

**Press Release****Plastics and Rubber Machinery**

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**‘Digital transformation and AI are indispensable for Gefran’****Interview on the way to K 2025 with Karsten Just, Chief Sales Officer at Gefran****Mr. Just, what levers can be used to improve machine efficiency?**

Efficiency increasingly depends on the ability to capture and utilise data generated by machines. The greater this ability, the greater the efficiency, as it speeds up processes. Sensors play a crucial role in the initial phase by capturing accurate real-time data directly from the field. This data is then processed by our automation platform, enabling intelligent control and analysis. Thanks to solutions such as MAX, our IoT platform, we can monitor consumption and performance in real time, identify potential for improvement, and take measures to reduce energy, air and water consumption. The integration of automation, intelligent sensor technology and data analysis software enables a proactive maintenance approach that prevents unexpected machine downtime and extends the service life of the equipment. All these levers result in increased production with lower resource consumption, and secure and transparent data management.

**Are the sensors already intelligent and capable enough to process data, or do they merely supply it?**

Basically, our sensors can collect and analyse data, which could then be made available to customers in a cloud. However, we are only at the start, with no systems in place as of yet. Many customers are still sceptical about such applications for security reasons, fearing an outside party hack of the cloud and manipulation of their data. The advantage of data analysis and sharing is that it would relieve the load on machine controls, allowing processes to run faster; that would also be another step towards greater efficiency.

**What potential does AI offer Gefran? What is your current status in that regard?**

Artificial intelligence is driving significant change in businesses, although a distinction must be made between traditional and generative AI. Traditional AI is already being used in many companies to improve the efficiency of business processes. However, generative AI is now increasingly establishing itself as a revolutionary tool that can change the way companies innovate and compete. For a manufacturing company like Gefran, digital transformation and AI are indispensable. We are exploring generative AI to improve internal processes and product quality. Traditional AI has long been integrated into our products. We use it to support our customers' technological advances in new automation solutions. In terms of our market offering, we have recently introduced GAIA, our virtual assistant based on generative artificial intelligence. GAIA was developed to provide machine operators with immediate, context-related support, enabling rapid fault diagnosis and process optimisation in real time. By leveraging in-depth technical knowledge, manuals and historical data, GAIA improves predictive maintenance capabilities and operational decision-making. This solution is an example of our commitment to integrating state-of-the-art AI into our platforms to help customers increase efficiency, reduce downtime and optimise energy consumption. This positions Gefran as a strategic partner for the digital and sustainable transformation of the plastics and rubber industry.

**How high is the level of acceptance among your customers in this area?**

The acceptance of technologies based on artificial intelligence is growing steadily among our customers. Many recognise the concrete advantages in terms of operational efficiency, cost reduction and increased process reliability. However, acceptance varies depending on the digital maturity of each company. Some are very open to these innovations, while others are more cautious, mainly due to training requirements and cultural adaptation. Gefran supports its customers throughout the entire integration process. We offer continuous support and show how AI can become a valuable ally in improving productivity and proactive machine management.

**To what extent can automation help reduce the shortage of skilled workers?**

Automation plays a crucial role in overcoming the shortage of skilled workers by simplifying complex processes and significantly reducing the amount of manual work required by operators. Gefran's solutions, which include advanced, intelligent sensors and intuitive control systems, make machine management and maintenance more accessible. This allows operators with less specialised skills to perform their tasks, which, in turn, enables companies to maintain high production standards even with limited human resources. Furthermore, automation improves work quality and workplace safety by providing tools that minimise errors and reduce intervention times, ultimately creating a more reliable and safer working environment.

Photo Karsten Just, Photo source: Gefran

Do you have any questions? Ina Hoch, VDMA Plastics and Rubber Machinery, will be happy to answer them: Phone +49 69 6603 1844, [ina.hoch@vdma.eu](mailto:ina.hoch@vdma.eu)

**Industry interviews on the road to K**

Plastics have become an integral part of our world and are indispensable when tackling the challenges of the future. The plastics industry develops solutions that enable a growing global population to live in safety and prosperity. This important role as an enabler is expressed in the motto of K 2025: The Power of Plastics! Green – Smart – Responsible. Green, because plastics help combat climate change and conserve resources. Smart, because digitalisation helps increase efficiency. Responsible because people are at the centre of everything we do.

To get in the mood for the industry gathering in October 2025, the VDMA is giving representatives of the plastics machinery industry and all other stakeholders in the sector a chance to have their say through a series of interviews.

**VDMA Plastics and Rubber Machinery**

More than 200 companies are members of the trade association, covering over 90 percent of the industry's production in Germany. Ten percent of our member companies come from Austria, Switzerland and France. The German member companies account for a turnover of 7 billion euros in core machine manufacturing, and 10 billion euros including peripheral technology. One in four plastic machines manufactured worldwide comes from Germany in terms of value; the export rate is 70 percent. The chairman of the trade association is Ulrich Reifenhäuser, Managing Partner of Reifenhäuser GmbH & Co KG.

The VDMA represents 3,600 German and European companies in the mechanical and plant engineering sector. The industry stands for innovation, export orientation and medium-sized businesses. The companies employ a total of around 3 million people in the EU-27, more than 1.2 million of them in Germany alone. This makes mechanical and plant engineering the largest employer among the capital goods industries, both in the EU-27 and in Germany. It accounts for an estimated turnover of around 870 billion euros in the European Union. Around 80 percent of the machinery sold in the EU originates from a manufacturing plant in the internal market.