

Theodor Zink GmbH focuses on flexibility and individuality: Bergen-based traditional company realigns itself

Th. Zink Fenster und Türen GmbH in Bergen, Lower Saxony, has grown continuously in recent years. Inevitably, the demands on the IT solutions have also increased. While they were still suitable years ago, they increasingly became a hindrance. Together with the management, Managing Director Theodor Zink therefore made the decision some time ago in favor of a future-oriented window design software. Zink trusts in the industry ERP 3E-LOOK in almost all areas.

The switch to productive operation with 3E-LOOK took place in mid-2020, in the midst of the Corona epidemic. Lars Wöhlking, member of the management board, head of work preparation and IT, takes stock: "In the meantime, more than 95% of the order entry takes place in 3E-LOOK, and the trend is increasing. For us it was crucial that we no longer have isolated applications in the company. From the beginning, we were convinced by the consistency of the solution, from order entry to installation planning." Wöhlking, who is also a wood technician and master carpenter, is a man of practical experience who knows exactly what modern window design software must be able to do.

Comprehensive data basis, also in Materials management

The work that was previously done via many Excel tables has now taken on a new quality after the changeover. Due to the integrated data basis in the program, almost all articles are recorded in the system and available for order processing.

Exceptional items that are not listed in the system - for example, for the special construction department - are entered via the so-called free purchase orders in integrated Materials management (MaWi).

With the previous solution, seamless recording in the system was simply not possible. It was precisely these gaps that repeatedly led to delays or problems that caused additional effort. The recording in 3E-LOOK is much more secure than in the previously used system thanks to the comprehensive restrictions. Th. Zink finds these very helpful. The order processing runs noticeably better, says Wöhlking.

One of the special features at Th. Zink is that the technicians are also directly connected to the system during order entry. Not only do technical employees have access to all relevant information, but technical details also enter the system without any detours. Th. Zink employs 10 technicians who both measure and record. In addition, three other employees are only responsible for recording, mostly in their home offices. The restrictions make data entry much more efficient, because usually it can be carried out without queries and errors are nearly eliminated.

In addition to windows and front doors, front door panels are also recorded for production. The Lower Saxons manufacture both insert panels and sash-covering panels. Around 40 percent of these are used in the company's front door production. Around 60 percent are supplied to processors and dealers in northern Germany.

Each panel is provided with a barcode. Corresponding info on the respective product can therefore be visualized at any time on the screens in production. Specifications relating to glazing, ornaments or frames are recorded in additional texts. The articles are then processed via Materials management. This process is mapped completely digitally in 3E-LOOK.

The enormous variety of variants for the panels means that this is a continuously growing process. Around 1.7 million different variants have already been created for the panels.

3E-LOOK also brings advantages for the company's roller shutter production. Because of the possibility to create roller shutters down to the last detail, the printing of technical lists is completely sufficient to produce them. "The lists generated in 3E-LOOK facilitate the work in this area



Large monitors are used in production to display the status of the job being processed.



Sabine, Theodor and Frederik Zink

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enormously", Wöhlking appreciates. Here, too, the cumbersome Excel tables have had their day.

Strong end-customer business requires customer-oriented focus

In recent years, the customer structure has changed significantly. The trade, the property developer and the end customer are served today. This growing share requires Th. Zink to act differently. Lars Wöhlking puts it in a nutshell: "We are characterized by a high degree of flexibility. The service concept is central to our company philosophy. We want to enable our customers to be as individual as possible. This makes high demands on the software. Here 3E-LOOK offers us good possibilities to map the special features in the system", explains Lars Wöhlking and is confirmed by Theodor Zink in his statement.

The majority of material orders is already processed in a paperless way. At the moment, it is mainly main suppliers from whom Th. Zink orders via openTRANS.

The digital supply chain ensures reliable processing right through to delivery. Material bottlenecks can also be largely avoided, provided the supplier has no delivery problems. Lars Wöhlking would like to see more suppliers enable digital order processing via openTRANS in the near future.

A lot has also changed in the areas of installation and service planning. Here, Th. Zink is increasingly relying on digital installation planning. The latest version of 3E-LOOK offers extensive functionalities to map the processes in operation planning but also mobile on the construction site and at the customer.

Th. Zink has invested continuously in the area of installation in recent years and employs 30 fitters today. These must be scheduled, and if necessary, rescheduled. The system must fully support the necessary flexibility. The strategic decision to expand the company's own installation teams was a good one, says Wöhlking. For success, he says, it is immensely important "that order processing runs cleanly right through to installation."

With the measurement and service app in 3E-LOOK, technicians and fitters have all relevant order data in mobile access. In the past, the sales department often lacked important information about service and deadlines.

In addition, all information collected on the construction site goes directly back into the system and is seamlessly available for order preparation or for processing complaints.

At Th. Zink GmbH, they are convinced that they have taken the right path by switching to 3E-LOOK. "We are now more efficient and better able to meet customer requirements," reveals Wöhlking.

The system ensures a high level of security and an overall better process within the company. Th. Zink uses the freed-up capacities for the further development of products and services. Lars Wöhlking also gives 3E customer support good marks. He feels well supported by the support team and appreciates in the intensive cooperation with 3E that one can "develop ideas together."

The IT project shows how important software is also for the strategic orientation of the company. "I am particularly pleased that we were able to win TH. Zink as a customer at that time and that the targeted optimization could be achieved with 3E-LOOK," concludes Gerhard Ebert, owner of 3E Datentechnik GmbH.

A company with tradition and future

Founder Theodor Zink Senior began in 1952 in a barn with the completion of concrete windows and precast concrete parts and, later on, of PVC basement windows. As early as 1981, his son Theodor Zink Junior entered the production of PVC windows on a large scale and developed the company to its current size with about 100 employees. Profiles from Deceuninck and Gealan are used. Window production accounts for the lion's share of about 70 percent. 30 percent is accounted for by front



Lars Wöhlking, Member of the Executive Board and Head of Production Planning and IT at Th. Zink

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doors, side entrance doors and special constructions. Another mainstay is roller shutter construction. The average time from order to installation is about four weeks. The sales area covers the whole of northern Germany.

The strategic renewal at Zink goes far beyond IT. At the turn of the year, a realignment in the company management took place at Th. Zink. Managing Director Theodor Zink will retire from operational responsibility and hand over the company management to his son Frederik Theodor Zink. After a technical education, a successfully completed study in the field of mechanical and automotive engineering as well as three and a half years of professional experience as an engineer and four years as a manager, Frederik Theodor Zink wants to continue the successful family business with innovative ideas, still very high quality standards for all products and services and a lot of joy in the new challenge.