

PRESS RELEASE

25 years of Kanban: WOLF and Würth Industrie Service celebrate Kanban milestone

- **more than 106,000 bins in circulation since then**
- **about 1,000 refills made**

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Bad Mergentheim/Main-Tauber-Kreis. For more than 25 years now, WOLF GmbH, one of the first Kanban customers of Würth Industrie Service GmbH & Co. KG, has relied on the intelligent Kanban supply solutions to achieve maximum security in process, quality and supply. At its main site in Mainburg, the heating and ventilation expert has been using one of the smartest replenishment methods for production materials for a quarter of a century to apply lean management for the inventories, automatically map the reorders and identify any fluctuations in demand at an early stage. An efficient value-added chain cannot be imagined without radio-controlled RFID technology. With the intelligent system solutions, including iSHELF®, iBOX® and iPUSH®, WOLF is setting important course for holistic C-Parts management of the future.

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WOLF: Specialist for healthy indoor climate

With 9 subsidiaries and 60 sales partners worldwide, WOLF is an expert in the field of heating and ventilation in Mainburg, and at the same time has international presence. In addition to Germany, WOLF has subsidiaries and partner companies in more than 50 countries. The company supports planners, installers and end customers in holistically planning and coordinating energy-efficient heating and ventilation solutions. To put it in a nutshell: the products of the WOLF Group provide an optimal indoor climate all over the world – from single and multi-family houses to office buildings, airports and railway stations, hotels and government buildings, football stadiums and leisure parks, hospitals and baths, and industrial environment.

Initial situation: High process and procurement costs

Modern, sustainable C-Parts management means far more than just supplying the required items. In fact, the supplier is now developing into a comprehensive partner who is integrated into the system-based process landscape, and uses holistic, automated systems and services that reduce process costs while increasing productivity, quality and flexibility. Even though C-Parts represent a small proportion of the purchase volume of the company, the procurement efforts involved are high. This is exactly where the supply solutions for the

automated production supply of Würth Industrie Service at WOLF have come into picture since 1997.

The solution: The highly flexible Kanban systems

Under the brand "CPS® C-Product Service", Würth Industrie Service offers manufacturing industry customers highly flexible Kanban solutions for efficient and transparent optimisation of existing production processes. In particular, fully digital systems from the CPS®RFID family are firmly established for replenishing production materials. Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) enables radio-controlled data transmission directly from the customer's production to the central warehouse of Würth Industrie Service. Through fully automated and demand-oriented reordering of production materials, industrial companies benefit from maximum supply and delivery security. The basis for all this is a Kanban bin. In the case of Würth Industrie Service, it is the patented Würth small load carrier, W-KLT 2.0. It is available in various sizes according to the VDA standard and is equipped with an RFID tag by default. Each transponder can be identified by a unique data security number. In the outgoing goods process, the ID of the bin is linked with the corresponding outgoing goods item. Through the various RFID systems, the ID of the bins can be read and transferred to the Kanban-Management-System for data transfer or automated re-ordering of C-Parts for production.

For more than 25 years, the heating and ventilation specialist WOLF has relied on the innovative system portfolio of the C-Parts expert, and is one of the first Kanban customers to rely on highly flexible RFID supply systems to optimise production processes within the assembly. A look into the past indicates the development at WOLF: Starting with simple, labelled bins that were manually provided by a system administrator of Würth Industrie Service for refilling for return transport, WOLF initially opted for conventional Kanban processing. A hand scanner was used to trigger demand. At the beginning of 2017, the RFID transition took place at the Mainburg site. Since then, the reordering process has been completely automated and demand-oriented, for example, using the intelligent shelves iSHELF®. If a bin is empty, then the integrated shelves directly detect it via an integrated sender-receiver-unit in the shelf. The shelf reads the RFID chip and transfers the information about the empty bin directly to the Kanban-Management-System (KMS) of Würth Industrie Service developed in-house. The supply takes place centrally from the European logistics centre in Bad Mergentheim to WOLF. Other RFID-based system solutions are also used. For example, the intelligent pallet box iBOX®, which

immediately transmits the data via RFID as soon as an empty bin is placed in there. The rest is handled altogether autonomously by the system. The demand is transmitted transparently and securely to the ERP system of Würth Industrie Service, and the subsequent delivery of the required items is triggered automatically. The iTAGBOX® also ensures that the data is immediately transmitted to WOLF and the subsequent order of the C-Parts is triggered by holding an RFID tag from the empty bin or a pallet card at the intelligent box. In addition, iPUSH® is used for easily transmitting the demand by pressing a button. With iPUSH®, the order is triggered by pressing the button integrated into the RFID module. "Through RFID-Kanban, we benefit from increased productivity and additional time and cost savings across all areas: Our assembly needs are managed in a lean manner and reordered automatically - without manual intervention.", said Ernst Kranert, Head of Purchasing at WOLF. In more than 40 Kanban storage locations spread over four floors, a total of around 2,200 active bins are equipped with various items, which are used in the assembly of the heating and ventilation solutions at WOLF. The portfolio comprises over 400 different items, ranging from screws, nuts and rivets to sealing bands, drawing parts and small electrical parts. A system administrator of Würth Industrie Service refills them at weekly intervals.

An occasion to celebrate: 25 years of Kanban

On 15th and 16th December 2022, WOLF and Würth Industrie Service celebrated 25 years of Kanban in Bad Mergentheim. An evening event was held to look back on the past cooperation and to talk about future projects. Thomas Schmid, Account Manager at Würth Industrie Service, who has been in charge of WOLF for over eight years, remembers: "Exactly 25 years ago, the first Kanban bins were delivered to Mainburg - from our then location as Industry division of our parent company in Gaisbach. Since then, around 106,000 bins have been in circulation with about 1,000 refills." As a notable innovation pioneer, WOLF is considered one of the longest-standing customers. "It is therefore a matter of course for us to duly acknowledge the loyalty of our customers." said Mr. Schmid.

Photo material:

Captions:



Photo 1: 25 year anniversary.jpg

Caption 1: On 15th and 16th December 2022, WOLF and Würth Industrie Service celebrated 25 years of Kanban anniversary.

Photo source 1: Chiara Brand, Würth Industrie Service GmbH & Co. KG



Photo 2: RFID-Kanban_WOLF.jpg

Caption 2: For more than 25 years, WOLF has benefited from a high supply security security within an efficient value-added chain through RFID-Kanban.

Photo source 2: WOLF GmbH

Brief profile of Würth Industrie Service GmbH & Co. KG

Within the Würth Group, Würth Industrie Service GmbH & Co. KG is responsible for the supply of the industrial sector. Since its foundation in 1999, Würth Industrie Service is located at the Industriepark Würth in Bad Mergentheim, Germany with over 1,750 employees. As a complete C-Parts provider, the company offers its customers a specialised product range of over 1,100,000 items: from screws, connection and fastening technology, tools to chemical-technical products and occupational safety. In addition to the extensive standard range, the strength of the company lies in its customer-specific, logistical and dispositive supply and service concepts as well as in special parts. Under the service brand "CPS® - C-Product Service", the company offers modular solutions, which are customised as per customer-specific requirements. Thereby, the consumption-based and demand-based systems significantly rationalise the processes for purchase, logistics and quality assurance and enable the procurement of small parts in a cost-optimised manner. Logistic and dispositive services such as shelving systems with scanners or a just-in-time supply using Kanban bin systems contribute significantly to increasing the productivity.