

GEKA EXTENDING THE VALUE CHAIN



MORE ROOM FOR NEW PRODUCTION CAPACITIES

In order to make the entire production chain more agile and flexible, Sulzer has now started the works to expand the capacity at the GEKA site in Bechhofen.

A 10,000 square meter extension is to be erected there by end of 2020, housing production facilities for lacquering and me-

tallizing, screen printing, logistics and assembly. This extension will be flanked by investments in the latest automation solutions and assembly concepts as well as new office positions in order to enhance GEKA's market presence in the high-end sector. With this investment GEKA creates a center of excellence with all technologies under the same roof: injection, injection blow molding, twisted wire brushes, plastic brushes, assem-

bling, decoration and filling as well as application laboratory center. In order to make a positive contribution for the future, the building is equipped with smart processes and production concepts to meet the requirements in terms of sustainability. During the next months, we like to inform you on a regular basis about our major achievements, that will be available with our headquarter expansion.

Interview with

Frank Pötzl

Expert Process Development - Decoration



„Screen printing is one of the preferred decoration processes, especially when it comes to ensuring high quality and reliable adhesion of colours used on painted or metallised surfaces.“

INCREASING PROCESS SPEEDS

The insourcing is part of the company's medium to long-term objective of incorporating an as large as possible range of decoration processes into its proprietary value creation and to combine them in one location.

In order to create the necessary spatial preconditions for this, a separate section for the decoration area will be set up in the new production hall.

To simultaneously ensure high quality and efficiency in print processing, two state-of-the-art screen-printing machines were initially purchased. The machines each have an energy-saving UV-LED drying system and are able to print on bottles and containers with cylindrical, conical or bulbous parts. In addition, they are also equipped with an integrated, fully automatic camera system which checks the printing of the parts for completeness or errors. Equipping the machines is also fully automatic: the bottles are brought into the correct position before they are placed on conveyor belts for further transport. In the future, even the exposure and coating of screens will take place in Waizendorf—a room with

the appropriate accessories is expressly set up for this purpose in the decoration area.

In this way, quantities of up to 3,000 parts per hour and machine are to be printed in-house. “Before we decided to insource the screen-printing process, we went through the worst- and best-case scenarios which an implementation of this kind may entail. We eventually came to the conclusion that we can combine a number of advantages both for our customers and for us as a company”, says Frank Pötzl, Process Development External Decoration at GEKA: “It starts with the expansion of our in-house value chain, but concerns, above all, the throughput speed of our processes, which we pass on to our customers and partners in the form of increased reaction speed and shorter delivery times.” According to Pötzl, process speed acceleration was an important decision-making factor when selecting the machines.

“For us to be able to increase process speed even in internal processes, we decided on a design using UV inks. This allowed us to shorten the drying times for conventional solvent-based paints from 72 to 24 hours. In this way, the printed parts can not only be transferred to the

next process phase more quickly; we can also save time and, above all, storage space that would otherwise have to be made available for a longer drying phase.”