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In interview: Lucas Funari, Technical Sales Engineer at HUBER do Brasil

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Lucas Funari works at HUBER do Brasil, the Brazilian subsidiary of HUBER SE, and has been supporting the Americas Sales team at the headquarters in Berching since September 2021. In the interview, he talks about his work at HUBER, what drives him as a real nature lover in his daily work and what it is like to work for a globally active company with a history of over 150 years.

In addition, he gives private insights and explains his “preference” for the cold German winter and why he is particularly fond of Bavarian beer gardens.

"What drives me every day? Bringing the best technologies for wastewater and sludge treatment to Brazil"

HUBER Communication: Hello Lucas, welcome again to the HUBER headquarters in Berching. You recently joined us from HUBER do Brasil, the Brazilian subsidiary. How long have you been with HUBER SE now and how long will you stay here in Germany?

Lucas Funari: Thank you very much for the words of welcome! I started at HUBER in Germany on 15 September 2021 and will stay for one year, until September 2022.

What were the reasons that you came to Germany to join us?

Lucas Funari: The main reason was the mutual exchange of knowledge with our parent company here in Germany, both in the field of machine technology and in project and sales management. HUBER Brazil saw the opportunity to develop a long-term training project and brought this idea to HUBER in Germany. The company supported the idea from the first moment.

How can the mutual exchange of knowledge take shape in the future and what experience do you want to bring to HUBER Brazil in the future?

Lucas Funari: The experiences of working here in Germany – including being together in the office, specific trainings, plant visits, discussing projects and contracts – will help to strengthen the values of HUBER SE and subsequently also improve my work at HUBER Brazil.

What were your responsibilities at HUBER do Brasil and what tasks do you now take on at the headquarters?

Lucas Funari: As I have had to work from home since March 2020 due to the pandemic, I continue my tasks in Brazil while I am here in Germany, but now even faster and more agile to resolve matters with Germany. In Brazil, my tasks included acquiring new projects, visiting customers, sizing equipment and processes, preparing technical and commercial proposals, selling new projects and managing the projects sold, from sales to on-site delivery.

How did the team welcome you and how were the first months?

Lucas Funari: The welcome from my colleagues was incredible and made it very easy for me to settle in and get started at HUBER Germany. I had great support from the colleagues I had already worked with from Brazil, from the Americas Sales team and also from the HR department, which took care of the practical organisation of my arrival. I am also very grateful to a colleague from the Industry department who helped me a lot with local tips and even lent me two bikes to explore the region. As I arrived at the end of summer, I was able to spend a few afternoons with my colleagues in the famous beer gardens.

The adjustment and the organisation of your stay were certainly very exciting.

Lucas Funari: The first month I spent living and working in Germany was quite intense, with many new things both in my personal and professional life. But I feel a great sense of gratitude for this incredible opportunity and I'm looking to make the most of every second.

What and at which university did you study and were you able to gain professional experience before joining HUBER?

Lucas Funari: I studied environmental engineering at the Escola Politécnica da Universidade de São Paulo (Polytechnic Department of the University of São Paulo, editor's note). Before joining HUBER Brazil, I worked at the university for one year, researching pilot plants with ultrafiltration membranes for municipal wastewater treatment. Later, still during my studies, I started as an intern in an engineering company called Sharewater in the field of design, construction and operation of wastewater treatment plants. After I graduated in 2016, I started as an engineer at Sharewater, where I was involved in a project of a HUBER plant (BioMem Membranes). This gave me the opportunity to get to know HUBER Brazil. The company later invited me to work in their office, where I have been since July 2018. That was very cool, because before I worked at HUBER Brazil, I was their customer!

Have you settled in well in Germany and what has been the biggest adjustment for you so far?

Lucas Funari: The biggest adjustment is the language, which I have been learning since February 2020, but which still makes it very difficult for me to interact better with the local culture. Besides the language, the climate is also a big adjustment, because in Brazil we don't have such cold temperatures or such short days in winter. In Brazil, the sun still shines between 7am and 6pm on the "worst" day



Lucas Funari has turned his love of nature into a profession: here he is relaxing by the canal near Berching.

of winter and temperatures rarely drop below ten degrees. I'm a bit worried about the coming winter, but that's part of the experience.

And when you're not at work – have you found any leisure activities?

Lucas Funari: Yes, outside of work I enjoy outdoor activities, especially hiking, walking and cycling. We also enjoy visiting the historical and medieval towns here in Germany on the weekends. Rothenburg ob der Tauber was one of them that we found very beautiful, very different from what you find in Brazil. As we arrived at the end of the summer season, we were also able to enjoy the beer gardens and we now understand why Germans like them so much: it is really very pleasant to sit in the sun and enjoy a good German beer in good company.

Let's get back to work: What drives you every day, what would you call your "purpose"?

Lucas Funari: I think it is the will to bring the best wastewater and sludge treatment technologies to Brazil. These are already a reality in the most developed countries, but for Brazil they are still a distant dream. Behind this, of course, is the intention to make a contribution – if only a small one – to the preservation of Brazil's waters through the efficient treatment of municipal and industrial wastewater.

And what contribution do you think HUBER can make here?

Lucas Funari: I see HUBER SE as an important player in improving the Brazilian situation in terms of wastewater treatment technologies and processes, especially in the reuse of resources such as sewage sludge. My top motivation is to learn more about these technologies and apply them in the projects we work on in Brazil.

We hear that you feel very comfortable at HUBER. How do you perceive the global HUBER family and what would you describe as the "unifying bond"?

Lucas Funari: Part of the experience and goals of my working year in Germany is just to get to know the HUBER family better, especially the headquarters in Berching. I think the most important unifying element is the diversity of the global HUBER family. When we look at the diversity of cultures, languages, traditions and histories of all the countries where HUBER SE is present, either with subsidiaries as in Brazil or with agencies, we see the true strength of our company: where each culture also contributes to the growth of HUBER as a whole and teaches us to be more open and tolerant towards others.

Finally, let's look ahead to next year: HUBER will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2022. What is it like for you to work in a company with such a long tradition?

Lucas Funari: Every time I remember it, I am still amazed at how big HUBER's history is. It's great to be able to work in a company with such a long tradition and a global presence. The company I worked for before was very small and had small projects accordingly. So the change to HUBER was very big and very nice, especially because you handle big projects and can count on all the experience gained in the 150-year history. This gives me a lot of security and peace of mind to make decisions and carry out the projects we have in Brazil.

Is there anything you wish for yourself personally, but also for HUBER, for the future?

Lucas Funari: That we can emerge stronger from this complicated situation (Corona, editor's note) that we are all going through and continue to contribute to the conservation of nature with new projects in Brazil and in the world. On a personal level, I hope to use this opportunity in Germany to develop as a person and professionally. And especially, I want to keep learning – after all, we have a lot to learn in this world.