Latest issue of Friedhelm Loh Group company magazine

**be top: The added value of good relations**

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Gone are the days of fighting alone. In business, it is almost impossible to manage a fluctuating economic and complex technological environment on your own. Good business relations are now just as important as technical expertise and skillsets. In the new issue of “be top”, Rittal, Eplan, Cideon German Edge Cloud discuss the potential and importance of working in partnership with customers, particularly in times of crisis and rising expectations.

Businesses are struggling to cope with complexity, political uncertainty, high regulatory hurdles and ever shorter economic cycles. Without reliable partnerships, they are hard put to see demanding automation projects through, achieve ambitious sustainability goals and win major orders or projects in highly sensitive environments. That is why the partnership between customers and suppliers is the focus of the latest issue of be top. What do plant, manufacturing, wind and data centre operators want from their suppliers? Expectations in these lines of business are growing, in particular when the going gets tough in a crisis. Business relationships, on the other hand, are also an opportunity – as the cover story of the magazine makes clear.

Thomas Basler, Managing Director of the electrical wholesaler and service provider Alexander Bürkle panel solutions, has been working closely with Rittal for many years. The magazine’s cover story describes how relations between customers and suppliers have changed over the years and the importance of dependability. In an exchange with Ulrich Engenhardt, Chief Business Units Officer at Rittal, the real potential of good customer relationships and the added value of a clever combination of hardware and software are revealed.

The collaboration with Coca-Cola Europacific Partners (CCEP) is another example of good customer relations. Here, commitment and creativity were a prerequisite for achieving the ambitious sustainability targets of Coca-Cola’s largest bottler: greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced by 30 per cent at 14 sites by 2030. It takes many individual steps and the successful cooperation of all partners to achieve a goal of this scale. One of these steps, for example, was to replace old cooling units with the energy-efficient range of Blue e+ cooling systems. Rittal is now CCEP’s “preferred supplier”, having reduced the energy required for cooling by 90 per cent through re-dimensioning and replacement.

Faster with standards

Current construction and production methods cannot cope with the rapid transformation of energy systems. An article in the magazine explains how standardising and automating with hardware and software from Eplan, Rittal and Rittal Automation Systems can speed up the transformation.

Open-mindedness, teamwork, continuous dialogue and transparency are values that Martin Schuetz, Director Engineering EMEA and Project Leader Engineering at Schenck Process, believes are critical to the success of this major greenfield venture. In a complex project involving the work processes of 1,000 employees across all its sites, the plant manufacturer planned to digitise all its processes. Cideon and BDF have used their model factory for the agile development of the “engineering to order” process.

Three-figure volumes per week

Stepping up to mass production demands a lot from all parties involved. In the early stages of a project, it is essential to have components, enclosures and other supplier parts available in high volumes and at all times ready to change as the project progresses. An article on the automation company Beckhoff describes in detail how a control box for testing machines was quickly and reliably upgraded to volume production – with an extremely high degree of variance and quantities in the three-digit range.

A variety of projects, large and small, around the world show how partnerships can create added value across national borders. These range from a data centre for a listed building in Spain to IT power for the world’s largest cruise ship and energy-saving racks for a Chinese data centre.

Other articles explore different facets of electrical and enclosure designing and engineering. They give readers insights on topics such as the background to high corrosion protection classes for the offshore sector, the effects of AI on factories and cooling technology, the potential of digital circuit diagrams, green steel, 3D-visualised spare parts management or the construction of data centres “à la carte” – and much more.

Guest article on PFAS ban

On the controversial topic of the ban on PFAS, the editorial team was able to win over Sarah Bäumchen, a member of the ZVEI board of directors, for a guest article.

be top is rounded off with all kinds of corporate and product news. Finally, for car lovers, a report on the unique Ferrari special exhibition at the National Car Museum – The Loh Collection.

Friedhelm Loh Group

The globally active Friedhelm Loh Group invents, develops and produces customised products and system solutions for industry, commerce and trade. The Group’s companies belong to the top addresses in their respective industries – as inventors and competent producers. They include the world's leading system provider for industrial enclosures, power distribution, climate control and IT infrastructure (Rittal); Europe's number one suppliers of software solutions for mechanical and plant engineering and industry (Eplan and Cideon), as well as integrated manufacturing expertise with state-of-the-art materials – steel, aluminium, and plastics (Stahlo and LKH). German Edge Cloud, a start-up company specialises in edge and cloud systems for data-sensitive companies. As a founder member of GAIA-X, it also supports the establishment of a competitive and sovereign data infrastructure in Europe.

The Friedhelm Loh Group operates worldwide, with more than 12 production sites and over 95 international subsidiaries. The owner-operated family business has more than 12,100 employees and posted revenues of 3 billion euros in fiscal 2023. In 2023, the Friedhelm Loh Group was presented with the “Best Place to Learn” and “Employer of the Future” awards.

For more information, visit www.friedhelm-loh-group.com.

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