Presse-Info

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50 years of FAWO: Interview with Managing Director Peter A. Hohage

Founded in Walldorf on July 1, 1974, "FAWO Vertriebs-GmbH für Fahrzeug- und Wohnwagenausrüstungsteile" celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2024. Peter A. Hohage, managing partner since 1984, has developed the company, which has been based in Nieder-Olm since 2001, into one of Europe's leading system providers for mobile vehicle construction.

1. Mr. Hohage, FAWO will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in summer 2024. Looking back over the last decade: What has been the greatest success? What was the biggest turning point or change?

Peter A. Hohage: The biggest success of the last decade was doubling our turnover without increasing our workforce. We achieved this through digitalization by continuously making processes more transparent, simpler and more modern.

2. Keyword digitalization: What role does it play at FAWO?

Peter A. Hohage: Of course, that depends on what you mean by digitalization. In our area, we are very far ahead when it comes to the digital processing of our workflows. There are hardly any areas where we still work by hand or on paper. Our entire warehouse runs fully automatically with barcode control.

3. What impact has (had) the pandemic-related raw materials and supply chain crisis had on FAWO?

Peter A. Hohage: A big one, in all areas. Especially when it came to imported products from the Far East, we had enormous difficulties and had to spend a lot of time making sure we were able to deliver. As a result, we have also increased our stocks accordingly. And we are thinking more than ever about whether and which products to make there or in Europe in the future.

4. Do you see the market euphoria associated with the coronavirus pandemic as a flash in the pan or a long-term trend?

Peter A. Hohage: It was certainly a huge boost for the industry, although growth was also steady throughout the years before the pandemic. However, we are now noticing that this "corona effect" is leveling off and we are returning to the healthy pre-pandemic level. But the figures

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continue to look very good.

5. Where do you see the greatest future potential for FAWO: in the exclusive luxury sector or in retrofitting/upgrading existing vehicles?

Peter A. Hohage: There are two trends. On the one hand, the trend towards luxury, ever more elaborate, ever more expensive. And on the other hand, the entry-level class, spartanly equipped for a young clientele that doesn't want this luxury. Retrofitting existing vehicles was a big issue for years. However, this is currently declining sharply.

6. What is your opinion on the electrification of individual mobility? Will e-mobility become relevant for the touring caravan and motorhome sector?

Peter A. Hohage: Not at the moment. The industry is far too classic for that. Another problem with motorhomes is that the vehicles are already so heavy and additional batteries would cause problems with registration. There are solar systems, but they are only for self-sufficient camping, which is a very small percentage.

7. What is the most important source of inspiration for new developments at FAWO? Our own experience, feedback from the trade, inquiries from manufacturers?

Peter A. Hohage: Actually, the impetus comes from the vehicle manufacturers, who set us tasks. The close cooperation with vehicle manufacturers is the real driver of innovation. It's not so much the wishes of end customers.

8. How can we imagine the roles and distribution of tasks?

Peter A. Hohage: Normally, we pick up an idea from the vehicle manufacturer or an idea is brought to us. We then consider which production partner might be suitable for us. There are basically two options: either complete development with a partner. Or developing the technology and assigning the design task to special designers who give the product the caravan or motorhome touch.

9. What proportion of the overall portfolio is made up of in-house developments?

Peter A. Hohage: Around 40 percent. This is because the manufacturers who produce for us generally don't have their own market access. This means that we are always involved in a new product from the very beginning. And of course we usually work with the same suppliers as far as possible, because we know that they are the specialists for these vehicles.

10. FAWO supplies manufacturers and specialist wholesalers. How important is brand awareness for FAWO among private end customers who buy accessories or spare parts from dealers?

Peter A. Hohage: To be honest, brand awareness among end customers is not important to us; in fact, we prefer not to be recognized as a brand there. It's quite different for our industrial customers. Of course, they should know that they can get this, this and this product group from

FAWO; that this or that product is a FAWO product. But we cannot and do not want to supply individual parts.

11. Keyword retailer network: does FAWO look for its retail partners or do the retailers apply to FAWO?

Peter A. Hohage: We supply the wholesalers we want to supply. Or the other way round: as a rule, we don't add any new ones because they would otherwise be too small. There are more and more companies that call themselves wholesalers but are actually retailers. One takes the sales from the other. So from our point of view, it doesn't really make sense to expand the retailer network or the wholesale network.

12. FAWO also supplies manufacturers of boats, trains, buses and sales vehicles. Are these areas more relevant to image or sales, or both?

Peter A. Hohage: These vehicle groups are not our direct focus. This is due to the fact that in the boat and ship sector in general, the quantities are not large enough for series production.

13. Outlook for the next few years: What should happen, what is planned?

Peter A. Hohage: Our plan is not simply to say that we have a standard programme, but that we always want to be involved in new developments. That is our speciality, our expertise. Without drifting into the area of accessories in the broadest sense. We don't want to be involved in things that are not fixed to the vehicle, but can be wrapped up, so to speak. We want to continue to be recognised by our customers as a technical development partner.

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FAWO supplies technical built-in and add-on parts for caravans, motorhomes, buses, sales vehicles, trains, boats and yachts worldwide. FAWO's portfolio of more than 6,000 stock items includes innovative in-house developments as well as the product range of over 250 international suppliers for whom FAWO acts as a system supplier and sales partner. For end customers, FAWO caravan components are available exclusively through specialised dealers.

FAWO_GF_Hohage.jpg
Peter A. Hohage, managing partner and director at FAWO since 1984.

Bildquelle: FAWO Fahrzeugtechnik



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