

Meet the future

Our workshop for rising professionals



Our trainers: Matthias Schaub, Otfried Bremer, Steffen Dornbusch, Gerhard von Mohr, Mario Rudolph, Manfred Schöll, Alfred Lepper (from left to right)

No other company in the Central Hesse region trains as many young people as Buderus Edelstahl. There are currently 128, spread over three and a half years. The company's training workshop trains future talent in six occupations: industrial fitter, milling machine operator, process fitter, electronics technician, foundry fitter and materials tester – professionals for the jobs of the future.

"No-one has failed the final exam for 10 years now", says Karl-Heinz Schäfer, Head of the Training Workshop. That could be the end of this article, because there is no better way of describing the quality of the training courses at Buderus Edelstahl – if it were not for the interesting question of why this is. "We have a rigorous selection process that includes social components as well as academic achievement; we have made the best people our trainers", explains Schäfer. One of them is Steffen Dornbusch, responsible for the metal foundation course for first-year trainees. Steffen Dornbusch is a process fitter who did his training at Buderus Edelstahl, and then worked in the steel mill. His tasks include supporting trainees, as well as running courses in welding and soldering. Like his fellow trainers, Steffen Dornbusch is a member of several training committees of the Lahn-Dill district Chamber of Industry and Commerce. He also attends the Technical College, and takes part in vocational training courses, for example in the field of control technol-

ogy. "I enjoy looking after the new trainees, and supporting them through the first year", says Steffen Dornbusch, "and when they have successfully completed their basic training, and everything is fine, the way we like it, then I share their sense of achievement." Like all trainers in the training workshop, Steffen Dornbusch seeks to provide individual support when it comes to removing minor weaknesses. "Our approach emphasizes understanding and motivation, and close support for our trainees to help them become very good technically, and to prove their team capability", says Karl-Heinz Schäfer. "In heavy industry, everyone must be able to rely on everyone else". Karl-Heinz Schäfer knows what he is talking about as Training Manager, having worked at Buderus Edelstahl for 46 years. He is not the only "original exhibit" in the place. "There are eight others who graduated with me in 1963 still employed in the company." Buderus Edelstahl is known for the long length of service of its employees. So it is no surprise that many a trainee is

the third generation of their family working in the company. So it sometimes happens that Karl-Heinz Schäfer contacts the family home when there are problems. "But such problems are rare", he says, "Most things can be resolved sensibly in a conversation between the trainee and me."

The basic course is followed by practical experience

When the basic course has been successfully completed, the trainees go to work in the main areas to which their own particular training relates – aspiring materials testers acquire practical knowledge in materials testing operations, and in the laboratory; others specialising in machining work together with the Buderus Edelstahl teams. In subsequent years of their training, the trainees also return to the training workshop regularly for some months for courses and to prepare for their exams. In the metal specialism, they are supported by Steffen Dornbusch and by the Engineering Foreman Matthias Schaub. Otfried Bremer, Metal Technology Foreman, runs the courses in control and welding technology. Gerhard von Mohr is also a Metal Technology Foreman, and carries out training in the field of turning and milling. The state certified Electrical Technician Mario Rudolph looks after training in electronics, which is headed by Electrical Installation Foreman and state-certified engineer Manfred Schöll. The rising materials testers are under the care of Karl-Heinz Schäfer; Alfred Lepper, Metal Technology Foreman, is head of metal training with responsibility for the courses in CNC technology. Everyone except Matthias Schaub and Manfred Schöll completed their own training at Buderus.

The workshop's contribution

The training workshop does not just make "school pieces". After their basic training, the trainees work together with their trainers on some small and large workpieces that help to keep the wheels turning at Buderus Edelstahl. "We make spare parts such as brackets, small components or special structural parts", says Stefan Dornbusch; Karl-Heinz Schäfer adds, "We also make prototypes from proposed improve-

ments, and create small works of art in steel as gifts for visitors, and undertake special tasks such as fitting out the interior of our new fire-fighting vehicle." This demanding project, for which Tobias Dietz and Frank Lühring undertook the complex electrical equipment installation, cost Buderus Edelstahl much less than if an outside company had been contracted to do the installation. Under the direction of Frank Brück, Head of the Works Fire Service, the training workshop equipped the new vehicle with everything necessary for rapid and competent response – tables, shelves, sockets, fuse boxes, complex electronics, and more. Mr Schöll and Mr Roland of the Works Fire Service monitored and supported the fitting work. The result sailed through quality inspection, and the vehicle

is already in service with the Fire Service. "Our training workshop is a service operation that trains for the strip, forging, casting, special casting, and machining operations", says Karl-Heinz Schäfer in conclusion. "Buderus Edelstahl does this at a high level. The company provides all the resources of the right quality required for good work, and management knows exactly who is needed for what and when. Decisions are firmly rooted in reality." That is now more important than ever; as Karl-Heinz Schäfer points out, "Key employees will be retiring over the next few years. With our growing number of trainees, we are well placed to respond." About 40 young people start their training at Buderus Edelstahl every year. They are in good hands.



Karl-Heinz Schäfer, Head of the Training Workshop