

25 years of SAWIKO: From a small four-man business to a Europe-wide successful supplier of premium accessories for motorhomes

A story of 70-hour weeks, a successful takeover and an investment for the future.

16 July 2020
Page 1 of 4

Kötz/Neuenkirchen-Vörden. SAWIKO celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Since its foundation, the company has developed into a leading supplier of premium accessories for leisure vehicles in Europe, from frame extensions to towbars to load carrier systems. The company has become an integral part of the caravanning industry and is popular with OEMs, retailers and end customers alike. Reason enough to review the company history and draw up an interim statement.

Press contact:
AL-KO Vehicle Technology Group GmbH
Marian Möbius
Ichenhauser Straße 14
89359 Kötz
Tel.: +49 8221 97-8239
E-mail: marian.moebius@alko-tech.com

www.alko-tech.com

"No pain, no gain"

The SAWIKO success story begins in 1995 in Hunteburg in the district of Osnabrück in Lower Saxony. Three passionate campers, Uwe Samland, Ralf Winter and Guido Kovermann, set up their own business with one employee. The mission: to recognise the needs of the market for leisure vehicle accessories, towbars and load carrier systems and to meet those needs with high-quality and innovative products.

True to the motto "No pain, no gain", they began by doing the assembling themselves at the beginning, visiting trade fairs and presenting their products at campsites. 70 hours per week including Saturdays and Sundays were normal for them in those days. It paid off quickly and was rewarded with new customers and increasing sales. The recipe for success was quickly established, not just focussing on one "sales pillar", but on OEMs, retailers and end customers.

AL-KO takes over SAWIKO

A new chapter in SAWIKO's history began at the end of 2011 with AL-KO Vehicle Technology Group taking over the accessories specialist. By then it was already clear that SAWIKO's strategy and brand would be continued under AL-KO's umbrella. "Through the acquisition of SAWIKO, we have strengthened our position in the European aftermarket business in a targeted manner and further expanded our proximity to customers who purchase our products from a trading partner," says Harald Hiller, President & CEO of the AL-KO Vehicle Technology Group. "Today, the SAWIKO experts in our Group are the drivers for marketing leisure vehicle accessories throughout Europe. The latest example is our Italian subsidiary

CBE, which also offers selected solar and energy management products to end customers.

Page 2 of 4

Successful then and now

With the takeover by AL-KO, SAWIKO continues along its growth trajectory – both economically and in terms of personnel. Therefore the four-man business has matured into a company with 70 employees. With a Europe-wide retailer network as well as its own customer centres with AL-KO in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Italy, the company operates nationwide in the most important European caravanning markets and thus ensures optimum customer service. The customer centre at SAWIKO's headquarters in Neuenkirchen-Vörden deserves special mention, where OEM, retailer and consumer wishes are analysed at an early stage through direct customer feedback and transformed into innovative, market-driven products and services.

"It makes us particularly proud that we can optimally fulfil the wishes of our customers both nationally and in Europe. 25 years of SAWIKO means 25 years of innovation, highest product quality, an excellent price-performance ratio and customer-oriented action. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our great workforce, who made our achievements possible in the first place. Together, we are firmly convinced that there are many more successful years ahead of us," says Guido Kovermann, Senior Vice President After Sales and Customer Centre at the AL-KO Vehicle Technology Group.

Investment for the future

The future remains positive. That's because AL-KO is investing in a new production facility at the SAWIKO site in Neuenkirchen-Vörden as a "birthday present", right on time for the 25th anniversary. This enables an even more efficient and high-quality production, which will ultimately benefit the customers. So the SAWIKO success story continues.



Caption 1: Proud company founders: Guido Kovermann, Uwe Samland and Ralf Winter (from left to right) in the SAWIKO founding year 1995.



Caption 2: SAWIKO's success story began in 1995 in this workshop in Hunteburg in the district of Osnabrück in Lower Saxony, Germany.



Caption 3: Colorful advertising: The front page of the first six-page SAWIKO flyer from 1997.



Caption 4: The SAWIKO team in 2005. Today, the company has around 70 employees.



Page 4 of 4

Caption 5: The new customer center in Neuenkirchen-Vöhren, Germany was opened in 2008.



Caption 6: Almost all SAWIKO products are produced in Germany and stand for highest quality.



Caption 7: The latest logo of SAWIKO.

AL-KO Vehicle Technology Group

Founded in 1931, AL-KO Vehicle Technology is now a global technology company with over 30 sites in Europe, South America, Asia and Australia. With high-quality chassis components for trailers, leisure vehicles and light commercial vehicles, AL-KO represents the best in ergonomics and functionality, maximum comfort as well as innovations to ensure greater driving safety. The company specialises in sophisticated innovation processes and has received several awards in this regard. The AL-KO Vehicle Technology Group is a wholly owned subsidiary of DexKo Global Inc, a portfolio company of KPS Capital Partners, LP.