

Continuous pioneering spirit and entrepreneurial excellence

HÄFELE is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2023 and shaping the future: In addition to the many festivities, the construction of a visionary Dynamics Centre in Nagold is also beginning



Häfele, the international expert for hardware technology, electronic access control systems and lighting, is regarded as a hidden champion. Appreciated in the “Ländle” and by experts all over the world, but less recognised further afield. Recently, this has been changing. The ZEIT publishing group attested “entrepreneurial excellence” to the group of companies, which now operates on a global basis. Customers from the joiner/cabinet maker area, the furniture industry, the dealer area, architecture and interior design put their trust in the expertise and innovative strength of the family-owned company. On the occasion of its 100th anniversary, Häfele now has many things in the pipeline. A visionary project has been launched with the construction of the “Dynamics Centre” in Nagold – and Häfele’s future orientation is going to be expressed at numerous events at the Nagold site and at interzum, the world’s leading trade fair. The new motto “Maximising the value of space. Together.” illustrates the aim of maximising the value of space together with our partners – with sophisticated concepts for the living and working environments of tomorrow.

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Innovative strength, courage and optimism: these qualities have accompanied Häfele from the very beginning, and also characterised the founders back in the day. The original 2-man business, which was a specialist hardware store, has developed into a global company, Häfele SE & Co KG, with subsidiaries in 38 countries and more than 8,000 employees. Nagold is the headquarters of the International Häfele Group, which is now

regarded as a leading expert in hardware technology, electronic access control systems and lighting. Häfele has unique expertise in the development of innovative room concepts, and is continuing to expand its international range of services. Häfele's presence at interzum, the world's leading trade fair, which is taking place in Cologne from 9th to 12th May, will kick off the anniversary celebrations in 2023, and will be duly celebrated at the headquarters in Nagold from 21st to 23rd July.

Time and again during Häfele's eventful company history, courage, innovative spirit, flexibility and perseverance have manifested themselves and taken the company forward. The basis of the world's leading expert in intelligent hardware technology, lighting and electronic access control systems was a small, agile and innovative hardware business. In 1923, when the economic conditions were anything but easy, two energetic young men – businessmen Adolf Häfele and Hermann Funk – opened the “Specialist Shop for Hardware” in Aulendorf. They soon realised that their products were particularly popular with carpenters, and moved to Nagold, which was the hub of Württemberg furniture production at the time. Nagold has now become a town with charm and charisma – and the traditional company Häfele is both dynamic and forward-looking, which makes them a good match.

Change is based on continuity

At Häfele, change always means continuity: much has happened since 1923, with just four management changes. At the beginning of 2023, Sibylle Thierer (2003-2023) placed the responsibility for the company in the hands of Gregor Riekema. His appointment as the fifth company director in the 100-year history of the company is tied in with the best experiences from the past. The first managing director not to be from the Häfele and Thierer families, Hans Nock (1982-2003), had paved the way for the company to become a global player with foresight. Gregor Riekema is now the second non-family Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Häfele Group.

“Without fittings, furniture is nothing more than a pile of boards”

The milestones in the company's history remain important – and so do their “inventors”: Häfele Managing Director Walther Thierer (1949-1982) launched Häfele Logistics, which is still highly praised in the industry today, and invented “The Complete Häfele” catalogue, which is now available worldwide in more than 20 languages. However, the name of his daughter Sibylle Thierer stands for what is probably the biggest change in the history of hardware and fitting systems. She brought furniture fittings, the metal components which were treated as purely technical accessories for a considerable period of time, out of obscurity. Sibylle Thierer turned the realisation that hardware and fitting systems are the real key to emotionalising and individualising furniture and furnishings into her creed.

“Without fittings, furniture is nothing more than a pile of boards,” this saying, which she created back in 2007, was amusing, memorable and immediately understandable in equal measure. It made furniture fittings the main focus of interest of planners, designers and employees in furniture manufacturing.

Planners in architecture and interior design work with Häfele

The Häfele Group is now also regarded as a driving force for the hotel industry and commercial living. It has particularly made a name for itself in digitalisation and the development of comprehensive networking solutions in furniture and space. New CEO Gregor Riekema, who held responsible positions at Häfele for several years before his appointment as Chairman of the Executive Board, was also instrumental in driving this forward. Häfele is not only a supplier of accessories, but also a reliable partner for planners in the areas of interior design and architecture – for which Häfele coined the term “360° comprehensive project solutions”. From design to implementation, the company provides support with the right products and with a comprehensive range of accompanying services. The Häfele product range includes electronic access systems, customisable lighting solutions and smart control systems with a high degree of operating convenience.

Looking to the future: "Maximising the value of space. Together."

Among other things, the company's outstanding expertise is based upon the strategic acquisition of start-ups, whose know-how is prudently integrated and further developed. One example is the acquisition of the ThingOS start-up, which was preceded by several years of cooperation. The technical knowledge and fresh impetus of the visionary founding spirit was incorporated into the company's own corporate culture with this step: With ThingOS, Häfele is now fully capable of designing unique light and room experiences from a single source, together with the Nimbus (light & acoustics) and Sphinx (electronic access control systems) business areas. The company's special expertise in smart networking of furniture and room light and also other functions in the interior is a unique selling point within the industry, and makes Häfele a pioneer.

"Maximising the value of space. Together." is also the new motto with which Häfele is starting its second century as a company. It encompasses nothing less than the aim of creating livable, consistent spatial worlds together with partners, in which everything has been thought through. Because no matter how we will want to live and work tomorrow, smart concepts will be in high demand. Häfele is convinced that the value of a space is not measured in square metres, but in what you do with it. That is why the goal is to achieve the greatest possible benefit together – for residents, guests and investors.

Entrepreneurial excellence

Häfele is now recognised well outside its own industry: “Entrepreneurial excellence” is what publicist and entrepreneur Dr. Florian Langenscheidt

attested to the Häfele Group of Companies in his recently published illustrated book “From the Best Family”, in which Häfele is portrayed as one of 100 family businesses. In troubled times, it is more important than ever to draw attention to the achievements of German family-run businesses. They represent continuity, sustainability, economic success and social responsibility, as you can read in the press release of the ZEIT publishing group. It would be hard to formulate more succinctly that which constitutes Häfele's corporate culture, and will also continue to characterise it for the next 100 years.

Gregor Riekens sees it like this: “On the occasion of the 100th anniversary, we want to express two things: pride in the successful path the company has taken to date – and the optimism that we can continue this success story, also by having the courage to continuously evolve.”

Activities in the anniversary year

The company has proven time and again that words are followed by deeds, and has many things in the pipeline for the anniversary year: After the opening of the fourth high-rise warehouse at the logistics centre in Nagold, construction of the new Dynamics Centre, which has been designed by Schmidt Architekten from Kenzingen, is going to start this year. The BAU trade fair in Munich from 17th -22nd April was also marked by a première: Häfele appeared for the first time in Hall C2 “Light and Smart” and impressively showcased the interplay of room and furniture light, access management and networked control on the trade fair booth developed together with Stuttgart-based creative agency “jangled nerves”. Various 100th anniversary activities are planned during the course of the year. The celebrations will kick off in Cologne in May at interzum, the world's leading trade fair for furniture production and interior design. This will be followed in the summer by the “Blackbox Night” in the Stuttgart showroom on 21st June and four weeks later by the big anniversary weekend at the headquarters: an appropriate celebration will be taking place in Nagold from 21st to 23rd July.

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1 Häfele is planning a visionary building project with the Dynamics Centre, and is investing in its Black Forest headquarters in Nagold. The building complex will provide workplaces which are fit for the future, and be a showcase example of innovative strength and a sense of community. Among other things, the plan is to create facilities that will also benefit other companies. The design originates from Kenzingen-based Schmidt Architekten. The foundation stone will be laid in the anniversary year of 2023. Photo: Häfele

2 “Black Forest Experience”: Häfele recently gave an impressive demonstration of how pop-up store concepts can be designed, from fittings to lighting and the access control system, at Euroshop in Düsseldorf. And playfully showcased the company’s Black Forest origins at the same time. Photo: Häfele

3 Ready for the move into the next Häfele century: After 20 years at the helm of the innovative specialist for furniture fittings and architectural hardware, electronic access control systems and LED light, Sibylle Thierer (CEO) is handing over the chair of the company management to 45-year-old managing director Gregor Riekena. Photo: Häfele

4 Team spirit, courage and optimism have always been the major driving forces at Häfele. In 1923, founders Adolf Häfele and Hermann Funk supplied “Products from the hardware and tool industry”, initially in Aulendorf. About ten years later (see picture), the fledgling company (the company headquarters were relocated to Nagold in 1927 to what was the hub of Württemberg furniture manufacturing at the time) was way ahead of its time with innovative products and excellent service. Photo: Häfele

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5 Häfele's legendary "Globe Catalogue" appeared in May 1939, which was a pioneering innovation at the time. Photo: Häfele

6 "The Complete Häfele" in German, the world's biggest catalogue for furniture fittings and accessories, appeared in 1971. Photo: Häfele

7 Häfele was customer-oriented right from the very beginning – both domestically and internationally. In the mid-1960s, the company established its export department, and the first travelling exhibition went on a world tour in a bus. Häfele now has subsidiaries in 38 countries. Photo: Häfele

8 Connecting two furniture components at right angles – it sounds simple enough, but it has been taken to a new level in industrial production with Häfele's Minifix fitting: Since it was invented by Häfele in 1983, this cabinet connector has held numerous furniture items from well-known KD furniture manufacturers together. Photo: Häfele

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9 The LoftCube conceived by designer Werner Aisslinger became a highlight of the State Horticultural Show in Nagold in 2012 as the "Häfele Functionality Cube". Photo: Häfele

10 Pivot, fold and slide – after that, nothing is like it was before: the desk becomes a bed, the sideboard becomes a home cinema and the kitchen becomes invisible. The "Häfele Functionality Cube" in 2012. Photo: Häfele

11 The Blackbox, Häfele's new showroom in Stuttgart, acts as an idea workshop for planners and creative minds. Furniture, light, space and connectivity are rethought, planned and implemented here together with the customers. Photo: Häfele

12 In the 96-apartment Clipper Boarding house in Hamburg, which Häfele helped to implement, sliding door and shower door fittings in matt black from the Nagold-based company are also used in addition to the electronic access control and mechanical locking system. Photo: Häfele

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13 The Lighting Pads and the Lighting Pad Lounge with its elegant moulded plywood top combine light and acoustics in a single product. They were developed by the Nimbus Group, which has been a member of the Häfele Group since 2019. In the "Texeria" of the LDT Fashion Management Academy in Nagold, they form an integral part of the concept of basic, ambient and effect lighting with products from Nimbus and Häfele. Photo: Häfele

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About Häfele

Häfele. The first 100 years.

Innovative strength, courage and optimism: these are qualities which have accompanied Häfele from the very beginning and have already distinguished the founders, merchants Adolf Häfele and Hermann Funk, who established Häfele in 1923 as a specialist hardware shop near Nagold. This valued contact point for the carpentry trade has now become a global company, Häfele SE & Co KG, with subsidiaries in 38 countries and more than 8000 employees. In the 2022 financial year, the Häfele Group achieved sales of 1.87 billion Euros with an export share of 81%.

Nagold is still the headquarters of the international Häfele Group, which has developed into the leading expert for hardware and fitting systems, electronic access control systems and LED lighting over the decades. The furniture industry and also architects, joiners/cabinet makers and dealers from more than 150 countries rely on the expertise of the innovative family business, which has been under the management of Gregor Riekema since January 2023.

The anniversary year is characterised by the company's origins, and also the view into the future: Häfele is going to celebrate its first 100 years in a fitting manner – in Nagold and selected locations worldwide.

Further information at www.haefele.de