though Edward Schick's job often involves sitting at a desk, his favorite part is seeing the machines at GF in action.



Anastasia Kochina loves the personal interactions she has in her job. Solving problems and identifying the right applications for customers are what motivates her.