



Ranga Yogeshwar (left), one of Germany's, most prominent business journalists, together with Katrin Köster and Dr. Markus Kliffken from BPW.

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Inquisitive streak makes BPW a leading innovator

- **BPW recognised as top-100 innovator among SMEs**
- **Innovation has been part of everyday business for 120 years**
- **Agile methodology fosters climate in which innovation thrives**

Wiehl, 28.06.2017 --- Best brand, best employer, best training company,

GreenTec Award, and now a top-100 innovator among SMEs – the transport specialist BPW has certainly been scooping up accolades recently. These prizes are the outcome not of good fortune, but of a rigorous innovation strategy, as the company's managers outline below.

In recognition of its status as a leading innovator among German SMEs, BPW Bergische Achsen KG has been presented with a top-100 award. The family enterprise situated to the east of Cologne has been researching, developing and producing running gear solutions for the transport industry for around 120 years. It is now an established global player.

BPW Group now offers an extensive portfolio of products and services in a variety of segments, from lighting systems to telematics solutions, but still grabs the headlines in its traditional axle and running gear sectors. Among its most recent innovations is an axle with integrated electric drive for the urban transport environment. It not only eradicates the emissions associated with delivery traffic, but also significantly enhances manoeuvrability, reduces vehicle weight and improves safety. The company's hub generator is equally impressive. It generates electricity when the vehicle's brakes are applied and, in the absence of a diesel unit, enables refrigerated vehicles to operate much more quietly. Emitting no more than a whisper, the hub generator allows supermarket deliveries to be made during the night. BPW has also devised a solution to curb the annoyance and cost triggered by burst tyres. The tyres are monitored and automatically inflated as necessary by a novel, autonomous tyre pressure control system.

“BPW involves vehicle operators and users in its research and development work at a very early stage so that we can understand actual requirements as well as possible,” explains BPW managing general partner Michael Pfeiffer. “We are also vigorously developing our organisation. For several years now we have been positioning ourselves no longer as simply a supplier and axle manufacturer, but as an international mobility and system partner of our customers. This new identity has also reinforced our innovative capacity. Innovation is now recognised as a task for the whole company and supported by all of our managers and employees.”

HR director Barbara Höfel comments, “We are a typical family enterprise. Many of our employees at headquarters in Wiehl are members of families who have been working for BPW for generations. They trust and identify with the company, which provides a strong foundation for a corporate culture that

fosters innovation.”

BPW nurtures this climate with training and development programmes, its own social network, and new working methods that encourage people to share knowledge across disciplines and hierarchical boundaries. An inspirational working environment, including a new ideas workshop, has been created for the same purpose. The workshop is not only a colourful, modern and creative space, but can also accommodate an entire trailer – the best possible backdrop for a discussion of fresh ideas.

Dr. Markus Kliffken is BPW’s director of innovation management and an advocate of agile methodology. Using methods such as scrum and model-based design, he has substantially accelerated the pace of innovation within the company. “We want to encourage employees to try things out, think outside the box, and talk to their colleagues in other departments. By purposely looking beyond the horizons of our industry, we can pioneer concepts and applications that have succeeded elsewhere within the transport sector as well. A silo mentality is anathema to anyone who desires innovation.”

Agile methodology is not only shaping the development of innovative mechatronics capable of teaching trailers to look, see and feel with the aid of sensors, but is also being applied by the BPW Innovation Lab in Siegburg. It is seeking to integrate transport processes in the internet of things, and has adopted the agile approach in its customer workshops. Among other things, it has engaged an illustrator to produce instructive drawings of highly complex logistical processes. Transport and telematics specialists of BPW Group are working in the Innovation Lab alongside experts employed by SAP to enhance the interface between transport movements and companies’ resource management and production processes.

“We pursue innovation methodically, but also with great enthusiasm, imagination and curiosity,” says Michael Pfeiffer. “As long as we are able to inspire our employees, customers and partners with our inquisitiveness, BPW will remain a pioneer and leading innovator in the transport industry.”

BPW Bergische Achsen KG is the parent company of the BPW Group. With more than 1,600 employees, including around 120 trainees, the family-run company has been developing and producing complete running gear systems for truck trailers and semi-trailers at its headquarters in Wiehl since 1898. BPW's technologies include axle systems, brake technology, suspension and bearings. BPW's trailer axles and running gear systems are in use in millions of vehicles around the world. An extensive range of services also provides vehicle manufacturers and vehicle operators with the opportunity to increase economic efficiency in their production and transport processes. www.bpw.de/en

About BPW Group

BPW Group, based in Wiehl, Germany, is a dependable international mobility and system partner for the transport industry, serving as a one-stop shop for innovative solutions. Its portfolio embraces axles, suspension systems and brake technologies (BPW), locking systems and bodywork technology (Hestal), lighting systems (Ermax), composite technologies (HBN-Teknik), and user-friendly telematics applications for trucks and trailers (idem telematics). BPW Group's technologies and services support manufacturers' cost-effective workflows and enable vehicle operators to manage their fleets efficiently by maximising the transparency of loading and transport processes. The owner-managed BPW Group encompasses more than 60 companies worldwide and employs around 6,400 people. www.wethinktransport.com

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