

# TAILOR-MADE

Big expertise for small-scale production: The Austrian company Atzlinger makes customised compressed air systems for agricultural vehicles.



Once a typical farrier's shop, today a high-tech powerhouse: Forefather Alois Atzlinger, who started here as a blacksmith in 1890, would be truly amazed. The sooty smithy of yesteryear has evolved into a surgically clean complex with around 50 highly qualified staff. Instead of forge and anvil, Atzlinger's warehouses now bristle with electronics such as laser-cutting systems, a CNC bend press and lathe. But these are not the only reasons you can

almost cut the high-tech atmosphere with a knife.

**For example**, there is the fully-automated components store, stocked with around 25,000 items and designed to hold a whopping 50 tons of material, which plays a key role in production. 'Until now, staff themselves had to collect all the parts for a particular set', says director Herbert Atzlinger, the third generation of his family to manage the

firm. 'Sometimes it took a lot of time', he adds.

A trained engineer who is also a qualified farm machinery mechanic, he continues: 'Today, the picking is mostly automatic'. The automation is so extensive that every part that needs selecting is identified by a laser indicator. If individual components still need to be ordered upon production of the configuration, the system instantly calculates a date when the order will be ready.

They once shod horses; now Atzlinger



■ High-tech gadgetry for small-scale production has replaced the forge and anvil.

equips the tractors that replaced them. Or more precisely: Atzlinger develops and manufactures compressed air braking systems for farm vehicles.

**Original equipment** for tractors, telescopic handlers and trailers and their corresponding retrofit kits are the focus of this DIN ISO 9001-certified company that produces around 5,000 units per year, always in its own distinctive, careful way. Owing to its special expertise, Atzlinger steps in where other manufacturers either can't or won't.

**Atzlinger** usually delivers pre-assembled products ready for installation to manufacturers or dealers. But sometimes the in-house fitting team itself goes on the road and installs the product on the customer's premises.

It is, therefore, no coincidence that the prototypes of many famous manufacturers such as CNH, Deutz and Liebherr show up at the Atzlinger factory. 'Our technicians analyse the possibilities and determine a solution in consultation with the customer. Our CAD-based construction team then goes to work', says Herbert Atzlinger, describing the

standard procedure. The Austrian specialists not only configure the braking systems but also conceptualise and produce special fixtures such as bespoke brackets.

There's a long tradition of cooperation with Haldex, which is becoming even stronger due to the stricter regulations the EU has decided at relatively short notice to impose on compressed air brakes for agricultural purposes. 'Haldex is integrating the necessary functions very skilfully in new solutions such as S-TCV, which saves space and reduces cost', says Herbert Atzlinger as he describes one example of new technology.

On the other hand, he's also quite clear that some customers are focusing on 'added value' and doing more in-house production themselves. In the long run, he's following a dual strategy of which 'strength in original equipment for large manufacturers' is just one part.

The other is expertise in major engineering demands that the new regulations are causing across the board. This, in particular, is a long-time speciality of Herbert Atzlinger's team: 'We have a huge amount to offer', he says, 'especially in support of mechanical conversions and consultation to find the optimum solution'. ■



■ Herbert Atzlinger, director of the third generation family company.



■ The warehouse laser identifies the desired part.



■ Atzlinger produces its own components from construction to CNC processing.