

Banner is 80-years-young and already facing up to the mobility of tomorrow

Since its foundation, the company has manufactured some 80 million batteries

- **The Banner location in Leonding has been in operation for sixty years.**
- **An ambitious, company investment programme has seen the spending of over EUR 50 million on the Leonding plant in the past six years and the outlay of a further EUR 15 million for an ongoing, capacity enlargement project.**
- **Banner is an important employer with 520 of its 800-strong workforce located in Leonding. Moreover, a double-digit increase in personnel numbers planned for the coming years.**
- **The e-mobility trend offers enormous growth opportunities.**
- **Lead-acid batteries are entirely recyclable and Banner guarantees a closed recycling loop from production to reprocessing.**
- **2016/2017 was a successful financial year for the company with sales revenues of EUR 272 million and 4.5 million starter batteries sold.**

Leonding, 4 December 2017

80 years of Banner and 80 million batteries

Artur Bawart founded the Banner company in Rankweil (Vorarlberg/Austria) during 1937. Subsequently, production in Upper Austria commenced in 1953 and the existing location in Leonding became operative in 1959. Banner has been Austria's only starter battery manufacturer since 2004 and the Bawart family remain the company's sole owners with Andreas Bawart (Commercial CEO) and Thomas Bawart (Technical CEO) as its executive management. This year, the company celebrates its eightieth birthday and in the course of the last eight decades it has produced some 80 million starter batteries. One million batteries were first produced and sold within twelve months during 1992/93 financial year and from its foundation until today, Banner's history has been shaped by the twin values of continuity and independence.

Major investments in increased production capacity

During the past six years, Banner has spent a total of more than EUR 50 million on investments at its Leonding location. As a response to the seasonality of battery sales, these have not only included further increases in the capacity available for the manufacture of environment-friendly start-stop batteries with the aim of achieving even greater production flexibility, but also the start-up of a fully automated high-bay warehouse with around 10,000 additional pallet spaces. Andreas Bawart: “Moreover, further investments are in the pipeline in order to ensure that we achieve our future target of 20 per cent sales revenue growth and the coming years will also see a double-digit increase in the size of the workforce.”

E-mobility is the megatrend of the future

Austria’s only battery specialist is also facing up to the challenges posed by what is the predominant topic of debate in the automotive industry and is working systematically on the next lead-acid battery generation. The vehicles of the future offer low fuel consumption, but still require a reliable energy source. Therefore, every e-vehicle contains a lead-acid battery for the supply of its electrical system. Consequently, apart from leading-edge start-ups, Banner also delivers its quality batteries to respected vehicle manufacturers such as the BMW Group.

As far as vehicles with full-hybrid or purely electric drive systems are concerned, the automotive industry sees lithium-ion technology as offering the greatest future potential. However, the sales of these vehicles remain extremely modest and therefore Banner continues to focus on the start-stop segment in which it is regarded as one of Europe’s leading suppliers of advanced lead-acid batteries. Andreas Bawart: “At present, we have several development projects in progress, which are targeted on an additional improvement in start-stop battery efficiency. The aim is to enhance power intake and output via perfected cell design, active mass additives and targeted design measures.

“Green” drive technologies colour the automotive industry

A well-established recycling loop with the highest recovery ratio of all the recyclable goods on the market means that lead-acid batteries from Banner represent an exemplary resource-protective and sustainable product.

Banner actually started to recycle used batteries 50 years ago and the materials thus obtained are treated and reintroduced to the production chain in the form of new products. Battery suppliers such as workshops and retailers store used batteries in special containers ready for collection by Banner. This closed loop facilitates the return of valuable raw materials such as lead, sulphuric acid and polypropylene to the manufacturing process.

In concrete terms, during the past 20 years the Starter Battery Environmental Forum (UFS), with Banner Österreich GmbH as one of its founder members, has been able to collect over 15 million used vehicle batteries. The raw materials that these contained, which for example included 160,000t of lead, were then recycled in their entirety by a special company in Austria. As a result, batteries have achieved the highest collection rate of all the recyclable goods on the market, even outstripping glass and paper. Moreover, as a lead processing company, Banner takes its ecological responsibilities extremely seriously and only employs treated lead from the recycling process in its production. Accordingly, in 2012 the company's single production plant in Leonding received ISO 14001:2004 certification for its environmental management system, which incorporates maximum employee and environment protection measures.

EUR 272 million sales revenues and 4.5 million starter batteries sold

Banner can reflect upon a successful 2016/17 financial year (1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017), as with an increase of 400,000 units over the preceding twelve months, starter battery sales rose to 4.5 million. The group's consolidated sales revenues also remained on course, rising to EUR 272 million. Furthermore, Banner's responsible business approach with regard to resource conservation and sustainability is clearly demonstrated by its enhanced flooded battery (EFB) and absorbent glass mat (AGM) technologies, which are employed in conjunction with so-called micro-hybrid systems and straightforward start-stop applications. Andreas Bawart: "Start-stop batteries from Banner make a decisive contribution to the environmental compatibility of motor vehicles." In the 2016/17 financial year alone, they provided fuel savings of around 66 million litres and a reduction in CO₂ emissions of some 164,000 t.

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Captions:

Picture 1) Banner vehicle starter batteries then and now

Picture 2) The Banner executive management: Andreas Bawart, Commercial CEO (r.) and Thomas Bawart, Technical CEO (l.)

Photo: reprints free of charge. Specimen copy requested.

Banner at a glance

Banner GmbH is an innovative, expanding producer of top quality starter batteries. The company, which is based in Linz-Leonding, Austria, has been manufacturing batteries for all types of vehicles since 1937. The family-owned firm, which is headed by Andreas Bawart and Thomas Bawart, employs a workforce of around 800 across Europe. Banner produces and sells over 4.5 million starter batteries annually and thus numbers among the oldest, most experienced and important brands in the battery production field. Banner batteries are used for the first fitting of numerous models from Audi, BMW, Caterpillar, Jungheinrich, Kässbohrer, Liebherr, Mercedes, Mitsubishi, Porsche, SEAT, Volvo, and VW. A company network of sales companies in fourteen countries provides retailer support and in addition Banner products are sold in more than 60 European, African and Asian states via direct importers. Future-oriented technology and outstanding quality underline the international reputation of these exemplary products with “buffalo power”, which are also characterised by the Banner logo. Further information is available at

bannerbatterien.com

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