

Wienerberger Receives 2021 MIMA Award in “Sustainability” Category

- › Wienerberger employee Florian Zittmayr wins Microsoft Intelligent Manufacturing Award for the company
- › Jury impressed by scaling potential of the solution
- › Analysis-based solution for energy and emission reduction contributes to the achievement of ambitious ESG targets

Vienna, February 25, 2022 – For years, Wienerberger has supported the implementation of innovative projects within the framework of its sustainability strategy, thus contributing to the achievement of its own ambitious ESG targets. Yesterday, a project on analysis-based energy and emission reduction received the Microsoft Intelligent Manufacturing Award in the Sustainability Category. The MIMA Award sponsored by Microsoft and Roland Berger regularly recognizes the most innovative and forward-looking concepts for digital use cases in production.

Within the framework of the “Automated Load Curve Balancing with AI” project, an application was developed together with SAS on SAS Viya on Microsoft Azure that enables roof tile plants to react more effectively to frequent and often major fluctuations in energy demand resulting from capacity changes during the production process. Based on a forecast of process patterns, the objective is to achieve the lowest possible levels of energy consumption and emissions in the energy-intensive production steps of drying and firing of clay tiles.

Clay tile production is based on a procedure that has been in use for years. Planning and implementing major investments and conversions to new technologies usually take a lot of time. For Wienerberger, digital solutions are a possibility of saving energy and reducing emissions on a short-term basis.

“Digitalization holds an enormous scaling potential for efficiency enhancements in production. We want to use this potential in order to save energy and reduce our CO2 emissions. Once again, Wienerberger is assuming a pioneering role in the building materials industry as the company is beginning to roll out data analysis models to the entire plant network step by step. Based on high-resolution operational data, we work with models capable of learning; we optimize the default parameters in order to enhance production efficiency and, at the same time, advance decarbonization. This program is in line with our strategic approach: operational excellence, innovation & digitalization, and ESG”, says Solveig Menard-Galli, Chief Operating Officer of Wienerberger Building Solutions and Member of the Managing Board of Wienerberger AG.

Currently, the solution is being tested in cooperation with SAS within the framework of a lighthouse project at a plant in Poland. This innovative concept, which is entirely cloud-based, would not have been possible without the company’s investments in a modern IT infrastructure. For Florian Zittmayr, who is responsible for digitalization in production and artificial intelligence, the primary focus has always been on scalability. The concept requires not only horizontal scaling on account of the large number of plants, but also vertical scaling due to the enormous volumes of data captured. Alongside the actual optimization model, numerous other models are to be set up and trained in the future. The objective is clear: saving energy and reducing emissions through data-driven optimization at a stable level of quality.

Sustainability has always been at the core of the World of Wienerberger and an essential element throughout the company's history of over 200 years. The MIMA Award won in the Sustainability Category once again confirms that, by international comparison, Wienerberger ranks among the best of its industry in terms of sustainability and innovation.

About the 2021 Microsoft Intelligent Manufacturing Award

The Intelligent Manufacturing Award recognizes the most forward-looking use cases from operational areas within the Factory of the Future. The jury is looking for innovative digital solutions that drive the transformation of the manufacturing industry toward Industry 4.0. With their fresh ideas and creative approaches, the projects submitted are setting new standards in the digitalization of the value chain.

Wienerberger Group

The Wienerberger Group is a leading international provider of smart solutions for the entire building envelope and for infrastructure. Wienerberger is the world's largest producer of bricks (Porotherm, Terca) and the market leader in clay roof tiles (Koramic, Tondach) in Europe as well as concrete pavers (Semmelrock) in Eastern Europe. In pipe systems (Steinzeug-Keramo ceramic pipes and Pipelife plastic pipes), the company is one of the leading suppliers in Europe. By acquiring Meridian Brick, Wienerberger further strengthened its position as a leading supplier of facade products in North America. With its total of 215 production sites, the Wienerberger Group generated revenues of € 4.0 billion and EBITDA LFL of € 671 million in 2021.

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