

Kobra Formen GmbH, 08485 Lengenfeld/Saxony, Germany

Customer oriented business strategy – Impulse for modern mould construction

Satisfied customers drive the success of modern businesses. This philosophy is valid for smaller producers and multinational concerns equally. For flexible medium-sized companies in the manufacturing industry, customer oriented business strategies can open up extremely promising commercial opportunities. Yet it must not be lost from sight that, with the increasing complexity of the

products offered and their worldwide availability, risks relating to the market and the customer also intensify. One German manufacturer, who is in the vanguard of specialised mould manufacturing technology for the concrete block industry, has met this challenge with their new “Kobra Impulse” customer programme.

Kobra Formen GmbH perceives customer oriented business not just as a short-term trade-off but rather a company management principle which is lived out. Through consistently focussing the commercial processes of all its company sectors on its customers’ needs, this mould constructor has gained appreciably in flexibility, and has experienced exemplary growth for years. Constructive cooperation with customers is an important motivational force and valuable source of inspiration for innovative products and services at Kobra (fig. 1).

procal impetus. At every contact point, certain forces are wholly or partially transferred to the objects forming part of that system. Seen from a psychological point of view, impulse is also taken to mean a short or long-term influence on the behaviour of a person or a group of persons. For Kobra, this means to be able to give and take impetus through as much frequent contact with customers and trade experts as possible.

Kobra Impulse consists of three brand names: Impulse [Operate], [Campus] and [Project]. In this way, the mould constructor has combined all instruments and functions which significantly influence customer relations’ quality. The company has

linked service, communication, research and development together in a circle in whose centre the customer and marketing/sales act in union (fig. 2). Kobra Impulse is, indeed, the division brand with the greatest vitality when it comes to selling its customers practical benefits. The output of concrete production facilities remains in focus.

“Customer care is the order of the day.” – Kobra Impulse [Operate]

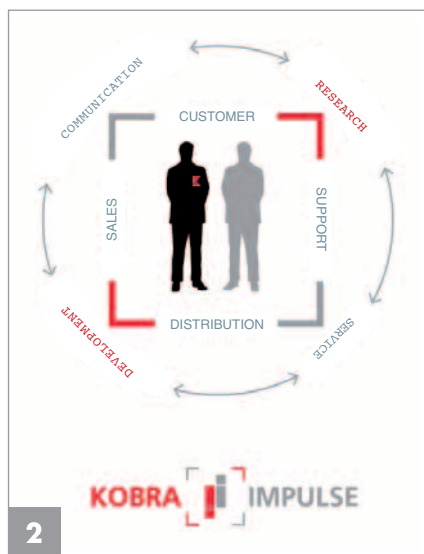
Competent sales staff and rapid-action service are the foundation of the Kobra-group after-sales business. Continued presence at the customer’s side and the ability to solve technical and commercial problems are essential points. These, together with the high quality implementation or reconstruction of desired product characteristics as well as the final provision of a product to the client’s entire satisfaction, are what customers expect from cooperating with their suppliers. Observations from the marketplace, instructions from individual clients plus feedback about current products are processed in market reports which form the basis of product strategies. When supplemented with a client’s particular information items, an effective and thorough tool for handling all orders can be created without compromising on specific requests.

It may be generally said that the best type of service is that which the customer does not have to press for. For Kobra, its clientele’s technical support is extremely important. When the innovative output of a company is high as here is the case,



At Kobra, the customer is the focus of attention

In 2006, Kobra set up a new product and brand structure. Alongside its main business sectors of mould construction and block design, the Kobra Impulse brand constitutes another business line for the company’s future security. Basically, in technology, impulse describes the interaction of masses set in motion through reci-



The new Kobra Impulse customer programme generates practical benefits for concrete production facilities



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KOBRA  **IMPULSE**

then customer care needs dynamic service. In order to be able to react more quickly in future on the marketplace, the mould manufacturer is further enlarging its service structure in 2007. This involves, in particular, enlarging the existing customer service networks with further service centres as well as increasing the number of skilled employees at the head and local offices so that the client can be reached in future more quickly and more frequently.

With its new service brands, Kobra Formen GmbH has the ability to supply profitable answers to perfecting manufacturing processes in concrete production facilities.

**Impulse [Operate] »Start up™«
and [Operate] »Support on Site™«**

The range of on site service offered under the Kobra brand name varies from "help getting started" for new customers, to the commissioning of complicated special or individual moulds, right up to finely tuning manufacturing machines or adjusting concrete mixtures (fig.3).

**Impulse [Operate] »My Calibration™«
and [Operate] »Dynamic View™«**

Assisted by the most modern measuring technology, Kobra can visualise the oscillation behaviour of a concrete block mould inside the machine and supply the client with precise starting points for improvements.

"Ideas have to be communicated." – Kobra Impulse [Campus]

Exchange ideas, share experience, provoke thoughts. The Kobra Impulse [Campus]

brand emphasises the areas of technology and representation within the framework of a communications strategy. Making a legitimate "chat room" of experts available for its clients to discuss technical issues is at least as important as the fostering of awareness and the group's image on the market. Internally, Kobra Formen GmbH uses its "Campus", to continue training all its employees and executive staff and to supply them with the latest information (fig.4).



Established in-house training at Kobra as [Campus] »Update™«.

Kobra sells technically sophisticated quality products. The way moulds are handled in concrete production facilities can have significant effect on the product fulfilling its promise as regards operating efficiency and service life. Wear parts on moulds in use can be replaced by new parts when repaired in time, creating an appreciable gain in the life span of the reconditioned mould. The most advisable way to handle moulds is described in the constructor's [Campus] »Update™«, amongst other things, in the technical documentation for changing oscillation inserts and the tamper shoes. Kobra offers external product training at the client's local place of production or extends invitations to in-house training and factory

tours at its headquarters in Lengendorf. Here, the customer has the possibility of arranging, by appointment, a personal talk with those responsible for all specialist manufacturing areas. He can also gain useful insight into his supplier's theoretical and practical method of operation on the spot. Clients at Kobra are fascinated again and again as their attention is drawn to how new concrete blocks are created on the computer or how accurately the individual components of a mould are manufactured on the production line. They are also able to benefit at first hand from the mould constructor's experience in the form of useful tips. Another notable instrument for achieving customer satisfaction, besides direct questioning, is systematic customer satisfaction analysis. From customer feedback, emphasising differing topics on separate occasions, the company receives important information from the marketplace and gains a starting point for targeting improvements with regard to its products and processes. Kobra has set itself the goal of measuring up to its clients very exacting requirements in constant quality. The firm is continually striving to identify probable gaps when supplying its customers and to tap into the valuable potential resource of intensive cooperation.

"Products are systematically, continuously improved." – Kobra Impulse [Project]

Kobra Impulse [Project] is the brand name for promising developments in mould construction. With its excellent array of patents, Kobra desires to shape the future of mould technology together with its customers. Since 1991, € 30 million has been invested in research and development as well as in the extension of the



Changing an oscillation insert on site at a customer by Kobra Impulse [Operate] »Support on Site™«.

company's worldwide production and distribution locations. From 2006 onwards, the subsidiaries, Kobra Forme A/S in Denmark and Kobra Moulds B.V., Netherlands, have been looking after the sales territories of Scandinavia and Benelux, respectively.

Nearer home, Kobra has prioritised its cooperation with innovative partners from the industry. Nonetheless, the main headquarters in Lengenfeld will still remain in future the standard bearer of expertise in its production and developments divisions. In the research department, two operational divisions have been assigned to developing products ideas and repetition products. During certain projects, new developments are subjected to constant and extreme loads in order to be able to release them for mass production once they have successfully completed their testing stage. This takes place on in house experimental equipment or at external research laboratories as well as during simulated customer trial runs (fig.5). Kobra expends much time and effort to ensure the best possible functioning of its products in the field right from the beginning.



5 Testing installation in the R&D competence centre at Kobra Impulse [Project]

Rising energy and raw material prices on the world markets plus the categorical attractiveness to be found in its own products' price and quality have stimulated Kobra Formen GmbH into preparing its

product portfolio for the future. Alongside numerous recent innovations, there will be many fresh and interesting ideas for modern mould construction to be seen in April at bauma 2007, the trade fair highlight of the industry.

Kobra is still committed to brand quality "made in Germany" and is investing once again this year in expanding its production and development resources in Saxony. An important objective of the company will be to maintain a comprehensive support service for concrete production facilities throughout the world whilst, at the same time, providing them with reliable means of production, on time and in continuously high quality.

Further information:



KOBRA Formen GmbH
 Plohnbachstraße 1
 08485 Lengenfeld/Saxony, GERMANY
 T +49 37606 3020
 F +49 37606 30222
 info@kobragroup.com
 www.kobragroup.com



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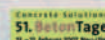
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Würschum GmbH
 Hedelfingerstr. 33
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 fon: + 49 711 44813 - 0
 fax: + 49 711 44813 - 110
 e-mail: info@wuerschum.com
 www.wuerschum.com