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MAGAZINE FOR EMPLOYEES

37
2024

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the sense of technology

DIRECTOR'S WORD

Dear Colleagues,
As we approach the end of this calendar year, I would like to share a few thoughts with you. Looking back on 2024, it has been a year full of challenges but also achievements, growth, and stabilization. Once again, our company has demonstrated its strength and determination. We have proven that what we do, we do well, and our customers appreciate it. We are a healthy, profitable company, ready for further development and strengthening of our position. Thank you all for your tireless efforts and unwavering will.

The end of the year is a time for reflection, planning, and, above all, relationships. Our personal level of happiness and satisfaction within teams depends significantly on relationships. We spend a lot of time at work, and the relationships within the company are crucial for well-functioning teams. It is much easier to work when we can communicate freely with colleagues, have no unresolved conflicts, and enjoy a team-oriented atmosphere. Similarly, we interact with customers better when our relationships are based on our values.

Machine manufacturing, surprisingly, involves a lot of relationships — not only within the team but also with customers and suppliers. Customers trust us and appreciate our straightforward communication and equitable approach. Suppliers value the clarity of our requirements and our collaboration in integrating their technologies into our production lines.

Beyond work relationships, we all return home to relationships with family, friends, and partners. Without this part of life, the circle would be incomplete, and maintaining this balance is vital for returning to work each morning and building relationships there. The fragility of this circle is essential, and efforts to nurture it never end.

As we close out 2024, I wish for all of us to find the best balance within this circle of relationships. It matters, and meaning is what people seek in life.

I am proud of our resilience and perseverance in 2024 and wish us all a year in 2025 filled with strong relationships and joy.

Ing. Jan Pleyer, CEO

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

The end of the year at the purchasing department was primarily focused on completing the final order for projects in the Zákupy production hall. Significant emphasis was placed on the delivery of large technological units. Despite arising complications with the delivery of certain components, which did not fully meet the requirements...

Looking ahead, we plan to continue our collaboration with this key customer on future production lines. Our procurement team believes that the experiences and challenges we faced will help ensure a smooth process and provide valuable insights for upcoming projects.

A slight lull in projects during the autumn allowed us to focus on planning activities with warehouse stock management, streamlining procurement processes, and completing smaller tasks that had been delayed in previous weeks. In collaboration with the design department, we have recently been able to effectively utilize our stock for current projects. Some inventory items are being offered for sale to partially reduce our warehouse holdings. Warehouse management remains a priority, and we are pleased with the incremental progress being made.

In November, we took on three new projects that required us to negotiate advantageous discounts on components and services and to establish new payment terms. For several weeks, the team has been ordering components based on extensive bills of materials and technical drawings.

With the approaching Christmas holidays, we are striving to secure the best delivery times to adhere to the timelines of individual projects.

Overall, 2024 has been a beneficial year for our department in many ways. The team has stabilized, and we have redistributed tasks, such as procuring diverse items and soliciting manufacturing collaborations.

On behalf of the entire procurement team, we wish all our colleagues a wonderful Christmas season and quality time with their loved ones. We look forward to pursuing our shared professional goals in the coming year!

Jindra Klazarová, Purchasing Manager

PROJECT DEPARTMENT

The project team serves as the main connection and liaison between our company and our customers. Despite the fact that fewer machines were visible in the workshop over the past month, our work did not come to a halt. Delivered projects for customers require final adjustments, potential modifications, or requested on-site visits.

Currently, we have four major projects under assembly and five key non-automotive sector projects awaiting production. Additionally, we are in the process of addressing all open items and project deliverables for a client in Germany, where we have been active for the past three years. Completing the current tasks will finalize all orders for this customer.

As of December 1st, Mr. Jiří Hillebrand joined the department. His experience in automotive projects, quality assurance, and process management will immediately benefit our operations, and we look forward to working with him.

Radek Brothánek, who has been partially supporting project management, will be able to fully focus on his role as Technical Sales Manager after finalizing the last project. He transitioned to this position in June of this year but continued to assist with the overloaded project department.

Our shared success in 2024 lies in maintaining communication and connections with customers. We have supported our clients throughout the integration period, and this collaboration has been essential in meeting project milestones and deadlines, contributing to favorable economic outcomes for completed projects.

The service department has remained fully operational, providing support for delivered projects. Each quarter, the department achieved its revenue targets, and we aim to further develop our service capabilities in the coming year.

For 2025, my greatest wish is for smooth teamwork. Let us work together to find solutions and enjoy the challenges ahead. I wish all colleagues the best in the upcoming year and look forward to our continued collaboration.

Martin Dohnal, Project Manager

MACHINING AND WELDING DEPARTMENT

In the final post of this year, I would like to reflect on what we have achieved and what posed a true challenge for us. The beginning of 2024 was quite demanding for our department in terms of ensuring production. In addition to ongoing projects, we faced setbacks in the machinery fleet and staffing.

Despite all the challenges, we managed to deliver the necessary parts and weldments for assembly on time and according to schedule. This was achieved thanks to the excellent work of the entire team, and I am genuinely pleased with everyone's willingness to contribute, even through overtime.

In February, a decision was made to take over machining and welding cooperations. Although there were initial concerns, we successfully brought the entire workload under our department, fully taking over the agenda with the help of colleagues.

In the second half of the year, we experienced a slowdown in new projects, resulting in reduced workloads for operators and the need for shutdowns. However, we utilized this time for necessary maintenance of machines and the company premises. The situation is gradually improving, and both the machining and welding departments will soon be operating at full capacity again.

Looking back, this year has been the best so far in terms of company organization and project quality. I hope we continue to achieve similar success in the coming year and that we secure more interesting projects, excelling in them once again.

Luboš Musil, Machining Manager

PRODUCTION

The Mechanical Assembly and Electrical Assembly Department is where our technologies are created. It is a place where we face challenges, whether in terms of space or obstacles related to processing, fine-tuning, samples, and more.

This year, we have successfully completed eight projects here and are working intensively on more. We expanded our production area by renting an external hall to meet the increasing demand. By the end of the year, we expect to complete two more projects, which I believe, with the necessary capacities, effort, and determination, we will finalize on time and with the quality that satisfies both our customers and ourselves.

Although each project is new, they all share one thing in common. They involve many challenges, new insights, and valuable experiences that we can later use in working on other orders.

We have also invested in improving working conditions. We purchased new tools for nearly 100,000 Kč. These included new drills, grinders, and hand tools such as hammers, wrenches, etc. We replaced old or damaged tools, preventing potential injuries or damage to materials. At the same time, we equipped our colleagues with new workwear from Strauss, which included items like shorts for the summer months, hoodies for the winter, as well as new t-shirts and additional pairs of long pants.

However, what personally makes me the happiest is that, based on many responses from the mechanics, we purchased 40 LED fluorescent lamps for the assembly halls at a cost of approximately 50 000 Kč. We were able to replace the old ones that no longer provided sufficient lighting. This will be especially appreciated during the winter months, when the dark period lasts most of the day.

I would like to thank everyone for their cooperation, effort, and contributions, and wish you all the best in the new year 2025!

Petr Venhauer, Assembly Manager

SALES

The year 2024 was a period for Krofian where we demonstrated our ability to adapt to turbulent market conditions. The decline in the automotive industry prompted us to actively search for opportunities in other segments. Expanding our customer portfolio into areas such as consumer goods and food processing confirms our flexibility and broad range of know-how.

Successful Projects and New Partnerships

We are nearing the successful completion of two large production lines in the consumer industry and have the opportunity to secure additional contracts, which would mean **continued production capacity** in 2025. Another significant impulse is the return of customers with whom we are renewing our collaboration after a few years, and we are currently preparing our first offers.

In the food industry, we face a challenge with an Austrian customer who is looking for equipment for handling and controlling returnable products. Successfully delivering this solution could open the door to further projects across Europe.

Diversification: The Key to Success

Diversification remains our ongoing priority. With **the decline in investments in the automotive industry**, we have focused on sectors with growth potential. One example is our collaboration with a manufacturer operating in explosive environments. This project not only brings new experience but also opens perspectives in a segment where we have not been active before.

Outlook for 2025

With the challenges presented by the current economic situation in mind, we believe that 2025 will be a **year of growth**. Our **strong customer relationships,** teamwork, and willingness to find innovative solutions prepare us for future demands. We continue with the strategy of expanding into new industries and strengthening our positions in existing sectors.

Reason for Moving Away from Automotive

The automotive industry is currently in stagnation, which limits investments in automation. However, our years of experience in this area are being transferred to other sectors, where we find opportunities to apply our knowledge and technology. This allows us to secure a **stable volume of orders** and workload across the entire company.

Key Figures for 2024

- Finalization of two large lines for a company in the consumer industry
- New segments: automation in explosive environments and returnable packaging
- Outlook: potential repeat orders in the food industry

What the Sales Team Is Working On

Our sales team's work is based on **building strong relationships** with customers. Thanks to this, we have received feedback that our equipment meets **the highest standards**. We enter 2025 with the belief that these relationships will be the foundation of our growth.

Filip Slaný, Sales Director

What Our Sales managers Think

One very interesting customer has been added to our portfolio outside of the automotive sector. This collaboration will bring us a wealth of new experiences and open doors into a segment we haven't had the chance to explore in our long history. This further confirms the broad scope of our company's know-how, and motivates us, your colleagues on the front lines, to search for other new areas where Krofian can apply its expertise.

There are also noteworthy projects from customers who have returned to us after successful collaborations in the past, some after more than 10 years. This is another sign that we are doing our work well, across all departments from sales to service.

Štefan Lupták, Sales Manager SK

Despite the Current Market Situation

Some companies still have clear visions for the future. One of them is a company that manufactures door handles for all car manufacturers in Europe in its Czech factories.

The customer invests significant amounts annually in automation and plans to continue this direction. There are several reasons, one of which is the current design of the handles, which is complex and demanding not only in terms of assembly. It's mainly about the systems hidden under the handle cover, which place great emphasis on reliability and durability. This all reflects in the precision of the production process, which is often fully automated, and all production steps undergo sophisticated controls. Each produced handle carries a unique DMC code, under which information about its production process and all incoming subcomponents is stored.

We have worked with this customer in the past, but our collaboration was interrupted for several years. Now we have successfully restarted the business relationship.

To avoid being dependent solely on the automotive industry, we are also striving to penetrate other markets. We now have the opportunity to show our capabilities in the food sector, where we face a challenge with a customer from Austria who specializes in cleaning returnable packaging. I see this as a significant step for our direction and automation development and an opportunity to show that Krofian can automate almost anything.

Miroslav Tůma, Sales Manager ČR

The European Economy Has Been Struggling for a Year

It has been extremely difficult to secure new contracts. However, the Krofian sales team has an extensive network of contacts with various customers in different sectors. Usually, when one sector is in a slump (such as the automotive industry), other sectors continue, and we can to some extent compensate for it. This is the basic idea behind diversification.

We are fortunate that the sales team has built a very good position in the consumer goods sector. Our recent projects for various customers prove our efficiency in different industries.

Currently, two lines in our Zákupy hall are nearing completion. The good news is that if we successfully pass the pre-acceptance stage, we have a high chance of securing two follow-up contracts. This means that our hall in Zákupy will likely remain full in 2025.

Our relationships with key customers are very positive. This is the result of the work of everyone supporting these projects, from TSM to design, project management, and assembly.

In addition, the sales team is currently working on many other interesting projects. Many of them fall into non-automotive sectors. In this way, we are trying to compensate for the slower automotive sector and secure new contracts to ensure enough work for everyone.

Thomas Willburger, Sales manager DE

CONSTRUCTION

In the recent period, the construction department has processed new projects. We have handed over projects for robotic manipulation of workpieces from the machining center and their placement in cleaning baskets, as well as equipment for pill immersion in an ATEX environment and a project for handling aluminum gearbox enclosures with the process of pressing bearings and retaining rings, including control equipment. We are still processing changes from older projects based on operational tests of the lines currently being completed.

One of the current projects has brought us a challenge in the new sector of EX industry, where our colleagues from the CON and ELP departments are working on elements from explosive environments. We are undergoing training and beginning to orient ourselves in this industry, as well as searching for suitable suppliers of components, many of which are new to us.

A significant portion of our time is dedicated to supporting the sales department, where we work on very detailed offers for several other lines. This helps our colleagues in sales to effectively tackle business cases and offer customers tailored, comprehensive solutions. This approach is one of the reasons why customers keep returning, and we are happy to resume previous collaborations.

Furthermore, we continue with the established FMEA discussions on ongoing projects, where we are increasingly seeing that this path is correct and allows us to prevent and identify more potential issues before the actual implementation.

Stanislav Koutný, Design Manager

AUTOMATION IN EXPLOSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Not only the automotive industry but also other industries are significantly adopting automation, and Krofian is expanding the deployment of its lines accordingly. We are capable of completing solutions for the food industry, healthcare, consumer goods industry, and we are now preparing a project for use in fully explosive environments.

ATEX: A Challenge That Tolerates No Mistakes
Designing automation for environments with explosion hazards comes with extreme demands. ATEX, the European legislation for equipment operating in explosive environments, reminds us that every detail is critical in such cases.

Did you know that...
Even a small spark can cause a big bang? A mechanical spark can occur when two materials, such as metal parts, collide or through friction. Whether it's small surface irregularities or improperly set tolerances, every tiny „spark" could lead to a disaster in an environment with flammable gases.

Electric Sparks Are Even More Treacherous
A small short circuit or insulation damage can cause even a tiny electrical discharge to have fatal consequences. This is why it is essential to carefully shield cables, eliminate loose wires, and ensure everything behaves exactly as it should.

ESD: The Silent Killer of Automation in Explosive Environments
An electrostatic discharge (ESD) can occur when two materials with different electrical charges come into contact or proximity. Imagine a situation where charged parts of a machine "snap" together—what may seem harmless to us could be a potential catastrophe in an ATEX environment. This is why we pay great attention to the use of antistatic materials and the grounding of all components.

Our construction and electrical engineering departments have delved into this issue of deployment. We are studying the specifics of explosive environments, optimizing processes, and designing solutions that comply with all safety standards. We look forward to Krofian's first technology for the mining industry and the further challenges this will bring.

PURCHASE OF NEW 3D PRINTER: BAMBULAB X1C

In today's world, where 3D printing is becoming more accessible and popular, many companies and individuals are choosing to invest in new technologies that streamline their work processes and expand manufacturing possibilities. We have decided to purchase a new 3D printer, specifically the Bambulab X1C model.

Our Previous Experience
In the past, we used two 3D printers, which provided us with solid foundations for our printing process. The first was the Prusa Mk3S+, known for its excellent print quality and reliability. This model is easy to use, has a large community, and offers many available upgrades. It's ideal for both beginners and advanced users.

The second printer was the Creality Ender 3 Pro. This model is popular for its affordability and good printing quality. While the Ender 3 Pro offers many advantages, we occasionally encountered calibration and printing stability issues, which led us to consider an upgrade.

The New Printer: Bambulab X1C
After careful consideration and analysis of our needs, we decided to invest in the Bambulab X1C. This printer has appeared on the market as a revolutionary device that promises high print quality, speed, and ease of use. Let's take a look at some of its advantages.

1. Speed and Efficiency
Bambulab X1C is designed for speed. It can print at high speeds, ensuring that our projects will be completed much faster than with previous models. This is especially useful in situations where we need to respond quickly to market or customer demands.

2. Print Quality
One of the biggest advantages of Bambulab X1C is its ability to achieve excellent print quality. Thanks to innovative technologies and advanced algorithms, it can print complex details with the precision essential for professional use.

3. User-Friendly Interface
Bambulab X1C boasts an intuitive user interface that makes setting up and operating the printer easy. This means that even new users can quickly learn how to use the printer and start printing without unnecessary complications.

4. Compatibility with Various Materials
This printer supports a wide range of printing materials, opening up new possibilities for our projects. From standard PLA and ABS to advanced composites, the Bambulab X1C allows us to experiment and innovate.

5. Community Support and Updates
Bambulab X1C has an active user community and regular firmware updates, ensuring that the printer stays up to date with the latest technologies and improvements. This gives us confidence that our investment in this printer will be worthwhile in the long run.

Conclusion
The purchase of the Bambulab X1C printer is a significant step forward for us. After many experiences with the Prusa Mk3S+ and Creality Ender 3 Pro, we have concluded that the new model will provide the necessary speed, quality, and flexibility for our projects. We are excited to begin utilizing all the benefits that the Bambulab X1C offers and look forward to the new possibilities this printer will bring to our next 3D printing adventures.

MODELING BELONGS TO CONSTRUCTION!

On the occasion of our owner Jakub Krofián's 50th birthday, our team faced the challenge of how to wish him in an original way. As a technology company specializing in the development of automated machinery, we decided on an unconventional gift – a functional model of one of our successfully realized projects.

The centerpiece of the model is a meticulously crafted, fully functional Taktomat linear conveyor, which we managed to replicate in a smaller scale. An interesting feature is the Fanuc Scara robots, whose task is, just like in the actual machine, to place parts from the vibratory feeders onto the conveyor beds. As the conveyor moves, the robots also move from position to position and "place" the parts.

The model faithfully replicates our K design, including details such as openable doors for access to the machine, the logo on the edge of the machine, and an exact replica of the HMI panel. Most of the components were 3D printed, but to make the model look more authentic, we had key parts manufactured from metal. The entire mechanism is powered by two 9V batteries, which not only make the model move but also light it up during operation.

This gift is not just an ordinary model. It is a showcase of our skills, creativity, and most importantly, teamwork. We believe that it will remind the owner not only of his milestone birthday but also of the successful journey we have traveled together with Krofian.

Note: When receiving the gift, Jakub laughed and said he shouldn't ask about the hours spent creating the model. :)

USE OF AI IN INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming a key element of industrial automation. From robotic welding to predictive maintenance and process optimization, AI provides solutions that increase efficiency, reduce costs, and minimize the risk of errors. By processing vast amounts of data in real time, AI not only replaces routine operations but also assists in decision-making in complex situations.

One of the most visible areas where AI is transforming industry is predictive maintenance. Instead of the traditional approach of regularly checking machines or inspecting them only when they fail, AI analyzes data from sensors and predicts potential problems. This allows maintenance to be carried out only when truly needed, saving both time and money. Another area is the use of machine learning to optimize production lines, where AI can identify patterns that might be overlooked by human operators.

Although AI offers many advantages, its implementation also comes with challenges. In addition to technological complexity, issues such as ethics, data security, and employee acceptance of this technology need to be addressed. Therefore, a key to a successful transition to AI is gradual implementation and staff education.

At Krofian, we are keeping up with the times. This month, we launched a pilot project focused on using AI in administration. A team of 10 people has been selected to work with the latest Microsoft tools and AI integration within Office 365 (Cocpit Pro). This tool will help us process texts, spreadsheets, presentations, and emails more easily, speeding up and streamlining our administrative processes.

In the coming period, we plan training and experience-sharing sessions for this group, which will allow us to extend the use of AI to a broader range of administrative processes. We then expect AI to be increasingly deployed among other colleagues.

WELCOME NEW COLLEAGUES!

Jiří Hillebrand
Position: **Project Manager**

I am joining the Krofian team with a passion for engineering and construction. I am currently studying a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in Liberec, where I became particularly interested in technical equipment and innovative environments. After 12 years of experience as a project manager in prototype devices outside of the automotive industry and 7 years in the automotive sector, I decided to apply my knowledge here at Krofian.
In my free time, I mainly focus on my family, hobbies, and studies, which currently fill most of my free time. I look forward to the new challenges and opportunities that working at Krofian will bring!

Radim Rohlík
Position: **Mechanic of Electrical Equipment**

I am happy to have become part of the Krofian team in October. Previously, I worked as an electrician in a small company, where I was involved in installations and repairs of domestic electrical systems. I am excited to contribute my existing knowledge and enthusiasm for the field, and I am also looking forward to gaining a lot of new knowledge and experience.
In my free time, I enjoy hiking, exploring new technologies, and listening to music.

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT TO KEEP UP WITH TRENDS IN AUTOMATION

Automation is a rapidly evolving field, where new technologies and processes are constantly emerging. In order to stay ahead and offer our customers top-notch solutions, continuous education and skill enhancement are key for us.

In recent months, our design department has focused on several specific areas:

• **Our designers** have attended training sessions focused on drawing and designing pneumatic systems and routes using **FluidDraw**. These trainings covered both basic principles and advanced techniques for effective design of pneumatic systems.

• **The electrical engineering team** concentrated on detailed training within FluidDraw. Additionally, we familiarized ourselves with a new range of cameras with integrated artificial intelligence functions. These technologies are increasingly appearing in automation components, simplifying setup and improving result evaluation. However, AI functions are still considered supplementary to existing functions, as they are not always suitable for every application.

• **The software department** is planning training on programming **Fanuc** robots and preparing for work with the new series of HMI panels.

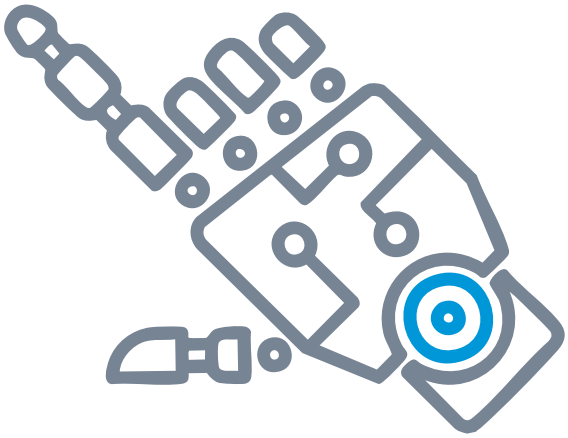
Further development awaits us at the beginning of next year when we are preparing:

• **Training for designers and electrical engineers** introducing software for selecting electric drives from SMC, which can significantly simplify the selection and design of drive systems for our machines.

• **Introduction and training on systems** for monitoring and analyzing energy savings, such as compressed air and electrical energy. This system will allow us to effectively evaluate energy flows in our machines and identify potential savings during equipment operation at customer sites. It will also support predictive maintenance, prolonging the equipment's lifespan.

Through these activities, we not only keep pace with technological advancements but also elevate our expertise to a higher level. Our motto remains the same: „Grow with technology and bring innovations into practice."

Stanislav Koutný, Design Manager



IMPROVING NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES IN PURCHASING

In the autumn, we held a management purchasing training session. This two-day workshop on the topic of „Negotiation in Purchasing" took place at an external venue in Prague and covered a wide range of topics related to negotiation. The program included aspects such as negotiation strategies and principles, tactics of buyers and sellers, finding the best alternatives, and various other negotiation practices and techniques.

„The foundation of every negotiation is understanding the key strategies and principles that lead to a successful outcome. In this module, we learned how to properly analyze the situation, identify the needs and interests of both parties, and formulate negotiation goals that are realistic and achievable," says Jindra Klazarová, Purchasing Manager.

In addition to theoretical knowledge, there was also an opportunity to practice various negotiation tactics on specific examples. „This part of the training was very interactive and allowed us to apply the learned strategies in practice."

The course was conducted by the experienced instructor, Mr. Miroslav Konopáč. „I really appreciated the small group of participants. With only five of us in total, the training and entire course were very intense. We had the chance to try out various strategies and tactics on many tasks. We realized how important preparation and goal setting are."

„One of the greatest benefits of this training was the intensive sharing of knowledge and practical experience, applying tactics in real-life situations, and many opportunities to engage in discussions on the topic. Being able to consult our approaches and strategies with an experienced purchasing professional/instructor was also very valuable. Thanks to this feedback, we were able to better understand our strengths and weaknesses and work on improving them."

I rate the entire course very positively, and based on the benefits I gained from the training, I look forward to expanding the educational program to the entire purchasing department.

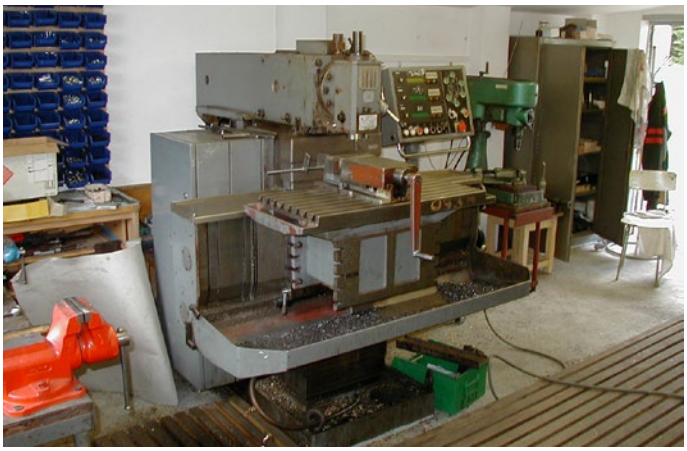
Jindra Klazarová, Purchasing Manager

HISTORY OF THE COMPANY – A REMINDER

The story of Krofian begins in 1999, in a garage in Volfartice. The founder and owner, Jakub Krofián, a trained toolmaker, had a dream to manufacture machines. He started with a single lathe, using it to produce basic preparations and products. In the early days, he sought out his own orders, which he then personally executed. This required full dedication, and twelve-hour workdays were not uncommon. „Tough beginnings, part of my life is just a black smudge," he recalls.

Gradually, two employees joined him. Over time, the company moved to external premises in Česká Lípa, where it established its own sales department. Thanks to hard work, honesty, and craftsmanship, the company gained more and more orders, purchasing new equipment and technologies.

In 2004, Jakub Krofián bought a former agricultural estate in Dobranov near Česká Lípa and transformed it into the company's current headquarters, which includes an administrative building, a machining shop, a locksmith shop, and a production hall. In 2007, the company moved into entirely new premises. By then, the company had around 50 employees.

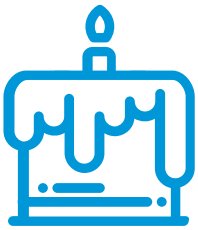


Krofian grew steadily, gaining more customers and working with increasingly complex technologies. In 2012, a new production hall was added. Today, the company has around 90 employees and a branch, Krofian GmbH, in Germany, which was founded in 2019 and houses the sales department.

The company overcame the crisis in 2018 and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, it is prepared to face new challenges, such as the shift away from the automotive sector due to the global economic situation and the Green Deal.

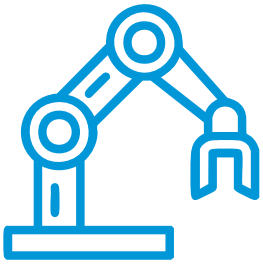
Jakub Krofián, along with the company's leadership team, is now working on optimizing operations and establishing a clear strategy. His goal is to develop and build a stable Czech technological brand, and he has a clear vision for the future. He says: „I know we have enormous potential, and I look forward to the work ahead! I see the energy that we managed to create in 2024."

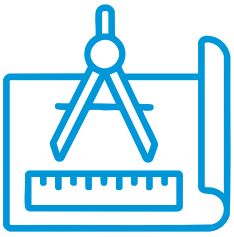
YEAR IN NUMBERS



24 YEARS
of the company

35
installed robots



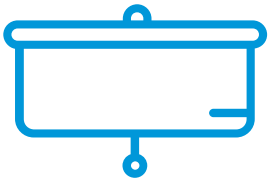


12,000
drawings issued

36
vibratory feeders

3,477
purchase orders

12
new hires



5
workshops
for schools

ADAM ŠAFRÁNEK
CNC MACHINIST

Adam joined us right after finishing his apprenticeship, making Krofian his first job. He enjoys working with his hands and is passionate about craftsmanship. Although he originally aspired to be an athlete, he decided to stay with us at Krofian and has been achieving great results here. He recently celebrated his 5th anniversary with the company.

How did you come to join us, Adam?
I found out about the company through a colleague who was already working here. You also visited our school to introduce Krofian and the work in general, which caught my interest. So, I gave it a try.

What were the beginnings like? What attracted you to the company when you first joined?
It really started to interest me here. I like working with my hands, and I enjoy varied tasks. Here, I'm always doing something different, we're not involved in mass production. I've already worked with milling machines and lathes, and I'd like to try welding.

What do you like about your craft? Did you always want to be a machinist?
I enjoy seeing the finished product, turning something into something else. I've always liked craftsmanship, although initially, I was drawn to sports. However, that's physically and time-demanding, and once I started working, I didn't have time for anything else.

What challenges have you faced during your career with us and how did you overcome them?
I don't really think of them as challenges. The demands just gradually increased. The guys started by teaching me with simpler parts, and it kept progressing. We have a good manager who recognizes what people are capable of and knows what to assign them. He's strict but fair – he doesn't forgive and doesn't forget. :)

What do you like most about working here?
The team. We go for drinks together, chat, and help each other out. Though sometimes I get frustrated when someone doesn't greet me – I think there should be courtesy across all departments and positions.

What are your career goals for the future, and how is the company helping you achieve them?
Welding would be something I'd enjoy. I like variety – I get bored doing the same thing all the time, so I enjoy learning new skills.

And what about hobbies and personal life, how do you spend your time outside of work?
Since I was five years old, I've been into motocross, with my dad getting me into it. I raced as a hobby until I was about 15, and then I switched to boxing. Now I ride my bike a lot, especially in the terrain, no matter the weather. I have a younger brother, and I go to races with him and coach him. Otherwise, I spend a lot of time with my family, going on trips, and with friends.

INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS

Jakub Hýsek

1. How would you evaluate your experiences and skills gained during your student internship?
I learned a lot of new things, especially about production lines, how they work, and how they are assembled. At school, we worked with lathes and milling machines, but here I had the opportunity to see things in real operation, which was great.

2. Which specific tasks or projects interested you the most, and why?
I was most interested in the mower assembly line because it was a really large line, and there was a lot to observe. Each station caught my attention because I could see how individual parts were put together. It was very interesting to see how something so complex is made in practice.

3. Is there anything you would change about your internship or do differently?
No, I wouldn't change anything about my internship. I have no complaints; it's been great, and I really like it here. I would definitely want to come back if the opportunity arose.

4. Would you recommend an internship at our company to your classmates?
Definitely, I would 100% recommend the internship at your company to my classmates. It's a great experience, the team is very helpful, and they've always been there to support me.

5. Were you able to connect the theory taught at school with the tasks assigned to you, and could you provide a specific example?
Not really. At school, we mostly learn individual topics and work with machines or tasks separately. But here in the internship, it's more interconnected.

David Kovář

1. How would you evaluate your experiences and skills gained during your student internship?
I evaluate my experiences positively. I learned how to work with a saw, assemble parts according to 3D drawings, and wire cables.

2. Which specific tasks or projects interested you the most, and why?
I enjoy cutting with the saw, drilling profiles, and assembling according to 3D drawings. I liked seeing how individual parts gradually come together to form a finished product.

3. Is there anything you would change about your internship or do differently?
No.

4. Would you recommend an internship at our company to your classmates?
Yes, I hear both good and bad experiences from my classmates, but I can say that I've had a good experience here.

5. Were you able to connect the theory taught at school with the tasks assigned to you, and could you provide a specific example?
Yes, when working with 3D drawings. The basics of reading drawings that we learned helped me understand how to extract the necessary information for assembling parts.

Marek Groh

1. How would you evaluate your experiences and skills gained during your student internship?
The internship here has been great. I learned how to operate CNC machines, which is awesome because it's not something you do every day.

2. Which specific tasks or projects interested you the most, and why?
Working on the machining department was interesting, as it's based on the same principles. I enjoyed making a keychain pendant during my free time.

3. Is there anything you would change about your internship or do differently?
No.

4. Would you recommend an internship at our company to your classmates?
Definitely. I feel like I have a better internship experience here than my classmates.

5. Were you able to connect the theory taught at school with the tasks assigned to you, and could you provide a specific example?
Yes, I was able to connect the theory. Almost every task I did allowed me to apply what I had learned in school.

EXCURSIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

On the Topic of INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION

We have been collaborating with secondary schools in the region for many years, offering workshops and internships to introduce high school students to the principles of industrial automation and the application of their fields.

Last week, two consecutive excursions took place for the Secondary Industrial School and the Secondary Vocational School in Česká Lípa. The goal of the event was to familiarize students with the technologies and processes in production and to present one of the company's final products – a semi-automatic production line. This technology was developed for a domestic customer to assemble a robotic lawnmower, capable of completing the entire mower in under a minute.

Thanks to the timing of the excursion, just before the technology was delivered to the customer, we were able to show the entire production process directly at the machine, allowing the students to try out various tasks on the line.

The excursion began with an introductory speech about the company, delivered by HR Manager Alena Krofiánová. Then, engineer Jan Martínek presented the technological design of the line, the 3D machine, and explained the functions and benefits for improving production efficiency. The students had the opportunity to see how these technologies simplify complex manufacturing processes and how the entire machine was developed.

After the presentation, there was an open discussion where students were encouraged to ask questions.

ROBOWORKSHOP

At the beginning of the school year, the Secondary Vocational School in Česká Lípa asked for our help in expanding their robotics curriculum with a practical demonstration.

Together with teacher Pečený and construction manager Stanislav Koutný, we created a two-day workshop program right in our production area during regular operations. Over the course of two days, students had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the basics of robotics and automation in practice.

The workshop was led by Stanislav Koutný along with programmer Dominik Kunka. As part of the program, they introduced the students to the Fanuc software, which is widely used in industrial robotics. The students learned the basic principles of robot programming, including setting robot positions, creating and modifying programs for various tasks, and optimizing robot movements to improve efficiency. They were also given the chance to directly interact with a robotic arm, providing hands-on experience in programming and controlling robots.
At the same time, the students could observe part of our production line in operation, where approximately five robots work together to transfer components along the line. This practical insight into manufacturing automation demonstrated how robot programming contributes to the speed and efficiency of the production process.

We asked the students for feedback to find out what interested them the most. The speed and efficiency of the line and direct interaction with the robot made the biggest impression. Additionally, they enjoyed seeing the production process in general, the products of our company, and, as always, the refreshments were a big hit.

We are happy to be able to introduce automation to younger generations and show them potential directions for further studies, whether in craftsmanship or programming itself

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Once again, we gathered outside the work environment for our traditional Christmas party, which took place on December 6th at the Zákupy Cultural Center. It was a great opportunity to momentarily forget about work duties, enjoy the company of colleagues, and get into the Christmas spirit.

There was no shortage of delicious food and drinks, which delighted every foodie, and the friendly atmosphere that filled the entire evening. In addition to pleasant conversations at the tables, we also enjoyed several exceptional moments. The star of the evening was magician Dejf, who showcased his masterful close-up magic. His tricks completely immersed us in the world of illusions, bringing awe and laughter.

During the evening, we also announced the results of our traditional company survey. Thank you to everyone who participated and voted – your opinions and insights are valuable to us! Once the DJ Réva started playing requested songs, the dance floor filled with dancers. Feet didn't stop moving almost until the end of the evening, whether to slow melodies or energetic hits.

Thank you all for your participation and great mood. It was an evening full of magic – exactly how we imagine Christmas.

COMPANY SURVEY RESULTS

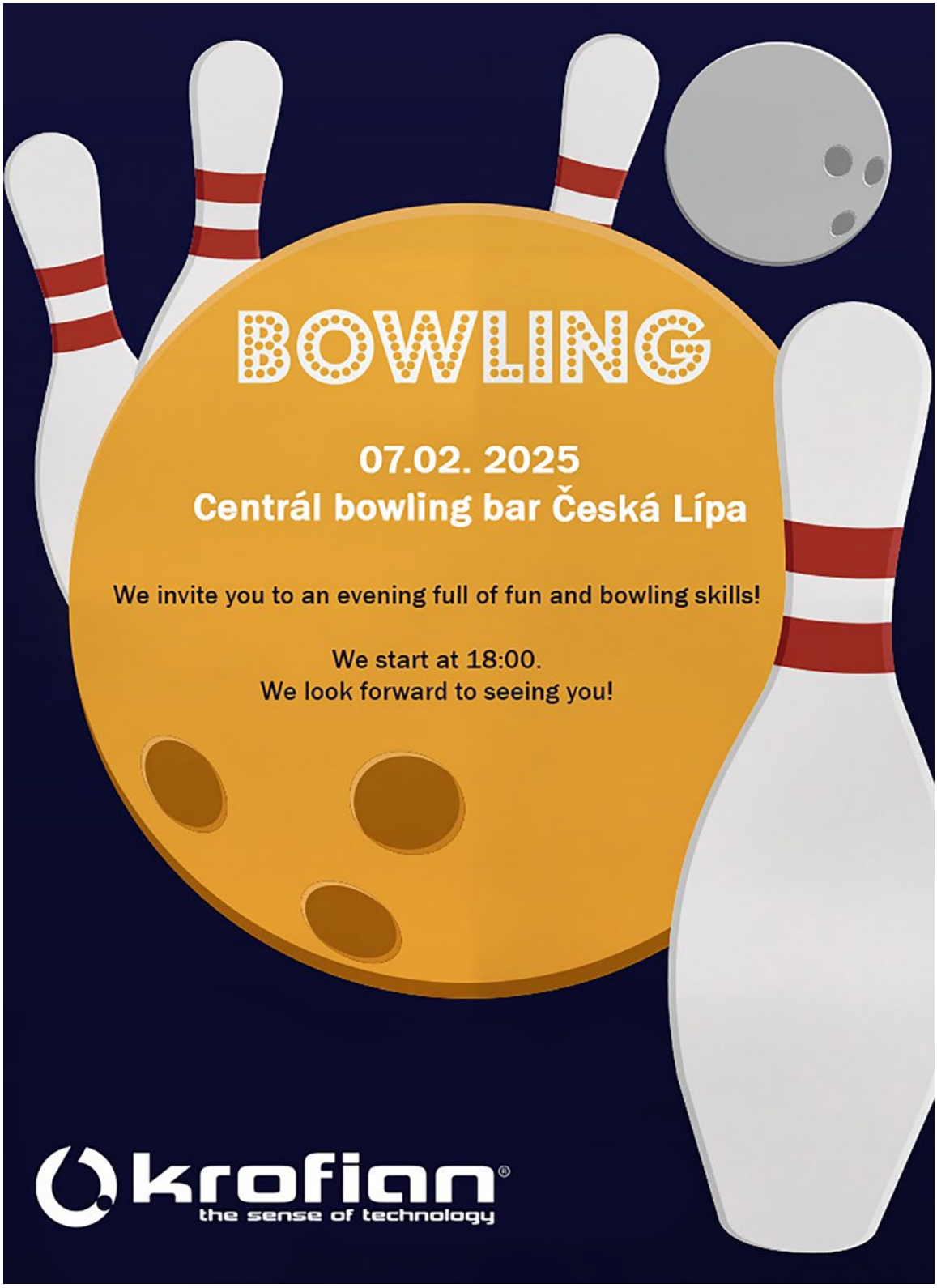
Athlete of the Year – Jan Buchar

The Best Team Player – František Lintava

Jumper of the Year – Robert Gärtner

Heart of the Company – Jan Martínek

BOWLING INVITATION



JOKES

Engineers are building an airplane, and when it's done, they put it on the runway for its first test flight. The plane takes off, and just before it's in the air—BANG! Both wings fall off.
The engineers look on in confusion, shaking their heads, while the security guard sits in the booth and keeps saying, *„That's obvious, that's obvious..."*
The engineers are counting and recalculating. They strengthen the wings, put the plane back on the ramp, and give it another go.
The plane starts to lift off, and again—BANG! The wings fall off.
No one understands; the engineers are staring, and the guard keeps repeating, *„That's obvious, that's obvious..."*
The engineers keep analyzing, thinking hard. They reinforce the wings once more, put the plane on the runway, and accelerate it again. The plane lifts off—BANG! The wings fall off again.
The engineers go mad, pulling their hair out, and the guard just keeps saying, *„That's obvious, that's obvious..."*
Finally, the engineers snap and shout, *„Hey, security guard, shut up! If you're so clever, go fix it yourself"*
„Of course, gentlemen."
The guard walks into the assembly hall, grabs a drill, and starts drilling holes where the wings are attached to the fuselage. The engineers are puzzled but the guard reassures them that it will work. And it does—the plane takes off perfectly, flies a test circuit, and lands without any issues.
The engineers ask, *„How did you do that?"*
The guard replies, *„There's nothing genius about it. I used to work in a toilet paper factory, and whenever it was perforated, it never tore."*

A new employee is hired at a company and is assigned a task by the foreman: *„Here's a broom, young man. Go sweep the hall."*
„But I'm an engineer!"
„Ah..." the foreman thinks for a moment, *„Let me show you how to do it."*

A man is in a hot air balloon, and another man is on the ground.
The man in the balloon calls down, *„Excuse me, do you know where I am?"*
The man on the ground looks at him and replies, *„You're in a hot air balloon, about 5 feet off the ground."*
The man in the balloon calls back, *„Are you an engineer by any chance?"*
„Yes, how did you guess?"
„Because everything you said was technically correct, but practically useless to me."
The man on the ground responds, *„And you're a manager, aren't you?"*
The man in the balloon replies, *„Yes, how did you guess?"*
„Because when you're in trouble, suddenly it's my problem."

Why does an automation engineer refuse to go to the gym?
Because every time he has to lift something by hand, he starts designing a robotic arm!

What happens when you lock a hyena and an auditor in the same room?
The hyena stops laughing.

A company manager is training employees on increasing the efficiency of work operations: *„The techniques I've outlined here, you better not try them at home."*
One of the employees asks, *„Why not?"*
The manager responds, *„Well, you see, for years I've watched my wife's routine as she prepared breakfast. She used to run back and forth between the fridge, stove, pantry, and table, often carrying only one thing at a time. So, I suggested a better way to do it."*
The employee asks, *„And did it work?"*
The manager replies, *„Well, sort of. Before, it took her 25 minutes to make breakfast. Now, I do it in 18!"*

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