



SUCCESS STORY

Schwermetall: Clear structure, consistent goal



The introduction of *PSI metals*, the manufacturing execution system from 4Production, brings maximum transparency and ability to respond in planning and control to the producer of semifinished copper products. All production stages from receiving to shipping are integrated into the system. Schwermetall has real-time access to the most important figures, and thus can recognise and use optimisation potential.

Schwermetall Halbzeugwerk GmbH & Co. KG in Stolberg near Aachen is the world's largest and most modern manufacturer of pre-rolled copper and brass strips. The companies Norddeutsche Affinerie/Prymetall and Wieland-Werke each hold 50% of the shares in Schwermetall. Up to 1,000 tons of strip in all copper-base alloys leave the works daily. They are used for coins and in the automobile and electrical industries, as well as in telecommunication.

4Production was commissioned with the engineering and implementation of its *PSI metals* manufacturing execution system to improve the works' performance with increasing vertical depth of manufacture and to enable quicker response to the demands of the markets. Karsten Neumann, project manager at Schwermetall, explains: "It was particularly important to us when choosing the right provider that the solution already very closely mirrors our specific processes."

Heading for growth

The business organisation, which has developed since the formation of the business in Stolberg in 1972, and the IT structure were only partially integrated. The production planning worked, in large part, with manually managed lists. Delayed feedback and data acquisition errors were therefore hardly to be avoided.

The new system, specially developed for the metalworking industry, simultaneously includes the appropriate production and process know-how. It now combines data flow along the production chain with the ERP data, which management uses. This means that implementation of the corporate strategy can be assured right down to the individual machines.

Transparent factory

"The simple reproduction of our processes confirmed our selection strategy. We have completely eliminated order-related paper", asserts Neumann retrospectively. Since the new system's implementation, the delivery date is the reference variable for all organisational areas.



Pickling line at Schwermetall Halbzeugwerk

Transparency is the most clearly visible and important improvement that *PSI metals* has produced. It provides the basis for being able to influence stocks and throughput times. This means that new, optimised production plans can also be quickly produced, if required.





Managing information, identifying potential

PSI*metals* prepares the production orders. It administers all data requests from production, such as customer, shipping, and production orders, takes care of scheduling and sequence planning, and controls all actions from manufacture to packaging, including resources, labelling, and transportation.

Antiquated material stocks - lovingly called "little old treasures" -, meaning batches that are more than six weeks old, can now be precisely identified. This allows these quantities to be reduced from over 300 to fewer than 200 today. And if they start to rise again, this is immediately noticeable and appropriate measures can be taken.



4Production AG

4Production, a 100% subsidiary of PSI AG, specialises in the planning and control of the production processes in the metals industry. PSI AG is the most focussed solution provider in the metals industry worldwide.

Customers include among others: Aleris, Aurubis, Corus, Georgsmarienhütte, Hydro, Novelis, Salzgitter und ThyssenKrupp..

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The highlights

- Transparent, paperless stock and production information
- Assuring the corporate strategy through real-time scheduling
- Improvement in delivery punctuality (the right quantity at the right time)
- Reduction in reserve stocks and risk buffer times
- Highest availability thanks to a fail-proof system

Outlook

In the next steps, the works' productivity will be further increased. Additional functions will also be realised. "Now we aim to include the bulk material handling upstream of the foundry to be able to plan even better in that area, too. Besides that, we are working on mapping delivery schedules in the system, for example, to further improve deadline monitoring", the project manager sums up the future plans - a clear indication that the strategic partnership with 4Production will be continued.

The convincing results were certainly also a good reason for shareholder Aurubis, Europe's largest copper producer, to have its growth strategy supported by 4Production and the implementation of PSI*metals*.

"We notice perceptible improvements in the three target variables of increased transparency, reduced throughput times, and lower stocks. Now we can evaluate the data obtained and immediately put the findings into organisational practice. This enables optimisation potential to be sustainably used."
Karsten Neumann, *Schwermetall Halbzeugwerk* project manager