

## March 2023 – Our new DNA – 4 questions for KACO CEO Richard Ongherth

In the last few years, KACO has been known for its outstanding sealing technology solutions, especially in the automotive sector.

The company has been constantly changing in terms of its product portfolio and the markets to which it supplies for several years now.

### 4 questions for Richard Ongherth about the change at KACO



Image 1: Richard Ongherth, CEO at KACO

#### **1. How does KACO differ today from the pure automotive sealing supplier for which the company has been known for more than 100 years?**

KACO has developed significantly in two areas in the last few years. First, the product portfolio has grown steadily in recent years in terms of new technologies. For example, we pioneered the dynamic sealing of internally cooled rotors and are enjoying a very rapidly growing global portfolio of grounding systems. We are currently working intensively on projects for battery cells of various types. On the other hand, we have also been able to drive forward the diversification of our sales markets, so that we can already report significant unit sales in the white goods and e-bike sectors, for example.

#### **2. What specifically does KACO do in the field of battery technology?**

We are involved in development projects for all three main types, i.e. round, prismatic and pouch cells. This involves housing components from the area of forming technology, assembly modules for cathodes and anodes as well as special solutions in the elastomer area for pre-development tasks. Our modular system for battery system venting, the so-called "battery quick deflation", is ready and we are currently actively rolling it out worldwide. It is worth mentioning that KACO has developed the heart of the assembly, the membrane itself, in-house and does not install it as a purchased part, as some of our market competitors do. This gives us maximum system competence from simulation and materials development through prototype construction to series production.

### **3. Are there any future topics where you can give us an idea of where the journey will still take us?**

We have picked up speed especially in the field of fuel cells. Our static seals are already undergoing stacker testing to replace existing systems based on our LEM technology. We are also working on sealing tasks in the pre-development of the hydrolyzer that have not yet been solved. We also see great growth potential in our relatively young product group "venting & deflation", in which we realize the functions of sealing, breathing and rapid deflation in various modules and customer-specific solutions.

### **4. What is your current interim conclusion regarding transformation and sustainability?**

We now know for certain that a great deal is changing around our business model. However, the fact is that sealing technology and other core competencies of our company are more in demand than ever. We are curious about the new requirements and are sure that there will be more opportunities to realize than risks to discuss in the future. The developments in the energy sector alone with regard to the decentralization of the supply network (domestic power plants, battery storage) hold great potential for technologies that have emerged in recent years around the electrification of vehicles. We are pleased to be able to help shape this future. We are implementing all of this successively with increasingly sustainable production processes.

KACO GmbH + Co KG, a subsidiary of the Zhongding Group, is one of the world's leading developers and manufacturers of high-precision, application-oriented sealing solutions for the automotive and mechanical engineering industries. The company, which is based in Germany, is characterized by the highest sealing quality and innovative strength and stands for recognized development and manufacturing expertise. KACO has six plants in Germany, Austria, Hungary, China and the USA and delivers its products all over the world. As a close partner of the automotive industry and its suppliers, the company has been keeping pace with the high demands and technical changes in the industry for decades.