



TOMORROW WILL  
SOON BE TODAY

# Sustainability 2018

*New Chemistry*

# Our Sites

An overview of the BÜFA Group



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# Preface

## BÜFA IN CHANGING TIMES

We can look back on a long, meanwhile 135-year old, company history. However, it is much more important for us to keep the future firmly in view because the upheavals that we are experiencing in all areas – socially and economically – do present great challenges but also offer trend-setting opportunities.

Whether life cycle assessment, scarcity of resources, expansion of our sites or our company philosophy – change at BÜFA has taken on further momentum. Three important areas of activity have decisively determined BÜFA's orientation this year: digitisation, innovation and sustainability.

None of the three issues are new but they are closely interlinked when it comes to providing fresh impetus to the working world and economy of tomorrow. Only by tackling these issues will we remain successful and maintain our position on the market.

In the scope of digitisation, our Internet platform chem-bid is a flagship project that has meanwhile attracted a great deal of interest across all industries. With this online marketplace for chemicals, which is also a search engine at the same time, we are breaking new ground in the chemical industry.

Rapidly developing information technology is redefining classic procurement processes. But not just there: what is successful today must be re-examined, thought through a step further and often changed to remain competitive. We are investing in this: in hardware and software, in the qualification of our employees and in research and development of new, innovative and sustainable products.

With regard to ecological sustainability, we have taken further major steps towards the future. In all three lines of business, projects are being implemented that enable our customers to use more resource-efficient and environment-friendly raw materials. An illustrative example of this is "BÜFA green", our special business in ecological raw materials. Conceptually launched in 2017, the first products will be introduced to the market in 2018.

Tomorrow will soon be today – and we are preparing for that.

Jan Philipp Wuppermann  
Chairman of the Advisory Board



Felix Thalmann

## DEAR READERS,

As a responsible company in the chemical industry, it is indispensable that BÜFA deals with the subject of sustainability. That does not just mean developing more alternatives for petrochemical products but also to increasingly anchor the manifold dimensions of sustainability at all levels of the company. That is why we bundle our sustainability activities into the following five areas:

Values + Strategy  
Products + Responsibility  
Climate + Resources  
Work + Future, as well as  
Engagement + Region.



Jan Philipp Wuppermann  
Photo: BÜFA

It has been more than 20 years now since we stated in our company principles that it is our intention to protect humans and the environment.

This guiding principle is now more relevant than ever before. Time, resources and energies are often carelessly and thoughtlessly wasted. We have made it our task to avoid waste in all areas. To do this, we have established Lean Management as one of several instruments – not just as an organisational concept but as a management philosophy. At the same time, we revised and supplemented our principles in the areas of environment, safety, health and quality, which we call our ESHQ policy, based on these principles. We orient our daily activities to this policy, but even more important, the policy also expresses our strategic objective.

Companies are subject to dramatic changes these days – at an ever faster pace. This unstoppable development will not just pass over us. More the opposite and the reason we take an active role: BÜFA develops sustainable lines of business with innovative products and services, promotes the recycling economy along the value-added chain and increasingly automates internal processes to improve quality and efficiency. This also means that our employees must leave the status quo they are accustomed to and be open for changes. That is why we at BÜFA implement a sustainable human resources policy that offers numerous measures, accompanies our employees during these measures and offers them perspectives.

This brochure will give you a comprehensive overview of what has been implemented so far at BÜFA in 2017 regarding the aspect of sustainability. We hope that you find it interesting reading and would be delighted to receive any suggestions or inquiries you may have which should be sent to: [info@buefa.de](mailto:info@buefa.de).

Felix Thalmann  
Chairman BÜFA Holding



BÜFA Reinigungssysteme



BÜFA Holding



BÜFA Chemikalien

# About BÜFA

The BÜFA group is an independent, medium-sized company in the chemical industry. The roots of this company, located in Oldenburg and founded in 1883, began in the dye woods, oils and chemicals business. Today, BÜFA offers a number of products and services internationally in three business areas:

## Chemicals

- Supply of industry sectors all over Germany with chemical raw materials
- Distribution, order picking, contract filling and warehousing
- Export of raw materials and transport of chemicals

## Cleaning

- Comprehensive offer of cleaning products and services for different branches
- Individual metering and application technology
- Execution of chemical analyses, preparation of solvent balances, training courses as well as consulting for hygiene management

## Composites

- Production of high quality composite materials for numerous branches
- System supplier with comprehensive machine technology and application know-how
- Contract manufacturing, project consulting as well as the development and installation of customised systems.



BÜFA Composite Systems

Among our customers you also find companies in the food processing industry, the textile, industrial and vehicle cleaning business, wind energy, the rail and utility vehicle branch as well as boat and ship building.

With 567 employees and 45 apprentices, BÜFA achieved group sales of 255 million Euro in 2017. In line with its high ethical standards, the traditional Oldenburg company cultivates fair, cooperative partnerships with customers, suppliers and the general public. Anchored in its corporate principles, BÜFA is strictly oriented to the principle of sustainability. BÜFA focuses on "New Chemistry" and combines economic efficiency with social responsibility.

For more information, go to:

[www.buefa.de](http://www.buefa.de)

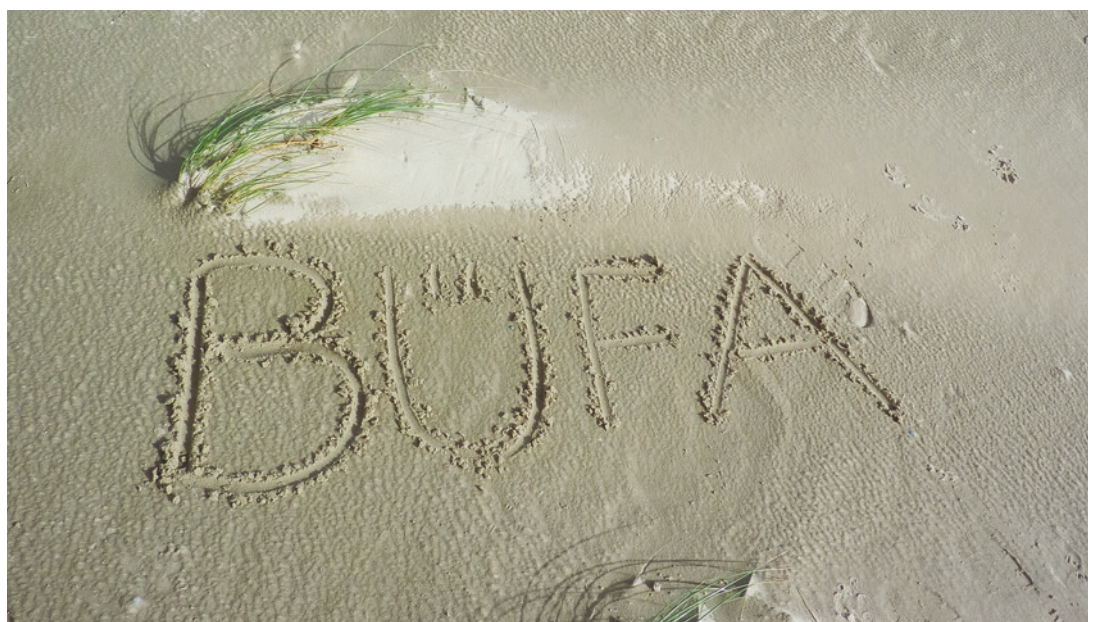


Photo: BÜFA



Photo: Bluesky60 / Fotolia



## Values + Strategy

### SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is an intrinsic part of our understanding of responsible company management and BÜFA expresses this in its company policy. Even if chemistry is omnipresent in our daily lives, we have an especially pronounced awareness when it comes to mindful, careful and resource conserving trade, production and management. For BÜFA, company values are above all future assets.

In 2017 we expanded, aligned and communicated the key messages and goals of our environment, safety and quality policy for the entire BÜFA group.

### ENVIRONMENT POLICY

**We act responsibly to protect humans and the environment.**

**We develop protective and resource efficient processes, products and services to continuously improve our company – even beyond legal requirements.**

In the scope of sustainability, we work with our customers on resource efficient processes, products and services.

We take the requirements of environmental protection into account right from the development and testing phase of new products and processes.

As far as possible, we avoid the use of carcinogenic, mutagenic and teratogenic (CMR) raw materials.

We always endeavour to use energy and raw materials efficiently, to reduce or prevent harmful substances as well as the emission of odours and noise, and to avoid, reduce or recycle waste.

We regularly check observance of all relevant environmental legislation and regulations as well as other obligations of the company.

We live in a continuous improvement process in which all of us systematically monitor all environmental performances and selectively prevent environmental impacts.

We maintain open communication with all interested parties in regard to the activities of our company group.





## SAFETY POLICY

**Plant safety as well as occupational health and safety is of utmost priority for us.**

**In conjunction with our concept for plant safety, our vision is zero accidents.**

We view the protection of humans as a primary goal, particularly when preparing safety concepts to reduce risk and prevent accidents.

We are well aware of the risk potential in our branch and make sure that our facilities are regularly maintained and our employees continuously trained in their special areas.

We observe legal and other requirements relevant to our organisation. Every employee is obligated to contribute in avoiding accidents, illness and risks at work by acting in the appropriate manner.

We take measures that serve to preserve the health and performance of all our employees over the long term. These prevention measures are regularly examined for their efficacy.

We take the latest ergonomic findings into consideration when designing work procedures and work places.

We endeavour to maintain a solid, pro-active safety culture and act in accordance with our Safety Management System. A basis for risk management and control is a risk matrix that serves to recognise and assess risks.

We aim for safety throughout the entire supply chain.

## QUALITY POLICY

**Our actions focus on long-term benefits to our customers and consistently high quality of our products and services.**

**Customer orientation, flexibility and dedication to quality by all employees are the basis for our success.**

We offer our customers coordinated, innovative products, processes and services customised to their respective needs.

We ask for and support creativity, individual initiative, an open mind and the engagement of all employees and utilise the resulting ideas to increase customer satisfaction.

We select our suppliers carefully and demand that consistently high quality is maintained. When selecting all the raw materials, products and services that we purchase, quality and availability have utmost priority.

We strive to achieve long-term and trusting cooperation with our partners in the value-added chain.

We live a continuous improvement process that allows us to avoid errors and recognise possible sources of errors in time so that high process quality is ensured.

We permanently work on further developing our Management System by training and qualifying our employees, continuously making improvements and regularly monitoring and analysing the achieved state.

# Highlights

Many larger and smaller activities make genuine contributions to the sustainable alignment and development of BÜFA. In this year of reporting, we especially focused on several subjects and projects which we will present in the following.

## HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AT BÜFA HONOURED – WE ARE “DEMOGRAPHICS-PROOF”

The future can come. To be able to meet the challenges of the changing work world of tomorrow, we – together with the works council – are in the process of implementing a sustainable personnel policy based on many measures. In 2017, we, along with eleven other companies and institutions, were honoured by the State of Lower Saxony for this achievement.

In the scope of a festive event, BÜFA was awarded the certificate “Demographically Sound. Social Partnership Company” by the Minister of Economic Affairs, Olaf Lies, and Lutz Stratmann, Managing Director of the Demography Agency.

Our modern communication and management structures, special qualification possibilities, attractive vocational training programmes, freedom to develop new ideas during the work day, health management as well as the ability of employees to combine professional and family life convinced the jury.

This certificate has been jointly awarded by the Lower Saxony Ministry for Economy, Labour and Transport and the Demography Agency since 2015. We hope to achieve regular recertification in two years’ time. The decisive factor for this is the implementation of agreed goals for further improvement of working conditions.

## DIGITAL SOLUTIONS IN THE WORK PLACE OF TOMORROW

To be able to maintain our position in the future in a sustainable manner as well, we have firmly established digitisation in all of our business processes. In the past reporting year, we were able to successfully start and implement projects to achieve this.

In one of these projects, the training process at BÜFA was comprehensively digitised to avoid wasting time in keeping with Lean Management aspects. An E-Learning Portal gives our employees the flexibility to decide themselves when and where they fulfil important further company training requirements. This also ensures that the content as well as the quality of the content is the same for all of our employees and that employees can learn at their own learning speed. This also makes life easier for our training staff since mandatory classes no longer need to be held and the training course and its content only need to be organised and prepared once.

In addition, we have begun migration of a new version of an Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP) in all three business units. The software supports and controls all business processes in the value-added chain and decisively contributes to further process optimisation at BÜFA. Through the use of this new software, all processes throughout the company – from purchasing to delivery – can be tracked more efficiently. On the other hand, this ERP solution is a prerequisite for planned automation projects.

At BÜFA Composite Systems in Rastede-Liethe, we are already testing Driverless Transport Systems (DTS) in our warehousing logistics. With the aid of laser navigation, automatic conveyor vehicles ensure continuous transport of finished goods into the warehouse. Pre-defined stations, consistent speed and millimetre-exact routes increase the safety of transport routes.



Driverless Transport Systems (DTS)

Photo: BÜFA

### REAL ECOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES: SENSENE™ AND SECASENE®

For decades, perchlorethylene has been conventionally used as an effective solvent for the chemical cleaning of textiles. However, the use of this chlorinated hydrocarbon is not uncritical. At present, this substance can harm health if used outside of closed machines.

In the scope of a strategic development cooperation, BÜFA Reinigungssysteme has provided the market with an excellent, ecological alternative for cleaning textiles: the textile care series SECASENE® and the cleaning solution SENSENE™. For many years, BÜFA Reinigungssysteme actively participated in research on the innovative formulation of SENSENE™ and was decisively involved in finding a new, future-oriented solvent that would meet the requirements of textile cleaners' in the future. SENSENE™ is based on a biodegradable, modified alcohol and an aromatic compound-free hydrocarbon. When routinely handled, this product does not have any toxic properties for humans and has a clearly lower harmful impact on water as a natural resource than perchlorethylene.



Photo: BÜFA Reinigungssysteme

Cleaning personnel in our customers' operations now have a clearly more ecological alternative with very good cleaning properties at their disposal for the market of the future.

Coordinated to SENSENE™, the textile cleaning series SECASENE® was developed. Thanks to excellent cleaning performance, which means shorter cleaning cycles, energy is saved at the same time.

Perchlorethylene was yesterday – the successful development of solvents made of modified alcohols marks a milestone in cleaning textiles that is just as effective but more environmentally-friendly.

### LIGHT-WEIGHT AND SAFE – BÜFA FOAMING RESINS AND FOAMING RESIN SYSTEMS

Foaming resins are used today across all sectors, especially for light-weight construction. They are indispensable in the automobile and rail vehicle industry, not only when very light-weight but also stable components are needed.

In 2017, BÜFA Composite Systems optimised and further developed their foaming resin systems. These systems not only save materials but also achieve a significant weight reduction of up to 50 percent. At the same time, less weight also means less CO<sub>2</sub> emission over the entire life cycle of the product.

Making the properties of foaming resins even safer is becoming more and more important. BÜFA Composite Systems has further developed the classic foaming resin system that uses an unsaturated polyester resin as the base resin which is then foamed with special blowing agents. Last year at a trade fair, we introduced a brand new product named BÜFA®-Firestop Foaming Resin. The innovative combination of light-weight, stability and fire protection that meets the highest hazard class requirements (Hazard Level 3) is unique worldwide.



## Products + Responsibility

At BÜFA, sustainability begins at the earliest stage, during the development and use of ecological, alternative products. We have set ambitious goals which we systematically pursue.

### Chemicals

We introduced the green transformation of the BÜFA Group through our “BÜFA green” programme. In the scope of individual projects, the entire BÜFA Group will be aligned more sustainably, step by step.

First we will mainly concentrate on the Chemicals business unit. The first project is to establish an innovative line of products that are sustainable alternatives to many of the traditionally available chemicals.

After detailed analysis of the market and potential, we carried out talks with manufacturers that develop alternatives to petrochemical materials. Our focus is especially on alternative solvents.

Together with our customers, we will build our new product portfolio and our “sales of tomorrow” – branch for branch and coordinated to the respective needs of our customers.

### Cleaning

Last year as well, BÜFA Reinigungssysteme has further developed products and processes from an environmental perspective.

In the areas of large-scale kitchen hygiene, under the label “Power by nature”, dishwasher detergents for commercial dishwashers, cleaning concentrates and pH-acid rinse agents based on renewable raw materials were added to the product line. These cleaning and rinsing agents meet all current requirements of the European Ecolabel which has established itself on the market, also known as Euro Flower or EU Ecolabel, and is generally well-known. This international seal of quality is awarded to cleaning agents that are distinguished by special environmental compatibility and comparably little health risk.

Beyond our endeavours to have more and more of our products awarded the EU Ecolabel, it is also our goal to purchase raw materials that are won from palm oil as far as possible in accordance with the provisions of RSPO. RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) was initiated in 2004 by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).



Photo: BÜFA

In the area of special cleaners to remove printing inks, we also try to combine high effectiveness and efficiency with ecological compatibility. The current, conventional use of solvent cleaners is a health risk and some of these are also highly flammable at room temperature. We now also offer an alternative for these cleaning agents. In this case, it is a special cleaning paste called Brush Cleaner Forte, which does not require any labelling according to GHS Regulations (Globally Harmonized System of Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Chemicals). GHS is a uniform system used all over the world to classify chemicals and regulate labelling on packaging and in Safety Data Sheets.

In addition, we have also been able to develop a solvent based tank cleaner which, after having been used many times, can be reclaimed by distillation and used again for cleaning purposes.

### Composites

In the business line of composites as well, we place high demands on the environmental, health and use properties of our products.

In report year 2017, BÜFA Composite Systems already achieved 65 percent of the goal it set to increase the number of cobalt-free products by more than 50 percent. We have also made further progress in research and development of styrene-free applications to reduce emissions.

With our BÜFA®-Ambition-Gelcoat, which has outstanding UV resistance, we can now offer our customers an excellent alternative to lacquers. By dispensing with a conventional lacquer in addition to the usual surface treatment, we shorten the process chain and simplify the production of components for our customers.

In regard to the production of composites and from a resources point of view, we also increased the average batch size in 2017 to make them more efficient.



# Climate + Resources

Since the beginning of this year, we have a new energy supplier across the entire group and have consciously opted for sustainability. Our electricity is now 100 percent from renewable energy sources. Numerous measures were also implemented in each of the business lines to save and protect the climate and resources.

## REFURBISHED FROM THE BOTTOM UP – FORMER LOCATION IN THE CLOPPENBURGER STR.

Without the knowledge we have today and the precautionary measures that are taken in conjunction with this, in the old days substances often found their way into the ground during the production of chemicals. What effects these could have – since some of them were not removed and contaminated the ground – was not a well-known fact then.

During the middle of the 1990s, soil and groundwater contamination was found at the former premises of BÜFA Reaktionsharze in the Cloppenburg Straße in Oldenburg. Not only volatile halogenated hydrocarbons (VHH) but also volatile aromatic hydrocarbons (VAHs) had leaked into the ground.

Different procedures were used for rehabilitation. To reduce contamination in the soil, the upper layers of earth, approximately one and a half metres deep, were removed and replaced. To remove volatile organic compounds, not only was the air in the soil extracted but stripping plants were set up to treat the water. With this technology, substances in the contaminated water were removed by desorption and brought to the gas phase. Following this, the gas extracted from the ground water was then cleaned with active charcoal. In addition to this, residue remaining in ground water was degraded through micro-biological activities (bio-reactor).

After conclusion of the active rehabilitation measures, and in coordination with the soil protection authorities in Oldenburg, sampling was carried out regularly to continuously check the quality, state and composition of soil and ground water. Last year, this was carried out for the last time. The rehabilitation measures successfully concluded and confirmed by the authorities. The groundwater can now be used without reservation or restrictions, for example to water small gardens.

## Chemicals

To reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, we have begun to replace our LPG-powered forklifts with non-polluting, electric forklifts. According to measurements, just the use of two electric forklifts was able to save around four tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. Not only that, the electric forklifts also emit less noise compared to gas or diesel forklifts. When the expansion of the site in Hude-Altmoorhausen is begun, which is planned for spring, further climate and resource saving projects will be introduced.



Photo: BÜFA

## Cleaning

The construction of BÜFA Reinigungssysteme's new building is almost completed. Starting with setting up charging stations for electric vehicles, energy efficient technology suitable for the site has also been installed during the construction project.

For one thing, lighting in the building and on the property has been switched to LED. Automatic light control through motion detectors is now in place in many areas. Underfloor heating, which not only heats but also cools, has been installed in offices, tailored to the needs of employees. Since it features weather compensated control, the flow temperature can be adjusted to meet heating needs.

The roof of the warehouse has already been prepared for mounting a photovoltaic system.

In addition, all of the building services – from heating to ventilation – are monitored so that protection and safety can be ensured at all times. For us, safety has high priority on principle, the reason advanced systems that far exceed legal requirements were also integrated when refitting the building, for example extinguishing technology without external effects for neighbouring residents.

In the production area, batches have also been optimised to reduce water and energy consumption. Within the respective product classes with the same properties, larger units are now produced which has reduced the frequency of rinsing cycles for production tanks.

## Composites

The construction of the extension buildings at BÜFA Composite Systems will soon be completed. In these buildings as well, technical solutions designed for sustainability have been implemented.

In the new building as well as the BÜFA Composite Systems employee parking area, we have installed environment-friendly LED lighting. Presence detectors are used in the new rooms which, thanks to sensitive sensors, record the smallest movements, passively react to changes in light and automatically regulate their functions.

Modern heating systems that save energy have been installed for the offices at this location. Through pinpoint heat emitted by dark radiators, we also achieve high cost effectiveness combined with the best possible working conditions in our large shipping halls and warehouses. Radiant heat, similar to the effect of the sun, is deemed more pleasant than convection heat. When using the radiant heaters, overall room temperature can be kept lower with the same level of comfort. Energy consumption and costs can be clearly reduced. Since the dark radiators have concealment covers, the infra-red rays are less intensive and workers are neither blinded nor disturbed by the bright light of the heating elements.

In the tank cleaning area we have replaced the mechanical cleaning process that was used before with a water based process. The time and work required to clean the tanks before, which took about six days, was very long.

With this new process, tank down time is two days at the most. High pressure cleaning not only achieves an excellent cleaning effect, it also smooths the interior wall of the tank. This not only increases the service life of the tanks; cleaning intervals are also reduced.



Photo: BÜFA



## Work + Future

### LEAN MANAGEMENT AND SHOPFLOOR MANAGEMENT AT ALL LEVELS

We understand lean as an (occupational) attitude, to be more customer-oriented and to jointly achieve sustainable improvements. The overriding goals of this management approach are to allow employees to work independently and without interruption. All employees at BÜFA should be able to work efficiently and enjoy their jobs. In addition, errors should be analysed neutrally and without bias.

To achieve this way of thinking, a so-called mind-set, the BÜFA Group rearranged organisational structures in 2016, taking team aspects into consideration **1**.

A new interpretation of management (Lean leads to reinforcement of personal responsibility), establishment of new functions (Lean Coaches, Shopfloor Coordinators), as well as training courses at all levels have been implemented and steering committees set up.

Since March 2017 we have been introducing Shopfloor Management (SFM) to infuse the Lean structure with life **2**.

We start directly at the site of the work and establish methods that correspond to the principles and work attitude in Lean.

Since then, more than sixty teams meet regularly at the Shopfloor Boards mounted for this purpose. There the teams briefly and concisely discuss the day's business as well as key performance indicators, define their goals again if necessary, resolve malfunctions and deviations and remedy the causes of problems.

The teams use clearly defined methods and practices. In the case of deviations and malfunctions, "Action Cards" are written and posted on the Shopfloor Board which go through a visible, so-called PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) until the cause of the problem is found and permanently remedied.

1. Lean Structure



2. Lean Practices on the Shopfloor



3. Lean Mind-Set



Processes, for example, are analysed and improved in flow charts. Superiors regularly carry out “Gemba Walks” (observance of a process and exchange of information with the people involved in the process) and, together with employees, optimise working places according to the “5 A Method”.

By establishing these routines, we achieve a change in habits and finally a change in thinking and attitude toward work – the mind-set **3**.

- We act customer-oriented in everything we do.
- Employees act with personal responsibility and the teams organise themselves (according to their abilities and within their given scope).
- Recognising and naming errors is evaluated positively.
- We work on the causes of problems and continually make improvements.
- We think and act together and with each other at defined liaison points.
- Superiors coach according to the situation; they guide more often with questions than with solutions.

The introduction of Lean Management and Shopfloor Management should be concluded in May 2018. From then on, structure, practices and mind-set must mesh together smoothly and function. The benchmarks for this are the regular Shopfloor Checks which have been executed twice so far and work according to a traffic light system.

In the second round, 33 of 60 teams achieved “green” results which stand for a good to excellent Shopfloor. The goal of the third round is to implement recommendations for the 27 other teams. By using the described practices and methods as routine procedures, “lean” working is to be made possible here as well.



### GOOD MIXTURE: VOCATIONAL TRAINING AT BÜFA

Our employees are our most valuable resource – the reason we place great value on practical and comprehensive vocational training. We do not just convey well-founded contents during the different learning stages but also endeavour to develop the personal skills of our apprentices for the simple reason that today's apprentices are tomorrow's professionals.



Photo: BÜFA

The excellent training of our apprentices is also reflected by the awards they have received: In 2017, three of our apprentices were honoured by the Oldenburg Chamber of Industry and Commerce. All three of them passed their final examination with "very good" and were the best in the region in their vocational training professions.

### SAFEGUARDED IN AN EXEMPLARY MANNER – OCCUPATIONAL DISABILITY ADD-ON INSURANCE AND COMPANY PENSION SCHEME

Health is a precious asset. It is a prerequisite to remain fully active and fit to the fullest extent in daily life.

No one is immune to serious illnesses or accidents that could lead to occupational disability. This can be an existential threat.

Therefore, occupational disability insurance is one of the most important insurances than an employee should have, especially for employees born as of 1961. If the ability to work is lost, all that you can expect are statutory disability pension benefits which, as a rule, are not sufficient to ensure the current standard of living. This means that private provisions are necessary. However, insurance companies are not obligated to insure everyone without exception.

As an employer in the chemical industry, BÜFA is able to provide such insurance to its employees and they do not need to insure themselves privately. Instead, they receive an occupational disability add-on insurance (Berufsunfähigkeitszusatzversicherung Chemie [BUC]) from us in the form of a monthly pension – and without a health examination. Along with a fixed, annual employer contribution, our employees can also choose whether they want to make additional contributions to the plan on their own.

The transition from work into secure retirement is just as important for BÜFA as a secure job.

For this reason, BÜFA also offers employees the opportunity to participate in its own company pension plan which allows employees to supplement their statutory pension insurance through tax and social security-free salary conversions – an attractive plan to enhance retirement benefits.



Photo: BÜFA, Alexander Geisler

In the years past, however, interest rates have strongly declined, thanks to the continued low interest rate policy. This has also considerably affected retirement pension provisions. Falling interest rates also mean reduced retirement benefits.

Along with former direct commitments from pension reserves with a direct insurance, BÜFA has created new options for the company pension plan. Among other things, different investment strategies offer employees individual return opportunities with a premium guarantee and the choice between a monthly pension or a one-off payoff of pension capital. This helps to counter the negative effects of the low interest phase to the benefit of our employees.



# Engagement + Region

## SMART REASONS FOR ENGAGEMENT IN HIGH-TECH GRÜNDERFONDS [START-UP FUNDS]

Promoting tomorrow's innovations today – that is how BÜFA helps to mould the future in a sustainable manner. Since May 2017, we have participated with three million Euro in the third issue of the High-Tech-Gründerfonds (HTGF).

Established in 2005, HTGF supports young technology companies through financial participation as well as consulting and, thanks to its comprehensive network, builds co-operations with business investors.

As a medium-sized, family-run company, BÜFA has just the right expertise for building long-term, sustainable business models and is an ideal partner for HTGF. As an investor in the fund, we are in close contact with young companies whose ideas and projects give us inspiration. Furthermore, we can also help to make sure that promising research results find their way into the business world.

## AN AFFINITY FOR THE REGION

In spite of being a company that does business all over the world, our roots are still in Oldenburg. This is reflected in our social engagement. We especially support regional projects, events and other initiatives through donations and sponsoring activities.

BÜFA and cabaret, for example, have become a permanent fixture: for two decades now, we have been a reliable sponsoring partner of the Oldenburg Cabaret Days, an event in the city's cultural scene that has become indispensable. Organised by "Kulturetage" and the Bureau of Culture run by the "Studentenwerk Oldenburg", these humorous events are highlights at the beginning of each year.

We also engage in the traditional Oldenburg State Equestrian Show held in Rastede's Schlosspark, now for the 70th time. Last year at this equestrian spectacle, which is well-known beyond the borders of Oldenburg, BÜFA sponsored the prize awarded in the one-star, fourth level dressage test, test S3, dressage performance rating 1-3. As strongly anchored in the region as this equestrian show is – BÜFA is just as strongly anchored and proud to be a part of it.

Also of special concern to us are social projects. The many voluntary and full-time personnel at the Hospice Service Foundation Oldenburg, for example, who accompany the terminally ill with dedication, fortitude and care, contribute a valuable and responsible service. This year, we will provide financial



# Future Issues

## PROMOTING DIGITISATION

The digital future is an important issue everywhere in the business world. At BÜFA, many digitisation projects are already underway in the company and others in the planning stage so that we can resolutely advance digital solutions.

In 2017 the go-ahead was given for the introduction of a Product Information Management System (PIM). BÜFA will strengthen its digital marketing and more emphasis will be placed on eCommerce. PIM ensures that these customer loyalty tools and avenues are stocked with stable, extensive product data. By centralising product data, the process chain from entering master data all the way to their utilisation is reinforced and rationalised.

At the same time, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) will be introduced to create a customer-oriented, modern, online-based as well as transparent marketing and sales organisation for the BÜFA Group. In the scope of this project, we will adapt existing processes and structures and replace software systems that are no longer up-to-date. First of all, this will increase the quality of our marketing, sales and service processes and, on the other hand, also increase their transparency. Not only will the CRM software support the activities of our employees; they will then also have tools to support customers in ways that were not possible in the past.

Clear goals, adequate structures, customised processes and the best software solutions available for implementation and support – that is how we create the prerequisites for winning customers in the future and being able to achieve above-average market growth.

## INNOVATIONS

Innovations result when ideas turn into new products, services or processes that successfully establish themselves on the market.

As a company in the chemical industry, we have, for example, made a giant step forward with our start-up company chembid, an online marketplace and search engine for chemicals all in one. Chembid is our digital answer to expand market shares in the growing online business and remain competitive in the long term.



More information:  
[www.chembid.de](http://www.chembid.de)

But our newest product innovations such as fire-resistant foaming resin systems, ecological cleaning agents, gelcoats in a class with lacquers or conductive plastics also prove that BÜFA is innovative in regard to sustainability. And we continue to carry out research and development in our own laboratories as well as with partners.

We will not only be changing our line of chemicals in the "BÜFA green" programme, but will also further advance the use of new raw materials in both the cleaning & composite areas.

In the composites business unit we have set ourselves the task of further improving the formulations of our fire protection materials and making them more sustainable. Research and development at BÜFA Composite Systems concentrates on testing alternatives to chlorine and bromine to find substances that are deemed safe from a health point of view.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

An effective orientation to sustainability also requires management systems in which quality, plant safety, occupational safety and health as well as environmental issues can be actively controlled. This allows company processes to become more efficient and be continuously further developed.

BÜFA has begun to replace the former management system with DocMa (Document Management System). With this platform, we offer our employees a modern, user-friendly and responsive system. DocMa is a separate area within an established platform to which every employee at BÜFA has access. With DocMa, it is now possible to continuously check documents and everyone in the company can initiate improvements to processes.

In addition, we have provided our employees with a software system for electronic payroll accounting. In the scope of our digital strategy, we will use this system in the future for all data and processes in personnel management. It replaces the two systems used before which means that data records no longer need to be recorded twice and compared and that information is uniform, comprehensive and transparent.

## AUDITING IN THE ESHQ AREA

As soon as the new auditing concept has been implemented for the entire BÜFA Group, internal audits of the Management System based on this concept will be executed in 2018. Systematic, independent and documented assessment of processes, requirements and guidelines are to be used for quality assurance. All of the company processes at BÜFA will be audited annually in all business lines.

The audit team presently consists of 28 employees in total, all of which have received basic training. Our chief auditors regularly receive further training and two of the chief auditors have already been trained for the latest standards. In the next cycle, a total of 34 internal audits will be executed to prepare for an external audit by a certification organisation.

## IN KEEPING WITH THE TIMES – A NEW VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROFESSION AT BÜFA











Starting in August this year, companies can train apprentices for the profession of industrial clerk in e-commerce. Companies like BÜFA that already offer products and services online are now following this new path in vocational training.

With digitisation and the growing online trade in focus, we are preparing to meet the requirements of tomorrow's labour market. By offering vocational training to become an industrial clerk in e-commerce, we systematically qualify our apprentices for the tasks of online business. In conformity with vocational training to become a wholesale and import/export clerk, training focuses not only classic commercial subjects but also new aspects such as online marketing and web analyses.



# Figures, Data, Facts

BÜFA Group		2017	2016	2015
Total sales (consolidated)	million €	213	194	198,6
Equity ratio	%	> 40	> 40	> 40
Research and development expenses	million €	2,1	1,9	1,7
Investments in property, plant and equipment	million €	18,7	10,8	3,6
Personnel costs	million €	32,9	31,3	29,4
Domestic locations (D)		6	6	6
Locations abroad		4	4	5
Employees		567	514	507
Employees <sup>1</sup>		497	442	424
Qualification costs per employee <sup>2</sup>	€	1040	985	514

Locations in Germany				
Illness rate <sup>3</sup>	%	3,7	3,5	3,7
Fluctuation	%	6,4	7,3	4,9
Training days		1397	1130	824
Training days per employee		3,2	2,7	2,0
Average age	years	 43  41	41	41
Ø Length of service BÜFA Holding	years	 13  14		
Ø Length of service BÜFA Reinigungssysteme	years	 13  12		
Ø Length of service BÜFA Chemikalien	years	 11  8		
Ø Length of service BÜFA Composite Systems	years	 12  10		
Percentage of women among employees	%	28,9	24,3	28,1
Apprentices		29	27	26
Training quota	%	7,5	6,2	6,1

Locations in Germany and the Netherlands				
Accident frequency rate <sup>4</sup>		3,2	3	3,8
Work-related accidents <sup>5</sup>		15	13	16
Days of absence		118	96	315

1 FTE = Full-Time Equivalent (full time employee)

2 Calculation based on costs for external training courses

3 Calculation based on 251 work days; sick days with continued payment

4 Calculation: Number of work-related accidents with lost days x 200,000 / number of hours actually worked

5 Calculation: Number of work-related accidents as of one lost day

Relative consumption/produced or sold tonnage

Locations in Germany		2017	2016	2015
<b>BÜFA Chemikalien, Hude-Altmoorhausen (/sold tons)</b>				
Waste	kg	0,900	0,825	0,586
Gas consumption	kWh	9,058	8,327	6,987
Gas consumption in CO <sub>2</sub>	kg	1,993	2,098	1,761
Electricity consumption	kWh	4,881	4,875	4,288
Electricity consumption in CO <sub>2</sub>	kg	1,825	1,823	1,844
Water consumption	m <sup>3</sup>	0,067	0,074	0,074

<b>BÜFA Reinigungssysteme, Oldenburg (/produced tons)</b>				
Waste	kg	29,119	32,721	29,075
Gas consumption	kWh	73,371	81,585	81,712
Gas consumption in CO <sub>2</sub>	kg	16,142	20,559	20,591
Electricity consumption	kWh	33,733	33,077	34,030
Electricity consumption in CO <sub>2</sub>	kg	12,616	12,371	14,633
Water consumption	m <sup>3</sup>	0,805	0,896	0,931

<b>BÜFA Composite Systems, Rastede-Liethe (/produced tons)</b>				
Abfälle	kg	42,121	39,009	44,512
Gas consumption	kWh	227,142	217,295	181,306
Gas consumption in CO <sub>2</sub>	kg	49,971	54,758	45,689
Electricity consumption	kWh	168,759	166,046	157,832
Electricity consumption in CO <sub>2</sub>	kg	63,116	62,101	67,868
Water consumption	m <sup>3</sup>	0,259	0,320	0,181

#### Reporting framework

This is the fourth sustainability brochure published by the BÜFA Group. The fiscal year runs from January 1st to December 31, 2017.

The information on this page refers exclusively to the German producing locations of the BÜFA Group.

The deadline for key figures was December 31, 2017. The editorial deadline was March 3, 2018.

\* Data not yet presented at the time of printing.

# BÜFA

*New chemistry.*

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