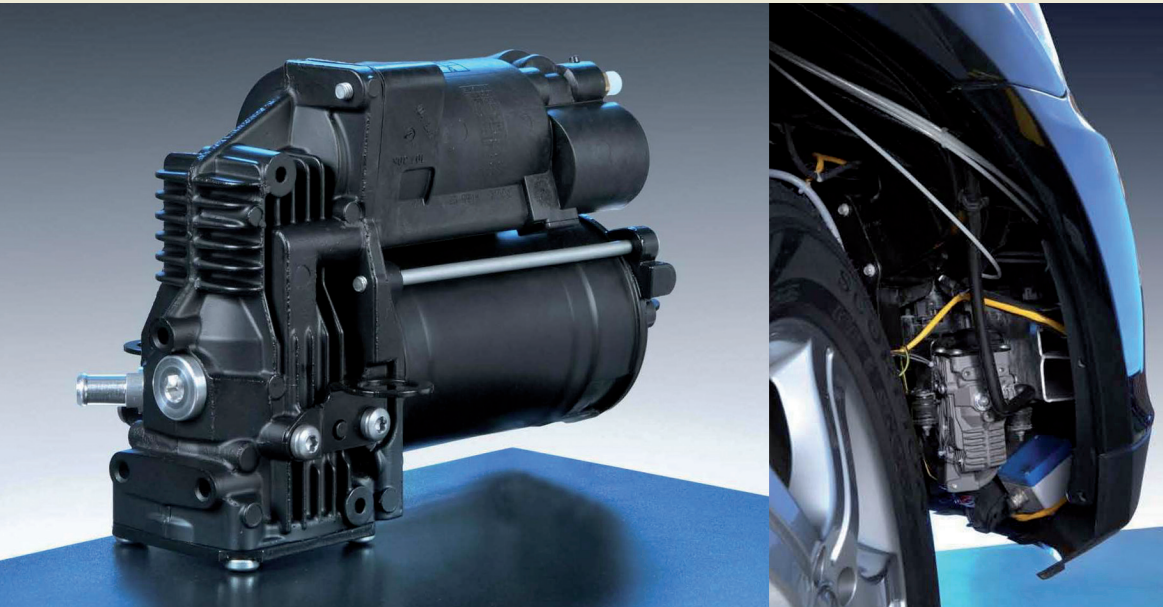




GSCHWENDER



GSCHWENDER
CONSULTING GMBH

ADOLF-KOLPING-STRASSE 4
73033 GÖPPINGEN
GERMANY

FON
+49 (07161) 987 28 - 0

FAX
+49 (07161) 987 28 - 25

E-MAIL
INFO@GSCHWENDER.COM

WEB
WWW.GSCHWENDER.COM

Case-Study

AIR SUSPENSION COMPRESSOR

Challenge This implied that our client had to broaden his technologically simple product portfolio in order to include a high quality technical part which was not yet available on the market. At the same time this development posed a massive challenge for the project management and the available human resources with the involvement of the development alliance and cooperation between Daimler AG, BMW AG and ThyssenKrupp Automotive Systems GmbH. In addition to this, our strategic target to establish a position on the market as a component supplier (tier 2) and a system supplier (tier 1) at later stages, posed huge challenges both for us and our client.

Initial situation A few years ago the European automobile industry defined the domain of chassis air suspensions as one of the most important distinguishing features for sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and luxury class cars, based upon security and comfort reasons. At that point there was only a single supplier on the European original equipment market, but this company did not fulfil the required specifications for performance, durability, quality and price to a satisfactory level. For this reason two German OEMs - Daimler AG and BMW AG

- decided to cooperate with an experienced system supplier - ThyssenKrupp Automotive Systems GmbH - to find and develop an alternative supplier. The development alliance chose to nominate our client as their development and supply partner for the design of air suspension compressors, following the positive experience gained during the project development for the tyre air compressor and the company's core competence in the field of electric motor manufacturing. »»»»



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Approach In the first phase we helped our client to build a development competence team in the fields of electric-motor development, condensation and compression technology as well as air drying processes. The second step for Gschwender Consulting GmbH was to mediate between our client the development alliance and thus to generate a sense of mutual trust on which we built a value network among all parties.

Realisation The process of fundamental research was considerably shortened by building a development competence team with our client, by introducing intensive know-how sharing among the two OEMs, the systems supplier and our client and by integrating well known suppliers early on into the development process. All decisions were taken jointly throughout the development process during monthly progress meetings where results and information could be discussed openly. This ensured that all participants - OEMs and suppliers - were involved and shared the responsibility for the achieved results. After finalising the design of the compressor and carrying out extensive tests in accordance with both the OEMs and our client's requirements, the team progressed to building a fully automated production line. At the same time the air suspension compressor was tested by both OEM development partners in various vehicles. Our cooperation partner ThyssenKrupp Automotive Systems GmbH provided the integration of the air suspension compressor into the car. By virtue of ThyssenKrupp Automotive Systems GmbH's longstanding and successful cooperation as a systems supplier to

BMW, our client was greatly unburdened in the system integration of the air supply machines. During the first BMW project ThyssenKrupp Automotive Systems GmbH also carried out the approval test and processes. This allowed our client to acquire the relevant know-how for the subsequent project for Daimler AG. Only 6 months later our client went into production for various vehicles as the component supplier (tier 1) for Daimler AG.

Achieved success The successful cooperation of all participants allowed our client to design an air suspension compressor, develop an automated assembly line and mass produce those compressors for BMW AG in merely 3 years.

In the course of 4 years, i.e. since the first production delivery, our client has been able to gain a European market share of 40% in the field of air suspension compressors, employ over 40 new staff and increase its turnover in the automotive sector by 300% to over 40 million Euros, all from starting out as a newcomer to the market. Today our client is one of the 4 biggest manufacturers of air suspension compressors worldwide.

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