

Blick

OBO Bettermann Group Magazine

2
2016

Certified quality

RKSM cable tray in every grade of quality and development

New lightning and surge voltage protection standards

New standards regulating installation

Sümmern – competence centre for sales and logistics

Sales relocates to new site in Iserlohn

BET Test Centre – 40 years of experience and expertise

Committed to quality – it was all still new in 1976



Building Connections

OBO
BETTERMANN



*“Committed to quality.
Since 1911.”*

Andreas Bettermann

Quality and intelligence are the trademarks of our company's solutions. OBO systems are based on high-quality products and designed to connect simply and easily into the environments where they're used. OBO quality management is flexible, adapting quickly to the demands and changes of the market. When we develop and manufacture products for electrical installation, we fall back on the experience of a century of OBO company history.



What the OBO brand promises

A brand is always a promise – a promise that you can trust the quality of its products and solutions. And it is branded quality services that OBO Bettermann offers.

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OBO Bettermann also takes its social responsibility seriously, supplying modern, environmentally compatible products whose manufacturing saves energy from planning to disposal. Naturally, we comply with legal and other regulations in every international market. We promote public safety and are committed to science and research. Our Management Manual defines the details of terms and conditions that are binding on all our workforce, worldwide. Our production processes are subject to constant, ongoing monitoring. OBO's production processes are transparent for its customers and workforce alike. To achieve this we continuously measure, publish and – where necessary – improve all of the targets, processes and data within the company.

Our success is based on the constant development and modernisation of our production facilities.

We are always looking for new ways of improving our production processes. Every person working at OBO's production contributes their expertise to the development of the company. The depth of our production and the level of automation in our processes make us highly flexible and efficient. OBO Bettermann is considered an innovation leader in the global electrical installation market. OBO has been deeply committed to domestic and international standardisation for over thirty years, helping to safeguard high levels of quality and product safety in the world market – and that includes guarding against cheap Far East brands. Many OBO products are certified and guarantee quality when they are used even under extreme conditions. OBO currently holds 405 active industrial property rights. Of these, 355 are German, European or worldwide patents, and a further 50 are designs registered within Germany.

Our development department has its own laboratory – the BET Test Centre – which works together with outside scientists and performs tests to accompany our development work, in compliance with standards, such as on lightning and surge voltage protection components and cable support systems. It also performs EMC tests, other electrical testing, environmental and aging tests, and tests done to customer specifications. OBO supports concepts such as dual study courses in collaboration with technical colleges and universities in order to attract good engineers to the company while they're still studying.

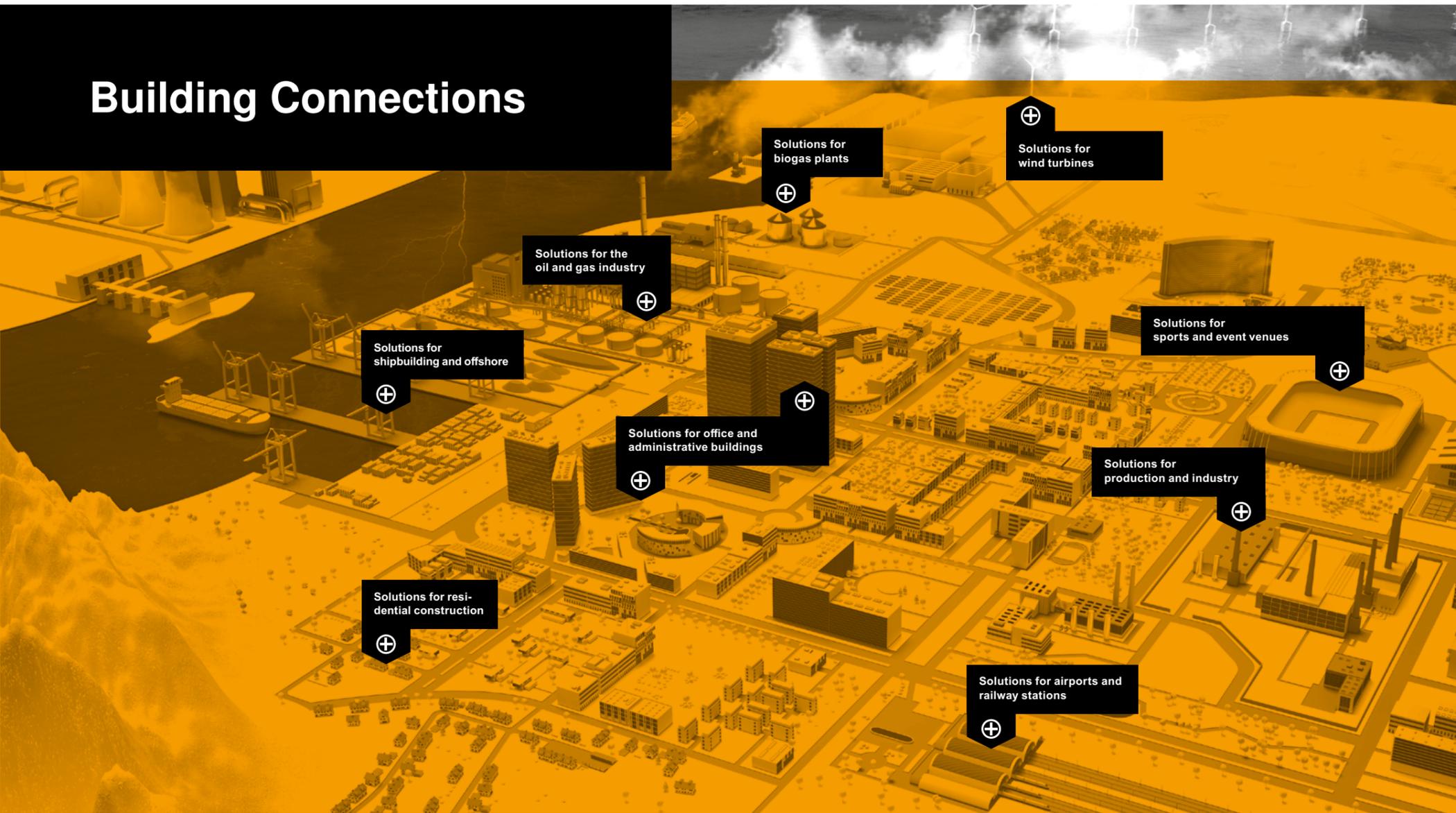
Our company culture and history gives us a high degree of innovative strength. Forty per cent of our products are younger than five years old, 25 per cent are no older than two and a half years. We present between 50 and 70 new products every two years at the world's biggest industry fair, Light + Building in Frankfurt. To maintain this position at the forefront of technological developments, we invest four per cent of our total annual turnover in developing new products.

Quality from OBO – something many are already familiar with. Nevertheless, we wish to keep demonstrating our quality promise – and we have to. That's what this edition of OBO Blick is all about, and we hope you enjoy reading it and gain some useful information in the process.

Andreas Bettermann



Building Connections



New slogan for OBO Bettermann

Did you visit us at this year's Light + Building? Then you will have already seen our new OBO slogan. In March 2016, we began to present our latest and existing solutions for electrical installation under the "Building Connections" slogan. But it's more than a trade fair tagline: "Building Connections" will stay with us and our customers from now on.

We were looking for a motto that describes who we are, what we do and what you can expect from us. "Building Connections" describes our work perfectly – in just two words.

Building Connections

The OBO Solution City: this is where you can see just how apt our new slogan is. We offer comprehensive solutions which enable our customers to create new things and construct connections.

OBO products:

Effectively linked – up and down multiple storeys and across large areas. OBO products enable modern, effective electrical installation, facilitating elegant connections. Our product systems are being evolved constantly and we are always adapting our solutions to the latest requirements of modern electrical fitting. Whether you are a planner, tradesman or architect – you can use OBO solutions to connect buildings and systems perfectly according to your specific requirements.

OBO experience:

Collaboration between generations. OBO's knowledge and a company tradition – more than a century old today – connect 3,700 employees and over 40 subsidiaries. This gives us a rich source of experience which ultimately benefits our customers. Here, the latest technology goes hand in hand with tried-and-tested, practical experience in the trades, and younger employees are in constant conversation with our more experienced colleagues. Collaboration between generations of employees is one of our most important principles and is reflected in our new slogan, "Building Connections".

OBO partners:

Networked worldwide. Its home and roots are in the Sauerland region of Germany, but OBO is now an international company with subsidiaries and partners

all over the world. Using today's digital possibilities, OBO's experts exchange experience throughout the world and work together constantly on new technologies. Working with our partners and associations, we always strive to find the best solutions for our customers.

OBO service:

Connect with us! Trustful links to our customers are our most important asset. That's because we always try to tailor what we offer to your requirements and wishes, and to ensure that every customer is given the solution that best suits them. That's why we're always there to serve you whenever you need help. If you have any questions about our products, if you need help installing anything or assistance with planning complex projects, then our staff will be there to assist you with help and advice in every phase of your project.



Mandatory protection

The new VDE regulations
VDE 0100-443
VDE 0100-534
made surge protection
mandatory from 1.10.2016

From dishwashers to sophisticated smart-home systems, modern electrical installations make our lives ever more comfortable and convenient. But they also mean the need for effective surge protection is growing – and now it may even be mandatory.

How do voltage surges happen?

Lightning often causes serious damage to electrical equipment and systems. It isn't just direct lightning strikes that are dangerous; strikes in the vicinity can also cause harm since dangerous voltage surges can happen up to two kilometres away.

Switching activities can also cause surge voltages; everyday on and off switching, switching inductive and capacitive loads and interrupting short circuit currents can all pose considerable dangers.

Effective protection against surge voltages has become mandatory

In the event of danger, surge protection equipment limits voltages to well below 1,500 V. This means they protect electronic equipment as well as buildings and people against dangerous surges.

For electrical installations to comply with standards, surge protection has to be built in. The new DIN VDE 0100-443 standard defines scenarios in which protective equipment has to be installed. The supplementary installation standard DIN VDE 0100-534 specifies which surge protection equipment has to be used and how to use it properly.

Every planner and electrical fitter should know that the new standard requires that they provide information to the owner/operator of a new building or electrical installation. Omissions and a lack of documented information can lead to recourse claims by the client.

For more information about these new standards visit:
<http://obo.de/de-de/service/5539.html>



“This new standard provides an answer at last to increased demands on electrical and electronic installations.”



1,500,000,000

More than 1,5 billion lightning events occur each year worldwide.



100,000 V

80% of all lightning worldwide produces between 30,000 and 100,000 A, which causes voltage surges of several hundreds of thousands of volts – something no electrical equipment can withstand.



1,500 V

Electronic equipment such as TV systems, PCs and building control systems can withstand short-term surges of up to 1,500 V. If this limit is exceeded it can cause expensive and even irreparable and dangerous damage.



450,000

More than 450,000 incidents of damage are reported to insurance companies each year.





> 10,000 €

Damage to building control systems, heating and air conditioning

> 50,000 €

Consequential damages: failure of complete building management systems, heating, lighting and security systems, and risk of fire

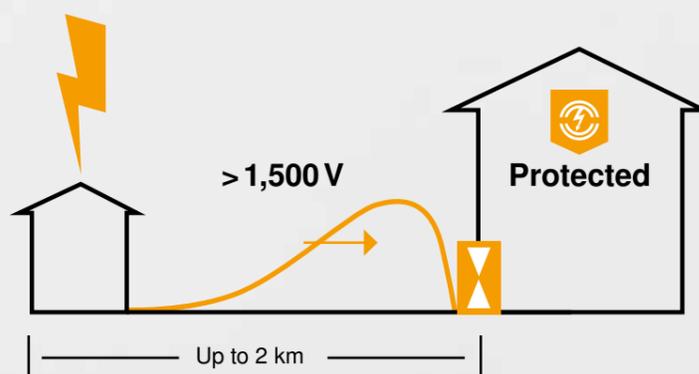
... Beyond price

Personal damage and irreparable loss of data



Dangerous voltages over 1,500 V

Equipment such as TV systems, PCs and heating and building control systems can withstand short-lived voltages of up to 1,500 V, but this limit can quickly be exceeded many times over by the effects of lightning and switching operations. OBO surge protection equipment limits voltages to well below 1,500 V.



Summary:

Surge protection safeguards the function and convenience of a system.



The road to quality



Part 1: Developing a wholly new product

1. Research and development

The development of the RKS-Magic® clickable cable tray proved that creativity can go hand in hand with compliance with every standard and quality demand. At the outset, it was just an off-the-wall idea: we wanted a snap-in connection; a cable tray without complex screw connectors. This wild idea gradually became a product which satisfies every need, including quality. Our research and development department developed a clickable cable tray which is just as strong and reliable as a conventional one.

Info: IEC 61537

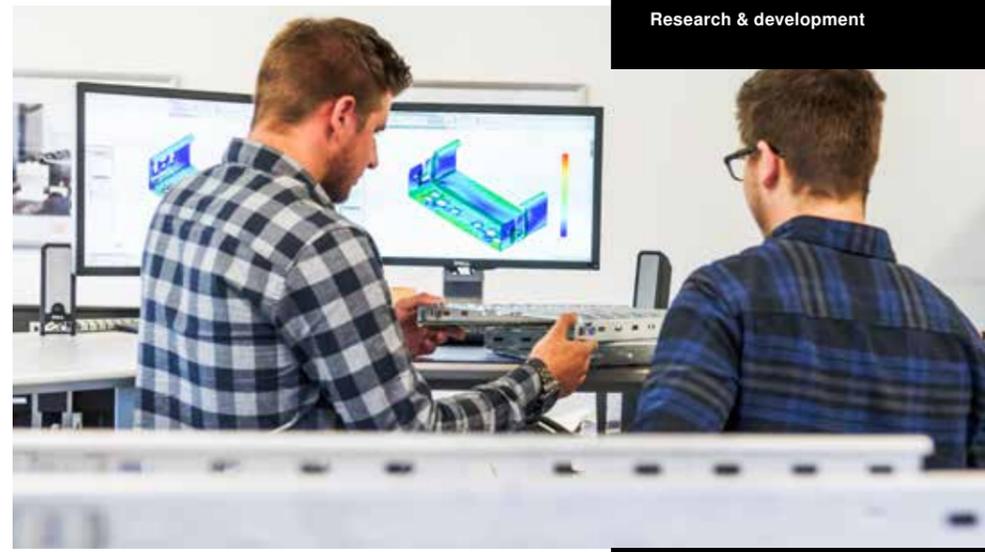
The IEC 61537 product standard defines all of the major safety and quality requirements that cable support systems have to fulfil. That's why this standard is at the centre of every new development in the field and was certainly instrumental in the functional specifications which RKS-Magic® had to fulfil. These specifications defined the requirements the new product had to meet, taking into account all of the relevant standards, and provided a quality guide for the developers as they worked.

Substandard products don't sell well – that much is clear. If you want to succeed you have to supply quality. OBO Bettermann has been in the business for more than 100 years and is now considered a world market leader and innovation driver in electrical installation, which is partly because of our ambitious quality policy. OBO customers expect products that fulfil the highest quality standards, and we enjoy meeting and even exceeding their expectations.

At OBO, we place emphasis on ultimate quality in every area. It starts with fundamental things such as safety at the workplace, and proceeds into detail, such as testing particular products under extreme conditions in usage scenarios. That's when our engineers go to great lengths to supply OBO customers with the best possible quality.

Tracing the development of a new product is an excellent way of understanding how the various cogs of quality assurance mesh at OBO. RKS-Magic®, a pioneering cable tray product, was developed from the initial idea all the way to the final screw at our headquarters in Menden, and is still produced there in high quantities.

We looked more closely at the development and ongoing production of our clickable cable tray and discovered a quality cycle of the highest calibre.



Research & development

2. Working in association

Working closely with industrial associations ensures that all of the interests of the industry are met, and it's often part of the development of a new product. New standards had to be identified for the clickable cable tray, which had never been made before. And of course, OBO couldn't define them alone; it had to develop them with all of its association partners.

"We introduced the new standards for RKS-Magic® to the standardisation body called the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). That was especially important to us because it meant independent quality requirements could be developed on which our customers can rely."

Andreas Bettermann



A. Bettermann talking to the Development department



3. BET Test Centre

The quality of our products is put to the test even in the development phase, when it is regularly gauged against existing standards. In the case of RKS-Magic®, OBO's product testers at our BET Test Centre were especially concerned with the questions of whether a click connection could withstand very high loads. And also, how conductive was the magical new cable tray?

Mechanical testing

The initial question was: How much load can RKS-Magic® withstand? It had to achieve what is referred to as the "safe working load". The testing conditions were stipulated by the KTS product standard IEC 61537, ensuring a dependable, independent test result. The RKS-Magic® tests showed that the finished cable tray achieved a loading limit of up to 2.1 kN/m at a support spacing of 1 m. This result fulfilled every standard and expectation and proved that clicking is just as strong as screwing.

Testing electrical conductivity

Electrical conductivity is highly relevant to the safety of every cable tray – including clickable ones. The measurements taken at the BET Test Centre provided precise results in the order of millivolts and microvolts. RKS-Magic® passed the tests more than satisfactorily: clickable connectors are just as good at equalising potential as screwed ones, so they fulfil the standard and ensure maximum safety.

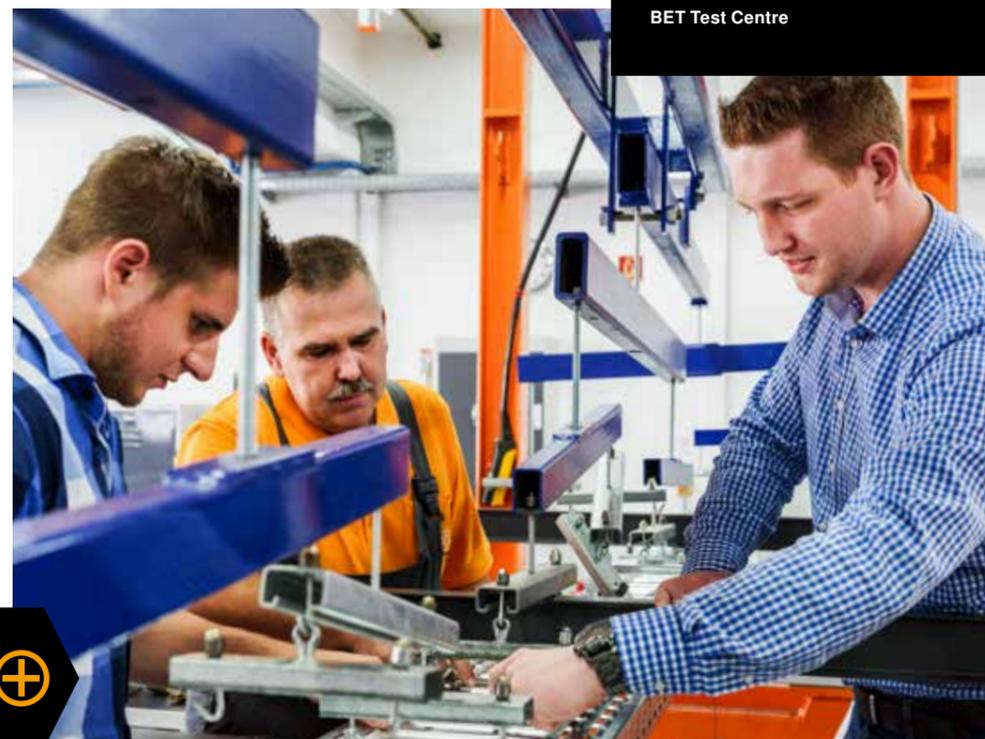
Testing criteria

And for our in-house tests it's quite natural that quality and independence are top priority, which is why:

- The BET Test Centre is subject to the standard on testing laboratories, DIN ISO 17025.
- All of the measuring instruments at the BET Test Centre and every other department are calibrated in compliance with DIN EN ISO 9001.
- All of our test results are documented accurately and can be viewed at any time by auditors such as VDE.
- Fire testing is performed at an independent material testing centre according to the requirements of DIN 4102-12.



BET Test Centre



BET Test Centre

4. Fire protection test

Electrical function maintenance in the event of a fire is an especially important quality criterion. That's because safety-relevant systems such as emergency lighting, alarm systems and sprinklers absolutely have to keep working if a fire breaks out. This is why OBO subjects all its new KTS systems to fire testing. The whole cable system is tested, consisting of the routing system and the cables or lines with integrated function maintenance. In this test, RKS-Magic® withstood temperatures of up to 1,000 °C and the snap-in connection remained stable. Deformation tests also revealed that the magic cable tray remains reliable and safe in the event of fire.

VDE certification

Official certifications confirm the quality of our products. For our RKS-Magic® that meant that after six months of inspections involving well over 100 different tests, VDE's auditors approved the clickable cable tray as a certified product. A comprehensive test report documents and confirms all of the results. RKS-Magic® has to prove itself every year anew as part of our works inspection, during which VDE ascertains whether this OBO product still fulfils all of the conditions of certification and may still carry the VDE mark.



VDE certification

Part 2: Production

5. Ordering goods

We usually order raw materials every three months, which allows us to secure the best quality in advance. We provide our dealers with limited tolerances so that the quality margins are tight from the outset.

Sustainability as a quality feature

Our environment is our most valuable asset. That's why we strive towards sustainable production, which benefits our customers as well. Did you know that the raw materials used to make RKS-Magic® consist of 20% to 25% recycled metal? It's good news for people such as architects, who have to demonstrate that the materials and products they use in their buildings are environmentally compatible if they are to be certified in compliance with DGNB, LEED or BREEAM (EPD certificate). The cuttings and scrap created when punching the cable trays are fed back into recycling and can be reused. Our factory in Menden, which produces RKS-Magic®, also uses 100% green electricity.

6. Quality testing at incoming goods

The raw materials used to make our cable trays are delivered directly to our Menden factory in the form of rolled-up sheet metal called raw coils, which have to pass their first quality tests as soon as they arrive. Our staff uses calibrated testing equipment to closely examine the quality of the material and surface and the thickness of the finish. If the material doesn't fulfil our exacting standards then it won't be used in production. We also regularly use our tearing machine to test the quality of raw coils. Punched-out samples are torn and analysed and the results provide us with information about many of the material's mechanical properties.

Quality you can track

Transparency is important to us. Once a raw coil has been received and tested, it's given its own label showing all of the important information about it as well as its own coil number. This number is printed onto the steel in production, allowing production to be tracked from beginning to end – and in many cases, all the way to the end product on the building site.

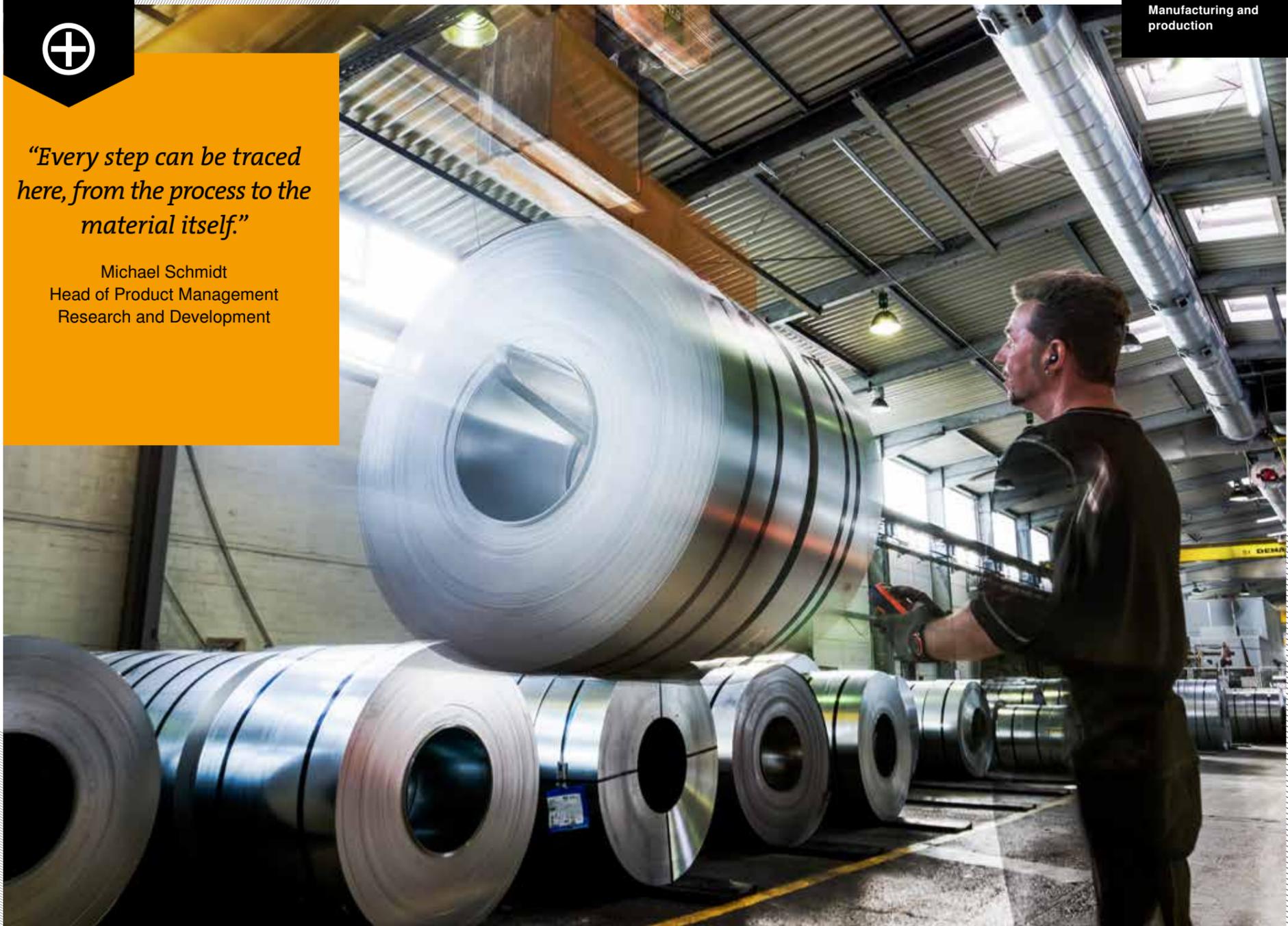


Certification and standards

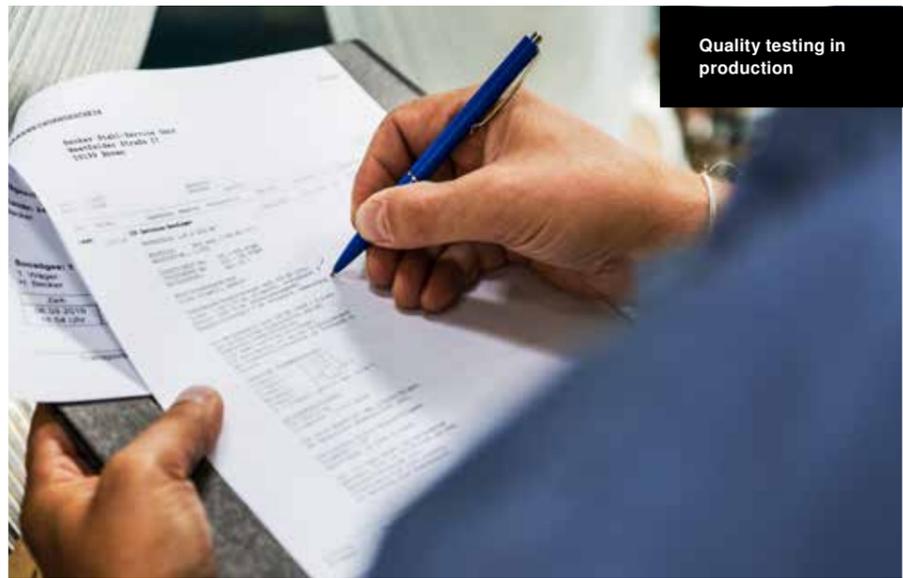


“Every step can be traced here, from the process to the material itself.”

Michael Schmidt
Head of Product Management
Research and Development



The ID of our raw material



Quality testing in production



Manufacturing and production

3



Product ID

It's especially important to us that every stage of production can be tracked. Every step in production can then be recorded and, if necessary, approved and adapted.

The product's "ID" is added to at every stage of production, and constitutes part of quality assurance.

Product ID – traceability at every stage of production



Part 3: Quality assurance

7. Quality assurance in production

Before every important step in production, our staff checks the materials being used: for example, does the primary material comply with the target dimensions? Does the punched sheet have the correct thickness and width? Every single stage of quality assurance is carefully documented. In the punching machine, a camera checks the functional dimensions of the tray. The finished cable tray is then monitored using various test gauges, to check that the width and wall heights are correct. In the case of RKS-Magic®, regular click-tests ascertain whether cable trays snap together properly.

8. Quality tests in the research and development department

We test to see whether the new product fulfils our expectations. A year after it was launched, RKS-Magic® was once again tested in detail by our research and development department. Did the cable tray fulfil our expectations? What could we still improve? Which accessories should we develop? Feedback from our product managers is also very important at this point because it tells us how customers are receiving the new product. And outside of our routine quality tests, new products also find their way back into the R&D department if we notice during production that they need to be improved. In which case, our developers immediately work on improving them.



Camera-based monitoring in the punching machine



Random sampling on the product



Monitoring in research and development



Final testing at research and development



Sales

excursion relocation 2017



There will be changes at OBO in early 2017. Germany's sales department is relocating from Menden to the Sümmern area of Iserlohn. This move is part of a broader restructuring of OBO's entire sales department in Germany. Up until now, OBO products manufactured throughout the world have always arrived first at our central German warehouse, from which they are sent on to customers. But OBO production has grown so big that this system is reaching its limits. Segment warehouses at the various production sites are designed to help, and sales organisations will market the products at the various locations.

Changing the location of sales will also mean more flexibility and speed. Moving from Menden to Iserlohn-Sümmern means bigger storage areas, and therefore more opportunities to stock products. A large administrative area is being set up for sales.



133
office chairs



43
office plants



574
ballpoint pens



158
computer monitors



158
telephones



83
coffee cups



To Sümmern



Availability



Delivery time



Flexibility

"This system guarantees our customers the continuation of top availability and fast delivery – in other words, the OBO service they are used to."

Andreas Bettermann



Logistics can be planned –
and that includes relocating
within a company.



Questions and answers

Interview with

Andreas Bettermann

What are the benefits of restructuring sales? And what is the purpose of moving to Iserlohn? We asked OBO Managing Director Andreas Bettermann.

Mr Bettermann, a big move is scheduled for the beginning of 2017. Who exactly will be moving where?

Our sales department, which is currently based in Menden, will be moving to Iserlohn – to the Sümmer area of town, to be precise. This new sales site is only around ten kilometres from our headquarters in Menden, but it offers numerous advantages.

What are those advantages?

We've acquired a large building in Iserlohn-Sümmer which offers us a lot of new opportunities. Storage space in Menden recently became too small. Because we always want to make sure our many different products are available to our customers, we needed more space. And we found it at Iserlohn.

Will the whole sales department make the move?

Yes it will. We're setting up a big administration area at our new sales site where our sales staff will be able to work. Our salespeople will also begin to manage five warehouses across Germany. We've set up another warehouse near to Hamburg to create even better stocking structures. This system guarantees our customers the continuation of top availability and fast delivery – in other words, the OBO service they are used to.

German sales will be separated off into a "GmbH & Co KG" company structure in 2017. Will that have an impact that customers will notice?

We expect a positive impact. By separating this operation off we will turn our sales activities into an independent company which is separated structurally from production. This separate sales company will then be able to act more quickly and independently – allowing it, for instance, to adjust itself faster to the needs and requirements of our customers. This restructuring is an important part of gaining more flexibility, which in the end will benefit our customers.



Forty years BET Test Centre

Committed to quality

How much strain can our cable support systems (KTS) actually take? This was the question at the inception of our comprehensive tests which we use to assess the quality of our OBO products today. Back in 1975, we approached our cable trays with weights, plumb line and measuring tape, and we would measure by hand the loads the systems could withstand. The first tests were a matter for the boss: Ernst Bettermann, manager at the time and father of Ulrich Bettermann, was often there assessing the tests.

A lot has happened since then. On the basis of this manual testing process we gradually developed highly technical testing procedures. Regulated testing conditions and high-tech testing equipment today form the basis for comprehensive, independent quality tests which we're able to perform directly at our Menden factory.

Aside from our KTS systems, we have been testing our transient and lightning protection systems since the 1980s. When the BET Test Centre moved to the heart of OBO production in Hüingsen in 2008, we were able to properly integrate the lightning current generator into the new facility. Our specialists can now trigger as many as 300 lightning impulses each day.

From the improvised placement of weights to a standardised, highly technical testing process, our quality tests have steadily improved over the past 40 years. But we're still delighted every time we can state at the end of a test that the product earns the title of "Quality made by OBO".

Where forces prevail for the good

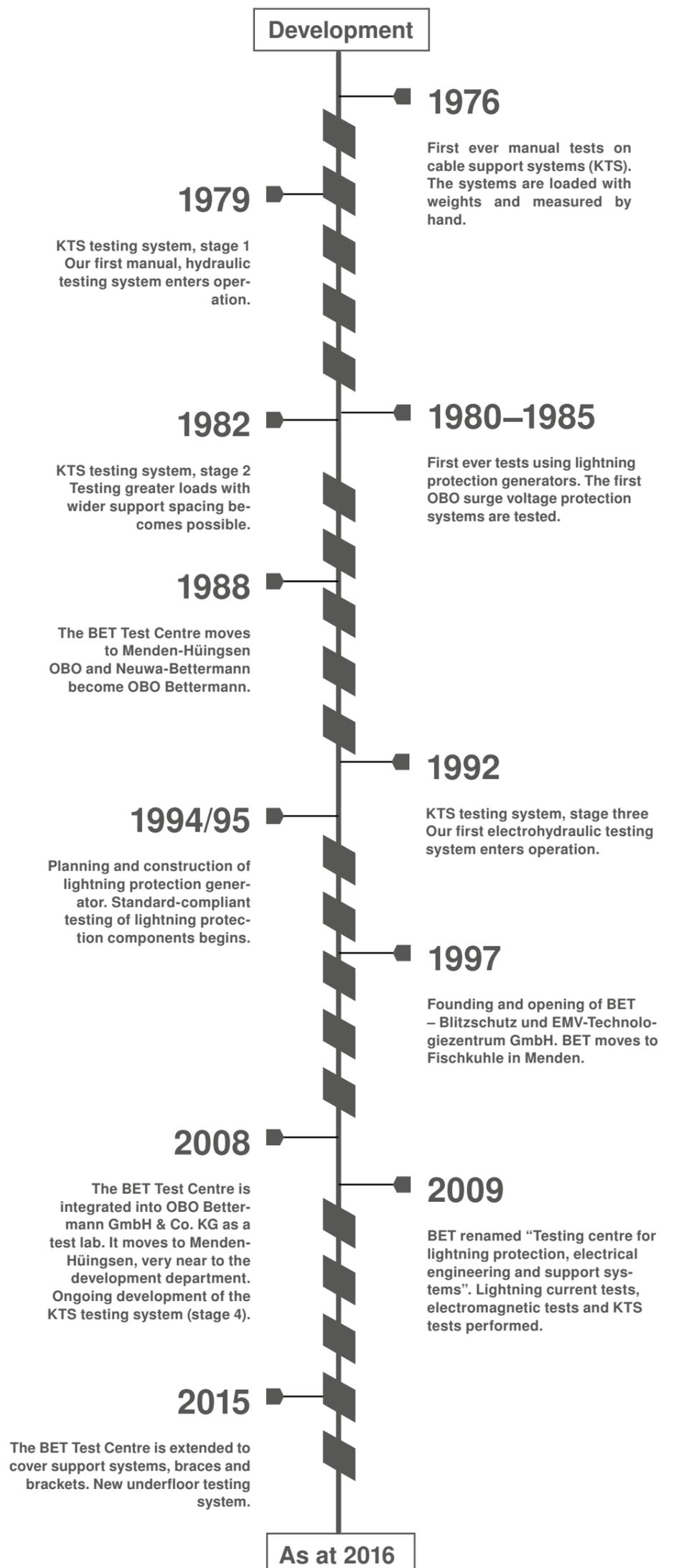
BET has carried the full name "Testing centre for lightning protection, electrical engineering and support systems" since 2009. Our own testing laboratory is currently situated centrally in Menden-Hüingsen, which allows it to work especially closely with OBO engineers in the research and development department. Do the products they develop fulfil all the standards? And do they comply with the particular needs and requirements of developers and customers? These are the questions that define the various tests that take place at BET.

The BET Test Centre now has a test generator for lightning current tests producing up to 200 kA, and a hybrid generator for surge voltage tests at up

to 20 kV.

Electrical testing apparatus enables insulation tests, conductivity tests and EMC tests.

Our testing system for cable support systems was built by OBO itself and now enables tests involving loads of up to seven tonnes. Highly qualified OBO specialists perform their tests alongside the development process and also as part of certification work, as and when needed, and when customers request it.





Back then it was all uncharted territory

The first tests were a matter for the boss: Ernst Bettermann, manager at the time and father of Ulrich Bettermann, was often there assessing the tests.



1976 First manual tests



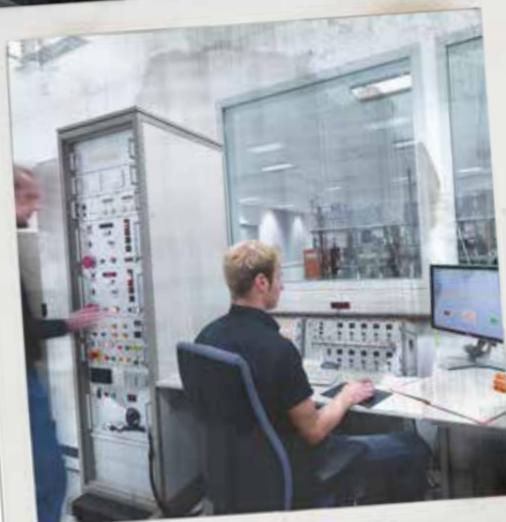
1979 KTS testing system stage 1



1997 The name BET is born



1995 Planning and constructing the lightning current generator



2016 Testing, inspecting and improving:
Everyday work at OBO's BET Test Centre

New products 2016/17

PYROCOMB® Intube ⊕

Sealing using half-shells in system flooring

The PYROCOMB® Intube insulation system is ideal for cables that have already been laid.

The new CTS-HP200 version is a half-shell, used primarily in underfloor installations. Simply place the half-shell around the lines and position it with the insulating surface on the floor using adhesive tape. You may completely fill the interior space. You then close off the half-shell with just one foam plug at one end, and seal the surface using the ASX fire protection coating.

This enables it to be done from one side. In the event of fire, the interior coating of the PYROCOMB® Intube foams up and closes off the half-shell completely, safely preventing the transmission of fire and smoke.

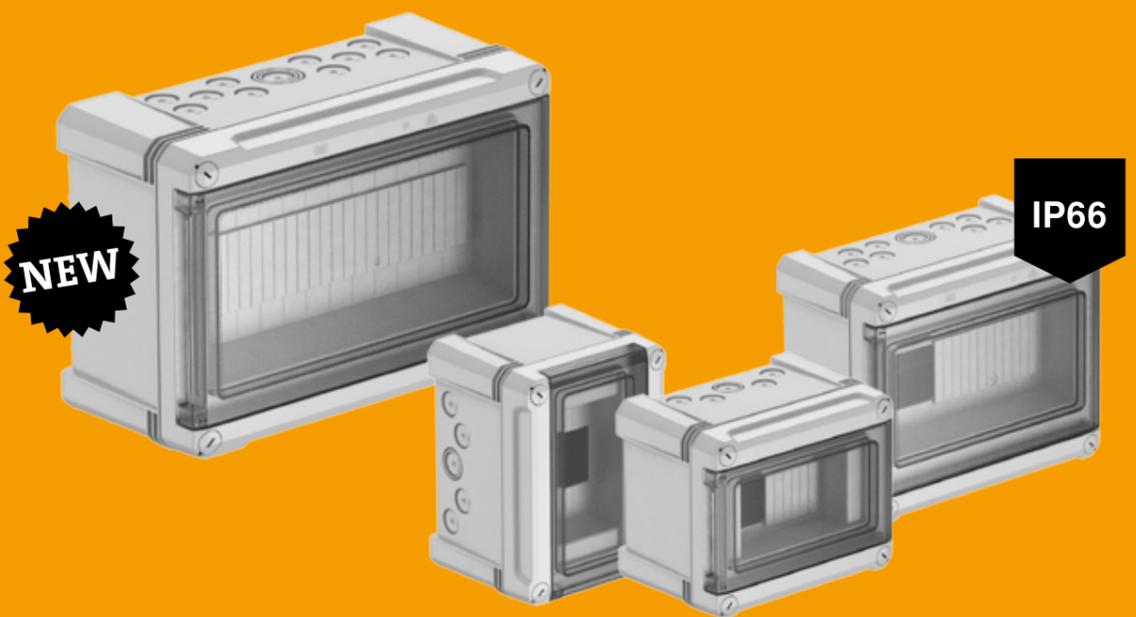


Distribution boxes ⊕

Strength and safety

OBO Bettermann's SDB distribution boxes can stand up to quite a lot, and this versatile plastic housing is completely new to OBO's range. It's tough and reliable, ensuring that electricity remains available at all times in the adverse environments of industrial production.

These high-grade distribution boxes made of polycarbonate protect electrical installations that are exposed to extremely harsh conditions. They fight off abrasive cleaners, cold and heat, as well as impacts and knocks in industrial and public areas.



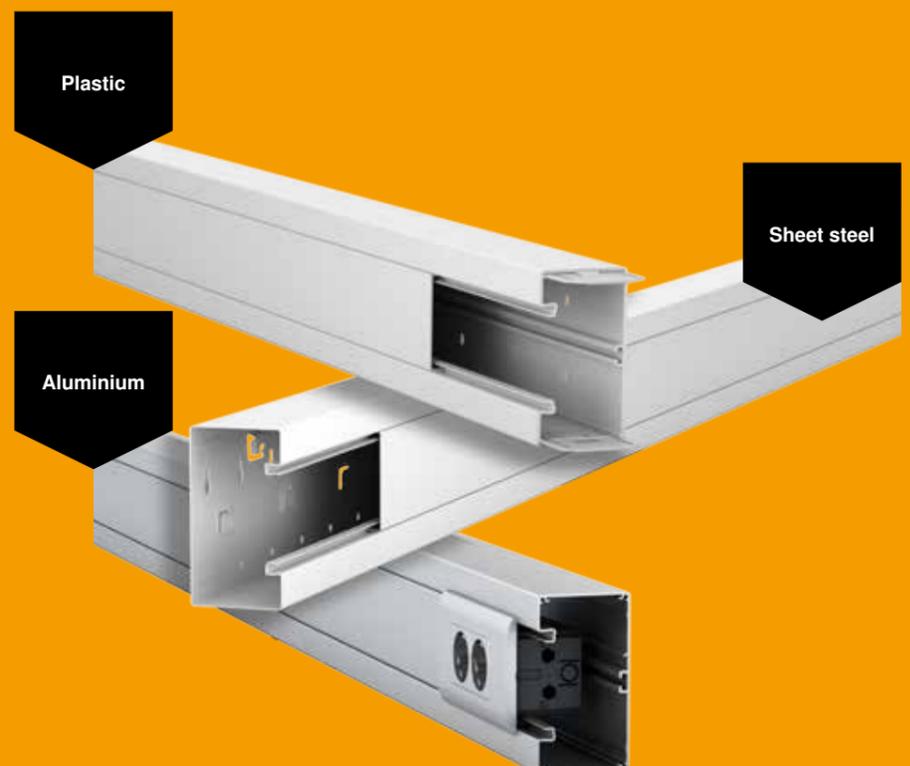
Rapid 45/80 ⊕

The new Rapid 45: A chameleon among trunking

The new Rapid 45-2 device installation trunking offers impressive diversity and adaptability. It combines symmetry, consistent colour quality and technical flexibility in one system. This trunking now includes an additional width to cover even more applications. In its plastic and aluminium versions, a 130 mm model is available alongside the familiar 100 and 165 mm versions. A three-compartment width of 160 mm is also available in the plastic trunking range. And another practical feature is that the plastic and aluminium device installation trunking is now designed symmetrically, which enables fittings such as T piece adapters and end pieces to be used more flexibly.

Rapid 80: Triple power in plastic, aluminium and sheet steel

Rapid 80 combines design and function into one convincing system. The system's components are standardised throughout, which allows the three trunking types in plastic, aluminium and sheet steel to be used separately but also in combination. Accessories such as end pieces and variable fittings go with all of the different versions. This is the ideal solution for areas where a lot of things have to be installed.



LSC I+II



Lightning monitoring

The new LSC I+II lightning current meter helps you keep an eye on lightning incidents at all times. It captures pulse currents and saves them permanently with their dates and times, so you can check at any time using a practical LCD whether and when lightning has struck the lightning protection system. That is important because, according to VDE 0185-305 (IEC 62305), a lightning protection system has to be serviced after being struck.

Thanks to its IP65 protection type, the lightning current meter is suitable for use indoors and out. Its cable clips enable it to be fitted to round and flat conductors. The meter can be fitted straight onto the lightning conductor or on the PE line belonging to the surge voltage protection device. The meter's internal, long-life lithium batteries allow it to be used for an extended period without maintenance (five years).



GES R2



Underfloor solutions for restricted spaces

The round floor sockets in the GES R2 series supply data and power to where they are needed. These floor sockets are suitable for floors that are cleaned dry or wet, depending on the cover version. OBO GES R2 floor sockets are especially suitable as underfloor solutions where an inconspicuous appearance, high load-bearing ability and plenty of versatility are required.

More connection space

The GES R2 installation box is fitted with two sockets as standard. There is an option for up to two data connections next to the socket on the side. GES R2 series floor sockets are available in various materials. The die-cast zinc version comes surface-treated in nickel, chrome, old copper and old brass colours. The die-cast zinc models come with either a hinged cover or a tube body for floors that are cleaned wet. The plastic cover features a useful cord outlet.

Modular design

The GES R2 floor sockets have been newly designed and have as much as 100 per cent more installation space than the predecessor model, the GESRM2. A modular structure consisting of screed box, installation box and service outlet facilitates easy configuration for different areas of use.



BKRS



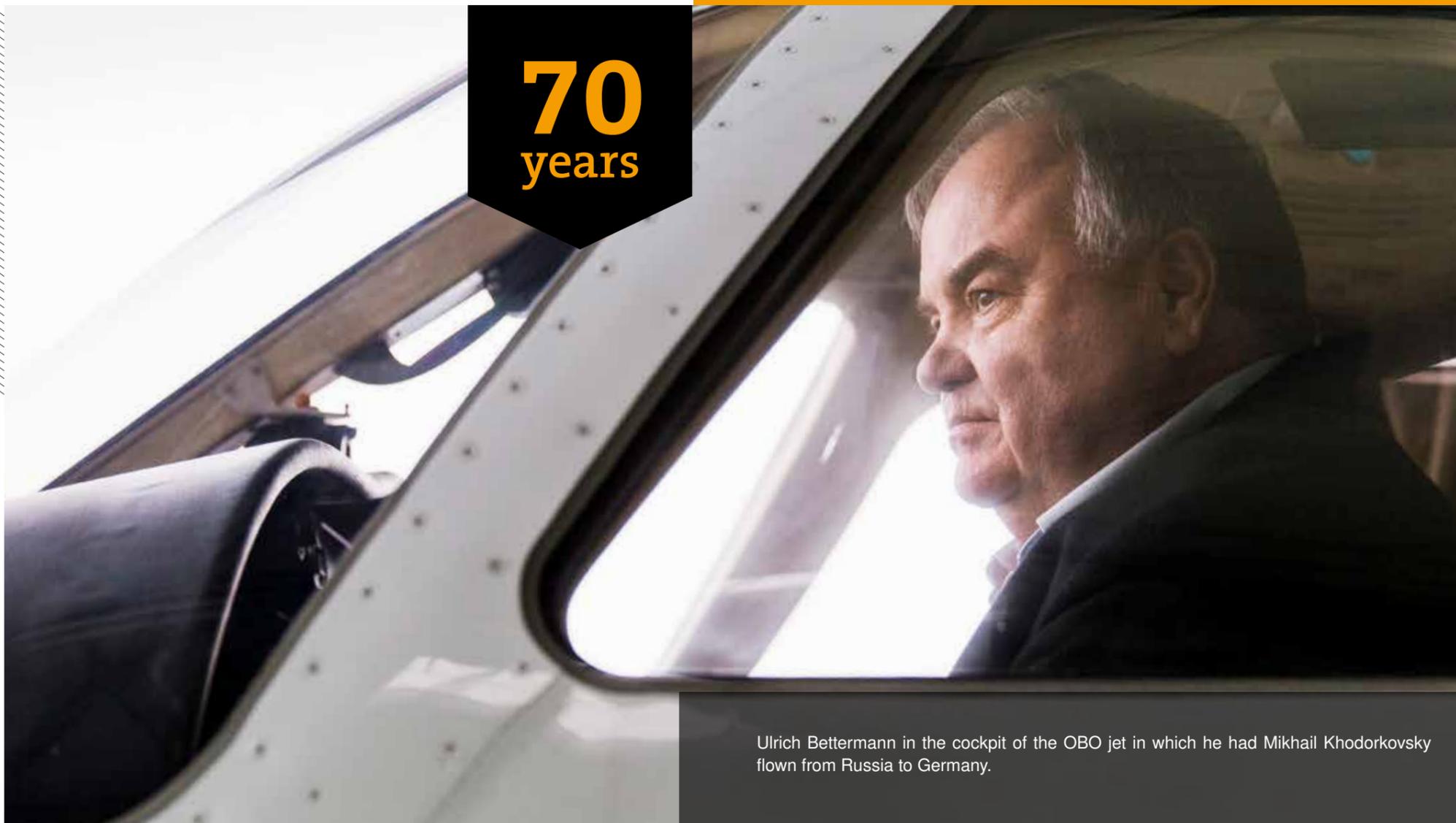
Safeguarding your every step

The BKRS walkable cable tray system provides safe access to machines and plants. Its trays, covers and Z-shaped barrier strips can all withstand heavy loads thanks to their design. OBO guarantees them under walking-loads of up to 9 kN, depending on the installation method and provided all the installation requirements have been met. Covers with aluminium chequer plate are non-slip and safe to stand on, minimising the risk of accidents in daily use.

To help achieve that even more effectively, OBO has expanded its system of heavy-duty, walkable BKRS cable trays. With wall heights of 100 and 110 mm they are designed for the harshest environments such as in areas around machinery and in automated production facilities involving robotic systems. Six different widths of between 100 mm and 600 mm mean there is a cable tray for every occasion.



70
years



Ulrich Bettermann in the cockpit of the OBO jet in which he had Mikhail Khodorkovsky flown from Russia to Germany.



50 years of VDE

Gold for OBO: Rudolf Cater (centre), Chairman of the Association for Electrical, Electronic and Information Technologies (VDE) in Bergisch Land, presented OBO's Managing Director Andreas Bettermann and Head of the Marketing Department Matthias Gerstberger (right) with a golden badge of honour and certificate for 50 years of membership at VDE.

OBO Bettermann has been constantly involved with this testing and standardisation organisation since 1966, and supports its activities. OBO has been very active in many standardisation bodies for half a century. The company was there when the standard for cable support systems (DIN EN 61537, now IEC 61537) was established 30 years ago. OBO currently supports product standardisation through 16 employees in over 40 working groups and technical committees in Germany, Europe and the rest of the world.

Congratulations Ulrich Bettermann.

Ulrich Bettermann began his entrepreneurial career in daring fashion. He joined OBO in 1968 as a 22-year-old. Two years later he became a shareholder, but his co-partners in the family didn't want to venture anything new, preferring to rest instead on their money. Ulrich Bettermann was cut from a different cloth. He indebted himself up to his neck, paid out the previous owners with a nine-figure sum, and invested the same again in production and sales. "He is an internationally active, extremely industrious businessman who, were he somewhat older, could have easily emerged during the German Economic Miracle," wrote the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper when Ulrich Bettermann celebrated his 70th birthday on 14 October.

He can look back on a successful life's work but prefers not to reminisce, because "one of the most successful German businessmen" (*Die Zeit*) remains extremely active in affairs. He recently opened a new factory in Russia with 200 employees together with his son Andreas Bettermann (41); as usual, Christoph Bettermann (31), his younger, wheelchair-bound son, was there.

Founded in 1911, no one has shaped the company like Ulrich Bettermann. "Our success story bears his signature; my father began our ongoing process of internationalisation four decades ago," says Andreas Bettermann, who now operatively leads the family business following a successful transition in the fourth generation.

Ulrich Bettermann secured the continuation of OBO as a family business by setting up trusts. "The stock exchange has never been to my taste. Family businesses think in terms of generations. They build trust, security, prospects and partnerships for customers, workforce and suppliers alike," he says.

Ulrich Bettermann lives and works in five countries. He acquired a jet pilot licence at an early stage and established a fleet of aircraft based at their own OBO airstrip at Arnsberg/Menden. He's not only active in business; he makes headlines with his extensive networking and social commitments, too. Hans-Dietrich Genscher was an especially close friend. He meets Viktor Orbán several times a year. Gerhard Schröder was recently in Menden on a visit. In 2013, Ulrich Bettermann famously had Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who had just been pardoned by Russian president Vladimir Putin, flown to Germany on an OBO plane. "Flying Sauerländer" was the title recently used by *Handelsblatt* for its birthday article on Ulrich Bettermann.

Ulrich Bettermann talking to Alexander Beglov



New factory opened in Russia

OBO Bettermann officially opened its new factory 450 kilometres south of Moscow in the Russian special economic zone of Lipetsk at the end of September. This factory will produce cable support systems, lightning protection systems and fastening materials. Included among the family company's inaugural guests was Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak. Production at the new OBO facility had already begun in February. It currently employs over 100 people and this number will soon double to 200. OBO's facility consists of production and administrative buildings on a plot of around 50,000 square metres. Success on the Russian market depends a lot on local production. OBO's Lipetsk plant also supplies countries in the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and soon will in China.

"Globalising our production will safeguard OBO's overall success, and with it jobs at locations all over the world."
Andreas Bettermann



OBO employees from the Middle East gathered at OBO Hungary.

Middle East in Budapest

Members of OBO's sales team gathered together at the Hungarian factory in Bugyi and the nearby capital, Budapest. Present at the conference were colleagues from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Lebanon and Egypt. They were welcomed to the three-day series of talks by OBO's Managing Director Andreas Bettermann, who reported on the company's status and outlook ("OBO Vision 2020"), and in particular on cable management project solutions.



Award: Top 500 Family Businesses

The Foundation for Family Businesses commissioned surveys by reputable economic research institutions on the importance of large family businesses.

And in September 2016, the foundation announced that OBO Bettermann is one of the "Top 500 Family Businesses" in Germany. Family companies are the backbone of Germany's successful economy. OBO is very glad to belong among them.



OBO takes over Chalfant in the USA

OBO Bettermann now has its own production facility in the USA alongside its distribution company at King of Prussia (Philadelphia). The company Chalfant in Brunswick/Elyria (Cleveland) was taken over on 1 August 2016.

Chalfant has been active in the US cable support systems sector since 1945. As a leading SME, the company, which is based near Lake Erie, represents an ideal addition to OBO's US product portfolio which includes the aluminium cable ladders typical of the country. This acquisition will also extend OBO's sales networks across the entire USA.



"Supplier of the Year 2015" at IMELCO

The "IMELCO Networking Event" takes place every year parallel with the EUEW Conference. EUEW, an association of European electrical wholesalers which is now active worldwide, uses this annual meeting of leading associations and corporations in European electrical retail to conduct animated talks with internationally strategic suppliers in a relaxed atmosphere and pleasant surroundings. This year's invitation was to Lisbon, which is where the "IMELCO Networking Event" also took place. It was an especially successful meeting for OBO, which, entirely unexpectedly, received three awards as part of the first ever "IMELCO Supplier Award Program". In addition to the "Marketing Support" and "Delivery and Logistics" categories, OBO won the main prize of "Supplier of the Year 2015". The awards were received by Frank Dahl, our Global Account Manager, accompanied by our Sales Director for Southern Europe, Benjamin Echtermann, IMELCO's Director Elena Reignier, and the President of the Association, Joan Garcia i Duch. We would like to take this opportunity to thank IMELCO once again for its "Oscar". This is yet another motivation for us to continue to build upon our trusting and successful collaboration with IMELCO in the future.

Sales Germany relocates



From 01.01.2017 you will find us at our new OBO site in Iserlohn-Sümmern.

Of course you will continue to enjoy our usual service. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

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