



# Successful customer centre model

AL-KO Vehicle Technology (AL-KO VT) knows that it's not just first-class products, but also a customer-focused service strategy that are essential to ensure a company resonates well with wholesalers and end customers alike. This is what the customer centres and the AL-KO Academy stand for

Words Peter Hirtschulz

**A**L-KO Vehicle Technology Group employees ensure that customers are always the focus and priority at AL-KO VT, led by the experienced CEO Harald Hiller and, particularly in the customer centres, Guido Kovermann, Senior Vice President After Sales and Customer Centre, and Michael Duckek, Head of the Customer Centre in Kötzt (the company's original site) and coordinator for all European Customer Centre locations.

As Harald Hiller says: *"The needs of our customers change along with market conditions and trends. To ensure our customers always get exactly the products they expect from us, we are constantly expanding our range and adapting it to these new directions or wishes in close coordination with our suppliers and body manufacturers. This allows us to provide our customers with individual support for as long as they use their AL-KO VT products, to ensure their vehicle is comfortable and future-proof on the road."*

There are currently six customer centres across Europe: three in Germany, in Neuenkirchen-Vörden (North), in Elsdorf (West) and in Kötzt (South); one in Nieuw-Venep (Benelux) in the Netherlands; one in Louhans-Cedex (France) and one in Verona (Italy). In April 2023, the opening of a seventh customer centre is planned in Ramsau in the Zillertal valley in Austria.

*"The new customer centre in Ramsau in the Zillertal valley in Austria is another step closer to the customer and an excellent addition to AL-KO VT's close-knit service network in Europe,"* says Günther Schöllenger, Managing Director AL-KO Vehicle Technology Austria. *"Its ideal geographical location on Europe's north-south axis also makes the Ramsau Customer*

*Centre a good place for a stopover during your holiday trip."* He continues: *"Also farmers, craftsmen and tourism businesses in the region will benefit from our expertise in all aspects of commercial trailers with a gross weight of up to 3.5 tonnes. Professional brake system maintenance and repair is of the ut-*





*most importance for safety, especially in this mountainous region."*

The customer centres offer owners of leisure vehicles, light commercial vehicles and trailers a wide range of services and products from the Group's AL-KO brand and its affiliated product brands such as SAWIKO, E&P and CBE. Besides classic maintenance and repair work as well as increasing the payload of the body, the service portfolio also includes the installation of air suspension and levelling systems as well as driving assistance systems, e. g. anti-snaking systems. Vehicles with an AL-KO chassis and axle naturally benefit from all special work being carried out in original equipment manufacturer quality. Moreover, bicycle carriers, towbars or motorbike loading ramps for motorhomes can be installed.

The site not only offers complete technical expertise: it also has the optimal equipment for top-quality work. Hydraulic ramps for vehicles and trailers are available to carry out workshop tasks quickly and reliably. Brake test stands for trailers as well as state-of-the-art

processing machinery round off the equipment, as do visitor lounges and showrooms with the latest product presentations.

It is not only end customers who are comprehensively catered for. And this is where the term 'customer centre' takes on a whole new dimension: AL-KO VT also takes care of its partners and wholesalers through its workshops. *"In order to provide the best possible customer service and be able to overcome any situation confidently as a competent contact, constant training is the key to success. In our seminars, we impart the specialist knowledge needed to keep professional and practical capabilities honed to the highest level. Our range of seminars offers the ideal opportunity for active training to expand the workshop and accessories business,"* says Guido Kovermann, describing the AL-KO Academy's advantages for wholesalers. The customer centres are not in competition with the wholesalers, but rather provide a regional or national link between AL-KO VT, partners and end customers.

This Europe-wide system will be expanded by another link in April 2023. *"The customer centre in Ramsau in the beautiful Zillertal Valley in Austria is an excellent addition to our broad support network,"* says Michael Duckek. Duckek knows what he is talking about, because AL-KO VT's success story of retrofitting, repair and maintenance began some ten years ago with the customer centre in Kötz in southern Germany. Particularly when it comes to advice-intensive topics such as payload increases or selecting the right air suspension, customers are certain to find the right contacts here: seasoned workshop professionals whose sole ambition is to make customer wishes come true in the best way possible. Guido Kovermann sums it up: *"Our customers invest in a high-quality vehicle consisting of high-quality components – and we always show them even more optimisation possibilities. To enable them to continuously improve the efficiency and quality of their driving experience, we offer our visitors all the advice and support possible."* In this regard, for example, the customer centres now also offer financing offers in response to popular customer demand, as is familiar from the purchase of a car.

The customer centre concept ensures: AL-KO VT and the entire DexKo Group are a respected expert partner worldwide, not only for end customers, but also in particular for wholesalers, manufacturers and suppliers. Or, as DexKo CEO Fred Bentley always reminds his teams: *"Our Group's highest priority is customer proximity as our core strength. We are always ready to answer questions and are passionate about providing custom tailored solutions."*



Michael Duckek and Guido Kovermann



Harald Hiller