
IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN MANUFACTURING CENTER AWARDED RENOWNED INDUSTRY PRIZE

Schaffhausen, 2nd December 2020 – IWC Schaffhausen has won the GEO Award in its first-ever entry into the industry competition "Factory of the Year". The prize is one of the most desirable awards for European companies and attests to the Swiss luxury watch manufacturer's outstanding operational excellence across the entire value-added chain. But the strong performances of IWC in the areas of quality and sustainability have also been recognised by the jurors.

Perfect quality can only be achieved by excellence on all levels: The very highest performance is required in innovation, development and design, but above all in terms of various production processes, so that every individual timepiece from IWC fulfils the strictest requirements for quality, reliability and long service life. In 2018, IWC consolidated the production of movement parts, movement assembly and case-making in a new Manufacturing Center. Now the transparently structured watchmaking company, in which IWC combines traditional craftsmanship with the latest production methods and technologies, has been awarded with the GEO Award (Global Excellence in Operations) at the industry competition "Factory of the Year".

"For over ten years, we have been addressing the subject of operational excellence as part of various strategic programmes, and have since then been able to achieve far-reaching improvements across the entire value-added chain. In the areas of quality, service and sustainability, in particular, we have achieved huge successes in doing so. The fact that we were able to win the major accolade of the GEO Award the very first time we took part in the competition is a great affirmation of our work, but at the same time is a great motivation for continuing to work on the ongoing improvement of our processes and products. We want to ensure absolutely perfect quality,

so that our mechanical timepieces delight their owners for an entire lifetime," explains Andreas Voll, COO of IWC Schaffhausen.

AN INNOVATIVE NEW PRODUCTION LAYOUT AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

The operations specialists of IWC have developed a new production layout for the new Manufacturing Center, which illustrates the value stream from the raw material to the finished movement or case in a closely coordinated process. Comprehensive lean principles were taken into account here, which are above all targeted at the avoidance of mistakes, short throughput times and high quality. The shop floor areas, in which employees regularly meet and exchange information, also contribute to the constant improvement of the processes. Striving for operational excellence at IWC goes back to the company's foundation over 150 years ago. Back then, the American watchmaker and engineer F.A. Jones introduced centralised production with a distinct division of labour and used hydropower from the Rhine to drive his machines. This is how he achieved not only better and more stable production processes, but also quality not previously known for mechanical watches.

"We participated in this competition in order to precisely benchmark ourselves against the best industrial companies in Europe and to allow us to learn from this. After all, as engineers of the art of watchmaking, we want to constantly scrutinise our procedures, continuously develop our processes further and sustainably increase the quality of our products. Winners in the last few years have included some of the most famous industrial companies in Europe, including our long-standing partner Mercedes-AMG. We are therefore especially pleased that we are now the first luxury watch manufacturer to have been awarded the GEO Award for operational excellence," adds Stefan Jung, Lean Advisor of IWC Schaffhausen.

JURORS RECOGNISE PROGRESS IN QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The competition's jurors particularly recognised the efforts with which IWC improves the quality of its products and increases sustainability in production. Examples mentioned included the use of advanced techniques for data analysis. From the production of a product and all test steps right up to service and customer feedback,

comprehensive data on quality is collected and evaluated at IWC. The findings from this regularly feed into the improvement of processes. IWC's performance in the area of sustainability was also particularly highlighted – for example, energy efficiency in production, the avoidance of waste and the "Great Place to Work" certification as an employer.

ONE OF THE MOST RENOWNED PRIZES FOR INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES

The industry competition "Factory of the Year" (www.fabrik-des-jahres.de/en) has been held since 1992 and aims to honour the outstanding achievements of manufacturing companies. The joint initiative of the Kearney consulting firm, SV Veranstaltungen and the industry magazine "Produktion" is one of the most renowned prizes for industrial companies in Europe. Past winners have included Mercedes-AMG, Procter & Gamble Crailsheim, MAN, Bosch, ABB and Infineon. The prizes will be officially awarded from 21st to 23rd June 2021 at the Neckar Forum in Esslingen.

IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN

In 1868, the American watchmaker and entrepreneur Florentine Ariosto Jones travelled from Boston to Switzerland and founded the 'International Watch Company' in Schaffhausen. His visionary dream was to combine advanced American manufacturing methods with the craftsmanship of Swiss watchmakers to make the best pocket watches of his time. In doing so, he not only laid the foundation for IWC's unique engineering approach but also established the centralised production of mechanical watches in Switzerland.

Over its 150 year history, IWC Schaffhausen has developed a reputation for creating functional complications, especially chronographs and calendars, which are ingenious, robust, and easy for customers to use. A pioneer in the use of titanium and ceramics, IWC today specialises in highly engineered technical watch cases manufactured from advanced materials, such as titanium-aluminide and Ceratanium®. Preferring the principle of "form follows function" over decoration, the Swiss watch manufacturer's timeless creations embody their owners' dreams and ambitions as they journey through life.

IWC sources materials responsibly and takes action to minimise its impact on the environment, creating intrinsically sustainable timepieces that are built to last for generations. The company prides itself in training its own future watchmakers and engineers, as well as offering an excellent working environment for all employees. IWC also partners with organisations that work globally to support children and young people.

DOWNLOADS

Photos of the IWC Manufacturing Center available free of charge at press.iwc.com

FURTHER INFORMATION

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