

Editors

Betty Hammond
b.hammond@kci-world.com
John Butterfield
j.butterfield@kci-world.com
Frank Wöbbeking
f.woebeking@kci-world.com
Joe Machney
j.machney@kci-world.com

Publishing Director

Donald Wiedemeyer
d.wiedemeyer@kci-world.com

Editorial Director

Sjef Roymans
Sjef.h.roymans@kci-world.com

Advertising

Ivan Gane
i.gane@kci-world.com
Robert-Jan á Campo
r.a.campo@kci-world.com
Karen Miller
k.miller@kci-world.com

Subscriptions

Erica Riethorst
e.riethorst@kci-world.com

Press contributions

Press.asn@kci-world.com

Design & Layout

Claire Smeets
claire.smeets@mediamixx.net

Production

Wright's Printing

Publishing House

KCI Publishing b.v.
P.O. Box 396
NL-7200 AJ Zutphen
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 575 585 270
Fax: +31 575 585 099

KCI GmbH

Tiergartenstraße 64
47533 Kleve, Germany
Tel: +49 2821 711 450
Fax: +49 2821 711 45 69
Kci-deutschland@kci-world.com

KCI Shanghai

Shanghai Ke Sheng Business
Consulting Company
Room 603, 6F, ChunShenJiang
Building,
#400 Zhejiang Mid. Road
Postcode 200001 Shanghai /
PR China
Tel: +86-21-6351 9609
Fax: +86-21-6351 9607
kci.shanghai@kci-world.com

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Spotlight On

The Schulz Group of Companies Specialists for High-Grade Projects

A new plant in Brazil, new machinery in Germany and an extended distribution network around the entire world, The Schulz Group of Companies has extended its capacity in all areas. "Now we are ready for the growing project requirements of the future," explains general manager Joachim Wickenkamp. The company specialises in producing fittings, seamless and welded pipes for challenging applications in industries such as water treatment, nuclear power, oil and gas. So, the products are made of high-quality materials such as duplex and super duplex, high nickel alloys and super austenites, titanium and 6Mo grades. The company's speciality is cold forming.

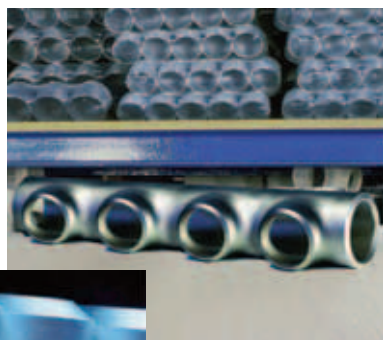


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"We're in the fast lane," says Wickenkamp, describing the growth path of the Schulz Group of Companies. The latest highlight is a new pipe factory in Brazil. Formally opened in October 2008, it is already the second step for the company in Brazil. The Schulz Group of Companies already commissioned a fitting plant in the spring of 2007. "And production is running fantastically well," Wickenkamp reports. Fittings are made in a factory hall 8,600 square metres large and are then sold all round the world. The products are cold formed up to 24inch SCH160.

Second Plant in Brazil

The new plant, which produces longitudinally welded pipes from eight inches in diameter, is situated on the same site



as, practically a stones throw away from, the fitting works. "One great advantage is that we can now process our own starting materials," says Wickenkamp. In this area we are now "fully independent," he says. In the 6,300 square metre-large hall, the company makes pipes out of high-quality starting materials.

The new factory is a joint venture of the Schulz Group of Companies with Erndtebrücker Eisenwerk GmbH + Co. KG and Heinz Gothe GmbH und Co. KG. The project was planned with an eye to the future – the site still offers a lot of space for possible future expansion.

Main Plant Modernised

In addition, the factory at the company's main site in Krefeld has been extended and upgraded. "We've built a new fabricating hall and doubled the amount of bevelling equipment. We've developed a new route for starting material inspection which makes it possible to examine them automatically. In that way small parts can also get a stamp code before sawing," says Wickenkamp. The machinery in Krefeld consists of 18 high-speed saws, 10 cold-forming presses, 12 bevelling units, 8 solution annealing furnaces and many testing facilities. He continued, "It's important to have the flexibility and expertise to respond to the demand in the market place and explore the possibilities that arise. Our team is highly experienced in the various forming techniques and is constantly thinking of new ways to use it. For example, we just have finished the construction of a new press to produce large di-

ameter tees, reducers and caps of up to 52 inch diameter and 6 inches of wall thickness same as special head-

ers. The press is up and running and is a welcome expansion of our manufacturing facilities." In addition, the headquarters in Krefeld has a new home, which is in line with the company's growth plans. The new complex opened in early 2009.

Header Pipe

Header pipe is a new product in the Schulz product portfolio. "We are able to produce headers up to 52 inches OD and a maximum wall thickness of 100mm in cold and hot forming technique. Our production method enables us to produce them with several outlets in one line or different angles to each other and on opposite sites. We will produce headers in all kinds of stainless steels, carbon and alloy steels," explains Wickenkamp.



What is the aim of these investments? "That's obvious. We want to be equipped for the international increase in projects that require our products," Wickenkamp says. He sees the greatest potential in the fields of water treatment, the oil and gas industries and nuclear sectors. "Desalination plants are very popular at the moment, the high oil price makes obtaining of difficult resources lucrative and nuclear energy is going through a renaissance in many countries," he explains.

Project Work

These kinds of projects are planned and constructed in Krefeld. As a result of the expansion in Brazil, where mainly standard products are manufactured, there is more room and time for the main plant to fulfil individual orders; these are the sorts of projects that offer more opportunity for growth. This is where the company's many years of experience pay off. In more than 60 years, know-how has been accumulated which is now unparalleled anywhere else. For example, the Schulz Group of Companies was already supplying components for Germany's nu-



clear power stations as long ago as the 1970s. Even then these components fulfilled the high safety standards and this competence is being continually developed today.

But what use is the best production without good sales? That is why the Schulz Group of Companies is well established on a global basis in this area as well. "We're where the action is", says Wickenkamp. For example, the company has over 17 sites worldwide. A 15-man sales team is active in Singapore and the Middle East is served from Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia. In 2007 sales offices were opened in Beijing and St. Petersburg.

In Houston, Texas, for example, the name Schulz has been well known for over 25 years. Just in time for this anniversary Schulz opened a new facility. In a warehouse of about 50,000 square feet and a pipe yard of approximately 90,000 square feet, Schulz USA keeps pipes, fittings and flanges in 304/L, 316/L, 317/L, duplex and superduplex on stock. Welded pipes in 10in to 24in OD coming from Schulz plant in Brazil are one of the key items on stock.

The Schulz team in Houston and Calgary (18 employees in total) serves customers from the oil- and gas sector, chemical and petrochemical industry, water treatment, nuclear industry and many other industries in Canada, Mexico and the US.

A Technical Head-Start

What is the company's greatest challenge? "We've created the conditions for growth; now we've got to maintain

our technical head-start ahead of the competition," Wickenkamp expressed. To achieve this, the Schulz Group of Companies has established its own research and development department.

Cold Forming: the company speciality

"The Schulz Group of Companies is the only company in the world which can hydroform products with wall thickness of up to six inches at room temperature," GM Joachim Wickenkamp explains. "The great advantage of cold forming is that the result is continually reproducible, thus making it possible to produce constant quality." As it is hardly subjected to heat, the consistency of the formed materials hardly alters – it is at best minimal. In turn, this guarantees the quality of the hydroform products and makes them particularly suitable for safety-related applications.

Facts & Figures

Name: Schulz Group of Companies
Products: welded and seamless pipes, pipe fittings, flanges, forged fittings, Materials: standard stainless steels, special stainless steels, high nickel alloys, duplex and super duplex steels, 6 Mo grades, super austenitics, titanium alloys, clad steels, CuNi grades
Industries: water treatment, oil and gas, nuclear, chemical, petrochemical
Employees: approx. 450 employees worldwide