

Press release

Friedhelm Loh Group

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96 Friedhelm Loh Group apprentices and students complete their training

96 young people have acquired the knowledge and skills needed in digital manufacturing

Today's young professionals are fascinated by electronic media and software, while manufacturers are increasingly digitizing their processes. For the Friedhelm Loh Group, the one phenomenon dovetails perfectly with the other, and its training programs addresses both. In all, 96 apprentices and students have just completed their programs at the Group. Their final presentations highlighted the convergence of IT and manufacturing, a trend which they have clearly embraced.

Haiger, Germany, 26 August 2016 – When Kevin Grahn talks of gap control in manufacturing, wiring solutions and terminal blocks, his enthusiasm is palpable. Kevin recently completed his training in industrial electronics with Rittal, a leading manufacturer of modular enclosure systems. He has now presented his final project to his instructors and colleagues, with understandable pride. “After modification work, one of the production systems at the Wissenbach plant developed a fault. As a result, enclosures were repeatedly being damaged beyond repair,” he explained. The goal of his final project was to resolve this problem. By means of a software-controlled light barrier, he managed to completely eliminate the risk of damage to enclosures passing through the system. “The intriguing aspect was that this assignment required both sophisticated hardware and software,” reported Kevin. He learned a programming language especially for the task, and mainly worked on the machine during breaks. “It's vital to avoid disrupting operations,” he explained.

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Kevin is one of 96 young people who successfully completed their training at the Friedhelm Loh Group this year, and are moving on to permanent positions. In fact, 28 apprentices sat their exams early and finished their programs at the beginning of the year. “The quality of work has been exceptional,” stressed Matthias Hecker, Director of Technical Training at Rittal. He had this advice for the newly qualified trainees: “Retain your sense of curiosity – and never stop learning.”

Digitization is transforming the world of work

Seventy-three apprentices completed their training with the Friedhelm Loh Group this year. In addition, 23 young people completed the co-operative education program offered by the Group in conjunction with the Central Hesse University of Applied Sciences (THM). The apprenticeship programs include warehouse logistics, plant and machine operation, and mechatronics for cooling systems. Industrial placements are provided for engineering and business administration students. “Germany provides the very best in vocational education,” emphasised Michael Weiher, Managing Director Production at Rittal. The company, a global market leader, has offered vocational training for 46 years. “Throughout that time we have continuously developed and refined our programs. Mechatronics and IT professions are the future of manufacturing. That is why we need skilled specialists like you,” he said.

Since its foundation, the Friedhelm Loh Group has trained 1,500 apprentices. Furthermore, in 2013 Rittal launched a special program designed to nurture high-potentials. And two years ago, it introduced a training program for unskilled workers. This enables them to become plant and machine operators, with a qualification recognised by the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK).

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Creating intelligent solutions while still a student

As Weiher stressed, the digitization of manufacturing will also impact co-operative education. “The integration of all processes – engineering, manufacturing, logistics and business administration – will prompt an overhaul of university curricula. Tomorrow’s engineers and managers need the skills to develop intelligent solutions that seamlessly link processes, making them better and faster”. As he explained, the 23 graduates have gained a wealth of practical experience at the Friedhelm Loh Group, working with various departments on real-world assignments. This has given them the skills they will require in their fields. The Friedhelm Loh Group has offered industrial placements to students at THM since 2001. The key benefit of co-operative education is that it blends theory with practice – periods of study at the university alternate with hands-on work experience.

The graduates’ enthusiasm for their study programs is reflected in the grades they achieved. Weiher paid tribute to the four top-placed individuals: business engineers Jaquelin Hansel and Max Schüssler who gained the highest possible grades (1.0), engineer Jan Hartmann and business administration graduate Niclas Thielmann, both of whom achieved the outstanding grade of 1.2. “These are impressive results,” said Weiher. “You have acquired a fund of knowledge and corresponding skills. It’s now up to you to apply and develop them further. You have everything you need to build successful careers,” he added.

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Caption(s)

fri162019100.jpg: Seventy-three apprentices and students completed their training at the Friedhelm Loh Group this year. 28 of them sat their exams early and secured their qualifications at the beginning of 2016. "The quality of work has been exceptional", reported Matthias Hecker, Head of Training at Rittal (second from right)

fri162014300.jpg: Twenty-three students completed their studies and left the Friedhelm Loh Group to embark on their careers. "Your qualifications put you in a very strong position. You have acquired a fund of knowledge and corresponding skills. It's now up to you to apply and develop them further. You have everything you need to build successful careers," said Michael Weiher, Managing Director Production at Rittal (third from the right, first row).

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Friedhelm Loh Group

A global player, the Friedhelm Loh Group (F.L.G.) invents, develops, and makes made-to-measure products and integrated solutions for manufacturers, distributors and other businesses. Member companies of the Group lead their respective industries in innovation and quality. They include the world's leading provider of modular platforms for enclosures, power distribution, climate control and IT infrastructure (Rittal); Europe's number one supplier of software solutions for plant engineering, general engineering, and manufacturing; and a specialist in integrated manufacturing with state-of-the-art materials – steel, aluminium, and plastics.

The family-owned company maintains a worldwide presence, with 18 production sites and 78 subsidiaries. Managed by founder Dr. Friedhelm Loh himself, the Group employs over 11,500 people and generated revenues of approximately €2.2 billion in 2015. It was named one of Germany's Top Employers in 2016, for the eighth year in a row. Within the scope of a Germany-wide survey, Focus Money magazine identified the Friedhelm Loh Group as one of the nation's best providers of vocational training.

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

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