

## Press release

### BPW scoops Digital Champion prize

- Research institute Deutschland Test evaluated extent of digitisation in around 10,000 companies
- BPW ranked highest among automotive suppliers for digital products, processes and applications
- Successful transition from running gear manufacturer to a pioneer and innovation leader of the commercial vehicle industry

**Wiehl, 27.03.2018 — BPW belongs to an elite group of enterprises in Germany that are spearheading the digital transformation of products, applications and processes. The business magazine Focus Money and its research institute Deutschland Test have now recognised the family enterprise as one of the leading Digital Champions. With academic support provided by the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI), the PR agency Faktenkontor assessed around 10,000 companies for the ranking exercise.**

Once trailers and semitrailers have learnt how to hear, see and touch, mechanics can purchase spare parts by voice, and cargoes know exactly where they are heading – a family enterprise situated to the east of Cologne is will have left its indelible mark on the industry. Over a period of 120 years, BPW Bergische Achsen KG has made the transition from simply manufacturing running gear to playing a pivotal role as an innovation leader of the commercial vehicle sector. It is successfully and imaginatively seizing the opportunities afforded by digitisation. These accomplishments have now been verified by Focus Money and Deutschland Test, which have named BPW, Bosch and Wabco as the primary digital pioneers of the automotive supply industry.

#### **Digitisation sharpens focus on customers**

“For BPW, digitisation is not an end in itself, but a tool that supports our alignment with customers,” explains Michael Pfeiffer, personally liable Managing Partner of BPW Bergische Achsen KG. “We redefined our role as international mobility partner of vehicle operators a few years ago, which initiated a drive to develop trailer intelligence, to interconnect trailers digitally, and to bring forward new ideas for maintenance support and the spare parts business. In pursuing this policy, we have also significantly enhanced our partnership with vehicle manufacturers. Among other things, this collaboration has prompted our engagement in the electric vehicle segment.”

#### **Role model for Industry 4.0**

BPW belongs to a select band of role models for Industry 4.0 named by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy in recognition of the high degree of automation and interconnection already achieved in its production operation at HQ in Wiehl. “We are digitising all of our processes in quality assurance, maintenance, production and logistics,” explains Alexander Reissner, head of IT production & internal logistics at BPW. “There’s barely a single rack here anymore that’s not

The brands of the BPW Group:



connected to IT.” BPW has adopted the one-piece flow principle – each running gear or wheel end unit is manufactured individually and assigned a “digital DNA” code as early as the production planning stage. It allows the customer, order and production data for each component to be traced throughout the manufacturing process, which also includes the paint shop, assembly, packaging and loading for shipping. The data remain available for 30 years after the relevant product is delivered.

### **Digitisation integral to internal cultural transformation**

“BPW regards digitisation as just one component of a cultural transformation that is reshaping the company. Among other things, the employees are embracing new ways of thinking and novel methodology,” explains Marcus Sassenrath, who is not only responsible for BPW Group’s IT and digital strategy, but also the founder of the BPW Innovation Lab in Siegburg. BPW has introduced innovative methods such as design thinking, which significantly accelerates the development of new ideas and gives employees greater freedom. Customers are actively integrated in the innovation process as well. Cloud-based platforms enable employees to establish working groups across sites and subsidiaries – mechatronics engineers in Wiehl and IT experts in Siegburg, for instance, are working hand in glove with telematics specialists in Munich and Aachen.

### **“Digitisation calls for courage”**

Marcus Sassenrath expects digitisation to trigger far-reaching upheaval in the logistics industry. He says, “While production and warehousing processes within companies have already been extensively interconnected and synchronised, the road transport sector remains largely untouched by digitisation. By teaching trailers and cargoes to talk, we are enabling both hauliers and shippers to grasp entirely new opportunities. Taking these opportunities is ultimately a question of creativity – and having the courage to break new ground.”

BPW itself is showing one such way forward itself in the spare parts business. In the sparsely populated expanses of Finland, for example, it has stationed a fleet of unmanned containers holding an extensive inventory of spare parts. Repair shops are given digital access to the containers, from which they collect spares as and when required. The parts are booked out and replenished automatically, and receipts are sent by e-mail. In addition, the BPW subsidiary PE Data is currently testing a voice recognition system for ordering spare parts. Orders can be placed directly by the voice of an employee working on an elevated platform or in a service pit – without the need to touch a tablet or computer with oily fingers. New webshop software for wholesalers, which is already available from PE Data, enables commercial vehicle workshops to identify spare parts much more easily.

The positive attitude towards innovation and digitisation is shared by BPW’s employees. Internal and independent surveys have confirmed the great extent to which they identify with the company and are motivated by their work. BPW has recently been recognised as one of the fairest and top-100 employers, and one of the best training companies in Germany.

More news on the topic of digitisation at BPW:

- [Ready for the interconnected future](#)
- [Smart solutions](#)
- [Laboratory on wheels](#)
- [Industry 4.0: Translating aspiration into practice](#)



**Picture caption:** BPW employees actively support the company's cultural transformation (photo: BPW Bergische Achsen KG)

### **About BPW Bergische Achsen KG**

*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](http://www.bpw.de/en)*

### **About the BPW Group**

*The BPW Group is the dependable international mobility and system partner for the transport industry. The globally active group of companies offers innovative solutions from a single supplier. Its portfolio extends from axles, suspension systems and brake technologies (BPW), locking systems and body structure technology (Hestal), lighting systems (Ermax) and composite technologies (HBN-Teknik) to user-friendly telematics applications for trucks and trailers (idem telematics). The coordinated BPW Group technologies and services enable manufacturers to benefit from economical production processes and provide maximum transparency in loading and transport processes for efficient fleet management by the vehicle operators. The owner-managed BPW Group encompasses 70 companies worldwide and employs around 7,000 people. [www.wethinktransport.com](http://www.wethinktransport.com)*

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