

Growth as a result of an increase in the daily production output

Shortest possible cycle time is the reason to opt for investment in a new manhole ring manufacturing plant in Austria

In a globalised industry, long-term investment decisions are reached after considering a number of different criteria. Protectionism or limiting the selection of regional suppliers for investment goods are often sidelined. The Austrian manufacturer of pre-assembled concrete components, Edwin Pimiskern, was never one for parochial thinking or excluding non-native business partners. Careful consideration of the costs and benefits has always underpinned his investment decisions and is the reason for his continuous, decade-spanning commercial success. This meant that, even before the decision was made to invest in a new plant for manufacturing concrete manhole rings, it was impossible to predict which manufacturer or machine manufacturer would win the tender. After careful consideration, the decision was ultimately made to invest in automated production with the Magic machine model by the system developer Schlüsselbauer.

Even as early as the time of the company's foundation in 1925, work at Pimiskern was focused on the production of concrete goods. Over the years, the range of products has been constantly expanded and today, it primarily consists of concrete pipes, manholes and troughs, as well as special designs that are specific to a project. The steady growth of the company, which now has 90 employees at the company's Andorf site, and progressive settlement led to the company premises, which have since become completely encircled by residential areas, being unable to expand further on this site. However, in recent years, the increasing demand for manhole components by Pimiskern in terms of quality and quantity also resulted in the fact that an increased production capacity formed the primary

focus of the investment strategy, in addition to the replacement of an old manufacturing plant.

The team entrusted with managing the company run by Mr. Pimiskern assessed numerous alternatives for manufacturing larger quantities of manhole rings and cones of nominal width DN800 and DN1000 over a long period of time. In numerous tours of plants across Europe, investigations were carried out into cycle times that could actually be achieved and the actual requirements of a new production plant were substantiated. Due to the lack of space already mentioned, the new production facility was expected to be created using the existing infrastructure and with a minimum amount of



Magic production plant of Schlüsselbauer Technology



Demoulding of a finished product



Product is transported into the setting area by electric cart



Pallet oiling using a sponge and therefore no spray



Warehouse in the outside area at Pimiskern

required renovations or newly constructed buildings. If nothing else, the new manufacturing plant was expected to be set up in such a way that the existing concrete supply via the bucket conveyor could still be used in its current state.

The fundamental basis for the decision to invest presented itself over the course of a machine inspection, within the scope of which a Schlüsselbauer Magic machine's output was able to be monitored. It produced considerably more than 200 manhole rings with integrated step rungs in just a single production shift. Similarly, two employees would also need to carry out the entire daily production at Pimiskern in the future, including transport of the new concrete elements to the setting area using electric carts. Additionally, the machine had to be equipped with material-saving pallet oiling that is not harmful to the working environment. This innovative type of pallet oiling has been used for several years now at Schlüsselbauer plants in lieu of spraying or dipping methods. However, the reliable cycle time that can be achieved with the new machine in connection with the shortest conversion cycles for various products or nominal widths was more important to Pimiskern than this design detail.

The range of products to be manufactured by Schlüsselbauer's Magic primarily consists of components in accordance with DIN 4034. One of the products is with construction heights of up to 1500 mm, as well as cones and manhole rings with hinges. The second product has a wall thickness of 85 mm and construction heights

of up to 1200 mm. The products can be produced either with or without ramps, where the use of the manipulator known as Stepmaster allows for step rungs or iron steps to be installed by the plant operator, independently of the cycle time. The moulds are also designed for rapid installation and removal, in order to keep down-times as a result of change-overs to a minimum.

Mr Edwin Pimiskern believes that his investment decision has been validated after just one production season: "After the timely assembly, a few adjustments needed to be made during the initial phase of the production plant, and our employees and the Schlüsselbauer team worked closely with one another to meet all of the requirements. We are proud to operate one of the most powerful machines for producing manhole rings in the world in Andorf and we can make the most of our site and therefore achieve market growth in the future." ■

FURTHER INFORMATION



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