

Media Release of Eugen Seitz AG SWISS Lean Award

Wetzikon, 17 May 2011

Eugen Seitz AG wins SWISS Lean Award

Recognition for the constant and consistent Lean-Management-Initiative in all areas

A few days ago KMU SWISS AG awarded the SWISS Lean Awards for the first time in the context of its Forum meeting in Baden. The winner in the category of up to 249 employees was Eugen Seitz AG from Wetzikon ZH. The company specialises in valve technology and convinced the jury with their consistent and constant implementation of the Lean Management approach in all areas. The award is a confirmation of the Lean-Management-Initiative that started in 2005.

KMU SWISS AG makes it possible for SMEs in Switzerland to successfully network and exchange information with each other. It is intended as a platform for the exchange of knowledge, expertise and experiences. The organisers assigned the SWISS Lean Award - a national award for top performances on the basis of the Lean Management philosophy - for the first time in the context of the KMU SWISS Forum in Baden on the 5th of May.

Do “the right thing”

A ‘lean’ company, respectively a company that successfully uses the Lean-Method, orients itself primarily to one important factor: the lead time. The Lean mentality relates to all divisions, from product development through to administration and up to manufacture, assembly and logistics of the products. A ‘lean’ company is characterised by its constant efforts to reduce activities that do not add value (e.g. storage, transport) and to eliminate wasteful processes (e.g. excessive stock, leadership problems). ‘Lean’ therefore does not mean to work faster, but rather to do ‘the right thing`.

This does not just require the optimised managerial and procedural skills of the senior personnel. “The key to success lies in enforcing the abilities of the employees“, says Thomas Girelli, COO and the person responsible for Lean Management at Eugen Seitz AG. “Today’s challenge is to constantly encourage the improvement and problem solving skills of employees as well as their motivation and to keep these high. Senior personnel need to have a different understanding of their role. In addition to being supervisors, they are coaches and mentors at the same time. A very demanding managerial function, which makes it also necessary to have professional support at this leadership level!“

Long-term orientation

The Lean-Management-Initiative of Eugen Seitz AG dates back to 2005. “The Board of Directors and the management stood behind this strategic initiative from the very beginning“, explains Urs Seitz, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Eugen Seitz AG. “We wanted to invest effectively in the matter and in all areas, so we adopted a long-term perspective. The transformation started in the training of key employees and with the initiation of the first methods (e.g. 5S: Improvement of the workspace organisation) as well as the introduction of a continuous improvement process – technically referred to as the ‘CIP’ for short. As a result workplaces were transformed, new methods were evaluated and trained in, and new processes were defined, introduced and consolidated. As a second step, the Lean mindset was integrated into product development.

“Lean Development has been consistently implemented in the company ever since“, says Dr. Stefan Gläser, CTO and person responsible for Lean Development at Eugen Seitz AG. A lean development process guarantees the optimal development of products in terms of time, cost and quality. A process that has been developed and standardised over the years forms the basis for it. The individual steps are comprehensively documented and the employees receive an intensive training. Today Lean-Management has penetrated the entire organisation in all the key areas (development, administration, logistics, manufacturing, assembly). “We even went another step further and also involved our key suppliers and partners. Today they are successfully integrated in our procurement process“, says Thomas Girelli.

Prize as a logical consequence

The honour of receiving the SWISS Lean Award is a confirmation of the Lean-Management-Initiative that started back in 2005. Today Eugen Seitz AG benefits from robust products and processes with a high level of focus on customers and efficiency, as well as the corresponding attitude and conduct of employees and senior personnel. They were able to significantly lower manufacturing costs, the lead times are now substantially shorter, and the capital tied up is pleasingly small. Employees and senior personnel are noticeably more motivated today; they benefit from being personally integrated in the processes, participating in and helping to shape their work skills as well as constantly furthering them. “Winning the SWISS Lean Award 2011 is a great recognition for the entire Seitz team to constantly look for the optimum solution and to effectively integrate improvements into new processes“, says an obviously proud Urs Seitz. Lean-Management is also more than just an end in itself: The company must function profitably and constantly improve its competitive ability. This promotes innovations and contributes thereby to the preservation of the Swiss workplace.

SWISS Lean Award and KMU SWISS AG

The SWISS Lean Award is a national award for top performances on the basis of the Lean Management philosophy. The award ceremony took place for the first time in the context of the KMU SWISS Forum in Baden (AG) on the 5th of May 2011. Manufacturing companies and organisations were distinguished if they exhibited an above average efficient organisation and if they lived and used the Lean Management mentality in all company processes. The participating companies underwent a fundamental analysis in the context of assessment criteria. Strengths and weaknesses were identified and improvement potentials were highlighted. The basis of the evaluation formed a model for the business appraisal consisting of four main criteria: Leadership, development, production and life cycle aspects. Independent on-site audits followed a comprehensive self-assessment. A specialist jury of 6 people under the direction of Dr. Uwe W. Schulz from the University of Lucerne carried out the evaluation. The SWISS Lean Award is awarded every year in four categories (1 to 9, 10 to 49, 50 to 249 and over 250 employees). A winner is appointed to the jury in the following year and they can then only contend for the award again after three years. The organiser of the SWISS Lean Award is KMU SWISS AG. They make it possible for SMEs in Switzerland to successfully network and exchange information with each other. Partners and sponsors of the Award ceremony are: Staufen AG consulting, Witzig The Office Company, Item Industrietechnik GmbH and the University of Lucerne.

For more information about the SWISS Lean Award please visit: www.swiss-lean-award.ch.

Eugen Seitz AG

Seitz Valve Technology (www.seitz.ch) develops, manufactures and distributes solenoid valves and valve systems. The family company, established in 1958, is a technological leader in the field of demanding valve technology for gaseous media. Seitz is active in the industrial target markets: PET-bottle production, natural gas and hydrogen powered vehicles and their fueling systems as well as diesel engines, gas turbines and chemical plants. Around 150 employees in Switzerland, Germany, China and Dubai create exceptional value for customers all over the world. Headquarters is in Wetzikon ZH.

For more information about Eugen Seitz AG please visit: www.seitz.ch.

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Press release and photos to download (versions for web and print):

www.seitz.ch/en/company/

Photo with caption



Caption (f.l.t.r.): Urs Seitz (Chairman BoD), Jörg Lutz (Member BoD), Martin Keller (CFO), Stefan Hohl (Assistant Operations), Thomas Marder (CEO until April 2011), Dr. Stefan Gläser (CTO), Thomas Girelli (COO).