

Heinz Dürr turns 90

Bietigheim-Bissingen, July 12, 2023 — On July 16, Heinz Dürr celebrates his 90th birthday. The entrepreneur is Honorary Chairman of the Dürr AG Supervisory Board. Being the anchor shareholder, he, together with his family, holds 29% of the shares in the company that his grandfather founded in 1896. Heinz Dürr joined the family business in 1957. Under his leadership, Dürr became a leading mechanical and plant engineering firm, combining the Swabian SME spirit with innovative strength and global business. From the 1970s, Heinz Dürr became well-known throughout Germany as a chief negotiator for metal industry employers, CEO of AEG, head of Deutsche Bahn, and Commissioner of the Carl Zeiss Foundation. Today, the entrepreneur, who has a broad range of interests, lives in Berlin, his domicile of choice. He and his wife promote culture, science, and early-years education through their foundation, Heinz und Heide Dürr Stiftung.

Heinz Dürr was born in Stuttgart in 1933. After finishing secondary school, he completed an apprenticeship as a locksmith in Uerdingen and then went on to study mechanical engineering in his hometown. His first stop in the family business journey was the engineering department. His father, Otto Dürr, was Managing Director at the time, while his mother, Betty, looked after the accounts and was highly respected as the “commercial conscience”. After the war, the company, based in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen, underwent major changes: The sheet metal work specialist became an industrial company, focusing on equipment engineering and surface processing. The foundation for its current position as a world market leader in painting technology had been laid.

Heinz Dürr was only 27 when he joined the management team. Business with the automotive industry was expanded. The junior executive boldly forged ahead with the company's internationalization. In 1964, the first foreign subsidiary was established in Brazil. Under the management of “HD”, Dürr built the first complete automotive paint shop for Volkswagen in São Paulo. Further companies were founded in the UK, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Mexico, the United States, South Africa, India, and China, among other countries. Together with his wife Heide, Heinz Dürr gave the corporate culture a modern edge. Dürr

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was one of the first industrial companies with an employee newsletter, a library, artwork displayed on the walls as well as theater and concert performances in the factory.

In the early 1970s, the family entrepreneur made a name for himself in the business world. In 1975, at the proposal of Hanns Martin Schleyer, Heinz Dürr became Chairman of the Employers' Association for the Metal Industry of North Baden/North Württemberg. He negotiated innovative collective bargaining agreements with Franz Steinkühler, head of the metalworkers' union IG Metall in Baden-Württemberg. In 1978, Heinz Dürr featured in the German media as the face of the employers' side during a strike that lasted several weeks.

Move to AEG

In 1980, Heinz Dürr stepped down as CEO of his company and became head of the ailing electrical company AEG. Aside from the entrepreneurial challenge, it was AEG's technological potential that appealed to him. The surprising move had been initiated by the then head of Bosch, Hans Lutz Merkle. Heinz Dürr led AEG through a settlement and brought it under the control of Daimler-Benz AG in 1985, where he joined the Board of Management in 1986.

In 1990, Heinz Dürr floated Dürr AG on the stock market. At the time, this was an unusual step for a mid-sized family firm. The proceeds were used to acquire application technology specialist Behr, which went on to become Dürr's successful painting robot segment. Later on, in 2014, Heinz Dürr was involved in driving forward the landmark acquisition of the HOMAG Group, which specializes in woodworking technology. This substantially broadened Dürr's mechanical engineering portfolio.

At the helm of Deutsche Bahn

In 1991, at the request of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Heinz Dürr took over as CEO of Deutsche Bundesbahn (German Federal Railway), thus assuming another role in the public eye. As part of the railway reform, he promoted the merger of Bundesbahn with the East German Reichsbahn and its transformation from a state-owned group into the service company Deutsche Bahn AG. In 1997, the 64-year-old moved to Deutsche Bahn AG's Supervisory Board and was its chairman until 1999. From 1999 to 2003, Heinz Dürr was Commissioner of the Carl Zeiss Foundation, where he made a significant contribution to reforming the foundation statute of 1896.

The company as a social organization

As an entrepreneur, Heinz Dürr feels a strong commitment to the public good. This understanding of his role goes back to Ernst Abbe and Walter Rathenau,

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the historic business figures at Zeiss and AEG. Heinz Dürr also takes reference from the former head of Deutsche Bank, Hermann Josef Abs, and the philosopher Odo Marquard. His economic thinking revolves around the notion of the "company as a social organization". He believes that a company has a responsibility toward its employees and society. "It must deliver proper products and services that society needs. It should look after the people in the company and make sure that those who give the company money receive a decent return." He adds that profit is not an end in itself, "but it is necessary to prevent the company from becoming a burden, usually to the taxpayer."

Heinz Dürr sees himself as a committed SME entrepreneur. To him, SME means "personal instead of technocratic leadership. The company boss knows his staff and talks to them." In keeping with his Swabian mentality, Heinz Dürr always advises his employees to be modest: "If you think you *are* somebody, you stop *becoming* somebody."

From 1990 to 2013, Heinz Dürr was Chairman of the Dürr AG Supervisory Board. Since 2006, Prof. Alexandra Dürr, one of Heinz and Heide Dürr's three daughters, has represented the family, which holds a 29% share, on the Supervisory Board. Being Honorary Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Heinz Dürr maintains close ties with the company. He regularly visits the company's headquarters in Bietigheim-Bissingen and seeks to engage with the Board of Management and the employees.

Property entails obligation: social commitment

In 1998, the entrepreneur and his wife set up a foundation, Heinz und Heide Dürr Stiftung, based on Section 14 of the German Basic Law: "Property entails obligation. Its use shall also serve the public good." The foundation focuses mainly on science and research, early-years education, and German-speaking theater.

Heinz Dürr has received numerous honors and awards. They include an honorary doctorate from Rhine-Westphalia Technical University of Aachen (1996) and the Grand Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (2003). He is the honorary chairman of several institutes and societies, including the Institute for Energy Efficiency in Production (University of Stuttgart) and Walther Rathenau Society (Berlin).

Being an avid reader, Heinz Dürr admires the Austrian author Thomas Bernhard, and has written three books himself: "In der ersten Reihe – Aufzeichnungen eines Unerschrockenen" (In the front row — notes from a dauntless man); "Über das Alter – Ein Gespräch mit Cato über Jugendwahn,

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Weisheit und Vergänglichkeit” (Talking about age — a conversation with Cato on the obsession with youth, on wisdom, and on transience); “Alter Mann, was nun? Zwischenrufe aus der letzten Reihe” (What now, old man? Interjections from the back row). In his books, he reflects — sometimes tongue-in-cheek — on his career and on getting older. Heinz Dürr, whose office is on Berlin's Gendarmenmarkt square, has close ties with both Germany's capital and his Swabian home province.

The Dürr Group is one of the world's leading mechanical and plant engineering firms with extensive expertise in automation, digitalization and energy efficiency. Its products, systems and services enable highly efficient and sustainable manufacturing processes in different industries. The Dürr Group primarily supplies the automotive industry, producers of furniture and timber houses as well as the chemical, pharmaceutical, medical devices and electrical engineering sectors. It generated sales of €4.3 billion in 2022. The company has about 18,700 employees and 123 business locations in 32 countries. The Dürr Group operates in the market with the brands Dürr, Schenck and HOMAG and with five divisions:

- **Paint and Final Assembly Systems:** paint shops as well as final assembly, testing and filling technology for the automotive industry, assembly and test systems for medical devices
- **Application Technology:** robot technologies for the automated application of paint, sealants and adhesives
- **Clean Technology Systems:** air pollution control, coating systems for battery electrodes and noise abatement systems
- **Measuring and Process Systems:** balancing equipment and diagnostic technology
- **Woodworking Machinery and Systems:** machinery and equipment for the woodworking industry

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