

The Kobra family continues to grow

New branch in Morocco strengthens market position

■ Andreas Gebauer-Günther, Kobra, Germany

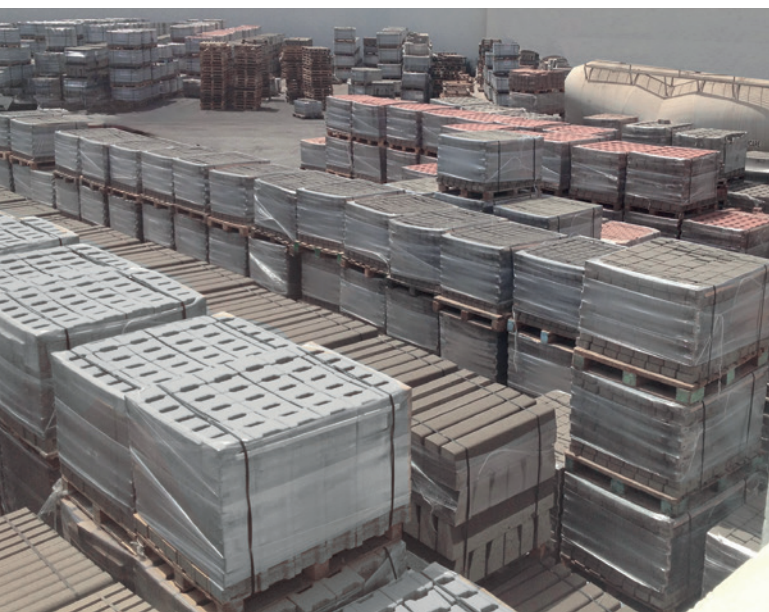
With the opening of a new branch in Morocco, Kobra is consolidating its position in the concrete industry, offering its customers in North Africa customised solutions and faster delivery times and underlining its commitment to innovative technologies and customer proximity. For more than three decades, the Kobra brand has stood for proximity, technological innovation, experience, quality advice, service and direct routes. As one of the technological market leaders in the field of mold construction for concrete blocks, Kobra is continuously expanding its international presence. With six international branches already operating primarily as sales offices, but some of which are also equipped with production and service facilities, Kobra focuses on customer proximity and the best possible service.

Since summer 2024, Kobra Formen Morocco S.A.R.L. in Morocco has joined the Kobra family as the seventh subsidiary. The opening brings a number of advantages for customers in North Africa. Key aspects are customer proximity, expanded production possibilities and international training and exchange.

Customer proximity and direct service on site

With local contacts who have years of experience in the concrete block plant, Kobra can guarantee competent and direct support. This is impressively demonstrated by Kobra's successful expansion in the USA and Canada: Since expanding the office and production space there in 2019 and investing in state-of-the-art machinery and equipment, Kobra has been able to continuously expand production. The launch of the Boltline™ products in 2023 is a very good example of how Kobra can adapt to customer needs and provide specific services.

The success story in North America served as an inspirational model for the branch in Morocco. By applying these proven strategies and providing a specialised local service, Kobra will also support the growth of local concrete block manufacturers in North Africa, promote technological innovation and contribute to strengthening the industry as a whole.



Product portfolio in Moroccan concrete block plant



A popular paving system in the Moroccan market



■ Andreas Gebauer-Günther is Managing Director of Kobra Formen GmbH, Lengenfeld and Kobra Molds L.L.C. in Hudson, Wisconsin, USA. He grew up in North Rhine-Westphalia and had been living in the new federal states since 1996 after training as an industrial business management assistant when he joined Kobra as a salesman in 1999. After more than 25 years of global customer support, he is now responsible for sales, service, despatch and order controlling. The core business of Kobra Formen GmbH is the development and production of special molds for the concrete block industry. In more than three decades, the Kobra brand has achieved a leading position worldwide in technology and competition as a system and solution provider for concrete block molds.
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Construction site near Marrakech

A major advantage of Kobra's expansion into North Africa is the provision of a dedicated local contact for local concrete block manufacturers. This direct access to Kobra's expertise makes it possible to obtain technical support and advice quickly and efficiently, which is particularly important when introducing new products or technologies. With fast reaction times, problems can be solved immediately and production downtimes minimised. In addition, the local contact can offer customised solutions that meet the specific requirements of the market. Personal support also promotes a trusting and long-term partnership from which both sides benefit.

The managing partner of the new branch is structural engineer Amine Maächi-Haddou, owner of concrete block plants with extensive product and market knowledge and president of the Moroccan concrete products association AMIB. Mr Mäachi-Haddou and Kobra have been in contact since 2022, and over the past few months the ideas for collaboration have become more concrete and tangible plans have almost taken on a life of their own.



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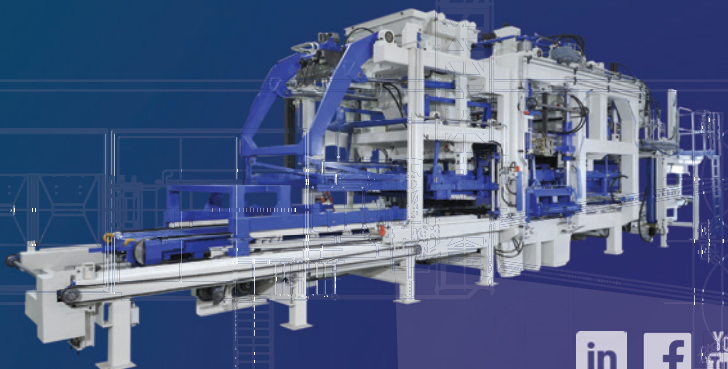
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Floor block in standard design



Installation situation floor blocks on site

Extended production possibilities

Another advantage is the extended production possibilities. Six years ago, the production capacities at Kobra Molds L.L.C. in Hudson, Wisconsin, USA, were significantly expanded. Since 2023, the main components of the Boltline™ molds have been manufactured and distributed there, both for new molds and for repair and spare parts requirements. Kobra Morocco S.A.R.L. follows the positive experiences in the USA and offers two product lines tailored to the Moroccan market:

- **Boltline™ - Modular design**
With replaceable wear parts for maximum flexibility.
- **Solidline™ technology**
This line combines the precision of Boltline™ technology and the durability of Carbo-68-Plus™ hardening, whereby wear parts are only partially replaceable.

These product lines enable very good cost structures for different areas of application. In addition, technical details of the Boltline™ molds have been optimised for specific markets to ensure durability and easy maintenance on site.

Kobra has further developed existing product designs especially for the Moroccan market, which have been revolutionising the construction of hollow block molds since 2019. The new designs are precisely matched to the concrete block making machines used locally and are characterised by a modified frame design that supports a newly developed insert while retaining the proven Carbo™ hardening technology and precision as well as the long service life of the Kobra molds.

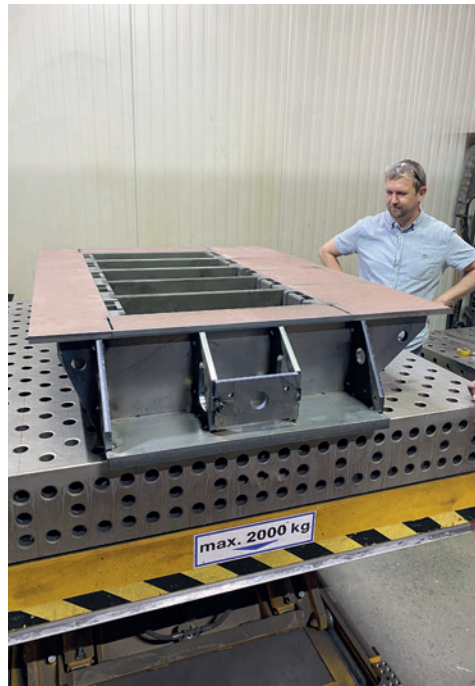
In addition, the cobra hollow block molds were further developed for the typical stone designs in North Africa. The result is a service-friendly design with high availability, which is supported particularly efficiently by the local presence of the Moroccan subsidiary. For customers, this means improved product quality, reduced maintenance costs and increased uptime, resulting in a significant overall increase in productivity.

International training and exchange

As in the USA, Kobra relies on international training and regular dialogue between the production departments in Lengenfeld, Hudson and Morocco. The company follows the motto “Progress through experience”: The personal dialogue plays a key role in continuously improving the products and adapting them to new requirements.

In the course of continuous product development, Kobra has further advanced and optimised some technical details in the mold design, especially for the expansion to Morocco. The resulting molds are characterised by production reliability and ease of maintenance. At the same time, the design allows flexible adaptations to meet local expectations. In order to utilise these advantages and to be able to serve the market individually, employees for the Moroccan branch are specifically trained. These training courses are based on the decades of experience of the employees at the headquarters in Lengenfeld, where the new technologies are tested and optimised.

The on-site training courses, which focus on direct personal dialogue between experts, always lead to further valuable



Torsten Stuckenbrock, Jan Streckenbach and Lars Leistner assembling the first prototype (from left)

Design manager Michael Ott inspecting during assembly

changes. These improvements are not only incorporated into the daily work of the subsidiary, but are also integrated into all Kobra subsidiaries and at the headquarters. Continuous product development is essential in a constantly evolving market and ensures that Kobra always remains at the forefront of innovation.

As in all Kobra markets, the company also offers its customers in Morocco its tried-and-tested mold maintenance and repair training courses. These training courses are particularly popular with the maintenance departments of concrete block plants. In close co-operation with the experienced Kobra employees, details of the technical features of the products are communicated. Not only is the mode of operation explained, but valuable tips and tricks for fitting and replacing components are also passed on. These practical training courses not only help to extend the service life of Kobra molds, but also help to reduce or even completely prevent downtime. This is how Kobra ensures the continuous efficiency and productivity of our customers.

From direct sales to the branch office

The founding of Kobra Formen Morocco S.A.R.L. followed many years of direct sales to Moroccan customers, who were previously looked after from Lengenfeld by the regional sales manager Carmen Hochmuth. Building up our own production capacity in Morocco was the next logical step due to an increasing number of customers and steadily growing demand. The decision was preceded by intensive planning and numerous on-site visits, including by the management.

An exciting journey to perfection

Travelling to Morocco to see concrete blocks and visit construction sites and concrete block plants was an exciting and inspiring process, full of lively discussions and intensive collaboration. Jan Streckenbach, Kobra's Technical Managing Director, and Andreas Gebauer-Günther were able to experience the machines and

- Semi or fully automatic manufacturing systems for both dry cast and wet cast concrete products
- Dry cast & wet cast moulds for the precast industry



The completed prototype before being shipped to Morocco

products up close on site, which gave them a deep insight into the local conditions and challenges. These impressions were essential for the further development of the mold designs.

From the very beginning, it was exciting to analyse and understand the expectations of the market. We spoke to many local experts and learnt about the technical limits and requirements they face in their daily work. Together with the engineers and technicians on site, the specific requirements were discussed and constructive solutions developed. Technical details were worked out down to the smallest detail, every screw and every material carefully weighed up.

The discussion process covered not only the technical feasibility, but also the economic prospects and business plans. Kobra looked at the investments in necessary machinery and equipment and calculated the long-term benefits of sharing production between Germany and Morocco. The balance between high quality and cost efficiency was a key issue.

Kobra followed the first prototypes, which were manufactured in Lengenfeld, with great excitement and documented every phase of assembly. The work with high-precision machines and the meticulous realisation of the designs were fascinating and once again demonstrated the engineering skill that goes into every detail. When the first prototype took shape, they could hardly wait to test the result. The precision and



The dispatch rack of the Kobra company in Lengenfeld

accuracy of the finished mold exceeded expectations and confirmed that they were on the right track.

The economic prospects and the business plans that were jointly developed look promising. By having a local presence and focussing on the strengths of both locations, Kobra can offer customers controlled quality in a short time and with professional service. It was a challenging but immensely rewarding journey that showed that Kobra has once again found innovative ways to ensure quality and service at a very high level.



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FURTHER INFORMATION



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Kobra Formen GmbH will be represented at this year's ICCX North Africa on 23 and 24 October 2024 by its new subsidiary Kobra Morocco S.A.R.L. and is looking forward to welcoming visitors.

Amine Maächi-Haddou, Managing Partner of the new Kobra Formen Morocco S.A.R.L.