

# INSIGHTS

**Semperit**

the new owner of RICO GROUP

**256 cavity mold**

at Fakuma 2023

**Expansion**

RICO, SIMTEC & HTR



## Silicone Excellence Inside

THE RICO GROUP MAGAZINE

2023 edition

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INSIGHTS The RICO GROUP magazine Publisher: RICO GROUP GmbH, Am Thalbach 8, A-4600 Thalheim bei Wels, Austria Tel. +43 (0)7242 76460 E-mail: office@rico-group.net, www.rico-group.net. Content: Markus Landl; editor: Stefanie Bernegger; picture credits: RICO, RICO GROUP, SIMTEC, SILCOPLAST, HTR printed by: RICO GROUP; art direction and layout: RICO GROUP. Reproduction in full or in part is subject to approval.

In order to improve readability, the INSIGHTS magazine does not use gender-specific phrasing. Where the masculine form is used, such references relate to both men and women.



# INSIGHTS EDITORIAL

2023

A new era begins

## Editorial Insights 2023

“First of all, we would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all your support and loyalty over the years. You have played a vital part in our success, and it's been a pleasure working with you. Your loyalty and the trust you placed in us have helped us grow and evolve, and have shaped the company – our life's work – into what it is today.”

29 years ago, it was just an idea in the minds of a group of forward thinkers. We were bold enough to venture into uncharted territory and pursue our dreams. What began as a small startup is now a success story that we can look back on with pride. The RICO Group has become a significant player in the silicone and mold production sector, and it would be difficult to imagine the industry without us.

It hasn't always been plain sailing, as I'm sure you can imagine. Like most companies, we've had to overcome challenges, endure setbacks, and adapt to ever-changing market conditions. Our passion, hard work, and unwavering belief in our abilities have enabled us to continuously evolve, and become a company renowned for quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction. Your support and trust have been invaluable along the way.



Ing. Gerhard Kornfelder, Alfred Griesbaum, Johannes Grabner

After much deliberation and intensive negotiations, we have decided to sell the RICO Group to Semperit AG. This was not an easy step to take, as so much passion and commitment have gone into creating the business as we know it today, but it was a carefully considered decision made in the best interests of the company's future development, as well as its employees and customers.

We would like to take this opportunity to say goodbye – we will always remain the founders of the RICO Group, but our time as its owners has come to an end. Semperit AG took over as the new owner on August 1, 2023 and head into a new era with you.

We wish you all the best for the future!



## The new ownership structure of



The acquisition of the RICO Group at the end of July 2023 marks a new, exciting chapter in the almost 200-year history of our company. As a manufacturer of industrial elastomer products, we are now expanding our operations to include liquid silicone products and the associated upstream value chain. Silicone is a highly attractive, logical, and natural addition to our product and service portfolio.

The RICO Group was a promising potential acquisition target for Semperit well before the initial contact was made. It was a healthy business which had been run responsibly and with considerable foresight by its founders, and had mapped out a clear path for growth.

The acquisition process took some time – the deal was signed 12 months after the first informal discussions between Semperit and RICO took place – but as the saying goes: Rome wasn't built in a day. The negotiations proceeded tentatively and respectfully as mutual trust grew between the two parties. Semperit wants to grow, just like RICO. And this common ground enabled us to reach an agreement with RICO's founders that offers both companies a promising outlook. As the directors, we are convinced that this acquisition makes sense, and see the customer groups served by the RICO Group as an important component for the growth of the entire Semperit Group.



From left to right: Gerfried Eder, Chief Industrial Officer; Karl Haider, Chief Executive Officer; Helmut Sorger, Chief Financial Officer;

Signing the contract was an emotional moment for everyone involved – including for us as members of Semperit's Board of Directors, as RICO fits perfectly into our updated corporate strategy, which is exclusively focused on industrial customers.

We are looking forward to shaping the exciting times that lie ahead together with RICO's employees and customers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerfried Eder".

Gerfried Eder

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl Haider".

Karl Haider

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helmut Sorger".

Helmut Sorger



# INTERVIEW **Karl HAIDER**

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## Silicone applications make the perfect addition

**Semperit's CEO Karl Haider introduces the new owners of the RICO Group, and explains why the two companies are such a good fit.**

### Insights: How would you describe Semperit?

Karl Haider: We are a manufacturer of highly specialized polymer and elastomer products for a variety of industrial applications, and ideally positioned on international markets. Our Industrial Applications division produces hydraulic and industrial hoses and profiles, while our Engineered Applications division manufactures custom products such as escalator handrails, conveyor belts, ropeway sheave liners, ski foil, and a wide range of other products for industrial use.

### What exactly do you mean by "international"?

Our production network encompasses a dozen production sites on three continents, which employ almost 4,000 people. Thanks to our own sales team and our partners, we have a worldwide sales presence, and in 2022 our turnover was around EUR 780m.

### Why did you decide to acquire the RICO Group?

RICO's silicone applications are the perfect addition to our polymer and elastomer-based product portfolio. We also view RICO's mold production capabilities as a unique asset.

### How do you see RICO's future?

The acquisition was completed because we were able to convince RICO's founders that we would endorse and actively support its current corporate philosophy and expansion strategy. In other words, the RICO takeover is an important step for us, one that will make a significant contribution to the growth of the Semperit Group.

### What are the next steps for RICO?

RICO is pressing ahead with the expansion at its headquarters in Thalheim. We want to see the new production spaces working at full tilt as soon as possible, just as the company's founders planned. We're also doing everything we can to support the expansion measures at SILCOPLAST and SIMTEC so that we can work together to support the growth of existing and potential customers.



Karl Haider, Chief Executive Officer Semperit



# RICO GROUP NEW CEO THOMAS AICHBERGER

## Packed agenda for further growth

Thomas Aichberger moved from Semperit to join the RICO Group's management team following the completion of the sale to Semperit. An engineering graduate, he has two decades of experience at international manufacturers and companies in their supply chains. At Semperit, he spent the past five years working as a senior procurement manager, and previously held engineering and management positions at the automotive supplier Nematik and the mining conglomerate Sandvik.

Mr. Aichberger has spent the past few weeks gaining a detailed picture of the RICO Group's portfolio and activities. On visits to RICO's locations in Switzerland and the US, as well as the Thalheim Original Plant, he was impressed by the company's dynamic, innovative approach and the staff's expertise and motivation. "I saw people working with great passion and commitment to achieve our objective of providing customers with proven technical solutions and supporting them right the way through to the finished product. The team's effectiveness is very impressive."

RICO will continue to follow its growth strategy under the new owners, and will benefit as a business that has retained its autonomy but now also has the support of the Semperit Group. The CEO's to-do list includes expanding production at all locations, strengthening in-house mold production, and preserving and internally disseminating RICO's expertise, so it can provide customers with the best possible service at all times. "The management team is giving very high priority to the planned training and recruitment initiatives because they are essential to the implementation of our growth plans."

Thomas Aichberger is married and has two sons. He enjoys spending his free time out and about in the mountains or mountain biking in the hills of the Upper Austria's Mühlviertel region.



Thomas Aichberger, Chief Executive Officer RICO Group





# RICO EXPANSION

**RICO continues to invest in its Thalheim site and is building a large extension next to its headquarters there. The construction work is taking place in several phases: the first phase began on June 15, 2022 and is scheduled to last around 15 months, with the new building due to enter service by the end of this year.**

Located on an adjoining 2.5-hectare plot, the new production facility will open the door for a huge expansion in RICO's manufacturing capacity. Injection molding equipment requires substantial amounts of space and the company's strong current order situation has made the extension necessary. RICO produces molds and injection-molded silicone parts for Healthcare, Mobility, Food, Industrial, Consumer & Appliances and Sanitary.

"We always think big. When we finished the most recent addition in 2018, we thought it would give us enough space until 2025, but the site is already bursting at the seams," explains Managing Director Markus Nuspl. RICO only recently opened a new, 5,500m<sup>2</sup> production building in 2018.

The company currently has around 15,000m<sup>2</sup> of space at its disposal. Phase one involves construction of three new production facilities, a high bay warehouse, handling areas, and new offices, providing a total of 11,000m<sup>2</sup> of additional floor space.

## Creating jobs in the region

RICO is a firmly established company with a significant workforce of over 300, 10% of whom are apprentices. The diversity and expertise of its talented people form the backbone of the company, and are essential to RICO's ongoing success and growth.

The extension is also bringing new jobs to the local area. "We're delighted to be taking the next step in our continued growth. From day one, it was clear that we wanted to expand in central Upper Austria. And by doing so we are creating 100 additional jobs in the region," Nuspl confirms.

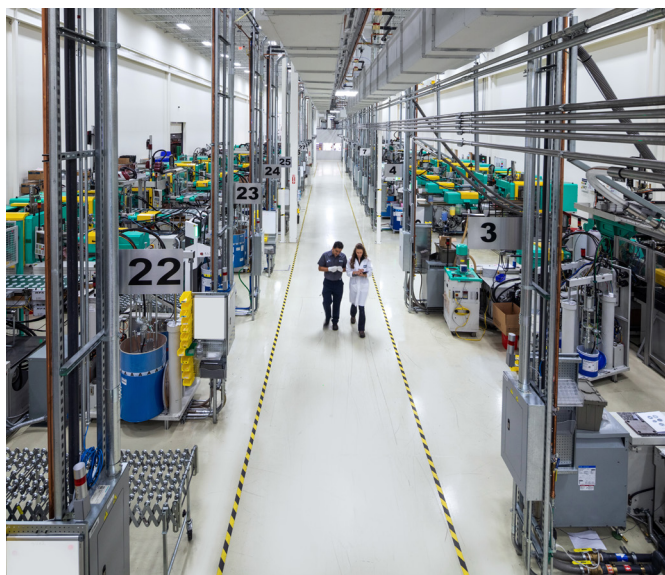




# SIMTEC EXPANDS MANUFACTURING

## SIMTEC Silicone Parts is once again expanding.

The facility located in Miramar, Florida (USA) was built for SIMTEC in 2013, upon relocating from Wisconsin where operations first started in 2002. The state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Florida was constructed to accommodate SIMTEC's need for technologically advanced manufacturing and to provide room for anticipated growth.



Over the years SIMTEC has experienced steady and healthy growth, producing 1.1 billion LSR custom components in 2022. SIMTEC's growth greatly escalated when they expanded their capabilities in 2017, adding a class 8 clean room and ISO 13485 certification to meet the needs of a growing number of medical, healthcare and life science customers. Advanced technology, hygienic, and high-volume precision molding and micro-molding have helped establish SIMTEC as a preferred partner by the leading medical device OEMs.



In 2023 SIMTEC's expansion plans have continued with the addition of an adjacent 26,000 square foot warehouse and reallocating existing warehouse space for manufacturing. In 2023, a total of three molding machines – comprised of both two-shot and single shot molding machines were added in Q3 and Q4. Including the three molding machines brought online in 2022, SIMTEC has added six new machines (single-shot and two-shot) in the last 18 months.

But it doesn't end here, in 2024 SIMTEC plans to purchase an additional three more molding machines further increasing its capacity to accommodate new customer programs and future growth plans.

# HTR NEW VEHICLE FLEET

## HTR invests in own vans and drivers

**HTR has bolstered another part of its operations with a substantial expansion of existing capacity and continues to focus on competitive differentiation.**

HTR currently serves about 1,200 customers throughout Austria and in neighboring German-speaking regions, with a particular focus on southern Germany. About half of HTR's customers use its convenient pick-up and delivery service, where HTR employees collect items directly from the customer and then deliver them back after heat treatment.

The company has been offering this service for many years on a scale that is unrivaled in the industry. Until 2022, most of the logistics involved was handled by external providers, but as part of moves to further improve its on-site customer service, HTR took the decision to use its own vehicles and staff to make the majority of these deliveries. This has brought clear benefits: HTR has enhanced its presence with customers and can ensure that all steps taken in this area serve to boost customer satisfaction.

### New vehicles

Since the first quarter of 2023 HTR has built up a fleet of 10 vans – it previously operated just a single small van – which will travel over 1,000,000 km every year. HTR's workforce has also increased significantly as a result, and the company now employs 70 people.

Recruiting new drivers turned out to be more straightforward than expected. Some of the drivers were recruited from the previous service provider, and the company's employee referral system worked superbly.



# Innovation

## Use of AI scouts in innovation management

**Identifying technology trends using artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the way companies discover new developments and emerging technologies. AI-based trend scouting built on machine learning techniques can be used to efficiently and accurately analyze a wide range of data sources. The RICO Group is now using an AI-based system to help pinpoint new technological opportunities at an early stage.**

The AI technology first trawls a wide range of sources, including scientific publications, patents, technical reports, social media, online forums, and news articles. This provides a broad spectrum of information about recent developments, opinions, discussions, and patterns of innovation.

The data is then analyzed and structured so that relevant information can be filtered out. The AI model has been specifically trained to meet the RICO Group's requirements so it can identify and prioritize potential trends and technologies.

The scouting results are discussed with internal and external sparring partners as part of RICO's innovation process, and measures are then taken as necessary. This enables the company, in collaboration with silicone and mold production experts, to screen more technology in a shorter amount of time than was previously possible. "AI is our new employee in innovation management," explains Christoph Zipko, the Group Innovation and Sustainability Manager at the RICO Group.

By harnessing AI for technology trend research, we can identify potential areas for innovation much faster, spot new business opportunities, and improve our competitiveness. This puts us in a position to take advantage of new opportunities at an early stage and bring new innovations onto the market.

AI can also be exploited in other areas aside from innovation management, which is why the RICO Group organized a company-wide innovation day on the topic of AI. The event featured presentations and workshops to familiarize employees with the ways in which AI can support them in their day-to-day work.





# Sustainability

## RICO's commitment to sustainability

**The RICO Group has strengthened its commitment to implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a range of initiatives and strategic partnerships.**

RICO collaborated with the prestigious Fraunhofer Institute to stage a multi-day workshop to support it in achieving its sustainability objectives. The aim of the workshop was to evaluate and improve alignment of company processes with the SDGs. Working with the Fraunhofer Institute enabled RICO to gain valuable insights and develop measures to help it enhance its sustainability targets.

A case in point: RICO's Austrian locations are now supplied exclusively with electricity and thermal energy from renewable sources.

It has also set up a steering committee to oversee all sustainability-related matters and liaise with the Sustainability Department at Semperit AG.

The committee coordinates and manages the RICO Group's sustainability activities to ensure consistent implementation across all sites in Europe and the USA.

"We are fully aware that sustainability is an important social issue, and we are committed to playing our part in protecting the climate and supporting our customers in this area.

Thanks to sustainable innovation initiatives aimed at improving the carbon footprint of our products, the concept of sustainability feeds through into our mold making and, in turn, into our customers' production facilities," says Christoph Zipko, RICO's Group Innovation and Sustainability Manager.



Quelle: <https://www.un.org/SustainableDevelopmentGoals>

# HTR INVESTS IN B2B DIGITALISATION

## New ordering system for HTR customers

### ! Strong customer focus

**With an eye on the future, HTR asked customers for their views on a new B2B platform as part of its customer satisfaction survey in 2022. The response was positive across the board.**

With around 1,200 customers and about 60,000 order items a year, HTR is currently facing significant challenges when it comes to dealing with all the orders for its services, particularly in view of its continuing growth. The company is working on developing a B2B platform, which will support HTR's standardization and harmonization of its order processing, as well as providing added customer value going forward.

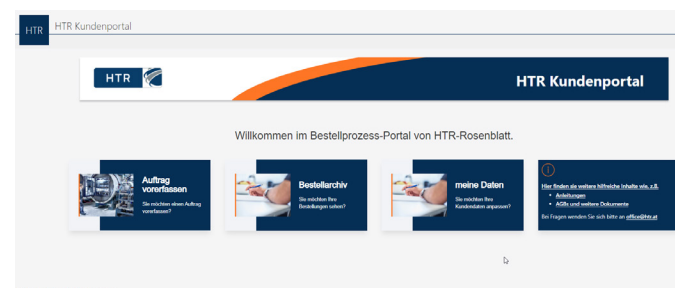
#### Benefits of the customer platform

- # Improved planning certainty
- # Clear overview of ordered components/delivery tracking and component status
- # No need to complete order forms by hand
- # Removing potential for errors in the ordering process
- # Basis for costing calculations
- # Basis for selecting materials
- # Information about delivery runs
- # Improved delivery times for HTR
- # Re-specification of custom requirements possible for every order
- # Quick and easy complaints handling
- # Gain of useful information for future orders

The new system will enable customers to place orders electronically, check the current status of their orders in real-time around the clock, and access even more precise information about delivery dates. It will support customers with the selection of the right heat treatment options in advance thanks to indirect access to HTR's extensive database, which will help to avoid ordering mistakes and delays due to follow-up inquiries. This will bring clear benefits for both customers and HTR.

The platform is basically aimed at all customers, because they will also have access to additional functions besides placing orders, which will enhance transparency. However, the system will primarily benefit customers who frequently need to place varying orders for different materials or heat treatment options, and those who make large repeat orders. In future, HTR plans to offer EDI integration for large customers with volume parts.

The company is collaborating closely with an external partner and the provider of its ERP system to develop the B2B platform. The launch of a beta version, which will undergo rigorous testing with the help of selected trial customers, is already underway. The rollout of the first release, which will enable customers to access the system's core functions, is scheduled for later this year. This will be followed by regular updates featuring additional tools.



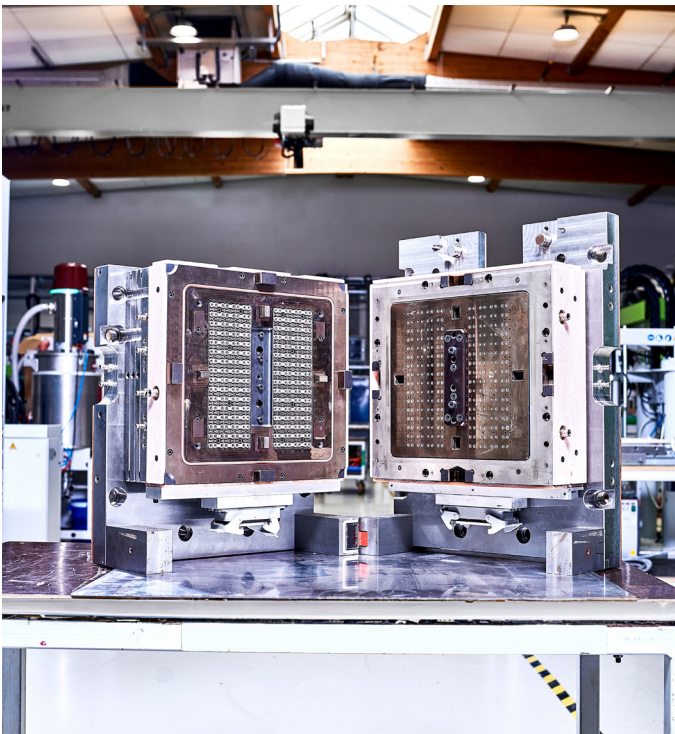
# RICO NEW APPLICATION AT FAKUMA 2023

## 1-K molds from RICO

**Lots of cavities,  
consistent volumes  
and high availability**

**RICO's new mold application is a real masterpiece of engineering – and not to be missed at FAKUMA 2023 in Friedrichshafen from 17-21 October.**

The 256-cavity injection mold with a part weight of 0.6 grams per cavity is designed for volume production of single-wire seals made of liquid silicone. The cycle time is only 15 seconds with a clamping force of 130 tons.



## Cold runner system made by RICO

Even though it has 256 cavities, the mold is extremely compact, measuring just 446mm x 611mm x 351mm. Combined with the equally space-saving design of the entire injection molding process, this results in greater productivity per square meter. The cold runner system developed by RICO's in-house specialists features a dual nozzle system that ensures waste-free direct injection. Another advantage of the compact design and the 1:2 ratio of the cold runner nozzles is optimal heat balance during heating or cooling, as well as minimal mismatch. This mold meets the most demanding requirements in terms of dimensional stability and part specifications. The self-balancing cold runner system improves efficiency and saves time by eliminating the need for frequent complicated adjustments.

## Perfect handling and high process reliability

The dual demolding system enables both bulk and individual nest separation. The latter results in higher production availability, so it represents a major step toward achieving zero ppm. Thanks to the quick-release system and integrated functionality – such as centering into the exchange package – changing different insert sets is quick, easy and friction-free. All RICO molds run on clamping force even when the mold is still cold without damaging components, which avoids expensive shutdowns and downtime costs.

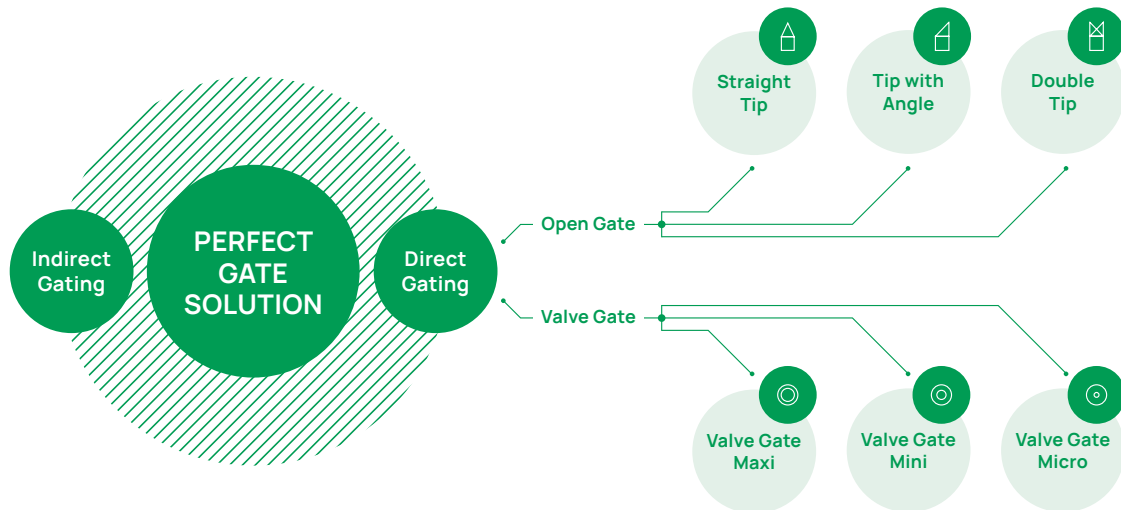
By designing and configuring both the mold and the automation, RICO avoids unnecessary complexity while significantly enhancing process reliability – all part of RICO's one-stop-shop service.

**Come and see the complete RICO application at FAKUMA 2023 at the Sumitomo (SHI) Demag stand (B1-1105, hall B1) You won't be disappointed!**





# RICO SMART INJECTION SYSTEMS



## Advantages and disadvantages of our open system

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Lower investment costs</li> <li>+ Self-balancing</li> <li>+ Up to 256 cavities in a compact size (max. 570mm tie-bar spacing) thanks to the dual nozzle design</li> <li>+ Side-on injection possible</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visible injection point (pin technology)</li> <li>- Limitations on thickness (&gt; 0,2mm)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## Advantages and disadvantages of our valve gate systems

We can supply all our valve gate nozzle systems in either fixed, manually adjustable or electronically adjustable designs

### Micro and mini systems:

- + Up to 160 cavities (15mm minimum spacing)
- + Suitable for extremely thin components
- + Direct injection even with minimal shot weight (micro valve gate system)
- + Balanced cold runner
- + Minimal installation height thanks to innovative plunger system
- + Compact design due to low nest spacing (15mm)

### Maxi system:

- + Up to 16 cavities
- + High injection volume
- + High viscosity (incl. HTV)
- + Balanced cold runner

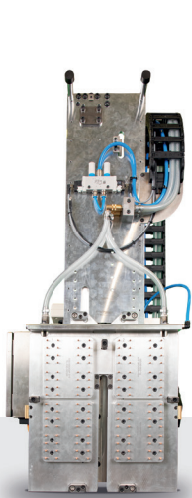
- Large number of moving parts in the cold runner
- High maintenance costs

- Large number of moving parts in the cold runner
- High maintenance costs

# RICO THREE SYSTEMS, LETS OF BENEFITS

! **Straightforward handling  
for fully automated operation**

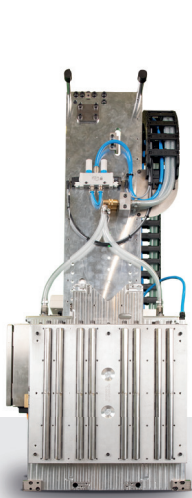
RICO handling systems are positioned directly on the mold and precisely adjusted to the specific part geometry. As the handling system is an integral part of the mold, it can be moved between machines just like the mold. All three of our handling systems enable fully automated molding operations.



**eCO-Ject**



**eCO-Rotor**



**eCO-Grip**

Function	Parts ejected from cavities ejector pins	Parts rotated from cavities using aluminum brushes	Parts demolded from cavities using grippers
Vertical axis speed	Pneumatic: max. 1m/s, servo-electric: max. 1.7m/s		
	Drive unit fully integrated into handling system and no external accessories required		
Cycle time	Servo-electric drive enables reduction in cycle time of approx. 1 second compared to pneumatic drive		
Interface	Brush unit		
Depositing location	Parts fall into machine bed after demolding		
Operation	Via wired handheld control unit, alternatively via W-Lan by mobile phone or tablet		

# SILCOPLAST NEW OPERATIONS MANAGER



SILCOPLAST AG's new Operations Manager Clay Hadzic

**Born in Vorarlberg, 51-year-old Clay Hadzic moved to Switzerland with his family a few years ago. He has over 25 years of international experience in the global electronics and pharmaceutical industries, and has always worked in operations, an environment where he still feels right at home.**

Clay trained as an electrical engineer and has extensive experience in management positions in the global electronics and pharmaceutical industries. He has continually enhanced his expertise, obtaining industrial foreman, operational excellence and Six Sigma Green Belt qualifications.

Joining Schott AG as an operations manager marked an important milestone in his career. In this role, he was responsible for setting up and growing the injection molding department and played a crucial part in expanding its capacity. He arrives at SILCOPLAST from V-ZUG AG, where he worked for the past three years, supporting its plant relocation, contributing to a reorganization process and managing the ramp-up of the new facility. This experience has honed his skills in project management and implementing change processes.

In his executive position at SILCOPLAST, Clay manages all operational processes in production, production planning, maintenance, and logistics. His goal is to make sure these processes are as efficient and seamless as possible, in order to ensure optimal results. An important aspect of his job is implementing the company's strategy, which involves overseeing necessary reorganizational measures in operations and business processes.

"Implementing business processes that are closely aligned with market requirements calls for flexible thinking and a willingness to change. So encouraging my staff to actively share their know-how with each other and identify potential areas of crossover is one of my top priorities. The drive to strengthen the RICO Group's market position in bold and innovative ways is very palpable. As SILCOPLAST's Operations Manager I'm looking forward to playing my part in this in collaboration with our dedicated employees to ensure the company's long-term growth and enable it to move forward effectively," explains Clay Hadzic.



# SILCOPLAST UNDER PRESSURE

## HCR silicone compression machines

Wide range of materials and high annual volumes



When it comes to silicone production and processing, our Swiss subsidiary in Wolfhalden is a specialist in high consistency rubber (HCR). In the compression process, solid silicone put into a mold – which is custom-made for the component in question – and the mold is then closed under high pressure using a hydraulic press. After that, the material is molded into its final shape at a temperature of around 180°C.

Mold prices are lower than those for injection molding, and this process also enables the production of complex components. Silicone compression machines are true all-rounders: they are ideally suited to the manufacture of various parts – from sophisticated small

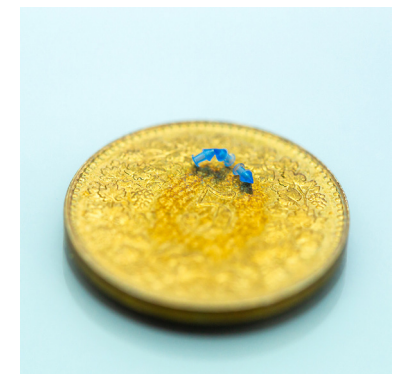
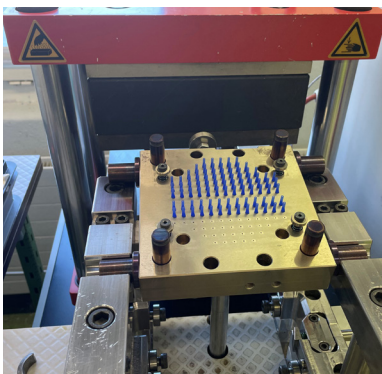
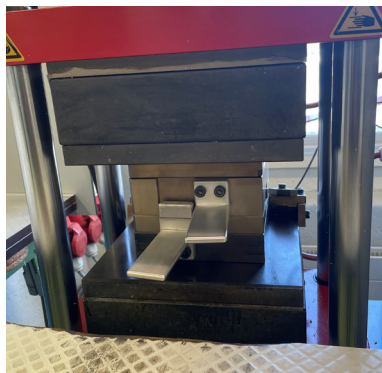
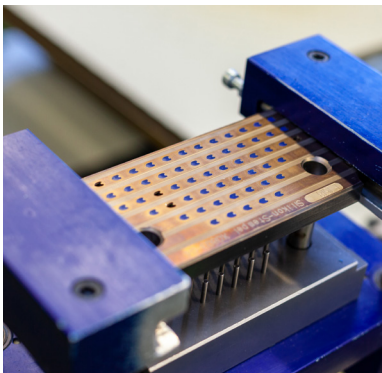
components and microparts all the way up to large parts for prototypes. And fully manual processing and complete control are all part of the package, too.

### More presses, more components

Silcoplast has 10 compression machines, with clean room production also available on request. 2K molding is also possible. Besides offering excellent value for money, the company can draw on its extensive experience, backed up by its outstanding expertise and precision.

### Numerous types and high annual volumes

Silcoplast can provide a huge range of material types in various colors and hardnesses. It also supplies products for the medical sector and – as already mentioned – can offer molds with up to 160 cavities. Over the course of a year, the company manufactures anywhere between 50 and three million units.



# SIMTEC ALTERNATIVE MANUFACTURING SOLUTION

## SIMTEC's Answer for Micro Molded Medical Components

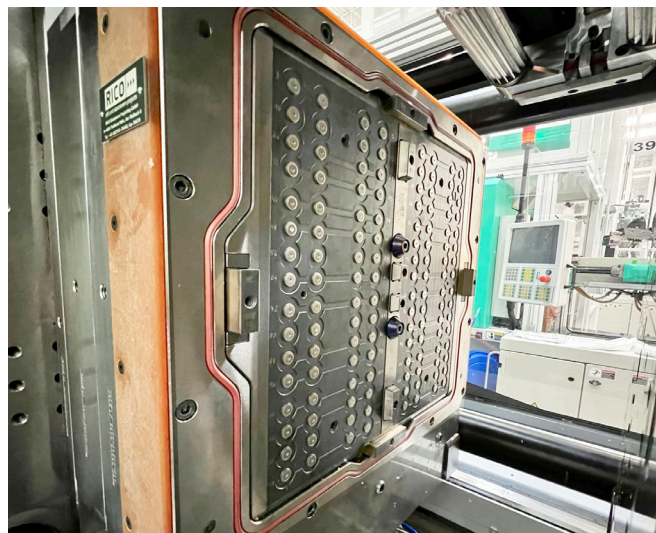
**Innovative solution that improved efficiency, added value, and met the customer's requirements.**

Providing solutions that meet or exceed customers' expectations is not new for SIMTEC, so when a large medical OEM needed a more efficient manufacturing solution that could keep up with their product's high demand and quality requirements, SIMTEC welcomed the opportunity to offer a value-added solution.

A solution was needed for four silicone rubber parts used in the insulin pump of a glucose monitoring device. The parts were being manufactured using compression molding. Because of the manufacturing process and the miniature sized parts, there was significant material waste relative to the parts' material volume. The four silicone rubber parts – a seal, septum and two plugs ranged in weight from 0.01 grams to a tiny 0.005 grams. Because the parts are used in medical devices, environmentally controlled manufacturing was required, as well as high production yields to meet their 30 million parts a year usage with a projected increase to 130 million annually.

A 4-cavity prototype mold was built to provide the customer samples needed for evaluation. The samples were tested to confirm the feasibility and performance of injection molding the components. Not having any other injection molded parts, they were pleased with the quality of the parts and the elimination of material waste it offers.

To meet production requirements, a dedicated, 128-cavity, needle valve injection mold was designed and built by RICO, SIMTEC's sister company and mold supplier. The mold was designed with direct gating to mitigate the material waste issues they were experiencing with compression molding.



Because the parts were so small and required clean room production and post-curing, a customized manufacturing cell was needed. The cell included a 150-ton injection press, automated parts removal and handling robotics, and an environmentally controlled enclosure. A proprietary parts delivery system was developed that could handle the 128 mini parts produced with each molding cycle and deliver the parts into the clean room. Utilizing ionized vacuum technology, the molded parts were efficiently transported into the class 8 clean room for post-curing, parts inspection, and packing. To fulfill post-curing requirements, the post-curing oven was fitted with a unique, custom-made mesh drum to accommodate the small parts.





# SIMTEC SIMTEC GOES “LIGHTS OUT”

## Providing solutions that will optimize manufacturing

### Producing parts around-the-clock



**24 hours a day, 7 days a week, SIMTEC is producing parts. SIMTEC is mass-producing LSR, LSR Two-Shot and LSR Multi-Shot parts around-the-clock.**

For a six-hour period each day, SIMTEC is running 'lights-out'. High quality molded parts are being manufactured without humans present. Thanks to a stable process, accurate programming, precision robotics, and a sophisticated ERP system, SIMTEC's high quality standards and production output remain intact. Molding machines “talk”

to the ERP system providing real time machine and production data. Customized programming, a robust database, and html scripts allow manufacturing and operations leaders to remotely access any machine to view real time machine and production data if needed.

SIMTEC is a technology and data driven company that takes a comprehensive total systems approach, always looks for opportunities to automate wherever possible. The goal – providing solutions that will optimize manufacturing, maximize efficiency and productivity, and add value to customers.





# ANNIVERSARIES

## A special thank you from the RICO GROUP

### ! to our loyal and long-serving employees

These days, highly trained specialists and long, loyal service to a single company are by no means a given. This is why we value even more highly the continuity that our hardworking employees have provided over their many years with the Group.

This year, we would once again like to pay tribute to the special milestones that our long-serving employees have reached. Their impressive, long-standing dedication to the company is not only a reflection of their individual performance; it also highlights the exceptionally positive working environment at the RICO GROUP and its subsidiaries. Serving as an exemplary employer that offers the very best working conditions, coupled with team spirit, trust, recognition, and a wide range of opportunities for personal and professional development, is very important to us.

**We are delighted to announce the following anniversaries:**

**Our congratulations and special thanks for 20 years of loyal service go to:** Roger Abderhalden, Plant and Machinery Maintenance, Silcoplast AG

**And an equally special thank you for 15 years of loyal service to:**

#### **RICO Elastomere Projecting**

Renate Ritzberger, Administration/Secretariat  
Thomas Enzlberger, Internal Services, AWT  
Gheorghe Manolea, Maintenance & Safety



From left to right: Thomas Enzlberger, Renate Ritzberger and Manolea Gheorghe



From left to right: Production Manager Markus Reuteler, celebrator Roger Abderhalden, Managing Director Philipp Gaus

# RICO GROUP Trade fairs and conferences

For customers, business partners and the general public!

You can find out more about the RICO GROUP at the following trade fairs and events in 2023.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Whether it's with long-term partners or prospective new customers, we always enjoy taking opportunities to talk face to face. Visit us at one of the following events or contact us directly to arrange an appointment at one of our sites.

**11-14 September 2023**  
LSR Conference, Charlotte/USA

**12-13 September 2023**  
Swiss Medtech Expo, Luzern/CH

**17-21 October 2023**  
Fakuma, Friedrichshafen/DE

**13-16 November 2023**  
Compamed, Düsseldorf/DE



## NEWS FROM RICO GROUP

# FLASHLIGHTS

There is always so much going on at the RICO GROUP outside our day-to-day operations. And we want to make sure you don't miss out on all the latest news.



01

**Thalheim local bus with RICO Group logos**

The new Thalheim local bus is now part of the public transport network. And it goes without saying that as a long-established local business, the RICO Group, along with its subsidiaries RICO and HTR, was only too happy to support the bus service as a branding partner. Our goal is to reach out to people in the area, raise the RICO Group's profile and attract new employees.



02

**HTR Rosenblattl sponsors Huskies Wels**

This year, HTR became the exclusive sponsor of the Huskies Wels American football team. The company wants to play its part in promoting sport in Austria. But this exclusive partnership is also based on a shared vision. "The American football club is a successful and highly committed team that is a by-word for toughness, perseverance and strength – values that are also really important to HTR. We're proud to be part of the community and to be involved in local events and activities," commented Managing Director Klaus Höggerl.



03

**HTR now with more than 70 employees**

HTR has grown rapidly – not just in revenue terms, but also as far as the number of employees is concerned. Expansion of the internal customer transport unit and some of the production departments, as well as the introduction of a new team leader managerial level has seen HTR's headcount grow from 55 employees to over 70 since the beginning of 2022.



04

**Success for RICO employees in the Wels Business Run**

This year, numerous RICO employees again took part in the Wels Business Run – more precisely, one-fifth of all staff, including 34 apprentices, took on this sporting challenge. And once more, this year's event was a roaring success. RICO came eighth in the company ranking (out of 75 companies) and successfully defended its title in the Apprentice Challenge, finishing streets ahead of the competition. Of course, there was a fun side to the day, too.





05

### RICO family get-together

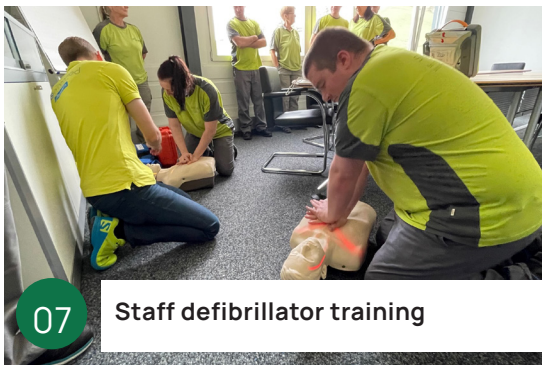
On July 28, 2023 RICO held its summer get-together – a big family party for visitors of all ages. The grounds of the Wels sports club served as a play and party area for the day. Besides food and drinks, there was no end of entertainment, with sports activities (including beach volleyball, basketball and tennis) as well as shooting galleries, a carousel and an inflatable slide for the youngsters. With around 350 guests, it was a hugely enjoyable day and we can't wait for next year's summer party!



06

### Happy birthday Philipp Gaus

The entire team at SILCOPLAST raised a glass to Philipp Gaus to mark his 60th birthday. The relaxed birthday party was not just an opportunity to celebrate, but also a way for us to jell more closely as a team. It was the perfect setting to share ideas and memories, have a laugh and make new contacts.



07

### Staff defibrillator training

SILCOPLAST has installed an automated external defibrillator (AED) and organized an employee training course on how to use the device. The course gave participants all of the necessary know-how, providing them with the skills required to use the AED correctly and give life-saving assistance before professional medical support arrives. The training was also designed to reduce anxiety and uncertainty in emergency situations, and to enhance workplace safety.



08

### SIMTEC welcomes Sales and Operations Leader

#### Cedric Henry, National Sales Representative (left)

SIMTEC welcomed Cedric Henry to the SIMTEC Sales Team in Nov 2022. Cedric's career has spanned 25+ years' holding several sales account management positions for injection molders, injection machine manufacturers, and in the tooling industry.

#### Jose Cepeda, Plant Operations Manager (right)

Jose Cepeda joined SIMTEC in early 2023. In his role as Plant Operations Manager, he oversees SIMTEC's production, facility maintenance and process engineering departments. Before joining SIMTEC, Mr. Cepeda held numerous Operations and Quality Management positions for global Tier 1 manufacturers in the automotive and commercial sanitation industries.



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2023 edition

# INSIGHTS

THE RICO GROUP MAGAZINE

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**Bundled Silicone Excellence Inside**