

For immediate release

Innovative Ideas Rewarded: Koehler Rewards Employee Suggestions

- **Koehler employees submitted 724 ideas in 2021**
- **Bonus payments totaling around EUR 79,000 were awarded**
- **Twenty-seven ideas were awarded an extra prize in a special draw, with three of them selected for a top prize**

Oberkirch, Germany, 07/28/2022 – Koehler employees are always keen to contribute new ideas for the benefit of the company. To encourage them to do so, Koehler runs a company suggestion scheme. The aim is to motivate employees to question existing processes and circumstances, and to come up with innovative suggestions for improvement to simplify day-to-day operations or help cut costs.

Koehler uses a modern idea management system to continuously optimize business operations and processes. Hartmut Felsch, chairman of the audit committee for the company suggestion scheme and Mill Director at the Oberkirch site explains: “We are especially proud this year because 724 ideas were submitted last year alone, 136 more than in 2020. This underlines the importance of the suggestion scheme. The creativity and capacity for innovation that our employees have shown are the drivers behind our continuous improvement. They know the operational processes best and are therefore able to identify specific opportunities for improvement.”

Innovative Capacity Is Rewarded at Koehler

Around 77% of all ideas submitted in 2021 can be categorized as relating to working processes, plant safety, and occupational safety. These include ideas on how to save energy, increase production, optimize production time, and improve occupational safety at work.

Bonus payments totaling around EUR 79,000 were paid out to those who submitted ideas. Each idea was assessed according to how much it was expected to benefit the company and the bonus amount paid accordingly. A further special draw with prizes totaling EUR 12,000 was organized in addition to this. Martin Friedmann, who scooped the top prize, received EUR 3000 for his idea. Simon Riexinger took second place and a prize of EUR 2000, while third place went to Adrian Marx, who won EUR 1000. The winning ideas related to plant engineering changes aimed at making the respective working and operating procedures more efficient for maintenance work. A further 24 employees were awarded prizes of EUR 250 each.

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Figure 1: From left to right (back): Thomas Peter (Production Manager, Kehl site), Hartmut Felsch (Mill Director, Oberkirch site), Gebhard Müller (Works Council); Bernhard Bonath (Head of Occupational Health and Safety). From left to right (front): Adrian Marx (3rd place), Martin Friedmann (1st place), and Simon Riexinger (2nd place) at Koehler HQ in Oberkirch. / Source: Koehler Group

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Figure 2: Fourteen of the 28 prize winners were presented with their certificates at a small event. / Source: Koehler Group

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More about the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run to this day. The Group's core area of business is the development and production of high-quality, specialty paper, including thermal paper, playing card board, drink coasters, fine paper, carbonless paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation paper, and, since 2019, innovative specialty paper for the packaging industry, too. In Germany, the Koehler Group, with its around 2,500 employees, has five production sites, as well as three more in the USA. The Group operates on an international level, with an export ratio of 70% in 2021 and annual revenue of about 1 billion euro.

As an energy-intensive enterprise, Koehler invests with its unit Koehler Renewable Energy in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydroelectric power, photovoltaics, and biomass. The Koehler Group has committed itself to producing more energy from renewable sources than is needed for paper production by 2030.

With the business unit Koehler Innovative Solutions, Koehler is also developing new business areas that are outside its core business of specialty paper production and energy generation.

More information is available here: <https://www.koehler.com>

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