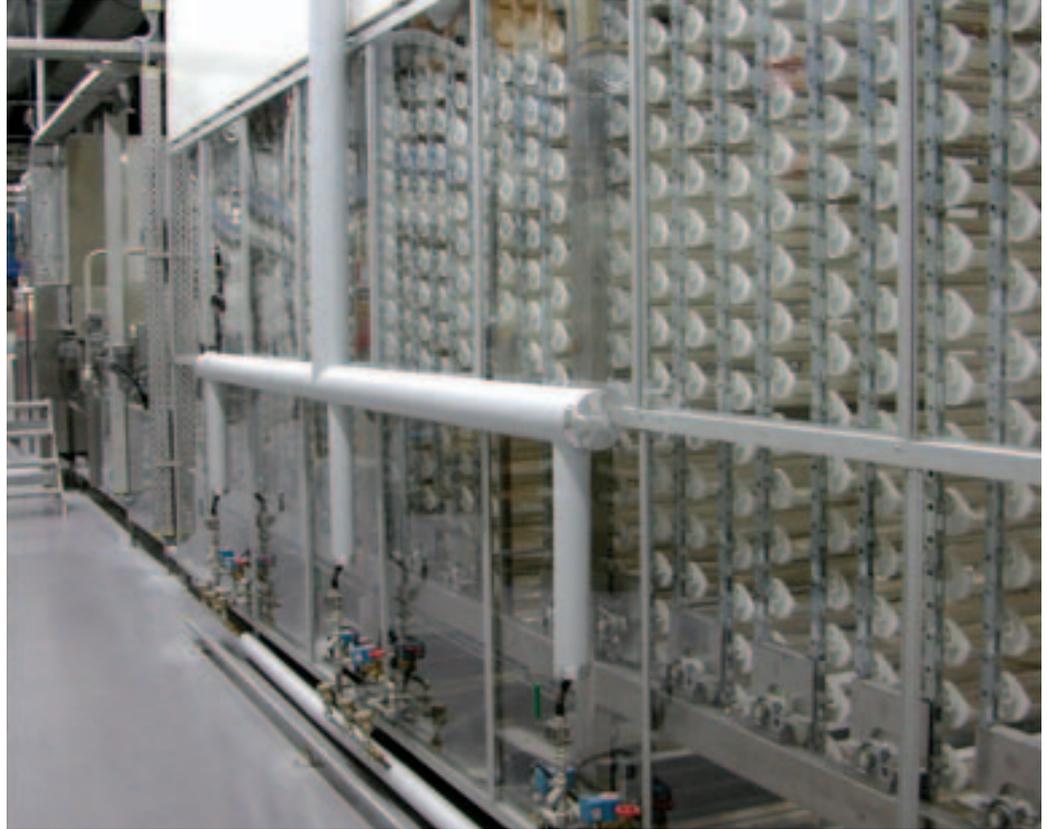


# Growing from the middle

DR. PETER KUCHNER HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS AN ADDITIONAL MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR THE AUSTRIAN COMPANY KÖNIG MASCHINEN GMBH

**++ figure 1**  
One of the first roll lines by König that works with a new dough divider which cuts dough pieces from a dough band



**+** It is an open question whether there was no suitable candidate for this job or whether the Board of directors of the König foundation took its time because it influences the operational business anyway. Be it as it is – since the beginning of 2005, this is history. The new person in the management at König is Dr. Peter Kuchner. He received plaudits in the Austrian machine construction and engineering industry, among others with the recapitalization of Wintersteiger, a specialized machine manufacturer, located in Ried/Innkreis, Austria.

Besides Dipl.-Ing. Richard Häusler, who is responsible for sales, and Dipl.-Ing. Johann Vogl, who is responsible for the technology part, Kuchner is the third person on the management team and the appointed speaker of the management as *primus inter pares* (the first among equals).

Kuchner considers strategy and product development to be his responsibility in the management of the König group, which comprises the headquarters in Graz, some subsidiaries and since the 90s the Hungarian ma-

chine manufacturer Celba, Celldömölk, about 50 km east of the Austrian border. He states very clearly that with a profitability of more than 5%, König is no economic basketcase. Kuchner is still in his orientation phase regarding the market for bakery machines as well as König's position, but the basic components for future plants which shall be introduced as a complete strategic concept to the foundation board latest in October this year, are becoming known.

According to that both locations will be kept and closely linked to the field of parts production. Kuchner reports: "In future there will be hardly any machine that is build completely and exclusively in one location." No doubt this has to do with the streamlining of production resources but also with the fact that in Graz there is no more room for expansion, other than in Celldömölk. Furthermore, a significant part of the future growth of König might be generated east of Vienna, considering that business is already flourishing there today.

But Kuchner's attention is not only focused on product organization. The structures in prod-

### Dr. Peter Kuchner (56), new managing director at König Maschinen GmbH



He knows the problems of the food industry very well. Peter Kuchner grew up as the son of a master butcher and he is good friends with Gerhard Ströck, one of the most successful bakers in Vienna. His father's profession did not appeal to Kuchner. Instead he studied economy at the University of Vienna and gained a doctorate. He started quite young and at 32 was managing director building his reputation as a successful reorganizer by turning a bankrupt company within three years into a successful enterprise again. In 1993, SPAR Austria chose him from among 250 candidates to recapitalize the ailing trade subsidiary Büttinghaus. One year later, Büttinghaus made a record profit. In 1996, the insolvent Wintersteiger group posed another challenge in another dimension. Wintersteiger, a special machine manufacturer for different industries was a globally active company with subsidiaries in Germany, the US and France. Kuchner recapitalized, reorganized and acquired. 1997 saw the turnaround and Wintersteiger started to double profits year by year. In 2001, the group was among the 30 most successful companies in Austria. In 2002, the Berndorf group employed Kuchner as consultant and adviser to their chairman and CEO Norbert Zimmermann. Kuchner helped put a German subsidiary back onto the road to success. Since the beginning of this year, Kuchner has become the speaker for the management at König Maschinen GmbH, Graz, Austria. +++

uct development are of equal importance to him. The current wave of automation in the bakery trade in almost all countries triggers enormous demand and large potential. Kuchner comments: "As soon as possible an excellent product management with detailed knowledge of the individual markets must be available to be able to assess the potentials in terms of quality and quantity and to develop respective specification sheets for product development. However, at the end of the day the worldwide market potential of target-oriented developments is decisive."

According to Kuchner, one positive example for increasing attention will be the vacuum cooling technology which is already arousing growing international interest and in which up to now König has had an almost unique selling position in the market. More expansion of the product range is not under discussion currently. At the next iba the company intends to distinguish itself with a new distribution and service organization.

According to the CEO, services are becoming more and more relevant to the income potential and this is the reason why services are given top priority in the management at König. Kuchner has no doubt that the sales structures have to be modified. Up to now König had delegated the sales activities in Austria, Germany and East-Europe completely to distributors, except for a few key account customers. It seems likely that Kuchner is already in the middle of important talks which he will not confirm nor deny.

To overcome the limits of the present König core business – kneader, dough divider, roll plants, bread make-up – Kuchner is trying to have talks with companies suitable for supplementing the König range in order to present themselves as system supplier. "However, we want to grow from the middle," assures Kuchner. "We want to go back to the innovative powder Helmut König used to apply to make the company large." +++

ADVERTISEMENT

## TAMPER EVIDENT BREAD PACKAGING



**WHAT CAN  
BURFORD DO  
FOR YOU?**

**CALL US TODAY  
1-877-BURFORD (287-3673)**

Let Burford update your line with the latest in Tamper Evident packaging technology. Our fully automated system seals in your bread, providing freshness and security for customer satisfaction and appeal.

**Burford**  
bc

P.O. Box 748 • Maysville, OK 73057 • 1-405-867-4467

e-mail: [sales@burford.com](mailto:sales@burford.com) • website: [www.burford.com](http://www.burford.com)