

Press
release



Heidenheim, October 2011

SMS Meer: Less sweating in Outlast® shoes

Well invested in function

What do tubes for pipelines, rails for the high-speed ICE and TGV trains, transmission components for the Mercedes S Class, the outer skin of the Ariane rocket and gigantic wind power generators have in common? They are all produced on machines or plants by SMS Meer, the world market leader in plant and machine engineering for the industrial processing of steel, aluminium and non-ferrous metals. This innovative company employs 3,100 workers, safety and employee satisfaction is a top priority.

„Employees satisfaction is very important,” says Ralf Büchsenschütz, Manager Health and Safety at SMS Meer GmbH, Mönchengladbach/Germany. The safety engineer Ralf Büchsenschütz is responsible for the health and safety of 1,400 employees at the headquarters in Mönchengladbach, of which 270 are working in production (size of the company premises: 124,000 m²). „Our staff must feel comfortable in their PPE”, strengthens Büchsenschütz. „Their footwear is an important factor. If the foot climate is perfect you feel more comfortable throughout the day.”

SMS Meer has been working together with the German shoe producer Baltes Schuhtechnik und Arbeitsschutzprodukte for six years and has supplied its staff with the Baltes styles “Lava” and “Magma” which are lined with the smart temperature regulating Outlast® material. Outlast® technology was originally developed for NASA to protect astronauts from temperature fluctuations in space. Today Outlast® materials in safety shoes help to dynamically balance the climate and to manage heat and moisture so comfort is increased and blisters are less potential.

SMS Meer decided to go for a shoe that incorporates Outlast® technology after a field test of Baltes’ shoes (running for a quarter) resulted in a “significant difference regarding perspiration feet” meaning that people sweat less in the new Outlast® shoes by Baltes. Even knowing that they are more expensive compared to other shoes, it was an easy decision. “We accepted this and believe it is money well invested for the comfort of our employees,” confirms Ralf Büchsenschütz, who has been with the company for nearly 20 years. The yearly need of SMS Meer is nearly 1,000 pairs of Baltes shoes with Outlast® lining. “We are convinced that it is extremely important that our workers feel comfortable”.

The priority of his criteria is clear: utility, comfort and then the price. Of course, the purchasing department has another view, but "we always find a compromise", smiles Büchenschütz. For him it is essential that the workers feel, "they do something for us, they support us". This is an important contribution for the performance and motivation of the employees. This way SMS Meer can be and stay a driver for new technologies.

SMS Meer GmbH which derived out of the former Mannesmann Demag will continue to maintain and improve its know-how and looks positively into the future. Only recently SMS Meer has confirmed again to strengthen the production location Germany. "We invest in the next years at our headquarters in Mönchengladbach approx. 60 Mio. Euro. We are building at the moment a completely new assembly hall (length: approx. 110 m, width: 40 m), which will be ready already end of March 2012." Also the machinery will be updated until 2015 to reduce the costs per unit and to shorten production processes.

There is a lot of work to do, says Ralf Büchenschütz. He keeps an eye on the common good of the staff. "With the help of high-quality work wear and work shoes we expect to avoid health damages of our personnel on the long term," says Ralf Büchenschütz. And he closes with a nice small anecdote: Not only the feedback of his colleagues is positive, also in private life he received convincing response of his kids after wearing the Outlast® shoes the whole day: "Before I have worn the Baltes shoes with the Outlast® high-tech material they always told me when I arrived at home: 'Dad, please wash your feet...'"

Outlast® technology

Outlast® technology was originally developed for NASA to protect astronauts from temperature fluctuations in space. Outlast® phase-change materials (PCMs) absorb, store and release excess body heat. The benefits of Outlast® Adaptive Comfort® products at a glance:

- Absorbs excess body heat
- Manages moisture
- Reduces overheating
- Reduces chilling
- Reduces perspiration
- Continuously adapts to thermal changes
-

Everybody's sensitivity to temperature changes is different, which means everyone sweats or becomes chilled at different rates - quickly or slowly. The temperature corridor in which we feel comfortable is relatively narrow: when the body core temperature of 37°C fluctuates only 2°C upwards or downwards we are subject to fever or hypothermia. Here is where Outlast® products help. They reduce temperature swings and influence the comfort zone efficiently. The microclimate is well balanced - one sweats less and is less chilled. You feel not too hot, not too cold, but just right®.

Outlast

Outlast Technologies, Inc., a privately held U.S. corporation, is the worldwide leader in phase change materials and applications. Outlast® technology is the heat management technology originally developed for NASA that enables any textile to absorb, store and release heat. Outlast® technology pro-actively responds to changes in skin temperature to manage heat and reduce moisture for everyday comfort.

For over 20 years, Outlast has been committed to the development of new fibers, fabrics and coatings incorporating phase change materials, expanding the use of Outlast® technology across more than 200 brands and a multitude of products in apparel, footwear, bedding, packaging and labels, and accessories. For more information, please visit www.outlast.com.

Baltes Schuhfabrik

The Baltes shoe producing company was founded in 1872 in Heinsberg. Today, Baltes® is one of the few shoe manufacturers who actually produces its shoes and boots in Germany. The **Baltes Schuhtechnik und Arbeitsschutzprodukte GmbH** (www.baltes-schuh.de) is responsible for worldwide distribution of Baltes® shoes. Baltes produces high quality safety shoes that are recognised for the high standard of quality with maximum comfort and fashionable design. The high flexibility of the modern Baltes® production plant in Heinsberg built in 1986 enables the enterprise to offer a particularly wide range of products and to take into account the customers' needs. Main areas of expertise are: Safety shoes, firemen's boots, rescue boots, military boots, shoes for the police: low shoes, all weather boots, combat boots. Comfort highlights include the Mondopoint multi-width system for optimal fit and active temperature-regulating Outlast® high-tech lining.

Outlast®, Adaptive Comfort®, Thermocules™ and ...not too hot ...not too cold ...just right™ are trademarks of Outlast Technologies, Inc.

651 words

Pictures: Production hall, work wear shoes, R. Büchenschütz, artwork

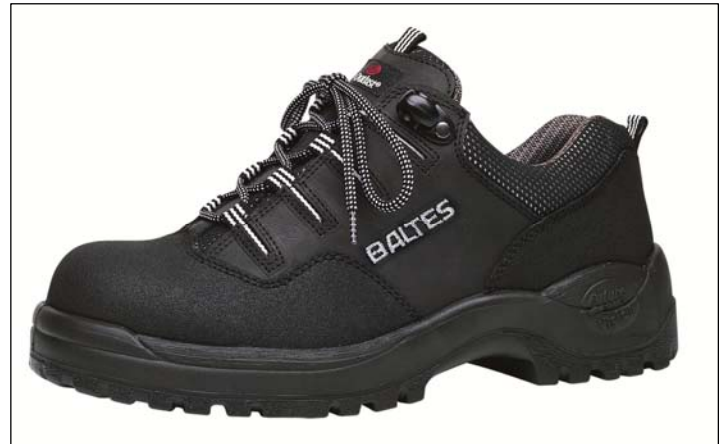
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information ...

Barbara Fendt
Marketing & PR
Outlast Europe GmbH
In den Seewiesen 26/1
D - 89520 Heidenheim . Germany
Phone: +49.7321.272 27 13
Fax: +49.7321.272 27 10
Mail: barbara.fendt@outlast-europe.com
URL: www.outlast.com



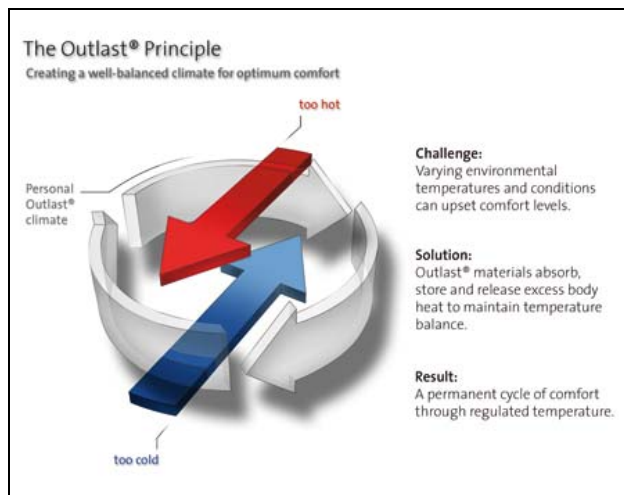
Picture 1
View into a production hall of SMS Meer in Mönchengladbach: Safety at work, but also comfort is very important - the employees wear safety shoes made by Baltes with the temperature regulating Outlast® lining.



Picture 2
A field test at SMS Meer with Outlast® shoes (picture on the right: style Lava by Baltes) demonstrated that workers suffered less from perspiring feet.



Picture 3
„The employee must feel comfortable,“ says Ralf Büchenschütz, Manager Health and Safety at SMS Meer GmbH, Mönchengladbach. „It is essential that the foot climate inside the safety shoe is well-balanced“.



Picture 4

Outlast® technology was originally developed for NASA to protect astronauts from temperature fluctuations. Today Outlast® materials bring a dynamic heat management to many applications and balance the body temperature to improve thermal comfort.

Artwork: Outlast Technologies, Inc.