

Freinberg, 17 July 2019

Germany strategy proving highly successful

- *Further growth in market share*
- *New site in Franconia successful right from the start*
- *Optimisation of customer service in Austria*

In 2019 Germany continues to be the driver of dynamic growth for the Schwarz Müller Group: in the first six months of 2019, the Group sold 1,200 vehicles there – a new high in sales volume. Having set up the new assembly-line production at all three of its plants, the Group is now focusing on ongoing optimisation of service quality in its Austrian operations. CEO Roland Hartwig made the announcement today, 17 July, at the company headquarters in Hanzing (Freinberg, Upper Austria).

In Germany the Schwarz Müller Group is aiming to double its market share from 5% to 10%. Hartwig stated that, as of mid-2019, the Group had achieved a market share of 6% in Germany despite the current sluggishness in the market as a whole. According to him, the new site in Eltmann, Franconia (Bavaria), has played a significant role in that achievement. “For the first time in Germany we are offering the complete Schwarz Müller comprehensive service. Proximity to customers at the new site has paid off immediately!” said Hartwig. On-time delivery of 90%, even for custom vehicles, is of particular advantage and, thanks to the change in production methods, is now the benchmark across the entire company.

The rental fleet in Germany is also undergoing expansion. According to Hartwig, rental vehicles play an important part in customer service, e.g. during peak periods, and also open doors in the acquisition of new customers by allowing them to experience the products up close. Schwarz Müller is currently seeking a further site in the northern region, and negotiations have already taken place. “With that in mind, the sales structure has been expanded again and divided into two regions: North and South,” said Hartwig.

On track for achieving targets for the year

During the first six months of 2019, the Group produced 5,238 vehicles, which represents a year-on-year increase of 9% (first half of 2018: 4,819 vehicles). According to Hartwig, Schwarz Müller is on track for achieving its targets for 2019 as a whole. Targets (9,900 vehicles; 401 million euros) will be achieved provided the current basic conditions do not change significantly. That is based on the assumption that the current dip in long-distance vehicles does not worsen, the construction industry holds its ground, and the international situation does not cause an abrupt economic downturn.

Focus on customer service in domestic market in Austria

As a follow-up to the complete restructuring of production systems, Hartwig intends to expand the Group’s customer service operations. Schwarz Müller offers a broad range of after-sales services for the entire life cycle of its vehicles, e.g. service and maintenance, repairs and replacement parts service, along with rental and used vehicles. The five Austrian service sites, which employ 270 people, will optimise their services, e.g. with the goal of keeping the service time for customers’ vehicles as short as possible by ensuring repairs are performed quickly. “Our customers expect a superior performance from Schwarz Müller products. A shorter service time can contribute in that respect,” said Hartwig. Opening times at the Lieboch (Styria) site have also been extended recently.

New cooperative venture bringing new technologies

Hartwig is clearly very satisfied with Schwarz Müller’s close cooperation with the vehicle producer Benzberg, headquartered in Schörfling (Upper Austria). Schwarz Müller has added to its portfolio a Benzberg off-road body, which is already selling well. In addition, the two companies are jointly developing a new hydraulic forced steering system. “Benzberg is very well versed technologically, innovative, and is able to rethink commercial vehicles,” commented Hartwig. “We intend to profit from that.”

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	<p>Roland Hartwig, CEO of the Schwarz Müller Group, is very satisfied with the company’s performance in the first six months of 2019.</p>
	<p>The first off-road body in Schwarz Müller’s portfolio has sold well right from the start. The vehicle is a cooperative venture with the vehicle producer Benzberg, which developed it. Schwarz Müller is responsible for production and sales.</p>

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The Schwarz Müller Group is one of Europe's largest full-service providers for towed commercial vehicles. Alongside its three production locations in Austria (Hanzing, in Freinberg), the Czech Republic (Žebrák) and Hungary (Dunaharaszti, near Budapest), the company operates in 21 countries, predominantly in Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. With its focus on the premium sector, the company sets industry benchmarks and with more than 140 years of experience is the specialist for individual transport solutions in demanding industries. These include the construction, petroleum, raw materials and recycling industries, as well as long-distance transport. In 2018 the Schwarz Müller Group manufactured 9,306 commercial vehicles, employed 2,290 people and generated 376 million euros.