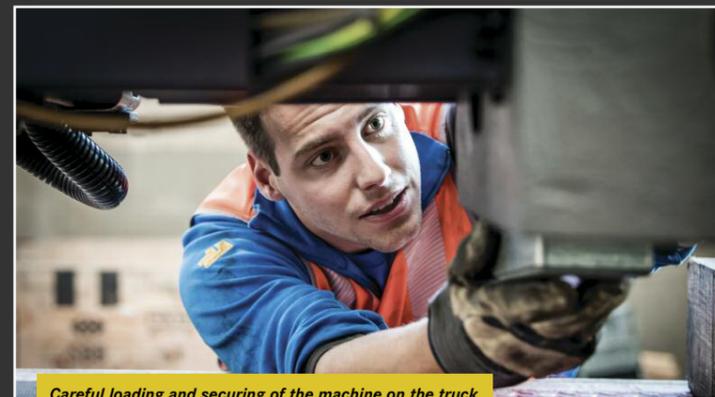


Loading a machine with a forklift onto a truck



In order to install a complex CNC machine in a tight building, various gantry systems had to be employed (total machine weight 214t)



Careful loading and securing of the machine on the truck to ensure that no damage occurs during transportation



Manual relocation of a smaller machine within a workshop

# SHOULDERING THE WEIGHT OF PROGRESS

Switzerland's Bauberger AG is a logistics specialist competent in a number of fields – yet most notably in the handling of industrial equipment, machinery and other high value assets. CEO Marcel Bach revealed in conversation how the company's niche specialisations are evolving, and how digitalisation is the next step in its evolution. Tony White reports.

Although capable of taking action anywhere on the globe, Switzerland has always been, and shall always remain, the home of Bauberger AG.

The business is an established name in the relocation and transportation of heavy assets, precise machinery and factory equipment too valuable to be entrusted to less proficient logistics companies. Although Bauberger AG today operates within the umbrella of Knecht Holding AG, its values remain as homespun as its family business origins.

Bauberger AG was established in 1974 by Rudolf Bauberger Senior. From contracting out his vehicle and services from a home office, Mr Bauberger grew the enterprise

in earnest, rapidly finding it a home in Elgg, 30km east of Zurich – where the business continues to flourish today.

## Keeping industry moving

Bauberger AG is regarded as a highly specialised and accomplished solutions provider in the field of relocating machinery and associated disciplines. The site in Elgg remains the company's sole base of operations, employing 30 full-time staff and 10 part-timers.

"We have a 5,000 sqm warehouse for equipment storage, capable of handling pieces of heavy equipment or machinery up to 360 tonnes," highlighted CEO Marcel Bach. "We have more than 30

forklifts, ranging between 1.5 to 75 ton lifting capacities, and seven trucks – four of which have cranes with a capacity of up to 100 metric tons."

Bauberger AG's equipment and vehicles also lists 10 truck trailers of various configurations, capable of accommodating GVWs of up to 75 tons. Six service vans, complete with fully equipped trailers, plus more than 2,000 managed handling items round off the resources and add to the company's flexibility. That flexibility is a key component in its forward strategy too, as Mr Bach disclosed.

"Our daily business consists of numerous small relocation projects, such as single machines being delivered or repositioned,"

he said. "Those projects take teams of up to four personnel, and are usually turned around in a day or two."

## Embracing the digital age

Bauberger AG's more specialised projects, tending to crop up several times in a given year, entail complete factory relocations – endeavours taking teams of up to eight, spread across up to several months for particularly sizeable projects.

"Several projects every year lean on our specialist knowledge and equipment – not only particularly bulky or heavy machines that need relocating, but also smaller machines that need to be moved into difficult locations," Mr Bach remarked. "On top of that, our mechanical expertise comes in handy whenever disassembling or assembling machines is part of the task at hand."

"Our main market is the machine industry, which we expect to remain stable going forward. Our second most active market is the food industry, where slight growth is possible – and beyond that, we are examining the potential of bio, pharma and chemicals sectors too."

Competition in the market is a consistent challenge.

"The barrier to entry is low," Mr Bach observed. "A team need only invest a few thousand euros in a truck and a crane,

and essentially be in business. However, we are recognised as one of only a few specialists in the market, focused on relocation – including de- and reinstallation – rather than merely trucking and crane work."

While numerous ideas are currently under consideration and implementation at Bauberger AG – ideas Mr Bach teasingly suggests as too early for full discussion – the company's commitment to growth is clear.

"Digitalisation is a major topic today," he commented. "We are in the process of implementing an ERP system to cope with current and future market demands. The system will especially help with safety and security requirements – bigger clients especially are understandably meticulous in seeing the relevant documentation when committing to a project."

## Staying inventive when looking ahead

Bauberger AG's family business origins are well reflected in the company's continued pioneering spirit.

"Many of our formative decisions were essentially made on a gut feeling by the founding family," Mr Bach highlighted. "Nobody becomes number one in their market by following others – instead, you have to find your own way, with all the associated risks. Pieces of equipment

such as the Montylift and Hubylift were acquired before there was even a mature market – it was basically created through this approach."

This outlook enabled Bauberger AG to outpace the competition in the past and will help the company master the challenges it faces today.

"The Swiss Franc is only now showing the signs of recovery against the euro that the country needs to get out of its economic slump," Mr Bach observed. "Yet even as we now recover as a country, players from other nations are entering the Swiss market to take on the kinds of projects we specialise in. That puts pressure on pricing."

Coupled with staff retention as industrial vocations continue to prove less appetising a career path than those with greater work life balance, and one can appreciate that Bauberger AG is well aware of the challenges ahead. For the future though, it intends to play to its strengths.

"We will remain an independent supplier for industrial relocations for challenging tasks and demanding customers," Mr Bach summarised. "Our focus will remain on the lowest possible machine downtime, not the lowest possible price. Our aim is to remain number one in our small niche, and we have identified various measures that make us confident in ensuring that we remain on top going forward." ■