02/2025 | English edition

XPRESS

MAGAZINE FOR EMPLOYEES

Vanishing Act

It comes, it works, and it's gone – Velcorin® kills bacteria. Xpress visited the production site. **PAGE 20**

Keeping at It

What do customers want? And how do our BU teams figure this out? On the hunt for clues. **PAGE 12**

AWARD-WINNING!

Board Member Frederique van Baarle recently presented the Innovation Award for the first time in Cologne. The grand prize went to the LPT team for its innovative PFAS filtration solution. The speed of development and implementation of the project impressed the jury as much as its business success. **PAGE 6**

LANXESS
Energizing Chemistry

FIRST INNOVATION AWARD PRESENTED

SPREADING THE SPIRIT

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

The team that won the 2025 Innovation Award did something truly remarkable: they progressed from the initial idea to a finished product in only ten months! During the photo shoot immediately following the award ceremony at the LANXESS Tower in Cologne, our colleagues from the LPT business unit told us how they achieved this together (see page 6) – and it wouldn't have been a celebratory photo shoot without a confetti shower, of course. In addition to the winning team, in this issue you'll also learn more about the two other teams that made it to the final round, of course (see page 8). We'd like to express our sincere congratulations for these impressive achievements, which are sure to open up many new market opportunities for our group. During the project presentations, two things clearly stood out: our experts' passion for their topics, and their strong drive to propel the company forward with innovative products and business models.

This spirit has undoubtedly inspired many other colleagues to look at things from new perspectives and seek innovative solutions. So let's make sure this positive energy continues to flow through all areas of the organization. If we do, I'm certain we'll be able to report on many more creative ideas in the coming months.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you!

BEST REGARDS,

MIRKA STEIN,
HEAD OF INTERNAL RELATIONS

SCAN ME

Every edition of Xpress can also be found on the web here.

The next issue of Xpress will be released in September. Please send your ideas for topics or your feedback to: xpress@lanxess.com

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“Deeply Grateful“

Cologne/Germany. Companies need customers as much as the chemical industry needs energy. “And many of you have remained loyal to us since the beginning 20 years ago,” said Matthias Zachert in his welcome address at the Lanxess Tower in Cologne. The company had invited guests there to express its gratitude for their support and outstanding collaboration over the past two decades with a reception on the rooftop terrace followed by a gala dinner. The approximately 180 guests in attendance primarily included important customers, but also representatives from the worlds of business, politics, and the media. Zachert highlighted the eventful history of LANXESS and concluded: “None of this would have been possible without you, our customers. You have always steered us in the right direction and remained loyal to us, even through tough times. We’re deeply grateful to you for this.” The guest of honor for the evening was Hendrik Wüst, head of the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia, who emphasized how important the company is to the state. Attendee Alexander Scheffler, LPT BU, noted: “The event provided a perfect opportunity to network across different fields.”

“The fact that our team won the Innovation Award’s grand prize with our new ion exchangers for PFAS filtration is recognition of the team’s amazing cohesion, customer focus, and fast, goal-driven approach. I’m extremely proud to be part of this group.”

Michael Rockel, Head of the LPT BU. You can read more about this on page 6.

PUSHING **FORWARD**

Cologne/Germany. Top spots in various rankings have already proven it – now LANXESS has also set itself a new goal in order to cement its role as a leader in the field of sustainability. “We don’t want to view sustainability as a regulatory burden, but rather as an opportunity for our business – a chance to work with our customers to develop innovative solutions along the entire value chain,” said CEO Matthias Zachert at the global sustainability community’s kick-off meeting in Cologne. With the help of thematic roadmaps outlining specific measures, the team intends to make clear progress in the fields of climate action and environmental protection as well as the transformation to a climate-neutral product portfolio in the coming months. As Zachert explained: “Even though we are still in the early stages of commercializing green products, we want to help shape the change in the markets. Leadership is definitely LANXESS’s explicit goal in this regard.” If you’d like to learn more, you can watch a video about our new vision on the sustainability page on our website. Or join the sustainability community in MS Teams.

Photos: LANXESS

25
YEARS WITH ZERO ACCIDENTS!

This impressive milestone was reached by the LAB team in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. During this period, not a single accident reportable under OSHA rules occurred.

NOW REPELLING **MOSQUITOES IN CHINA** AS WELL

China. Mosquitoes are a scourge – in all four corners of the globe. Not only does their bite itch, but these little bloodsuckers can also transmit diseases such as dengue fever, Zika, and malaria. A new mosquito repellent product now contains the highly effective insect repellent Saltidin®. It is sold by Liushen, one of China's best-known personal care brands. This collaboration positions Saltigo as an important technology partner in the rapidly growing Chinese market for personal care products. The BU's project partner is Shanghai Jahwa, a leading beauty and personal care products company that has been a market leader for over 30 years together with Liushen and other brands. The newly launched product contains 20 percent Saltidin® and provides more than 8 hours of continuous protection from mosquitoes.

THREE **QUESTIONS FOR**

KIRK HABEL,
Head of the POLARIS Cybersecurity Program

"We Don't Want to Be the Ones Slowing Things Down"

Mr. Habel, LANXESS has just released its first cybersecurity podcast. How did your team come up with the idea for the new format?
Kirk Habel: I like listening to podcasts in my free time, for example during my commute to work. You can gain a lot of knowledge on a topic in a short period of time – and conveniently while doing other things. So we had the idea of using the format for ourselves, really just to give us an opportunity to delve deeper into topics that are also covered by the media – such as current cases of hacker attacks or the disclosure of data leaks. Through this new format, we want to highlight a specific topic each episode, and then explain: How is LANXESS dealing with it? And what specific steps can individuals take to protect their data, both professionally and personally?

What's the first episode about?
It's on the topic of zero trust. Many people have probably heard this term before. My coworker Ulf Wermann and I discuss how we can protect our data when AI-based tools and cloud solutions mean that something like an internal network no longer really exists. That's why we are currently implementing a series of technical changes at LANXESS to ensure that users can be uniquely authenticated. We don't want to be the ones slowing down business processes, but we always have to weigh the benefits and risks of new tools, etc. against each other. Through this podcast, we want to raise awareness of this delicate balance.

What role does artificial intelligence play in the field of cybersecurity in general?
It is both a blessing and a curse, so to speak. Microsoft uses AI to block thousands of phishing emails every day, preventing them from even reaching our Outlook inbox at all. That is, of course, an amazing benefit. On the other hand, attackers are also increasingly becoming faster and more adept with the help of AI. A professional wouldn't need more than two minutes to create a virtual Kirk, who could then call a coworker and ask for a password. That's why, in the age of AI, we must question things with even more skepticism: Who is asking me for what data, and what am I sharing via which channels? If anyone ever has any doubts, our cybersecurity team is always available and grateful for feedback. After all, this is the only way for us to gain a comprehensive picture of the cybersecurity risks our company is currently exposed to.

The new cybersecurity podcast will be available via Xlearn starting in late July. Anyone interested in this topic is also welcome to join the cybersecurity community in MS Teams. To do so, scan the QR code to the left (only works with LANXESS devices) or use the access code "cuophka".

AND THE WINNER IS...

New ideas were submitted every week, and it was difficult to choose. But after much deliberation, the jury made their selection and picked the three finalists. The grand prize went to the Liquid Purification Technology team for its innovative PFAS filtration solution. The team is a model of speed, collaboration, and efficiency – they only took ten months to go from the initial idea to delivery of the finished product, five multidisciplinary teams were involved, and the margin spiked up immediately. However, the other two finalists also impressed the jury: the Lubricant Additives Business BU's innovative platform for joint lubricants and the Material Protection Products BU's new "pay per liter" sales model.

Congratulations to all three teams!

...A SOLUTION FOR PFAS
A BOND THAT LAST FOREVER

Things couldn't be better: chemical company Chemours is ordering more than ever before. The company aims to use even more efficient selective ion exchangers to filter out larger amounts of the "forever chemical" PFAS from wastewater. Sales employees Bart Goossens and Dirk Steinhilber, Application Technology Manager, are initially enthusiastic about the idea – but also cautiously skeptical: "Will it really work? Can we increase the surface area of the ion exchangers enough for them to absorb more PFAS? That remains to be seen." But of course they're on board.

They then discuss the concept with colleagues from the Research, Application Technology, and Production departments. Together, they look for practical solutions – both for their major customer and for LPT. To increase the surface area of the

Lenz Kroeck (left), Head of Innovation Excellence, and Board Member Frederique van Baarle (second from left) presented the winning team with the award and prize money of €10,000 in Cologne.
From left to right (next to van Baarle): Lisa Demes, Dirk Steinkühler, Bart Goossens, Christian Ochsmann, Robert Gorgas, and Ajoy Bhattacharya from India, who joined via video conference. Bhattacharya is now retiring as a "winner" and is certain to enjoy his well-earned leisure time.

TS

polymer beads, they must be made smaller. "One thing we asked ourselves was whether the beads would still be stable enough to allow the wastewater to pass through them," says Steinhilber. The business unit had already gained experience with fine-bead ion exchangers in chloralkali electrolysis, however. Here, the little beads had worked well. So the teams in the laboratories in Bitterfeld and Leverkusen got started right away and reported back after a very short time: "When the diameter of the polymer beads is reduced from 0.6 mm to 0.4 mm, they can bind twice as much PFAS." As a result, they only produce half as much waste and are more environmentally friendly. These PFAS-selective ion exchangers from the laboratory were then sent to the customer for testing. "They were very impressed and immediately ordered three batches," says Steinhilber. This quantity now needed to be delivered as quickly as possible. In April, Chemours underwent an audit with an environmental authority in the Netherlands. As regulations on PFAS filtration are becoming increasingly stringent there too, the customer wanted the audit to demonstrate that it is successfully working on new solutions to the PFAS problem.

India Was Immediately Ready to Go

The LPT team got right to work: "We manufactured the pure polymer beads in Bitterfeld and then flew them to Jhagadia," explains Steinhilber. Five multidisciplinary teams worked on the process together in a highly agile manner. The Indian team was ready to go as soon as the polymers arrived. It treated them chemically, applied PFAS-selective groups, and flew them back. The three batches arrived at the beginning of January. "That was an amazing achievement by our logistics team," says Lisa Demes, Global Segment Head Specialized Water. The majority went to Chemours in the Netherlands, and the rest were sent to other interested customers as samples. "The feedback we received was quite promising." But even more important was whether the large batch worked as well as the laboratory sample. Chemours confirmed that this was the case and even reported that they were able to treat more than double the amount of wastewater initially expected. The customer was extremely satisfied and stated – without being asked – that the beads from LPT were superior to those from our competitors. The fact that the LPT team accommodated Chemours' wishes on many levels certainly contributed to this positive feedback. Within a span of only ten months from the initial idea for these ion exchangers to the delivery of the batches, everything went smoothly. And the customer received them before their audit.

At the moment, Europe is the driving force pushing the PFAS issue. "We see a great deal of potential here for our PFAS-selective ion exchangers," says Demes. The current major customer is eager to ensure that we can deliver reliably over the long term. Because of this, the BU would prefer to relocate the entire production of the beads to Bitterfeld. "That would make logistics much easier," says Demes.

Revenue Rose Sharply

This new product, Lewapole® TP 108, won the grand prize at the Innovation Awards. It perfectly embodies the spirit of the Innovation Award: An existing product was quickly improved to meet customer requirements and can now generate several times the average LANXESS margin. Chemours and LPT worked closely together to achieve this. Revenue increased significantly thanks to the new product, and further customers have already expressed interest. All that remains to be said is that things really couldn't have gone any better.

Van Baarle (far left) with the LAB team Su Mi Beack, Sarah Korwek, and Wayne Mackwood. In addition to a certificate, they received €3,000 for a team event.

… A HYBRID INNOVATION

SMOOTH PERFORMANCE STARTS WITH THE RIGHT GREASE

Electric vehicles (EVs) are rapidly gaining popularity, particularly in China. However, this rise brings new challenges in maintaining their optimal performance. One significant issue is the increased vehicle weight due to the heavy electric car batteries. For instance, a high-end model like the Mercedes EQS 580 4Matic weighs around 3.5 tons. This added weight compared to traditional vehicels with Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) puts extra strain on the drivetrain, especially on the constant velocity (CV) joints that transfer motion and torque to the front wheels. Proper lubrication of CV joints is crucial; otherwise, they wear out quickly and produce undesirable noise. Unfortunately, the existing greases on the market are not adequate for lubricating these new Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV).

Novel Hybrid Grease

This is where the LAB BU team stepped in. LAB, a pioneer and market leader in calcium sulfonate complex (CSC) greases, recognized the need for a better solution. Although polyurea (PU) greases are commonly used for electric cars, they are not perfect. Kevin Liu, an application engineer at LAB BU in the AADC in Shanghai, noted that the team, led by Wayne Mackwood, head of technology for grease and detergents at LAB BU in West Hill, Canada, had long understood that superior grease for CV joints would be key to entering the large battery electric mobility market, particularly in China. "We aimed to develop a hybrid grease that combines the advantages of our CSC greases with those of PU greases," explains Kevin Liu. The multinational team succeeded, filing a patent for their new PU-CSC hybrid grease in 2018. Major electric car manufacturers, such as the Chinese BYD Group, are currently testing it in the field. "All tests should be completed by the end of this year," says Lucy Li, Head of Application Technology APAC. She and her colleagues are optimistic about the success of their novel hybrid formulation. Wayne Mackwood adds, "We offer exceptional wear protection, low noise, low friction, and a long service life for CV joints. Our PU-CSC grease can handle the higher loads caused by the weight and torque of electric vehicles, where conventional greases fail. Our long-term goal is to become the leading manufacturer of CV joint grease in the battery electric vehicle segment."

But that's not all. Su Mi Beack, Head of Product Management for Transportation Additive, envisions further applications for these new greases: "This grease technology serves as a platform from which we can tailor formulations for specific applications. Our technology and sales teams in China are already making inroads into steel manufacturing with products tailored to meet those requirements. We also see potential in the lubrication of industrial electric motors." Mackwood believes that the successful collaboration between colleagues from Canada, the US, and China holds great promise: "It is even conceivable that we could manufacture this new technology using bio-based or other sustainable materials in the future."

For Sarah Korwek, Global Product Manager for Grease, one thing is clear: "Without this new technology development from LAB, these key applications and industries would likely have remained closed to us, along with a major opportunity for growth in this key business segment of LAB."

The Innovation Award jury clearly agreed and honored the team for their achievement.

… A NEW SALES MODEL

HOW MONEY **STRENGTHENS RELATIONSHIPS**

Life isn't fair, and this is especially true in business – years ago, a former employee sold the plans for a Velcorin® plant to a Chinese manufacturer. This company built the plant on the basis of these plans and then attempted to lure the MPP BU's customers away with a lower sales price. LANXESS naturally took legal action against the manufacturer and eventually won the case. But by that time, another copycat had appeared. "These unfair competitors wanted to take control of our patent-protected market by distributing their copy of Velcorin® in our established and operated ecosystem – dosing pumps, service infrastructure, regulations. This would have allowed the competitor to offer its product at a significantly lower price, as it wouldn't have had to bear any costs for the ecosystem, whereas we have to keep the entire system up and running. So we had to and must continue to better protect ourselves against this," explains Matthias Hüttl, head of the Beverage & Food market segment, MPP BU. To make matters worse, the patent for Velcorin® expires in 2027, at which point everyone in the market can offer it in any way they see fit.

Service as a Differentiator

Until now, the BU has sold its customers a dosing system and helped them train their staff to ensure that the addition of Velcorin® to fruit juices, wines, and isotonic sports drinks went smoothly. The same applied to the natural preservative Nagardo®. "Velcorin® is an additive that requires a good bit of explanation at first. That's why we also rent out our dosing systems, so that customers can gain experience with them first." The service offered with Velcorin® and Nagardo® ultimately gave the team the idea for the "pay per liter" sales model. Similar models have long been in use in other industrial sectors – think of printers or copiers, for example.

With the new model, customers receive a complete dosing service. The system is provided to them, and MPP also receives the customer's consumption data via the web-enabled dosing system. The customer determines in advance how many drinks they want to mix with the cold sterilizer. The MPP team calculates the required amount and provides the customer with a monthly estimate, similar to how an electricity provider operates. If the customer doesn't produce anything, they don't have to pay anything. This also means they can avoid the high upfront cost of investing in their own equipment. "Our pilot customer in the US was so thrilled with the idea that they added Velcorin® to another drink," says Hüttl.

The MPP BU team – with their certificate and the €3,000 voucher – together with Kröck and van Baarle. From left to right: Lea Hagemeier, Matthias Hüttl, and Janmarc Heitmann

FACTS

29
projects were submitted as entries for the Innovation Award.

3
projects were ultimately selected and nominated "with a heavy heart," as van Baarle said.

4
other project teams presented their ideas alongside the finalists at the award ceremony.

Anyone who doesn't want the full service package from MPP can also simply rent the dosing system. "The advantage for us is that if the customer wants to switch to another provider, we take back our equipment and discontinue our service. Since we control the entire process, we would also immediately see if a customer were to purchase a competitor's product." Then the system would be removed from their premises. The team hopes that this will enable it to retain all of the BU's strategically important customers – even after the patent expires.

"The biggest problem that arose when launching the new model was essentially an administrative issue. Our accounting department wanted to know how much of the price for the complete package was for service and how much was for the actual product. This question is important for tax purposes in many countries. In addition, the new model somewhat overwhelmed our SAP system."

Inspiring Others

The team submitted the project for the Innovation Award and was selected as one of the three finalists. "We are extremely pleased about this and also want to show that a new sales model offers new opportunities to boost customer loyalty. Perhaps we can inspire colleagues in similar situations to try it too," says Hüttl.

FROM THE LAB

Who are the visionaries driving our company forward? Process engineer Roberta Montana, for one. She works for the LAB business unit at the production facility in Latina, Italy. Last year, she and her team succeeded in using a catalyst tested by the Global Process Development team in Elmira, Canada, in their plant. Doing so accelerated the production processes and enabled the plant to produce larger quantities of the end product Naugalube® 438 L. In this interview, Montana explains why the transition from the lab to the plant is not quite as easy as you might think.

Mrs. Montana, what are the difficulties involved in transferring a successful laboratory test to a large-scale plant?
Roberta Montana: It's pretty tricky. We knew from the start that the new catalyst for the end product Naugalube® 438 L was more active because we had tested it in our plant in 2023. But we wanted to know whether it performs just as well as the old one at such high production volumes. This is something you should know in advance when producing an order worth millions – you don't want to take any risks. The catalyst met these criteria. We were initially satisfied with this result. But we hadn't yet fully exploited the new catalyst's potential. This is because its increased activity shortened the process time. To take advantage of this, we would have had to completely overhaul our entire process. Which we didn't do, because the process was already running smoothly and delivered a high-quality product – and there was less demand back in 2023.

Why did you end up doing it after all a little later?
We had to produce such large quantities that we really needed to save time. Numerous recipe adjustments were necessary throughout the entire process in order to exploit the full potential. In this context, you need to keep in mind that it wouldn't help to just make one step faster. We're dealing with chemical processes here that are all interdependent. Speeding up a single subprocess may not have any effect on the total time it takes to complete the entire process. All of the steps of the production process have to remain in sync.

ROBERTA MONTANA
is a chemical engineer and has been with LANXESS in Latina since 2019. She was in charge of overseeing the catalyst's implementation: "It was an exciting process because at first, we didn't know if it would work. But we proved that we could do it."

Can you explain that in more detail?
Our process essentially consists of three main steps: In the first step, the aromatic amine is alkylated with tripropylene, i.e., the chemical reaction between the amine and tripropylene is set in motion using a catalyst. In the second step, we need to remove the catalyst. We do this by filtering it out. In the third step, the excess tripropylene is distilled off.

In order to fully leverage the potential of the accelerated reaction in the first step, we also had to optimize the other steps.

How did you do that?
We scrutinized everything within the individual process steps to determine what is actually necessary and what we can shorten and/or parallelize. At the same time, we couldn't afford to interrupt production last year to conduct tests or make modifications. We had to ensure that we continued to produce a product that met the specifications. Meeting the customer's requirements was the top priority. That's why we integrated our process improvement ideas into ongoing production as gradually and precisely as possible. Every change was carefully planned and its effects closely monitored. This involved a great deal of effort, including for our colleagues in quality control.

So, was it worth it?
Absolutely – in the end, we were able to produce a much larger quantity in high quality, although it did take a while under the circumstances to find the ideal new formulation for peak productivity. The approach was very incremental.

It would be beyond the scope of this interview to detail every single step we took. But here are a few examples: With our system being highly automated, each modification required new programming and fine-tuning. Steps that were previously programmed sequentially needed to be reconfigured to run in parallel. We couldn't have done it without the support of the process control team.
In addition, we reduced the duration of certain filtration steps and even eliminated a few altogether. As a result, throughput

TO THE **PLANT**

Roberta Montana inspects the new catalyst with future supervisor Daniele Massa.

Together with supervisor Vincenzo Innocenti, Montana maps out the next steps.

In the control room: plant operator Ascenzio Cencia monitors the production process.

increased significantly, but this ended up impacting the maintenance requirements of a central filtration system. Another challenge was that the new catalyst operated differently than the old one. The filtration system had to be serviced more often, which could have meant losing hours of crucial production time. But in this case as well, the maintenance team quickly found a way to streamline the process. And in distillation, we were able to skip the cooling step, saving valuable time.

Was there ever a point when you thought, "This just isn't going to work"?

Sure, moments like that always come up. But in the end, it works out after all. We also faced a bottleneck at the loading station for the tank trucks that transport our product to the customer. Our high production output couldn't be processed quickly enough. In the worst-case scenario, a full product tank means production has to stop entirely. This meant that we had to quickly bring a second, already existing filling station online.

And lastly, we also had to ensure that the necessary raw materials were available on site in sufficient quantities. Given the conditions in 2024, this was an immense effort for the supply chain team. But in the end, everything worked out well – a testament to the dedication of everyone involved. That was a great feeling for all of us. And the effort to keep improving our processes is ongoing.

What do customers want? Which products or services have the potential to drive future economic growth – for both the customer and

CLOSE
Intertwi

LANXESS? How can the company identify the products and services with this kind of potential?

The only way to find them is through close dialogue with customers and thorough market analysis. But where does LANXESS currently stand in this process? On the hunt for clues.

LY ned!

For many years, our focus was on optimizing our plants and increasing their efficiency. “We must not lose sight of these goals now either,” says CEO Matthias Zachert. But at the same time, he urges all employees to embrace a mindset shift: “We need to shift our focus – toward the customer. “We want to become a knowledge-based, innovation-driven company that constantly keeps an eye on markets and customers, and develops tailored, high-margin solutions for them.” To help drive this transformation, the Commercial Excellence Stream was established as part of the Business Excellence program. The insights gained from this Stream are now being shared across the company and further refined. Roy van Griensven, who heads the Stream, says: “The only way to identify new business opportunities and differentiate our offerings is through a deep understanding of the markets and our customers.” That’s exactly what it’s all about: sustainably boosting margins with customized products and services, thereby reducing LANXESS’s exposure to economic volatility.

Xpress spoke with teams across the company and found that many areas have already taken important steps. The Material Production Products business unit (MPP BU), for instance, is creating new products in response to customer suggestions. The Rhein Chemie (RCH BU) and Lubricant Additives Business (LAB BU) business units are strengthening customer relationships through meetings, seminars, and workshops. Due to the complexity of its products, the Liquid Purification Technologies business unit (LPT BU) has always relied on close collaboration with customers.

Recognized by the Customer

The RCH BU, for instance, has clearly succeeded in translating customer focus into action for Japanese tire maker Bridgestone. Bridgestone recognized LANXESS as one of just six strategic suppliers following a global evaluation of all suppliers by the company. Following this, representatives from the RCH BU, which supplies Bridgestone with rubber additives, were invited to the company's headquarters in Japan. In April, a delegation from Bridgestone paid a return visit to Leverkusen and LANXESS's headquarters in Cologne. "We're obviously thrilled about this recognition from our customer," says Holger Graf, who heads the Functional Tire Additives business line at RCH.

The LAB BU strongly emphasizes personal exchange and direct contact. Last year, it organized a seminar on the Reolube® branded fire-resistant product portfolio for around 100 existing and potential customers, which helped boost sales in the Greater China sub-region. "We received significantly larger orders following the seminar," says Colin Zhang, Sub-Region Sales Head, LAB BU. He attributes part of this success to the external experts who spoke at the event. "Thanks to their participation, the event became more like a workshop where important knowledge was exchanged." The Reolube® product portfolio is well established for use in turbines at power plants, as well as in various industrial applications such as waste incineration, recycling, paper production, petrochemicals, steel manufacturing, and more.

Customized Innovation

The MPP business unit takes a slightly less personal but equally customer-centric approach to the question of what new products or better applications it could bring to market that are in demand among customers. "When we received a customer request for alternative chemicals for household care and textiles, we quickly realized that our Oxone™ chemistry could be a possibility," says technical applications manager Hannah Nowotarski from Wilmington. Oxone™ has been manufactured in Memphis for more than 60 years and is commonly used in swimming pools, electronics, and oral care products. Kelly Board, technical applications manager in Sudbury, UK, explains: "We have found new applications for our product in recent years and now aim to extend its use to the household cleaning sector." Further customer surveys indicated that stain removal at low temperatures could be a promising application for Oxone™. The reason is that customers seek to reduce costs, as washing clothes with hot water uses a great deal of energy, while also prioritizing sustainability. More than 60 percent of carbon emissions from washing clothes are caused by heating the water. But with Oxone™, even stubborn stains can be removed at low temperatures with little impact on fabric quality.

IN THE LAB IN WILMINGTON: *The development of Neolone®*

"We arrived at these results through collaboration with our colleagues in Singapore and the UK," says Ethan Solomon. The team in Singapore – led by Melvin Tan and Adrian Cheong – developed a robust test protocol to quickly measure stain removal from textiles. The team in Wilmington con-

DEEPER DIALOGUE – IMPROVED OUTCOMES

"Direct interaction and dialogue, such as with Bridgestone, particularly help us to understand our customers' needs more deeply. This is the only way we can strategically advance our entire portfolio and collaborate with customers to create improved and more sustainable products and solutions."

HOLGER GRAF,
Head of the Functional Tire Additives Business Line, RCH BU

PH Max involved numerous rounds of tests – such as here with student Nuri Ferguson.

NO LIMITS

"The new application for Oxone was identified and implemented so quickly thanks to excellent cross-country collaboration we worked together perfectly across countries. From Wilmington, US, to Sudbury, England, to Singapore, all our labs worked intensively to find solutions. This demonstrates how much can be achieved when we all give our best and share knowledge."

ETHAN SOLOMON,
Head of Application Technology in Wilmington, DE, USA

ducted testing using industry-standard laboratory equipment for laundromats, which is normally reserved for LANXESS Silvadur technology. "Our collaboration worked extremely well. Now we want to bring our new application to market. We have already had promising discussions with several consumer packaged goods manufacturers," says Solomon.

Riding the "Clean Cosmetics" Trend

Janna Eggert, Head of Marketing Communication, MPP BU, and her colleagues Melanie Keck, Technical Application Manager, and Vivien Konetzky, Global Product Manager, have also made promising connections for their new preservative Neolone® PH Max. The global Hygiene & Care team presented the newly formulated preservative for personal care products at the world's largest trade show for cosmetics and personal care, held in Amsterdam. "There was strong interest following the expert talk given by our colleague Ziang Li," says Eggert. The first samples have already been sent to customers, with more ready to go.

Neolone® PH Max combines the well-established preservative phenoxyethanol, known for being highly antimicrobial and extremely skin friendly, with pelargonic acid, a multifunctional ingredient sourced from sunflower oil. This new booster helps reduce the amount of phenoxyethanol needed, among other benefits. Neolone® PH Max stands out for its low toxicity, lack of sensitization potential, and reliable efficacy against both bacteria and fungi. It is easy to use and suitable for a wide range of creams, lotions, and serums. "A big advantage for our customers is that they can usually incorporate it into their existing formulations," says Keck. This is a prized benefit and one that adds further depth to MPP's offering in this product category.

Alongside the traditional phenoxyethanol-based Neolone® PH 100 preservative, the MPP BU also offers the eco-friendly Neolone® BioG preservative. "Our customers are big fans of both products," says Eggert. The sustainable preservative meets the expectations of many end customers, but comes at a somewhat higher price than a conventional product, of course. In addition, its composition often makes it difficult to incorporate into an existing formulation. "The ideal approach is to incorporate the product as a preservative when beginning to develop a new, sustainable formulation," says Keck. Several large customers are already developing new products that include the sustainable preservative.

"We're naturally supporting these development efforts and supplying product samples," Keck notes. The focus is on building long-term customer relationships. But this takes persistence – developing a product can be a multi-year process. "The same was true for our Neolone® PH Max," she explains. "Regulations, compliance rules, new requirements, and the required safety assessments were all part of the research process," says Keck. "At the end of the day, our preservative needs to work flawlessly despite all these requirements – and across a wide range of different formulations." The global Hygiene & Care team is proud of its new preservative. Unlike the Neolone® BioG preservative, it's more moderately priced and positioned in the mid-range segment.

In addition, the trend among customers toward "clean cosmetics" – meaning fewer ingredients but higher performance – continues to grow. "We're meeting this consumer demand as well with the booster in Neolone® PH Max," says Eggert.

It All Starts with Customer Conversations

"Just delivering our products to the customer's doorstep and calling it a day – that's never been how we do things," says Nadja Hermsdorf, Business Development & Applications, LPT BU. With more than a decade of experience in the LPT BU's food segment, she knows: "One reason our customers choose us is the comprehensive service we provide." She knows her customers well – whether they're from the sugar or beverage industry, or producers of starch-based sweeteners around the world. "We support them every step of the way, including if they're planning to expand their facility or build a new one from scratch." Her day-to-day work, she says, revolves largely around her customers' needs, problems, and questions. This is because the ion exchangers used to purify many raw materials for the food industry are complex to work with. "If customers purchase our ion exchangers and aren't satisfied with the results, then we have a problem. Our job is to train them so they can they achieve the best possible results with our products." That's not always easy, of course. For key customers, she occasionally conducts on-site seminars in coordination with the sales team. "This is something we do for our top-tier customers." Many of these customers operate globally and send their employees – such as process engineers and plant operators – to the seminars.

"To reach a broader customer base, we also offer online seminars," says Hermsdorf. Interest in the training sessions on the LewaPlus® module for food desalination was especially high in the Americas, EMEA, and APAC regions. The module enables customers to assess their existing food desalination units and develop new system components. It allows them to optimize settings and thereby reduce waste, chemical usage, or water consumption. "During our most recent webinar, 66 of the 97 attendees were new contacts," Hermsdorf reports. Transferring knowledge not only helps strengthen relationships with key customers and establish new ones, it also creates added value for the customers themselves.

Due to the close customer relationships and the complexity of ion exchangers, the COVID-19 pandemic was an extremely challenging time. Contact via Teams alone is no substitute for an in-person meeting. Since trade shows don't always deliver the desired return, LPT regularly organizes face-to-face meetings around the world. For example, in August of this year, a sugar seminar will be held in Thailand for the third time, in collaboration with the distributor. "After in-person events like these, virtual discussions become much more natural," says Hermsdorf. In fact, customers value these in-person meetings so highly that they're even willing to pay a small fee for them. This was the case about eighteen months ago. At the LANXESS Tower in Cologne, 36 participants from 21 companies across 11 countries came together for the event. In addition to researchers and engineers from direct customers and distributors, the event was also attended by key plant manufacturers and thought leaders in

CLOSER TO CUSTOMERS THROUGH TRAINING

"Our products are complex and require explanation. That's why we need to offer our customers seminars and training to ensure they achieve the best results. This naturally has the side effect of allowing us to gain a deep understanding of our customers, which sometimes leads to new product ideas."

NADJA HERMSDORF,
Business Development & Applications,
LPT BU

the field. “Such face-to-face meetings are truly the most valuable,” says Hermsdorf. “Speaking with someone in person conveys much more than a meeting held solely via Teams,” says Hermsdorf. And no expenses were incurred by LANXESS.

It goes without saying that all these interactions with customers also generate new ideas for products or services. “But many ideas turn out to be too complex to implement. In some cases, we would need to completely reconfigure the production facilities to implement them,” she says. That immediately raises a few questions: What potential does such an innovation have? When would it pay off? Is it future-oriented? The business unit regularly conducts innovation workshops. Around 30 employees from the Laboratory, Application Technology, and Research departments participated in the most recent workshop back in February. “In the end, we had three promising new ideas that we decided to pursue further,” says Hermsdorf. Should a truly breakthrough idea emerge, it can now be submitted for consideration for the innovation budget.

PRESENTED AT THE TRADE SHOW: *Neolone® PH Max was one of the MPP BU’s highlights showcased at the world’s largest trade fair for cosmetics and personal care products in Amsterdam.*

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT ACADEMY

LANXESS is entering uncharted waters with the Commercial Excellence Academy. The academy is designed for sales and marketing employees worldwide to sharpen their focus on business opportunities and work on their implementation.

A primary objective of the newly launched Commercial Excellence Academy is to collaboratively shape the company’s future. The Academy is geared toward marketing and sales employees. The first 60 participants have already been nominated for the three events in June and September. CEO Matthias Zachert greeted the teams: “You were chosen for this program because you stand on the front lines for LANXESS and interact directly with our customers.” He stressed: “As managers, you play a crucial role in driving sustainable growth and delivering added value to our customers in an increasingly complex environment.”

Participants in the academy receive up-to-date insights on the topic of Commercial Excellence. The program kicks off in the US and across the AMERICAS region. “That’s no coincidence, as this region holds great strategic importance for us and makes a crucial contribution to our global success,” Zachert explained.

Participants in the academy are expected to identify and work on growth projects within their respective regions, among other tasks. These can be specific to their own business unit or include other BUs. The teams will work on these projects over a period of 90 days, supported by experienced business coaches. “The coaches all have many years of experience and expertise in the chemical industry. This is how we want to improve our approach and succeed and grow together in the market,” said Zachert.

At the end of the 90 days, participants will be given the chance to showcase their findings and proposals to a panel of senior executives. The best ideas will then be selected and their teams supported in implementing them on a larger scale.

The Academy will be rolled out gradually worldwide.

HOW **OLD** ARE YOU, ANYWAY?

A baby boomer might casually cancel an apparently important appointment scheduled for 5 p.m., while at that time a Gen Zer has already long been in a mentally exhausting dialogue with their inner child. At least, those are the stereotypes. Age discrimination can go both ways. LANXESS is just as affected by this as society as a whole. In honor of Diversity Day, we've gathered a few facts and thought-provoking points on the topic.

?!

AGE IS THE MOST COMMON SOURCE OF WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION, EVEN BEFORE GENDER.

Russell Reynolds Associates, D&I Pulse 2023

What are the most important things in your life?

BABY BOOMERS

1. Health
2. Family
3. Freedom

GENERATION Z

1. Family
2. Health
3. Freedom

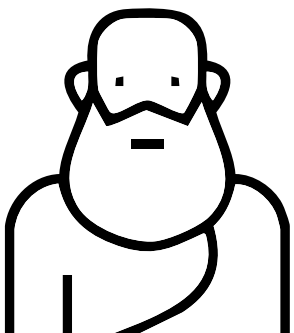
"Youth in Germany" study, May 2023

30%

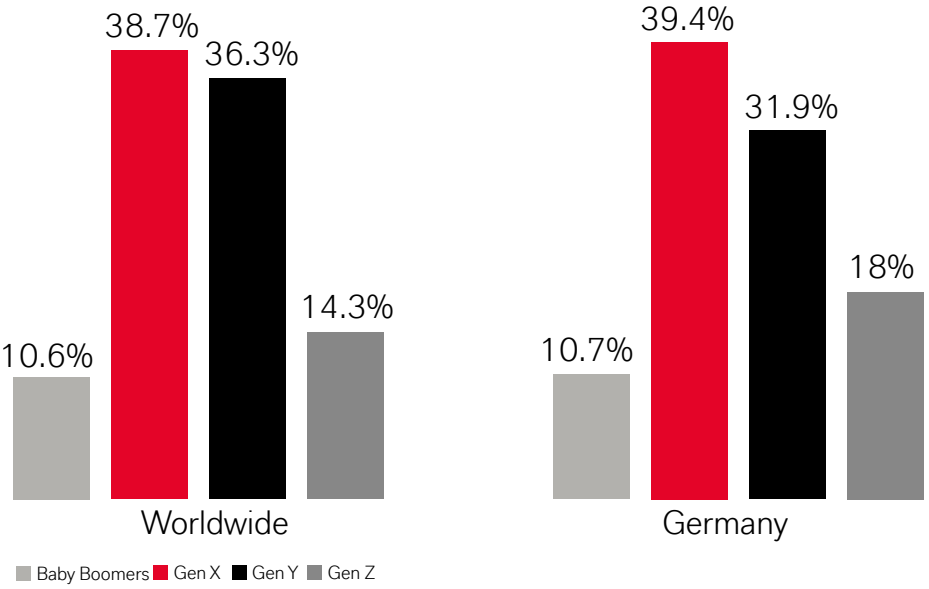
of the current workforce in Germany will no longer be available to work in the coming five years, as they will be retiring. LANXESS is preparing for this and offers various tools for knowledge management.

Generational conflict has always been an issue.

"The young generation is lazy, dresses poorly, and poses a danger to society," lamented the philosopher Aristotle over 2000 years ago.



GENERATIONS AT LANXESS



Look out for **age-related stereotypes** every day for a whole week!

Build an intergenerational team: **What can you learn from each other?**

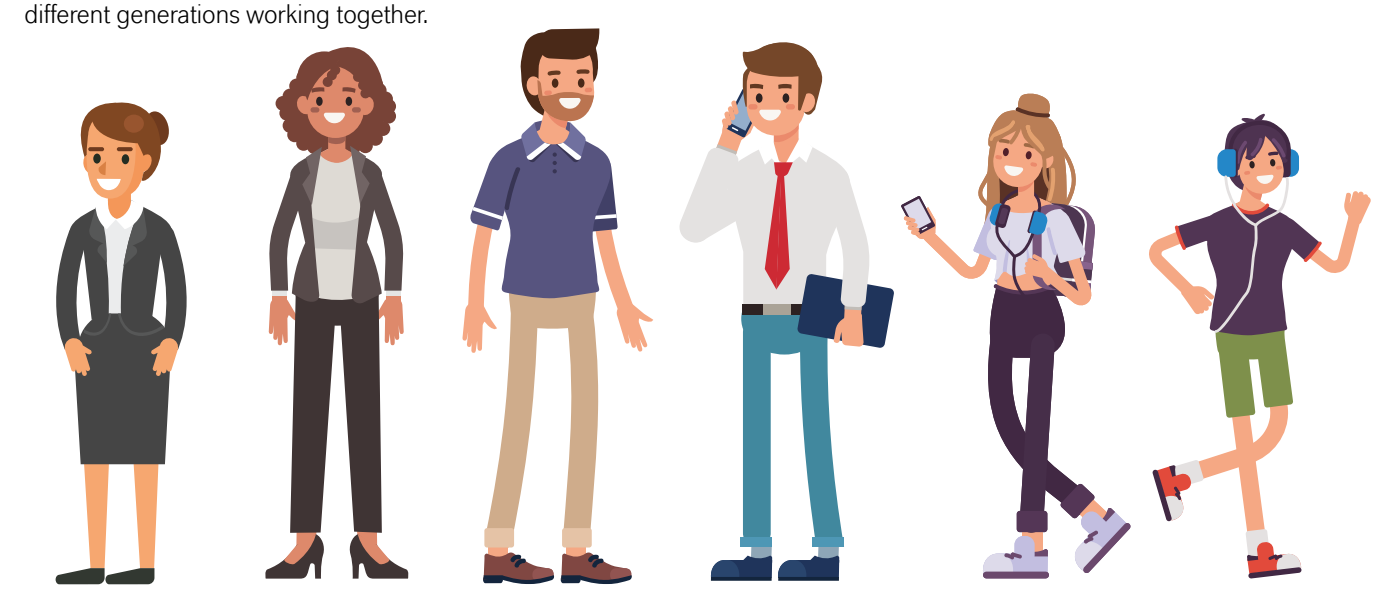
TIME TO REFLECT

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU ASKED SOMEONE UNDER 30 FOR BUSINESS-RELATED FEEDBACK?

WOULD YOU HIRE SOMEONE OVER 50 FOR YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM?

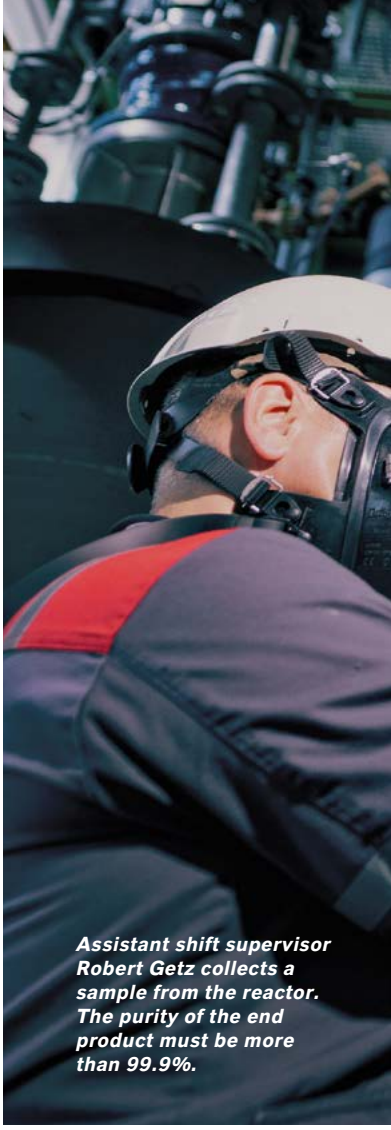
6 GENERATIONS UNDER ONE ROOF

Baby boomers are the oldest generation still in the labor market. Generation X has experienced quite a lot: economic crises, technological leaps, unemployment, and environmental disasters. They value a high-paying and secure job. Generation Y is considered the first cohort of digital natives. Digital media has been a part of Generation Z's lives from the very beginning. Starting in 2026, members of Generation Alpha will enter the workforce. At that point, LANXESS will have employees from six different generations working together.



A FLEETING **BOND**

With its own fleet of vehicles, a "watchdog" team, and a product that vanishes almost completely shortly after use, the MPP BU's Velcorin® plants, located in Dormagen and Krefeld-Uerdingen, stand out for numerous reasons. The Xpress team visited the plants where the cold sterilizer is produced.



Assistant shift supervisor Robert Getz collects a sample from the reactor. The purity of the end product must be more than 99.9%.

Andreas Gratz is an expert in sensitivity. But he's neither a dermatologist nor a behavioral therapist. The chemical engineer is a deputy plant manager at LANXESS, and deals with a real "sensitive soul": dimethyldicarbonate. Marketed by LANXESS under the name Velcorin® it is something of a diva among chemicals: "Our product breaks down extremely easily. It is highly sensitive to moisture, temperature, and any materials it comes into contact with. That's what makes the production of our cold sterilizing agent particularly challenging," reports the deputy plant manager.

TWO SITES, ONE TEAM

Fortunately, the Velcorin® plant team consists of real experts who have knowledge and experience from several decades of production. The Velcorin® plant in Krefeld-Uerdingen started operations in 1963, with production in Dormagen commencing in 2005. "Two sites, one team – that's basically our motto here," explains Nils Brinkmann, head plant manager of the two Velcorin® facilities.

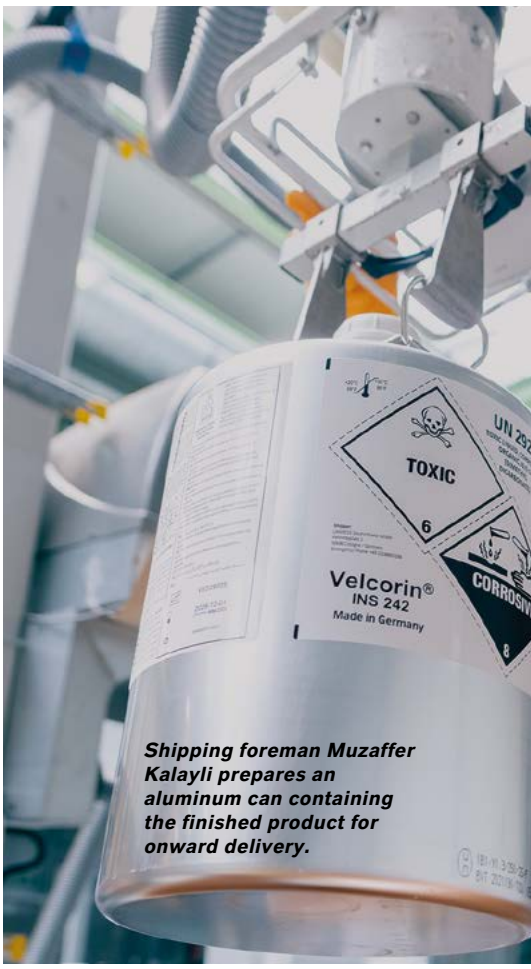
> "Our customers produce premium beverages and prefer not to use any of the conventional preservatives. Because unlike those, Velcorin® not only provides reliable protection but is also completely odorless and tasteless."
>
> **MATTHIAS HÜTTL,**
> Head of the Beverage and Food Market Segment, MPP BU

What makes this situation unique is that the two plants alternate with each other – production runs at one site for about six months, then the plant is shut down for maintenance and upkeep while the other site takes over. "We established this redundancy at the request of our customers. This is because we are the sole producer of Velcorin®. Should any unexpected downtime in production occur causing delays in delivery, the customers' plants would also be forced to stop operations. And this is obviously something that we need to prevent at all costs," Brinkmann continues.

That's also why the team regularly assigns members to "watchdog" duty. This involves checking that everything is in order at the idle plant when the machines are not running. "Who knows, maybe this position will eventually become obsolete. Demand for our product has now increased so much that, over the medium term, we might not be able to manage with just one production facility," the plant manager says proudly.

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Manufacturing a product alternately at two sites naturally demands a lot of flexibility from the team. On the one hand,



Shipping foreman Muzaffer Kalayli prepares an aluminum can containing the finished product for onward delivery.

Four Decades of Experience and Expertise

- Dimethyldicarbonate – that is, Velcorin® – has been manufactured at the Uerdingen plant since 1978. The Dormagen plant started operations in 2005, at which time it was still part of the Saltigo BU. Both facilities have been part of the MPP business unit since 2011.
- Altogether, the plant team includes 48 staff members: 35 working in shifts, 8 in shipping and administration, and 5 in technical support.
- Both plants are certified for food safety, kosher, and halal, and undergo various audits annually to maintain these certifications.

The Velcorin®-plant in Dormagen is housed in the same building as Saltigo's Plant 1 (the gray part of the building). An advantage of this close proximity is the short distance the key raw material, CAME, needs to travel.

The second Velcorin® production facility is located in the CHEMPARK in Krefeld-Uerdingen, about 45 kilometers from Dormagen.

The plant's management team (from left to right): B. Kelemen (Shipping Supervisor), A. Gratz (Assistant Plant Manager), N. Brinkmann (Head Plant Manager), M. Kalayli (Shipping Foreman), M. Maubach (Plant Supervisor), Ch. Hachenberg (Section and Plant Engineer), G. Lienesch (HSEQ Manager).

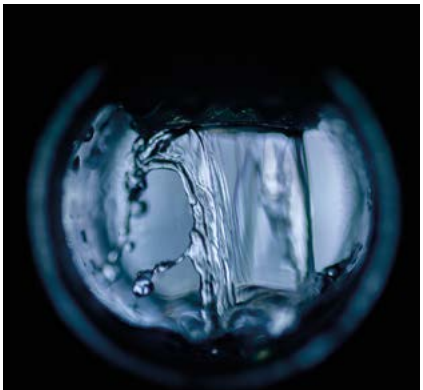
Velcorin® is approved for use in the food industry. That's why strict hygiene rules are in place. The filling area is designated a "white zone," requiring anyone who enters to change their work clothes.

the team's workplace changes regularly, and employees may occasionally need to commute between the locations at short notice. Thanks to the plant's own fleet of vehicles, this isn't a problem, however. But the team's work is also complex from a technical standpoint: "While both facilities use the same production method, they differ in specifics because, for instance, some equipment is made from different materials. In addition, we use two different process control systems," explains Christian Hachenberg, head of the technical department. "That's why we expect that it will take new team members around one to one and a half years to become fully proficient at operating both plants."

PURITY REQUIREMENT

In addition to reliable delivery, purity and quality are also top priorities for customers. Because Velcorin® is an approved food additive, both plants are audited annually under the FSSC 22,000 standard. "Maintaining a high level of purity is crucial to the stability of this product, which decomposes easily. We achieve a purity level of 99.9%," explains plant supervisor Markus Maubach. "This is only possible when every process parameter is exactly right." As a result, none of the 5-liter and 28-liter aluminum cans leave the warehouse without first undergoing thorough quality checks. Each plant has its own lab specifically for this purpose. The final inspection, however, always takes place at the Uerdingen Preventol® facility – effectively an independent location.

A few samples from Dormagen are currently making their way along the roughly 45-kilometer route between the sites. Once the lab there gives the green light, the filling process can begin, and afterwards the pallet of goods for an overseas customer can leave the warehouse. Inside: an "invisible product" made by a visibly motivated team.



The Sensitive Powerhouse

- Velcorin® is a cold sterilizing agent for the beverage industry. It is used in juices, spritzers, beer mixes, and wine, among other drinks.
- The LANXESS product is manufactured in Dormagen and Krefeld-Uerdingen and shipped from there to customers across the globe.
- Dimethyldicarbonate (Velcorin®) decomposes quickly – within approximately four hours, it hydrolyzes in the drink to methanol and carbon dioxide, becoming undetectable.
- Velcorin® is a food additive and has its own E number (E242).

PUZZLES & COMPETITIONS!

1. GRAB YOUR PEN AND SOLVE THE PUZZLE!

Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains all the digits from 1 to 9 exactly once.

5						8		
	2			7			4	
8	7		5				1	
	8		1			6		
3			2		9			1
		1			6		9	
	1				5		2	8
	5			6			3	
		2						6

2. WHAT DOES "WHITE ZONE" REFER TO?

a. All of the equipment in the room is white.
b. Everyone in the room is dressed in white.
c. Everyone entering the room is required to put on a clean white lab coat.

3. SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

There are five differences between the two images. Can you find them?

Photos: LANXESS

LANXESS MEANS ...

Lancer: Our AI Coworker

Cheerful, efficient, and never sick – let's be honest, coworkers like this don't exist. Or do they? LANXESS employees can now enjoy having one such colleague around. Its name: Xchat. Its job title: AI assistant. Our new AI teammate has many different skills: it can transform handwritten notes into emails, compare documents side by side, or turn a PDF into a PowerPoint presentation. First-time users of Xchat need to accept the Microsoft pop-up before proceeding. User guides and training documents for the tool can be found in the Knowledge Portal.

Success: Home Field Advantage

Chemspec Europe 2025 was held in Cologne during LANXESS's anniversary year. The company took this opportunity to showcase six of its BUs at one of the largest booths, covering approximately 160 square meters. The effort was worth it. Jenny Boettger, LPT BU, commented: "The conversations were more relevant than ever. The new connections I made in the Health sector were especially valuable – that's exactly the kind of exchange that drives our business forward." Christoph Schaffrath from the SGO BU also gave a positive assessment: "For Saltigo, the trade fair was a complete success – we held over 170 meetings across the two days. During this time, we were able to make numerous new connections, particularly in the non-agricultural segment, that we are now actively following up with."

JOIN IN

Would you like to win a stylish vintage radio? Join in and send an email with the correct **answer to question 2** to *xpress@lanxess.com.*

Participation is only open to employees of LANXESS and its subsidiaries (excluding Corporate Communications employees). Only one entry per participant allowed. All decisions are final. The solution will appear in the next Xpress. The winner of the quiz in Xpress 01/2025 was **Sven von Kothen**, Germany. The right answer to the second question was a.

QUALITYWORKS.

BACK TO SCHOOL

The list goes on and on – fortunately, the stationery shop owner knows her stuff. Those who don't want to face empty shelves know to start shopping a few weeks before school begins, buying gel pens and fineliners, fountain pens, ballpoint pens, and highlighters for their kids.

It's the colorants from the Polymer Additives business unit that ensure their colors are vibrant and long-lasting. "Many of them contain our specialty dyes from the Bayscript®, Special, Nigrosin, and Pyranin lines, as well as pigment dispersions from the Levanyl® portfolio. "They help ensure that the pens deliver vibrant colors and long-lasting performance," explains Morten Christensen, Global Product Manager, Polymer Additives BU. The colorants are water-based and solvent-free, making them an excellent option for environmentally friendly and sustainable writing instruments.

LANXESS
Energizing Chemistry