

Flying High in the Niche



Interview with

Uta Peter,

CEO

of Schüsckhe GmbH & Co. KG

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On the workbenches of Schüsckhe GmbH & Co. KG in Kirchentellinsfurt, drilling, doweling, sanding and milling are carried out just like at any traditional carpentry: It is not oak, beech, cherry or pine wood that is processed there, however, but Varicor®, a solid surface material that impresses with its diverse characteristics whenever particularly demanding surfaces are required – for example in the aviation industry where Schüsckhe manufactures washbasins from Varicor® exclusively for the Airbus Group.

Schüsckhe is well on its way to becoming the epitome of washbasins in the aviation industry. The company was founded by Uwe Schüsckhe in 1986 as a classic joinery with a focus on kitchen furniture. When the tech-savvy master carpenter acquired a CNC machine and was able to expand into new markets, he set a new course. „At that time, the Varicor® solid surface material came onto the European market; in the U. S., the similar material Corian® had already become established,” explains Uta Peter, who has been Managing Director since 2017. „Mr. Schüsckhe had the idea of offering washbasins

made of Varicor® for the aviation industry and came into contact with Airbus in Hamburg. Unlike its major competitor Boeing, Airbus has been focusing on individuality for a long time; therefore Varicor® was the ideal material. Previously washbasins were mostly made of stainless steel; Varicor® opened up exciting new design possibilities, because the material creates a warm and pleasant atmosphere and is visually and haptically appealing.“ Varicor® scores in many ways. The material can be processed like wood, but is homogeneous and can be dyed, sanded, repaired and recycled. Varicor® is virtually predestined for deman-

ding surfaces. „With Varicor®, Schüsckhe has undergone a continuous development over the years”, says Uta Peter. „Today we cover the entire aviation sector for Varicor®, we are specialists and have developed the material with regard to the applicable requirements. This involves topics such as fire protection and weight.“

A Full-Service Provider in the Niche

25 years ago Schüsckhe entered the aviation industry and after four years of development, the company produced the first washbasins for the Airbus A320. This year, the company is deli-

vering its 58,000th washbasin. Even if the aviation industry is the focus of the business, the construction industry is a second mainstay. In hotels, kindergartens, laboratories, hospitals and office buildings, wherever surfaces need to be robust or anti-viral properties are required, Varicor® is used - for changing combinations, wash troughs, play and wash areas or counter systems. The development and production take place in Kirchentellinsfurt, where approximately 50 people are employed. After the founder Uwe Schüsckhe retired, the company became part of a group of investors in 2016.



Varicor is also a favoured material for counter systems because it is water-repellent, hygienic and food-safe



Nothing stands in the way of sophisticated, elegant designs with Varicor



Varicor not only impresses as a robust material for washbasins, but also because it enables beautiful designs

The dynamic development has continued after the takeover. „We are operating in a niche market in which we feel very comfortable and which we cover completely,“ emphasizes Uta Peter. „It is important for our customers that we have mastered the entirety from development to production and assembly. As a rule, we receive 3-D data from our customers, from which we construct the desired product.“ Schüschke manufactures prototypes and series products, small series with one component and large series with 1,000 washbasins with consistent quality. The entire production process takes place in-house; each product has the necessary approvals for aviation. Schüschke has two approvals from the Federal Aviation Office; the EASA Part 21G as a manufacturer and the

EASA Part 145 as a repair organization.

Crises overcome

Schüschke intends to continue with Varicor® washbasins for the aviation industry. The potential is there. „Covid was a challenge for us,“ says Uta Peter. „The incoming orders dropped extremely from one day to the next. We maintained close partnerships with our customers and together, we took on this challenge.“ Schüschke handled the crisis well – so well, in fact, that the company was awarded the ‚Most sustainable supplier in terms of performance‘ in 2023. „We have consolidated very well in 2022 and 2023,“ ex-

plains Uta Peter. „Now, we are taking the first steps towards further development. In aviation, the requirements are increasing; we must prepare for the ramp-up at Airbus and have already invested in a new CNC machine. This is the only way we can become the hidden champion in washbasins in the aviation sector.“ Innovative technology alone is not enough. A major issue is finding qualified personnel. There are many long-serving employees, but now new staff must step up. „As an employer, we can only score points if we offer employees flexibility; for example regarding the working hours,“ emphasizes Uta Peter. „We have flat hierarchies

and attach great importance to common rituals and small awards. As a family-friendly company, we pay employees who have been with us for more than two years an additional 30 EUR a month in child benefits. On Fridays we serve ice cream or candy: a small treat for the weekend, but also an honest token of our appreciation.“