

DIE ZEIT  
VERLAGSGRUPPE

Edited by  
Florian Langenscheidt

Special folder PFEIFER

**PFEIFER**

**FROM** Over 100  
exemplary German  
family-owned  
businesses

**A GOOD**

**FAMILY**

IMPRINT

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## DEAR READERS,

The German *Mittelstand*, or German medium-sized enterprises, are often cited by analysts abroad as the reason for Germany's solid economic situation. Especially in these politically turbulent times, our country appears to be a bastion of peace. It is a centre of gravity of sorts amid the centrifugal forces of global confusion – and it gives people reason to marvel. That is due in part to medium-sized enterprises, and to the many family-owned businesses that make sure the centre of Europe is peaceful and help guarantee Germany's prosperity, freedom, and societal stability.

We want to affirm and expand upon that statement with the book you are holding in your hands. When asked to identify the central element of Germany's strong economic backbone, we want the answer to be »German family-owned businesses.«

Why? Because they are flexible and innovative. They think in terms of generations, not quarterly earnings. They make quick decisions that are also sustainable. They do business with no small measure of social responsibility – and do not look at their trusted business partners as mere cash cows. What is more, family-owned businesses find a way to connect the rational business world with the emotional world of the family. And in order to make that possible, balance must be found between the magical triumvirate of power, love, and money.

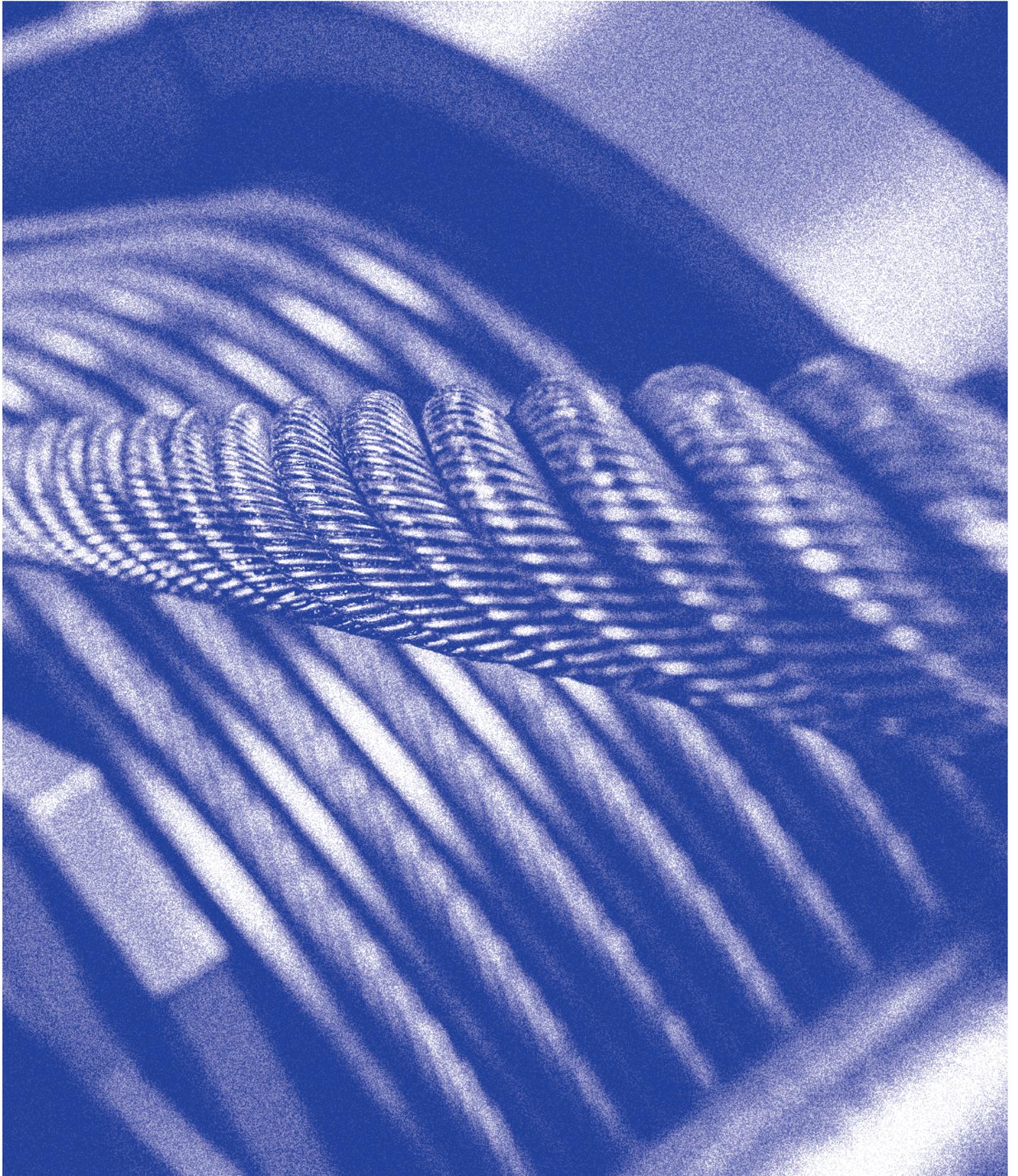
This compendium *Aus bester Familie, From a Good Family* – now in its third edition – tells the story of more than 100 exemplary family-owned businesses in Germany in 400 pages. It includes stories about outstanding international industries, about large and small-branded companies, and about particularly tradi-

tional businesses. It also tells the story of companies that are not necessarily in the limelight, but whose number and variety make up the fertile ground of the German family-owned business landscape. We are pleased that we were able to bring this exciting project to the ZEIT Publishing Company fold. We see it as the beginning of a medium-sized enterprise initiative, one that we can bring to a brighter future and further develop with our partners. This project's connection with the Deutsche Wirtschaftsforum (German Economic Forum) alone shows how fruitful this initial cooperation is. And the positive reaction from so many of the participating businesses emboldens us to go even further: We were able to launch *Aus bester Familie* on the evening before the 9th Deutsche Wirtschaftsforum, in the presence of many of the family entrepreneurs, as well as our partners Berenberg, Obermark, and the Stiftung Familienunternehmen (The Foundation for Family Businesses). We would like to thank them for their enormous support.

Now it is our responsibility to help provide this joint project with as much exposure and attention as possible – as a printed symbol for the sustainable success and meaning of family-owned businesses for Germany as an industrial hub.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Florian Langenscheidt, Editor  
 Dr. Rainer Esser, Publisher  
 Frankfurt, November 2017



From a small family rope making business to a global industrial enterprise and the world's most technically advanced rope supplier, PFEIFER is one of the few companies with such a long tradition and impressive growth behind them

# PFEIFER

SINCE 1579

A company that has been around since the Renaissance is one that is especially suited to thinking in the long-term. PFEIFER, a family-owned company, began working with rope in the 16th century. Today it is considered the world's most technically advanced rope supplier. It was a long journey from a small, family-owned rope making business to an internationally active corporate group, from a company that made hemp rope to one that continually explores new technological applications in wire rope and lifting technology, connecting and lifting systems, as well as in cable structures.

It was a journey during which tradition and innovation were always closely tied together. The PFEIFER Group's headquarters are in Memmingen, Germany – and have been for more than 430 years. The Group's history stretches back to 1579 at least: That is the year Linhart Biechele (a rope maker and ancestor of the Pfeifer family) and his colleagues complained, in the name of the rope maker's guild, to the city council about illegal trading practices. This letter of complaint is the oldest evidence of the Pfeifer family's rope making

**»Premium solutions for the most demanding applications in wire rope and lifting technology, connecting and lifting systems and cable structures.«**

## **PFEIFER Corporate Profile**

business in Memmingen. For generations, the family practiced its craft in the centre of the city's old town. After World War II, the business moved to a new location outside the city walls.

For as long as can be remembered, hemp and natural-fibre ropes were part of the company's product line. Beginning in 1950, Hermann Pfeifer, the father of

Gerhard Pfeifer – the company's current owner – began expanding the business. With the introduction of wire rope manufacturing and the institution of modern machines, as well as a new production facility, PFEIFER quickly transformed into a modern industrial company – while simultaneously expanding into fields outside of rope making, including building systems and lifting technology. Under the leadership of Hermann Pfeifer, in the 1960s the company was also able to develop such innovations as the PFEIFER Lifting Anchor System, made specifically to lift and transport precast concrete elements.

Since 1996, Gerhard Pfeifer has led this family-owned business in the 12th generation. He was the driving force behind PFEIFER's internationalisation, turning the company into a global player with nearly 260 million euros in revenue and six manufacturing facilities on three continents. Despite being a holding company with numerous national and international subsidiary companies, the PFEIFER Group continues to be owned and controlled by the Pfeifer family. It is divided into eight business units. PFEIFER manufactures ►

## FROM A GOOD FAMILY



Value-oriented: Gerhard Pfeifer, the president of the PFEIFER Group of companies, is the twelfth generation to lead the family-owned company

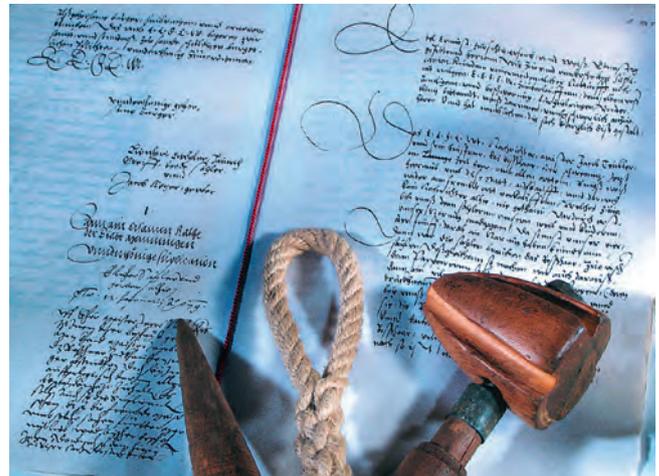
»Tomorrow's world is designed by individuals. It's our responsibility to make the world a little bit safer for them every day.«

Gerhard Pfeifer



Unique: The fully automatic high-rack storage in Memmingen is one-of-a-kind. It has a total capacity of more than 1,600 rope reels

Innovative: PFEIFER's Lifting Anchor System revolutionised how precast concrete elements are transported, moved, and lifted



Tradition minded: This document – dated 13 February 1579 – offers the oldest evidence of the Pfeifer family's rope making business in Memmingen. It testifies to the family's centuries-old tradition of craftsmanship



**International:** The largest project in company history was the construction of the roof for the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa

ropes for cranes, elevators, and for industrial use, but also makes concrete inserts, lifting devices, attachment and lashing equipment, and protection systems.

In addition, PFEIFER is the only full-service provider worldwide in the field of lightweight architecture, a field best characterised by Munich's Olympic Stadium – the first important modern cable construction – or the Moses Mabhida Stadium in the South African city of Durban. PFEIFER took part in the construction of both. For the South African stadium – constructed for the 2010 World Cup – PFEIFER was responsible for the entire roof, the company's largest project thus far.

PFEIFER is in the middle of a reorganisation, a measure undertaken in order to ensure the company is manageable in the future and to refocus its strengths. In the future, the eight business units will be restructured into four independent operational divisions. During that entire process, the company will keep its main focus on its employees and make sure that it continues to operate as a company steeped in tradition.

In keeping with its long history, PFEIFER is especially active in training younger generations, and has an apprenticeship ratio of ten per cent. The company is proud to recruit a majority of foremen, group leaders, and management staff from within its own ranks. Additionally, the family-owned firm offers »PFEIFER Campus,« a continuing education program designed to support individual employee development. The campus offers courses in over 80 subjects, ranging from technology and business administration to foreign languages, health, and safety. And once an individual starts working for PFEIFER, they are likely to stay loyal – a fact that is reflected in the firm's higher-than-average employee tenures. The detailed expert knowledge in application technology is unique in the industry.

»For us, looking for the best solution means not being satisfied with the existing situation, but rather turning one's attention to new things in an open way,« says Gerhard Pfeifer. He and his descendants will ensure that, even centuries from now, PFEIFER will continue to look to the future.

## DATES AND FACTS

### FAMILY OWNERS

Pfeifer family  
12th generation of ownership

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Wire rope and lifting technology, connecting and lifting systems, cable structures

### BUSINESS UNITS

Rope application technology, Attachment and lashing equipment, Lifting technology, Elevator products, Mining and industry ropes, Cable structures, Rockfall protection products, Connecting and lifting systems

### LOCATIONS

Headquarters in Memmingen (Germany) with five further production facilities located in Changshu (China), Shanghai (China), Dallas (USA) and Wroclaw (Poland), as well as additional offices in Germany and abroad.

### CORPORATE STRUCTURE

Holding company with currently 33 active operative companies in 19 countries.

### DISTRIBUTION

Global

### EMPLOYEES

1,500 worldwide

### SALES VOLUME

approximately 260 million euros (in 2017)

**PFEIFER**

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EDITION  
SPEERSORT 

In Cooperation with

 Stiftung  
Familienunternehmen

  
**BERENBERG**  
PRIVATBANKIERS SEIT 1890

**Obermark**