

## PRESS RELEASE

**Bright, colourful, eye-catching and very successful:  
The STABILO BOSS ORIGINAL is celebrating its 50th birthday!**



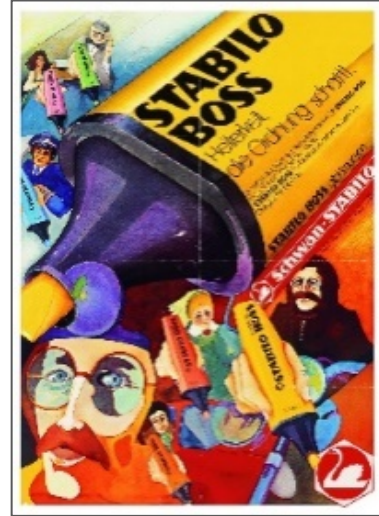
- Günter Schwanhäußer is a pioneer in highlighter pens
- 2.6 billion STABILO BOSS ORIGINAL have been produced
- Success story from Weißenburg

Heroldsberg/Weißenburg, February 2021. Three to four STABILO BOSS ORIGINAL highlighters cross shop counters all over the world every second: First presented in 1971, the brightly coloured highlighter is celebrating its 50th birthday this year. Well over two billion units have been manufactured at the Weissenburg plant in central Franconia since production began. To this day, it is impossible to imagine offices, lecture halls or classrooms without this felt-tip pen with fluorescent ink.

Make printed information accesible quickly in a structured way – highlight texts without crossing them out: Günter Schwanhäußer achieved a global success with this product idea in 1971 that continues to this day. During a trip to the US, the Managing Director at the time, who was running the company together with his cousin Horst Schwanhäußer and was responsible for the “Writing Instruments” division, had watched students reading texts. They were using fibre-tip pens to mark important passages in their documents in colour. It was a good idea, but Günter Schwanhäußer was not convinced by how they were doing it in the US. Back in Nuremberg, together with experienced chemists and product designers, he designed the first highlighter that could be used to highlight printed material in bright yellow.

## BOSS makes text highlighting popular

The now world-famous shape of the STABILO BOSS ORIGINAL was more a product of chance than anything else: The designers created various designs out of modelling clay – including a conical cylinder that Schwanhäußer was not happy with at first. It was only the frustrated reaction of a designer who smashed the clay model with the palm of his hand that led to the distinctive design of the highlighter. Less of a coincidence, on the other hand, was the large-scale marketing campaign for the sales launch of the “BOSS” highlighter pen. “We’ve never again brought a product to market in such a well thought-out way”, said Günter Schwanhäußer during his lifetime about the marketing strategy, which was planned down to the last detail. In order to make a big splash with the idea, which was revolutionary at the time, of marking texts with neon ink instead of underlining or marking over them, trial products were sent to over 1,000 “opinion leaders” – from the German Chancellor to CEOs. It was a success: The STABILO BOSS made text highlighting popular and – through targeted and up-to-date communication around the colourful highlighters – secured the company’s leadership in the European market, which continues to this day.



## Made in Franconia

Inseparably linked to the success story of the colourful highlighter is the STABILO factory in Weißenburg, which was built in 1971 as a plastic injection moulding plant for the production of the STABILO BOSS. Increasing sales volumes made a new, modern production and assembly facility necessary as early as 1986. The new facility was considered extremely innovative by the standards of the time. While it has been continuously expanded, modernised and optimised, the highlighter is still made at that location – the largest production facility for STABILO products.

1.2 million litres of ink are produced there year after year. Whenever possible, the company produces parts of the pen from recycled material.



“People in our area see the plant as a reliable employer”, explains plant manager Thomas Hildenbrand. “We even have some families working for us who are already second or third generation

contributors to the STABILO BOSS success story. Whenever possible we also outsource work to nearby workshops for people with disabilities to create interesting employment prospects for them as well.”



The highlighter received an additional boost with the introduction of pastel colours in 2016. The new products did not replace the conventional nine neon colours, but expanded the uses. The pastel markers, which are now available in 14 different colours, are mainly used for creative work such as hand-lettering. There’s even a grey BOSS – which is great for creating shadows in drawings or lettering and is celebrated among creative types in social media as a new “must have” product. “This turned the previously purely functional pen into an emotional product,” explains Horst Brinkmann, Managing Director of the STABILO subgroup. The pastel boom in 2017, for example, pushed the company’s production capacity to the limit for an extended period of time. “However, we can always count on our employees, who tackle all challenges – including the coronavirus pandemic, for example – with team spirit and a willingness to adapt to changes. They’re the ones who have helped the STABILO BOSS achieve such great success over the past 50 years!”

The best-selling variant of the marker continues to be neon yellow – even after a half a century. If you add up all the shades that are now available, more than 100 million copies of the highlighter are currently produced each year and sold all over the world – including the handy mini version. Increasing digitalisation has not affected the popularity of the STABILO BOSS. On the contrary, the BOSS also has a large community of fans on the Internet. For example, social network users are currently competing in the “BOSS Tower Challenge” to see who can build the highest tower using the colourful markers.

“We’re continuously developing the idea of our flagship product so we can stay fit for the future”, says Horst Brinkmann. “That’s how we will continue for another 50 years to bring more colour to our everyday lives, which can sometimes be a little grey!”