

Press release

ALTANA sets new standards in Wesel: digital BYK laboratory is unique worldwide

- 15 million euros invested at Wesel site
- Specially developed digital technology in use
- New freedom for creative work strengthens innovative power

Wesel, May 3, 2022 – ALTANA's BYK division is setting new standards in specialty chemicals at its Wesel site with a globally unique digital laboratory. The company invested a total of 15 million euros in the so-called high-throughput screening (HTS) facility. The self-sufficient building on Abelstrasse was erected under an existing parking garage, making the facility also an architectural peculiarity. But it is primarily the digital technology deployed that sets new standards.

“Some of the technology used in the digital laboratory had to be developed in cooperation with partners. So some of the components are unique worldwide and are only used here, at our home site in Wesel,” says Manfred Knospe, who has been responsible for the innovative facility since the initial idea was conceived.

Months become days

The HTS plant is an exciting example of how digitization can open up completely new dimensions for the chemical industry. It can perform fully automated serial tests. More precisely, it tests how certain additives work, for example in coatings. The 300-square-meter facility can produce and test up to 220 samples a day. The largest of its kind in the world, it doubles BYK's capacity in application technology. Thanks to the digital laboratory, from now on existing products can also be tested to see if they are suitable for other areas of application without there being a specific need for this. “This gives rise to completely new possibilities that would be inconceivable without the digitization of series tests,” says project manager Knospe enthusiastically.

A look into the “engine room” shows how this works: In a first step, the HTS system fills all the ingredients needed for testing into a vessel. The latter is then sealed and the contents mixed. Finally, the system transports the finished samples to the measuring instruments, which check whether the fully automatically mixed coatings meet current or future customer requirements. What used to take months can now be done in just a few days.

Innovative prowess strengthened

The time saved by the automatic series tests creates equal scope for the highly qualified application engineers, who previously had to deal with uniform series tests, to now concentrate on more demanding, creative laboratory work and develop new solutions thanks to the new HTS system. “This gives our innovative prowess a new boost,” says Knospe.

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Page

1/2

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Each year, ALTANA invests about seven percent of its total sales in research and development. Of the approximately 1,100 employees at the Wesel site, about 340 work in R&D.

A video on BYK's website shows the HTS facility in action:

<https://www.byk.com/en/product/highlights/high-throughput-screening>

About ALTANA:

ALTANA is a global leader in true specialty chemicals. The Group offers innovative, environmentally compatible solutions for coating manufacturers, paint and plastics processors, the printing and packaging industries, the cosmetics sector, and the electrical and electronics industry. The product range includes additives, specialty coatings and adhesives, effect pigments, sealants and compounds, impregnating resins and varnishes, and testing and measuring instruments. ALTANA's four divisions, BYK, ECKART, ELANTAS, and ACTEGA, all occupy a leading position in their target markets with respect to quality, product solution expertise, innovation, and service.

Headquartered in Wesel, Germany, the ALTANA Group has 48 production facilities and 65 service and research laboratories worldwide. Throughout the Group, more than 6,700 people work to ensure the worldwide success of ALTANA. In 2021, ALTANA achieved sales of around € 2.7 billion. About 7 percent of the total sales is invested in research and development each year. Its high earning power and high growth rate make ALTANA one of the world's most innovative, fastest growing, and most profitable chemical companies.

www.altana.com

About BYK:

BYK is a leading global supplier of specialty chemicals. The company's innovative additives and differentiated solutions optimize product and material properties as well as production and application processes. Amongst other things, BYK additives improve scratch resistance and surface gloss, the mechanical strength or flow behavior of materials, and properties such as UV- and light stability or flame retardancy. In the field of quality assurance, BYK's measuring and testing instruments serve to effectively assess appearance and physical properties.

The company's customers include manufacturers of coatings and printing inks, plastics, adhesives and sealants, as well as cleaners, floor coatings, and lubricants. BYK additives are also successfully used in the construction chemistry, oil and gas, and foundry industries.

BYK has a global network of subsidiaries and operates production sites in Germany (Wesel, Kempen, Moosburg, Schkopau), the Netherlands (Deventer, Nijverdal and Denekamp), and the UK (Widnes), in the USA (Wallingford, Chester, Gonzales, Louisville, Earth City and Pompano Beach), and in China (Tongling). The company is part of the ALTANA Group and employs a workforce of more than 2,400 people worldwide.