



You are Regional Sales Manager for Western Europe and Latin America. First of all which result Meyle achieved during the 2013 year? 2013 was a very good year for us with a strong increase of our turnover. But of course there are other factors which are extremely important for us like customer satisfaction, improving our high quality standards and service levels. Here we had a very good feedback from our customers which made us very happy.

In both regions which are goals that you are pointing at?

Still there is a good market for quality products and we can offer our partners and customers important key advantages helping them to sell our products successfully in the market. These key factors are our high quality standards for all MEYLE parts and our unique MEYLE-HD parts with four year warranty, a wide and updated program range covering also newest applications, our new logistics centre ensuring quick deliveries and highest availability, a modern information management, strong marketing and our technical support. Another important key factor is to have the right partners in the different countries which are giving a “face” to our brand. We know that in these days it is hard work to be successful in the market and we are doing our best to understand the needs and problems of our clients in order to support them. In Italy for example Massimo Poletti takes care of our Italian distributors and gives them sales and technical support. He is present in the market and connected with our Italian distributors day by day so that we get a lot of information which helps us to understand the concerns and needs of our clients better. One thing which we have learnt for example is the importance of technical trainings: The mechanics are really interested to get technical information about the products they are installing day by day and they want to be sure that the part they install is a quality part working perfectly without any problems. For us these technical trainings are a great opportunity to give them this kind of security, explaining our products, showing them what material and production processes we use and to give them technical hints. At the same time we get a lot of information from the mechanics and their daily concerns. This helps us to get ideas about what can be improved and done better. To cut a long story short: Our goal for these regions is to convince the workshops of our MEYLE and MEYLE-HD parts,

offering the best service level possible in all areas and to grow together with our partners even closer.

You can consider a safe car thanks to its components. How are Wulf Gaertner Autoparts spare parts long live and reliable?

Until today Wulf Gaertner Autoparts' range has grown up to 17,500 reliable automotive spares. The key to this success has been our unerring commitment to quality. Our own team of engineers draws on extensive experience in the development and manufacturing of automotive spare parts. Product development is centralised at our Hamburg base. With their in-depth expert knowledge our own engineers monitor manufacturing processes both at company-run production sites and trusted manufacturing partners. They ensure that the same stringent quality standards are met throughout our global network of production facilities by means of complex multi-stage testing processes which are applied throughout the MEYLE parts production processes. These include analyses of materials, processing and correct product fit. Rigorous initial sample testing is followed by more analysis procedures both in-production and in our Hamburg testing lab and complemented by quality tests carried out by independent organisations such as the German technical inspection organisation TÜV and the Helmut-Schmidt University in Hamburg. Wulf Gaertner Autoparts first introduced technically enhanced auto parts in 2002 under the MEYLE-HD premium brand. MEYLE-HD parts are re-engineered to provide greater stability and durability than the parts developed by OEMs and vehicle manufacturers. There are now over 700 re-engineered and technically enhanced parts to fit thousands of different vehicle applications. Our company is the only independent aftermarket supplier which demonstrates its quality commitment by giving a four-year warranty on these products. When looked at individually, each modification has a limited impact, and it is only by combining the effects that they unfold their full potential. Under-dimensioned ball joints for example will cause a ball-and-socket-joint to fail prematurely under the exceedingly high dynamic stress that occurs under braking or cornering. The surface pressure generated by a small ball head with small surface area causes severe wear of the individual parts and leads to early joint failure. Our engineers used professional load simulation techniques to calculate the new ball pin diameter. The logical solution in order to reduce wear and increase service life is therefore to increase the ball head diameter. Optimising the composition of materials yields an extremely wear-resistant plastic socket, which makes the ball joint last even longer. Another factor determining part life is the rubber-to-metal bonding of rubber bushings and mounts. Pioneering designs and high-grade

rubber materials help reinforce material bonding considerably. Thanks to the larger rubber-to-metal contact surface forces are distributed more evenly, which in turn reduces overall load on the bonding. Again, the combination of all features increases service life. Right at the beginning of product development the engineers decide which technologies and materials to use. MEYLE-HD spare parts only feature full-rubber mounts to rule out the risk of leakage. The damping characteristics are precisely attuned to the OE component, so as not to compromise driving comfort. Though often ignored, the grease employed in ball joints is one of the crucial factors determining ball joint life. We use a high-performance grease specially developed to support the high loads to which these parts are subjected. The grease helps reduce wear and tear significantly and prevents corrosion and early joint failure. With MEYLE-HD parts, workshops do not only benefit from outstanding durability. Wulf Gaertner Autoparts AG has also succeeded in increasing spare part replacement efficiency. MEYLE-HD parts can be fitted entirely without special tools. Thanks to their universal design, MEYLE tie rod end assemblies for example are compatible with several different axial joint designs. A common problem repair shops have to deal with is the replacement of an entire assembly, even though only one component may be defective. Thus, for example, a defective trailing arm on the Ford Mondeo requires the entire assembly to be replaced, though only the bushing is worn. The corresponding bushing is available separately from Wulf Gaertner Autoparts AG thereby offering a very time and cost efficient repair solution.

Meyle brands has over 17 thousands spare-parts in its catalogue, from cooling systems to electric and sensors. Is Meyle working at new products? What manufactures require to you?

Under its MEYLE and MEYLE-HD brands Wulf Gaertner Autoparts AG engineers, manufactures and markets more than 17,500 premium-quality replacements parts for the independent aftermarket. The parts are ranging from steering and suspension components, rubber-to-metal parts, brakes, damping components, cooling systems, filters, drive train components, auto electronics and sensing technology. Wulf Gaertner Autoparts is always working on the development of new products and on further product enhancements. Using information from the German Technical Inspection Agency (TÜV) along with media and market feedback from repair shops and technology partners, our engineers identify the parts which are vulnerable to premature failure. As a first step in the process the engineering department determines which loads have been causing the OE part to fail. Load interaction is continuously measured throughout the entire re-engineering process. When we develop a MEYLE-HD part we never lose sight of the overall system. To gain an understanding of the effects of the loads applied we use computational models to simulate power flow dynamics. Along with failure analyses from TÜV, DEKRA and other data resources all the information required to build durable parts is readily at hand. Especially when we look at our optimised MEYLE-HD parts – there is such a tremendous need in the market. The reasons are quite simple: over the past years, ever more powerful engine generations have been designed, while deteriorating road conditions and rising traffic levels make stop-and-go driving a growing challenge. And owing to increasingly intensive cost pressures and ever shorter

engineering and test cycles, the service life of some automotive parts falls short of the usual product life. The trend towards lightweight designs, short model life cycles and increasing model variety also results in significantly shorter volume-production part life. Wulf Gaertner Autoparts is opposing this trend by designing and producing quality-enhanced automotive replacement parts. Our engineers develop steering and suspension parts to perform reliably even after thousands of driven kilometres – no matter how bad the roads and how heavy the load. The latest addition to our MEYLE-HD range for example is a newly designed control arm bushing for Mazda 3 and 5 series models. The most distinctive feature about the re-engineered MEYLE-HD part is the rugged full-rubber mount designed to easily outlast the hydro bushing used on the OE version and coming – like all MEYLE-HD products – with a four-year warranty. Furthermore we recently added a quality-enhanced MEYLE-HD tie rod end to our program to fit a wide range of Opel applications. To enhance part durability we have been using a bespoke MEYLE high-performance grease on all MEYLE joints since 2013. Specially formulated to match the materials in use, it offers even better anti-wear protection. The re-engineered MEYLE-HD tie rod end for Opel models also features a larger ball pin designed to reduce surface pressure while increasing overall part durability. Wulf Gaertner Autoparts also added lately another 10 items to its MEYLE-HD range of VW control arms now covering the complete small and mid-size model range of the VW Group's brands (Audi, Seat, Skoda and VW). The growing product range enables workshops to expand their customer base by offering MEYLE-HD quality repairs for an ever-increasing range of applications. With the new design and optimised rubber compound MEYLE-HD control arms are engineered to outlive OE parts by far.