

# WEIGANG

Motivation through Organisation



## KANBAN

Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG  
Altenmarkt, Austria

Reference



The company Georg Fischer AG is a leading industrial group, focussed on the three core businesses GF Automotive, GF Piping Systems and GF AgieCharmilles. The company was founded in 1802 with headquarters in Schaffhausen (Switzerland) and employs about 13000 employees worldwide.



At Altenmarkt, Austria, the Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG produces aluminium and magnesium automotive components by means of the die-casting process.

With the help of the KANBAN control, the subsequent process gets the required materials from the buffer stock of the previous process at the right time and in the necessary quantity.

At Altenmarkt, the KANBAN system was introduced in stages. In a pilot project, the first loop – the foundry and the post processing – was tackled. At Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG, the information for the production of the supplies needed is communicated via KANBAN cards – as usual in the classic KANBAN system.

## Departments Communicate with KANBAN

The automotive supplier Georg Fischer AG has successfully introduced a production control based on the KANBAN principle. A vital element of this principle is the circulation of KANBAN cards controlled by planning boards.

The automotive business division of Georg Fischer AG develops and produces high-performance cast components for the automotive industry and their suppliers. Production sites are in Germany, Austria, Canada and China. Within its product segment, the company is considered the European technology and market leader with all casting methods and materials relevant for series production.

At the factory in Altenmarkt, Austria, about 600 employees of Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG produce aluminium and magnesium automotive components by means of die casting. Customers in Stuttgart, Bremen and Munich as well as in France and Great Britain are supplied.

## Mass Production versus Stock Minimization

Within the company, the foundry aims at the production of large quantities – on the one hand for an economic utilisation of their machines, and on the other hand because the production of large quantities ensures a better quality.

However, the aim of high throughputs is not always in line with the interests of further processing and delivery. According to the principle of Lean Management, the management board for example wants at the same time to reduce the raw material stocks at the intermediate warehouses. The inter-company aim of the management is to optimise the lot sizes of the foundry so that orders can be produced just-in-time and the finished products can be picked up by the customer within a defined time frame.

## Self-controlling Loops as a Solution

The management of Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG in Altenmarkt introduced the KANBAN method as a control medium in this power play between customer requirements, foundry and further processing. This comparatively simple system connects two successive processes with a self-controlling loop. The world-famous method reduces work-in-process stocks and finished products, thus reducing capital commitment. At the same time, the system reacts flexibly to the fluctuating customer demands.

On their way between the processes, the KANBAN cards are inserted systematically into the planning boards by the staff members.

## Containers, Cards, Planning Boards

The planning boards serve as central organisational tool. On their way between the individual processes, the KANBAN cards are systematically inserted into the relevant columns.

The foundry's semi-finished products are stored in designated containers. As soon as a container is filled, it is provided with an accordingly labelled KANBAN card and transferred to the further processing department. Thus, the card is missing at the control board. As soon as the subsequent production island has processed all semi-finished products and the container is empty, the card returns to one of the compartments of the board. This means that if there are no more cards in the control board, all containers are circulating.





The KANBAN boards were positioned at logistically favourable locations in the company.

The metal compartments of the cascading displays are mounted in an overlapping manner on the wall or free-standing frames.



KANBAN boards fulfil several functions in the control loops. On one hand, they help with the sequence planning of the production orders activated by the cards, and on the other hand, they determine the priority level. For this reason, the compartments are painted in traffic-light colours. The cards that return first are sorted into the green compartments, then into the yellow and finally into the red ones.

Moreover, the planning boards as uniform and secure storage system prevent the loss of cards.

## Custom-made, Modular Metal Compartments

For their KANBAN boards, Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG decided to use the product line cascading display from WEIGANG. The company, a specialist for organisational and visualisation media, provided custom-made sizes of their standard system based on the KANBAN card specifications of Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG.

The stable overlapping cascading display compartments made of metal are mounted on the wall or on free-standing boards. The system has a modular concept; by simply adding single compartments, it is possible to expand the system downwards or to the side without any problem.

## Better Communication and More Self-Responsibility

"One of the advantages of the KANBAN system is that it is obligatory for the departments and the employees to communicate with one another. The shift foremen have daily meetings in front of the boards. Furthermore, we have successfully strengthened the self-responsibility of the executive staff since this system was introduced. We can now generally rely on an uninterrupted information flow throughout the departments", explains Gerhard Hintsteiner, the technician responsible for the sector production planning at Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG in Altenmarkt.

## Shorter Set-up Times, Less Overtime, Faster Inventory

In terms of workflow, the KANBAN method has optimised the material flow and the set-up times of the foundry, which at the same time resulted in the reduction of overtime.

A further major advantage is the improved overview of the stocks. Gerhard Hintsteiner: "Before KANBAN was introduced, performing an inventory in the production area took about 3 days – now it is done in half a day."

The improved organisation and visualisation also has an outward effect: The KANBAN board immediately provides information on the status of a product during on-site customer visits. After the successful introduction of the pilot loop foundry/further processing, Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG at Altenmarkt controls in the meantime three loops with KANBAN – and more are to follow.



At Georg Fischer GmbH & Co KG, WEIGANG boards are used not only for KANBAN control but also for the visualisation of staff information, quality objectives and other key figures.



The semi-finished products of the foundry are stored in designated containers. As soon as a container is filled, it is equipped with a KANBAN card and transferred to the further processing department.



# **WEIGANG**

## Organisational Solutions

Your **WEIGANG** sales partner

**WEIGANG-Vertriebs-GmbH**

Bahnhofstraße 27  
D-96106 Ebern

Phone: +49 (0) 9531 61-222

Fax: +49 (0) 9531 61-221

E-Mail: [wvg@weingang.de](mailto:wvg@weingang.de)

Web: [www.weingang.de](http://www.weingang.de)