

STRATEGY 2025  
AND CULTURE

+GF+

# Global

THE GLOBAL MAGAZINE  
FOR GF EMPLOYEES

ISSUE 2 · 2021

## A Strong Performance

Bret Carlson is an SAP expert who lives the life of a cowboy. At work or at the rodeo, he always has the right strategy. > 12

### Our Journey

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How a new way of learning is preparing GF employees for the future. > 24

# HELLO!



## Axel Schwörer

Schaffhausen (Switzerland),  
3 March 2021,  
2:15 p.m.

**My colleagues from the COOL-FIT core team and I** (fourth from left) are currently setting up our new COOL-FIT production area. On the day the picture was taken, we were having a look at the first products manufactured with the new machine. We had already achieved good results and will continue to optimize the process in the following weeks.

**Axel Schwörer** works in Production at GF Piping Systems in Schaffhausen (Switzerland).



## Sonia Zhang

Chongqing (China),  
3 March 2021,  
2:15 p.m.

**I took my "Hello" picture while I was on the bus** on my way to visit one of our customers, Chongqing Huaifu New Material Technology Co. Ltd. This company produces medium- and high-strength powder metallurgy components and is a member of the China Powder Metallurgy Association, the top association in this field in China.

**Sonia Zhang** is Sales Engineer – Consumable Products at GF Machining Solutions in Chongqing (China).



Check out further submissions in a video at [globe-strategy.georgfischer.com](https://globe-strategy.georgfischer.com)



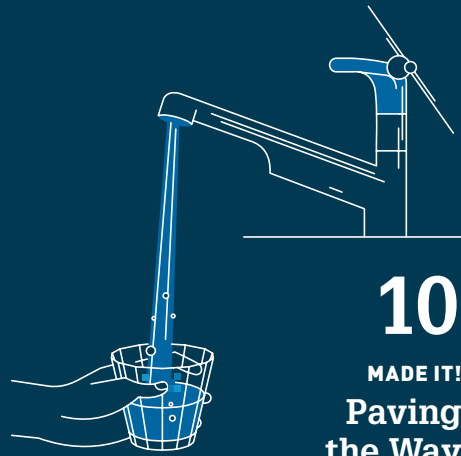
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Nesibe Bruggmann aims to establish a new way of learning at GF. And three employees share how they are already making learning an active part of their daily work.

# EDITORIAL

## Learning from each other

Dear colleagues,

Becoming better every day – since 1802. At GF, that’s our purpose. We want to improve every day. But how can we achieve this, and what can each of us contribute toward this goal?

You’ll find the answers in this issue of Globe, includes stories and insights on the new GF Strategy 2025: CEO Andreas Müller discusses the close links between corporate purpose, culture, and strategy in an interview (p. 18). You’ll learn about the central role a new way of learning is playing in the strategy’s implementation and how colleagues are already embedding it in their daily work (p. 24).

Our cover story demonstrates that strategy and learning are important topics, even for a “cowboy to the bone.” Bret Carlson is an SAP Consultant at GF Piping Systems. In his free time, he ropes steers with a lasso – at record speed. But things don’t always go smoothly, and you can find out starting on page 12 what Bret has learned from his mistakes.

Each and every one of us needs to get involved in bringing our new values to life now in order to make our Strategy 2025 a success. Let’s learn from each other and with each other so we can become even better together – every day.

This issue of Globe will help you to do just that.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue!

Lena Koehnen  
Globe Project Manager



**IN BRIEF**

**2016**

**ENTERING THE FUTURE - WITH LASER TECHNOLOGY**

GF Machining Solutions acquires US-based Microlution Inc., a specialist in micromachining using laser technology. The acquisition enables GF Machining Solutions to expand its technology portfolio to meet the demands of the aerospace and medical applications industries, among others.



"This acquisition is a good example of how to extend the technology portfolio in order to enable our existing customers to make a technology jump. We are constantly monitoring new technologies."

**Stefan Dahl**  
Head of Operations/COO,  
GF Machining Solutions

GF and its Divisions have achieved a number of key milestones thanks to their expansion into new markets during the 2016–2020 strategy cycle. The new GF Strategy 2025 continues to build on this success. Going forward, GF will be investing even more in innovation and sustainability to foster profitable growth.

**Two Strategies, One Goal**



**2017 2018 2019**

**GROWTH IN ROMANIA**

GF Automotive acquires Eucasting Ro SRL, a high-pressure aluminum die-casting specialist with two production sites in Romania. This acquisition helps GF Automotive expand its presence in the growing light metal components business.

**GF EXPANDS ITS PRESENCE IN THE AMERICAS**

GF acquires Urecon Ltd. (Canada), a specialist in pre-insulated piping systems for freeze protection and chilled water. This acquisition helps GF Piping Systems expand its presence in North America. Development of the acclaimed pre-insulated COOL-FIT systems for transporting cooling media.



"Through the acquisition, we could establish ourselves as the COOL-FIT PE+ pipe producer for the North American market."

**Isabelle Beaulieu**  
General Manager Georg Fischer Urecon Ltd.

**THE AEROSPACE BUSINESS TAKES FLIGHT**

It will acquire Precicast Industrial Holding SA, the Swiss precision casting specialist, to increase its presence in the industrial sector, in particular in the promising aerospace business. GF Automotive becomes GF Casting Solutions.



"Our production site in Novazzano (Switzerland) became part of GF in 2018. During the Strategy Cycle 2016–2020, I fostered the dialogue and built up trust between the ceramics and casting departments."

**Monica De Giorgio**  
Ceramics Operation Manager at the ceramic tool shop at GF Casting Solutions Novazzano SA

**STRATEGIC COOPERATION FOR 3D PRINTING**

GF Machining Solutions and US-based 3D Systems, a leader in additive manufacturing, announce their strategic cooperation for jointly developed, integrated manufacturing solutions based on 3D printing.

**RED DOT AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE SOLUTION**

The Hycleen Automation System from GF Piping Systems receives an honorable mention at the 2019 Red Dot Award. The system addresses the need for safe and hygienic water solutions in large buildings. The Red Dot Award is one of the world's most coveted design awards.



**FULL SPEED AHEAD IN CHINA**

Following its official inauguration on 30 October 2018, the new tooling shop in Suzhou (China) begins to swiftly ramp up production. The first projects have since been successfully launched. With this investment in the Chinese automotive industry, GF can respond to customer needs even more swiftly.



# 2020 2021



## GROWTH IN SOUTH AMERICA

GF Piping Systems announces the acquisition of FGS Brasil Indústria e Comércio Ltda. (FGS), Cajamar (Brazil), which serves the local water and gas distribution market and other industrial segments. The acquisition provides GF Piping Systems with a unique platform for further growth in Brazil and South America.

## INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR WATER LOSS

GF Piping Systems signs a partnership agreement with Oxford Flow Ltd., Oxford (UK) and acquires a stake in the company. Its innovative pressure-regulating valve enables utility companies to reduce water loss, a major problem around the globe.



## NEW GOALS, NEW CHALLENGES

In addition to the GF Strategy 2025, with its three strategic focus areas, GF presents a new vision and defines for the first time a company-wide purpose – “Becoming better every day – since 1802” – as well as three new values.



## GF STRATEGY 2025 KICK-OFF

For the strategy kick-off on 3 March 2021, all three divisions prepare comprehensive information packages for their employees and publish statements from the division presidents. A range of events takes place around the world. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of them are virtual or limited to small groups. In addition, GF Piping Systems, for example, launches a new series of awards associated with the GF Strategy 2025 while GF Casting Solutions shares numerous live videos with the division management from the new showroom in Schaffhausen.

## A TIME CAPSULE FOR THE FUTURE

As a creative contribution to the launch of the GF Strategy 2025, colleagues from GF Piping Systems in Irvine, CA (US), buried a time capsule filled with employees’ predictions of how GF Piping Systems Americas will look in the year 2025 and how many employees the facility will have by then. They plan to dig up the time capsule at the end of the Strategy 2025 period.



## FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is an integral part of the GF Strategy 2025: In the last years, several regional sustainability conferences in Europe, Asia or the Americas took place to ensure a cross-divisional exchange on sustainability topics. In 2021, GF continues with this tradition and extends the scope to a global virtual sustainability conference in the second half of the year.

## TWO POINTS OF VIEW

### What makes a motivating corporate culture?

Being part of the global GF organization and bringing Additive Manufacturing closer to mainstream manufacturing is an inspiring and motivating challenge in itself. I joined GF during the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. Even though online tools and e-learnings are a great addition nowadays, real inspiration also needs real-life experiences. So I have yet to experience the culture of GF live.

For me, an inspiring corporate culture is one that is customer-centric. We grow and combine the strengths of individuals in order to achieve customer success. This involves continuous learning and openly sharing ideas and feedback.

If we love what we do, we will deliver first-class work to our customers. Being able to work in an environment with a passionate team is truly inspiring and motivating.

For the future, I am looking forward to interacting with more GF colleagues worldwide to grow the Additive Manufacturing business in Japan even further. ■

#### Sadato Kobayashi

joined GF Machining Solutions Japan in August 2020 as a Business Development Manager for Additive Manufacturing. He is located in Tokyo and collaborates with customers and experts in Additive Manufacturing, wirecutting, milling, and tooling on a global level.

“We foster and synergize the unique strengths of individual employees to ensure customer success.”



“GF encourages employees to come forward with new ideas. This is a fundamental motivational factor.”



For me, career opportunities and company stability are essential motivational factors. Participating in internal training courses allows employees to gain valuable experience and skills necessary for advancing their career or being promoted.

I see GF as a big family, where communication and diversity are encouraged. Inspiration and motivation are already part of the company culture. My own path at GF is a good example of what you can achieve if you are motivated to learn and grow. Over the past five years, I was able to develop new skills and advance my career to being a quality controller today. I like that GF encourages and rewards employees’ ideas for process improvement. This is a fundamental motivational factor.

Based on the idea of a colleague, we recently improved the part quality and reduced deburring operations by automating the trimming process.

My only suggestion for the future: establish a training program to identify and develop high-potential employees. ■

#### Simona Stoica

started to work at Eucasting in Pitești (Romania) as a deburrer five years ago. In 2017, Eucasting became part of GF. Simona has been promoted to being quality controller of the high pressure die-casting foundry in early 2021.



More pictures at  
[globe-strategy.  
georgfischer.com](https://globe-strategy.georgfischer.com)





**Johann Viljoen,**  
Head of Corporate Sustainability  
Johann (50) has been in the sustainability business since before it became mainstream. He studied chemistry and switched to environmental management in the late 1990s, before joining GF last year. Here, he's excited to quantify challenges, find sustainable solutions, and drive the change that is needed to become a truly sustainable company.

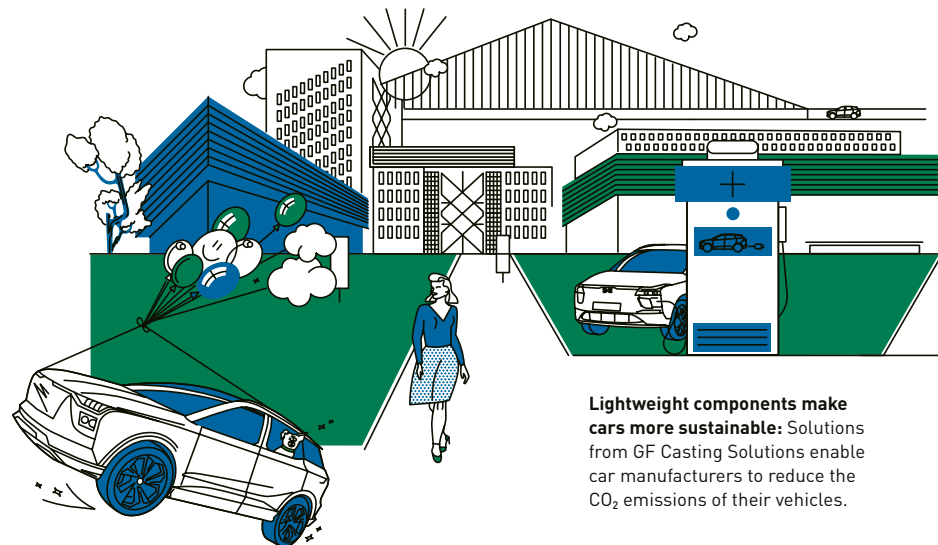


**Anna Oetinger,**  
Corporate Sustainability Manager  
Anna (32) started to work for GF after university in 2017, because she believes in the important role companies play in society. She enjoys designing that relationship by combining economic, social, and environmental perspectives.

**MADE IT!**  
SUSTAINABILITY AT GF

# Paving the Way

**Sustainability at GF has taken center stage as part of the Strategy 2025 and the company vision. Johann Viljoen and his team from Corporate Sustainability follow a holistic approach. Their goal: To make GF a leader in sustainability.**



**Lightweight components make cars more sustainable:** Solutions from GF Casting Solutions enable car manufacturers to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of their vehicles.

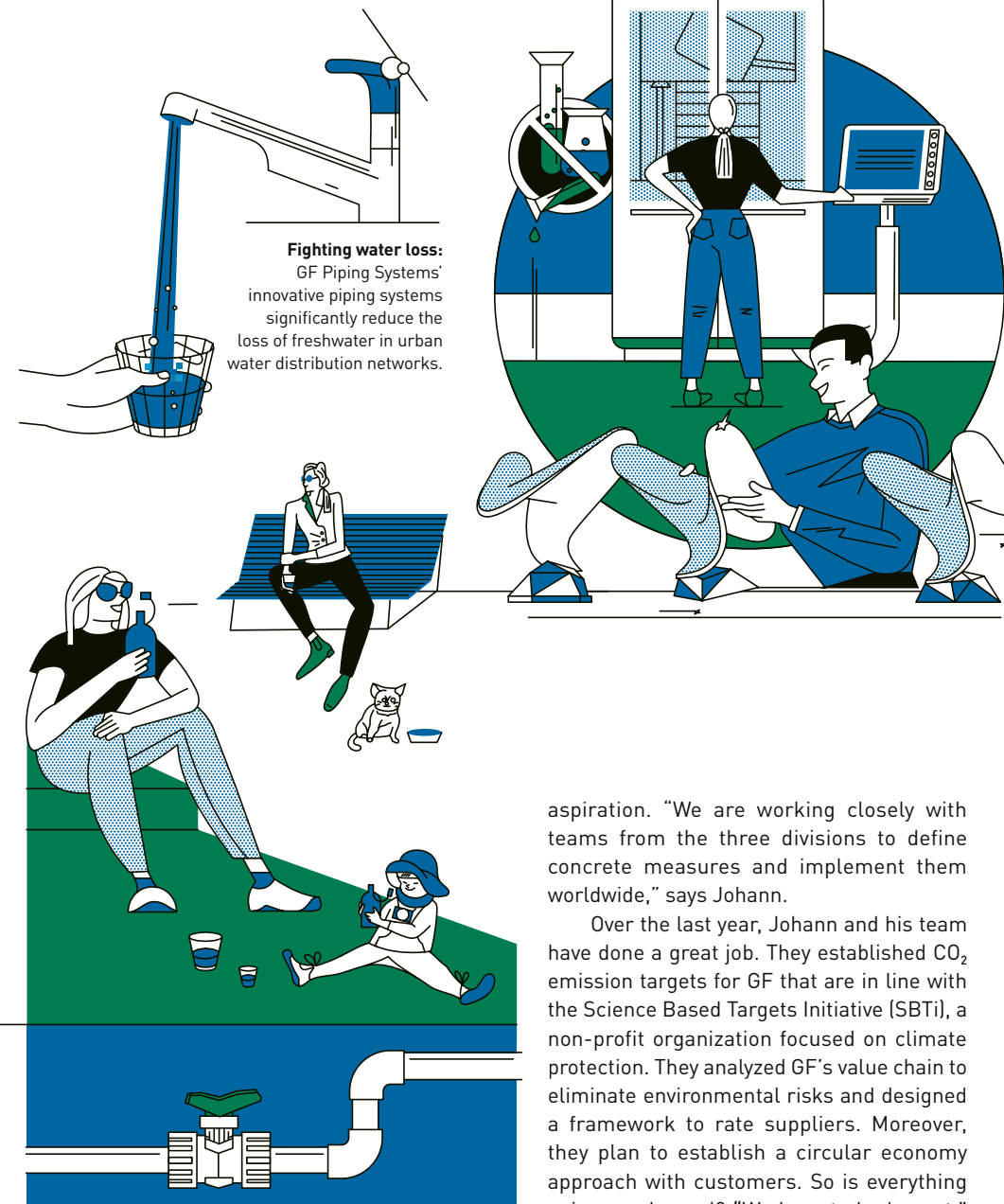
**W**hen it comes to sustainability, GF can already count on some remarkable successes. By making the switch to lightweight castings, GF Casting Solutions has made it possible for car manufacturers to reduce both fuel consumption and emissions. For example, the division has been producing a new light metal battery housing for Renault since 2020.

GF's other divisions are also on sustainable tracks. GF Piping Systems' Neo-Flow valve (PRV) strengthens aging water supply systems, reducing water loss and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. GF Machining Solutions helps to avoid the use of corrosive chemicals with laser texturing machines.

**Setting the right priorities**

Johann Viljoen, Head of Corporate Sustainability at GF, aims to establish a more holistic view. Together with his team, he coordinates GF's global effort to become a sustainability and innovation leader. "We have established three workstreams to frame GF's sustainability ambitions. The first one refers to our product portfolio, followed by a focus on climate and resources, and the third one on people and their well-being," explains Johann. Defining these workstreams laid the foundation for setting eight sustainability targets the company aims to achieve by 2025.

In this age marked by climate change and dwindling natural resources, companies like GF are under pressure from multiple external stakeholders to combine economic



**Fighting water loss:** GF Piping Systems' innovative piping systems significantly reduce the loss of freshwater in urban water distribution networks.

**Texturing without corrosive chemicals:** GF Machining Solutions' state-of-the-art laser texturing machines help reduce the use of chemicals, protecting people and the environment in the process.

aspiration. "We are working closely with teams from the three divisions to define concrete measures and implement them worldwide," says Johann.

Over the last year, Johann and his team have done a great job. They established CO<sub>2</sub> emission targets for GF that are in line with the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), a non-profit organization focused on climate protection. They analyzed GF's value chain to eliminate environmental risks and designed a framework to rate suppliers. Moreover, they plan to establish a circular economy approach with customers. So is everything going as planned? "We have to be honest," says Anna. "For example, we still have challenges with our waste going to landfills or incinerators. There are opportunities to reduce over-packaging of products, reduce the volume of oil emulsions, and recycle copper wires."

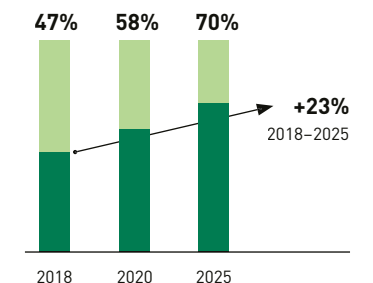
One thing is clear: The way has been paved for GF to become a global sustainability leader. The task now is to work holistically toward this vision. ■

**Waste is an opportunity**

Accordingly, sustainability was established as an integral part of the GF Strategy 2025 and embedded in the company vision. Now it is the task of Johann and his team to realize this

**58%**

**This is the percentage of products and solutions in GF's 2020 portfolio that have a positive social or environmental impact. In 2018, this number stood at 47%. The company's target for 2025: 70%.**



**SUSTAINABILITY MINI-GLOSSARY**

- **Circular economy** is a model of production and consumption that aims to extend the life cycle of products and eliminate waste at the end of their life by keeping materials in the loop. Key concepts are: repair, re-use, and recycle.
- **EcoVadis** is a business sustainability rating and network that GF signed up for in 2020. It assesses, certifies and helps to improve the sustainability impact of a company by managing its supply chain through looking at environmental, ethical, labor, and human rights aspects as well as at sustainable procurement.

▶ Three video statements from the **sustainability officers from each division**





# Dances With Steers

Bret Carlson is an SAP consultant for the Business Unit Americas of GF Piping Systems and catches steers in his free time. Those two aspects of his life might seem worlds apart, but to excel in both one needs agility and the guts to perform when it matters most.

**Perfect teamwork:** Secure in the saddle, Bret Carlson swings his lasso while his roping partner ropes the steer by the head and pulls him to the left. Now it's up to Bret to rope the steer's back feet.



## KEY FACTS

**Name:** Bret Carlson  
**Position:** SAP Consultant  
**Division:** GF Piping Systems  
**Location:** Shawnee, OK (US)  
**Part of GF since:** 2011

**O**ne cold weekend in February 2021, a new rope and a split second almost cost Bret Carlson the thumb of his right hand. Bret is 50 years old, from Oklahoma (US), and refers to himself as a “cowboy to the bone.” He has been riding horses since he could walk and catching steers with a rope for nearly as long.

Doing so in a sport called team roping has won him great memories and a large amount of prize money. On that particular day, though, something was off. An internet video shows Bret and his partner on their horses dashing behind a steer: 200 kilos, pitch black. Donning a cowboy hat and a red flannel shirt that blows in the wind, Bret races his horse out of an iron gate, chasing the steer. He is using a brand-new rope, one that slides through his fingers a tad too effortlessly.

A run of team roping normally lasts less than a minute. The challenge is for two riders to catch a steer with a rope and immobilize it as fast as possible. This time Bret is in charge. He has to catch the steer by its horns with a rope, which he wraps around his saddle horn, while his partner takes care of the steer's hind legs. However, this time things don't go as expected.

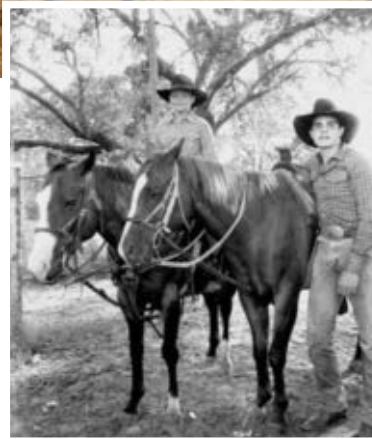
## A dangerous spot

Bret is off to a good start and ropes the horns of the animal in near record time. But as he tries to secure it, the steer crosses his path and the tension of the rope is lost. Bret >



**Bret and his wife Lynne** just before a roping event at the Lazy E Arena in Guthrie, OK (US). The couple share a passion for horses.

**Roping cattle** with a lasso was a skill Bret (right) picked up as a child. He learnt all about animals from his father, a veterinarian.



**The cattle wait** in a pen before they are led one by one into the roping arena. Once the steer is released, every second counts.



**Roping the grand prize:** Elaborate belt buckles are coveted trophies among seasoned ropers. In 2019, Bret won this buckle in a competition at the White Horse Arena in Paden, OK (US).

**~9 meters**  
is the usual length of the header's rope. The rope of the second rider, known as the "heeler," is around 10.6 meters long and far stiffer, allowing the rider to rope and secure the steer's back feet.

**4 to 8 seconds**  
is the average time it takes a professional roping team to catch the steer.

› turns his horse to the left, so the rope tightens up again. All of a sudden, he drops everything. The steer dashes off. The run is over. Lost. "From a roping standpoint, that was the most dangerous spot I've ever been in," Bret recalls. "When the rope became tight, I realized it was wrapped around my thumb and had to let go immediately. Otherwise, it would've cut off my thumb right there." Still, his voice doesn't sound troubled at all. It is perfectly obvious that, for Bret, the danger is part of the fun.

However, Bret insists that this is not his favorite aspect of roping. "I like the competition and the comradery best. Only if you get along well with your horse and trust your roping partner, you perform well as a team." Teamwork is also important in his daily work as an SAP consultant for the Business Unit Americas of GF Piping Systems. When Bret is not hunting down steers in a sandy arena, he handles the automated order and invoicing system and, as he puts it, "anything going in and coming out of SAP." Usually, Bret works at the office in Shawnee, OK (US), which is located about

40 kilometers southeast of his home. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, he's mainly been working from home – and enjoying it. "I can work very efficiently, and it saves me 1.5 hours of commute on a daily basis."

**Teamwork and cowboy lifestyle**

Just recently, he celebrated his ten-year work anniversary at GF. It's the team spirit, Bret says, that has kept him on the job for a whole decade. "My colleagues in Switzerland, China and the Americas are great. I feel like it's the best team that I've ever had the opportunity to work with."

Bret enjoys the challenging nature of his work. "I like putting together various puzzle pieces and making things work." This is clear when he explains how he programmed a software solution from scratch to reduce the time employees spend entering their data. Bret's solution saves his colleagues significant amounts of time.

It's notable that his voice has the same satisfied tone when he talks about his

for roughly 25 years, because he was too busy making a living and taking care of his family. It is only now that just one of his children is still living at home that he can dedicate his free time to his horses, the practice, and the competitions – the "cowboy lifestyle," as he calls it.

**All variables at a glance**

And a lifestyle it is. On a typical day, Bret will get up, take care of the three horses he owns with his wife Lynne, work eight hours, and again dedicate himself to the animals after work. On weeknights, he often takes part in local tournaments or meets with his roping partner to practice and improve their skills. Luckily, his wife is equally passionate about horses and joins him on his trips.

While roping and programming might at first sight seem worlds apart, they become more similar the more closely they are observed. Roping runs are often decided by split seconds. To perform in those decisive seconds, everything has to fit. "You need the skills, the right horse, and a great partner." Bret is sure that his career in IT complements his skills in roping very well. IT work trained his ability to consider all variables and to focus solely on the relevant ones when it matters most. This is a skill he has applied countless times to fix software issues at GF Piping Systems in Shawnee. There, a secure stock system keeps track of the contents of 21 cabinets where working materials for production employees are stored – security glasses, gloves, and drill >

**"I like the competition and the comradery best."**

**Bret Carlson**  
SAP Consultant at  
GF Piping Systems





bits. Employees scan their badges to open them and detail the products that they take out. This way, the system automatically knows what to reorder. It's a practical solution for the employees – but also one that is prone to mistakes.

"When somebody doesn't check items out properly or enters a zero for quantity in a hurry, it causes the system to fail and I have to fix it quickly to keep it going," Bret explains. Since he knows the system inside out and learnt a lot from past incidents, it's easy for him to track down the cause of the respective malfunction and get it up and running again.

**Compete, perform, deliver**

2020 was a tough year for Bret when it came to roping. "I wasn't winning much and it was getting really discouraging," he remembers. So he did what he knows best. "I sat down with my wife and analyzed all variables. We even had a spreadsheet to track all kinds of variables, including our entry fees and winnings." He laughs at the memory. Together they came up with a new strategy: Bret would compete in fewer competitions and pick only the big ones. And, most importantly, he prioritized teaming up with

partners that he worked together with best. It worked. "Finally, this year, I have started to have more success."

Looking back recently at the five years he has dedicated to team roping, Bret reflects, "The accomplishment I'm most proud of is fighting through the mental toughness of when you don't do well." Doing so would have been impossible without the support of his wife – and the closely knit community within the roping world. "They believe in me and we share experiences and lessons learnt – this keeps us going."

This, without a doubt, is also true for Bret's colleagues at GF. The good relationship with the worldwide team has already kept him on the job for the past ten years, and he is sure it will do so for another ten – at least. ■



See Bret in action at [globe-strategy.georgfischer.com](http://globe-strategy.georgfischer.com)



**FACTS & FIGURES**

- **Year when Bret started roping:** 1982 – at the age of 12
- **Horses he owns:** 3 (Shank, Skeeter, and Hollywood)
- **Time he spends with them:** Up to 7 hours on a tournament day
- **Bret's most important event:** Roping in the AT&T arena, stadium of the Dallas Cowboys football team in March 2019

**Team spirit is key**, also at work. Just recently, Bret celebrated his ten-year work anniversary at GF. He enjoys working with such a great international team.



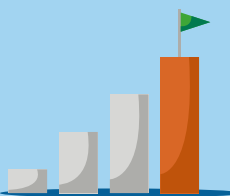
At work, Bret fixes software issues at GF Piping Systems in Shawnee (US). He developed a software solution that supports his colleagues in keeping track of stock levels.

**3x3**

1. This is how I achieve my objectives swiftly:
2. For me, team spirit means ...
3. This is what I learned from a failure:



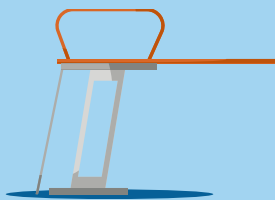
**Lioba Elsäber**  
Project Manager  
GF Casting Solutions  
Singen (Germany)



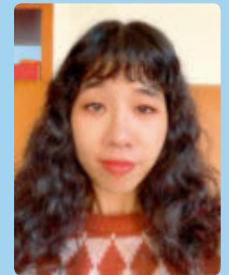
1. I start by taking **one small step**. The next steps happen almost on their own.
2. ... that **everyone works together** and can rely on each other.
3. **Dust yourself off and keep going** – and do better next time based on what you've learned.



**Aditya Sarkar**  
Process Engineer  
GF Piping Systems  
Easton, PA (US)

1. **Set a goal** that can be quantified and qualified, create an action plan, and minimize distractions.
  2. ... working toward a goal with **different perspectives and ideas**. It's one of the most important qualities for a team to be successful.
- 

3. Every failure is a learning experience and helps develop us as a person. My motto is, **"Failure is a stepping stone toward success."**



**Yummy Li**  
Senior Accountant  
GF Machining Solutions  
Guangdong (China)

1. **I review my work regularly** to find out where I need to improve my skills to reach my goal step by step.
- 
2. ... that all team members **pull together** and encourage each other until the goal is achieved!

3. **Doing something** is always better than waiting: "Strike while the iron is hot."



You can find more submissions to 3x3 online at [globe-strategy.georgfischer.com](http://globe-strategy.georgfischer.com)



**FOCUS ON THE GF STRATEGY 2025 AND CULTURE**

**18-21 INTERVIEW WITH THE CEO**

- Andreas Müller discusses the intersections between strategy, vision, and corporate purpose and explains the importance of a “winning culture.”
- According to the CEO, all employees should see themselves as part of the company’s journey to 2025.

**22-23 INFOGRAPHIC**

- The GF Strategy 2025 is a response to global trends.
- The infographic illustrates the different developments GF stands to influence over the next few years.

**24-29 LEARNING AT GF**

- Nesibe Bruggmann, Head of Learning and Development, plans to establish a new culture of learning at GF.
- This includes a new way of handling failure. “It’s just fine to make mistakes,” says Nesibe, “as long as we are quick to learn from them.”
- Three GF employees discuss the role that learning plays for them.

# GF in 2025 is the result of living up to our winning culture

**GF kicked off its new strategy cycle in March 2021.** In the next five years, GF is set to become a sustainability and innovation leader providing superior customer value. CEO Andreas Müller tells us how to live up to this new vision and explains how life at GF is going to change.

**Strategy 2025 is the first new cycle you kicked off as CEO of GF. How was this experience and what do you remember the most?**

The many late nights, I would say! Joking aside, it has been a tremendous experience to work closely with our experts and strategy teams on our Strategy 2025. We had many intense moments, where collaboration was key. One of the most challenging aspects has always been to build a common GF Strategy that is also applicable, with the respective adjustments, to our three divisions. There were moments when we simply realized the great potential that we can unleash at GF. Strategy 2025 is the result of great team spirit, inspired by the need to equip GF for the future.

**What is the GF Strategy 2025 in a nutshell?**

Our Strategy 2025 and its strategic focus areas are a logical next chapter, given the successful path we have



**OUR VALUES**

**PERFORMANCE**  
is about speed and excellence.

**LEARNING**  
is about having an open mind.

**CARING**  
is about being part of a team.

taken in the last five years. It addresses profitable growth, portfolio resilience and a “go for the full potential” spirit. It paves the way for GF to face the challenges of an uncertain environment, like the one we are facing now as the world battles the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is a roadmap to reach our objectives. If I were to sum it up in one sentence, I would say: It is the way to ensure GF will be successful and growing in the times ahead.

**What progress did we make in the first months of the new strategy cycle?**

The teams at both divisional and corporate level did a great job in preparing and launching our new strategy. There were internal events and townhall meetings at our locations worldwide, most of them virtual due to COVID-19, and more will come. Trainings and workshops are also in the works. We went for a “role model” approach. It is our shared responsibility to live up to our values and vision in the next five years. GF in 2025 is the result of the behavior of all of us. We all need to become role models and take an active role in the journey that GF has embarked on.

**What is different this time?**

The focus moves to a winning culture. Strategy and culture go hand in hand, as two equally important drivers of our future success. Our culture, the set of shared beliefs and values that govern the way we interact with each other, is the basis to create a positive environment where our people thrive, develop, and deliver. It is a big opportunity to build on our purpose and continue to make GF an inspiring and highly motivating place.

**What is our Purpose, and why do we need one?**

“Becoming better every day – since 1802” is not just a slogan. It’s what GF has always been doing. It’s the ambition and the ability to set new standards, by creating new technologies to respond to ever-evolving needs, and by developing our people. Our Purpose perfectly combines our long heritage with our future-oriented attitude and our drive to provide superior customer value. It is what motivates us at GF to give our best. The strength of our Purpose is the message that there are no limits. >



**OUR PURPOSE**

Becoming better every day – since 1802



**“The strength of our Purpose is the message that there are no limits.”**

**You mentioned that culture plays an important role in the new strategy. Why do we evolve it?**

We can be proud of our identity and culture which has grown over 200 years. At GF, we respect and care about people. To unleash our full potential, we need to evolve our culture towards more performance and learning. Ownership and the desire to discover new ideas, a positive attitude towards change, and team orientation will be key pillars of our new winning culture. A strong corporate culture is a prerequisite for future success in a rapidly changing environment. Everyone at GF must do their part.

**Which of our new values is most important from your perspective?**

I would not single out one value alone because they absolutely work in synergy. There is no performance

without learning, and no learning can happen where there is no caring. Let's look at the new values and target culture holistically, rather than as tasks to be completed in isolation. They are a crucial part of our roadmap to steer GF, and our people, into the future.

**As part of the new culture, it is okay to make mistakes. Isn't this a contradiction with our ambition to always deliver an excellent performance?**

I agree that this might sound contradictory at first. In a fast-changing world, we can only deliver top performance if we have the courage to embark on new paths. New ideas always imply a certain risk, especially if we want to be fast. When we think about Learning at GF, we should remember what we are already applying with Design

› **GF's vision is to become a sustainability and innovation leader. Can you explain what this means?**

At GF, we provide more and more products with a positive social or environmental impact. We can quantify by how much our solutions are cutting harmful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, replacing dangerous chemical processes, or ensuring that more and more people have access to clean water. Sustainability is also a driver of growth for GF and it provides many opportunities for innovative solutions to satisfy the demand for products with demonstrable benefits. Another important aspect is the effort to increase gender diversity in our workforce and tap our incredible human potential. Here, the message for everybody is that there is a bright future in our company. Everyone is empowered to take action and make a step.

Thinking: It is okay to make mistakes, if we learn from them quickly and share the lessons learned. An excellent performance is one that meets and exceeds customers' expectations. The principle of "putting our customers first" did not disappear; it is already part of GF's DNA. If we aren't putting our customers in the center of everything we do, we are not doing our job right.

**Do you remember a challenging situation in your career where you made a mistake and then learned from it?**

They say you cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs, right? Obviously, I have made and still make mistakes. It is part of being human, I guess. What is important, as I said before, is to learn from them and move ahead.

**What is your personal wish for the remainder of the first year of Strategy 2025?**

I hope to travel more to our GF locations this year and be able to meet more colleagues in person, share experiences and insights, and have good discussions about GF's direction and goals. I also wish for every employee to feel part of our journey towards 2025. It's only thanks to our GF team that we can bring the company forward and strengthen it even further. ■



Scan the QR code to learn more about the topics **strategy and culture**



**OUR VISION**

GF is a **sustainability and innovation leader** providing **superior customer value**.



**OUR FOCUS AREAS**

- Drive **profitable growth**
- Increase **robustness**
- Evolve **culture**

# The trends shaping our future

**Population development, digitalization, and the drive toward increased sustainability:** The GF Strategy 2025 is a response to the global trends of this decade. Innovative thinking reveals an array of opportunities to capture new markets. This infographic illustrates the different developments that will influence our business activities over the next few years.

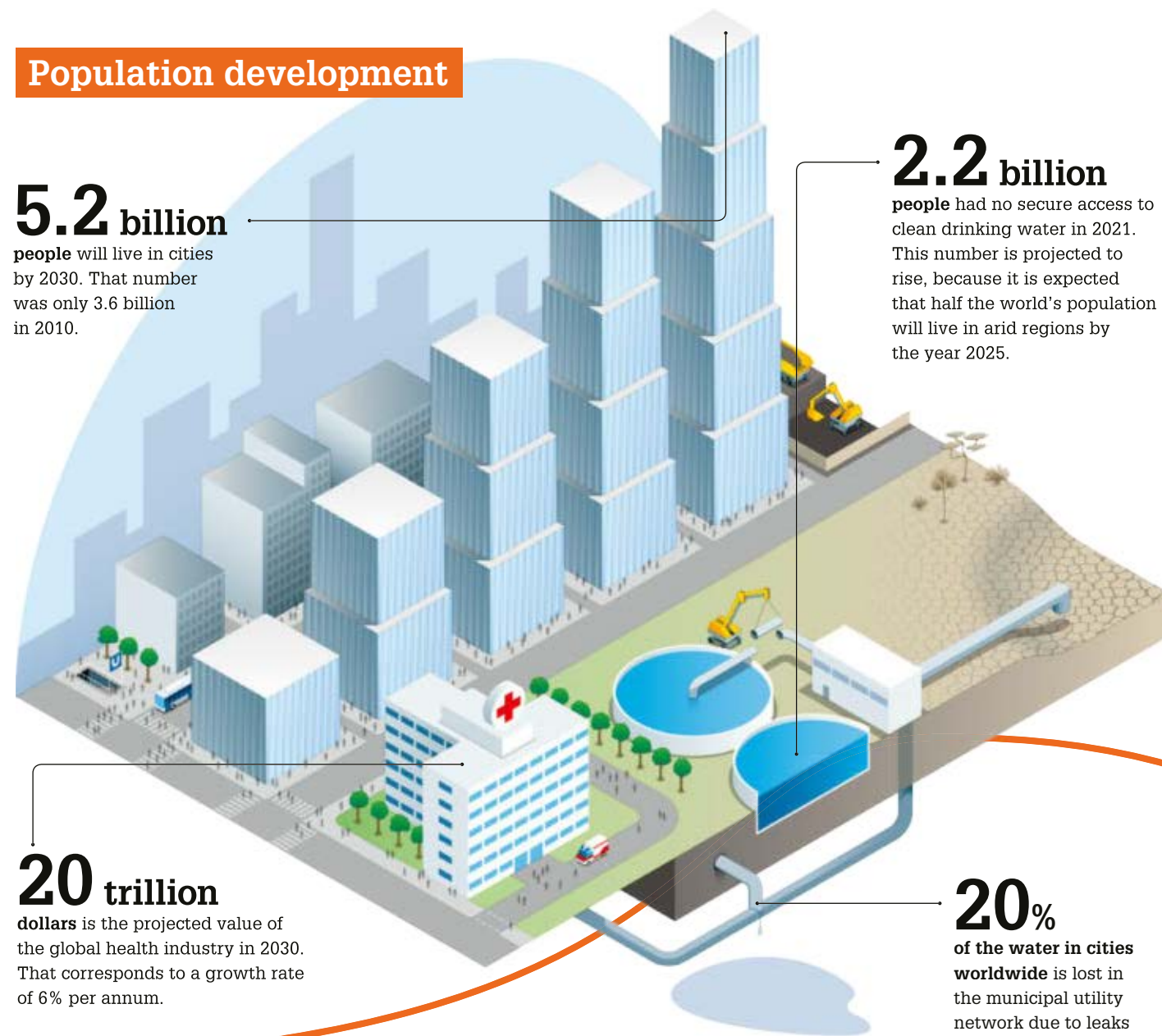
## Population development

**5.2 billion** people will live in cities by 2030. That number was only 3.6 billion in 2010.

**2.2 billion** people had no secure access to clean drinking water in 2021. This number is projected to rise, because it is expected that half the world's population will live in arid regions by the year 2025.

**20 trillion** dollars is the projected value of the global health industry in 2030. That corresponds to a growth rate of 6% per annum.

**20%** of the water in cities worldwide is lost in the municipal utility network due to leaks and other damage.



**5'000 servers** is the minimum number of servers operating in a hyperscale data center. Around 600 such data centers processed massive quantities of data worldwide in 2021 – and that number is on the rise. Just 500 hyperscale data centers were in operation in 2019.

**12%** is the 2020 projection for the annual growth rate of the global microelectronics market by 2025.

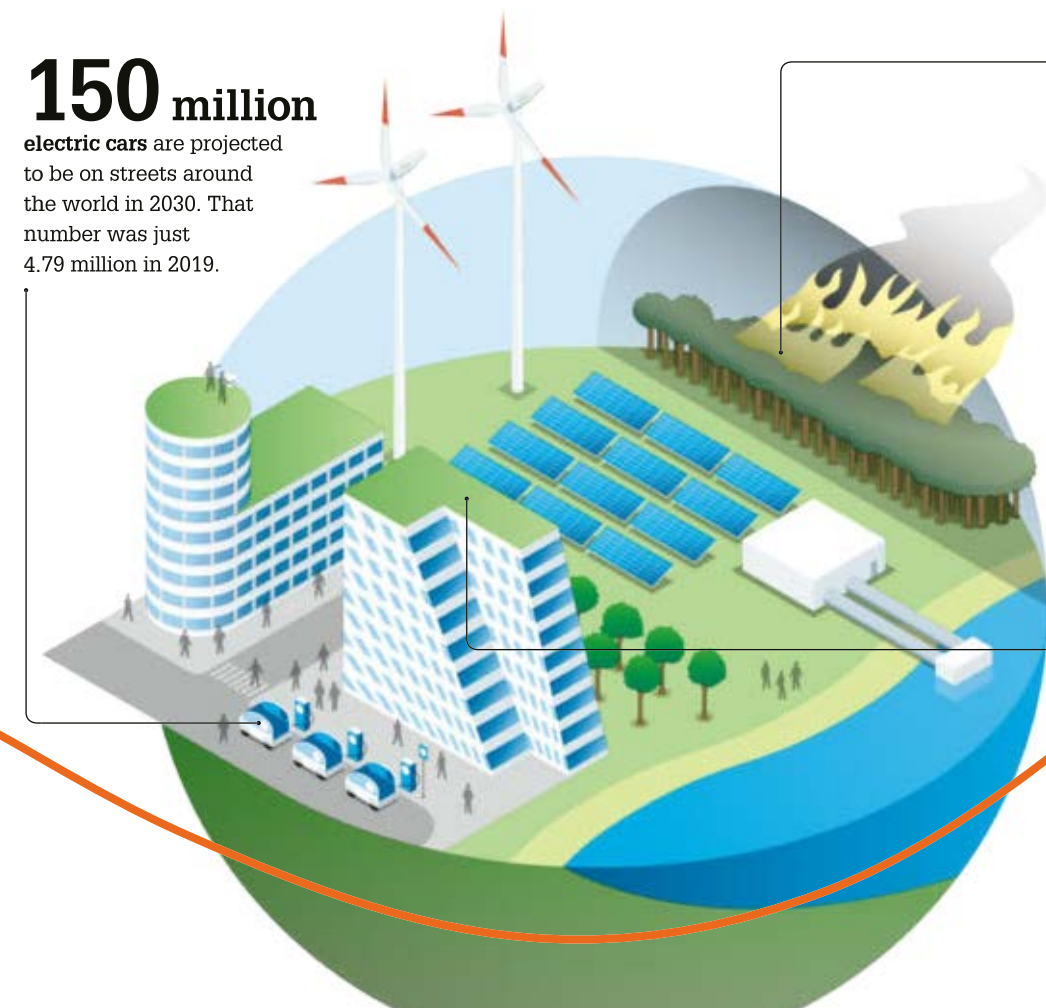
**50 billion** networked machines and devices will be in use around the world by 2025. That number was just 22 billion in 2018.

## Digitalization

**150 million** electric cars are projected to be on streets around the world in 2030. That number was just 4.79 million in 2019.

**5 out of 6** global risks threatening prosperity around the world in 2021 stem from environmental risk exposure, according to an estimate by nearly 850 international experts and decision-makers. Six years ago, only one environmental risk exposure was recognized as a threat.

**>1'200** companies in over 60 countries have joined the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) that was founded by leading environmental and climate protection organizations in 2015. This initiative is pioneering the drive toward carbon neutrality by setting emissions reduction targets based on scientific studies.



## Environmental awareness

# A Passion for Learning

**We are open to new ideas.** And we want to establish a new way of learning that is designed to prepare GF for a changing world of work. Together with her team, Nesibe Bruggmann is aiming to make this philosophy an integral part of the company.

**N**esibe is passionate about learning – and this passion is what brought her to GF over five years ago. She interviewed with the company in the spring of 2016 for a Talent Management & Learning internship in the Corporate HR team in Schaffhausen (Switzerland). “During the interview, I said I wanted to keep learning and improving every day,” she recalls as if it were yesterday. “I know now that sentence was the reason I was offered the position.”

Nesibe is true to her word. She established herself in the company and expanded her horizons. “During my internship, I learned about all the types of training offered by the GF Academy – cross-divisional training courses at the corporate level – and helped set some of them up,” she says. “That’s when I knew I wanted to keep working in this area for a long time to come.” After finishing her internship in the Corporate HR team, Nesibe moved to the GF Machining Solutions division, where she was responsible for improving global HR processes and implementing the Me@GF platform as an HR Specialist. At the beginning of 2020, she received an offer from Schaffhausen that she could not refuse. Since then, she has served as Head of Learning and Development, overseeing the ongoing development of the culture of learning at GF and global training measures at the corporate level. Part of her role is creating a new, global learning platform called MyLearning@GF.

## Learning is valuable

Nesibe’s work has become even more important since the beginning of 2021, when the implementation of the GF Strategy 2025 gave new impulse to the culture of learning. GF is aiming to make “Learning” a key part of the

corporate culture, along with “Performance” and “Caring.” Nesibe sees this as a logical step: “Our vision is for each and every one of us to make learning part of our everyday routine.” The new MyLearning@GF online learning platform is designed to help employees do just this. It went live with a pilot in May.

Why is the company making learning a central pillar of its new target culture now in particular? The GF Piping Systems, GF Casting Solutions, and GF Machining Solutions divisions are already world-class today. But the working environment is undergoing a transformation. “Our world is changing faster – and the markets we currently lead in are changing along with it,” says Nesibe. Digitalization, efforts to boost sustainability, and most recently the coronavirus crisis are pushing old certainties aside and making long-successful business models obsolete. “We have to respond by becoming faster and more agile. We need to be bolder and more confident about taking new approaches.”

—  
**“It’s okay to make mistakes – as long as we are quick to learn from them.”**

**Nesibe Bruggmann**  
Head of Learning and Development



## “We want to encourage people to learn”

**Nesibe Bruggmann** puts her heart into the topic of learning – and the new learning platform for GF. In this interview, she talks about the development phase, her expectations, and inspiration.

### What role does MyLearning@GF have to play for the future culture of learning at GF?

MyLearning@GF is the first central platform at GF that promotes learning from and with each other. The platform’s intuitive interface is designed to encourage employees to engage in regular learning, anytime and anywhere. During a second phase, we want to make the content available to colleagues in production, as well.

### What was the biggest thing you learned from the project yourself?

There were a lot of challenges, because part of the team was on short-time work due to the pandemic and we could only collaborate online. So it was all the more important to make sure everyone was always on board and not let setbacks get us down, either. If you put your heart and soul into working toward a shared goal as a team, you’ll be successful.

### Where do you get ideas and inspiration for your work?

I speak with people from my personal environment and from GF, of course. Now and then I talk with the colleague who supervised me when I did the internship. She works at a different company now, but we still stay in touch. I also like using social networks like LinkedIn, watching TED Talks, or reading specialist articles.

## KEY FACTS

**Name:** Nesibe Bruggmann  
**Position:** Head of Learning and Development, Corporate HR  
**Location:** Schaffhausen (Switzerland)  
**Part of GF since:** April 2016



**65%**

**of all children worldwide** will choose a profession when they are adults that does not yet exist.

**375 million**

**people worldwide** will have to acquire completely new skills or learn a different profession by 2030. This corresponds to 14 percent of all employees.

**57%**

**of all managers** see soft skills as more important than hard skills. This is because soft skills cannot be replaced by machines.

#### › **More digital, more flexible**

The same applies to learning offers at GF, of course. "GF has always had high-quality training offers," says Nesibe. "Our new learning platform will first and foremost make us more digital and more flexible." GF employees who visit MyLearning@GF will find new opportunities to develop themselves as employees. New learning content and formats will be continually adapted to the GF strategy and the needs of the teams and employees in order to build up the right skills and stay ahead of the curve. "Going forward, we will be focusing on a mix of digital self-study, online seminars, and in-person events," Nesibe says.

She and her team are aiming to instill a new way of thinking among employees. Their message: You can learn anytime and anywhere! It does not matter whether it is during daily routines, from experienced colleagues, or bit by bit. "We don't always have to participate in comprehensive training programs," Nesibe says. "Every day, each of us should ask ourselves, what can I learn by watching the best members of my team – and how can I make our values an active part of my daily work?"

But Nesibe believes that making a new culture of learning an integral part of GF will take more than modern platforms: "As one of our values, Learning means that we are open to new ideas. In other words, learning isn't a task that I check off my list once a year," she says. "Everything that we do is an opportunity to learn something new and to share what we have learned with each other."

Nesibe and her team are already seeing how well this can work in training sessions they have reorganized. "It's fantastic to see how colleagues from various areas who are meeting each other for the first time can talk openly about mistakes and learn from each other's expertise," she enthuses while describing the recent training sessions. "This is what we want to achieve."

#### **Making mistakes is part of life**

But what needs to happen to make this culture of learning from each other part of everyday work at a company that has always been about thinking precisely and the pursuit of technical perfection? It is not always easy for experienced engineers or long-time employees in particular to embrace new things and speak openly about aspects that are not working as well as they could. Nesibe thinks the key is a new awareness about dealing with failure. "It's okay to make

mistakes," she says, "as long as we are quick to learn from them."

Of course, there are different types of mistakes. There should not be any mistakes in situations that would have severe consequences – for example, when it comes to safety at work or standardized production processes involving large quantities. But: "Some mistakes can help us learn and can even be useful – for example, when developing prototypes," says Nesibe.

One prime example could be the startup scene, where you begin by focusing on developing a minimum viable product (MVP) at high speed. The MVP is an initial version of the product with the key basic functions, which is then developed continually by incorporating customer feedback. "We are using this same approach in the development of the MyLearning@GF platform so we can improve the system as well as the spectrum of learning offers on an ongoing basis," Nesibe says.

#### **New things take time**

Nesibe knows it will take some time for the new learning platform to become established throughout GF. "While working at GF Machining Solutions, I came to understand how long it takes for concepts from the corporate area to reach everyone else." This was why she implemented the project together with colleagues from the three divisions; in all, 16 people were involved worldwide. Nesibe is certain that the advantages offered by the new system will ultimately win over all employees at GF. In the future, the benefits will also include, for example, the option of training customers in the correct use of new machines.

Whether it's customers or employees, "You can tell when people are getting into the flow and are enthusiastic about the know-how they are acquiring. That's what we want to achieve with MyLearning@GF, too," Nesibe says, and her eyes begin to light up. There it is again – the passion for learning. ■



More pictures and videos from GF employees at [globe-strategy.georgfischer.com](https://www.globe-strategy.georgfischer.com)



**“The most important thing is addressing mistakes openly and learning from them.”**

Identifying disruptions and optimizing work processes are key parts of my job. Making mistakes is human, and nothing we need to be ashamed of. The most important thing is that we learn from them. Speaking openly about things that do not go well is the basis for continuous improvement. One day before the opening ceremony of the new greenfield foundry of GF Linamar in Mills River, I damaged a casting tool because of incorrect machine settings. I immediately talked to the team. With joint efforts, we were able to repair the tool just in time. It felt great for the entire team to present the new machine to our customers and guests the next day. Even if something goes wrong, we can still turn it into something positive, and learn from it. In the future, I will always use the right settings for this machine. Let's keep on sharing our lessons learnt.

**Sebastian Felkl** joined GF in 2002. As a Process Optimizer, he is responsible for production processes in high-pressure die-casting. Located in Herzogenburg (Austria), he collaborates with other GF sites in Europe and the US.



**“I challenge myself, give new things a try, and aim to be persistent when learning something new.”**

I challenge myself, give new things a try, and aim to be persistent when learning something new. Identifying a coach who can support you in developing new skills can be very helpful. For my new role as focus factory lead, I had to learn how to build new products and take leadership responsibility for a few team members – a great opportunity! I advanced my skills in lean management in internal training courses and Kaizen events. I also keep learning from own experience. Once I didn't check the method sheets for a production line I was in charge of. I made a mistake because I assumed I knew how it had to be done since I used to work on this line. Luckily, I was able to correct the mistake and apologized to my team. Better consult colleagues working on the production line first and don't assume that things do not change.

**Martha Gil**  
started as assembly operator at GF Piping Systems in El Monte, CA (US) in 2015. Two years later, she became cell lead and was recently promoted to focus factory lead.

**“The innovation game takes courage, the right people, and the right environment to fail often and succeed sooner!”**



I want to improve the ergonomics for operators of GF milling machines. I can implement my idea: connect VR glasses to our machines. Key data now appears in the operator's field of vision instead of on the machine monitor. For my project, I collaborate with many people and had to present my idea to our top management. This meant stepping out of my comfort zone. Kickbox gave me the right methodology and confidence to do so. A low point was when the remote connection didn't work as planned. I ran out of ideas and deadlines got tighter. Together with colleagues from IT, we came up with a different approach. It worked! I was able to analyze my mistakes and learnt how to resolve them. What I learnt: The innovation game takes courage, the right people, and the right environment to fail often and succeed sooner!

**Oliver Rosin**  
has been an engineer for spindle technologies at GF Machining Solutions in Biel (Switzerland) since 2017. In 2020, he joined the Division's Kickbox initiative that encourages employees to bring their own ideas to market.

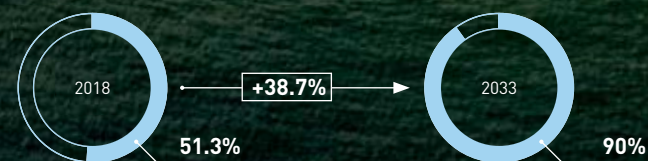
With a population of 13.3 million, Rio de Janeiro is one of the world's largest urban centers. However, the utility segment is unable to provide an adequate supply of gas and water here and in other areas of Brazil. This presents an opportunity for GF Piping Systems to grow its business.



**ACCESS FOR ALL**

In 2018, only half of all Brazilians were connected to the wastewater management system, resulting in environmental and hygiene-related problems. The government plans to implement long-term improvements by 2033.

Percentage of Brazilians with access to wastewater management



**38.5%**

percent of Brazil's drinking water never reached consumers in 2018. The main reasons were aging pipes and leakage.

Sources: GWI, Switzerland Global Enterprise

**OUR MARKETS**  
UTILITY MARKET IN BRAZIL

# Brazilian Jewel

Industry players looking to profit from the boom in water and gas supply projects in Brazil need strong partners locally. GF Piping Systems is now perfectly poised to make its mark in the region thanks to the acquisition of pipe manufacturer FGS.

**B**razil is currently one of the world's most dynamic markets for water and gas supply. The country is experiencing a boom in infrastructure projects in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, this has been the result of a governmental drive to privatize state companies, and on the other, it has been girded by an upswell in interested investors expecting good business and growth in the region.

Only 10% of Brazil's utility companies are currently in private hands. "In this sector, we're expecting an investment volume of around USD 130 billion by 2035," says Chris Blumer, Head of GF Piping Systems South America. "There is enormous potential there." The December 2020 acquisition of pipe manufacturer FGS Brasil Indústria e Comércio from the municipality of Cajamar in the state of São Paulo strengthened GF Piping Systems' position. The division has been active in Brazil and other South American countries for more than 20 years, but its activities had been limited to importing and selling GF Piping Systems products and providing local service to customers. "Our growth strategy for 2025 calls for us to increase our global market share and strengthen collaborations," explains Chris. "We will continue to add partners on the ground to help us expand our business in South America."

**Producing locally**

In Brazil, the largest utility market in South America, any company aiming to win contracts for infrastructure and public building projects needs to have in-country production sites. "That is largely due to high import costs and associated taxes," says Chris. "These make imported products and

services much more expensive, rendering international suppliers far less attractive than domestic producers."

**Significant water loss**

Particularly when it comes to the country's water supply, pipes need to be reliable with leak-free connections in order to combat the very common problem of potable water loss. The current rate of non-revenue water in the country is 38.5%. GF Piping Systems has in the past worked very closely with SABESP, the largest water utility company in Brazil, for example, collaborating on a large-scale project to improve the efficiency of water use in São Paulo. "We completed an important first phase of this project in 2019, with more phases to come," says Chris. He estimates that GF FGS – the name of the new company – holds a 75% share of the Brazilian market for HDPE piping systems. The acquisition "has dramatically improved our chances for expansion in Brazil and all of South America," says Chris. "GF FGS now has two local production sites." FGS opened an additional plant in the eastern region of Recife in 2019, in addition to the plant in Cajamar. The company numbered among the most influential manufacturers and suppliers in the Brazilian utilities market for HDPE piping systems. The same management team and the employees responsible for past successes have taken the reins at GF FGS. "Never change a winning team," says Chris Blumer. ■

**700 billion**

**Brazilian real (R\$):** The projected market volume for the expansion of water supply and wastewater management in Brazil by 2033. That is equivalent to CHF 118 billion.

**300'000**

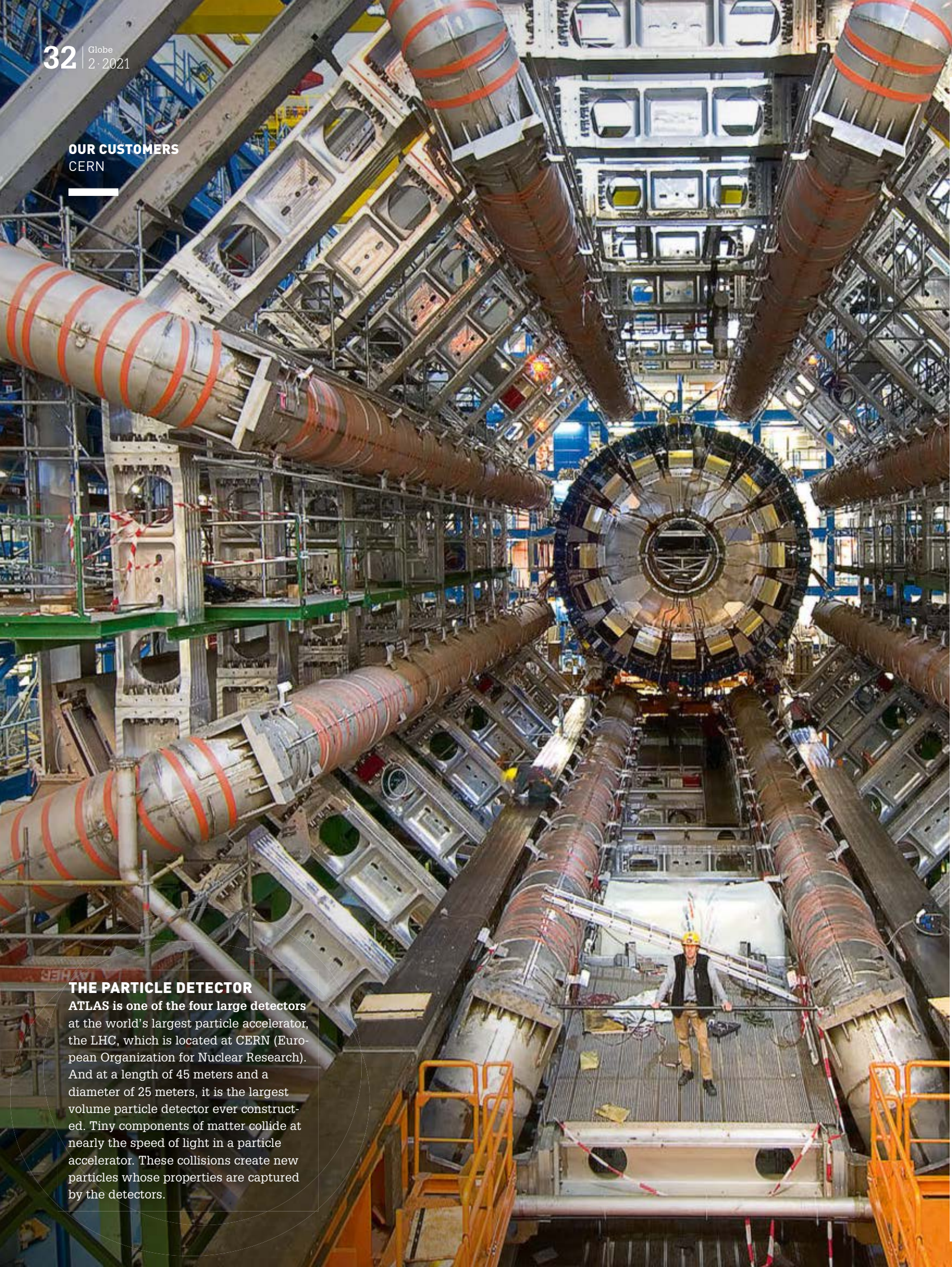
**km of new piping systems** must be built to ensure efficient wastewater management in Brazil. An additional 200'000 km would be required to supply the country with drinking water.



**Chris Blumer** began his career at GF in 1971 and has worked in several divisions and countries. Chris has lived and worked in the US for over three decades now, the last five years as Head of GF Piping Systems South America. He is responsible for the business in Mexico and Central and South America.



**OUR CUSTOMERS**  
CERN



**THE PARTICLE DETECTOR**

ATLAS is one of the four large detectors at the world's largest particle accelerator, the LHC, which is located at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research). And at a length of 45 meters and a diameter of 25 meters, it is the largest volume particle detector ever constructed. Tiny components of matter collide at nearly the speed of light in a particle accelerator. These collisions create new particles whose properties are captured by the detectors.



CERN has been working with GF Machining Solutions since 1980. The collaboration is based on a mutual commitment to solution-oriented thinking and development. On the job: the team at CERN's main workshop under the leadership of Said Atieh (second from left) together with Patrick Debonneville, Sales Engineer at GF Machining Solutions (right).

# Direct Line to the Universe

**What holds our cosmos together at its core?** Scientists at CERN are looking for answers to the big questions in physics. Wire-cutting EDM machines from GF Machining Solutions help them.

**S**aid Atieh has found his dream job. "I work in an environment that is both multicultural and multi-disciplinary," says the mechanical engineer. "Branches of science are represented here at CERN, where all my colleagues are constantly working at the frontier of what is possible. We have a unique mix of people, cultures, and disciplines here. The sum of their efforts is the excellence."

Atieh works for the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Meyrin near Geneva (Switzerland), better known as CERN, the world's largest research center for particle physics. Since the organization was founded in 1954, scientists have been searching for answers to the fundamental questions of physics at the world's largest research center for particle physics. What is matter made of? What forces hold it

together? What exactly happened shortly after the Big Bang?

To find answers to these questions, CERN researchers operate massive particle accelerators that provide insights into the nature of matter and the forces in the universe. Many scientific breakthroughs have been achieved with the support of the complex systems in recent decades. The researchers celebrated a spectacular discovery in 2012, when they proved for the first time the existence of the Higgs boson particle, which gives all things in the universe their mass.

**Colder than the cosmos**

Since 2010, CERN researchers have been operating the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's largest particle accelerator. This is housed in a circular tunnel that has a >

**CERN IN FIGURES**

**23** countries are now involved in the world's largest research center for particle physics. The yearly research budget rings in at CHF 1.2 billion.

**2'500** employees are permanently on the staff at CERN.

**9'500** magnets accelerate the particles in the LHC to near the speed of light.

**17'500** visiting scientists from all over the world are involved in the various CERN research projects.

**EXTREME EMPTINESS**

**The vacuum inside the LHC** is similar to the surface on the moon. In this way, the scientists ensure that the orbiting particles collide only with their own kind and not with air molecules. However, this requires a great deal of effort. It takes almost two weeks for special pumps to pump the particle accelerator as empty of air as possible.

**NOBEL PRIZES**

- **1984:** CERN researchers Carlo Rubbia and Simon van der Meer were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for the discovery of the W and Z particles.
- **1992:** In 1992, Georges Charpak was awarded for the development of particle detectors.

› circumference of 27 kilometers and runs at a depth of 100 meters under both Swiss and French territory. The LHC can offer several superlatives. One of them is that inside the magnets that keep the particles on their circular path, the temperature is minus 271 degrees Celsius, which is colder than in outer space. Building and operating a system like the LHC requires the best machines and materials that are available on the market – as well as creative engineers and technicians. This is where Atieh comes in. He heads CERN’s main workshop with 50 employees, where prototypes for new LHC components are created.

**Fast and precise**

It is no wonder that CERN is a special customer for GF Machining Solutions. “Because the technicians and scientists keep pushing things to their limits here, they also need state-of-the-art machines,” says Patrick Debonneville, who has been with GF Machining Solutions for 41 years and has been a sales engineer in Electrical Discharge Machining (EDM) since 1995.

CERN has been working together with GF Machining Solutions since 1980. At that time, the research center purchased the first wire-cutting EDM machine, followed by a newer model in 1998. In 2018, when the machine was nearing the end of its useful life, Debonneville supported Atieh in the purchase of a new CUT P 800 machine. It took patience to find an answer to every question – technological and economic.

Inside the machine, electrical sparks jump between a thin wire and the workpiece 600’000 times per second, creating a temperature of around 15’000 degree Celsius at specific points. “This allows metals

to be cut much more precisely than with a milling machine,” Debonneville explains.

**Exotic materials**

At CERN, the technicians in the workshop often work with exotic materials. These include the metal Niobium, which has the high conductivity necessary to generate high magnetic fields. “We need new components made of Niobium to make the LHC even more powerful in the future or to build completely new particle accelerators,” Atieh says. “For this, we have to produce very precise, sophisticated components such as the crab cavities for the upgrade of the LHC – the perfect task for wire-cutting EDM machines.”

However, some adjustments to the technology were necessary. After all, almost all other GF customers use it to cut more common materials such as steel, aluminum, or titanium. Due to the machining behavior of Niobium, application specialists from GF Machining Solutions had to adjust some of the machine’s characteristics, such as the tension of the wire or the frequency of the



Since March 2021, CERN has relied on the CUT P 800 to produce small components for the LHC particle accelerator. The enormous amount of energy contained inside the machine allows for more precise metal processing than a milling machine.



CERN researchers attempt to replicate conditions in outer space as closely as possible. To do this, they use particle accelerators that require tiny, intricate components to operate correctly.

electrical voltage, so that it could meet CERN’s specific needs. For two years, Atieh and Debonneville kept exchanging requirements and ideas for possible solutions. In March 2021, the time had come: The new CUT P 800 was delivered to the main workshop at CERN. There, it will play its part in answering the big questions in physics over the next 20 years. ■

**“We have known and trusted each other for a long time”**

**Said Atieh** heads CERN’s main workshop in Meyrin, near Geneva (Switzerland). The mechanical engineer talks about his role at the research center and the many years of cooperation with GF Machining Solutions.

**What role does your workshop play for CERN?**

We are part of CERN’s Engineering department, which is responsible for the design, manufacturing, and quality assurance of new components for the particle accelerators or detectors. CERN scientists and technicians come to us with ideas for prototypes, which we build with our machines according to their specifications. This has a very long tradition here. Our workshop was one of the very first buildings on the CERN site in the late 1950s, something we are still very proud of today.

**How does GF Machining Solutions support you in your work?**

We need machines with which we can ensure the highest precision in the machining of materials, which are sometimes exotic, such as Niobium. However, our machines must not be tailor-made one-offs. We rely on industry standards, because our prototypes will also be manufactured later in larger quantities by companies from CERN member states on the same machines. GF offers us both outstanding quality of machining, and machines that are used worldwide in industry.

**What do you appreciate about the cooperation?**

GF Machining Solutions is an important partner for us. We have known and trusted each other for a long time. We appreciate their proactive and very reliable service, in addition to the quality of the products. Whenever we need support, a GF expert is on site right away. Moreover, our contacts understand very well what we need. With our very specific requirements, this cannot be taken for granted.



**CUT P 800**

**The wire-cutting EDM machine** automatically recognizes which material has been inserted, selects the corresponding parameters, and processes the material with exacting precision.

More pictures and a video are available at [globe-strategy.georgfischer.com](http://globe-strategy.georgfischer.com)



**Said Atieh** works for the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Meyrin near Geneva (Switzerland).

# GF在 华前景

## OUR LOCATIONS GF IN CHINA

## New Locations in the Middle Kingdom

GF has been doing business in China for nearly 30 years and has continuously expanded its market presence there. The company's success story in the Chinese market began with a subsidiary of GF Piping Systems in 1993 and is continuing in 2021 with the construction of new, cutting-edge production sites for all three divisions.

**C**hina has developed into an industrialized country at breathtaking speed, with the country's gross domestic product growing by an average of 11.3 percent per annum since 1978. Even in 2020, the year of the coronavirus pandemic, China was the only major economy worldwide to increase its GDP – by 2.3 percent to an incredible USD 15.4 trillion. Switzerland's GDP, by comparison, dropped by 2.9 percent over the same period.

The hub of China's boom is the metropolitan region of Shanghai, the world's largest transshipment center. GF's Asian headquarters is located there, with further GF subsidiaries from all divisions in the surrounding megacities. In addition, GF has a successful partnership with the Lingyun Group. The common joint venture Chinaust celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2020.

### Potential for GF

China offers future growth potential for all GF divisions: GF Piping Systems could produce piping systems for millions of people in the utility, energy, and industrial segments. There are also opportunities for GF Casting Solutions, because China accounts for about one-third of all cars sold worldwide, with a rising trend. Finally, China accounts for about one-third of the global machine tool market, opening up growth possibilities for GF Machining Solutions.

### Additional sites for GF's key market

China is the key market for the three GF divisions that have been gradually growing their businesses there since 1993. GF has more than 3'100 employees in the country – almost as many as in Switzerland. China has a key role to play in the GF Strategy 2025, which aims to increase GF's sales to CHF 5 billion by 2025. Over 30 percent of these sales are expected to take place in Asia, and a majority of them in China.

GF is currently building two new production sites in the country. GF Machining Solutions built a new plant for milling machines in Changzhou, northwest of Shanghai, at the end of 2018, and the other divisions are following suit. GF Casting Solutions is currently building a high-pressure >

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“We want to grow by focusing on high-quality solutions for process automation.”

Michael Toh  
Head of Business Unit Asia  
at GF Piping Systems

### CHINA BY NUMBERS

China is an attractive market for all three GF divisions due to its size and dynamic economic growth. The country's rapid recovery from the coronavirus crisis is also enhancing the positive strategic outlook.

**1.4 billion**

people lived in cities in China in 2020. This figure puts China at the top of the world's population charts once again, slightly ahead of India.

**18.56%**

of the global gross domestic product was produced by China in 2020. By comparison, Switzerland achieved a value of 0.48 percent in 2020.

**GF MILESTONES IN CHINA**

- **1994:** The country's first GF Machining Solutions location, Beijing Agie Charmilles, goes into operation.
- **1997:** GF Piping Systems founds the division's first Chinese location in Pudong, a district of Shanghai.
- **2000:** The Chinaust joint venture is set up on the basis of the successful cooperation between GF and the Lingyun Group, and today includes 12 companies.
- **2005:** GF Casting Solutions establishes a plant for aluminum and magnesium die-casting in Suzhou, a booming city in the Shanghai region.

die casting plant for structural parts in Shenyang, a city in northeast China. The plant is scheduled to begin operations in winter 2021/2022, and the division chose this region to be close to customers including BMW and Volvo that have production facilities here. Customer expectations were also a key factor. "Their sustainability targets on CO<sub>2</sub> reduction are growing across the whole logistics supply chain," says Mujia Zhang, Head of Business Unit China GF Casting Solutions and Delegate of the CEO in China. "Therefore customers largely prefer the geographic adjacency of suppliers during the nomination process for new projects." Above all, GF is benefiting from China's booming e-mobility market. In addition to solutions for electric drive trains, the GF Casting Solutions offering includes lightweight structural parts that reduce the weight of electric cars while increasing their range. There were more than 1.34 million new registrations for electric and plug-in hybrid cars in China in 2020, a figure equal to that of the entire European market.

**New super plant in Yangzhou**

GF Piping Systems has been producing high-quality piping systems in China since 1998. At the end of 2020, the division began

construction work on a "super plant" in Yangzhou, about three hours' drive from Shanghai. The latest technology will be used here to produce innovative products such as automated valves, which GF Piping Systems aims to use to capture more segments on China's growing markets, specifically in the areas of industrial wastewater treatment and water quality monitoring.

Constant growth is also the name of the game for GF's largest division in China. "We want to grow by focusing on high-quality solutions for process automation, especially in the areas of industrial wastewater treatment and monitoring water quality," says Michael Toh, Head of Business Unit Asia at GF Piping Systems. By setting up its new locations, GF has paved the way for all divisions to take their next steps toward sustainable growth in China. ■

Work has been under way on a new GF super factory in Yangzhou since the end of 2020. Those attending the groundbreaking ceremony included Mujia Zhang, Delegate of the CEO in China [center], George Yang, Project Manager of the new plant [right], and colleagues from GF Piping Systems China and the Business Unit Asia.



The first location in China was established by GF Piping Systems in Pudong in 1997. Since then, all three divisions have been expanding their presence in the country. New production sites are currently being built with the aim of boosting further growth.



**FACTSHEET**

<b>Division:</b>	GF Piping Systems
<b>Location:</b>	Yangzhou
<b>Groundbreaking:</b>	September 2020
<b>Planned inauguration:</b>	Spring 2022
<b>Size:</b>	46'600 m <sup>2</sup> (total land occupation)
<b>Workspace:</b>	for ~130 employees



**WOW FACTOR**

The new building will feature a **leisure area** for employees to make the working environment interesting and lively.



**MODERN PRODUCTION**

The Yangzhou location has 17 extrusion production lines and 30 injection molding production lines, as well as high-end assembly workshops, clean rooms, and automated storage centers.

**State-of-the-Art and Sustainable**

GF Piping Systems aims to become a competitive player in China's municipal sewage treatment market by means of innovative products. Featuring modern manufacturing lines, open offices, and clean rooms, the new Yangzhou production site will enable the division to locally develop and produce pipes, fittings, and instrumentation for industrial and building technology applications. The goals here are to generate growth, satisfy customer needs, and contribute to a more sustainable way of life by reducing water loss. A variety

of ecologically friendly and energy-saving technologies are used in the new plant: high insulation wall and roof panels, low power consumption and noise reduction engines, solar energy, and geothermal heat pump air-conditioning. The new plant also utilizes what's known as the "sponge city" concept, which imitates the natural water cycle by retaining large parts of the rainwater.



"It is challenging to build this high-quality plant in alignment with GF's long-term business strategy in a very dynamic Chinese market. But this project shows me what teamwork can achieve. The passion, support, and care we have among our multicultural team motivates us every day."

**George Yang**  
Head of Supply Chain China and Project Manager of the Yangzhou plant



**FACTSHEET**

Division:	GF Casting Solutions
Location:	Shenyang
Groundbreaking:	July 2020
Planned inauguration:	April 2022
Size:	17'962 m <sup>2</sup>
Workspace:	for ~150 employees



Shenyang

**WOW FACTOR**  
The project is running right on schedule despite the impact of both the COVID-19 pandemic and the winter shutdown in northern China.

## Products for the Mobility of the Future

With its new Shenyang plant, GF Casting Solutions will be producing closer to its customers and gain growth in the Asian market. It focuses on lightweight solutions for well-known manufacturers such as BMW and Volvo. It provides modern workplaces for employees in production, maintenance and supporting functions such as sales, purchasing and HR. About 25 percent of the division's Chinese workforce will work in Shenyang once it has been inaugurated. The new site strengthens GF Casting Solutions' R&D

competences, which stretch across the entire manufacturing process from initial concept design to series production. From day one, the plant was designed according to the latest sustainability standards, for example with regard to energy efficiency in the manufacturing process or the use of renewable energy. The facility also complies with LEED requirements. This is the leading global certification for sustainable construction and manufacturing, including water recycling and heat treatment.



"In 2013, I joined GF as Head of Maintenance in Suzhou. Employee training at the company and its continuous improvement of technology attracted me to it. I like both innovation and challenges. The project to build our brand new factory in Shenyang involves both. I enjoyed it very much."

**Xiang Wu**  
Project Manager of the new Shenyang plant



**THE FIRST PRODUCT** in Shenyang will be a magnesium cross car beam for the BMW G18 (X5 SUV). Production start will be in 2022.



**FACTSHEET**

Division:	GF Machining Solutions
Location:	Changzhou
Groundbreaking:	September 2018
Inauguration:	End of 2019
Size:	51'550 m <sup>2</sup>
Workspace:	for ~165 employees



Changzhou

**WOW FACTOR**  
Changzhou is one of the division's two Application Centers in China. In late 2020, the 3'000th milling machine was delivered from Changzhou.

## New Plant, New Records

Since 2009, GF Machining Solutions has been producing milling machines in Changzhou. After the new production plant had been inaugurated at the end of 2019, the division reached a record number of order intakes in 2020 despite the pandemic. The new plant has a capacity of 700 sets of milling machines per year. Sustainability is a key topic at the Changzhou plant: LED light is saving electricity and a rainwater pool is used to reduce water consumption, just to offer two examples. For China, the Strategy 2025

of GF Machining Solutions focuses more and more on developing advanced manufacturing solutions for all key segments, from aerospace to medical to ICT/electronics and, of course, new energy vehicles within the automotive sector. The contribution of GF Machining Solutions China to the GF Strategy 2025 is expected to be significant in terms of growth and profit.



"I have spent 11 years at GF Machining Solutions in Changzhou, starting out as an Electrical Assembly Worker. I was promoted several times due to good performance and achievement. Fairness, transparency and ownership are our core principles. We count on team spirit and good execution to strengthen our competitiveness."

**Feng Yan**  
Vice Production Manager



**70%** of the milling machines produced in Changzhou in 2020 were sold in China.

MY HOME  
GENEVA REGION



Lying between the Alps and the Jura Mountains, the region around Geneva offers something for everyone.



## Peace and Quiet in the Heart of Europe

Here in Saint-Julien-en-Genevois, borders don't mean a thing. I have lived with my wife and two sons in this town with a population of around 15'000 in the Haute-Savoie department of eastern France since 2014. I work 15 kilometers away at GF Machining Solutions in Meyrin near Geneva (Switzerland).

My home is just a 20-minute journey from the airport, the train station, the lake, and the mountains. We have everything our hearts desire right here. I like to go hiking in summer and the 1'379-meter Mont Salève is the perfect place. If you don't want to drive up to the near slopes of La Clusaz in winter, here is my insider tip: Near St. Blaise, the

farmers let you sled on their summer fields during the winter, much to my children's delight. There are many renowned companies in and around Geneva, including GF Machining Solutions. As Head of Strategy, 2021 is a particularly exciting year for me. I contributed to designing the GF Strategy 2025 by analyzing market potential and assessing our strengths and weaknesses. I supported management in taking the right decisions. Now, my job is to make sure that we implement the strategy successfully. I was born in Paris, and I'm used to the hustle and bustle of the city, so after a long working day, I truly appreciate the peace and quiet of where I now live. ■



Guillaume Miechowka joined GF Machining Solutions in 2018. He played a key role in the development of the division's Strategy 2025 and collaborates closely with colleagues around the world.

MORNINGS

A CUP OF TEA



Once I've brought my children to school, I like to enjoy breakfast at the En Apar'Thé in Saint-Julien-en-Genevois. It's a cozy cafe with a tearoom, a terrace for sunny days, and an amazing assortment of different teas. I'm particularly fond of the Dammann brand of teas. Robert and Pierre Dammann, two brothers, founded the tea company in 1925, continuing in the tradition of Sir Damame, who traded tea in France back in the 17th Century.

## One day around Geneva

AFTERNOONS

GREEN SCENE

At noon, when I have more time, I like to set out for Hautecombe Abbey on the western shore of Lake Bourget. The former abbey was founded by monks in 1101. It can be reached on foot, by car, or by boat. The romantic scenery makes it the perfect place for a hike or to while away the afternoon. French poet Alphonse de Lamartine once visited this lake, where he penned his most famous poem, The Lake.



EVENINGS

HOME COOKING AT ITS FINEST



To cap off your evening with a culinary treat, I recommend the Auberge de Bajole restaurant, which is just 20 minutes away from the din of the city – in the middle of the countryside. It's a real hidden gem, and most people don't know about it. They serve home cooking at its finest, and for me it's a great place to relax and enjoy my time. The Auberge de Bajole opens its spacious terrace in summer so that children can play while their parents enjoy a meal and a glass of wine.

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How are you and your team contributing to the GF Strategy 2025 and living our new values every day? The Globe editorial team is looking forward to hearing from you: [globe@georgfischer.com](mailto:globe@georgfischer.com)



**“Let’s grab  
the future  
by the horns!”**

**Bret Carlson**  
SAP Consultant at GF Piping Systems  
and cowboy to the bone



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