

Puky produces children's bicycles, tricycles and Go-Karts guaranteeing uncompromised quality.

Quality **always pays**

Talking about children's bikes, tricycles and Go-Karts in Germany means talking about Puky. In fact, the company from Wülfrath, near Düsseldorf is the German leader in the **production of children's vehicles** both in terms of the high-tech applied in the production process, as well as the endless innovations and technical solutions applied to each of its products. All this derives from the profound belief that the vehicles must adapt to the child and not vice versa. For this reason, Puky has been on the market since a distant 1949 and continues to produce in Germany although there has been great pressure as regards their prices. Besides the home market, Puky exports throughout Europe, Japan and Australia with a turnover of 20 - 25 million Euros, of which a mere 20% derives from exports.

Quality and safety

Puky executives, Rolf Kuchenbecker and Ralf Puslat together with Michael Bunte, Technical executive of the company strongly believe that **production can continue in Germany** regardless of strong competition.

A fundamental factor is the commitment to guarantee an **uncompromised quality**: "We should always bear in mind that children's toys **will never be used as they should**", says Kuchenbecker. "A child may all too often take a friend on board the rear saddle or a parent may decide to sit on a child's bike to revive his/her childhood memories. All these uses should be contemplated, whether we are looking at **bikes, GoKarts or other Puky products**".

When a rack or frame brakes, obviously, parents will never ask their children whether they have used it properly and children will "hardly tell their

parents that they tried the bike out going down a flight of steps"; as Michael Bunte knows from experience with his three children.

Puky, with its 90 employees, **checks all steps** from the design phase, through to production (tube bending, drilling, deformation, welding and painting), logistics, quality control and the severe final control tests.

In fact, as **qualitative standards**, both components and Puky finished products not only meet the **DIN or EN standards for toys** but further tests are carried out on special test devices. Only components that pass the resistance tests are used for the assembly.

Safety for children

"Quality always pays", emphasises Kuchenbecker, and the growing turnover over the last few years confirm this. Customers have again gone back to having a perception of greater product value. Moreover, greater quality, together with exchangeable parts that can be ordered for many years, guarantee use of the article for as long as possible. These factors, too, are again sought-after by the customer.

"For next season, the company intends to **launch many new products on the market**" says Kuchenbecker. "This does not, however, mean that Puky is simply following the latest trends. In fact, there are some products that will never be made because they **fall short of meeting the quality criteria**, and they are not really necessary to a child's development. Let us never forget our slogan: "Sicher Kind sein", i.e. "**Safety for children**".





Michael Bunte,
Technical Director PUKY GMBH & CO. KG



A 30 year long alliance

As mentioned in the beginning, one of the fundamental elements of Puky's philosophy of "quality without compromise" is the use of **technologically avant-garde machines and concepts**. To this end, it is interesting to note that since the '70s, Puky has been using BLM machines, as can be seen by the CNC Dynamo-E-MR-200 tube bending machine that was installed in view of a new production reorganisation, **to produce tubes in silence and with an all-electric technology** for use in bicycle, tricycle and Go-Kart frames.

"BLM has always been the only producer of tube bending machines that are able to offer standard products as well as **unique tailored solutions with unbeatable quality for the price**" explains Rolf Kuchenbecker. "Then a fundamental element is **BLM's competence in issues on bending technology**. The BLM staff does not try to sell you a special machine at all costs. To the contrary, they focus on **trying to find directions and solutions that can be installed on standard machines with modifications to the tools and programming software**.

And BLM does not simply sell a machine to then forget about it. Quite the contrary, **its staff visits customers on a regular basis** and shares the experiences gained on the machines. In this way, our operators have been able to develop **processing programmes with extremely complex geometries** directly by themselves, succeeding in creating an in-house know-how in such a short time".

The **customer service** is directly followed by the **German BLM branch in Unna**. Among other things, the new machines can be diagnosed in remote mode, through the Internet, directly from the Italian headquarters and this service has been much appreciated by Puky. Nevertheless, if it were absolutely necessary, in an emergency situation, a technician is available from Italy at all times.

Perfect cells

Alongside the uncompromised quality, the test lab, direct assembly and a vast range of innovative products, another important factor that con-



tributes to the success of Puky is a factory organised in production cells.

"Each cell consists of **one or two BLM tube bending machines** that are complete, if necessary, with a punching machine, press or other devices that have developed and manufactured in-house to perform grooves, drill holes or other operations, and a welding station. **Each tube bending machine is equipped with a loader** from where the machine takes the tube, bends it and places it on a chute or a conveyor belt. The operator then shift it to other cells that complete the processing cycle " explains Michael Bunte.

"As opposed to the past, **one operator is responsible for the an entire component/product assembly (tubular frame)**. The advantage of this method is that the operator can immediately spot a problem on the processing line, such as a bent frame that does not access the welding station. **The error is immediately eliminated**. In the past, a problem would only have been noticed downstream the welding unit and perhaps after a few hundred pieces had already been welded incorrectly ".

"To have changed the production method has given extremely positive results: **we have increased production by 25% and decreased the production area by 30%**. This makes it possible to have extra space for other cells, thereby increasing the direct production output and to **carry out various jobs that were once outsourced "**.

As far as numbers are concerned, Puky produces from 300,000 to 350,000 single pieces per year, per shift. When raw material becomes expensive, it is important to have **semi-finished products with a constant quality at adequate prices**. This is also applicable to tube. And this is where the BLM tube bending machines come into the picture again thanks to the fact that they are able to **compensate for the tolerance oscillation in the raw material**.

After the experience with BLM, it goes without saying that the Westphalian company **will continue to use Italian technology** and produce uncompromised quality for the safety of its young customers.

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