*Interview with Harald Ziebula*

**Meeting supply requirements worldwide at Doka**

Interview with Harald Ziebula, Chairman of the Executive Board, Doka GmbH

Supply availability is one of the main issues that companies deal with on a daily basis. Ensuring that the right products are available at the right time, in the right amount and in the right place, is a critical competitive factor when it comes to rapidly changing market requirements and conditions at the construction site.

**What challenges does Doka face in terms of supply availability?**

Construction companies – that is, our customers – are confronted with a multitude of unpredictable factors that can impact the construction process. These include, for example, a delay in planning, general interactions with suppliers, rescheduling during the construction phase, approval procedures, weather, etc. All in all, this means construction sites are never 100 percent plannable. At Doka, we are aware that, as a supplier, we have to be flexible and adapt to the circumstances as they arise. Lead times are getting shorter and shorter, everything is becoming short-term, which means that construction companies are also under pressure from builders, planners and so forth, and have to respond with speed and flexibility. At Doka, we also have to deal with this fact and we have to respond with flexible scheduling, provide personnel options, and be ready to deliver.

**What did Doka do last year to optimise the delivery of formwork equipment?**

In recent years, we have invested heavily in expanding and strengthening our logistics capacity. Customer focus and ensuring that we supply the right equipment at the right time is our top priority. In this regard, we are operating at a very good and high level. We are able to access over 100 logistics locations worldwide. Particularly, when it comes to special products not used on a daily basis, we can cover our customer requirements with inventories worldwide. In recent years, we have expanded our cross-border cooperation and utilisation of our equipment stocks, both logistically and organisationally. In the meantime, this model has become an important recipe for success at ensuring our customers are supplied properly.

**What logistics measures has Doka implemented?**

In order to be able to supply equipment to customers, even during periods of high demand, we have invested in five distribution centres (DC) worldwide. These are located in Austria, Germany, Asia, the Middle East and North America.

What does this mean for our customers? As an extension of our production operations, the DCs stock additional equipment closer to our branches and construction sites. They are in a sense buffers to "cushion" special peaks. In this way, we ensure even faster follow-up supply to these locations, with the aim of reducing partial deliveries to construction sites. This reduction is also an important factor for customer satisfaction, because from customer surveys we know that we have to be better in this area. We take this feedback very seriously.

**Are there any further measures that you have planned?**

In the process of establishing our new distribution centres, we also invested in the personnel capacities to enable us to process requirements from subsidiaries – from production as well as intercompany – via our new centralised supply management process. We have already moved this new process a good way forward, but we still need to make improvements and stabilise the entire process. Furthermore, we have invested large sums in a logistics software designed to make complex planning work significantly easier and more transparent. This is our additional commitment and investment in better logistics. Additionally, we significantly increased our production output last year.

**What role does digital technology play?**

We rely on self-learning materials scheduling tools, for example, for our worldwide inventory control. On the basis of historical data, our offers, orders, planned return deliveries and our largest supplier, our own rental park, as well as other parameters, the system determines short- and medium-term delivery requirements, and sends this information to the distribution centre or production. Or, in short, the system identifies quickly and at a high level, where and when the equipment is needed and in what quantity.

In conclusion, at Doka we are engaged intensively with the question of what measures we can use to better supply our customers with formwork equipment. We work hard every day to meet – ever more reliably – construction site requirements that often cannot be planned in advance. That is our number one priority!