

# “From the Industry for the Industry as a Success Factor”

This year, the Munich Adhesives and Finishing Symposium (MKVS) celebrated its 50th anniversary. From October 27 to 29, 2025, the industry met in Munich (Germany) to exchange ideas about hot melts, hot melt adhesives, and hot melt compounds. To mark the occasion, the editors of adhesion spoke with organizer Stephan Hinterwaldner about the development, character, and future of the symposium.

## In 1976 the MKVS took place for the first time. What prompted the decision to launch the symposium?

Stephan Hinterwaldner: “By the industry, for the industry” – this guiding principle was the impetus for Professor Knut Nitzl to launch the MKVS in 1976. As a professor at Munich University of Applied Sciences, he wanted to make it easier for his students to enter professional life and offer them a suitable platform for this. The concrete impetus arose during a difficult economic phase in the mid-1970s. After the successful years of the economic miracle, the chemical industry also came under pressure due to recession and drastically increased raw material prices. It was during this period that it became clear how crucial investment in research and development is to remain competitive in the

long term. The symposium was therefore intended to create a space for professional exchange along the entire value chain, the promotion of innovation, and the joint development of new perspectives – supported by the strong backing within the industry that has characterized the Munich Adhesives and Finishing Symposium from the start.

## How has the event developed and changed in recent years?

The MKVS is constantly evolving – in step with the demands of the times. Flexibility is a key success factor here: as an independent, family-run event and consulting company, we can respond quickly and purposefully to changes. For example, during the pandemic, we developed alternative formats – from digital pres-

entations to hybrid events – and were thus able to continue the professional exchange seamlessly.

In terms of content, however, the MKVS remains true to its spirit: the topics and professional focus are geared toward the current requirements of research, development, the environment, and the economy. It is precisely this consistency in content, coupled with organizational flexibility, that gives the symposium its special character. Last but not least, it is also the international uniqueness of the MKVS that makes it so special: there is no other

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## Stephan Hinterwaldner

... is the owner of Hinterwaldner Consulting and is backed by many years of experience in research and development.

His work focuses on innovation management and international business development, particularly in the areas of adhesives, sealants, and coatings. Founded by Rudolf Hinterwaldner, the globally active consulting network will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2026.



Professor Knut Nitzl (left) and Stephan Hinterwaldner at a meeting during the MKVS.

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Stephan Hinterwaldner enthusiastically leads the symposium's moderation and discussion rounds, working together with other session moderators.

comparable event worldwide that combines scientific depth, industrial practice, and long-standing network maintenance in this form – and has done so for so many years.

all in an informal atmosphere with a regional focus. This mixture of knowledge transfer and networking defines the character of the event – today just as it did 50 years ago.

**“Only those who know the past can understand the present and shape the future.”**

#### **What distinguishes the MKVS? What is the appeal of the event for you?**

What characterizes the symposium is the combination of tradition, independence, and a forward-looking perspective. A quote from August Bebel aptly sums it up: “Only those who know the past can understand the present and shape the future.” Over the years, the MKVS has learned from the past without allowing itself to be constrained by it. This openness to change – while maintaining continuity in terms of content – also reflects the independence of the symposium. The focus remains clear: the industry should move into the future as efficiently, sustainably, and creatively as possible.

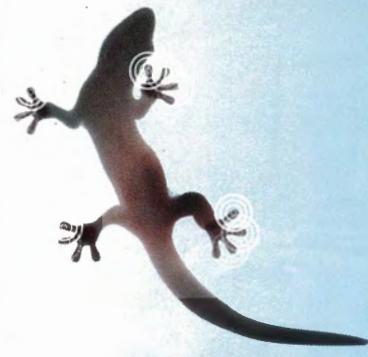
What makes the event particularly appealing to me is the lively exchange: users, manufacturers, machine builders, and service providers discuss practical topics, share their expertise, and make contacts –

#### **What memories of the early years are particularly memorable for you?**

I witnessed the early years of the MKVS from the back seat, so to speak – as a child in an environment where bonding was omnipresent. Professor Knut Nitzl was a close friend of my father's; the two were united not only by their passion for the industry, but also by a deep relationship of trust. Support was important for both of them – and so my father gave lectures at the first symposia at the Deutsches Museum, moderated sessions, and brought speakers and companies on board.

Later, I was also able to make my own contribution, for example by making my contacts in the Munich hotel industry available for a possible change of location. The background to this were the discussions about the demolition of the long-standing venue, the Arabella Sheraton Hotel Munich, which already began in the 1990s. When I joined my parents'

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The event hall during the symposium: Many participants are on site to learn about current developments, ideas, and trends in the industry.

consulting firm after graduating, I ran into Knut again – quite unexpectedly at a picnic on Roseninsel on Lake Starnberg with my wife and our son Luis. It was a wonderful afternoon, not least because our wives were immediately on the same wavelength. Shortly afterwards, Knut approached me with the idea of recruiting me as his successor. That was in 2004. And from then on, everything happened very quickly.

development over time has been incredibly enriching. This established network is invaluable – both personally and professionally.

#### **What role does personal exchange play at the MKVS?**

In an increasingly digital and globalized world, personal contact is more important than ever. The symposium offers the ideal setting for this: professionally sound, but

exciting dissertations, bachelor's and master's theses from several universities and colleges as well as companies. It offers the opportunity to talk directly with young professionals, learn about their research, and discuss current developments. This open atmosphere not only promotes innovation but also builds trust – and that is the best foundation for successful collaboration within the industry.

#### **What are your hopes for the future of the symposium? In what direction do you think the event will develop?**

My wish for the future of the MKVS is clear: that we can continue to offer the industry a current, high-quality program in the coming years – practical, well-founded, and relevant for the future. It should continue to be the place where people can obtain comprehensive and independent information about current developments, trends, and technologies – or present themselves to an expert audience.

The trend is clearly moving toward greater interdisciplinarity and networking. Topics such as sustainability, digitalization, process automation, and new regulatory requirements will gain in importance – as will the expectation that scientific findings and industrial practice will become even more closely intertwined.

I am convinced that the symposium will not only accompany this development, but also actively initiate and help shape it. And that it will remain exactly what it has been for almost 50 years: a platform for exchange on an equal footing – independent, professionally relevant, and personally enriching. //

## **"In an increasingly digital and globalized world, personal contact is more important than ever."**

In order to combine consulting with event organization, I then brought Dr. Michael R.C. Gerstenberger into the team. We worked closely and trustingly together for over twelve years until he sadly passed away far too early in 2017.

What continues to impress me to this day are the personal relationships that have grown over the years. For me, the MKVS is almost like a big family reunion. I have known many of the speakers since their student days or from their early professional years – witnessing their

without stiff formalities. Whether during coffee breaks, evening events, or discussion rounds – many ideas arise precisely where conversations take place on an equal footing.

From the very beginning, a key component has been the excellent cooperation with Munich University of Applied Sciences, which consistently contributes interesting presentations and thus also enables participants to get to know the students. Another highlight is the poster session, now in its second round, which features

*The interview was conducted by  
Vanessa Sendrowski.*

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