

40 YEARS OF ENCLOSURE SYSTEMS





DEAR READER

In the latest issue of our customer magazine INSIDE, we are celebrating 40 years of OKW Gehäusesysteme GmbH and providing a comprehensive review of our journey over these four decades. Since 1984, we have been manufacturing and delivering enclosures and tuning knobs worldwide under the slogan 'To each his own housing'.

This edition also features an in-depth exploration of building services systems. We cover not only the smart control of living areas but also enclosure applications in public buildings and digital factories.

Additionally, we provide updates on various topics, including the many ways we can transform a standard product into a customised solution, the progress of our current construction projects, and the introduction of new employees to the OKW family.

The management of OKW wishes you an enjoyable read.

IMPRINT

Magazine

INSIDE – the OKW Customer Magazine

Publisher

Odenwälder Kunststoffwerke Gehäusesysteme GmbH
Friedrich-List-Str. 3, D-74722 Buchen
Tel. +49 (0) 62 81 404-00
Fax +49 (0) 62 81 404-144
E-Mail Info@okw.com
Web www.okw.com

Management

Dipl.-Betriebswirtin (BA) Yvonne Ellwanger,
Dipl.-Ing. Christoph Schneider

Editors

Patricia Hart, Bastian Heger, Kay Hirmer, Lilly Kempf, Elias Noe,
Kerstin Riedling, Anne Schneider

Graphics

Kerstin Riedling

Print

Flyeralarm GmbH, Alfred-Nobel-Str. 18, D-97080 Würzburg

Graphics & photos

Odenwälder Kunststoffwerke Gehäusesysteme GmbH,
Fotostudio Respondek, D-74722 Buchen,
Adobe Stock-Bilder

Issue

February 2025

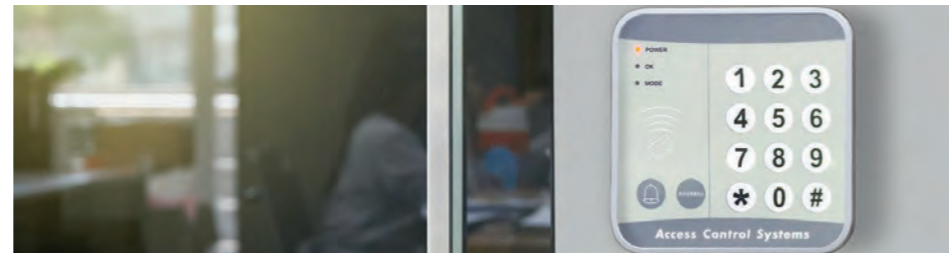
Reprinting and reproduction, even of excerpts,
only with the publisher's permission.

Dipl.-Ing.
Christoph Schneider

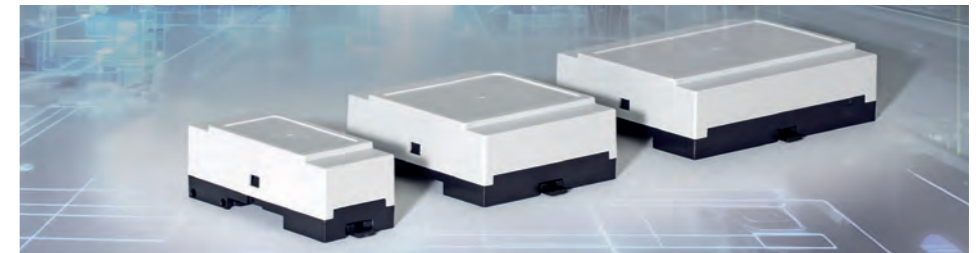
Dipl.-Betriebswirtin (BA)
Yvonne Ellwanger



40 Years of
OKW GEHÄUSESYSTEME **6-11**
Happy Birthday! We were established on 1 October 1984



BUILDING SERVICES
SYSTEMS **12-15**
Visually appealing and high-quality enclosures from OKW



PRODUCT
SUPPLEMENTS **16-17**
Introducing RAILTEC B with a new design and customising options



TO EACH HIS OWN
CUSTOMISED HOUSING **18-20**
From standard products to custom modifications



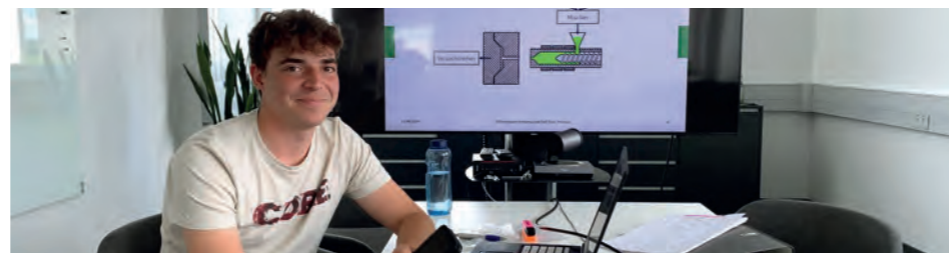
STRENGTHENING
PARTNERSHIPS **21**
Highlights from OKW's first sales partner meeting post-pandemic



CONSTRUCTION
MEASURES **22-23**
The new logistics centre is now operational



TRADE FAIR NEWS **24**
OKW at the world's leading electronics trade fair in Munich



MASTER'S THESIS RESULTS **25**
Master's thesis insights on 'Sustainability Assessment and Optimization of Standardized Enclosure Systems'



EMPLOYEE NEWS **26-27**
Enhancing the Technical Team - Welcoming new junior staff - Trainee introduction day



40 YEARS OF ENCLOSURE SYSTEMS

Happy Birthday! We were officially established on 1 October 1984. Not every anniversary deserves to be a cover story but ours does. Discover the reasons why in this feature.

Author: Anne Schneider

“Our employees, our predecessors, deserve to be remembered from time to time,” emphasised our founder Dieter Schneider. Preserving the company’s history was of great importance to him. Anniversaries provide an opportunity to pause amidst the daily hustle and bustle, to reminisce and to reflect on our origins. This retrospection fosters gratitude for every individual who has been part of the OKW journey and has contributed to keeping the company on course.

40 YEARS – A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME


At first glance, 40 years may not seem much. But what a transformation these four decades have witnessed! The gap between 1984 and 2024 is vast. Anyone stepping into a time machine and journeying back would be astounded.

The world in 1984 was markedly different. There were no mobile phones, emails or faxes. Radio, television and tape recorders were the primary electronic distractions. Modern computers were rare in offices, especially in Europe. Communication relied on telephone calls and letters, and news was gleaned from the rustling pages of newspapers. Data processing involved cumbersome punched cards, the precursor to electronic data management.

It was the proverbial calm before the storm. But soon, everything changed. This backdrop sets the stage for our company’s success. The 1980s and 1990s can be encapsulated in the glowing neon phrase: ‘Rapid development of computer technology’.

What a Brand!

The chocolate company has its iconic purple cow, and OKW Gehäusesysteme has its beloved turtle. The green reptile has been the company’s mascot and the personification of enclosures since its creation in 1986. It serves as a distinctive figure, a popular icon, a crowd-pleaser and an effective icebreaker. We are frequently asked, “Aren’t you the tortoise company?” This question highlights how strongly our customers have associated OKW enclosures with the turtle. In both the USA and the United Kingdom, the turtle has been exceptionally well received. Marketing even describes it as “more American than many a Disney character.”




left: Managing Director Horst Sigel, right: Founder Dieter Schneider

A BOOM IN THE FIELD OF PLASTIC ENCLOSURES

1984-1994: The intuition of the company’s founder proved to be astute. The growth in electronics led to a significant demand for plastic enclosures – essential for safeguarding the delicate internal components of electronic devices. Among a manageable number of competitors, the rapidly expanding enclosure company quickly established itself as a formidable player in the industry. The terms ‘trendsetter’ and OKW enclosures became synonymous within the trade. Post-1990, the era was marked by political upheaval following the fall of the Berlin Wall, market changes and the introduction of the Euro. OKW Gehäusesysteme expanded its international presence, and the opening of the Iron Curtain introduced new markets and perspectives.

The workplace environment also underwent a complete transformation. Within the factory, as well as in administration and production, the personal computer revolutionised operations, starting at the end of the 1980s. The pace of work accelerated, necessitating numerous internal adjustments, such as the transition of the IT system, which, until the early 1990s, was still managed centrally via mainframe computers.

OKW GEHÄUSESYSTEME

‘Odenwälder Kunststoffwerke GmbH & Co. Gehäusesysteme KG’ was established with the objective of combining the standard range of enclosures and buttons into a separate entity. Dieter Schneider, then a junior employee at the OKW plant, successfully separated this promising division from the parent company. Since 1948, the parent company had been manufacturing injection-moulded parts for various applications including washing machine control panels, school bags and plastic interior parts for car doors, coffee pots and plastic lamps.

However, Dieter Schneider’s vision was that the casings would liberate the company from its reliance on major customers and low margins. The newspaper headline at the time sceptically labelled it an “ambitious plan”. Today, 40 years later, that plan has proven successful! In 2022, under the dual CEO leadership of Schneider and Ellwanger, the company celebrated a record turnover of 17.9 million.

1984



2024



KNOBS, CURVES, EDGES: OKW Gehäusesysteme has what it takes!

The largest enclosure, the ROBUST-BOX, measures 360 x 240 x 160 mm. In contrast, the smallest enclosure, the POTTING BOXES Vers. III, measures just 12.3 x 12.3 x 15.3 mm.



1988
ROBUST-BOX

1994
TOP-KNOBS



2000
MEDITEC

2012
BLOB



The BLOB handheld enclosure series stands out with its unique appearance. Introduced in 2012, this highly individual enclosure has garnered design awards and created a wow factor.

2016
BODY-CASE



2021
CONTROL-KNOBS



Last but not least, our tuning knobs continue to be produced successfully. We have remained steadfast in our commitment to quality knobs. The first OKW radio knob was manufactured 76 years ago for the radio company Nordmende.

2023
SOLID-BOX



The company initially started with just 10 products. Today, our range includes 48 plastic enclosure models, six groups of tuning knobs, and two aluminium enclosures. Since our founding, we have introduced a new product each year.

The foundation of our success was the 'legendary' flat enclosure (FLAT-PACK CASE), which was introduced as a trial at the Hanover Trade Fair in 1973 (under the original company) and caused a sensation. It was light and dark grey and remained a top seller for decades. Today that box has evolved, featuring a grey-white top and a pebble-grey bottom.



Showcase of Products from 40 Years of Enclosure Systems

INTERNET AND MODIFICATIONS

From 1994 to 2004, the company faced various challenges, including the banking crisis and relentless competition. In early 1996, the company launched its information and communication platform on the Internet. By 1998, we proudly announced in the company newspaper: "We are presenting our product catalogues on the Internet at Electronica." To meet customer demands, CNC machines were installed in the finishing department, and OKW services such as painting and printing were becoming increasingly popular.

With the millennium successfully navigated, the design philosophy from 2004 to 2014 gained prominence. Customer requirements were given greater consideration. Since its inception, the company's

stylish enclosures and buttons have won numerous awards.

CHRISTOPH SCHNEIDER'S LEADERSHIP

In 2008, following the passing of the founder, his son Christoph assumed leadership of the company. Under his guidance, the company ventured into new industries, notably medical technology – marking a significant milestone in our history.

Today, two out of every three products are destined for this sector. The introduction of wearable housings brought our products closer to the human body. These enclosures are designed to fit into the pocket of a machine operator, be worn on a jogger's wrist, or be attached to a senior citizen's belt as an alarm system – a great innovation.

In 2011, the company undertook an extensive re-design and renovation of the OKW premises in Buchen, an initiative aimed at future-proofing the company.

40 YEARS LATER

Today, forty years after the company's founding, we find ourselves halfway through the 2020s, which seem less golden than the legendary 1920s a century ago. The COVID-19 pandemic not only brought about lockdowns, suffering and supply chain disruptions, but also fundamentally altered the world of work with the advent of working from home and an emphasis on work-life balance.

The future presents us with numerous questions: how to achieve energy-efficient and sustainable manage-

ment, how to attract committed specialists, how to navigate regulations effectively and – above all – how to leverage growth potential.

Providing digital solutions with enclosures has been our mission from the very beginning!

Figuratively speaking, the ink on our latest milestone in 2024 is barely dry. This milestone refers to the construction of the new logistics hall on the recently acquired property – the largest single investment in the company's 40-year history. The entrepreneurial family, management and employees are making a clear commitment to Germany as a business location, especially as we look to the future.



“He was equally fascinated by the electrical workings of the enclosures as he was by their appearance,” recalls his successor Christoph Schneider.

OUR FOUNDER: DIETER SCHNEIDER

Dieter Schneider was born on 7 June 1940 in Buchen. His mother Marianne was the granddaughter of the local furniture manufacturer Franz Fertig, while his father Herbert was a grammar school teacher who had been drafted into military service. When Dieter was seven years old, his father established a Duroplaste pressing plant. Dieter was a generalist and diligently broadened his horizons through his business studies at the Technical University of Berlin. The young student was often found in lecture halls outside his field of study. Apart from electrical engineering, he had a passion for philosophy, particularly the existentialism of Albert Camus.

After his father’s premature death, Dieter abandoned his doctoral thesis in Berlin and joined his father’s company full-time in 1973.

The times were challenging; the company, which had been accustomed to success, was experiencing its first crisis, leading to nervousness among the management. The young industrial engineer revolutionised the company. In 1984, he set a course for the future by manufacturing standard plastic enclosures. He aimed to create a second ‘pillar’.

Dieter was a computer enthusiast even before the term existed. He believed in the burgeoning computer industry. “Even back then, Mr Schneider saw far ahead. Yes, he loved the computer world and knew his way around,” his employees recounted in 2001.

“He was equally interested in the electrical workings inside the enclosures as he was in their appearance,” recalls his son Christoph Schneider, now the Managing Director of the group. The air in the basement of their home often smelled of solder as Dieter spent his free time tinkering with electrical sets. “Always looking for a power outlet,” his family quipped. However, he ignored the talk and followed his instinct. As a technology-oriented individual, he recognised the enormous potential of the electronics revolution.

“People here are interested in designing their environment in such a way that it is enjoyable to be here and to work together. That’s far more than just doing your job.”

Christoph Schneider, 2014.

The company’s early success is attributed to Dieter. On 1 October 1984, he began a new era on the neighbouring property. OKW Gehäusesysteme KG quickly established itself as a trendsetter in the field of electronic enclosures.

In the late 90s, reunification occurred and the borders with the East opened. Dieter wasted no time and seized the multitude of opportunities presented by this historic moment. He delivered enclosures to East Germany, leading to the establishment of Kunststofftechnik Chemnitz.

Business relationships evolved into friendships, and trips to the former Eastern zone deeply affected the 50-year-old Dieter. Two contrasting worlds, two political systems and two ways of thinking came face to face – an exciting revelation for Schneider. His interest was genuine and he lacked the widespread arrogance of Westerners.

Together with his son Christoph, he achieved much before his premature death in 2008. “He preserved the name OKW through crises, expanded it and – with the successful handover to the next generation – gave it a new, vibrant direction,” says Christoph Schneider.



OUR CURRENT MANAGING DIRECTOR: CHRISTOPH SCHNEIDER

Christoph Schneider, born in 1965, has been a pivotal member of the company since 1995. Under his leadership, the company has expanded its branches globally and has weathered significant challenges, from the aftermath of the Berlin Wall’s fall to the recent pandemic. With Christoph, a graduate industrial engineer at the helm, the emphasis on design became integral to OKW. His passion for detail and commitment to excellence have resulted in outstanding products and processes that are respected and recognised worldwide.

We have certainly come a long way since our beginnings! Starting with heavy machinery, endless construction sites and serious financial worries, we then experienced an upswing, strikes and trips, the implementation of new computer systems, waves of frustration and success, difficult decisions, design awards and cost pressures, exciting encounters and new businesses worldwide.

“My main objective in this company has always been to maintain and continue OKW as a family-owned enterprise, to enhance and expand its market position, and above all, to benefit the employees.” Dieter Schneider, 1988

And this commitment remains steadfast today!

From left to right:
Herbert, Dieter, Christoph, Nadja Schneider (the four generations)



OKW Gehäusesysteme is a product of the 1980s, born at a time when electronics began to take off and soon advanced at an extraordinary pace. In 1984, we embarked on a journey parallel to the IT industry’s boom. We seized the opportunity back then. Today in 2024, we are living in a digital era, where technology shapes our everyday lives more than ever before.



TECHNOLOGY FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND DIGITAL FACTORIES

Digitalisation is firmly established in process automation and monitoring within factories and plants through IoT and IIoT. It is also increasingly prevalent in industrial building technology. The relevant devices are being used in various areas and require suitable plastic enclosures. Technological advancements are continually producing new devices, necessitating appropriate enclosures – whether for time recording and access control, network technology for intercom and surveillance systems, control of building and domestic technology, or applications related to occupational safety and operational security.

THE ENCLOSURE – A CRUCIAL COMPONENT FOR AUTOMATION AND MODERNISATION

For the modernisation and automation of residential, commercial, and industrial environments, versatile plastic enclosures play a vital role in building technology. They ensure the smooth operation of smart devices by protecting sensitive electronics. Appropriate interfaces are essential for integrating hardware within enclosure systems. Consequently, the design of the enclosures themselves is of paramount importance. To meet the varying requirements of different applications, the enclosures must be both user-friendly and functional. For instance, smart applications often demand ease of use and compatibility with various end devices. The following three ranges of enclosures from OKW are regularly used to house electronics in building services engineering.

CONTROLLING, OPERATING AND MONITORING IN THE FIELD OF

BUILDING SERVICES SYSTEMS

Visually appealing and high-quality enclosures from OKW

Author: Kerstin Riedling, Marketing and Communications at OKW Gehäuseysteme



Digitalisation is rapidly advancing in building technology. In an era of smart homes, IoT, IIoT, and wireless communications, new devices are continuously being developed to control or monitor processes, as well as to improve convenience. Finding the right enclosure is crucial for these technologies. A closer examination of building technology reveals diverse demand for enclosures.

SMART CONTROL OF LIVING AREAS

Plastic enclosures are a key component of modern smart home systems. These intelligent systems have become integral to our homes, allowing us to operate and control a wide range of devices, such as lighting and heating, security systems, blinds and more, often via app-controlled interfaces. Their primary function is to enhance quality of life, comfort, security and energy efficiency. This is often achieved through devices networked via remote control.





Potential application of SMART-PANEL in access control

SMART-PANEL

SMART-PANEL wall-mount enclosures offer space for intelligent systems for the convenient control and monitoring of entire buildings. Whether for radio-networked devices, for wired control or for operating

centres, the enclosure presents the electronics in a visually appealing way for indoor applications.

New SMART-PANEL is available in three plan sizes: S84 (84 x 84 mm), E155 (155 x 84 mm) and S114 (114 x 114 mm). The S114 size can be installed on standard flush-mount/cavity wall boxes with an installation opening of 61 mm, as well as larger wall boxes up to a maximum of 100 x 100 mm. The enclosure impresses with its elegant appearance and is moulded from high-quality V-0 ASA+PC in traffic white (RAL 9016). The bottom part is highly polished, while the top has a fine surface structure. Additionally, simple, screwless assembly is possible via a snap-in function. The recessed operating area in the upper section protects membrane keypads, display/control elements or touch displays, while the flat, recessed area for interface integration in the lower section completes the design of the enclosure.

NET-BOX

NET-BOX wall mount enclosures are an exciting solution. Despite their flat design, the enclosures offer ample space for electronics, small displays, and even large-volume connectors. A 'keyhole' and additional fixing (which also serves as an anti-removal safeguard) are used for wall mounting.



NET-BOX as an elegant control unit

Three sizes are available depending on the required installation volume: 140 (140 x 140 x 46.5 mm), 180 (180 x 180 x 48.5 mm) and 220 (220 x 220 x 50.5 mm), providing sufficient space for the electronics and required interfaces. The three-part enclosure consists of a bottom part, a curved front cover and a front lid that conceals connectors and cables. If needed, an optional cover can be used to close the bottom of the enclosure and mount an additional circuit board.

Thanks to its elegant cover, stylish light grey/lava colour scheme, and with no fixing screws visible from the front, NET-BOX fits seamlessly into modern surroundings. Outdoor use is enabled by its IP 65 ingress protection (optional) and UV-stable V-0 material.

SMART-CONTROL

OKW has developed SMART-CONTROL for easy installation in room corners, where equipment is usually placed as high as possible – ideal for monitoring large areas, saving space and avoiding damage. However, the enclosures can also be used on a flat wall or on a table in an ergonomically inclined position.

SMART-CONTROL can be specified in two sizes: S (142 x 81 x 46 mm) and M (173 x 101 x 59 mm). It is available as standard in UV-stable ASA+PC (UL 94 V-0) in RAL 9002 (off-white). Other colours are also available on request.

This wall and table-top enclosure series features a two-part design. Additionally, the top sections are available in two different versions: convex or with a recessed control panel for membrane keypads. Mounting pillars for PCBs and assemblies are located in both the top and bottom sections. An IP 55 ingress protection rating can be achieved with a seal (accessory). The individual parts of the enclosure are screwed together at the back using tamperproof Torx stainless steel screws. When the enclosure is positioned horizontally, a desktop stand set ensures stability and provides an ergonomic reading angle of 45°. Installation in 90° internal corners or on flat surfaces is possible using a special wall bracket (accessory).



SMART-CONTROL for testing air quality in enclosed spaces



PRODUCT SUPPLEMENTS

RAILTEC B - now even more versatile with a new innovative design

RAILTEC B DIN rail enclosures are ideal for quick and easy snap-on mounting on EN 60715 TH35 rails and/or direct wall mounting (using the appropriate accessories). The top parts are moulded from high-quality, flame-retardant PC (UL 94 V-0) in light grey (RAL 7035), while the bottom parts are black PPO (UL 94 V-0). These enclosures are fully insulated and protected in accordance with VBG 4 and IEC 529/DIN VDE 0470-1.

This product group now offers more application possibilities thanks to a new, flat design with a closed top and four module widths (2, 4, 6 and 9). The new version is available in the dimensions (W x H x D): 35 x 86 x 31.25 mm (2 modules), 70 mm width for 4 modules, 105 mm width for 6 modules and 157.5 mm width for the 9-module version.

The flat design makes particularly effective use of space. The closed top has a generous operating area for displays, controls and interfaces. Extensive custom design options are available for RAILTEC B. Options include machining of apertures (for interfaces, displays and cables), painting, printing, laser marking, decor foils and installation/assembly of accessories.

Thanks to its versatility and flexible customisation options, RAILTEC B can be specified for a variety of applications including automation, building/security technology, heating and air conditioning, communications and measurement.

CUSTOMISATION

Optical light highlights

For applications requiring reduced displays or visual emphasis, the OKW service portfolio now offers an innovative design option.

Within a specified grid, or for individual backlit elements (such as on/off status), the internal wall thickness of the plastic parts can be reduced, allowing light from LEDs positioned behind them to shine through.

This enables the presentation of numbers and letters, such as temperature or individual status displays, in an engaging and stylish way. Additionally, the respective surfaces are not fully open, ensuring that IP ratings and seals remain unaffected. Furthermore, when the device is switched off, no alterations or modifications are visible on the housing, and special light guides are not required.



CUSTOMISATION

Quick fastening for mobile applications

Press stud fastening of devices is advantageous for applications requiring secure attachment – such as when movement is involved – but still allows them to be detached quickly.

On request, OKW now offers a full machining service to fit either the male or female part of the press stud to the bottom of its enclosures.

This service is recommended for OKW small enclosures such as BODY-CASE, MINITEC, CONNECT, SOFT-CASE and MINI-DATA-BOX. All these enclosures can be machined for press studs, making them ideal for such applications.





From standard products to custom modifications

To each his own CUSTOMISED housing

Author: Kerstin Riedling, Marketing and Communications at OKW Gehäuseysteme



Developing specific enclosures often entails high initial costs, significant investments and lengthy development times. From OKW's perspective – based on our extensive experience in the OBT business field – this approach is the optimal solution for projects involving unit quantities in the five-digit range. When the development process proceeds according to plan, it remains a valid and effective choice. However, agility and flexibility are frequently a high priority. Time constraints in the development process can delay component decisions, thereby creating additional time pressures. This is equally relevant for the enclosure component, which requires precise final dimensions and geometries.

For such challenges, or for smaller quantities, enclosure solutions based on customised standard models are particularly appealing: they can be adapted until the last minute or even post-market launch, without necessitating additional investment or compromising time to market.

OKW offers an extensive range of standard enclosures and tuning knobs. Initially, a model from this range can be selected to best match the development concept, the electronic components and the customer's requirements. This standard product can then be modified flexibly and efficiently on-site at OKW – meeting the customer's specific needs within days rather than months.

CNC Machining

Whether milling, tapping, engraving, drilling, countersinking, cutting or stamping, the form and design possibilities offered by the OKW Service Centre are almost unlimited. Individual processing from sample production to series production is quick and reliable.



A variety of machining processes

Lacquering

Colours and surface effects increase the value of equipment. Options at OKW include individual colours to support corporate identity, special finishes for tactile enhancement (soft-touch), and metallic effects or varying degrees of gloss. Additionally, anti-bacterial finishes are available to prevent the growth of bacteria. ESD paint optimises discharge properties; it has a special black finish. We can produce paints according to the RAL colour system and a wide range

of Pantone colours in our own mixing plant. This ensures high, consistent quality and short delivery times.

Laser Marking

Inscriptions, markings and very small machine-readable labels – such as QR codes, barcodes, consecutive numbering and individual texts – can be easily and quickly realised with laser marking. This method meets the highest quality requirements in terms of legibility and durability of the marking. Very high, reproducible printing accuracy is possible on many plastics or even on metals.



SOFT-CASE in off-white with laser engraving

Decor Foils

Foils can be digitally printed quickly and easily for labelling and colour design. Small quantities are possible – even just one item. The photo-quality digital printing process enables swift production of different variants for corporate designs, consecutive numbering, barcodes and technical information. Colour gradients are also possible. Additionally, it is possible to print white as a full-tone colour, to exclude display/



ECG electronic device with decor foil

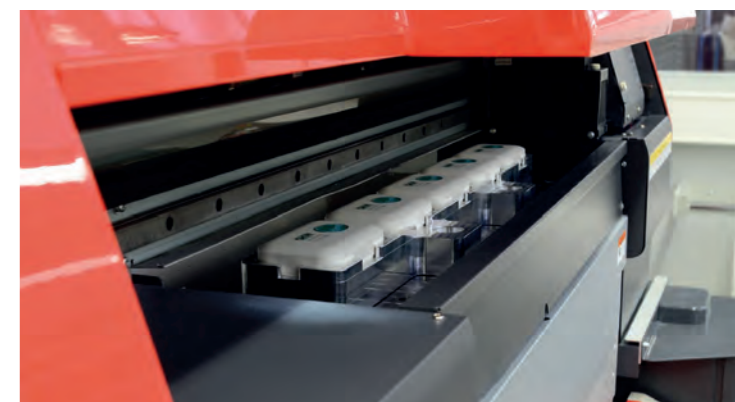


In-house lacquering facility

LED windows, and to provide foils with embossing for key functions. OKW produces the decor foils in its own printing department, adapts them to the recessed area in the enclosure, and provides them with an adhesive layer. OKW can also apply the foils to the enclosure for the customer.

Printing

Depending on the print image and the respective enclosure or control knob type, individual printing is possible using screen, pad or digital printing – also as a rotary printing process. Single-colour inscriptions and precise multi-colour prints are possible, as are colour gradients. Additionally, the range of colours for screen printing at OKW has recently been extended. It now includes daylight-luminous fluorescents and neons, and also phosphorescent colours – offering customers even more individual design options.

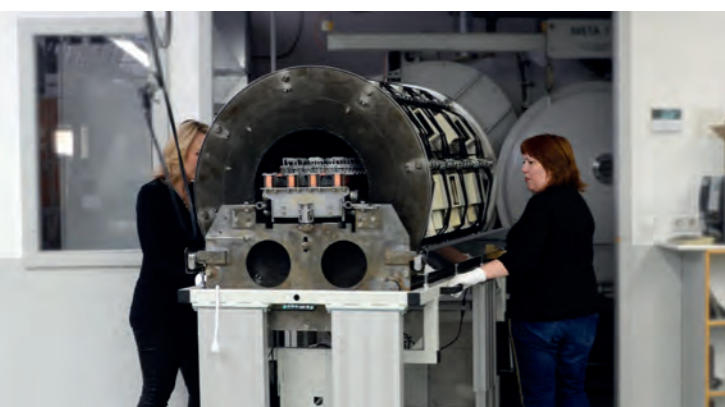


Digital printing on enclosures

EMC Protection

EMC (electromagnetic compatibility) should not be neglected in electronic applications. This encompasses protecting internal electronics from external interference and addressing the devices' own, sometimes increased, interference emissions.

For the shielding of plastic parts that do not inherently offer protection against electromagnetic radiation, the inside of the enclosure can be coated with aluminium at the OKW Service Centre. This coating is applied in a high vacuum. The aluminium, with a purity of 99.98%, is vaporised rapidly and deposited on the plastic surface with a layer thickness of approximately 2.5 µm (other thicknesses are available on request). The aluminium coating is characterised by its excellent adhesion.



Vapour-plating system for EMC process

Special Materials

OKW can manufacture many enclosures and tuning knobs in special colours on request. The desired colour is achieved by dyeing the raw material using an extrusion process, ensuring high reproduction quality. The individual colour is matched according to samples, colour plates, RAL or Pantone standards.



Special colours through dyed natural material

Installation and Assembly

OKW also provides extensive in-house finishing and assembly support. Whether it involves assembly, screwing on, gluing of accessories, or other tasks, we accommodate various needs. It is also possible to purchase components from other companies,

subject to agreement. For individual equipping and configuration, there is a wide selection of fastening elements, such as threaded bushes and bolts, spacers, fastening domes, screws and much more. Additionally, OKW can efficiently manage the assembly of cable glands, snap-on clips, pop-up brackets, wall brackets, the gluing of keyboard foils, decorative foils, type plates, display discs, and the installation of components.



Gluing the front foil to the enclosure

The 'Individual Standard Enclosure'

The concept of the modifiable standard enclosure from OKW offers numerous advantages. Above all, products for specific applications can be developed safely and flexibly with ease. Standard components are used; these are individually combined and functionally developed. For OKW and its customers, this is an ideal approach for realising projects together. The process begins with the selection and immediate sampling from more than 50 product ranges. The potential areas of application, such as directly at the machine, on the laboratory bench or in the user's hand, have already been considered.

Within the various models, there are multiple sizes and versions in different designs and colours. Additionally, there are options in terms of materials and protective properties, intended mounting methods, and stationary versus mobile power supply. Thanks to the in-house technologies of the OKW Service Centre, there are few enclosure solutions that cannot be implemented from the standard range. This approach results in a completely unique device design that conveys the message: "I am innovative, professional, safe, ergonomic and of lasting value."

SALES PARTNERS

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS



OKW's first post-pandemic Sales Agency Meeting

Author: Patricia Hart, International Marketing at OKW Gehäusesysteme

OKW partners from all over the world converged on Buchen for a three-day Sales Agency Meeting – the first of its kind since the global pandemic.

This long-awaited reunion of OKW's partners was the first since 2018. Normally the event takes place every two years but it had to be postponed until all the countries involved lifted travel restrictions.

Focus on Sales, Marketing and Product Development

Discussions centred on sales, marketing and product development. Partners explored innovative ways to enhance collaboration with the aim of strengthening partnerships. They discussed new strategies – sharing ideas and best practices.

This created a positive ripple effect. After the event, OKW experienced a surge in partner support. Collaborations intensified and the OKW network expanded.

Partners who attended the meeting strengthened their commitment as ambassadors for our brand, advocating for OKW in their respective regions. Their endorsement helped to raise OKW's profile and increase brand awareness.

The Value of Personal Contact: An Extremely Important Tool

OKW Gehäusesysteme Sales and Marketing Manager Sean Bailey said: "The presence of our partners was more than just symbolic – it stood as evidence of the relationships we've built. Their active participation and engagement during the meeting reaffirmed our commitment to mutual progress."

He added: "We knew we missed the personal contact with our worldwide sales partners – but we didn't realise just how much until the day arrived when we were reunited once again.

"The enthusiasm from the OKW team and our sales partners during the meeting and at the communal dinner was impressive. It proves the heart truly does grow fonder when you're apart. I'm excited to see how this enthusiasm brings more fans to the OKW family! As we move forward, we remain focused on common goals. Our team and partners are integral to our success. Together, we'll continue to explore new avenues, enhance our offerings and reach new heights.

"To all the OKW team and partners, thank you for your unwavering support. Let's build on this momentum, collaborate relentlessly and create a legacy that transcends borders. Together, we'll shape the future of OKW Odenwälder Kunststoffwerke Gehäusesysteme GmbH," said Mr Bailey.



NEW LOGISTICS CENTRE NOW IN FULL OPERATION



Author: Kay Hirmer, Strategic Product Management at OKW Gehäusesysteme

“Our warehouse structures have evolved over time, leaving little scope for further expansion. The areas used spanned several buildings and levels. They were very dispersed with minimal potential for optimisation. With the new warehouse, we aimed to significantly reduce distances, sustainably improve work processes and ensure sufficient space for future growth. We have achieved this and thus paved the way for the next successful decades,” says a pleased Yvonne Ellwanger.

Approximately 40% of the logistics centre has been equipped with new high shelves, which are already well stocked following the relocation of the entire warehouse programme. The hall, measuring 75 x 45 metres (length x width) and nine metres in height, features a modern heating and cooling concept. It also demonstrates OKW's environmental awareness: on the roof there is a photovoltaic system with a 334 kWp output. Under optimal conditions, this system

can generate around 330,000 kWh of electricity per year for the company's own consumption.

Everything New – Logistics Hall and Warehouse Management

The aforementioned relocation required meticulous planning in advance, as only one week was available to quickly react again to customer needs worldwide. The challenge was not only the relocation of the enclosures, control knobs, accessories, cardboard boxes, existing storage technology and office space but also the simultaneous introduction of new software optimally adapted to the new warehouse.

Project manager Andrea Dietrich reflects: “The planning for the new EWM system began in mid-2023 and had to be spread over several phases. In the first phase, we intensively examined the existing processes in our current warehouse management system.



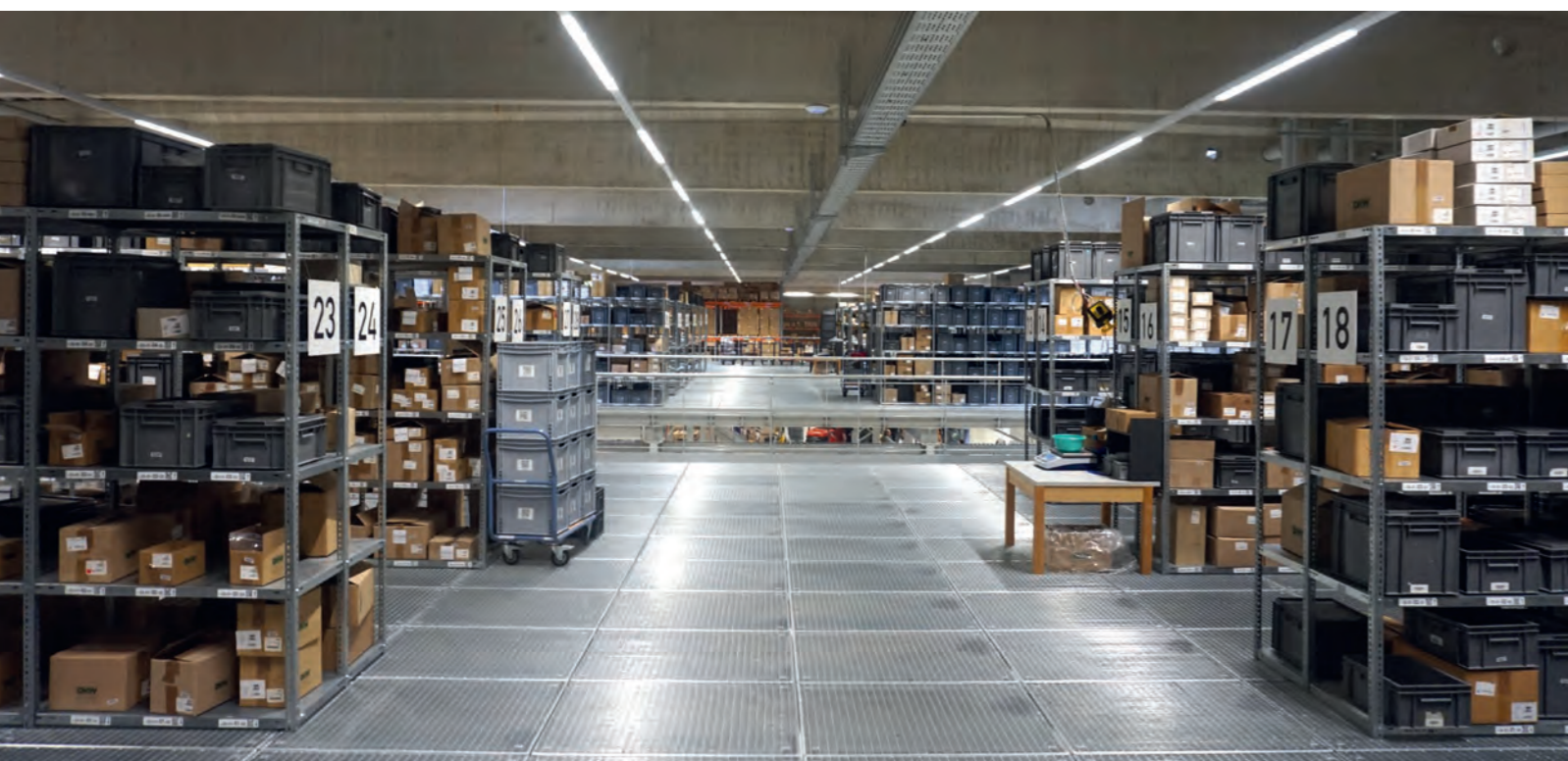
A Glimpse Into the Future

In parallel with the above activities, the extension of the existing OKW office building continued. In the near future (likely still in 2025), this extension will connect the existing warehouse/production halls with the administrative area and will include a staff recreation room and a generously sized training and meeting room.



This analysis was necessary to develop a thorough understanding of the current processes and to identify areas for improvement. Based on this analysis, we defined the target processes. Existing procedures were not only adopted but targeted optimisations were also carried out to make our logistics processes more efficient and effective.”

The introduction of the new warehouse management system went smoothly and on 19 August, we were able to commence the delivery and dispatch of OKW goods from the new location, with a future-oriented software system to rely on. This significantly contributes to increasing operational efficiency, optimising control and reducing costs and disruption within logistics.



OKW AT THE WORLD'S LEADING ELECTRONICS TRADE FAIR IN MUNICH

For many years, **electronica** has covered the entire spectrum of electronics. From 12 to 15 November 2024, approximately 80,000 visitors once again flocked to 18 exhibition halls to explore a wide range of topics presented by 3,480 exhibitors. This year's main topics included sustainability and artificial intelligence.

Naturally, we were among the exhibitors, showcasing our innovative packaging for electronics. Numerous inquiries and significant interest – some from international markets – once again underscored the global reach and role of our family business.

Our products are distinguished by their quality, aesthetics and functionality. The versatility and durability of the enclosures, combined with their high-quality materials, were very well received by visitors. The strategically advantageous positioning of our exhibition stand also positively impacted the flow of visitors, ensuring that the trade fair team, led by Managing Director Christoph Schneider, was fully occupied throughout the four days of the fair, engaging in many lively discussions with potential customers.

Mr Schneider also took to the stage in the Embedded Platforms Forum to explain the advantages of standard enclosures in electronics design to an interested audience during his presentation. He highlighted the potential for saving time and money in the development process and increasing project efficiency.

Overall, electronica 2024 was a tremendous success for OKW and once again demonstrated the crucial importance of personal contact and the ability to see and touch a product.



SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS AND OPTIMISATION OF STANDARDISED HOUSING SYSTEMS



Author: Elias Noe, is studying polymer engineering at the IKD (Institute for Polymer Engineering) in Darmstadt

The Basis of the Topic

Sustainability is increasingly important and significant in today's world. OKW is also striving to find solutions to make its products more sustainable. In connection with plastics, the following topics play an important role in **public debate**:

- littering of the environment
- microplastics in the sea
- climate change
- consumption of fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, coal).

The most effective improvements are achieved when **critical areas** are identified and subsequently optimised.

Approach

Life cycle assessments facilitate the evaluation of a product's environmental impact. In our research, the **life cycle of a SOFT-CASE enclosure** was considered thoroughly.

Results

The main factors influencing the life cycle of a SOFT-CASE enclosure are the **material production** and the **end-of-life scenario**. These areas also present the greatest potential for improvement. For instance, **transitioning to other polymers (PP, PET etc.) or recyclates** can significantly reduce the environmental impact. These considerations are particularly relevant for new developments.

In the future, enclosures can be developed with an even greater focus on sustainability. Important considerations include:

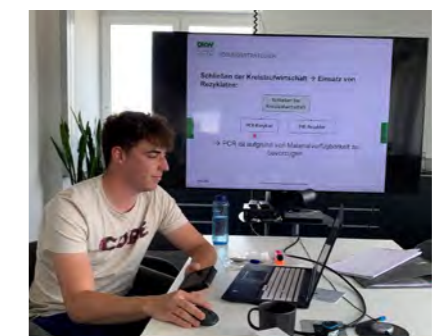
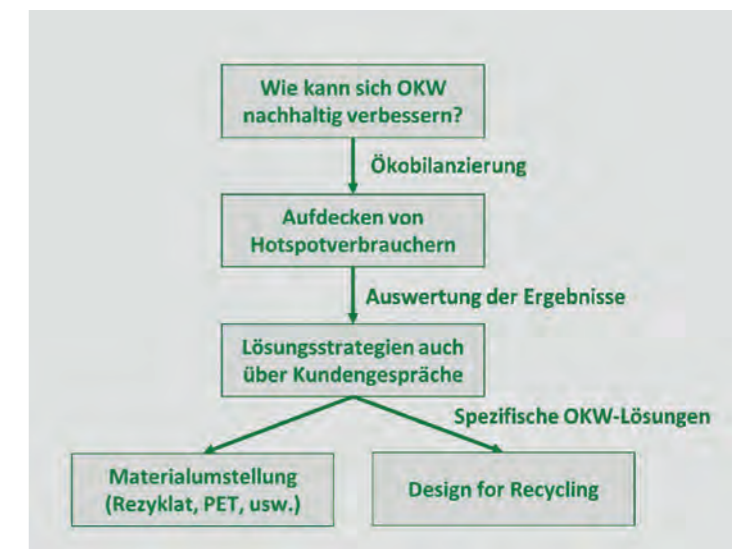
- **Design for Recycling (DfR):** How can we increase the likelihood of an enclosure being recycled?
- material savings achieved through the use of radii on components or reductions in wall thickness.

OKW's Path to a Sustainable Future

- Customer Communication
- Incorporating DfR in the development process
- Conducting test series with recyclates
- Developing new ECO Lines in collaboration with customers.

Step by step, with foresight, transparency and openness, we are addressing the topic of sustainable development to develop and establish OKW-specific solutions.

We aim to lead by example and play a pioneering role.



Elias worked in the Engineering Department of OKW Gehäusesysteme GmbH from 1 January to 30 June 2024, as part of his master's thesis.

REINFORCING THE TECHNICAL TEAM

Since 1 November 2023, Bastian Heger has been a valuable addition to our team. He has been supporting us in the area of construction as a project manager, with a focus on new product series. His responsibilities include creating requirement profiles, specifications, supplier selection and price calculations, among other tasks.

Mr Heger originally hails from the field of construction and ventured into the design world of the automotive industry for five years. As a CAD designer specialising in exteriors, he contributed to the design of cars that we see on the roads today. Through this experience, he developed a keen eye for surface design and design language, which he now brings to the development of new enclosure series.

Mr Heger's great-grandfather, August Heger, played a significant role in establishing the Odenwälder Kunststoffwerk in 1948. Subsequently, his son, Arthur Heger, also contributed to the company's history. Like Bastian Heger, his grandfather was employed in the technology department at OKW during that time.



Bastian Heger, Development & Construction

a significant role in establishing the Odenwälder Kunststoffwerk in 1948. Subsequently, his son, Arthur Heger, also contributed to the company's history. Like Bastian Heger, his grandfather was employed in the technology department at OKW during that time.

We are delighted to have Mr Heger on our team and wish him every success in realising his creative ideas!

INTERNAL PROMOTION:

LILLY KEMPF HIRED FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL EXAMINATION

Hello, I am Lilly Kempf, and I started my dual Industrial Management studies in September 2021. Since July 2024, I have been working as an Executive Assistant.

During my practical phases at OKW, I had the opportunity to apply and deepen the knowledge acquired from my lectures. The diverse tasks and projects enabled me to familiarise myself with various areas of the company and continuously develop my skills. Through close cooperation with experienced colleagues and superiors, I gained valuable insights into the professional world and expanded my network.

This network, combined with my diverse knowledge, forms the foundation for my current role. I support the management in all administrative and organisational matters. My responsibilities include organising meetings and events, coordinating appointments and creating presentations and reports. A significant part of my role involves human resources, encompassing internal and external communication, as well as recruitment and staff development. Additionally,



Lilly Kempf, Executive Assistant to the Management

I am responsible for training in the commercial area and look forward to accompanying our future skilled workers through their training period.

I am proud to have successfully completed my three-year course of study and am enthusiastic about my professional future and the challenges that lie ahead.

TRAINEE INDUCTION DAY AT EVENTUREPARK

The trainee induction day has now become a permanent fixture at the OKW Group, marking the start of the training period each September. The experienced members of the team have the opportunity to mentor the newcomers, making their transition smoother. This year, the team decided to challenge themselves by booking a teambuilding event at Eventurepark in Mudau/Steinbach.

Despite the poor weather, the spirits remained high, with the two OKW trainers, Lilly Kempf (commercial area) and Jasmin Weber (industrial area), leading by example with great enthusiasm.

The aim of the various obstacle courses and games was to work together, to 'pull in the same direction', to trust the group and to significantly step out of one's comfort zone from time to time. Additionally, the apprentices had the chance to get to know each other across different groups and years, establishing and further developing contacts.



JASMIN WEBER

LILLY KEMPF

The day concluded with a delicious barbecue buffet in the conference room of the converted 'barn' at Eventurepark. Here, everyone had the opportunity to share their impressions of the day once again.



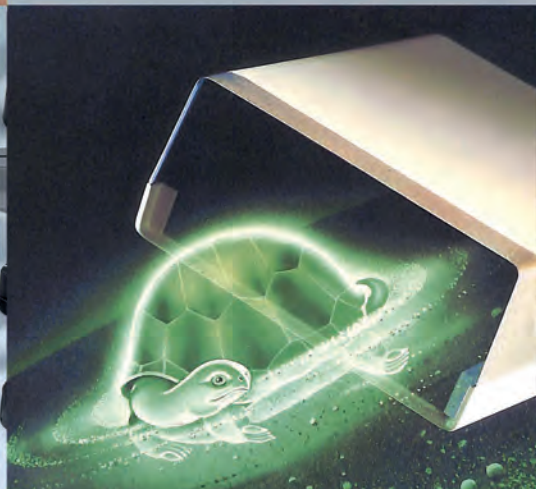
We extend our best wishes to all apprentices for a successful training year in 2024/2025.

For further information about our apprenticeship programmes, please visit:



OKW

GEHÄUSE
SYSTEME



Odenwälder Kunststoffwerke
Gehäusesysteme GmbH
Friedrich-List-Str. 3
D-74722 Buchen
Tel. +49 (0) 62 81 / 404-00
E-Mail Info@okw.com
Web www.okw.com

