



KWH Offers Quality with CAQ AG Factory Systems

When KWH began in 1968 with its production of metal components for the automobile industry, cars were, compared to today, much less sophisticated. To specialize in the production of deep drawn electronic cases only 10 years after founding the company, KWH Metallwarenfabrik Wolf GmbH was acting highly unorthodox for its era.

Of course, in retrospect the success of this now 500 employee strong company justifies a specialization in what was back then a unique technology. As a supplier of a variety of complex metal assemblies, KWH delivers, as a "Tier 1 Supplier", products to several well-known automobile manufacturers, such as Daimler Chrysler, BMW, Volkswagen, and Audi, as well as to secondary suppliers to this industry. For example, Bosch, located approximately 15 km away in Brühl, uses TRW components necessary for building various actuators, which will eventually find their way into electronic seat adjusters, window lifters, sun roofs, and have many other purposes.

The KWH subsidiary in Gaggenau (KWH Automobiltechnik GmbH) produces highly complex chassis parts made from extremely durable steel and aluminum on large presses of up to 1800 tons. These parts are destined for the new Audi A8 or the BMW X3, among others. Another principle specialization is prototype manufacturing. KWH produces complex modules, such as the steering adjustment for an Unimog by Daimler Chrysler.

KWH manufactures metal sheets according to specific customer parameters of up to 8 mm strength and appropriate elements, such as punching nuts, threads or other connecting parts. With an all-round service ranging from design optimization



according to feasibility criteria of deep-drawing simulations to the production of prototypes on to the construction and production of specialized tools, KWH offers certified serial productions with annual numbers of items of up to 6 million parts per series.

Growth in Thuringia As Well

Since the company was able to register continual growth in Baden-Baden since the end of the 1960s, KWH decided to expand the company to include an additional location. In 1992, by concentrating on the production of specialized tools, WKF Metallwarenfabrik became a company subsidiary located in the Thuringian Sömmerda, whose machinery, employed in the area of re-shaping, is expanded regularly to include highly precise automats.

From Paper to Computer

KWH knew right from the beginning that as supplier of the automobile industry it had to adhere to particularly strict quality requirements. So it was no surprise that the company used a computer-assisted system for quality control as early as 1991. The software system, running at that time on a Unix platform, cannot be compared to today's systems, but it was still possible to make significant gains in time and security in comparison to the quality inspections that had been done by hand up until then.

From Unix to Windows

In order to gain more time and security, KWH decided in 1999 to change over to another quality control software system. Since KWH decided on implementing the



Hans Wolff
Leiter der Qualitätssicherung

operating system Windows, used in most industry sectors today, the company collected extensive information on all likely software providers.

Hans Wolff, supervisor for quality control at KWH since 1989, became aware of a possible software through its client Bosch. "The programmers of this system, were, as was I, originally Bosch employees. Thus one could assume that this system would also be suitable for KWH." Mr. Wolff has never doubted that it was a good decision for him to change from the company Bosch to his present employer 15 years ago. The fact that Bosch is not the basis for good choices in all cases of qualitative support shows KWH's final decision when it came to quality management. "Of course, the system programmed by former Bosch employees originally had a customer bonus status," explains the supervisor for quality. "However, in a comparison with CAQ AG Factory Systems software it could not stand up to the challenge!"

The Rheinböllen company software particularly convinced Mr. Wolff with its high performance and the accompanying training sessions and consultations. Also, the user interface immediately struck Mr. Wolff as pleasantly unique compared to other quality control software. Since the software applications would also be used by the 42 employees of the metal goods factory in Baden-Baden, user-friendliness was an important criterion when it came to selecting a future software partner for quality.

When CAQ AG Factory Systems software also impressed with its price performance ratio as well as its system's flexibility, KWH was convinced that FS [CAQ-Compact] was the right choice. With six licenses of the core software module as well as licenses for the supplementary modules FS [REM], FS [PMM], FS [FMEA], ▶

FS [QAM], FS [FORM] and FS [QBD], Mr. Wolff combined the new system with its software for production control, so that nothing stood in the way anymore of a high-quality controlled production.

This comprehensive system is in use today by the specialists in quality control, as well as by the company executive leadership. Based on information gained from its software system, KWH could adhere to quality standards according to DIN ISO 9001:2000 as well as ISO/TS 16949:2002 and goal-driven company decisions could be made.

Educated Quality

It is difficult for Mr. Wolff to imagine adhering to today's quality standards without CAQ AG Factory Systems' software. In order to guarantee the highest results in matters of quality, Mr. Wolff and two of his colleagues in quality management regularly attend training sessions offered in Rheinböllen. Within the framework of KWH's TSP contract with CAQ AG Factory Systems, the company has the right to attend free seminars pertaining to the software in use by the company as well as receive continuous updates to keep quality running smooth.

CAQ AG Factory Systems always answers questions in appropriate forums or in personalized customer support sessions. Since KWH is planning to get certified according to ISO/TS 16949 this fall, there are no questions that have been left unanswered. ■