

Elster Gas Meter Segment wins competition

Elster in Lotte: Factory of the Year

Elster GmbH's Gas Meter Segment at the Lotte site (near Osnabrück, Germany) took part in the "Factory of the Year" competition this year. With overwhelming success: it was awarded the German Global Excellence in Operations (GEO) Award in the category for outstanding improvements over the entire value chain.



This Factory of the Year/GEO Award is considered to be THE benchmarking test for all manufacturing companies. This competition has been organized since 1992 by A.T. Kearney company consultants and "Produktion" business periodical.

While the Factory of the Year Award focuses on peak performance in production, the GEO Award conferred since 1999 honours excellent performance in the entire value chain.

The multi-stage application process for the competition starts with a questionnaire which deals with general information, strategies, success factors, innovative



approaches and improvement initiatives covering every aspect of the nominated area. After the questionnaire had been sifted through and evaluated, there was an on-site appointment on 23 August 2011, attended by Dr. Jordan, partner and member of the board of A.T. Kearney business consultants, and Dr. Lakner, also from A.T. Kearney. The focal points of this audit were assessment of the value chain in the sector of residential gas meter production in general and the innovative approaches and improvement initiatives of the production and assembly processes in particular.

This was where the Osnabrück site impressed the judges with an exemplary automation system for measuring unit V2 production and the process of focussing on eliminating wastage along the entire value chain. This results in minimal stocks and short throughput times.

The winners of this year's "Factory of the Year/GEO AWARD 2011"

Factory of the Year	Volkswagen engine plant, Chemnitz
GEO	Elster Gas Meter Segment, Lotte
Site Development	Bahlsen plant, Barsinghausen
Excellent Assembly	Wolf Heiztechnik, Mainburg

In the category of innovative production methods, the housing deep-drawing process in one go without the use of liquid lubricants (anti-friction coating technology) was just as much a highlight for the audit team as the 100% online tightness test after closing the meters. Both processes were recognized specifically in the summary assessment.

The cornerstone of the success story is integration of all staff along the entire development and production process. The successful result of a process forms the basis of further improvements. In the words of Ulrich Clasemann, Plant Manager and Division Director Residential Metering in the Elster Gas International Business Unit: "This relates to both production units at the site, Gas Distribution and Gas Utilization."

With the new assembly techniques currently to be implemented in the sectors of residential and commercial gas meters, Elster is taking innovative approaches in production and assembly engineering, and is thus confirming its worldwide market



"Factory of the Year/GEO" competition

Many of the most renowned German companies took part in the "Factory of the Year" competition

Some of the award-winners since 1992

Some of the award-winners since 1992 (source: www.geo-award.de)

leadership for diaphragm gas meters. With the investments, "... we have created an excellent starting situation for the pending challenges in the sector of smart meters", as Ulrich Clasemann goes on to say.

The Gas Meter Segment was then announced as the winner of the Global Excellence in Operations 2011 Award in

September. Ralf Geiger, Executive Vice President Gas International, informed all staff in a company meeting convened at very short notice and thanked all of them for their excellent commitment to the company and the entire Elster Group.

The Anniversary Congress on the 20th "Factory of the Year/GEO" competition on 21 and 22 March 2012 in Dresden forms the concluding event of this year's competition. At this congress, the award-winners will be honoured for their achievements. We would be very happy to see you there.

By winning the Global Excellence in Operations (GEO) Award, the Gas Meter Segment at the Osnabrück site now numbers among the award-winners which include many of the most renowned German companies.

We are proud to belong to this illustrious group. The innovative production and assembly engineering and ongoing systematic improvement of processes allow us to implement our high quality and safety standards for the benefit of our customers.

Frank Schlingmann frank.schlingmann@elster.com