



The team (l.t.r.): Joshua Richert (apprentice), Malte Spiering (apprentice), Joschua Kuffner (trainer), Niklas Weber (apprentice), Jens Elkenkamp (production manager and authorised signatory), Ludwig Klotzkowski (dual student). Not in the picture: Matthias Plat (apprentice).

## Trainee Project 2020: Turn old into new!

### The task:

The 2020 training project was a restoration of a 40-year-old suction trailer from 1981. The task was clearly defined: In twelve weeks, the vehicle was to be restored so that it was functional. In addition, care was to be taken to ensure that it was managed efficiently. Not only did the trainees have to think independently about how best to proceed, they also had to carry out project planning and cost calculation as well as prepare the corresponding daily documentation. Finally, the results were presented to the management.



The whole project was made by four of the MÜLLER-trainees in teamwork – from dismantling

to priming, sanding and filling to final assembly. Through this, the trainees should get to know and appreciate the work processes of all departments involved.



### The trainees report enthusiastically:

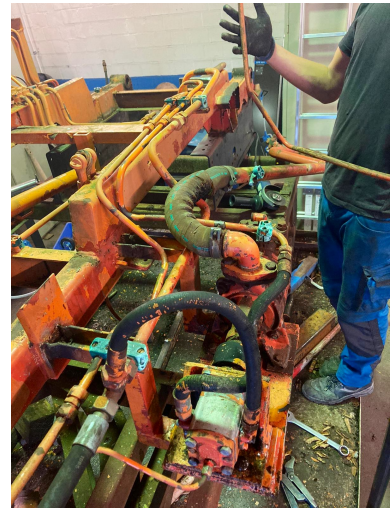
When we heard that the project had been approved, we were of course very pleased. The project reflects exactly our future tasks – on a small scale. It allowed us to make perfect use of our strengths, namely practical and manual work. We quickly learned that we had to work concentrated, efficiently and as a team in order to complete the project in the allotted time. It was then quickly agreed among us who would be the team spokesperson and lead the project, so that no ambiguities and unnecessary discussions would arise.

After taking stock, the first project planning and cost calculation, we realised that the project was somewhat bigger than we had thought at the beginning. After our training supervisor suggested that we plan



an extra week as a time buffer, since the unexpected can always occur, we hesitated at first. However, we were soon taught better.

The first unexpected problem came directly on the first day of the project. We opened the container, which had not been used for 20 years. We were greeted by a pungent smell and the first contents followed. Unfortunately, the tank, which was no longer used, was filled to the top with – let's call it "various things". At this point, our motivation was dampened for the first time. But it quickly returned, because we realised that we could work completely independently on this project and bring in and realise our own ideas.



After we had cleaned the container, the next problem arose. The years have left their mark on the tank. The bottom of the tank had suffered somewhat from the weather and there were holes. In addition, many things had rusted so badly that we had to heat them or burn them out and they could no longer be reused.



The project was very interesting and varied because we were able to work on different things, such as the hydraulics and the high-pressure system. Furthermore, we got to know other areas of work in the company that are not directly part of our training, such as blasting, sanding, priming and painting.

By working in a team, we were able to support each other and compensate for each other's weaknesses. And if we still didn't know what to do, we could always turn to our training supervisor. He was often with us and we often had to stop him from picking up the flex again out of sheer enthusiasm. We suspect that not only we were very interested in the project, but he was too.

The multitude of tasks gave us great pleasure and we were able to gain some additional expertise. Unfortunately, we were somewhat slowed down by Corona due to quarantine regulations and strict rules.

We were very pleased that many customers came to see and photograph the project. In addition, there were numerous questions that we were happy to answer conclusively. It showed us that we were on the right track with our project.



For the future, we take the following with us:

- **Working with foresight is the key to success.**
- **Nothing works without teamwork.**
- **One should always construct in a way that is suitable for assembly.**
- **And the most important thing: fun at work should never be missing!**

What we unfortunately have to admit to ourselves is that we all have deficits in office applications. We noticed this when creating the presentation, the daily reports and when calculating costs and time. We will work on these points in the future.

We hope that the management and our training manager are satisfied with our result. We are very happy that we got this project and that we had the chance to prove our ability.

### **The training manager praises:**

From my point of view, I can only say that I am absolutely satisfied with the result. The four of them did a really great job and can be proud of it. This project was not a usual project, because the projects should always help the company in some way (e.g. internal transport units for special vehicle components).



I have to be honest and say that I was really keen on the "trailer restoration" project and had to restrain myself from digging out the blue man from the cupboard again and taking up the power axe. This project covers exactly the tasks that we have in vehicle construction. When I told the four that the project had been approved, I noticed that not only I was very keen on the project, but they were too.

The four trainees very quickly decided who was responsible for what and who would cover which part of the task. They appointed a project leader who was in charge of the whole thing and acted as

a contact person for me. The four of them immediately recognised the problem that they had to plan a buffer for the time planning, because in a restoration like this, some things can take more time than you think at the beginning.

They worked very well in a team and complemented each other: if one of the four had a deficit, for example in the area of hydraulics, the others explained it to him and thus eliminated the deficit. So I, as the training manager, rarely had to intervene in the project. Of course, a few questions still arose, which I had to answer. You also have to remember that the four of them are only in their third year of training. They already know a lot for their level of training, but still not everything. I let them work on their own for the most part and only gave them some food for thought now and then, which they implemented perfectly.

I noticed very positively that they quickly realised that the trailer looked very uneven from the back and then decided to add another box on the left side like a billboard.

I think the greatest praise and the greatest motivation for the trainees was that all the customers who came to our company and saw the project stopped first, looked at it closely, took pictures and asked questions about it. The highlight was when customers from England said they would like to buy the project and exhibit it at trade fairs.

The four of them can be very proud and satisfied. I, as the training manager, am!

Further information:

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