



# Open training workshop shows the way

## China: Manz and sequa launch practical high-tech training



### The challenge

Highly specialised German or European companies working with the very latest technologies need specialised staff. This is particularly true when they set up production outside their own countries. However, skilled workers with thorough training in both theoretical and practical aspects are often rare, even in such a large economy as China's. The country lacks sound vocational training services.

The shortage of skilled workers is also a challenge for Manz AG, a globally active high-tech mechanical engineering company. Its systems are used to produce solar modules, electronic devices such as smartphones, tablet computers and notebooks, and lithium-ion batteries. Many of the workers employed in Suzhou in Jiangsu Province, the location of this southern German manufacturer's Chinese plant, not only lacked basic knowledge of materials processing and electrical engineering, they also had little practical knowledge of how to handle tools and measuring instruments.

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*'Anyone who wants to produce in China needs well-trained skilled workers, but they are hard to find. That's why as a company we simply have to address the issue of training and skills development. With sequa at our side, we have broken new ground in the search for talent.'*

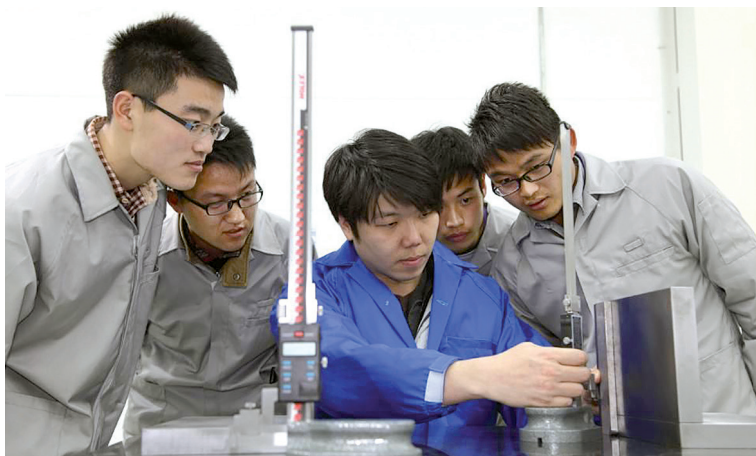
Rolf Hämmerle, Project Manager for the Open Training Workshop, Manz AG

### The solution

In order to safeguard the quality of its products over the long term, Manz AG decided to invest in basic practical training on site, for which it entered into a development partnership with sequa GmbH. A training workshop at the company's own premises in Suzhou is the centrepiece of this development partnership, providing practical training for Manz employees but also for vocational school students and skilled workers from other companies. Two Chinese technical vocational schools were brought in as local partners. The project received technical and financial backing from develoPPP.de – a programme set up by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) that fosters the involvement of the private sector at the point where business opportunities and development policy initiatives intersect.

### Our services

The core focus of the development partnership was to establish an open training workshop – a new concept in the Chinese training landscape. At the workshop trainees were able to learn how to handle the expensive, highly complex precision machinery. As the trainees also included employees of Manz AG's local suppliers, the company was thus also ensuring the quality of products in its supply chain and broadening the impact of the measure. 'The idea that you first have to invest in training before this pays off for the company is still new in China,' says Rolf Hämmerle, Project Manager at Manz.



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In parallel with the training workshop, Manz collaborated with two technical vocational schools in Suzhou to redevelop parts of their vocational training – a course on materials processing, which was translated into Chinese, and a basic training course in electrical engineering. Employees from Manz trained teaching staff in both of these disciplines and the teachers will now pass on their knowledge to the Chinese skilled workers. ‘The project has triggered a remarkable process of quality improvement in vocational education,’ claims Project Manager Roland Strohmeier from sequa, ‘and it has given crucial impetus to provision of more practical training in China – opportunities which have been taken up.’

This is mainly thanks to the open training workshop. Special supplier and trainee days have helped it achieve a small degree of fame in the region, and trainees, companies and even political decision-makers have become more aware of the importance of practical technical training. The technical vocational schools were also strongly committed, as their offer of free English courses for Chinese employees at Manz proves. One technical vocational school set up a special ‘Manz Class’ and intensified cooperation with the company even after the project had come to an end. ‘This is exactly what we want to achieve with a development partnership – that a project becomes structurally embedded beyond its actual term and has a lasting impact,’ says sequa Project Manager Strohmeier.

## Impacts and results

- Manz AG benefited from higher standards in training and in its supply chain. The competitiveness of supplier companies is being raised, in an interesting market.
- China’s education landscape was encouraged to boost practical training for specialised staff. More than 330 people completed training courses during the two-year development partnership, one third of them skilled workers from Manz and two thirds from elsewhere.

- The German company is able to rely on the good quality of its high-tech products from China and can position itself as a promoter of training and trusted partner.
- Both internal and external workers have acquired sound basic knowledge thanks to their training, and have enhanced their chances of obtaining higher-skilled work and improving their earnings.
- In Manz AG, the technical vocational schools have gained a highly professional, powerful industrial partner that has given them a vital stimulus to offer up-to-date training and skills development.

### At a glance

<b>Duration</b>	17 December 2012 – 16 December 2014
<b>Country</b>	China
<b>Objective</b>	Improvement of in-school training in high-tech mechanical engineering through the development of practical skills.
<b>Partners</b>	Manz AG and sequa gGmbH
<b>Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More than 330 skilled workers trained on 10-day courses, including company employees, vocational school students and teaching staff.</li><li>• Novel form of training established at technical vocational school with one-year practical phase at Manz AG.</li><li>• Practice-based course in materials processing translated into Chinese.</li><li>• Basic training course in electrical engineering.</li></ul>

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