



Success Story

Well prepared for the future with CLOOS Retrofit

Modernisation of a robot system at SAF-HOLLAND

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HAIGER/BESSENBACH – As a leading manufacturer of chassis-related systems and components for trailers and semi-trailers, trucks and buses, SAF-HOLLAND trusts in a modern production with reliable machines. Recently, the company successfully modernised an older CLOOS welding system at its Bessenbach premises. Since 1998, the robots reliably welded supports of brake linings for truck drum brakes. Due to the retrofit by CLOOS and the installation of two new QIROX welding robots, the availability of the system could be increased further.

The SAF-HOLLAND S.A. Group with its headquarters in Luxembourg currently is active on six continents and has locations in 28 countries. The product range comprises axle and suspension systems, fifth wheels, kingpins, and landing gear and is marketed under the brands SAF, HOLLAND, and Neway. At the Bessenbach site, the complete production of trailer axles is concentrated. In 2016, the 850 employees produced about 220,000 axles.



Photo 1: In the component production area, a CLOOS robot system welds the supports of brake lines for truck drum brakes.



Photo 2: The CLOOS robots had been in continuous operation since 1998.

CLOOS system in continuous operation since 1998

In the component production area, a CLOOS robot system welds the supports of brake lines for truck drum brakes. An operator manually inserts the parts and checks the quality after automated welding by the robots. If the parts meet the quality criteria, they are led to the lacquering system via a conveyor belt. Per shift the two robots weld around 450 parts, there are 7 variants. "The system has been running in 4-shift operation since 1998 and is thus continuously working without interruptions", explains Marco Krebs, department manager component production at SAF-HOLLAND GmbH in Bessenbach. "The only production pause is from Saturday at 10 o'clock p.m. to Sunday at 10 o'clock p.m."

Smooth system retrofit

In spring 2017 the system has been updated to further increase the availability. Now two new QIROX QRC-350 robots weld the components instead of the old robots. The new robots have enormous dynamics, shortest acceleration and highest offset speeds.

The system retrofit was smoothly done during Eastern 2017. "With eight days, CLOOS exactly met the defined period", explains Krebs. The system did not produce for a total of two weeks because there were also other changes beside the CLOOS technology. To build up a safety stock before the retrofit start, the inventory production took place on several Sundays in advance.

Modernisation increases system performance

For many years, the robot system was the bottleneck of the axle production. To ensure the parts supply, a high system availability in continuous operation is essential. Since the modernisation was finished, the system is now working even more stable and nearly without failures.

Furthermore, the new QIROX controller offers an optimum man-machine interface. The employees benefit from user-friendly operation and simplified programming. A training directly at the machine allowed them to get acquainted with the new technology. The CLOOS specialist who realised the retrofit informed the eight employees completely.

Long-term partnership

SAF-HOLLAND has been trusting in the CLOOS welding technology for many years. So the company uses 14 CLOOS robot systems in its two premises in Bessenbach alone. The oldest system has been successfully producing since 1997. On-the-spot support is provided by long-standing CLOOS sales and service partner Schwalbach Schweißtechnik, based in Frankfurt. Many more CLOOS systems are also used in their production sites all over the world. "We particularly value the excellent service of CLOOS", says Krebs. "Because here we get all relevant components from a single source". The mechanics of the two old robots are still completely ready-for-use. Therefore they still play an important role in the company - they now serve as training robots in the trainee workshop.



Photo 3: The two old welding robots were replaced by two new QIROX QRC-350 robots.



Photo 4: Since the modernisation, the system performance has been increased further.

Retrofit by CLOOS:

Meet the requirements of tomorrow today

The requirements for welding always change and the expectations of the customers increase continuously. A quick and efficient adaptation of the production is often necessary. The CLOOS service team advises on any modifications and retrofits of existing robot systems to increase their productivity and to adapt them to changed requirements.

All advantages at a glance:

- Use of up-to-date technology
- Simplified programming and operating comfort
- Increased spare parts availability
- Increase in performance
- Improved efficiency and cost reduction
- Training of the employees with minimum expenditure



Video on CLOOS TV

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