

trailer world

The customer magazine of BPW

Issue Three 2009



Holy Metal

Fascination Automobile



Dear Readers,

Have you discovered a new country yet today? Of course, we all like to look back, particularly at the end of the year. We take stock, weigh up what we have learned and, sometimes, we even dare to make a prediction for the future.

Admittedly, most of the decision-makers in the transport and logistics business would say that their personal and business balance sheet displays both ups and downs. Nevertheless, we shouldn't shy away from taking a peep into the future.

Various examples in this edition reveal that it pays to take a forward-looking approach. The "metal bashing" business can still exert its technical fascination over us.

The production citadels of the automotive industry rightly place their emphasis on a blend of emotion and innovation. However, successful automobiles do not always have to be made from sheet metal. Today and in the future, it is technology that will determine whether vehicles are financially successful. Modern axle and brake technology in commercial vehicles also makes a decisive contribution to the economic and ecological success of a vehicle fleet.

Our trailer world customer magazine won a silver medal this year. The jury for "Best of Corporate Publishing" selected our content and graphical concept for this prize from more than 500 entries. Indeed, we can afford a certain pride in what we have achieved. Also, the traditional saying of "Do good and talk about it!" could take on a new and correct dimension especially for the German economy amidst this international crisis.

Shakespeare described the future as the "undiscovered country". So, gird yourself with courage and curiosity to discover this new continent. We will accompany you with our guiding principles of quality, reliability and economic efficiency packaged in our knapsack.

I wish you every success for the coming year.

Dr. Bert Brauers, Executive Director/Sales
E-Mail: brauersb@bpw.de

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BPW seminar programme 2010

■ BPW is offering a comprehensive seminar programme for 2010. The training courses provide an ideal way for vehicle manufacturers, parts dealers and employees of transport companies and workshops to learn about current BPW technology right from the horse's mouth – with valuable, relevant information and practical tips in no short supply.

New seminars, which supplement the proven offerings, include the ECO Tronic EBS seminar and the seminar on disc brake repair for the new ECO Disc trailer disc brake. BPW also develops custom seminar programmes focused on a particular target group

and the relevant field of activity. These seminars are held in the state-of-the-art BPW training centre at the centrally located production site in Wiehl and in regional training facilities. Seminars can also be held at the customer's premises upon request. The international BPW subsidiaries also conduct seminars. With comprehensive learning materials and a plentiful supply of functional exhibits available, content can be optimally presented at any location.

See www.bpw.de/aktuell for more information about the seminar programme and contacts.



ECO Tronic EBS Seminar with Dietmar Franke, BPW training manager.

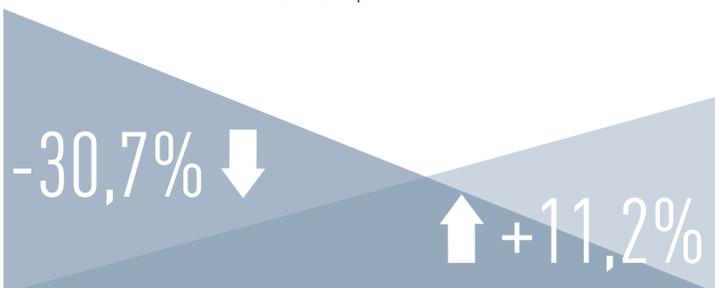


Technical training for workshop staff and manufacturers.

The number of new **passenger cars** registered in Europe in **October 2009** increased by **11.2 percent** as compared to this time last year. The main contributor to this trend was the scrap-page incentive offered in many European countries.

The number of new **commercial vehicles** registered during the same period, however, dropped by **30.7 percent**.

Source: ACEA – European Automobile Manufacturers' Association



New BPW sales structure from 2010 (D)

■ BPW will be using a new sales structure for Germany from January 2010, with coverage split into three areas – north, central, and south – and existing sales offices phased out. A team of qualified field and office employees, operating from the company's headquarters in Wiehl, will continue to ensure excellent support. More streamlined processes and channels of communica-

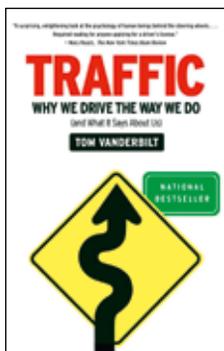
tion will also be implemented with this change. See www.bpw.de for more information.

»The top three suppliers of a market segment come out ahead in the crisis.«

Prof. Horst Wildemann of Munich's Technical University, on market consolidation in the supplier segment, with a focus on the automotive industry.

BOOK TIP: HOW WE DRIVE

New York Times author Tom Vanderbilt has conducted extensive research to better understand people's fascination with the automobile. His book explains why we drive, how



we drive, and what can be learned from this. In the USA and Canada, the book has already become a best seller and is now also available in German. Just in time for the feature article in the current issue of "trailer world"! *TRAFFIC*, by Tom Vanderbilt, can be purchased from Vintage for € 11.00 (\$ 24.95), ISBN: 978-0-307-27719-0 www.howwedrive.com www.tomvanderbilt.com/traffic

BPW the "Best Brand" four times in a row

■ Stuttgart: BPW was again presented the "Best Brand" image award in the category of trailer axles after having won it three times before, in 2005, 2007, and 2008. Headquartered in Wiehl, the company received the majority of the over 8,000 reader votes submitted via trade journals "lastauto omnibus", "trans aktuell", and "FERNFAHRER".

BPW Infomobil on tour throughout Europe

Trucker Michael Löcker logged 60,000 kilometres on the BPW Infomobil during the 2009 European tour to demonstrate the "ECO Disc" and "ECO Tronic EBS" trailer disc brake to customers. To this end, the European BPW subsidiary companies and representative offices organised seminars and exhibits, together with their customers, to provide information on BPW products and services to many interested entrepreneurs and technicians.



First love in red

Many people look back on it with fond affection as their first-ever experience behind the wheel of a vehicle. Meanwhile, the Bobby-Car which was launched in 1972 has added its very own chapter to the story of toys.

Crawling, walking, driving: each and every one of us goes through these steps on the way towards expanding our own personal horizons. Keeping a safe distance, experiencing freedom and enjoying independence: it's mobility that gives us this kind of corresponding happiness, which also explains why cars fascinate us all.

The earlier and more intensively we go through these experiences, the deeper our love for independent mobility. Since 1972, children's lives have been enriched by a small vehicle tailor-made for doing this ground-work. We're talking about the Big-Bobby-Car by toy giant Simba Dickie Group from Fürth. This car has broken practically all the records. 98% of the German population are familiar with this unmistakable vehicle whose name has been used for a whole category of toys. It is also the best-selling children's vehicle of all times. All over the world, 17 million of these nippy little cars weighing just 4,500 g and made of weatherproof plastic granules can be found racing around corridors, housing estates and front gardens. It belongs to the fleet of many a kindergarten where it is put to intensive use by hoards of pre-school children. At home the Bobby-Car can often be found in the garage or garden shed and helps to keep siblings and friends out and about in the fresh air.

In 37 years, well over 40 million children have sat behind the wheel of a Bobby-Car and proudly imitated what they see their own parents doing. The best-seller from Bavaria has even been the focus for research by scientists seeking to ascertain its positive medical effect on the growth of children. In orthopaedic terms, it is said to be „physiologically valuable“, while Germany's consumer organisation „Stiftung Warentest“ →

Photos: Simba Dickie





put this most famous of all kids cars at the top of the list in all its benchmark tests. A colourfully painted unique copy of the unmistakable Bobby-Car is even exhibited in Nürnberg Toy Museum. Without doubt, the car with the BIG buffalo on its radiator has written its own chapter in the story of toys.

Bobby-Car family continues to grow

But the story is by no means over. Every year, new members and variations are being added to the Bobby-Car family. The catalogue meanwhile contains 19 different models, starting with the Big-Bobby-Car-Classic in red for €37, via „Police“ in silver, „Dolphin“ in blue or „Girlie“ in pink. Then there is a range of various customised variations for the ADAC, Tchibo, Würth, the German Postal Service or Nivea, all produced in the corresponding corporate colours.

„One increasingly important sales channel consists of models made on behalf of the car manufacturers“, says Jürgen Schröpf, Commercial Director. The kids cars available from Porsche, Daimler, VW or Mazda shaped like contemporary road vehicles also come from the company's production factory in Burghaslach. Imitation trucks are also available as well as cars: the TGA by MAN comes as an emission-free vehicle, just like the Actros and Unimog trucks made by Mercedes. The moulds for these particular models are developed jointly by the product designers in the automotive industry and BIG's own experts.

And so the range continues to grow, safeguarding jobs on the production line which works in three shifts. „When I started at BIG, there were exactly two versions of the Bobby-Car“, recalls Uwe Hofmann, Purchasing Director. Today, various features and extras permit a highly differentiated approach to various target groups.

4,000 cars in 19 variations

Altogether, the cute toy consists of around 20 elements and stickers, made for the most part by the approx. 140 employees in Burghaslach

where all the assembly work takes place. „Our car consists of two axles, steering linkage, the body, steering wheel, horn, spacer rings, four wheels and a few screws and stickers“, Uwe Hofmann explains.

Every day these parts are assembled to produce up to 4,000 Bobby-Cars which subsequently travel along a 700 m underground conveyor belt into the state-of-the-art high-bay warehouse. Here at least 5,000 packaging boxes have to be at the ready for the best-seller, otherwise an alarm is set off by the ingenious system implemented by Rolf Stuhldreyer, Logistics Director. In theory, his warehouse can take up to 250,000 Bobby-Cars. However, BIG also makes about another 200 products on site here which also need shelf space. 83 of them are fast-moving items in the high-bay warehouse, while the remaining approx. 120 products are kept in the conventional stores.



„Every year we deal with 30,000 orders for altogether 120,000 delivery items“, Stuhldreyer has calculated. 1.5 million shipping units are palletised with about 2.3 million items. Up to 800 pallets are moved in Burghaslach each day – a development which would have been completely inconceivable not so long ago. After all, on 9 April 1998 a major fire destroyed all the production capacities at once. Machinery, production lines and most of the valuable moulds

vanished in the flames. In those days, the BIG factory was still located in Fürth-Stadeln.

New beginnings after the disastrous fire.

This brought things to a complete halt for the family company. Although the order books were full, after the disaster the production lines were at a standstill. For weeks, customers at home and abroad could only be supplied with goods ex stock. But retailers and customers remained loyal to BIG in this most difficult phase in the company's history. Even competitors offered their help in coping with the production bottlenecks.

No-one would have thought it possible that only six months later, 80% of the core product range would once again be available for delivery without major delays. Already by December 1998, 20% more Bobby-Cars were running off the production lines than before the fire. Unconventional corporate decisions, combined with improvisation capabilities and the sheer hard work of the employees who frequently worked both day- and night-shifts as well as the weekends, all came together to make the „BIG miracle“ possible.

But company founder Ernst A. Bettag, who died in 2003, also saw how that particular situation offered the chance for establishing state-of-the-art production facilities under practically ideal conditions on a green-field site in Burghaslach. And so the role-model Bavarian entrepreneur provided investment funds going into seven figures. A plot of land measuring 320,000 square metres was soon found. The new factory with adjoining logistics centre was opened only 16 months after the disastrous fire. The site is ideal and offers scope for further expansion. Right on the A3 motorway between Nürnberg and Frankfurt, the premises include space for further development stages. Up to now, buildings have been erected on only four hectares of the land which covers altogether 32 hectares.

Since 2004, the classic version has been joined by the Big-New-Bobby-Car at a price of €49. The classic model still costs €37 from retailers and remains the first choice for →



The Bobby-Car is one of the fast-movers in BIG's logistics centre with its direct underground link to the production line.



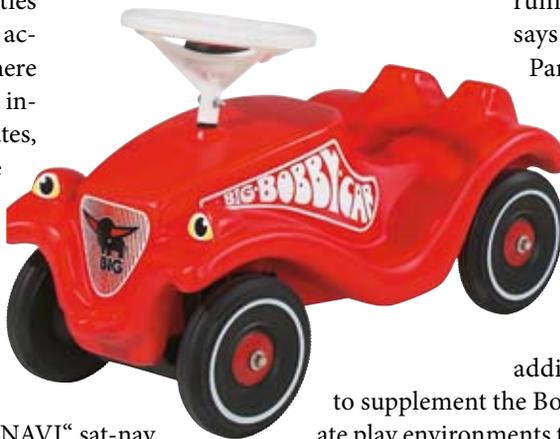
From the bodywork made of plastic granules through to the lovingly completed final assemble: all "made in Germany".



Every day, trucks bring the kids cars to the toy markets of the world.

70% of the customers. It is only at second glance that the new design is seen to differ from the original version. It is more streamlined with low-profile, low-noise tyres and a secret compartment as the main changes.

All in all, the marketing strategists have decided not to take any risks with the design. A Bobby-Car is still a Bobby-Car, the same philosophy as with the classic sports car Porsche 911. Other similarities can be found in the accessories list which here too is long! It includes individual number plates, tool boxes and a range of different steering wheels with additional electric functions. A trailer is also available, turning the Bobby-Car into an articulated vehicle, while the „BIG-NAVI“ sat-nav – oh yes, it really exists – offers a range of varying commands to take driver and load more or less directly to their destination.



Once they've arrived, it's time to fill up with fuel and check the tyre pressure. Here BIG offers a multi-function fuel pump that even takes payment with the toy cheque card. In other respects too, the range of accessories for the children's vehicle includes all that tomorrow's fleet manager needs. „On request it is even possible to retrofit the car with different tyre types that have varying running properties“, says Jürgen Schröpf.

Parents prefer the low-noise profile with reduced rolling noises and a soft tyre surface to protect that precious parquet floor. „We offer additional products to supplement the Bobby-Car and create play environments to stimulate every child's imagination“, says Schröpf. A relatively new model in the range is fitted with a resilient bull bar that protects antique fur-

niture from any scratches in the event of a possible collision.

Bobby-Car clubs for adults

Apart from all this, adults have always tended to be very tolerant when they come across Bobby-Cars. Younger parents at least will probably still remember their own adventures with the indestructible vehicles. And many men fail to see why their age should disqualify them from this particular form of fun. This special clientele even has its own Bobby-Car club with official races and world championships for adults. Helmets are compulsory at these events in view of the breath-taking speeds involved. The fastest driver hitherto reached a speed of 105 kilometres per hour – without a trailer, of course. That's what it must feel like to ride a cannonball.

Ideas for new target groups

These scenarios are naturally not suitable for children on an everyday basis. But



The new factory was built on a green-field site.



»An increasingly important sales channel consists of models made on behalf of the car manufacturers.«

Jürgen Schröpf,
Commercial Director

they show just what safety reserves the little vehicles offer. Sturdy resilience was already the focus of attention in BIG advertisements back in the ,70s. One particular motif shows a fully grown elephant putting the bodywork to the test. The incredible durability of the Bobby-Car is the result of a sound production concept. Parts such as axles and bolts are made of steel, the rest of thick-walled or solid plastic made in the company's own production facilities, which will to continue growing in the long-term.

„Potential for further production capacities can only be found in new markets“ is the firm conviction of Jürgen Schröpf. Which is why developing additional products for new target groups is one of the prime tasks for product management

Sales channels are already available, as well as the product ideas. When BIG was taken over in 2004 by the Simba Dickie Group also in Fürth, this opened the doors to the world for the Bobby-Car, with subsidiaries existing even in the Emirate of Dubai.



Schröpf and his team had a very special idea for the deep-pocketed customers on the Arabian Gulf. In future, well-situated sheik children can look forward to high-gloss Bobby-Cars. Costly water-transfer technology is being used to apply a hard-wearing foil to the bodywork. The results are most impressive – a really classy look and a really proud price! The luxury version is to cost around €200. At the moment, the first few tiger-look versions are on sale through Amazon. Is this the next chapter in the success story of the Bobby-Cars? (mw)

→ Info For more information about Bobby-Car and BIG, please go to <http://uk.big.de>

Background: the BIG story

- 1954: Ernst A. Bettag takes over the Johann Höfler metalware factory in Fürth
- 1956: Bettag changes production over to plastic and invents kids cars
- 1962: the company is renamed BIG-Spielwarenfabrik (BIG toy factory)
- 1966: the buffalo is introduced as the logo
- 1972: the Big-Bobby-Car is launched at Nuremberg toy fair
- 1998: fire destroys the BIG factory in Fürth
- 1999: production starts in the newly built factory in Burghaslach
- 2003: company founder Ernst A. Bettag dies
- 2004: BIG is taken over by the Simba Dickie Group
- 2009: the product range encompasses about 200 BIG toys



Holy metal!

With more than 165,000 visitors from 35 countries and over 1,000 exhibitors from 26 nations, the Techno-Classica is the world's largest vintage car show. Since 1988, it has been held in Essen every spring and is seen as a barometer of vintage car culture.

Claus F. Mirbach knows them all. His company which specialises in classic cars currently has more than 300 vehicles on offer. "Here we're talking about emotional, sensual products" – that's how one of the most distinguished classic car dealers describes the special atmosphere prevailing among all the glossy vehicles of yesteryear. Potential customers, including many society celebrities and big names in racing sport, are looking for models that match their own personality. Driven by the desire to own something no-one else has, they'll pay several thousand Euros for their special requests. The globally unique range of collectors' items on show in Essen is huge. The international purchasing public is highly appreciative and finds the visual incentives almost irresistible. And so it is no great surprise at the end of the show's first day which is reserved for trade visitors and the press, to find that numerous top-of-the-market classic cars already have the so terribly final "SOLD" sign on their windscreen.

Neat values One particular rarity from the '50s, a Victoria Spatz dated 1957 went for 25,900 Euro as soon as the show got underway. On day two, a VW Bus dated 1972 changed hands from its first owner for 28,800 Euro. Sounds like a lot of money, which it is too, but the Techno-Classica shows that nothing is impossible. Essen has laid the table, and the prices even for bread-and-butter cars are really spicy: just about 1000 kg of Toyota 1000 dated 1975 costs 16,975 Euro.

Car shopping in Essen Behaviour patterns at the show are changing too: the top-of-the-range dealers are noticing a striking fre-

quency in the number of customers from North and South America as well as the Asian region that are deliberately on the look-out for vintage cars at the very top of the price scale. Perfectly restored high-end vehicles with an Emily, jaguar, horse or trident on the bonnet are usually presented without any indication of the price; all you can see is a discreet sign saying "Price on request". The dealers have to get used to these particular customers who come to Essen from other countries, from Russia for example, carrying the necessary hard cash with them in flat aluminium cases. They purchase vehicles less according to the state of preservation and more for the model and colour.

Tradition and brand loyalty Meanwhile nearly all major European manufacturers recognise the valuable contribution made by Techno-Classica as a leading fair, where models from a company's past bridge the gap to the present. For example, VW placed the new Scirocco clearly in the tradition of its predecessor models, paying homage to the pop-coloured paintwork of the top coupé model of the '70s and '80s, on loan brand new from Wolfsburg's Autostadt. While Audi placed the focus on "40 Years of Sport Quattro", Ford looked back on 100 years of its Model-T. The Italians come across as incredibly elegant and sporty. Beautiful Alfas and Lancias from the pre-war and early post-war period raised the pulse not only of the Alfistas. Statistics indicate that events such as the Techno-Classica have a greater impact on the sales figures for Alfa-Romeo than any other marketing activities undertaken by the Italians. The brand image created in better times still persists today. Citroën is →



Photos: Spiegl

celebrating 60 years of 2CV production, with the rediscovered 2CV prototypes dated 1939 showing that the idea of the minimalist car was born in France and not in India.

Lovely cars for each and every day It transpires that the Techno-Classica is a car show not just for the rich. Together with the glossy polished collector vehicles, there always has been a traditional sales market for old and more recent vintage vehicles on the exhibition grounds outside the halls. Depending on the particular generation, childhood dreams can be satisfied at affordable prices, from the Opel Rekord dated 1953 with “jaw mouth” radiator for 9,500 Euro to a rare Ford Taunus 20 from the ‘70s for around 6,000 Euro. And so the Techno-Classica also offers what must be the most colourfully mixed bunch of visitors. None of whom are too proud to go down on their knees on finding the car they’ve been longing for.

Logistics factor It might sound strange, but it is the top exhibits that have to be protected from all too curious eyes (and more). Protection from the weather is one thing, protection from over-eager fans is something else entirely. Most dealers are more than willing to pay for professional cleaning experts who regularly remove dust and fingerprints from the shiny bodywork using special paintwork and chromium cleaning agents. An immaculate glossy polished surface is the best sales argument. And so all vehicles exhibited by the major dealers are brought exclusively in closed vehicle transporters to their destination. A number of forwarders, transport companies and international logistics providers such as Schenker or DHL have specialised in this particular service. Many customers buying top-priced vehicles would rather have them in their garage today instead of waiting another day. And so the expense involved in fitting the vehicles in special car racks for loading on a cargo aircraft don’t figure in the equation at all. But it is vital for the transports to be professionally secured. While this again has its price, here too the expenditure involved is negligible compared to the costs for dealing with a dented wing or damaged rear light, which might even involve complicated reproduction.

Logistics service providers not only offer door-to-door transport but also ensure that all the correct freight and customs papers are available, as well as the corresponding insurance. Cases where incorrect papers resulted in the disappearance of valuable vehicles in the never-never-land of the US-American customs warehouses are no exception to the rule.

One last look at the valuable exhibition halls, then suddenly the clock strikes 6 p.m. and it’s all over. Now the real work begins once again. Special caution is required to manoeuvre the vehicles out of the exhibition halls. It would be simply too exasperating for them to be damaged. Some of those vintage cars that have been sold go from Essen straight to their new owners, while others are made ready for the next show. (hs)

→ Info The next Techno-Classica begins in Essen on 7 April 2010: www.siha.de/tce_uk.php
It’s also worth going to the Antwerp Classic Salon from 5 to 7 March 2010: www.siha.de/acs_uk.php.

Both sellers and buyers only let professionals get close to the expensive vehicles.



New home for old dreams: BMW's new museum world

Temple in the soup bowl

Fans have had to show great patience in waiting for the BMW Museum to reopen in Munich at the foot of the legendary “Four Cylinder”, aka company headquarters. But the waiting has all been worthwhile. Now visitors can enjoy a museum world that by no means simply looks back in history but has become a place that illustrates the lines of development.

Photos: BMW

Karl Schwanzer, star architect from Austria, designed both the BMW company headquarters, quickly nicknamed “Four Cylinder”, and the museum building inaugurated in 1973. With the BMW buildings, Schwanzer created an unmistakable counter pole to the striking Olympics complex in the immediately vicinity. After its long re-fit phase, the new BMW museum now once again sets avant-garde accents. Each of the more than 120 exhibits has its very own story to tell. The exhibition area has been drastically enlarged. It presents visitors with what are now 91 years of BMW history in an ambience that is certainly not just a stabling facility for cars with a typically static museum approach. Instead, it shows the lines of development followed by the car as an automotive medium. As visitors move through the various topical sections such as motor sport, design and engineering, they actually

become part of a documentation process that reflects the history of the car in the passing of time, as a combination of economic, technical and also social processes. There is no zeitgeisty excitement: the museum wants to get visitors to think and reflect on a whole range of issues. Including the currently hot topic of lightweight construction, illustrated by the example of the filigree tubular space frame of the 328 Kamm racing saloon dated 1940 with its sensationally low CW value of 0.23.

The BMW Isetta is sure to be a popular favourite: it was the saviour of the brand in the 50s, when BMW's baroque angels such as the BMW 502 V8 failed to assert themselves in the face of competition from their rival Opel in Rüsselsheim or Mercedes in Stuttgart.

One of the museum's special highlights consists of the BMW Art Cars. The 16th BMW Art Car has just been presented. It was

created by the Icelandic/Danish artist Olafur Eliasson on the basis of the hydrogen-driven BMW H2R. Is this a sign that we don't need to fear the automotive future after all? (hs) ●



Info

- The BMW museum in Munich, right next to the BMW factory and the BMW World in Munich (Am Olympiapark 2, 80809 Munich) is open Tuesdays to Fridays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and on bank holidays. The entrance fee costs 12 Euro for adults. An extensive preview and additional information is available at www.bmw-museum.com.
- An overview of numerous museums can be found at www.oldtimermuseen.de

Specialist

The fascination of prototypes and test vehicles comes above all from their novelty value. Forwarder Cartrans brings these valuable cars safely over snowy roads right up to the Arctic Circle.

Reliable, experienced, circumspect – and slim! This profile applies to all drivers who transport prototypes and test vehicles for forwarder Cartrans on behalf of the car industry. The company based in Freudenberg uses closed trailers for these special transports to protect the development vehicles from curious eyes and exposure to the weather.

This means that there is very little space inside these costly trailers. Once a car has been loaded on board, there's scarcely any room left to open the doors. „This is why these tasks can only be given to slim drivers without a belly and who are not too tall“, explains Oliver Hirth, one of the three associates of the company that was founded around 25 years ago. Cartrans has six of these huge trailers that can take six vehicles each.

Most of the hand-made prototypes are worth huge amounts of money. Which is why the Cartrans drivers have to be extremely responsible as well as wiry. And in winter the journeys frequently head for the Arctic Circle as this is where car manufacturers traditionally carry out their endurance tests for new products once the autumn has set in. Before a new car is launched, it must have proven its winter handling characteristics in Arvidsjaur which is guaranteed to have snow. For Cartrans, this means a round trip lasting altogether seven days, including at least three to four days over slippery roads covered with ice and snow.

The route goes right across Germany to Kiel and then by ferry to Gothenburg. „The crossing to Sweden offers an ideal opportunity for making optimum use of driving and rest times“, says Hirth. In contrast to other possibilities of spending the night at motorway services, here the drivers look forward to good food and a cabin with en-suite shower. From Gothenburg they then still have another 1,400 km or two days driving ahead of them until they reach their destination in North Sweden. Roads start to get slippery once they leave Stockholm, or even as soon →

»Cartrans truckers have to be wiry.«

Vehicle to Eur





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All-rounder

The French company Gefco has developed from the logistics subsidiary of the car manufacturer PSA into a global logistics firm. But new car logistics remains one of the core activities of the company and is organised on a multi-model footing.

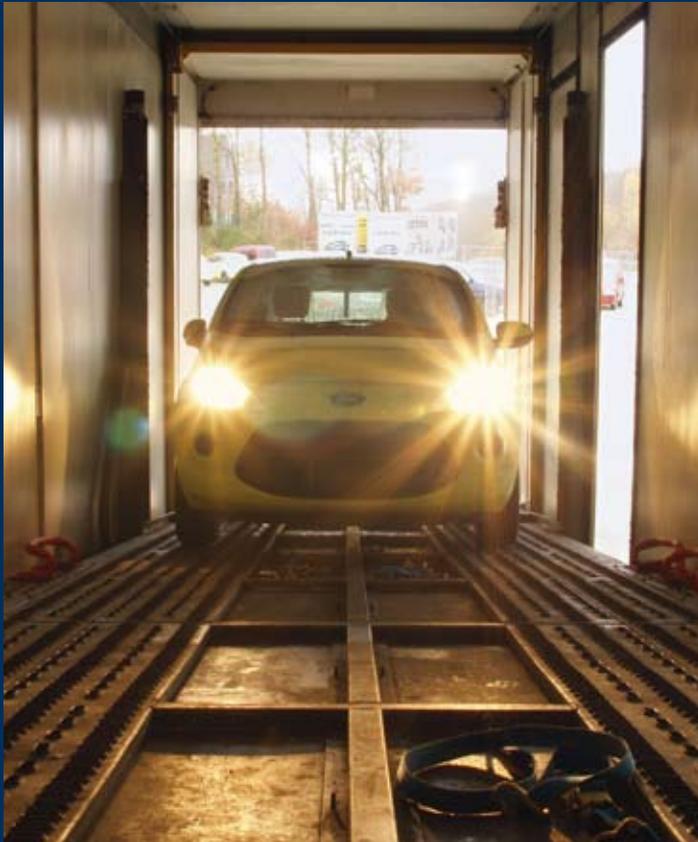
Transporting vehicles is a niche in the road transport market where you mostly find only small and medium-sized companies. One of the few large firms operating here is the French Gefco Group, a subsidiary of the PSA car manufacturer. On the one hand, Gefco delivers the material and components needed for the production process to the Citroen and Peugeot factories; on the other hand, the company is also responsible for bringing the finished cars to the dealerships. „Meanwhile we have diversified so that the PSA Group now only accounts for 55% of Gefco’s activities“, explains Antoine Redier, Director of Car Transportation and Logistics. „But when it comes to car transportation, we still work more than 80% for PSA, i.e. with Citroen and Peugeot vehicles.“ In 2008 the company transported 2.2 million cars for PSA, including 800,000 for the French market and 200,000 for Germany, together with more than 400,000 cars for other manufacturers. These include makes such as Ford, Mercedes, General Motors, Volkswagen, Seat, Nissan,

»We want to be more independent as a subsidiary.«

Renault, Dacia, Honda, Jaguar or Landrover. „Our aim is to continue increasing this third-party share“. As a result, the company can optimise its own capacities of rail wagons and

trucks. There is frequently a great fluctuation when it comes to the number of cars being transported and the required directions. „In contrast to car production, it is not possible to plan transportation of the finished cars in the long-term, but it still has to be profitable and above all, keep to certain deadlines. After all, the dealer wants to be able to tell his customer exactly on which day he can collect his new car“, emphasises Director Redier. „And so the transports we have to organise differ greatly, and no one journey is like the next one“. The journey begins with the „approach transport“ from the factory to the regional distribution centres at home and abroad, by truck, rail or ship. The last part of the journey out to the dealer is reserved for trucks. But the journey can also involve various different means of transport. For example, cars destined for the United Kingdom are brought by rail from Sochaux to Calais, →

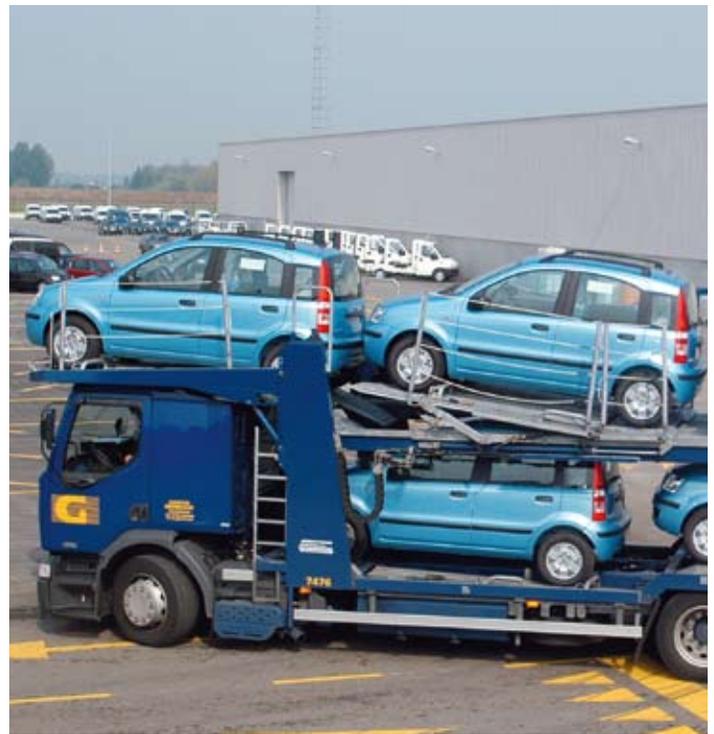
Photos: Gefco



The special transporters have scarcely any room to open the doors.

as they drive off the ferry, depending on the time of year. Which means the drivers need to concentrate fully on what they're doing until they get to the huge testing facility in Lappland.

It's certainly not lonely up there. During the cold months of the year, drivers are almost certain to meet lots of colleagues on arrival. Between November and March, up to 15 Cartrans trucks will be on the road to and from Arvidsjaur at the same time. Not only closed trailers are used for the journeys: the company's customer base also includes brake and tyre manufacturers, whose test vehicles do not necessarily have to be transported hidden from view, as the effect of new brake discs, air-conditioning systems and winter tyres can also be tested on "normal" cars.



Gefco also serves other manufacturers to an increasing extent.

where they then drive onto the ferry under their own steam, before being loaded on trucks for on-going transport within the UK. Last year, 27% of the cars leaving the factory were sent by rail, with a relatively small share by ship and therefore around 70% by truck. Antoine Redier is convinced that „trucks are simply unbeatable and indispensable in terms of flexibility“. For example, a truck can do a round trip through Europe to avoid any empty runs. „To start with, it brings new cars from the Slovakian factory in Tranava to Bremerhaven. It then loads up with VW cars in Emden which it brings to the Paris region, where it changes load again with more cars, this time produced by PSA in Aulnay near Paris and destined for Northern Italy. Finally, it brings the delivery vans made in Northern Italy to a distribution centre in Central Europe, where it can then take on another load of new PSA cars made in Slovakia, thus completing the full circle.“

There are many such round trips between the production factories and the various distribution centres spread right across Europe. Citroen and Peugeot cars are made primarily in the large factories at Aulnay-sous-Bois and Poissy near Paris, in Sochaux in Eastern



»No transport solution is like the next.«

Antoine Redier, Director of Car Transportation at Gefco

France and in Rennes in Brittany. These are joined by Hordain Sevelnord in Northern France, a joint enterprise with Fiat, where mini- and delivery vans are made. The key factories ab-

road are Tranava in Slovakia, Kolin in the Czech Republic and Vigo in Spain. „Vigo is a port which gives us the opportunity of bringing finished cars by Ro-Ro ship to Nantes-Saint-Nazaire, Zeebrügge, the United Kingdom or Bremerhaven“. As Bremerhaven is used as out-

Photos: Gefco, Walter, Stürtz, Klingsieck



27% of the transports are operated with Gefco's own railway wagons.

going port for German exports, the Gefco trucks not only bring the Citroen and Peugeot cars arriving here to destinations in Germany itself but also return with a load of cars of other makes produced in Germany and intended for export. „These are profitable transport solutions which we try to implement on the broadest possible basis“, underlines Antoine Redier. The fleet available for this purpose consists of 300 of

»Car transport capacities have to be utilised to the full as far as possible.«

the company's own car transporters with permanently employed drivers, and 540 transporters operated by subcontractors. In addition, Gefco also uses the car transportation capacities made available to the market by other companies who operate for Gefco from time to time or occasionally, as the need arises. „This is how we optimise transportation schedules throughout Europe. The problem is that car transporters can only be used for this one specific purpose so that they have to be utilised to capacity as far as possible.“ Two different kinds of car transporters are used. One version has loading ramps that stay horizontal during the journey. They are loaded and unloaded quickly and therefore used primarily for short transport journeys for example between the distribution centres and the dealerships, or for returning hire cars and used vehicles. However, as a rule they can only take up to eight cars. Long journeys right across Europe are served by other transporters that have several short loading ramps so that the cars are each set at a different angle in order to make optimum use of the available space. This naturally takes longer to load and unload the cars, but it is definitely worthwhile for longer journeys as they can carry up to eleven cars in this way. (rkl) ●

→ Info More information about GEFCO can be found online at www.gefco.fr



»We operate as a kind of seasonal business«

Oliver Hirth, Managing director at Cartrans

Altogether Cartrans has a fleet of 38 vehicles. Together with the six closed trailers, the company has a further 32 car transporter vehicles with conventional open superstructures, with scheduling organised by three dispatchers. Once the winter season has come has come close, they turn their attention to a completely different kind of business. During the spring and summer, Cartrans operates mostly for the ADAC, collecting stranded vehicles belonging to the motoring organisation's members who have suffered a breakdown during a business trip or while on holiday.

These tasks also demand a special approach. To make sure they stay within budget, the dispatchers have to organise round trips that often last ten to twelve days. „The ADAC dictates the times and periods in which we have to bring the cars back to Germany from Scandinavia, the Benelux countries, the United Kingdom and France“, says Hirth. The drivers are sent on their way as soon as one or two orders have been received for a specific destination. Over the next few days, additions are then constantly made to the initial itinerary – a method that demands a highly sensitive approach. (mw) ●

»Round trips that demand a highly sensitive approach.«

→ Info The forwarder 'cartrans gmbh' can be found on the internet at www.cartrans.de



Cartrans uses six special closed trailers.

»Trust is a key factor«

Field trialling of the new ECO Disc. Haulage company Peisker has tested the trailer disc brake on daily business runs.

Check in the workshop in Wiehl: the trailer bearing the company name “Peisker GmbH” is fitted with the new Eco Disc. For several weeks now, this new BPW trailer disc brake has been available for customers to order, but the trailer from Peisker was one of the very first vehicles to have been in road



For the past 36 years, Peter Peisker has used trailers fitted with BPW axles.

operation with it for a long time before the product launch. This was because the haulage company was one of 31 transport companies which took part in a field trial with the innovative new system. Testing of this nature commences long before a new product goes into series production – and guarantees its safety and quality. Even on completion of the test phase, BPW continues monitoring the participating vehicles for the purposes of recording the respective technical data.

»It is exciting to find out the results of our testing.«

Today it's the Peisker trailer's turn for an inspection session at BPW in Wiehl, in the course of which Chief mechanic Stefan Scholz and his colleagues will be taking a meticulously close look at the new brake. The vehicle is brought into position over the pit and has its wheels removed. The fitters first check the braking force and the condition of the material. All details are logged and passed on to BPW's development service and design de-

partment. “It's exciting to know that the results of our measurements can be used for adjustments to the product”, enthuses Scholz.

As managing director of haulage company Spedition Peisker GmbH in Waldbröl in the Bergische Land region, Peter Peisker is only too pleased to play a part in this important activity with his involvement in the field trial process. He founded his company in 1973 – and has used BPW axles right from the very start: “I can't recollect one single glitch that would have put any of my vehicles out of action on the road”. Peisker has 40 company-owned truck/trailer combinations and works with 25 subcontractors. He goes about his daily work under the motto “Nothing's impossible” – and that is precisely what he demands of the components with which his vehicles go on their travels. There are just 14 kilometres between Wiehl and Waldbröl – and thus from BPW's premises to the headquarters of Peisker GmbH. The two companies have developed a basis of intensive cooperation over the years, and BPW often books the haulage company's services at short notice for express deliveries and, because of the proximity to



Chief mechanic Scholz and company owner Peisker take a look at the ECO Disc in the pit in the BPW workshop.

Waldbröl, has set up an external storage facility at Peisker's premises.

BPW approaches freight forwarders directly when field trials such as those with the ECO Disc are planned. "Decisions as to what we wish to test depend on who we contact, for instance whether the vehicles are to be tested in short or long-distance traffic or whether it's building site vehicles that we need", explains Stefan Scholz. Peter Peisker agreed immediately on being asked if one of his trailers could be fitted with the new ECO Disc: "Trust is of course a key factor and the most important basis – and that means on both sides. I have often received similar offers from other firms but always turned them down. Where BPW is concerned, however, I simply know that I can rely on everything going well and being given optimal support."

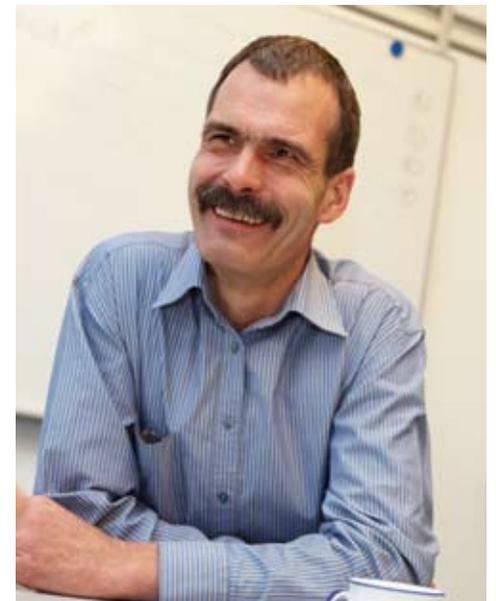
When field trialling takes place, the trailer is fitted free of charge with the product which is to be tested – but there are also a few obligations which the freight forwarder has to fulfil as well: one of these is to ensure that the vehicle in question can be inspected about four times per year, either in Wiehl or at

a local workshop. "We always let the customer know about three to four weeks in advance and need a day for the inspection itself, after which the vehicle can be put back into operation again", says Scholz. "These regular checks pose no problem from Peter Peisker's point of view since he has five trailers in his fleet which are always on stand-by if a replacement is needed.

»The new ECO Disc shows good braking characteristics and is easy to control.«

"The driver was impressed by the fact that braking with the new trailer disc brake shows good braking characteristics and can be excellently controlled", reports Peter Peisker. This is something that struck him too on trips with the test trailer. Even now, the managing director can be regularly found behind the wheel, above all on weekend trips, and he remains closely involved in his company's daily business activities: "My wife complains when I come home in the evening in a dirty shirt

because I've been crawling under a vehicle again." Nevertheless, this close involvement is important, the entrepreneur tells us: "You have to love your work in order to be successful!" (jg)



Stefan Scholz is responsible for the field trials.

Portrait



Business and passion:
Hermann Schoch has been
involved with truck styling
for a long time, but he only
gets nervous when his son
Marcel is out on the track
in his 4-axle MAN

Love at second sight

Entrepreneur Hermann Schoch has a lot to do with trucks: he supplies trucking fans with all they need to turn a non-descript 40-tonne vehicle into a colourful, sparkling jewel. But trucks were business for Schoch – until he discovered the sport of Truck Trial.

A PR advisor would probably have advised Hermann Schoch to conjure up a pretty story about “lorry love”. An emotional tale of how a young entrepreneur succumbed to the fascination over night, falling head-over-heels into the world of 40-tonne trucks. But that’s not Schoch’s way of doing things. Yes, he supplies the trucking fans that spend every weekend tinkering away and polishing their trucks and then turn up at the relevant events with every conceivable gimmick, ornamentation and useful accessory.

But Schoch’s relationship with trucks is primarily rational by nature: the entrepreneur’s intensive liaison with the vehicles is a business relationship which has grown organically. “Somehow it just all happened”, is how Schoch described his career from being a trained building mechanic to becoming the head of a conglomerate where most activities are focused on heavy vehicles.

His story includes many famous names, such as Bickel-Transport from Helmlingen in the Baden region, the family company that spawned truck racer Gern Körber. This corner of Germany, just a stone’s throw from the French border, was also home to Hermann Schoch, who decided at the age of 23 to start his own business. Together with an old friend, he set up a sales organisation for Bickel’s roof spoilers which were just emerging on the market. Shortly afterwards, the young businessman moved to the Swabian Mountains where he became co-partner in an earth works company. This then provided the foundations for today’s diversified HS-Schoch Group.

Always on the go, the entrepreneur got involved in wear parts for earth moving ve-

hicles and also in the sales of roof sleeping cabs, soon to be followed by bull-bars and lamp rails. Schoch’s prophecy in those days was: “The future does not consist of truck styling alone, we also need non-luxury items”. And so he got on with the production of pallet boxes, as well as founding a company in Saxony Anhalt for sheet metal processing and powder coating. Gradually the companies became system partners for the vehicle industry: the Group also works as a supplier for BPW.

A few years ago, Hermann Schoch then coincidentally came across something that has far more to do with emotion than with business acumen. It all began with two stickers that made him sponsor of a trial team with an invitation to a race “somewhere near Leipzig. I got the bug straightaway. I

thought it was just great how the drivers kept pushing their trucks to the limit all the time. I could quite definitely see parallels to business life”. Meanwhile Schoch also has his own “HS Truck Trial Team” which has also become a first-class marketing instrument. In the 2009 season, Schoch’s son Marcel and co-driver Johnny Stumpp won the European championship in the “S5” champions league of 4-axle trucks, while he himself became co-partner of the European championship organiser OVS before the start of the 2008 season. When Marcel is out there on the track coping with the extreme demands, Schoch is the last person you’ll find among the crowd: “I can’t stand there and watch, it just all gets too much for me”, says the entrepreneur – the latest victim of truck fever. (rk) 

The HS-Schoch Group

Marcel Schoch joined his father’s business as co-partner at the start of 2010. Schoch Junior had trained as a vehicle constructor at Neoplan, followed by a degree in business studies. It wasn’t an easy decision to take, given the current economic crisis, but he is “convinced by the company and its structure”.

The Group currently has more than 500 employees, with turnover reaching a seven-figure sum on average. In the interview with trailer world, Marcel (28) and Hermann Schoch (54) are quite open about their relationship and talk about different styles of management and the difficulties facing a successor in a family company. Hermann Schoch emphasises that he hasn’t pushed his son: “it was a decision he took all by himself”.

The HS-Schoch Group consists of the following companies:

- HS-Schoch GmbH, Lauchheim, truck accessories and truck styling
- HS-Schoch GmbH, Cobbelsdorf, sheet metal processing, cathodic dip/powder coating
- HS-Schoch e.K., Lauchheim and Cobbelsdorf, earth moving equipment: production, service, sales
- HRZ Blechbearbeitungs- und Handels-GbR, Oranienbaum (sheet metal processing and trading company)
- BRT GmbH, Braunschweig, plastics technology
- Metec, Tartu (Estonia), stainless steel processing, forming processes, welding



The Reinhard haulage company can be found in numerous quarries, mines and building sites throughout South Africa.

Returning to stay

The oldest BPW foreign subsidiary of the 45 international locations, in 25 countries, is in South Africa. For over 47 years, the running gear specialists in Johannesburg have been meeting a wide range of needs with durable, high-tech designs for the southern portion of the continent.

When customers decide to go elsewhere, Andre Cilliers remains calm, since they usually come back to BPW sooner or later. They then stay with the brand forever, attests the 53-year old managing director of BPW Axles Ltd.

After all, German quality continues to be very highly regarded in the South African business community. The philosophy, product line, and tradition of the BPW subsidiary enhances the prestige of German engineering. The success story of the company dates back to 1962, when son Christian Peter Kotz (now head chairperson) was called to Johannesburg by his father. Christian then looked at the ERN Quality Products running gear plant and bought it to start serving the booming South African transport market.

The address has not changed; the outskirts of the thriving metropolis are still home to a spotlessly clean factory. Here, the axles and suspension modules that have been produced in Germany and South Africa are assembled for the local market, completed and delivered to neighbouring countries. Computer-controlled welding robots, customized components, and decades of know-how have put the southern-most BPW crew at the top of the list when it comes to professional running gear construction in the region. The products that leave the factory have to meet demanding requirements, as they travel over rough, unsurfaced roads in Zambia, are used in 22-meter heavy duty trucks for mining, and are fitted to modern, long-distance vehicles designed for maximum fuel efficiency. →



International



German quality for harsh conditions on the roads of Africa, where BPW axles have proven their worth for 47 years.

The branded German products can even be found as far away as Kenya. The requirements that must be met are very diverse. Andre Cilliers and his approximately 80 employees have thus adapted to the market by specializing in meeting these requirements. Work is carried out in two shifts to complete orders, which come from many different types of customer, including trailer manufacturers and large freight forwarders. Business is also treated confidentially and customers are not questioned about their motives should they think of going to a competitor.

Derek Reinhardt, who heads South Africa's largest privately owned forwarder, with 540 trucks, has been a loyal customer of BPW for years and once fell for an offer from a competitor. The relationship between Reinhardt Transport and BPW is especially close. A self-made entrepreneur, Reinhardt has been relying on quality German axles

since 2000 and uses them in his bulk cargo trucks, which are operated under extreme conditions. Measuring 22 meters in length, these double-trailer road trains, or "interlinks" as they are known in South Africa, have a weight of 56 tonnes distributed across four axles with 4 wheels each. The trailers are towed by a 6x4 tractor. The harsh operating conditions, which involve transporting chrome ore, coal, bulk material and fertilizer, frequently have to be endured across country borders, where the roads are worse and the demands placed on the equipment higher.

The average Reinhardt truck travels some 18,000 challenging kilometres under varying conditions each month. The long-distance routes in neighbouring southern African countries, where the valuable raw material deposits are located, cannot be compared to the smooth roads of the expansive regional highway network. Potholes the size of bath-



Test of material: Vehicles and components are taken to their limit every day to transport raw materials.



Success story: Andre Cilliers heads BPW in South Africa.

tubs, muddy roads during the rainy season and washboard-like surfaces take their toll on man and machine over hundreds of miles. A breakdown is all the more serious here and can ultimately mean a total loss. Expensive raw materials such as copper are popular targets for organized thieves who operate in the north around the capital city of Pretoria. It is not uncommon for an entire vehicle to be stolen, together with the driver, and hidden in a secret location for an indefinite period.

Harsh everyday working conditions necessitate the use of robust, reliable equipment. It therefore wasn't too surprising that the much less expensive axles from China, which the laid-back transport tycoon had fitted to his side tipper trailer a couple years ago, failed. The price, however, had been simply irresistible and the offer seemed too good to refuse. "In the end, the Chinese ordeal turned out to be more expensive than if we had stuck to axles from BPW!" exclaimed Derek Reinhardt as he ran the calculations. This is music to the ears for service professional Cilliers, whose many years of serving the South African transport market have revealed that it is fairly common for customers who place great emphasis on the total cost of ownership to return to and stay with BPW.

Demand for heavy-duty trucks for the domestic market is largely saturated with ap-

South Africa – The Land at the Cape of Good Hope

■ South Africa is located at the southernmost tip of the African continent and is approximately three and a half times the size of Germany. The multicultural “rainbow nation” is home to 45 million people, approximately 80 percent of whom are black Africans. The remaining 20 percent comprise Asians, Arabs and white settlers. There are eleven official national languages, the most widely spoken of which are Afrikaans, English and Zulu. South Africa is especially known for its diversity of wild animals.

National problem: health The average lifespan in South Africa is only 43 years and is a direct result of the main problem the poor are currently faced with: the devastatingly fast spread of AIDS, which affects approximately 12 percent of the overall population. Although Apartheid politics were abolished at the beginning of the 1990s, the conflict between the social classes is ever-present. According to unofficial unemployment estimates, some 35 percent of the population is without work.

Abundance of raw materials With a wealth of natural resources, including chrome ore, coal, platinum, gold and diamonds, South Africa is regarded as an industrial nation blessed with raw materials. Vehicle production plays a key role in driving the economy – almost every car and truck manufacturer runs an assembly or production factory here to support the domestic market and export business. Trucks plying the extensive network of national roads are the primary form of transport for local industry. Also, the import of raw materials from neighbouring countries to the large international ports of Durban, Richards Bay and Port Elizabeth on the Indian Ocean is handled over the road.

Mega trucks Interlink trucks pulling two double-axled trailers are a frequent sight on the road and are a very common

configuration for hauling heavy loads across long distances. They can measure up to 22 meters in length and weigh 56 tonnes. The speed limit for trucks, which typically reach 100 km/h, is 80 km/h on the motorway-like national roads. South Africa has also invested around 800 million Euro to further expand the transport infrastructure in the nine cities where matches for the FIFA World Cup 2010 will be hosted in order to better accommodate the high volume of visitors expected.



proximately 350,000 rolling units. The global financial crisis has also reached South Africa, with the incoming order volume



Big and bigger: A passionate big game hunter, Derek Reinhardt owns South Africa's largest private transport company.

having dropped by some 40 percent across the industry. The almost 150,000 trailers and semi-trailers that can be seen on the roads of the nation that will be hosting the FIFA World Cup 2010, however, require durable solutions. The fact that BPW ranks as the number two axle manufacturer behind a domestic manufacturer of axles and trailers is viewed by Cilliers as proof that customers also regard his products as having premium quality.

Derek Reinhardt, who, with 26 years of experience, has climbed his way to the top in the private freight forwarding business, takes a very practical approach to “German top quality”: “We already looked at what is currently offered.” For 50-year old transport giant Reinhardt, one thing is certain: “BPW makes the best axles money can buy!” Nothing else is considered, swears the passio-

nate big game hunter, whose office is decorated with the prepared head and forequarters of a fallen buffalo (“...was a tough fellow!”). With the sincere, direct compliment still on his lips, he climbs into his private helicopter and rushes off to the other end of the vast country to troubleshoot a problem in one of his three subsidiaries.

Sometimes you need to try something different to appreciate what you had before. And, in the case of Andre Cilliers of BPW in South Africa, patience must be demonstrated, one of the defining characteristics of an experienced top manager. In the end, he knows that they will come back and never entertain the notion of going elsewhere again! (owi)

→ Info More information on the BPW subsidiary in South Africa can be found online at www.bpw.co.za. The Reinhardt Transport website can be found at www.reinhardt.co.za

High-tech for agriculture

Optimism at the agricultural technology show in spite of a decline in sales. The industry is facing the crisis with modern technology.



Combine harvesters with GPS navigation, turbo forage harvesters, sensor-controlled fertiliser spreading and intelligent assistance systems – agricultural technology has long since ceased to be just solid or even cumbersome, but now includes top-class high-tech components.

About 2300 exhibitors from 46 countries were at the Agritechnica, the world's largest agricultural technology trade fair, to show what equipment like this looks like. Gigantic machinery tuned for high-performance is a feature of everyday work in fields and pastures, and often features more technology than many a luxury car. "The requirements on the equipment are increasing steadily," says Stefan Oelhafen, the Agriculture Sales Director at BPW. German manufacturers are excellently positioned. The trend is heading towards bigger and bigger machinery and tractors with ever-more efficient technology.

"The agricultural profession is all about high-tech equipment with good traction," says Klaus Pöttinger, CEO of the Austrian company, Pöttinger. According to calculations by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), there will be nine billion mouths to feed on the Earth in 2050. This amounts to 1800 square metres of arable land per capita. In 1950, the equivalent figure was 5100 square metres. "The necessary productivity boosts will be inconceivable without new developments in agricultural technology," says Bernard Krone, Managing Partner of the Bernard Krone Holding. However, innovations can be used for more than meeting the explosion in demand for food, they can also combat stagnating prices. "Greater efficiency means higher margins for the farmer," continues Bernard Krone, and he went on to point out that it is essential to have modern technology in the fields, especially in times of crisis.

The agricultural technology industry is regarded as stable. However, it has not been left untouched by the economic upheaval. German industrial companies are highly geared for exports, and their markets in Eastern Europe and Russia have nose-dived. "It has mainly been due to the credit crunch, although the negative trend in producer prices has also been responsible for the fall in sales," says Stefan Oelhafen from BPW, summarising the situation. Nevertheless: the mood is optimistic. Agricultural engineering has been able to out-perform other related sectors: "We don't have excess capacity like in the commercial vehicle business," says Stefan Oelhafen. And the underlying market figures are OK, he continues. "The market will recover noticeably from as early as the middle of next year," forecasts Dr. Stefan Kotte, the CEO of Kotte Landtechnik.

"Eastern Europe in general is an important market," says Bernard Krone. One and a half years ago, they founded a Russian subsidiary in order to be closer to that market. However, since the credit crunch Eastern European companies have had trouble finding money for investments. "However, the first green shoots of recovery are now visible in terms of financing options," observes Bernard Krone. Fliegl also has Eastern Europe in its sights. The Bavarian company is already generating 25% of its sales there, with 8% in Russia. "We are expecting demand to pick up again within the next couple of years," predicts Josef Fliegl, the CEO of Fliegl Agrartechnik.

Flexibility – one of the plus points of the agricultural technology business with its plethora of medium-sized firms. It is rare for any of these firms – most of which are family run – to be floated on the stock market, which means they are free to play to their strengths. Here, a handshake still counts. The business is characterised by close customer relationships and high levels of innovation. "The industry has gained strength from past crises," observes Bernard Krone. As a result, its members can handle dips in sales, he concludes.

For this reason, the agricultural business has always been open to new ideas. Standing still means losing ground – that's the current watchword. An example: the steering axle. It is still a relative rarity in the commercial vehicle sphere, whereas it has long since established itself in the agricultural business on a wide front. "BPW steering axles are a standard feature of our vehicles," says Stefan Kotte. The technology of the new electrohydraulic MSS steering system from Kotte is, in any case, based entirely on steering axles. And their high quality has enabled them to withstand the crisis. Stefan Kotte also pointed out the ingenious control system with steering axles that offers real advantages: less fuel consumption, less tyre wear, lower lateral forces and therefore less soil disturbance.

Others too are banking on progress: "Despite a decline in sales, we are not cutting either our research and development or our sales activities," announces Bernard Krone. The technical personnel have their roots in farming to a large extent, and they often have a special role to play: "Our readiness to make changes is not something that is just driven by customers, but also by our internal improvement processes," says Klaus Pöttinger. The workforce submitted more than 4000 suggestions last year. In parallel to this, Pöttinger has made sustained investments in new technologies for production. "Development partnerships such as the system solution comprising an intelligent pick-up trailer and John Deere tractor also offer an effective way of combining expertise and developing overarching solutions," states the company boss.

"Farmers have always got to cultivate their fields, no matter what the economy is doing," says Josef Fliegl. He sees good potential in transport technology in particular. Centralising warehouse facilities in Germany would make transport distances longer. The challenge is to cut the costs per mile. As far as Pöttinger is concerned, it will be particularly important to optimise cooperation between the tractor and the implement in the future, as well as to use mechatronic and computer systems in a targeted way.

Electricity and gas. The agricultural technology industry long since ceased simply producing machinery for harvesting and processing foodstuffs. "The energy market is becoming more and more important," reveals Stefan Kotte. In recent years, it has become apparent that a significant boost is being given to the business by biogas. "Biogas is clearly a growth market," judges Josef Fliegl and continues that using agricultural products for generating energy will also stabilise prices in the agricultural market. In spite of criticisms levelled at monocultures and competition for land – the trend towards stationary biogas plants is continuing unabated. "We are sensing there will be increased demand for components for these plants next year," states Josef Fliegl. The industry is also being supported by the German government. It has promulgated the Renewable Energies Act (REA) which promotes increasing use of biomass; meanwhile the fixed price for electricity supplied into the grid guarantees a reliable income for farmers. "Germany is a pioneer in biogas," boasts Josef Fliegl. The first developments are also underway in the Czech Republic and Italy. Also, the EU accession countries are bringing large land areas into play, offering immense opportunities. (bb)



»Greater productivity with high-tech.«

Bernard Krone,
the Managing Partner of
Bernard Krone Holding



»Flexible for the customer.«

Klaus Pöttinger,
CEO of Pöttinger



»Biogas is a future market.«

Dr. Stefan Kotte,
CEO of Kotte
Landtechnik



»The East offers potential.«

Josef Fliegl jun.,
CEO of Fliegl
Agrartechnik



»German manufacturers out in front.«

Stefan Oelhafen, Agriculture
Sales Director at BPW

Logistics

Let the music play: high-end logistics for Sennheiser

The perfect supply chain makes no noise at all. Only the computer screen reveals the beat to which the supply chain plays. A traffic-light system indicates whether the delivery is underway and will reach the customer as ordered: a virtuoso piece of logistics composed for the world-famous audio specialists Sennheiser by Hellmann Worldwide Logistics.





Premium logistics for a premium brand: the logistics firm Hellmann from Osnabrück is out on the roads of the entire world for Sennheiser.

A company producing auditory pleasure offers both innovative technology and the emotional aspects involved in sound. For lifelike reception by the most active of all human sensory organs. Sennheiser – that is music in the ears of a global fan community. Synonymous with mikes, headphones and wireless transmission technology in first-class quality.

Wedemark is a small town with a population of 30,000 to the north west of Hanover and home to good sound. Research and development centre, production site, company headquarters. And the heart of global supply chain management (SCM). This is where four years ago, Sennheiser launched a “global distribution” initiative. The intention was to optimise delivery capability to the company’s customer base and realign the worldwide network of production sites, supplier firms, subsidiaries and distribution partners. “Essentially it was a case of pooling and reducing global stocks”, is how Andreas Kahl, SCM and Logistics Director at Sennheiser, describes his demands for the logistics concept. “And we also wanted to enhance the performance of our delivery processes.”

The service provider of choice was Hellmann Worldwide Logistics. The firm from Osnabrück fulfils the audio specialist’s ideal profile in several respects. In 2002 the global logistics company had already demonstrated its capabilities in numerous projects for Sennheiser. It offers a complex transport and logistics network spread all over the world with 210 branches in 47 countries. It offers the expertise of an experienced contract logistics service provider. And it

offers the flexibility of an SME company which places Hellmann at Sennheiser’s side as an ally when it comes to globalisation.

“We feel well taken care of at Hellmann, as a customer we are not just an also-ran”, says Heidrun Streich, SCM and logistics employee with Sennheiser. “Hellmann is an SME business just like we are. The cultural match plays a crucial role in a well-functioning, long-standing partnership between the two companies”, she emphasises. Both firms stand out with low staff fluctuation levels, a high degree of direct responsibility and swift response times. “Many important interfaces are on a personal level”, says Streich, who also appreciates “the immediate accessibility of Mr. Hellmann himself”.

Time and again, observers are amazed by the perfect nature of the cultural match. Both companies operate on the same wavelength,

»As customer not just an also-ran.«

sometimes forming “tandems” where employees are given a chance to gain a better understanding of how things run in the other side’s warehouse, shipping division or commercial departments. Trips to Hellmann’s central warehouse in Osnabrück are part

and parcel of the training opportunities made available to the Sennheiser workforce. Even so, Sennheiser is still a demanding customer, as Andreas Kahl underlines: “We are a premium brand which means we also make high demands particularly in terms of logistics.”

Sennheiser defines the principles for restructuring its global logistics, and Hellmann develops a corresponding “Sennheiser Master Plan”. The result is a logistics infrastructure that focuses the global flow of goods on three warehousing sites. “Central versus local, →



Music with a good tone: Andreas Kahl and Heidrun Streich (both Sennheiser) work at the supply chain together with Hellmann Key Account Manager Günther Maaß (on the right).

that was the challenge” is how Heidrun Streich described the necessary co-operation process.

For three years now, the Hellmann facilities in Chicago, Hong Kong and Osnabrück have acted as the pillars of Sennheiser’s global SCM strategy. These three locations serve the markets in the USA, in Asia and in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East and Asia) with finished goods previously manufactured in Germany, Ireland or New Mexico. It is above all the customers of Sennheiser’s subsidiaries who profit from the streamlined structures, as consignments are now shipped directly to their destinations without having to pass through the regional warehouses. Shorter delivery times and enhanced delivery quality together with lower transport costs are the overall result achieved with the Hellmann logistics scheme.

The flexibility of the new SCM concept was demonstrated in January 2007 when Sennheiser set up a new subsidiary in India. Within just a few weeks, the logistics experts from Osnabrück had established a local warehousing and distribution site with Hellmann India

»Tasks that go way beyond pure transport.«

which merged seamlessly into the supply network. Hellmann also accompanied Sennheiser in expanding into Russia, followed shortly after by Japan and China. The principle in Hellmann’s approach is to make it unnecessary for Sennheiser to have to set up its own warehousing sites and capacities by assuming the role of Sennheiser’s outsourcing partner, providing all logistics services associated with the site.

“Sennheiser is one of our benchmark customers”, says Günther Maaß, Key Account Manager Consumer Electronics SCM & Contract Logistics at Hellmann. The mechanical engineer has great experience on the product side and is well aware of the delicate nature of premium audio products and the complexity of all related logistics

processes. “Sennheiser also entrusts us with tasks that go way beyond pure transport”, Maaß explains. Hellmann assembles and finishes whole product series, such as the “evolution wireless” microphones. This entails putting together all the components in the individual customer order, followed by requisite packaging and subsequently dispatching the orders by sea- or airfreight for intercontinental transports. With 600 different packaging variations, this means that every order has to be dispatched with very great care.

»Central versus local, that’s the challenge.«

“As customer it is in our very best interests for all the services related to transport and warehousing to be provided from a single source. And with the greatest possible perfection”, is how Andreas Kahl explains the decision to focus on one single logistics partner worldwide. For him, this also includes the absolutely complete transparency of all order-related processes by means of efficient software which makes it possible for example to track stocks or consignment progress online all over the world.

An EDI interface and universal ERP system which is currently in the roll-out phase at all Sennheiser sales subsidiaries makes sure that Kahl and his Team are always well informed. The Hellmann Information Tool (HIT) developed by the experts in Osnabrück provides the greatest possible information depth and transparency by visualising the entire supply chain. Every single order can be tracked, controlled and documented using an online mask. The advantages for Andreas Kahl: “This gives us an outstanding overview – and the necessary farsighted approach. After all, we know that Hellmann is the strong partner we can rely on also where new markets are concerned.” (rp)

→ Info More information about the named companies is available at www.sennheiser.com and www.hellmann.net

»Getting everything right«

BPW tailors individual logistics solutions for its customers from which both sides benefit. Peter Schmitz, head of the Logistics Centre in Wiehl explains how these solutions are arrived at.

trailer world: *Mr. Schmitz, can you tell us about how BPW's Logistics Centre is organized?*

Peter Schmitz: It starts out with order logistics through which the orders are worked out and configured, then on to the planning

office, parts purchasing, order picking, assembly and packaging, right through to distribution and maintenance. We have storage systems in several variants. For OEM orders, for instance, we mainly have automatic warehousing where the "goods to man" principle

applies. Where replacement parts are concerned, the larger parts are collected by the employees themselves – under the "man to goods" principle. It sometimes takes just an hour from receipt of an order through to dispatch: on workdays it is possible for orders to be logged in until 6:00 p.m., and these can be sent out with the last delivery at 7:00 p.m..

What do your customers expect of you?

I'll put it quite simply: the right material has to arrive in the right quantity at the right time at the right place. Logistics are one of the key success factors in the supply chain. We are in personal contact with both the customers and the appropriate sales staff and foster this contact as well. And, on request, we can work together on an individual concept.

What might a concept of this type look like?

The production flows vary considerably among the individual customers: for instance we provide a key account working according to the continuous production principle →



Personal information

Peter Schmitz is 45 years old and has been with BPW since 1991. Having completed his training as a mechanic, he went on to study mechanical engineering. Following various activities at BPW – including production planning, investment planning and material requirements planning – he was entrusted in 1996 with the planning and construction of BPW Bergische Achsen KG's Logistics Centre of which he is now head.



Peter Schmitz: The right material is leaving “his” logistics centre in the right quantity at the right time to the right place.

»A good logistics concept is a win-win situation for both manufacturer and customer.«

with a component in advance, for example a hanger bracket, which the customer then has welded into place by the sub-supplier. When the vehicle frame arrives back at the customer’s plant we then provide the axle.

On the other hand, a smaller-scale customer receives everything together in a package on an agreed date. Customers in this category then work according to the principle of workshop production, with all the parts being welded at a single workplace and the axle being installed under the chassis.

It is frequently the case that customer-specific labelling is required. A company manufacturing at two plants can, for example, tell from these labels in which plant and where the respective axle or part has to be stored.

Then again, other customers build special running gear. We have examined our scope of delivery in such instances, and arrived at the conclusion that, with the delivery time in mind, it is better to stockpile certain articles. This means that our deliveries there are faster and the customer can likewise pass on the time saved to the end user.

You have also developed the company’s own packaging

This packaging makes for safe and secure transport, in addition to which both we and our customers can work well with it. An axle transportation rack contains three axle units. These are in some cases put in place as needed for the customer’s production proc-

ess. This, for example, can mean that the axle with ABS lies at the front of the rack and the two without ABS behind it or the last one is the steering axle. The customer can then have the rack driven right up to the production area and fit everything directly. The labeling on replacement-part packaging serves as advertising, and the customer is able to see that the package contains a genuine BPW replacement part.

Why does BPW invest in such efforts?

The fact is that every good logistics concept ought to be characterized by a win-win situation, in other words stock reduction on both sides, for example, and optimization or even elimination of individual steps in the process chain. Ensuring that this is the case calls for extremely high quality in terms of information. We can react better when we have earlier knowledge of what the customer is planning and when this is to happen.

What role does the topic of logistics play in BPW’s service standards?

A very big one. We have developed an indicator in this connection, namely the delivery service level, on the basis of which we can daily assess and evaluate the degree of adher-

ence to quantities and deadlines. We already started concerning ourselves with this topic at an early stage, and have since learned that an increasing number of customers too are evaluating the delivery service – which means that we can then also compare their results with ours.

What do you also do in your sphere of activity towards quality management?

We make sure that the delivery service level remains as high as possible, and have also concluded quality assurance agreements with our suppliers in connection with purchasing. We perform audits at suppliers’ premises and have ourselves audited likewise. One of the topics involved in this context is, for example, that of environmental protection. How resource and energy-saving is our work? We also have tools with which we can measure the quality of our warehouse staff’s daily work.

What do you like about your work as a whole?

I never used to be able to imagine myself sitting in an office, but here I have new tasks every day, and each day brings with it new challenges from the most varied sources: these, for example, include contact with customers and suppliers, road traffic, transport, productivity, warehousing – and that’s something I simply find exciting. (jg)

→ Info More information about logistics at BPW can be found at www.bpw.de/en/service/logistic-concepts.html

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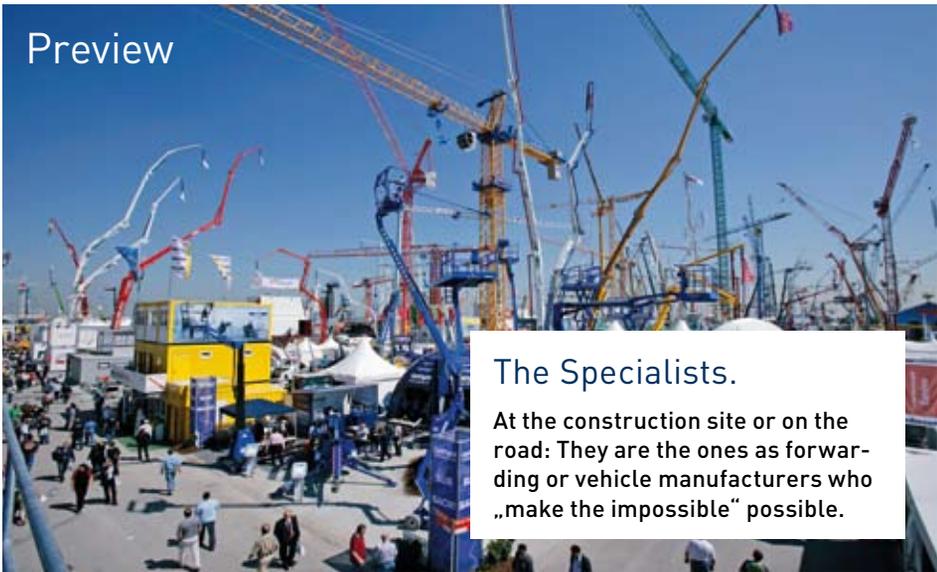
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Preview

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As a sign of our gratitude, we will be holding a draw among all entries, for three metal models of the BPW truck with trailing steering axle on a scale of 1 to 50.



Company:

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Position:

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E-mail:

Please send your coupon by post to BPW Bergische Achsen KG, P.O.Box 1280, 51656 Wiehl/ Germany, by fax to +49 2262 78-1765 or enter online at www.trailerworld.de. The closing date for the competition is 26 February 2010.

Winners of the competition in trailer world Issue Two 2009: Siegfried Vogt, Lienen, Michael Ruppert, Aschaffenburg, and Franz Lehrer, Schwandorf, named „ECO Tronic“ as the right answer in the last competition and each received an LED Joblight.

