



TESTIMONIAL CAPAUL SA (BE)

16/11/2020

Ludwig HENKES,
Managing Director



WHAT KIND OF COMPANY ARE YOU? WHEN WERE YOU FOUNDED? WHY DID YOU CREATE THE COMPANY?

Capaul is a family business based in Eupen in eastern Belgium, close to the border with the Netherlands and Germany. It is active in high-precision machining of mechanical components for use in industries such as aviation, railways, medical and automotive. Its service extends from prototyping to mass production.

The company was founded by Eugène Graf in 1868. Initially, its main business was repairing machinery and equipment in the textile factories of the Vesdre Valley. In 1929, Graf & Cie was renamed Werkzeugfabrik Capaul (Capaul Tool Factory). In 1988, it was taken over by Ludwig Henkes, a 28-year-old entrepreneur. At that time, the company employed 12 FTEs and generated turnover of €500,000.

Aware that industrialisation and production times were key and could really set the business apart, Henkes forged a corporate culture based on the mantra "Wir halten was wir versprechen!" ("We keep our promises!"). To remain at the cutting edge and foster unique expertise, Capaul has invested over €1 million a year in high-precision numerical control machinery and in training up young people to operate this new equipment. These developments have enabled the company to accelerate its growth, and it now has 90 employees, equivalent to 80 FTEs.

TESTIMONIAL

WHAT WAS THE PROBLEM YOU NEEDED SOLVED? HOW WERE THESE PROBLEMS HOLDING YOU BACK FROM ACHIEVING YOUR (BUSINESS) GOALS?

In 2009, as Capaul expanded into new markets and continued to grow, management realised that the company's organisational and communication methods were no longer sufficient to guarantee efficient operations. The communication tools used, which relied mainly on verbal exchanges and the memory of key staff, were no longer suitable.

WHICH SOLUTION ?

To boost the commitment of its teams, Capaul needed to redefine the company's vision so that it engaged and resonated with all its employees. The emphasis therefore shifted from manufacturing high-precision parts to being a company capable of developing robust processes. This vision has four main components: adhering to specifications, meeting deadlines, working for a price that customers can afford, and respecting people.

To help nurture this corporate vision, Capaul invests continuously in the most advanced machinery and in its people. Capaul has built its success on apprenticeships and dual education, and is regularly cited as an example for others. Its employees are proud of this approach and support the idea of passing on their knowledge to young 'high potentials'. These youngsters start out in the workshop, where they learn to operate the machinery and equipment, before joining the industrialisation teams. Thanks to this cross-training, Capaul knows more about what its machines are capable of than the machines' manufacturers. Prototypes designed in this way can be manufactured successfully on the first attempt and in accordance with the specifications. In the workshop, there are more machines than people.

The company operates a three-shift system; the operators are trained to start up several machines positioned in a cell formation, so that they can deal with any unforeseen problems. This efficient time management allows Capaul to make smart use of the available human/machine capacity.

The company has implemented the Quick Response Quality Control (QRQC) method, which enables it to respond quickly to quality issues and identify targeted actions. The efficiency of this method means that Capaul can decompartmentalise its teams and refocus each employee on the company's priorities.

Capaul has implemented new digital tools to plan and visualise operating ranges, manage machining tools thanks to a system that communicates with the machines, and analyse measurement results in order to quickly detect critical tolerances for a manufacturing sequence.

WHICH RESULT ?

The combination of a corporate culture geared towards meeting commitments and a people-centred vision focused on developing robust processes have enabled Capaul to cut delivery times by 70% (down to four weeks) with a 99% service rate. By comparison, the average among its competitors is a 12-week delivery time and a 50% service rate.

In addition, Capaul can count on a highly motivated team of industrial engineers thanks to state-of-the-art equipment and lots of positive customer feedback. This has helped to boost productivity by over 30%.

Thanks to these robust processes, Capaul has earned the trust of its customers!

WHO WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE SOLUTION TO ? WHY ?

In the face of competition from Asian countries, cutting production and especially industrialisation times offers a real opportunity to capitalise on the company's know-how. It is essential to make the whole team aware of this issue in order to meet market requirements and stand out from the competition. Deadlines must be agreed and, most importantly, met!

High productivity combined with great responsiveness is the key to success for a subcontractor !

« 95% of success is down to the team »

Ludwig HENKES,
Managing Director