

2025/  
2026

GLOBAL SOLUTIONS OF KANSAI HELIOS

# TrueColours



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**True Colours**  
2025/2026

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PAINT

# Dear readers,



In an era where integration shapes the foundation of progress, this edition of TRUE COLOURS invites you to explore the power of interconnectedness. As businesses navigate the complexities of sustainability, artificial intelligence, and evolving customer needs, integration emerges as the key to unlocking efficiency, innovation, and long-term success.

From seamless product solutions that enhance customer experience to the fusion of AI-driven intelligence with sustainability efforts, this edition of TRUE COLOURS highlights how integration is redefining industries. Knowledge transfer is an essential component of this transformation, encouraging interdisciplinarity and ensuring that skills are transferred, refined, and applied to generate meaningful outcomes.

Sustainability, no longer an isolated ambition, is now deeply embedded in corporate strategies, strengthened by integrated processes and intelligent solutions. AI, once a futuristic concept, is now a vital tool in optimizing workflows, improving decision-making, and enabling businesses to operate with greater foresight and responsibility. By embracing integration in all its forms, companies can not only meet current demands but also shape a more resilient and forward-thinking future.

Within these pages, you will find inspiring examples of businesses that have successfully harnessed the power of integration—aligning technology, sustainability, and human expertise to create holistic solutions for a rapidly changing world.

May this edition of TRUE COLOURS inspire you to rethink connections, embrace new synergies, and drive meaningful change in your organization and beyond.

Best regards,

**Dietmar Jost**

President of the KANSAI HELIOS Group Management Board



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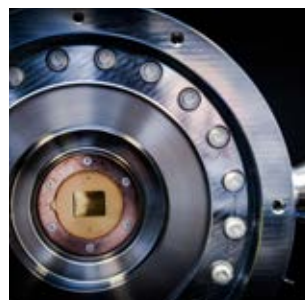
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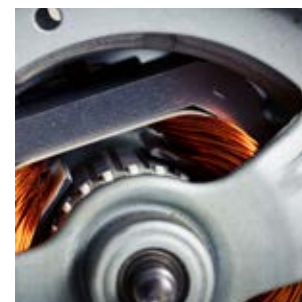
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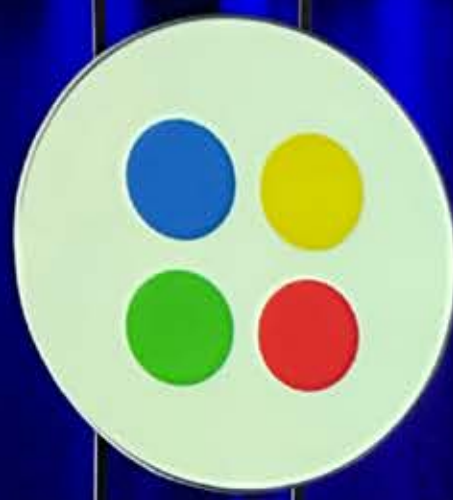


# PROGRESS

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”

Benjamin Franklin





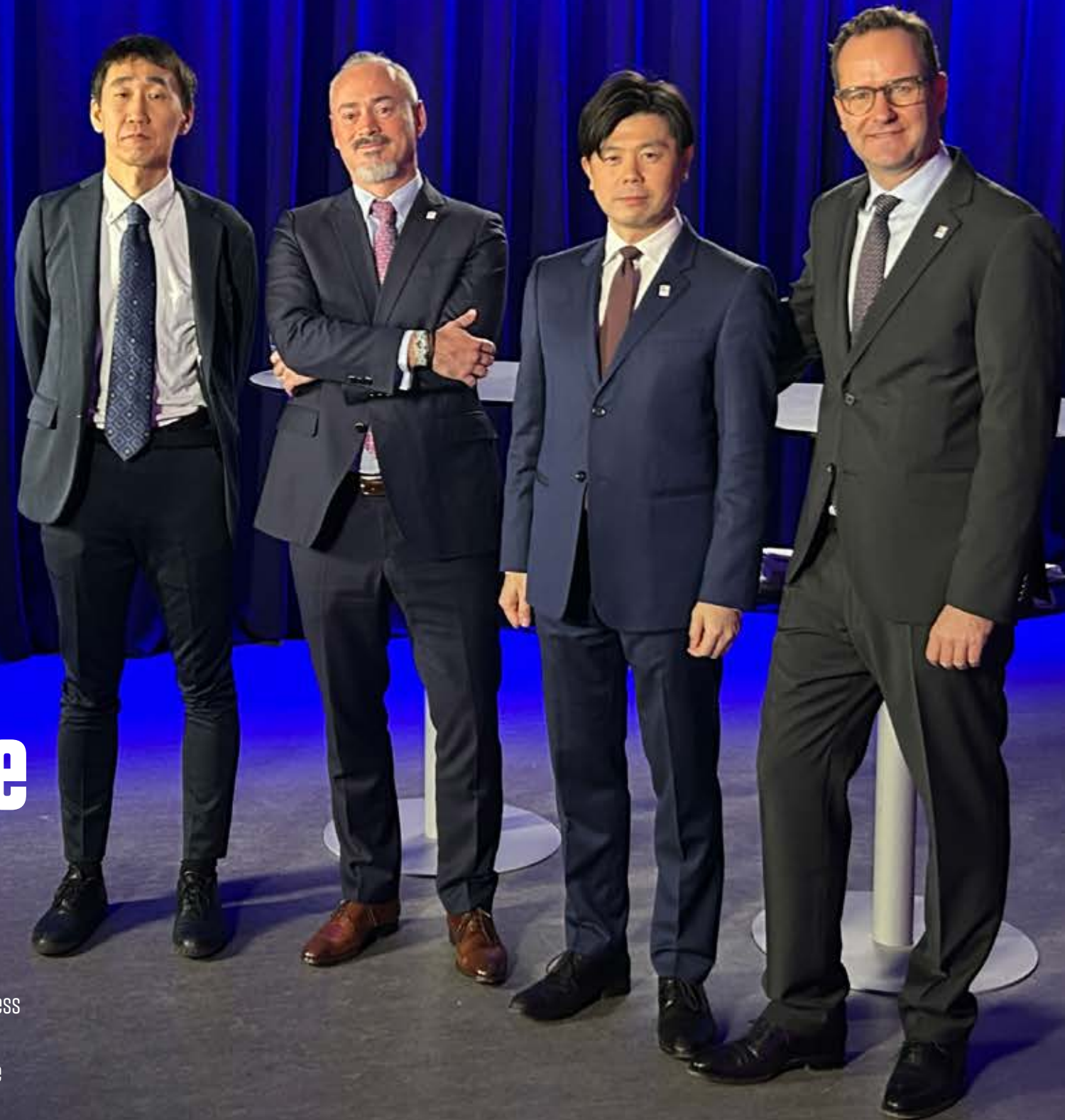
## STRATEGY BRIEFING

A VISIONARY STRATEGY UNVEILED AT THE  
INVESTOR RELATIONS & BUSINESS STRATEGY DAY

# Driving innovation and growth in Europe and beyond

Cornelia Camondo-Weißhapp

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Kansai Paint hosted its highly anticipated Investor Relations & Business Strategy Day, spotlighting the KANSAI HELIOS Group. This fully hybrid event provided valuable insights into the company's remarkable journey, its strategic role within the Kansai Paint Group, and the roadmap for future growth.





**W**ith the members of the Group Management Board leading the discussions, the event painted a vivid picture of how KANSAI HELIOS has positioned itself as a key player in Europe's industrial coatings market and is poised to become a global leader in innovation, sustainability, and financial performance.

#### A story of strategic transformation

Since its acquisition by Kansai Paint in 2017, KANSAI HELIOS has undergone a remarkable transformation. Originally focusing on the Eastern European market, the company strategically shifted its emphasis towards the robust, innovation-driven economies of Central and Western Europe. This move has yielded impressive results, with KANSAI HELIOS doubling its revenue in Western Europe and strengthening its foothold in key markets like Germany, France, and Italy.

This strategic shift has been crucial in consolidating the company's presence in Europe—a region recognized for its leadership in green technology and sustainability. By leveraging its European expertise, KANSAI HELIOS is not only bolstering the global presence of Kansai Paint, but also pioneering innovations in industrial coatings that support sustainable development across industries.

#### A European powerhouse with global reach

One of the major highlights of the event was the emphasis on KANSAI HELIOS' global footprint. With 19 production sites in Europe, two in America, and two in Asia, the company has established a strong foundation to serve diverse industries and customers worldwide.

The ability to develop and validate industrial coatings technologies in Europe and then scale them to global markets through the Kansai Paint network has positioned KANSAI HELIOS as a key innovation driver in the group.

A significant part of the company's success comes from its ability to integrate newly acquired companies into its operations seamlessly. The recent acquisitions of CWS Powder Coatings and WEILBURGER Coatings are clear examples of this, adding substantial revenue streams and fostering valuable synergies. Through disciplined post-merger integration activities—including governance alignment, purchasing synergies, and supply chain consolidation—KANSAI HELIOS is set to achieve an EBITDA margin of 13% by 2027 and 18% by 2030, with a revenue target of 1 billion euros.

#### Sustainability at the core of innovation

A defining characteristic of KANSAI HELIOS is its commitment to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) initiatives. At the Investor Relations & Business Strategy Day, the company showcased its ambitious ESG targets, which are shaping the future of industrial coatings:

- **Carbon footprint reduction:** KANSAI HELIOS aims to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30%, water consumption by 30%, and waste generation by 30% by 2030.
- **Sustainable products:** By 2030, 30% of the company's portfolio will consist of sustainable coatings, contributing to a more circular economy.
- **Green energy:** The company is committed to using 100% renewable energy and producing at least 10% of its own green energy.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** More than 30% of leadership positions are now held by women, demonstrating KANSAI HELIOS' dedication to an inclusive workplace.

**CONTINUED INVESTMENTS IN DIGITALIZATION, PROCESS EFFICIENCY, AND COST OPTIMIZATION ARE EXPECTED TO GENERATE AN ADDITIONAL 2% PROFITABILITY IMPROVEMENT THROUGH STRUCTURAL CHANGES ACROSS THE BUSINESS.**



Moreover, the company's Platinum rating from EcoVadis and its ICC+ certified products further underscore its leadership in sustainability. These initiatives align with Europe's position as a hub for green technology investments and reinforce KANSAI HELIOS' commitment to responsible business practices.

#### Innovating for a competitive edge

Innovation has been at the heart of KANSAI HELIOS' success, and the company continues to push the boundaries in industrial coatings technology. Some breakthrough advancements highlighted during the event include:

- Low-temperature curing powder coatings—reducing energy consumption for customers.
- Polyaspartic railway coatings—improving durability and efficiency in train manufacturing.
- High-performance non-stick coatings—enhancing industrial and consumer applications.
- Core plate varnishes for electric vehicles—supporting the e-mobility revolution.

By continuously investing in R&D—allocating 4% of its revenue to innovation—KANSAI HELIOS is ensuring its own growth and reinforcing the strength of the entire Kansai Paint Group.

As part of its 18<sup>th</sup> mid-term plan, KANSAI HELIOS is implementing a structured growth strategy to achieve

its ambitious financial goals. Beyond organic growth, the company is also exploring bolt-on acquisitions and strategic partnerships to strengthen its market position.

A key focus will be expanding in high-growth industrial segments such as:

- Railway coatings (where KANSAI HELIOS already holds a leading market position).
- Core plate varnishes for the energy sector.
- Powder coatings for sustainable industrial applications.

#### KANSAI HELIOS—the third pillar of Kansai Paint's global strategy

The Investor Relations & Business Strategy Day made one thing clear—KANSAI HELIOS is on an unstoppable trajectory toward becoming the third pillar of Kansai Paint, alongside Japan and India.

With its fastest-growing industrial coatings business in Europe, its leadership in sustainability-driven innovation, and its strategic importance within Kansai Paint's global network, KANSAI HELIOS is more than just a European success story—it's a global force shaping the future of industrial coatings.

As the company continues its journey toward 1 billion euros in revenue, investors, stakeholders, and partners can look forward to an exciting and transformative decade ahead. •





DRIVING INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

# Kansai Paint's vision for a better future

Radmila Wollrab



Kansai Paint has unveiled its 2025 Integrated Report, presenting a year of exceptional progress, strategic innovation and a commitment to sustainability. We take you on a brief journey through the current world of paints and coatings from the view of Kansai Paint as global coatings industry leader, addressing questions like: How does Kansai Paint create value? What is the backbone of the growth and ESG strategy? How do they approach the challenges of the industry? And which role does Europe play for the group-wide growth strategy?

From the very first page of the 2025 Integrated Report, it becomes clear: Kansai Paint is more than a global coatings company and a leader in climate-friendly transport solutions—it's a group with a clear purpose. Across its factories worldwide, from Japan to Europe, India, and Africa, it's not just paints and coatings being produced but a shared commitment to innovation and sustainability. At the heart of it all is a clear corporate philosophy:

#### “Coating Our Life”

Kansai Paint leverages superior technology to contribute to customers and society, in a sustainable manner, with innovative products and services, through a competent workforce, built on a culture of customer focus, integrity, and respect to our stakeholders.

The core functions or the original value of every paint and coating are protection, beautification and functionality. We are often unaware of it, but paints and coatings accompany us every day and, more than that—they protect us, support us and make our lives more beautiful and colourful. Regarding objects, goods, and buildings, one “rule” applies in most cases: if it is important, if it needs protection, it is coated.

In addition to their protective function, they can offer functionalities almost as diverse as their range of colours. For example, they extend the life of bridges

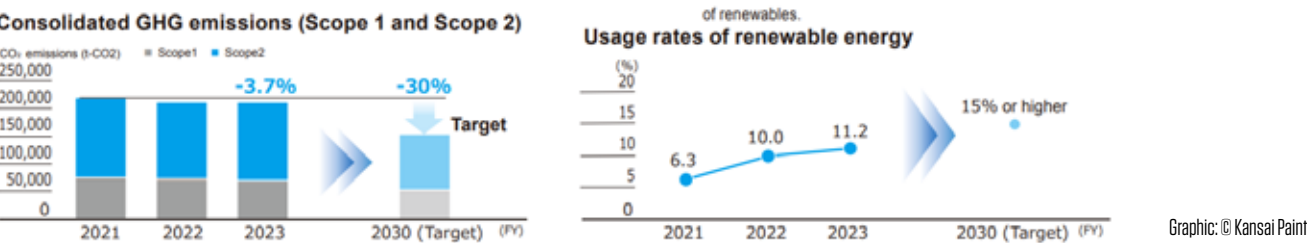
and infrastructure objects, they create a pleasant room climate, offering thermal insulation, ensure traffic safety, protect us from heat or viruses, and give our kitchen furniture the perfect finish. Coatings offer manifold opportunities, playing a crucial role in developing solutions to ensure the continued safety and comfort of human life—with plenty of future potential. Kansai Paint is confident in this role and its mission will grow even larger and more important as the group works to enhance sustainability for humanity, specially, through businesses, the company will generate products and services that increase

value for customers, then use the earnings a resources for further growth.

#### Thriving the original value of paints and coatings

Kansai Paint is specialized in five different sectors: architectural, automotive, marine/protective, industrial, and car refinish. Despite their diversity, all these segments share a common goal: leveraging the core benefits of paints and coatings to drive sustainability. By extending the lifespan of structures and objects, they help preserve value, enhance durability, and minimize waste.





The company has been promoting reforms in environmental protection and to human progress, since merely continuing to do things as we have to date will be insufficient to counter global warming and environmental degradation. Thus, a clear contribution to environmental protection and to human progress are focal points for Kansai Paint. The company is driving forward reforms in all areas in order to transform corporate value, with the focus on profitable growth.

“Good to Great”—17<sup>th</sup> Medium-term Management Plan

Launched in April 2022, Kansai Paint’s 17<sup>th</sup> Medium-term Management Plan marks a turning point toward sustainable growth, outlining key priorities such as enhancing profitability, investing in growth areas, and strengthening management foundations. Framed as a “Good to Great” strategy, this plan is a crucial step in transforming corporate value while addressing materiality issues over three years. The second year presented significant challenges, including intensified competition in India and shifting market conditions in Africa, yet the Group made steady progress through bolt-on M&A in Europe and structural reforms in Asia. In its final year of the 17<sup>th</sup> Medium-term Management Plan, Kansai Paint leveraged these lessons to enhance competitiveness in India, expand in Africa, and drive earnings improvements in Europe and Asia. Simultaneously, the company is taking a forward-looking approach by boldly formulating its next Medium-term Management Plan, with a long-term vision spanning the next five to ten years.

Sustainability goals

Kansai Paint Group has defined material topics and set “KPI2030”—a set of goals to be achieved by 2030—to address these priorities. To ensure steady progress, the Group follows the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle, continuously collecting and analyzing data, then implementing necessary improvements.

Committed to reaching its sustainability goals, the entire Group cooperates under the guidance of the Sustainability Promotion Committee. This committee updates plans, integrates sustainability into company-wide policies, and ensures that initiatives are both effective and practical by implementing concrete measures in collaboration with individual departments.



The Sustainability Promotion Department collaborates with each unit and with each Group company to gather ESG information concerning the entire Group, to prepare for disclosure of the information demanded and be ready for the movement toward regulation underway in Japan and other countries. Every day, we take on the challenge of making steady preparations in this area. All activities and efforts are part of medium-term and long-term targets, which are set to 2050 and beyond.

- **Environment:** Kansai Paint has established its fundamental position on climate change, water resources, and biodiversity based on its Corporate

A CLEAR CONTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND TO HUMAN PROGRESS ARE FOCAL POINTS FOR KANSAI PAINT

Policy. In conducting business activities, the company strives to identify the opportunities and risks associated with climate change, environmental resource dependence, and shifting environmental conditions. It actively works to reduce GHG emissions, water withdrawal, waste reduction and preservation of biodiversity. Understanding the relationship between business activities and the environment across the entire supply chain is essential, extending beyond company-operated sites to include upstream suppliers and customer production locations.

- **Social:** The company is committed to advancing people and society through innovative products and services. Respect for cultures, groups, and communities is a core value. Kansai Paint group promotes diversity, honors individual and cultural differences, and strives for harmonious coexistence with local communities worldwide. Kansai Paint’s human rights policy is based on the belief that true progress requires upholding human rights, complying with local laws, and fostering awareness of how our activities impact society. Internally, there is a clear strategy supporting the thrive of human resources, including health and safety management, strengthening relationships based on trust, engagement and career planning as well as supporting talents.
- **Governance:** Kansai Paint has established a robust corporate governance framework to ensure compliance, risk management, and business continuity. The Risk

**Realizing decarbonization**

**Improvement of Quality of Life (QOL)**

**Transform into a Group where diverse people play active roles**

**Enhancement of aachieving resource and economic circulation**

Management Committee, under the Corporate Governance Committee, leads efforts to identify, evaluate, and mitigate risks, while the Compliance Promotion Committee oversees adherence to laws, regulations, and ethical standards. To strengthen resilience, the company prioritizes business continuity planning, particularly for high-impact risks such as natural disasters. Regular training, a structured internal whistleblowing system, and transparent stakeholder communication further reinforce Kansai Paint’s commitment to responsible corporate management.

The role of Europe in Kansai Paint’s Goals

Kansai Paint Group is just as diverse as the world of colours. With companies spread around the world, every region has its own roles and main themes. Therefore, the group focuses on the collaboration across all regions and businesses.

Europe and KANSAI HELIOS as their competence center in this market play a significant role for Kansai Paint being fundamental for the growth strategy and the efforts in terms of ESG. Europe is a pioneer in sustainability initiatives with a focus on advanced technological fields in this market. KANSAI HELIOS is establishing and growing their position as a leading industrial coating system supplier in various markets, including railway coatings and powder coatings. The company aims to drive profitability through strategic bolt-on mergers and acquisitions and effective post-merger integration (PMI). In 2023, Europe was responsible for 24.2%

of consolidated net sales and Kansai Paint is therefore strengthening the foundations that support its businesses.

In the future, Kansai Paint expects a market growth associated with sustainability regulations and new trends in Europe. The railway, powder and ACE markets will continue to be of utmost importance for the Group and the focus will continue to be on supplying products and providing solutions for issues relating to the realization of sustainable societies in the areas of industry and trade.

At KANSAI HELIOS, we fully commit to Kansai Paint’s vision by focusing on environmentally responsible solutions, efficient processes, and long-term value creation. By contributing to the Group’s shared goals, we aim to address current challenges while preparing for future opportunities. The Integrated Report serves as an invaluable resource for comprehending how these efforts are coordinated to achieve quantifiable progress, both globally and within KANSAI HELIOS. It reflects our collective commitment to operating responsibly and sustainably in a rapidly changing world. And finally, it shares a clear conviction based on the long-term expertise and knowledge: coatings are not only an incredibly fascinating subject. They are connecting people, continents, objects, thrive and protect values, and provide solutions that contribute to a more sustainable world. •

AN INTERVIEW WITH YUKIYO YUZAWA

# CMF design trends and their meaningful value

Cornelia Camondo-Weißhapp

Which colour trends enhance the value of social products? How do CMF design trends emerge, and how is the paint industry leveraging these trends? Which factors are driving them? And why are some Japanese railcars suddenly shimmering like pearls? We asked Yukiyo Yuzawa, Colour Designer at Kansai Paint in Japan.



**T**his is the first time we have a colour designer in an interview. We are excited to get some insights in CMF design, which is such a brought field. Can you introduce us briefly to this discipline?

CMF stands for “Colour, Material, Finish,” encompassing key elements that define a product’s appearance, texture, and tactile qualities. Beyond colour, it involves combining materials and finishes to enhance the product’s shape or to evoke tactile comfort. From a very technical perspective, CMF utilizes meta design for a synchronized planning of the identity of a whole product series for a specific brand. A single colour matrix is enough instead of one colour card for each product line. As usually different designers work on different products of a specific brand, they use CMF Design handbooks in order to ensure a unique but coordinated product identity. This process makes sense for choosing the

colour basis for OEM products for instance. If the OEM products have different forms, the CMF design ensures the representative basis colours and materials.

**What do you consider as huge potential of CMF design?**

Amidst the global emphasis on sustainability, design is increasingly recognized not merely as “decoration” but as a “means of creating new value.” CMF design is gaining attention across various industries as a key factor influencing product perception. In Europe, a product’s alignment with brand values and environmental considerations have become significant criteria for consumer choice. As an illustration, initiatives such as the utilization of circular materials and the reduction of carbon footprint during production enhance the competitiveness of a product. Similarly, in Japan, sustainable materials and designs

reflecting regional characteristics are drawing attention. This highlights industry-wide efforts to respond to this global trend. In short: CMF design strengthens product sustainability and user experience while deepening connections with culture and society.

**How can this potential be applied to the paint and coating industry?**

There are many possibilities to use CMF. Let’s begin with their vivid colour expression. Organic pigments can be used to create captivating vibrancy for various surfaces in many different industries. Other possibilities are special metallic designs on aluminium materials that highlight the smooth curves of products with radiant brilliance. A

brilliant option by the way is also layering pearl pigments over a white base to create a refined and silky glow. And of course, there are techniques like matte processing to diffuse light or soft-feel coatings that provide a smooth texture, evoking an impression of luxury.

Such sophisticated effects are achieved through careful material selection and advanced process technologies, adding unique character and significant value to products. CMF design goes beyond aesthetics, influencing emotions and perceptions. It fosters attachment to products and drives purchase decisions. In this way, CMF design can be described as “design with meaningful value,” creating experiences that resonate deeply with users.



Photo: © TOKYOTOWER





Photo: © Lexus

## CMF TRENDS FOR PAINTS

- Vivid Colours
- Metallic Finishes to accentuate Curves
  - Luxurious Pearl-like Sheen
- Sophisticated Surface Finishes



Photo: © LRT

**This description also resonates with us. How are CMF design trends created?**

CMF design trends emerge through research and analysis by international experts. For instance: Intercolour, the International Colour Authority, brings together design specialists from around 18 countries to define and disseminate global colour trends. Design research firms like Carlin analyse social backgrounds and consumer attitudes to predict lifestyles 18 months to 2.5 years ahead.

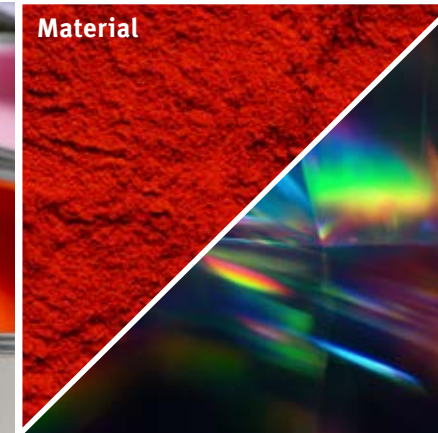
The annual Salone del Mobile Milano in Italy presents future lifestyle concepts and latest CMF designs, setting significant trends across the design industry.

Kansai Paint Japan integrates global trend insights with past design movements and industrial data to forecast CMF trends for future paint and coating applications. Particularly in the automotive sector, the Global Colour Trend Meeting (GCTM), involving members from 7 different countries, combines regional demand, production data, and global trend analyses to deliver unique forecasts and colour proposals.

THIS INNOVATIVE PAINT AND COATING TECHNIQUE CREATED A TRAM THAT TRANSCENDS ITS ROLE AS A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, ALSO BECOMING A REGIONAL ICON AND CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: THE HAGA UTSUNOMIYA LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT.



Colour



Material



Finish



Photo: © Dyson

**Can you share examples of CMF design in paint applications?**

A notable example from Kansai Paint Japan is the next-generation tram system, the Haga and Utsunomiya Light Rail Transit (LRT). As the first newly constructed tram system in Japan in 75 years, this project incorporated regional nature and cultural history into its design.

Utsunomiya is known as the “City of Thunder” due to frequent lightning, symbolizing vitality, and prosperity. Drawing on this cultural heritage, the vibrant yellow “Raito Yellow”, which means “Thunder City Yellow” was chosen as the concept colour to represent energy and modern advancement. Conventional railway coatings often use single-coat solid colours. However, Kansai Paint adopted a three-layer coating system for the LRT, involving a colour coat for vibrancy, a pearl

layer for high brilliance, and a clear coat for surface protection. By using high-brightness transparent pearls instead of aluminium pigments, they could overcome challenges in maintaining vivid yellow tones while achieving a shimmering, metallic-like quality.

**Please grant us a look into the future CMF design trends?**

Future CMF trends will revolve around the fusion of “environment,” “comfort,” and “futuristic aesthetics.” In light of the Sustainable Development Goals, designs that incorporate recycled industrial waste and bio-based pigments, such as bamboo charcoal, are garnering attention. Soft greyish tones and earthy colours, which offer natural sophistication, will appeal to diverse audiences across age and gender. Simultaneously, vibrant, and futuristic

colours reflecting advancements in AI and virtual environments will remain essential for contemporary style propositions. These trends will enhance the sensory and social value of products, harmonising with everyday life.

**Where do you see the role of KANSAI HELIOS in regard of CMF design?**

Kansai Paint, in collaboration with its acquired partner KANSAI HELIOS, aims to extend these CMF designs into various industries, including transportation, architecture, and heavy machinery. Leveraging KANSAI HELIOS' expertise in European markets, the partnership strives to create cross-industry value and advance global initiatives to enhance quality of life, embodying the shared philosophy of “making people happy through paint.” •



DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY

# How bio-based coatings are transforming the ACE industry

Karla Rončević

In an age where sustainability is reshaping industries worldwide, bio-based coatings are leading the change. These eco-friendly products are not just a response to growing environmental concerns—they're an innovative solution for the agricultural, construction, and earthmoving (ACE) coatings segment. With raw materials derived largely from renewable sources, bio-based coatings enable a reduction in the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint while delivering performance that rivals, and often surpasses, traditional options. The result? A powerful, planet-friendly alternative that redefines coating quality without compromise.

A significant number of raw materials, which are used to produce paints, either originate directly from fossil feedstock or indirectly from energy in the oil and gas industry. This reliance has prompted researchers to explore alternative feedstocks such as biomass, recycled chemicals, and carbon dioxide. While reusing materials from applied coatings remains impractical due to the challenges of separating the coating from the substrate, a shift to biologically renewable binders opens the door to a circular economy and a greener future. However, transitioning to bio-based raw materials isn't without hurdles. Limited availability, high costs, and scepticism about their suitability in high-performance segments pose challenges. Nevertheless, the industry is pursuing novel

approaches to balance cost, quality, and sustainability, thus paving the way for new solutions.

**Turning challenges into opportunities**  
Chemically, there are two ways to introduce or increase bio-based content in a coating. The simpler approach is to use bio-based raw materials that are chemically identical to their fossil-based counterparts. A significant amount of resin raw materials are available from biological sources or through mass balance certification schemes like ISCC Plus. This results in binders with higher bio-content while maintaining the same properties as traditional oil-based products. Such materials enable paint formulators to quickly boost the bio-content in their paints, often leading to a

reduction in carbon footprint as well. The alternative approach involves using fully or partially bio-based raw materials that serve as functional equivalents to fossil-based ones. Since their properties may differ, formulators must adapt the formulations to ensure the final product delivers the coating performance customers are used to.

**Setting new standards for ACE coatings**  
The ACE segment demands coatings that can withstand the harshest conditions. From corrosion protection to UV resistance, bio-based solutions must meet these rigorous standards—and they do so without compromise.  
When developing more sustainable bio-based coating solutions, KANSAI HELIOS focused on improving high-solid

EPOXY PRIMERS, 720 h NSS (ISO 9227) PERFORMED AT BLASTED STEEL SUBSTRATE, Sa 2 1/2, Rz 20-30 µm.

Property	Standard	EP-P/Oil	EP-P	EP-P/Bio
DFT [µm]	ISO 2808	81±4	82±3	79±4
Blistering	ISO 4628-2	0(S0)	0(S0)	0(S0)
Rusting	ISO 4628-3	Ri 0	Ri 0	Ri 0
Cracking	ISO 4628-4	0(S0)	0(S0)	0(S0)
Flaking	ISO 4628-5	0(S0)	0(S0)	0(S0)
Delamination at scribe [mm]	ISO 4628-8	0,2	0,2	0,2
Rusting at scribe [mm]	ISO 4628-8	0,2	0,1	0,1
Adhesion	ISO 2409	Gt 0	Gt 0	Gt 0

products. These products included a two-component epoxy primer, a high-build two-component polyurethane topcoat, and a two-component polyurethane monolayer with enhanced weather resistance. They were already top performers for agricultural machinery and equipment, offering a lower carbon footprint by speeding up processing or reducing the energy needed for curing.

The original formulation of the primer already included some bio-based components, and by carefully selecting additional bio-based raw materials, the bio-content increased significantly without compromising performance. By utilizing functional equivalents of conventional materials, the bio-based content was further elevated, resulting in a significantly higher proportion of bio-based components. The properties of the new formulations remain nearly identical to the original, with tests showing no significant difference in their durability. This demonstrates that it's

possible to improve the sustainability of coatings while maintaining their high-quality performance.

For the reformulation of polyurethane coatings there are fewer economically efficient bio-based raw materials available, and certain key ingredients are limited. Despite this challenge, their potential is nevertheless promising, encouraging the creation of bio-based versions of established materials. The development of the bio-based polyurethane topcoat (PU-TC/bio) began with the standard commercial version, which already contained a small amount of bio-based content. The bio-based components were incorporated into all the key ingredients, including the film-forming components, binders, hardeners, and additives. The formulation was carefully adjusted to ensure it closely matched the properties of the traditional, fossil-based version. Consequently, the latest PU-TC/bio formulation exhibits a

significantly elevated bio-based content, whereas the fundamental coating attributes remain nearly identical to the initial formulation. Since corrosion resistance is the primary function of primers and weather resistance is key for topcoats, a xenon test was performed to assess the weathering resistance of the bio-based topcoat. The test results, as shown in the data, indicate minimal difference in performance.

Introduction of significant bio-based content into PU-DTM followed the same development logic as with the PU top-coat. Bio-based functional equivalents of petrol based raw materials allowed for increase of the bio-based content in PU-DTM/bio to 35.0% from 3% in standard PU-DTM. DTM materials combine requirements of primers and top-coats. The test results prove that PU-DTM/bio can be safely used as a bio-based drop-in alternative to PU-DTM.

EPOXY PRIMERS, 480 h of WATER CONDENSATION (ISO 6270-2) PERFORMED AT BLASTED STEEL SUBSTRATE, Sa 2 1/2, Rz 20-30 µm.

Property	Standard	EP-P/Oil	EP-P	EP-P/Bio
DFT [µm]	ISO 2808	82±4	81±5	80±3
Blistering	ISO 4628-2	0(S0)	0(S0)	0(S0)
Rusting	ISO 4628-3	Ri 0	Ri 0	Ri 0
Cracking	ISO 4628-4	0(S0)	0(S0)	0(S0)
Flaking	ISO 4628-5	0(S0)	0(S0)	0(S0)
Adhesion	ISO 2409	Gt 0	Gt 0	Gt 0

POLYURETHANE TOP-COATS, ACCELERATED WEATHERING OF PU-TC AND PU-TC/BIO ACCORDING TO ISO 16474-2, METHOD A CYCLE 1.

Property	Gloss ret.		DE
	20 °	60 °	
Exposure	2016 h		
PU-TC	73 %	90 %	0.17
PU-TC/Bio	71 %	90 %	0.14







POLYURETHANE MONOLAYERS, ACCELERATED WEATHERING OF PU-DTM AND PU-DTM/BIO ACCORDING TO ISO 16474-2, METHOD A CYCLE 1.

Property	Gloss ret.		DE
	20 °	60 °	
Exposure	2016 h		
PU-TC	74%	92%	0.22
PU-TC/Bio	77%	91%	0.21

Reducing the carbon footprint

Increasing bio-based content significantly reduces the carbon footprint of coatings. Product Carbon Footprint calculations (ISO 14067) showed up to a 30% reduction in the carbon footprint of KANSAI HELIOS bio-based ACE coatings compared to their petroleum-based equivalents. While the reduction in carbon footprint isn't proportional to the increase in bio-based content, this progress highlights the potential of bio-based solutions in driving sustainability in the coatings industry. Overcoming obstacles related to price, availability, and performance, bio-based coatings provide a viable means of reducing environmental harm without compromising performance. •

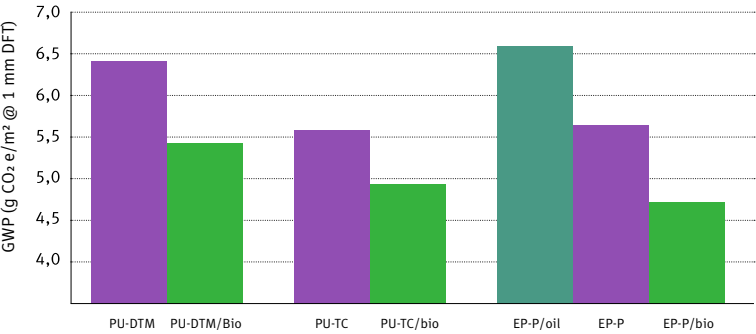
POLYURETHANE MONOLAYERS, 720 h NSS (ISO 9227) PERFORMED AT BLASTED STEEL SUBSTRATE, Sa 2 1/2, Rz 20-30 µm.

Property	Standard	PU-DTM	PU-DTM/bio
DFT [µm]	ISO 2808	93±5	97±2
Blistering	ISO 4628-2	0(S0)	0(S0)
Rusting	ISO 4628-3	Ri 0	Ri 0
Cracking	ISO 4628-4	0(S0)	0(S0)
Flaking	ISO 4628-5	0(S0)	0(S0)
Delamination at scribe [mm]	ISO 4628-8	2,1	2,0
Rusting at scribe [mm]	ISO 4628-8	0,8	0,9
Adhesion	ISO 2409	Gt 0	Gt 0

POLYURETHANE MONOLAYERS, 480 h OF WATER CONDENSATION (ISO 6270-2) PERFORMED AT BLASTED STEEL SUBSTRATE, Sa 2 1/2, Rz 20-30 µm.

Property	Standard	PU-DTM	PU-DTM/bio
DFT [µm]	ISO 2808	96±4	94±3
Blistering	ISO 4628-2	0(S0)	0(S0)
Rusting	ISO 4628-3	Ri 0	Ri 0
Cracking	ISO 4628-4	0(S0)	0(S0)
Flaking	ISO 4628-5	0(S0)	0(S0)
Adhesion	ISO 2409	Gt 0	Gt 0

CARBON FOOTPRINTS OF THE MATERIALS FROM THE ARTICLE



OUR PLANET IS EVERYONE'S  
RESPONSIBILITY.



GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN WITH A  
LOCAL FOOTPRINT



ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY  
ALTERNATIVES TO STANDARD PRODUCTS



ENERGY- AND RESOURCE-EFFICIENT  
APPLICATION METHODS



# AI—the power to revolutionize the coatings industry

Naoki Saito, Manager of Coating Materials Dept., Performance Monomers & Coatings Division, Basic Materials Business Unit

Artificial intelligence (AI) is currently one of the most relevant topics in the world. The rapid advances in this field are opening up new opportunities for people, companies, and the environment. At the same time, this also comes with challenges in terms of innovation and responsibility. The coatings industry is a global discipline, where standards, safety and environmental awareness play a central role. AI provides opportunities to design processes more precisely and sustainable.

**W**hether in product development, quality assurance or communication—AI helps us to break new ground. For a coatings specialist such as KANSAI HELIOS, AI signifies not only efficiency and automation, but also the prospect of driving sustainability and innovating with a forward-thinking outlook. As part of MITSUI & CO., LTD., KANSAI HELIOS draws inspiration from Mitsui’s pioneering AI technology, which continues to set remarkable standards in innovation and intelligent solutions.

## Mitsui DX and the digital transformation at Mitsui

The project “Mitsui DX” describes the way how Mitsui integrates AI in their daily business. It also defines how future business with AI will look like by using digital power based on actual experiences. Mitsui is aiming to reduce costs, improve

product efficiency, expand sales, and even create new business models by combining operational technology with digital power. From optimizing manufacturing systems to redefining customer engagement, AI enables Mitsui to stay ahead in a highly competitive market. The digital transformations are the framework into three initiatives:

- **Solution 1** aims to reduce costs through productivity enhancement, efficiency, and optimization.
- **Solution 2** aims to expand sales through strengthening engagement with partners and customers.
- **Transformation** aims to create new business and business models to enhance future business.

The first step, which is already underway, is to strengthen and advance existing businesses in the Mitsui Group with the help of AI.

**Digital projects at Mitsui Shape Digital**, established in Rio de Janeiro with additional offices in São Paulo, Singapore and Houston is a digital service provider for industrial companies dedicated to delivering sustainable business value through combining data, technology and real-world industry experience. Their platform uses available operational data for building digital twins on the topside to improve asset integrity and reduce downtime.

Their platform features the largest library of AI-based physics and engineering knowledge, specially designed to predict failures and ensure optimal asset health and reliability. The preferred targets in this area are the integrity status of Safety Critical Elements (SCEs) and barriers as well as the reduction of scope 1 GHG emissions based on AI, physics simulations and optimization.

## ABOUT MITSUI & CO., LTD.

MITSUI & CO. (Mitsui) is a global trading and investment company with a presence in more than 60 countries and a diverse business portfolio covering a wide range of industries. The company identifies, develops, and grows its businesses in partnership with a global network of trusted partners including world-leading companies, combining its geographic and cross-industry strengths to create long-term sustainable value for its stakeholders.

Mitsui has set three key strategic initiatives for its current Medium-term Management Plan:

1. Supporting industries to grow and evolve with stable supplies of resources and materials and providing infrastructure
2. Promoting a global transition to low-carbon and renewable energy
3. Empowering people to lead healthy lives through the delivery of quality healthcare and access to good nutrition.





Photo courtesy of MODEC, Inc.



Photo courtesy of MODEC, Inc.



Photo courtesy of MODEC, Inc.

**Quantum computers:** The power of AI needs the right resources to go in the right way. Mitsui has therefore already entered a strategic alliance partnership with Quantinuum, the global quantum computing company, in 2022. In 2024, Mitsui invested \$ 50 million and conducted a distributorship agreement to market its solutions. The achievement lies in creating an innovative business model by leveraging business assets and domain knowledge, utilizing quantum technology and developing new models across diverse industries.

InQuanto is a sophisticated quantum chemistry software designed to simulate molecular properties and reactions with high precision. It leverages advanced quantum computing methods to provide accurate predictions of electronic structures, reaction pathways, spectroscopic properties, and many more. This makes it an invaluable tool for researchers and chemists aiming to understand and predict chemical behavior at the molecular and electron level, facilitating innovations in materials science, pharmaceuticals, and chemical engineering.

#### Using DX/AI to reduce GHG emissions

Mitsui launched a cloud-based Product Carbon Footprint calculation service in Japan. This is the first step to help companies to achieve carbon neutrality, by providing this tool to quantify carbon footprint impact of raw material choice, manufacturing process improvement, etc. The calculation service is called “LCA Plus” and was already launched in Japan, in August 2022. LCA Plus provides a high-quality calculation method that ensures objectivity and

accuracy, based on the environmental certification backed by the ISO 14040 and 14044. LCA Plus supports actively the reduction of GHG emissions throughout the lifecycle of specific products or services.

Another cloud-based service platform is called “e-dash”. This platform provides total support from visualizing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions volume to optimizing energy procurement and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In July 2022 a website was launched where carbon credits and non-fossil certificates can be purchased. The emissions calculation logic undergoes third-party verification by a major auditing firm. With the support of e-dash, many companies have achieved success in reducing their electricity bills and obtaining international certifications by utilizing this service.

#### Farmers 360° link and generating Forest J-Credits

With farmers 360° link, Mitsui in collaboration with ETG, global conglomerate, has developed a program designed to enhance efficiency and promote sustainable practices within agricultural supply chains. By tracing data across the supply chain, this initiative visualizes the environmental and social impacts of products, ensuring fair return by directly linking producers and consumers.

Separately, Mitsui has partnered with a Japanese company to support sustainable forest management through the Forest J-Credit initiative. This tool leverages aerial measurement data to calculate CO<sub>2</sub> absorption in company-owned forests, maximizing the generation of carbon credits and contributing to Japan’s environmental objectives.

#### Revolutionizing supply chain data integration with AI and secure computing

Mitsui Bussan Chemicals, a subsidiary of Mitsui, is advancing innovation in specialty chemicals through a collaboration with the Japanese deep-tech startup EAGLYS. Together, they are developing a Materials Informatics Platform that employs AI and next-generation encryption technologies to enable secure data integration across the supply chain.

This cross-industry initiative includes proof-of-concept (PoC) projects with major Japanese chemical manufacturers, leveraging real-world R&D data to validate the platform’s effectiveness. Using EAGLYS confidential computing technology, the platform securely integrates data, addressing key challenges in supply chain communication and reducing R&D costs. By verifying the effectiveness of this platform, we aim to commercialize it across the diverse chemical supply chains.

#### AI-Driven Optimization for the Chemical Industry with Planium

ALGO ARTIS, with its mission to enhance social infrastructure through cutting-edge AI solutions, introduces “Planium”—a planning optimization tool tailored to address the unique challenges of the chemical industry. In an era where Japanese manufacturers face critical challenges such as resource constraints and the need for rapid production planning, Planium offers a decisive edge.

The unique team of world-class engineers at ALGO ARTIS, with expertise in both AI development and profound industry knowledge, delivers customized algorithms that surpass human capabilities. By tailoring AI, UI



Photo courtesy of Shape Pipe Ltd

(User Interface), and functionalities to the operational constraints of each client, Planium enables the creation of manufacturing plans that align with the needs of planners and internal stakeholders.

Collaborating with Mitsui, Planium extends its value proposition by integrating procurement functions and leveraging Mitsui’s DX expertise in manufacturing. This partnership enhances operational efficiency and opens doors to developing a new platform for streamlining contract manufacturing and fostering industry-wide integration.

Mitsui’s General Manager, responsible for chemical industry in Integrated Digital Strategy Division, Yoshinori Osawa, sums up the company’s AI/DX strategy: “AI/DX is not just a tool; it’s a mindset. At

Mitsui, we believe that by combining our operational expertise with the transformative power of AI/DX, we can build a future that is more efficient, sustainable, and innovative. For the coatings industry, this means harnessing AI/DX to deliver better products while safeguarding our planet for generations to come.”

The possibilities with AI/DX are vast, but Mitsui’s approach demonstrates that its true value lies in practical implementation. By focusing on tangible solutions, the company is addressing today’s challenges and laying the groundwork for tomorrow’s innovations. For the coatings industry, the message is clear: embracing AI/DX is not merely an option—it’s the path to a sustainable and competitive future. •

The background is a solid blue color. It features several decorative elements: a cluster of small blue dots in the top left, a thick white curved line starting from the bottom left and arching towards the top right, a thin white curved line starting from the top left and arching towards the bottom right, and three more clusters of small blue dots in the middle right and bottom left areas.

# SUCCESS

“Perfection is not attainable. But if we chase perfection,  
we can catch excellence.”

Vince Lombardi  
Football coach and leader



LEVERAGING COATING AND COOKING KNOW-HOW TO THE NEXT LEVEL

# “Q-LINE” with a culinary master chef

Jürgen Losacker

Do you know that moment in the morning when you're frying your pancake and staring into the pan, wondering what the coating can do? No? Neither do we—except maybe for the GREBLON® experts in our team. Because the best coating is unobtrusive—it simply works. This is, what makes Q-LINE so special and convince the renowned chef Johann Lafer to collaborate closely with WEILBURGER Coatings. This article will provide you with the missing ingredients to understand our developments in the field of non-stick and PFAS-free coatings.

**W**hether you're a hobby chef or a professional master chef like Johann Lafer, everyone wants the best cooking results with their pan, or as we coating professionals would express it: the perfect balance of non-stick properties, robustness, and suitability for everyday use.

“So, if I realize in my professional kitchen environment that a product is particularly efficient, of high quality, that it has properties that simply support me when I want to make something special, then it will come to my kitchen at home—because I certainly don't want to eat worse at home than in my restaurant,” says Johann about GREBLON®.

Johann Lafer is an Austrian top chef, TV chef, and cookbook author, known for his creative cuisine and appearances on numerous

television shows. He trained as a chef and gained experience in renowned European restaurants. He achieved international recognition with his Michelin-starred restaurant “Le Val d'Or” at Stromburg. In Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, Lafer is famous for his passion for high-quality ingredients. Therefore, we at GREBLON® were delightful to get this expert on board for a partnership in the non-stick coating segment.

## The recipe of success: the right pinch of know-how for coating and cooking

Behind the GREBLON® brand by WEILBURGER Coatings stand 50 years of experience in the application of PTFE-based coatings, various standards and test methods. These standards were developed to evaluate and continuously







Johann praised the development: “I noticed little or no difference to conventional non-stick pans, quite the opposite. Even when cleaning or when frying very sensitive food in the pan, like fish with skin, for example, I was completely satisfied. And if it stays that way and the durability and properties of this pan or the coating is like that, I believe that we will have taken a big step forward, not only when it comes to cooking food, but also when it comes to ecology.”

The collaboration between GREBLON® and Johann Lafer fully achieved its goal. The concept of combining our technical expertise and his decades of chef experience formed the special ingredients that helped

us develop a unique PFAS-free product line—currently the only one of its kind on the market.

The GREBLON® team at WEILBURGER enjoyed this teamwork and cooperation and as far as we know—also Johann Lafer did. Together, we have successfully crafted that special touch with the right level of sophistication to propel the coatings market forward once again. •



SCAN TO WATCH ON YOUTUBE HOW JOHANN LAFER TESTS OUR NON-STICK COATINGS AND APPROVES THEM!

improve the quality and performance of PTFE-based coatings. However, with the development of the new PFAS-free coatings, it has become apparent that these traditional standards and test methods are not always suitable for achieving meaningful results, especially with ceramic-based coatings. Therefore, the expert team in Germany decided to think outside the box and involve someone who has a lot of experience in the kitchen. And a perfect match has indeed been found: Johann Lafer, whose most important daily tools are different types of pans, pots, and even kitchens, turned out to be the perfect partner for this technological cooperation.

One of the first steps was to guide Johann through the production site in Weilburg. For one day, the chef immersed himself in the world of coatings. On this day, we showed him the development of coatings, the production and the tests that are essential for the products to be ready for sale. The visit was about intense discussions

and exchanging opinions as well as surprising moments. This special day ended with Johann successfully handling a paint spray gun instead of a pan.

The biggest surprise for him, who never ever thought about the complexity of the coatings on his pans, was how much technology is involved in an optimal coating system. In the past, the chef threw broken pans away and forgot they ever existed. By working with us, he understood what sustainability, durability, and non-stick technology means for his pans. On the other hand, we got a better understanding of what a good pan or baking equipment must achieve from the perspective of a professional chef, as Johann has accompanied us through almost the whole invention process.

Adhesive effect, health, safety and durability of frying pans were just a few of the main challenges that had to be addressed in more detail. Many intense brainstorming sessions, tests, discussions

and delicious menus later, it was born: the new product range GREBLON® Q-LINE – a product line of PFAS-free coatings.

**One step ahead**

Since many years, the EU has been planning to prohibit PFAS materials due to their harmful effect to health. A complete ban on PFAS substances in the EU and in some areas of the USA will be a major challenge that will entail a change in technology. It does not only affect pans with their traditional and standard PFAS non-stick coatings, but around 10,000 other materials of our everyday lives.

With GREBLON® Q-LINE, we have developed our own line of PFAS-free coatings as an answer to latest trends and regulations that ensures transparency, creates trust and represents a further step towards sustainability. This product line is a clear “Yes!” to PFAS-free products! The Q-LINE was not only tested in laboratory, but also in a cooking school and in the cooking TV studio.





SKY-HIGH CORROSION PROTECTION

# A look at the new check-in hall at Frankfurt Airport

Stefan Kobor

Frankfurt Airport Terminal 3

Photo: © Haslinger Stahlbau GmbH

Photo: © Haslinger Stahlbau GmbH

Photo: © Haslinger Stahlbau GmbH

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HALL REQUIRES AN EFFICIENT INTERPLAY OF TECHNOLOGY, LOGISTICS, AND TIME MANAGEMENT. APPROXIMATELY 12,500 TONS OF STEEL, COATED WITH AROUND 200 TONS OF PROTECTIVE COATING, HAVE BEEN USED FOR THE NEW CHECK-IN-HALL AT FRANKFURT AIRPORT.

THE CHECK-IN-HALL AT THE NEW TERMINAL 3 IS THE REPRESENTATIVE ENTRANCE AREA FOR DEPARTING PASSENGERS.

If you are a frequent traveler, it is very likely that you have already landed at Frankfurt Airport at some point, making you one of millions of passengers every year. The new Terminal 3 is currently still under construction—including the impressive new check-in hall. Haslinger Stahlbau GmbH—a long-standing customer of KANSAI HELIOS Austria—is the execution and workshop planner for this hall. The entire steel structure is protected with a comprehensive anti-corrosion coating system.

**M**eeting the highest standards with high-performance corrosion protection: This promise from KANSAI HELIOS takes on special significance in the steel structure of the check-in hall at Terminal 3 of Frankfurt Airport. Join us for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects.

**Modern, robust, and well-protected**  
Covering an area of 176,000 square meters, one of Europe's largest construction sites is taking shape in Frankfurt. The competition is scheduled by 2026. With a construction budget of approximately

4 billion euros, the new Terminal 3, including the modern check-in hall, is being built in the southern section of Frankfurt Airport. The check-in hall will serve as the impressive gateway for departing passengers, accommodating up to 19 million travelers annually.

The Austrian steel construction company Haslinger Stahlbau GmbH is building the steel structure for the check-in hall and the aircraft docking stations, relying on KANSAI HELIOS' corrosion protection coating as a long-standing partner. The 18-meter-high hall is enclosed by an almost seamless steel and glass façade with impressive dimensions: the hall spans 150 meters in length and 78 meters

in width. The roof structure itself covers a total length of 200 meters, covering more than 20 meters beyond the hall's edge on all sides. It rests on 30 slender pendulum columns and is horizontally stabilized at only two fixed points.

## Highlights of the construction process

"The absolute highlight of the project's execution was the assembly of the approximately 8,000-ton roof structure," states Arno Sorger, Managing Director of Haslinger Stahlbau GmbH, "due to construction logistics, there was only one solution for assembling the roof structure: assembling the roof on a dedicated assembly platform, followed by sliding it into place on specially designed glide tracks."

The impressive roof structure, spanning an area of 26,000 m<sup>2</sup>, was divided into five segments, each weighing approximately 1,600 tons. As described by Sorger, these segments were assembled on a specialized assembly platform—at a height of 28 meters. Subsequently, they were hydraulically moved step by step along five sliding tracks into their final position, covering a distance of 200 meters. The assembly platform itself, named MOHIKO, was a 6,500 m<sup>2</sup> steel structure weighing an impressive 2,000 tons.

## Corrosion protection for highest demands

The overall steel construction at the new airport terminal in Frankfurt has been protected by a comprehensive corrosion

protection system consisting of base coat, intermediate coating and top coat. A particular challenge was the final colour tone RAL 9005 which had to be applied in a matte finish. Applying a matte tone is difficult because transitions from starting and stopping the roller can remain visible. To avoid this disruption in the finish, KANSAI HELIOS Austria has developed a special coating system that ensures a unique and consistent appearance. The modern system reduces maintenance costs from the outset, while preserving the safety and functionality of the infrastructure for many decades, ensuring that rust never finds a runway. •



SETTING NEW STANDARDS ALONG THE LINE

# More than just a perfect coating system

Cristian Palmieri, Martina Perkovic

Our long-term partnership with the LPG storage cylinder manufacturer Merloni in Italy is one of our favorite examples of a collaboration that goes far beyond delivering the perfect powder coating system. It is a partnership that optimizes innovative solutions—all along the process. This is the story of development and application of an innovative epoxy-polyester powder system that makes the difference in the balance of performance, economical and ecological goals. And regarding the desired finish: same difference—no matter if above or below the ground.

**F**ounded in 1954, Merloni has long been a pioneer in the manufacturing of LPG storage cylinders, setting new standards with its fully automated vertical production process that transforms raw coils into finished products. As the company continued to push the boundaries of innovation with new product designs and manufacturing techniques, it became clear that their next challenge would involve the coatings used to protect their large storage tanks. Merloni recognized the need for an advanced coating solution capable of delivering the same level of innovation and toughness as their core offerings, given the increasing complexity of the goods and the increasingly challenging environmental conditions.

Merloni's primary objective was to develop a coating system that could not only withstand extreme outdoor conditions but also maintain its integrity and appearance over time. The company produces both underground and above-ground gas storage tanks, each of which presents unique challenges in terms of surface performance and durability. Tanks exposed to the elements, particularly those situated above ground, require coatings that resist harsh weathering, UV radiation, and physical wear. For underground installations, the coating must offer enhanced corrosion protection to ensure the tanks remain secure and reliable for long-term use.





BY ADDRESSING EVERY ASPECT OF THE COATING PROCESS, AN INTEGRATED SOLUTION COULD BE ACHIEVED, COMBINING TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, INNOVATIVE COATINGS, AND ADVANCED EQUIPMENT.



Photo: © Antonio Merloni Pressure Vessels s.r.l.

THE XRAY INTERNAL BUNKER IS AN INTERNAL STRUCTURE DESIGNED FOR VERIFYING THE QUALITATIVE CONGRUITY OF WELDS.

#### 700 microns in a single layer

In particular, Merloni sought a coating that could achieve a thickness of over 500 microns to provide optimal protection, but also ensure that this thickness could be achieved in a single application to optimize production time and efficiency, while offering superior corrosion resistance, colour retention, and gloss durability. To meet these requirements, Merloni partnered with KANSAI HELIOS, and our technical expert team in Italy developed a high-performance epoxy gloss in the green colour tone desired by Merloni. In close cooperation, the original requirement was not only met but exceeded. The developed powder coating solution could be applied in a single layer to achieve up to 700 microns in thickness with no risk of detachment, providing the durability and protection needed.

While the epoxy solution worked perfectly for tanks that would be installed underground, tanks above ground required a different approach. To address this, KANSAI HELIOS developed a Polyester powder version of the same Merloni glossy green. This time, the polyester coating was specifically designed for exterior application. The product not only protects the underlying epoxy layer from colour and gloss degradation but also enhances the tank's weathering resistance, making it ideal for outdoor exposure.

To further enhance the performance and durability of the coatings, the solution incorporated a stock clearcoat in a glossy finish that could be applied as a two-layer system using the powder-on-powder approach. This coating system offers a highly efficient solution for applying two protective layers in a single oven cycle, reducing energy consumption and contributing to a sustainable production process.

#### Comprehensive support from coating to equipment setup

Creating the perfect coating system went far beyond simply developing the ideal formulas.

KANSAI HELIOS, through its partnership with a leading producer of spraying equipment, ensured that Merloni had access to the best tools and technology to optimize their production process. This collaboration allowed Merloni to implement tailored equipment and layout design specifically suited for the efficient application of both the Epoxy and Polyester coatings. The process achieved consistent, high-quality results by integrating innovative spraying technology, which ensured the coatings adhered perfectly and delivered the required performance characteristics.

By addressing every aspect of the coating process—from the initial formulation of materials to the final application—this partnership exemplified a truly integrated solution and underlines how combining technical expertise, innovative materials, and advanced equipment can transform production capabilities and set new standards for quality and efficiency in the industry.

#### Liquid coatings for Merloni on the horizon

Merloni's collaboration with KANSAI HELIOS continues to grow as new challenges and opportunities arise. Building on the success of the powder coating solutions developed for their gas tanks, exploring the adoption of liquid coating solutions for additional types of gas tanks is the next step. For the complex tank designs, a specific liquid coating system offers unique advantages, especially for applications requiring high flexibility in application techniques. Leveraging its technical expertise as global system supplier, KANSAI HELIOS is set on delivering powder and liquid solutions that align with Merloni's stringent performance and environmental standards. The excellent cooperation with Merloni continues to be the basis to continue this successful path—our joint know-how “tank” is well filled and ready for further development in the future. •

MESSAGE ON THE BOTTLE

# A French story of the birth of glass coatings

Christophe Meuriot, Barbara Sova

Glass has long been a symbol of elegance and sophistication, embodying the essence of luxury with its transparency, durability, and timeless appeal. It has served as the medium for some of the most iconic packaging in the world, from perfume bottles to tableware, from drinking glasses to decorative art, and much more. At WEILBURGER France, we are proud to contribute to the protection and design of this most recyclable material.





The story of glass coatings at WEILBURGER France began more than 25 years ago. The factory was only a modest industrial coatings company. To avoid sinking into bankruptcy like its French market companions, it was decided to take a very close look to the internal strengths and skills of the company and to the external needs of the market. Based on this few, the strategy to develop and produce glass coatings was born. As the cosmetics and luxury perfume industries flourished in France at the turn of the millennium, these markets were the first to take off.

WEILBURGER France was one of the first companies to develop a solvent-based epoxy clearcoat that adhered directly to glass, at a time when adhesion primer was still the industry standard. In 1998, we developed our colorimetry laboratories, and we were regularly investing in R&D to continuously innovate our products for the market. Innovation was our driving strength, and it still is. To further improve and to match with the needs of the market, we started to cooperate closely with our customers, the applicators, the glassmakers. We listened to the requests of the brands, enhancing their packaging while maintaining quality and preserving their brand image.

This collaborative approach led us to establish close partnerships with world-renowned brands, such as L'Oréal, Dior, Chanel, Shiseido, and mass-market leaders like Procter & Gamble and Henkel. These brands have come to trust us not only for our expertise in glass coatings, but also for our ability to understand and meet their sustainability goals. As we have built strong relationships together, we are partners on this interesting journey, developing packaging that is both luxurious and responsible.

#### The journey towards sustainability and luxury

Over the years, WEILBURGER France has redefined the world of glass coatings, aligning innovations with growing environmental demands. The journey toward sustainability began in the early 2000s, when the industry began to realize the need for greener solutions. As brands became more aware of their environmental impact, WEILBURGER transitioned from traditional solvent-based coatings to water-based technologies, significantly reducing VOC emissions and ensuring that our coatings had minimal environmental impact.

In 2005, as the pressure to reduce carbon emissions and VOC increased, WEILBURGER introduced their first hydro-based clearcoat for



glass. Through this shift allowed us to reduce VOC emissions and to meet the increasing demand for eco-friendly solutions. Today, over 80% of our market uses hydro-based coatings, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to sustainability. Our efforts go beyond just reducing VOC. We have also introduced VOC-free UV-curing clearcoats, which lower energy consumption and reduce carbon footprints. These coatings are not only environmentally responsible, but also deliver superior durability and performance, ensuring that brands can maintain their high standards of quality while minimizing their impact on the planet.

The senoglass® product range includes a low-curing hydro varnish that cuts energy consumption by 20% compared to previous generations. In addition to its energy-saving attributes, this product is procured from local suppliers, thereby reducing our Scope 3 emissions and contributing to more sustainable supply chains.

#### GETing the experts and pioneering EcoVadis

In 2020, we launched the Glass Expert Team (GET) which is dedicated to further develop the coating technologies and closely cooperate with the customers. Furthermore, the GET is currently expanding the know-how and technology worldwide through our professional teams within the whole KANSAI HELIOS Group. Our goal is to deliver the same renowned quality locally, share innovations with sister factories, and promote best practices while advancing sustainable development.

With a combination of advanced glass coating technologies and a commitment to sustainable development, we have been redefining what it means to create premium and environmentally responsible coating solutions for various glass applications. With the assortment of senoglass®, WEILBURGER offers coatings which are designed to enhance the aesthetics and durability of glass products while

minimizing their environmental footprint. WEILBURGER France received 3 Ecovadis Platinum medals in a row and is known as a pioneer of the EcoVadis approach in the company group with recognition from customers and brands.

#### Luxury bottles and their demand for sustainable protection

From Hennessy to Dior and Chanel—luxury brands and global players focus on sustainability and environmentally-friendly solutions, while maintaining their luxury appearance. This approach affects also the packaging, particularly the bottle, which is often also an art in glass. This is where the WEILBURGER expertise and technology seamlessly come together. The high-performance coating prevents any external damage from diminishing the bottle's aesthetic value. Nonetheless, it not only serves as the protective layer of the glass but also enhances its purity and brilliance, while demonstrating the utmost standards upheld by the brands. The



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Photo: © me4rich / shutterstock.com



Photo: © samolaitonut / shutterstock.com





WEILBURGER FRANCE  
HAS REDEFINED THE WORLD  
OF GLASS COATINGS,  
ALIGNING INNOVATIONS  
WITH GROWING  
ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS.

# A cool system revolutionizing e-mobility

Petra Gomez Alfaro-Kalteis

E-mobility represents the forefront of innovation, where continuous improvements in efficiency and motor design pave the way for the future of transportation. At the heart of this evolution, we remain committed to analyzing market trends, engaging with stakeholders across the supply chain, and delivering ground-breaking solutions. Our latest product, EB 549 Pulse+, exemplifies this commitment and sets a new benchmark in motor design for e-mobility.

combination of advanced coating technology and environmentally responsible practices ensures that their packaging aligns with the values of sustainability and luxury.

When it comes to premium spirits, packaging is as much about storytelling as it is about preserving the quality of the product inside. For Hennessy, the rich amber hues of its glass bottle are accentuated by our specialized glass coatings. These coatings enhance the bottle's transparency and protect it from the external environment, preserving the integrity of the packaging throughout its journey to the consumer. For Ciroc Vodka, the packaging mirrors the bold, innovative nature of the brand. The unique metallic effects and finishes achieved through our state-of-the-art coatings give the bottle a striking, futuristic appeal that resonates with

its target audience. Our glass coatings enhance the packaging's visual appeal while safeguarding the bottle from wear and tear, thereby ensuring that the product continues to shine in an increasingly competitive market.

Sauvage by Dior is a fragrance that embodies the untamed spirit of nature—raw, bold, and full of energy. This boldness is reflected in its striking packaging. The deep, gradient hues of the glass bottle symbolize the transition from dusk to dawn, a visual story told through the innovative coating techniques.

On the other hand, Chanel's Allure is an epitome of sophistication and timeless beauty. The brand's legacy is one of meticulous attention to detail, and this extends to its packaging as well. The flawless clarity of the Allure bottle, its pristine shine, and its elegant form are all enhanced by the coatings we supply.

## Pushing tomorrow's boundaries

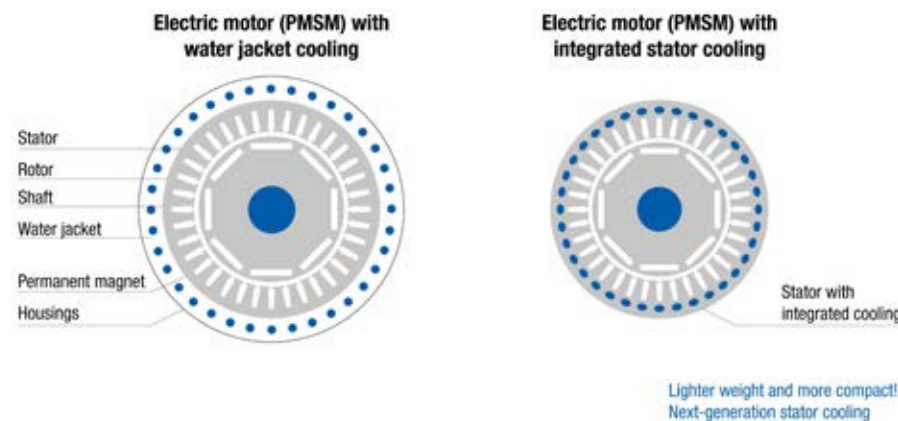
Through our continuous efforts and investments in R&D, we continue to aim for innovative and more sustainable glass coatings that address the challenges of an evolving world, where environmental responsibility plays a key role in brand success. Our technology is constantly evolving to reduce energy use, minimize emissions, and support the development of eco-friendly packaging solutions, constantly pushing the boundaries of what's possible with glass coatings.

As a member of KANSAI HELIOS and with the continued support of the Glass Expert Team WEILBURGER France is well-positioned to lead the way in the world of luxury glass packaging. Together, we are ensuring that our renowned customers brands can continue to shine in the competitive global market—without compromising on sustainability. •





COMPARISON OF EXTERNAL COOLING JACKETS AND INTEGRATED COOLING SYSTEM.



In recent years, more OEMs have embraced bonding varnishes for electric motor construction. Known for their high bonding strength, reduced motor noise, and superior corrosion protection, these varnishes eliminate the need for traditional methods like welding or interlocking. Thus, they streamline the production process and improve compatibility. Recognizing this shift, we developed EB 549 Pulse+ to address an emerging demand: media-tight stator stacks.

**A new standard in motor efficiency**  
A motor's performance and efficiency heavily depend on its thermal management. Traditional designs rely on external cooling jackets to dissipate heat, which can add weight and complexity to the motor. By integrating the cooling system directly into the stator, our new product offers a revolutionary approach. This innovation not only simplifies the overall design but also improves thermal conductivity,

ensuring that heat is effectively managed even in high-performance applications. Moreover, integrated cooling systems reduce the number of components required, resulting in fewer potential points of failure. As a result, motors are more reliable, durable, and suited to the rigorous demands of e-mobility. Additionally, the improved thermal efficiency supports better energy conversion, contributing to the overall sustainability of electric vehicles.

**Developed for excellence and precision**  
EB 549 Pulse+ is already gaining traction. Steel mills regularly use this varnish, and its adoption is spreading as other manufacturers sample it for upcoming e-mobility projects. By integrating this innovative technology, OEMs, and their partners can achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency and design freedom.

As market leader in core plate varnish, we know the challenges of the market and use our knowledge,

experience, and innovation power to continuously develop our solutions. Our technical team provides comprehensive support to ensure the optimal application of this product, as the coating process requires precision. The top and bottom sides of the strip must be treated differently, with one side activated for the best results. Once the parameters are optimized, EB 549 Pulse+ delivers seamless performance and customer satisfaction.

This latest product launch enriching our Rembrandtin core plate varnish product range represents a significant milestone in our journey to redefine e-mobility. By introducing a varnish that enhances motor design, simplifies production, and improves efficiency, we are empowering the industry to embrace the future of sustainable transportation. Together with our partners, we are shaping a new era of innovation, one motor at a time. •



Photo: © AFoma Company

ONLY ONE ROAD LEADS TO ROMA

# Knowing paints and varnishes—and the handyman

Jadranka Orlović

Roma Company is one of our long-term distribution partners in Serbia, who has been in business for 33 years. However, a look behind the façade shows that paints and varnishes are more than just a business for them. It is the pursuit of innovation, the constant eye for trends and the goal to connect and support people, whether at social events or by matching customers with the right handyman. Tradition and experience “dipped” in an innovation spirit have enabled Roma to become a synonym for quality and reliability in this field.

Whether a homeowner is looking to renovate a wooden terrace or a craftsman is aiming to satisfy their clients, having in-depth knowledge of paints and varnishes is a clear advantage. But when you can not only supply the right paint but also connect both the DIY terrace

renovator and the handyman at the same time, you become a true service provider.

This is exactly what Roma Company aims for: “Our main goal is to provide everything a painter or plasterer needs to do their job in one place, in various quality levels and in different price ranges. However,

our ultimate goal is not only to offer products, but also to provide each customer with top-notch service, knowledge, and expert assistance. We want every customer to leave completely satisfied, which will ultimately lead them to return to us. Quality, expertise, and trust—that is what we want to offer our customers



OUR COLLABORATION IS LONG-TERM AND BASED ON TRUST, PROFESSIONALISM, AND A FRIENDLY APPROACH.

so they will always return with confidence in our work”, says Romas CEO Nemanja Romadić.

In the past decades, Roma Company has continuously improved its product range by introducing innovations and new technologies, which has contributed to its competitiveness and market recognition. Their dedication to quality, teamwork, and ongoing investments in development have enabled them to overcome all market obstacles and maintain their leading position in this industry. With clearly set goals and strategies, Roma Company has continued to grow and expand its influence, building long-term relationships with partners and customers.

There are many interesting examples of how Roma consistently goes the extra mile for its customers or adds the finishing touch. Two of their latest “innovative hacks” are mobile apps. They have been specifically developed to make their customers lives easier and more convenient.

The “DECOROMA” allows to visualize how a specific wall paint colour will appear in the living room or the kitchen before making a purchase. By simply uploading a picture of the space and choosing a colour, the selected shade is projected onto the walls of the room, providing an exact preview of how it would transform the space. Whether the user is experimenting with different shades or trying out various finishes, the app gives a realistic preview, supporting the decision-making process.

And if someone is needed to professionally paint that wall or even fix the kitchen shelf at the same time, Roma Company has a solution for that as well. “I know a handyman” (translated from Serbian, original title “Znam majstora”) connects users with the best handyman across Serbia. All handymen are rated by previous users, helping users easily select the best expert from a large contact base.

From 1 to 190—the story and the numbers

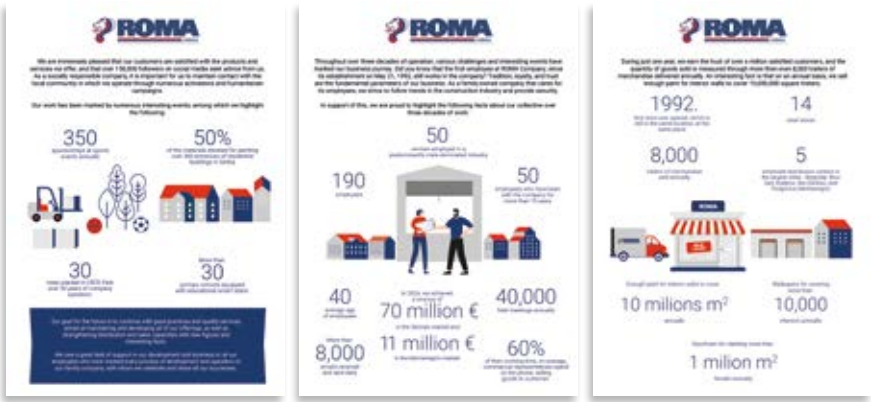
At the very beginning of its founding in 1992, Roma Company employed just one single worker. Today, 190 employees across five cities in Serbia and Montenegro work for the family-owned company. Tradition, loyalty, and trust are the fundamental principles. And they are not only empty words but living reality. Roma cares for its employees, they strive to keep up with trends and provide modern equipment and tools for their operations, as well as ensure continuous improvement and education for both their employees and their customers, whose number is impressive: more than half a million customers visit their retail locations every year.

In addition, to stay in direct contact with customers and business partners, Roma hold over 40,000 field meetings annually. And, finally, the volume of goods they sell can be measured by more than 8,000 truckloads of products annually. These numbers are not just statistics. They are a confirmation of Roma’s dedication to quality and service, as well as their ability to respond to market needs and continuously improve their business.

Creativity, social support and responsibility

When Roma celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they planted 30 trees in Belgrade as a message of strength, longevity, and stability. Additionally, they made special monetary donations to institutions of priority importance in Belgrade, Niš, Kraljevo, Novi Sad, and Podgorica.

As a company that nurtures tradition and family values and operates by supporting local communities where they do business, Roma is recognized as a socially responsible company that helps their fellow citizens through numerous humanitarian actions and donations. Through their program, many primary schools across Serbia have received smart educational stairs as an addition to education and aesthetics. Preschools, parks, maternity hospitals, theatres, and zoos



ROMA REMAINS FOCUSED ON BROADENING THE PRODUCT ASSORTMENT, A QUICKER AND MORE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY, AS WELL AS OFFERING PREMIUM SERVICES TO THEIR PARTNERS.

are just some of the institutions they have supported through their corporate social responsibility efforts. Their goal is to expand their impact in the coming years through constant development and progress, reaching an even larger number of institutions. They have supported numerous festivals and young, emerging artists, who through their assistance program, have contributed with their art and creativity.

“We owe great support in our development and business to all our employees, friends, business partners, suppliers, and satisfied customers, who have marked every step of the development and operations of our family company. Together with them, we celebrate and share all our successes”, was one part of the anniversary statement.

KANSAI HELIOS products among the bestsellers

For Nemanja Romadić, KANSAI HELIOS is one example of a high-level partnership: “We have been having an intensive cooperation with KANSAI HELIOS Serbia since our establishment 33 years ago. For our customers, this means that we offer top-quality products, which we deliver in the shortest possible time. KANSAI HELIOS products are recognized for their quality in the market, and it’s no coincidence that they are among the best-sellers. The good results we achieve with KANSAI HELIOS define the high level of our relationships and cooperation, both with the employees of this company and with the partners themselves. Our collaboration is long-term and based on trust, professionalism, and a friendly

approach, all of which contribute to the constant improvement of our offer and the achievement of mutual success.”

According to the CEO, the year 2025 will be exceptionally challenging, but also an opportunity for further progress. In the upcoming years, Roma’s approach will remain focused on broadening their product assortment, which will allow for quicker and more effective delivery, as well as offering premium services to their partners, thereby distinguishing them from their rivals.

“We plan to relocate to our new logistics centre in the second quarter of 2025, which will be a key step in improving our operations. The new centre will allow us to significantly increase the stock of our products and expand our range, enabling

us to supply our business partners more quickly and efficiently. This move will also help us improve our service, as we will be able to ensure faster deliveries and greater flexibility in our operations. We believe that relocating to the new logistics centre will bring long-term benefits and help us enhance our competitiveness in the market”, says Nemanja.

At KANSAI HELIOS, we look forward to taking on this challenge together with Roma, developing it side by side, and continuing to evolve the world of paints and coatings with the well-being of people, the environment, and the community in mind. And, of course, we also know a few handymen who we can get excited about this. •



ROMA'S LATEST MOBILE APPS ALLOW A COLOUR VISUALIZATION OF WALL PAINTS AND CONNECT USERS WITH THE RIGHT HANDYMAN.



# YOUR SYSTEM SUPPLIER FOR INDUSTRIAL COATINGS



# PERFECTLY ALIGNED FOR HIGHEST SURFACE PROTECTION AND OPTIMAL FINISH





# FOUNDATIONS

The background is a solid red color. It features several clusters of small, semi-transparent red dots arranged in star-like or abstract patterns. There are also three curved lines: a thick orange line and two thin white lines, all sweeping across the lower-left portion of the image.

“A stable foundation is the prerequisite for everything  
that is meant to last.”

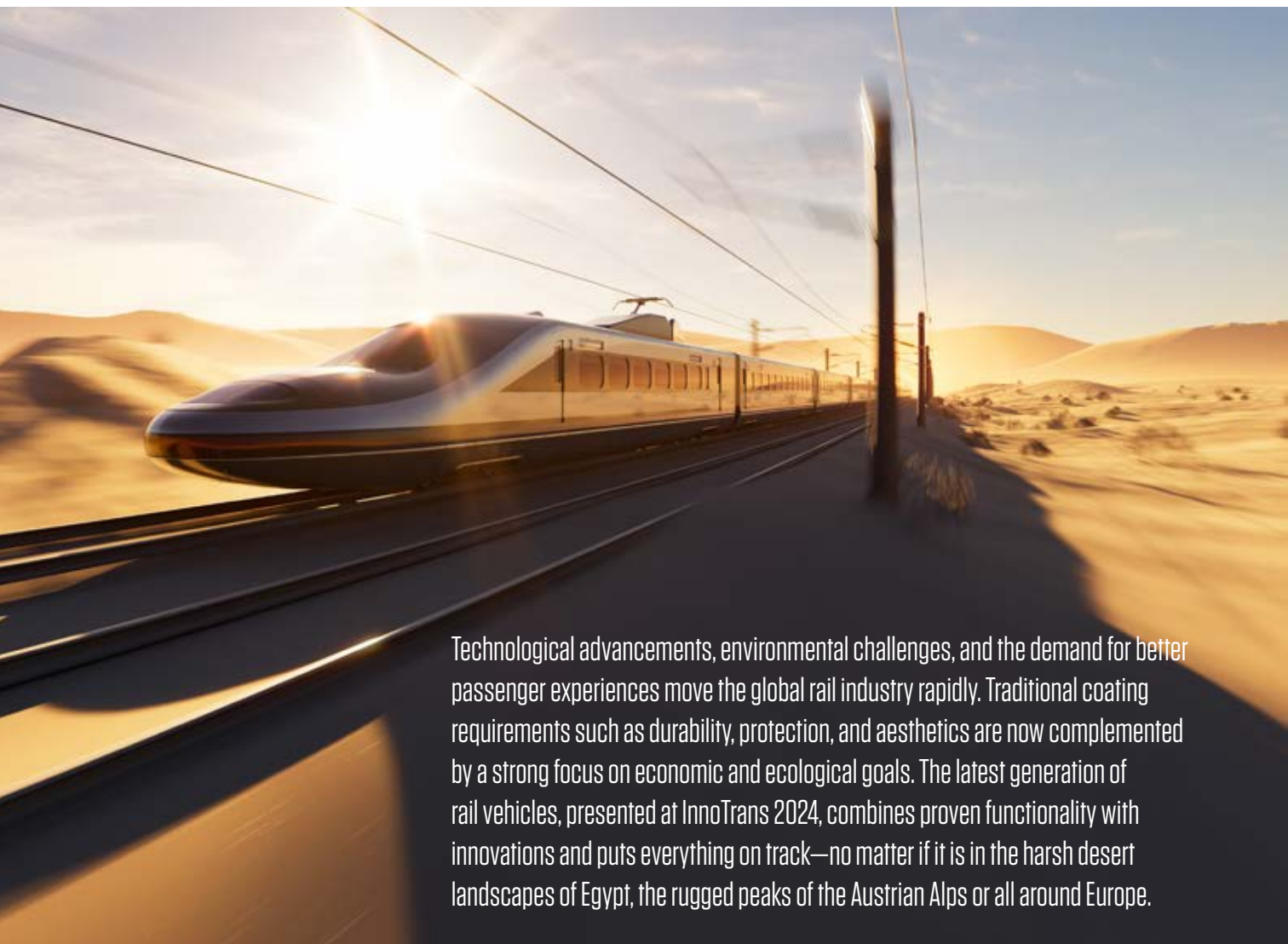
Confucius



WHERE DESIGN MEETS PERFORMANCE

# Explore the latest rail generations

Peter Gabb, Petra Steinmüller, Klaus Mölling, Marco Görlitz, Nicolas Mayet



Technological advancements, environmental challenges, and the demand for better passenger experiences move the global rail industry rapidly. Traditional coating requirements such as durability, protection, and aesthetics are now complemented by a strong focus on economic and ecological goals. The latest generation of rail vehicles, presented at InnoTrans 2024, combines proven functionality with innovations and puts everything on track—no matter if it is in the harsh desert landscapes of Egypt, the rugged peaks of the Austrian Alps or all around Europe.

THE RAIL VEHICLES OF THE FUTURE WILL NOT ONLY BE FASTER AND MORE ENERGY-EFFICIENT, BUT ALSO MORE ADAPTABLE TO DIVERSE ENVIRONMENTS AND PASSENGER NEEDS.

At the world's leading international trade fair for transport technology in 2024 in Berlin, renowned railroad operators and manufacturers like Siemens, Stadler and Altom presented rail innovations redefining transport. As their trusted coatings partner, we proudly present the stars of the latest train generation. Advanced coating systems meet stringent demands for protection, aesthetics and durability in three globally interesting projects.

**Resilience in the desert: Siemens and Egypt's rail revolution**  
Siemens secured the largest order

in its corporate history with Egypt's ambitious high-speed rail project. At InnoTrans they presented the first Siemens Velaro high-speed train for Egypt. This project, connecting key regions across the country, is set to transform mobility in a challenging desert environment. A critical aspect of its success lies in the durability of the trains, particularly their external surfaces, which must withstand harsh conditions such as extreme heat, UV radiation, and abrasive sandstorms.

To ensure the performance of the Velaro reliably, Siemens conducted advanced desert simulation tests. These assessments exposed coatings

to high-intensity sand abrasion and UV light to measure their long-term resilience. The long-term collaboration behind the coating process has yielded remarkable results, shielding the trains from deterioration and preserving their sleek appearance.

Initially, field tests of I6 coating systems have been conducted for abrasion and erosion. They included extensive sandblasting tests. Different blasting material grain sizes, various impact angles and different speeds have been used. The durability and quality of the coating system was assessed by sandblasting metal panels under different conditions.



## TEST RESULTS OF HEAT TESTS IN VIENNA

Siemens "Valero" underwent a series of tests to verify and demonstrate its compatibility with desert conditions. The coating system of KANSAI HELIOS achieved a performance of 25.6°C stable conditions in the passenger saloon at 50°C external temperatures with 1050 W solar radiation.



A VIDEO RELEASED DURING INNOTRANS CAPTURED THE INTRICATE TESTING PROCESS, OFFERING A GLIMPSE INTO THE ENGINEERING RIGOR OF THIS PROJECT. FURTHERMORE, THE TRAINS ARE EQUIPPED WITH ENERGY-SAVING DEVICES, AIDING EGYPT'S ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES AND PAVING THE WAY FOR FUTURE REGIONAL TRANSPORT INITIATIVES.





**Redefining passenger comfort:  
Stadler's partnership with ÖBB**

The new ÖBB trains presented at InnoTrans will not travel through the Egyptian deserts but will cater to diverse travel needs, from high-speed connections on the western route to commuter services in the eastern region. Stadler's collaboration with Austria's ÖBB has brought 35 new trains to the Railjet and Cityjet fleets.

The key to this project is the seamless integration of functionality and passenger experience. The trains feature modern interior designs optimized for comfort, accessibility, and efficiency.

For Stadler, this project represents a balance of form and

function. The exterior coatings play a significant role. They are designed to endure frequent use and rapid cleaning cycles, maintaining their gloss and colour fidelity, reflecting ÖBB's commitment to quality. The new fleet underscores the value of collaboration in delivering modern transport solutions tailored to regional requirements.

**Pioneering modular systems: TRAXX locomotives in Europe**

The TRAXX platform, developed initially by Bombardier and now owned by Alstom, has become a cornerstone of Europe's railway infrastructure. Today, more than 2,500 locomotives are operative across 20 countries. Deutsche Bahn operates the largest fleet of over 800 units.

TRAXX is renowned for its modular design, offering tailored solutions under its two brands: TRAXX Universal for freight services and TRAXX Passenger for passenger transport. The locomotive body shells are manufactured and partially painted in Wrocław, Poland. This includes applying a comprehensive coating system comprising primer, putty, topcoat, and filler. Final painting, including additional layers of filler and topcoat, is completed at assembly sites in Kassel, Germany, and Vado Ligure, Italy.

This coordinated approach ensures that TRAXX locomotives attain a long-lasting and superior appearance, meeting both aesthetic and functional requirements for the rigorous rail sector. The coating solutions have

been designed to withstand abrasion, corrosion, and extreme temperatures. Thus, the train surfaces maintain structural integrity and reduce maintenance requirements.

Since 2010, KANSAL HELIOS Wefa has been supplying water-based coatings for TRAXX locomotives to the Alstom production sites in Poland, Germany, and Italy. These coatings meet the rigorous standards of DB TL 918 300, including Sheets 2, 3, 39, and 42, ensuring their suitability and approval for locomotive applications.

**The road ahead: challenges and opportunities in railway coatings**

As the rail industry advances, surface technology remains a cornerstone of innovation. Coatings define a

train's visual identity and contribute to its operational performance, environmental resilience, and maintenance efficiency.

Looking ahead, the sector faces several challenges. Climate change demands coatings that can endure more extreme weather conditions, while stricter environmental regulations push manufacturers to adopt sustainable materials and production methods. Passenger expectations are also evolving, with a growing emphasis on cleanliness, touch-safe surfaces, and aesthetics.

Emerging technologies present promising solutions. Nano-coatings and self-cleaning surfaces, for instance, are gaining popularity due to their ability to repel dirt and resist microbial

growth. Additionally, the importance of repair will continue to grow in the future. Specialized solutions for easy repair and maintenance will keep coating manufacturers busy, ensuring long-term performance and durability.

The rail vehicles of the future will not only be faster and more energy-efficient, but also more adaptable to diverse environments and passenger needs. By prioritizing collaboration and investing in advanced materials, the industry is poised to meet these challenges, ensuring that the next generation of trains delivers on both design and performance. •



# Young talents in the chemical industry

Katja Možina

The shortage of skilled labour is a major challenge for most industries and does not spare the chemical industry either. This makes it all the more important to discover young talent and promote them. At KANSAI HELIOS, we therefore strengthen our presence in relevant training institutes, promote training and further education, and aim to stay attractive as an employer for young talents.

In an online interview with the *inac* global executive<sup>1</sup> search Stephen J. Mothersole, CEO of Chemical Search international, highlights the challenges in the chemical industry and faces in attracting young skilled workers. He points out, too few students have studied chemistry, chemical engineering or other STEM subjects. Consequently, there has been a significant decrease in the number of young talents, attributed to either higher salaries in certain industries or the decentralized location of numerous chemical plants.

However, attracting young talent is not mainly about the payment or the location of the company. Workplace attractiveness in general needs a new perspective through the lens of Generation Z. According to the “2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey 2024”<sup>2</sup> by Deloitte®, GenZ is environmentally aware, technology-oriented and places great value on flexibility and individual support. In their careers, they require security and stability on the one hand and innovative working environments on the other. According to an article in *Forbes* in 2024<sup>3</sup>, companies are facing the challenge of fulfilling precisely the desires of GenZ. As a company, you can ask yourself questions like: Do we offer enough training opportunities? Do we offer sufficient opportunities for training? Do we have a management culture that allows for appreciation? Can we offer enough variety?

At KANSAI HELIOS, we continuously reflect on these factors to strengthen our position as an attractive employer for young talent. In Austria, we have been recognized as a “Top Training Company” for several years—an award for outstanding training opportunities. The voices of five young talents within our group highlight our dynamic spirit and the importance of diversity, teamwork, and career growth.

Considering the shortage of skilled labour and the challenges facing the industry, it makes us all the prouder when our trainees are among the best. It is a fact that the world of work changes with the generations, and that this is accompanied by challenges. However, it is possible not only to overcome these challenges, but also to see them as opportunities for sustainable internal growth. •

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Mothersole, “On the Spotlight Series 02-2025: Challenge and Opportunities in Talent Acquisition for the Chemical Industry,” *inac*, <https://inac-global.com/2025/02/11/on-the-spotlight-series-02-2025-challenge-and-opportunities-in-talent-acquisition-for-the-chemical-industry/> [25.02.2025].

<sup>2</sup> Deloitte Global, “2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey, Living and working with purpose in a transforming world”, 2024, Deloitte., <https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-shared/docs/campaigns/2024/deloitte-2024-genz-millennial-survey.pdf?dlva=1> [25.02.2025].

<sup>3</sup> Hassan Chouhary, “The Impact of Gen-Z In The Workplace”, 2024, *Forbes*., <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2024/02/05/the-impact-of-gen-z-in-the-workplace/> [27.02.2025].



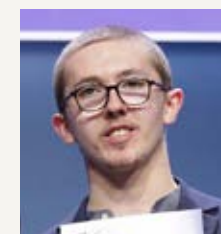
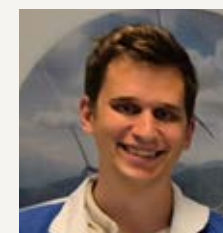
Besides the variety, also the training possibilities play an important role for our young talents: “An advantage is that I have the opportunity to take part in various training courses that help me expand my knowledge and skills,” says **Nataša Milovanović**, technologist at KANSAI HELIOS Srbija.

Social interaction and close teamwork are also important factors for our young employees. **Christoph Spilles**, Chemical engineer at CWS Powder Coatings states: “It’s a lot of fun—especially because it’s always individual cases, always something new.” He also appreciates the variety in the paint industry: “It’s a varied job!”



**Nina Holzer** started her career at CWS Powder Coatings in Germany with her first summer internship in 2014 and has come to stay. Nina’s work includes processing customer enquiries, colour shade and new formulations development. Meanwhile, she is also a trainer at CWS. “Everyone knows everyone”, says Nina, referring to the familiar working atmosphere of the company and the niche market of powder coatings.

Furthermore, **Leon Ostanek Jurina**, in R&D at KANSAI HELIOS Slovenija, emphasizes how important variety and practical orientation are for him: “I am thrilled that my work in the field of coatings offers practical solutions for applications such as parquet, skirting boards and furniture.”



In addition to other factors, personal accomplishment serves as a significant motivator for young employees and as a confirmation of the company’s training plan. **Jan Meikies**, employee at WEILBURGER Coatings Germany has been awarded as Germany’s best trainee in the chemical production specialist profession. “This award means a lot to me. It is not only a confirmation of my hard work, but also a motivation to keep doing my best,” said Jan.



# YOUR SYSTEM SUPPLIER FOR RAILWAY COATINGS



LIQUID  
COATINGS



POWDER  
COATINGS



E-COAT



GELCOAT



PUTTY

## A YEAR OF GROWTH

# WEILBURGER and KANSAI HELIOS moving forward together

Cornelia Camondo-Weißhapp

One year ago, KANSAI HELIOS and WEILBURGER Coatings joined forces, marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter. Mergers and acquisitions often spark curiosity and uncertainty—what will change, what will remain the same, and most importantly, what new opportunities will emerge? For WEILBURGER and KANSAI HELIOS, this past year has been about more than integration; it has been a journey of collaboration, shared progress, and mutual growth.

**W**EILBURGER Coatings, a globally recognized manufacturer of coatings for industrial and consumer goods, and KANSAI HELIOS, a leading system supplier with extensive know-how, share a common vision: to unite expertise, innovation, and cultures for a stronger future. But how has the first year of this partnership unfolded? What milestones have been achieved, and what valuable lessons have been learned along the way?

To gain more profound insights into this transformative journey, we spoke with Frank Gläser, former CEO of the WEILBURGER Group and now a member of the KANSAI HELIOS Group Management Board. He reflects on the integration process, the evolving dynamics of the two companies, and what the future holds as they continue to grow together.







# INTERVIEW WITH FRANK GLÄSER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KANSAI HELIOS GROUP

**Frank, thank you for joining us. Reflecting on your time as CEO of the WEILBURGER Group, can you take us back to the decision-making process? What were the key motivations behind selling a company with such a long and successful history?**

WEILBURGER has always focused on sustainability. This approach has proven to be a good one to this day, where we can indeed look back to a long history. The company celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025. Our strength was and still is to provide our customers and the market with innovative coating solutions to create a common value and built trustful and long-term partnerships. As the global market is getting more and more challenging, it is important to think strategically ahead and to join forces where possible. KANSAI HELIOS and the former Rembrandtin, has been a well-known and respected market companion for WEILBURGER. We knew that the Group was based on a similar DNA and offering a highly complementary product portfolio.

Therefore, from a strategic perspective, the merge of both companies makes utmost sense. The idea originally emerged by chance during a management meeting and was subsequently developed further. It was a challenging task to persuade the former WEILBURGER shareholders to adopt this approach, however, they ultimately consented after recognizing the advantages of a strategic global investor. Being acquired

now by KANSAI HELIOS does provide to WEILBURGER the advantages of a bigger corporate whilst keeping most of the identity.

**Looking back at the past year, how would you describe the journey of WEILBURGER and KANSAI HELIOS coming together—not just from a business perspective, but also from a personal and cultural standpoint?**

After communicating the acquisition to our global valued staff, there was a kind of shock, because nobody within WEILBURGER expected such a decision or move. Surely, this was accompanied by a lot of natural uncertainty. Effective communication and confidence-building actions, such as authentic cooperation between the new colleagues formed a solid foundation for a joint approach. Mutual trust is established, but it is our task in the management to strengthen this further and anchor it sustainably.

Business related there is certainly a lot of movement in all activities and jointly we were already been able to activate interesting synergies in various fields. Furthermore, we have to be careful to maintain our high level of customer care beside all integration activities and challenges.

**Were there any pivotal moments or milestones during the integration that stand out to you? Can you share a specific**

**story or experience that highlights the transition?**

The first participation on the KANSAI HELIOS-Management Congress last year was such a highlight. I had the opportunity of getting to know all the new management colleagues at once and having a cross-cultural exchange. It provided a perfect chance to feel the heartbeat of the KANSAI HELIOS organization.

**Cultural integration is often one of the biggest challenges in acquisitions. What were the key cultural differences, and how did you and your teams work to build a shared company culture?**

In the former WEILBURGER organization, we were used to work in an unbureaucratic and pragmatic way to succeed in the market. All our key people in various levels were equipped with much trust in their responsibilities, and this was one key to the success.

My, respectively our, credo was always: “Hire the best people you can get, create an environment to keep them and then let them do their job!”

In my perspective, the existence of a culture in a mature setting is imperative for achieving success and recognizing that failures can occur in tandem with a significant potential for learning and improvement. Clearly in a bigger corporate some more stringent rules or frameworks apply. However, professionals—so-called free thinkers—need space for their

activities. As the top management, we have in first instance to monitor and if necessary to support or redirect.

Finally, it is all about keeping and growing the strengths and eliminating the weak points.

**Every acquisition brings new opportunities. What doors has this partnership opened for WEILBURGER and KANSAI HELIOS? Are there any innovative projects, expanded markets, or synergies that have already taken shape?**

There is surely a lot of perspective movement in various segments. I like to highlight the cooperation with the resins department. The work on alternative captive resins to substitute external ones looks very promising and will increase our profitability.

**From your perspective, what unique strengths does KANSAI HELIOS bring to WEILBURGER—and what does WEILBURGER contribute to the broader KANSAI HELIOS Group?**

The wide European and even global set-up of KANSAI HELIOS with Kansai Paint Japan and Mitsui is a real strength of KANSAI

HELIOS. Furthermore, the extensive product portfolio and the backward integration in the resin field does provide great advantages.

WEILBURGER can, vice versa, contribute with some new technologies, strong customer relationships, new markets and combined market intelligence. In principle each of us can contribute to a common successful joint journey and we have to be open-minded in embarking it.

**No transition is without challenges. What were some of the biggest obstacles during the first year, and what strategies helped overcome them?**

Change is always a kind of obstacle for people and, to a certain extend, a natural human answer. Open and honest communication is important to take and onboard the people to the process. It is important for them to understand the WHY of certain processes and steps that need to be taken.

In the end, it is about trust to the management and the superiors in general—and this has to be proved continuously.

**On a personal level, what have been your biggest takeaways from this journey? How has your perspective as a leader evolved through this experience?**

The transition from being competitors to cooperating side by side as colleagues with a joint mission is an absolute transformation! Through many years, we mutually spent a lot of energy to take away each others’ customers and projects. Now we are working shoulder by shoulder as a family with joint targets.

**Looking ahead, where do you see the partnership in the next few years? What are your top priorities, and how do you envision WEILBURGER and KANSAI HELIOS shaping the future together?**

I am fully convinced that we have the potential to further strengthen KANSAI HELIOS as a leading company in the global industrial coatings market. We have to set the right focus on the market segments, reduce complexity while staying flexible and focus on our innovative approach! Together we are stronger. TOGETHER WE ARE ONE! •

“I AM FULLY CONVINCED THAT WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN KANSAI HELIOS AS A LEADING COMPANY IN THE GLOBAL INDUSTRIAL COATINGS MARKET.”







## NEW MARKETS—NEW OPPORTUNITIES

# India, Brazil, China

Parag Mazumder, Roberto Caforio, Massimo Dinelli

With the acquisition of WEILBURGER Coatings, KANSAI HELIOS has expanded its presence into three vibrant coatings markets: India, China, and Brazil. Each of these regions bring its own distinct characteristics and opportunities, reflecting the diversity of the global coatings industry. In this article, we take a closer look at these markets, exploring their unique attributes and learn what makes them stand out in the world of coatings.

### India—between rapid urbanization and constant development

The Indian paint and coating industry has been one of the fastest growing paint sectors in Asia. Significant contribution and growth from the architectural and industrial sub-segments have enabled Indian coating producers to register vibrant growth over the years.

The beginning can be tracked back to the first factory set up in Howrah, Kolkata in 1902 by Shalimar Paint Colour and Varnish Company. This company, started by two British entrepreneurs, paved the way for many many British companies to follow—Goodlass Walls (now Kansai Nerolac), ICI, British Paints (now Berger), Jenson & Nicholson and Blundell &

Eomite (now Garware Paints). In 1942, an indigenous paint company in Mumbai opened that grew rapidly to become the market leader in the 1960s and maintained that position ever since: Asian Paints.

As India experienced a rapid urbanization and infrastructure development, the demand for architectural and industrial coatings increased. Rising disposable incomes and a growing real estate sector fuel renovations and construction projects, boosting the need for aesthetic and protective coating. The fast-growing consumer demand and a hike in per capita income has prompted big players to explore paint and coating businesses. In addition, the “post-pandemic boom” of investments and infrastructure development has resulted in a demand spike from the real estate sector, which accounts for about 70% of the total coating demand in India.

With this increase of economy, Indian paint companies are also benefitting. They are adopting the latest technological advancements, driving innovation, enhancing product performance and sustainable practices to meet evolving consumer preferences and

regulatory standards. The paint industry is now home to local manufacturing of global paint companies such as Asian Paints, Kansai Paint, Akzo, Berger, Nippon, Jotun, Hempel, Grasim and many more.

The rising of the paints sector in India is expected to continue: It is set to double its production capacity to 7.8 billion liters per year by 2027, with investments of 200 billion USD. The expansion will intensify competition and drive revenue growth to 7-10% YOY. Furthermore, the Indian automotive paints and coatings market size is expected to grow from 608.17 million USD in 2023 to 910.69 million USD by 2028, at a CAGR of 8.41% during the forecast period (2023-2028). With the growing demand for automotive & e-mobility and increasing after-sale services for various car segments, the market is expected to see growth over the coming years.<sup>1</sup>

Presence of all shipping companies and Governments initiative on various port infrastructure has opened new dry docking and marine repair facilities, making India an important country for most marine paint companies.

<sup>1</sup> Economic Times June 11 / 24 & , new from Mordor Intelligence Report and verified facts from various industry sources and Indian Paint Associations.





WEILBURGER BRASIL: THE TEAM IN SÃO BERNARDO DO CAMPO IS READY TO EXPLORE NEW OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN KANSAI HELIOS GROUP AND TO LEVERAGE ITS EXPERIENCE IN HTE COATINGS SECTOR.

WEILBURGER Coatings India Private Limited was established in June 2006 as a subsidiary of WEILBURGER Coatings Germany. Based in Howrah, West Bengal, the company specializes in providing high-quality coating solutions for various industries, including high-temperature systems, non-stick coatings, general industrial and packaging coating products for various markets in India and exports to South Asia. The company is certified to ISO9000, ISO14001 & GMP and employing 80 people.

**Brazil—navigating a challenging market**

The Brazilian coatings market presents significant challenges, such as exchange rate volatility and competition with imported products. These challenges stem from Brazil's industrial evolution, beginning

with rapid industrial growth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in textiles, and later with the expansion of the automotive and oil industries. As Brazil continued to modernize and integrate into the global economy, these factors have increasingly shaped the current landscape of the coatings industry.

Brazil is also one of the world's largest oil and gas producers, which has driven demand for specialized coatings designed to withstand harsh environments. The expansion of offshore drilling and infrastructure projects has led to an increased need for corrosion-resistant coatings to protect pipelines, storage tanks, and industrial equipment.

WEILBURGER Brasil Ind. e Com. LTDA has used these adversities as catalysts for innovation. Investments in cutting-edge technology and local production have

**WEILBURGER PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE EXPORT OF COOKWARE PRODUCTS, SERVING MAJOR BRAZILIAN MANUFACTURERS.**

allowed the company to offer solutions tailored to the demands of the national market. Over time, the company specialized not only in non-stick coatings for cookware but also advanced into industrial coatings for various industry segments, consolidating itself as a reference in the sector and building a solid reputation for quality and technology. WEILBURGER plays a crucial role in the export of cookware products, serving major Brazilian manufacturers and connecting national production to international markets. This role strengthens Brazil as a production hub in the coatings industry.

Having operated in Brazil for more than a decade, WEILBURGER has experienced steady growth. This trajectory highlights the role of a strong foundation in fostering innovation and sustainability within the coatings industry.

WEILBURGER Brasil is aiming to expand its market presence further in the future. The company's technical team is ready to explore international opportunities, leveraging its experience in the coatings sector and the path taken so far reflects a broad commitment to progress—merging technology, sustainability, and design to contribute to the evolving coatings market in Brazil and beyond.

**China—sustainability in the focus of development**

China is currently the world's largest coatings market including the coatings for industrial applications and automotive, with a total estimated value of over 45 billion USD and 14 million tons in volume in 2023. Applications range from material protection to the aesthetics of finished products. The exponential growth in the recent decades has been supported not only by domestic production of consumer goods, but also by exports. It was further

driven by industrial expansion and urbanization and the increasing demand for high-quality and environmentally friendly coatings. The market encompasses a wide array of applications, including architectural coatings (~ 50% of the total market share), industrial coatings (~30% market share), automotive coatings (~15% market share), and marine/protective coatings (~ 5% market share).

In the 1980s and 1990s, China embarked on rapid industrialization and economic opening. During that period, the industrial coating industry was mainly dominated by international manufacturers, as domestic companies lacked the technical expertise to produce advanced coatings. Imported coatings were utilized in diverse industries, including shipbuilding, automotive, and household appliances. In the late 1990s, China began to invest significantly in production capacity and research to develop its own technologies, gradually reducing its dependence on imports. Industrial production in the country grew by 15-20% annually during this period, and with it the demand for specialized coatings, such as corrosion- and scratch-resistant coatings, and high-aesthetic automotive paints.

Innovation will remain a key factor in China also in the future. According to market estimates, the paint industry is expected to grow at a 5% CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) through 2028. Sustainability will be a significant area of development, with a particular emphasis on low-VOC coatings, water-based paints, powder coatings, and UV coatings, with the aim of reducing air pollution.

China is expected to continue to strengthen its global leadership position in industrial paints, both through expanding its production capacity and through strategic partnerships with international companies.



## AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF CHINA'S EFFORTS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, WEILBURGER IS BEST-EQUIPPED TO MEET THE HIGHEST REQUIREMENTS.

WEILBURGER China operates in two sectors: non-stick coatings and general industry (railway, automotive such as shock absorbers, transmission, interior, and exterior plastic parts, and industrial vehicles). Most of the customers of WEILBURGER China are Chinese companies that produce for both the Chinese and international markets.

Against the background of China's efforts on sustainable development, WEILBURGER is best-equipped to meet the highest requirements, as the company has already been successfully developing water-based technologies for the general industry and non-stick for a long time.

WEILBURGER has also pioneered the replacement of PFAS-based technologies in the non-stick sector. Although this product portfolio is mature and consolidated, we continue to research and develop along these lines to maintain technological leadership. The coatings market in China presents several opportunities alongside challenges. Understanding consumer preferences and continuing market research will be crucial to stakeholders in this industry. WEILBURGER closely observes the trends in the Chinese market and aligns its approach accordingly.

The operational strategy aims to further increase the localization of supplies and

the supply chain to reduce dependence on foreign countries, strengthen sales on the Chinese market by paying more attention to domestic consumption and finally train and educate internal personnel to make the most of the local talents that represent the future of the company.

China's paint and coating industry has come a long way from an import-dominated market to an innovative global manufacturing hub. With steady growth expected in the coming years, and an increasing focus on sustainability and innovation, China is poised to lead the next phase of development in the global paint industry. •







WATER-BASED COATINGS FOR STOVES, STOVE-PIPES AND FIREPLACES

# Burning for innovation

Sebastian Neuhof

A stove is far more than just a technical object—it is a piece of quality of life. It is not just an investment, but a symbol of warmth, security, and the magic of the moment. With its gentle glow, it becomes the centerpiece of any room, creating an atmosphere of well-being. Subtly, it blends into any interior—a perfect harmony of aesthetics and functionality. Stove manufacturers, our customers, are rooted in tradition and continue to develop this symbolic power with a spirit of innovation that burns like an unquenchable fire—full of energy, inspiration, and vision.

**B**ERTRAMS GmbH & Co KG in Vienna, one of our long-standing partners in the field of high-temperature coatings, is a pioneer of fiery innovation power. The family business has been manufacturing flue and stove-pipes since 1875 and is one of the leading specialists in Europe with its expertise. The high-quality standards of the BERTRAMS products and the continuous development of innovative solutions make the company so popular with its customers. “We manufacture our flue gas pipes with the next generations in mind. Environmental compatibility is very important to us,” explains Anna Wach, Head of Sales at BERTRAMS.



Photo: © BERTRAMS GmbH & Co KG

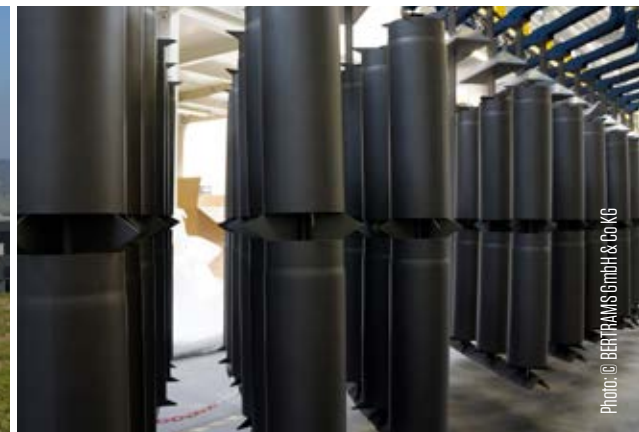


Photo: © BERTRAMS GmbH & Co KG

BERTRAMS GMBH & CO KG, LOCATED IN VIENNA, PIONEERED THE USE OF INNOVATIVE WATER-BASED, HIGH-TEMPERATURE RESISTANT COATING SYSTEMS FOR THEIR STOVE-PIPES.

## Environment and sustainability: a lasting spark

“We were the first manufacturer in Europe to opt for a paint shop in which both the flue gas and stove-pipes are finished with an innovative water-based, high-temperature-resistant coating system. It is essential for our customers that the coating is absolutely smoke- and odor-free when it is first heated. The private Swedish stove in the living room is becoming increasingly popular. An unpleasant smell from the new stove-pipes when they are first heated—and often afterwards too—is unappealing and therefore not an option for us,” Wach emphasizes.

With its high temperature coating senotherm® UHT Hydro WEILBURGER has developed the very first smoke- and odor-free water-based oven enamel, revolutionizing the world of high-temperature coatings. This coating is also known under the name Non-Smoker®, which defines all low-smoke and low-odor coatings.

Especially when it comes to cooperating between coating producer and customer in the high-temperature range, maximum precision is paramount. The development of a customized coating system requires expertise and commitment on both sides, but

is an investment that pays off, confirms Anna Wach: “In 2011, we tailored our blasting and coating system to our stove-pipes in close cooperation with WEILBURGER and have only been coating our stove-pipes with the Non-Smoker® since 2012. With our know-how, we can produce almost any custom-made product for our customers, even from a single piece. By producing in Austria, we safeguard jobs and Austria as an industrial location.”

## We make the impossible possible

As a coating manufacturer, we focus on customized solutions. The market and our customers are our inspiration and drive for continuous development. At WEILBURGER Coatings production site in Germany, we have always produced high-temperature resistant coatings based on a unique combination of many years of experience, living tradition and a clear view of the future—embodied by the renowned brand senotherm®.

This environment gives rise to coating innovations for the entire industry. The first pure water-based, high heat-resistant coating from WEILBURGER remains stable at a permanent temperature load

of 600°C, hardens at room temperature, has an exceptional scratch-resistant surface, and is also eco-friendly.

A product like this senotherm® UHT Hydro was considered impossible in the oven industry for many years. Today, this paint literally shines on ovens and accessories throughout Europe, setting new standards in terms of quality and environmental protection. The surface is smoother, harder, and more durable than conventional coating solutions and guarantees the highest level of surface quality. The Non-Smoker® version also ensures smoke- and odor-free initial firing.

## One step ahead together

Environmentally friendly coatings preserve ovens in a way that does justice to their valuable symbolic character. We support our customers in their further development and work with them to set new standards for environmental compatibility and surface perfection. We are proud of our long-standing partnerships that turn into joint developments—full of creative sparks that spark without stirring up any smoke. •



“OLD CAN BE AS NEW”

# The timeless power of emotions

Vanja Hočevar

In a world where so much seemingly divides us, where we are all so different, there is at least one thing that connects us as humans: we are driven by emotions, and we love stories. It's no surprise that marketing embraced this approach years ago, using the power of storytelling to help brands connect with us on a deeper, more heartfelt level. No matter how old this approach is, it still works. Our Woody, who was reborn, is just one example of this.

## Old can be as new—the rebirth of Woody

It was a sunny spring day in 2020 when Miha was storing a few file folders in a lonely old storage room of KANSAI HELIOS Slovenia. Just as he was about to leave the way to a quiet place, he stumbled upon an old wooden doll. A strange feeling touched him, and he suddenly knew, this little guy should not be left to be forgotten. “Funny hairstyle,” he thought, as he picked the dusty, scratched,

and dull piece gently up and carefully carried it into the Belinka brand lab. The doll's arms creaked as he moved them, the wood was gray, dark, and seemed brittle. But those eyes, though faded, said: “I want to live.” With each brushstroke of wood stain, it seemed as though new energy was flowing through him. After two hours, it was alive again: Woody. Since then, it has been shining ever brighter. He enjoys life, plays in the sun, paints garden fences, renovates old toys, paints

coffee tables, bathes in the lake and above all—he fills the hearts of his friends with joy and attachment to the material wood and responsible environmental practices. Whenever you see him, you'll be able to listen to the amazing sound of Humoresque Op. 101 No. 7 by A. Dvořák, his favorite song.

What sounds like a little fairy tale is the story of Belinka's central figure—created based on an emotional marketing approach. Woody was reborn in Belinka's

“Old can be as new”, #REUSE campaign in 2021 and since then is the character supporting a strong storytelling of the brand. Each #REUSE campaign with Woody offers a broader content perspective. There's always something Woody's in, whether it's a specific ritual that makes you feel connected or cozy, or just a regular routine that makes you feel like you're part of something.

In the “Old can be as new” campaign, the story is built around the importance of restoring and preserving wood. The

campaign encourages people to breathe new life into old wooden items using Belinka's high-quality products. Additionally, it emphasizes sustainability and a responsible approach to nature. With simple steps and the right products, old wood can shine like new, supporting creativity and a sustainable approach in everyday life.

As a result, Woody, or the campaign, awakens emotions in customers, reminding them of a cherished piece

THE MAIN MESSAGE OF THE CAMPAIGN WAS THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO THROW AWAY DAMAGED WOODEN ITEMS. INSTEAD, WE CAN RESTORE THEM, BEING MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS.





of furniture given to them by a loved one. They may have recalled that a similar task awaits them. Everyday situations, the simplest and most ordinary ones, serve as a link connecting us all, which is why many customers can relate to them.

**Environmental care as a cornerstone of the story**

The Belinka brand uses this powerful narrative to convey its core beliefs, such as environmental concern, a responsible approach to nature, and a green approach. This appeals primarily to environmentally conscious individuals who are aware of the impact of their decisions on the planet and seek sustainable solutions, eco-enthusiasts who prefer natural and eco-friendly products, and individuals who are more sensitive to environmental issues and support companies that are sustainable and responsible towards the environment.

**Understanding the customers**

In today’s age of digital marketing and social media, where genuine personal interaction is lacking, it is more important than ever how brands communicate and connect with consumers. One of the most powerful strategies is based on a simple yet highly effective

principle: people don’t just buy products as such; they buy them based on the emotions, feelings, and values these products represent. Coca-Cola and Nike are well-known examples of how deep emotional connections can be formed. Who doesn’t associate “JUST DO IT” with Nike? And what do you think of when you hear “Holidays are coming” on the radio at Christmastime?

Brands that use emotional marketing techniques can better understand their consumers, create more relevant products and services, and build long-term relationships. In a world where consumers are increasingly overloaded with information, such strategies are key to success. Understanding people is thus becoming one of the most powerful tools in modern marketing.

A proven deeper connection with consumers is created if a brand evokes emotions in consumers, such as happiness, nostalgia, fear, or pride. This strategy is commonly referred to as emotional marketing.

**The beginnings of emotional marketing**

Old can be as new—this also applies to the concept of emotional marketing, which dates back to 1980, when marketing professionals began to place greater emphasis

PEOPLE DON'T JUST BUY PRODUCTS; THEY BUY THEM BASED ON THE EMOTIONS, FEELINGS, AND VALUES THESE PRODUCTS REPRESENT.

THE USE OF VARIOUS EMOTIONAL MARKETING TECHNIQUES BEGAN AFTER SCIENTISTS PROVED THAT EMOTIONS, NOT RATIONALITY, DRIVE DECISIONMAKING.



on the role of emotions in consumer decision-making. However, it is still evolving with every good new story that is told.

Until the early 1980s, it was widely believed that consumers made rational decisions when shopping. However, psychological and neuroscience research in the 20<sup>th</sup> century revealed the significant influence emotions have on our behavior. One pioneer in this field was Portuguese neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, who demonstrated through his research that people predominantly make decisions based on emotions, with rationality often playing a secondary role. This insight is

captured in his famous quote: “We are not thinking machines that feel; we are feeling machines that think.”

**Stories work**

The theory is simple: we humans love stories and are easily inspired and influenced by them. However, telling a really good, coherent story in marketing is not that easy. A well-crafted story is authentic, compelling, and aligned with the target audience’s values, fostering long-term loyalty and enhancing communication effectiveness. This is something raw, unrelated data cannot achieve.

Stories that resonate with our lives and experiences touch us more deeply because they reach us on an emotional level rather than on the objective one. Storytelling is one of the most powerful communication techniques, combining the art of narrative with clear marketing objectives. Through stories, companies build trust, inspire, and motivate their customers.

No matter whether you are looking for good wood paint or not, check out our Facebook page to see what Woody is up to. •





**Davor Sladoje**  
Head of Integration Office



**Ai Shinohara**  
Integration Officer

## UNITING PEOPLE UNDER A SHARED VISION

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN TIMES OF TRANSFORMATION

**T**ransformation projects often come with unique challenges that require careful navigation. One of the most demanding aspects of managing such projects is dealing with uncertainty. By nature, transformation involves change and change often brings ambiguity. The ability to remain adaptable is the most important skill. It takes ongoing effort and thoughtful decision-making to provide clarity and direction to the team.

Another significant challenge lies in aligning diverse stakeholders. Each participant brings their own perspectives, priorities, and concerns to the table. If these differences are not addressed early on, they can lead to conflicting expectations and delays. This is where clear communication plays a pivotal role—it serves as the glue that binds all stakeholders together, ensuring that everyone remains aligned and focused on the common objectives.

### The major questions: What? Why?

Effective communication is essential for ensuring alignment among stakeholders, and it begins with transparency. From the outset of a project, it's very important to make sure everyone understands not just what is being done, but also why. Regular updates, open forums for discussion, and clear documentation are key elements. However, communication isn't just about delivering information—it's equally about actively listening to all voices at the table.

A particularly effective strategy is something that we call “drawing a common picture.” This involves co-creating a shared understanding of the project's goals, challenges, and desired outcomes. It can be as straightforward as aligning on a project roadmap, or as interactive as hosting workshops where teams collaboratively visualize what success looks like. Once everyone shares the same vision, collaboration becomes significantly more seamless.

### Strategies for highly demanding projects

Transformative projects often create high-pressure

environments, with competing deadlines and demanding expectations. Managing these effectively requires a thoughtful approach. Prioritization is key—not everything needs to be tackled at once. As project managers, it's our responsibility to distinguish between urgent tasks and important ones, ensuring that the team focuses on what truly matters. Setting realistic expectations is equally essential, both for the team and for stakeholders. In high-pressure situations, even small victories can have a significant impact, which is why celebrating progress along the way is so valuable.

Another crucial strategy is fostering a culture of psychological safety. Team members need to feel comfortable voicing concerns or admitting when they're feeling overwhelmed. A little empathy can go a long way in maintaining focus and morale, even under intense pressure.

### The power of listening

A good project manager isn't just someone who plans or solves problems—they're also a connector. By truly understanding the concerns and motivations of your stakeholders, you can build trust, foster collaboration, and drive consensus.

Additionally, clarity is your greatest tool. Whether you are creating a comprehensive project plan, elucidating a complex decision, or resolving conflicts, your proficiency in communicating effectively will be a crucial factor in your accomplishments. Always remember that a shared vision doesn't happen accidentally. It takes intentional effort, but the payoff is worth it. By fostering open dialogue and a common understanding, you can lead your team toward achieving the project's goals effectively.

In times of transformation, the role of a project manager extends beyond coordinating tasks. It's about uniting people under a shared vision and ensuring that every step of the journey is guided by clarity and communication. The most transformative outcomes occur when teams see the big picture that they are part of. •



**Radmila Wollrab**  
Director Sustainability  
KANSAI HELIOS Group

## NAVIGATING ESG

# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COATINGS INDUSTRY

**E**SG has been touted as a global priority, reshaping industries like coatings. However, balancing sustainability with profitability has proven to be challenging. Amid growing backlash and increasing regulatory requirements it seems that the word alone—and more tragically, the actions that embody it—are retreating from the business stage. ESG demands systemic change. It can spark creativity and assist companies in strategically addressing environmental, social, and governance ramifications.

The coating industry sits at the intersection of sustainability and functionality. Our products are critical to infrastructure and mobility. They also carry an environmental footprint, from raw material sourcing to production and application. My role as Sustainability Director is integrating ESG into our strategy, which is no small feat. It requires a fundamental shift in how we assess our products and operations in order to meet regulatory demands, customer expectations, and economic pressures.

### The challenges of ESG in the coatings industry

The coatings sector faces challenges similar to other industries in Europe. Aligning with European legislative requirements such as the EU's Chemical Strategy for Sustainability and Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive requires significant investment. Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) and Product Carbon Footprint (PCF) are not mandatory but are becoming increasingly necessary for businesses aiming to remain competitive. Developing and applying these tools across our portfolio while maintaining profitability is a delicate balancing act.

The greatest challenge may be the shifting ESG narrative. Recent backlash has portrayed ESG as a distraction from financial performance, painting it as a costly burden rather than a driver of innovation and resilience. This sentiment can undermine efforts to position sustainability as a long-term business strategy.

### Focus areas

I see clear focus areas where ESG can be both a lever for innovation and a value driver. First, product sustain-

ability remains my top priority. We've started rolling out our own product assessments for existing and innovative coatings, which are based on the established tools such as the Portfolio Sustainability Assessment by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Second, collaboration with suppliers and customers is critical. By fostering partnerships across the value chain, we can collectively reduce emissions, improve material circularity, and enhance product durability.

Finally, communication is a cornerstone. Transparent and consistent messaging on our ESG initiatives helps combat skepticism, both internally and externally. Managing EcoVadis ratings for the group and its subsidiaries is not just about achieving high scores but ensuring our efforts reflect genuine commitment.

### Concerns

Sustainability cannot be a secondary concern or a tool for marketing; it must become a fundamental driver of decision-making. Yet, shifting this mindset is a monumental task, particularly when short-term gains often trump long-term impact.

Finally, I am acutely aware of the human element of ESG. Behind every initiative are people—employees, customers, and communities—whose lives are affected by our actions. Striking a balance between environmental goals, business performance, and social impact is a complex puzzle that keeps me focused but also concerned about whether we are moving fast enough to make a difference.

### Looking ahead

ESG is not an obstacle but an opportunity to redefine what success looks like in the coating industry. I remain committed to integrating sustainability into our business strategy, pushing boundaries where possible, and challenging the status quo. ESG is a journey, not a destination, and while it may be fraught with difficulties, it is a path worth taking—for our business, our stakeholders, and the planet. •

CLARITY IS YOUR  
GREATEST TOOL.

ESG IS A JOURNEY,  
NOT A DESTINATION.





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**“The secret of change is to focus all of our energy,  
not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”**

**Socrates**

