



WERMA, Germany

Background

German-based WERMA has been manufacturing high quality optical and acoustic electronic signalling devices for more than 50 years, with a reputation as one of the technology leaders in devices such as towers, beacons, buzzers, horns, and sirens.

Key facts

WERMA has a turnover in excess of £14m and 200 employees worldwide, coupled with agents across the globe. Approximately 34% of its sales are exports and with an increasingly globalised market, WERMA was keen to get closer to its customers.

The Challenge

With growing legislation and health and safety issues at the forefront of many businesses' minds, the demand for optical and acoustic signal devices in the UK has increased steadily in recent years. Even with the latest communications technology, face to face contact with key customers remains paramount to any successful business and the search was on for a new UK base.

WERMA currently invests 11% of its sales revenue in R & D and the setting up of the UK facility demonstrates another significant investment in the business. The importance of this is explained by Simon Adams, Managing Director of WERMA (UK) Ltd:

“The aim of getting close to the customer is a key objective for WERMA. This aim is not just a question of WERMA jumping on a customer service bandwagon – it reflects, in fact, the very essence of the corporate objectives of the parent company, developed and honed over years of experience in the market place.”

WERMA products were no strangers to the UK market place, having been available from a number of distribution sources over the years. However, what was now required was a central location with good transport links, room to demonstrate products and also, space to expand.

Selecting England's East Midlands

England's East Midlands region, located in the centre of the country is easily accessed by the major motorway network surrounding the region. As a bonus, a major existing customer was also located close by.

The new facility based in Kettering, Northamptonshire, complete with warehouse and sales office enables the company to react quickly and efficiently to customer demand and also offers a complete technical service from the experienced local team. The East Midlands Airport is also close by for ease of access back to the German HQ.



Assistance

Local experience was also essential in finding the ideal premises for WERMA when their search began. The East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) was quick to establish a working relationship with the WERMA team.

emda's International Investment team had all the knowledge about the region and availability of premises. This information was invaluable for the site selection process. Their range of professional contacts within the region also helped make the process as swift as possible.

With the site selected and contracts agreed, work began on an empty building on Telford Way Industrial Estate. The brief was to replicate the German office down to the last detail, including the furniture.

The philosophy behind this was to make both the customers and equally the new employees feel immediately that they were "at home" and in similar, comfortable surroundings.

Within just three months, the new UK subsidiary, a first for WERMA, was open for business and receiving new customers. WERMA's passion for maintaining a high level of customer responsiveness should see many more walk through the doors over the years to come.

For more case studies from England's East Midlands visit

www.englandseastmidlands.com