30 percent energy savings

Snowboard manufacturer Capita in Carinthia uses large amounts of energy and needed to improve energy efficiency quickly. The result: compressed air optimisation.



Massimo Doraponti, Capita maintenance manager, Steinbrugger and Ebner

Photo: KK/CAPITA

By Astrid Jäger

More than 100,000 snowboards leave Capita's factory in Feistritz an der Gail each year. The company employs 120 people. It exports 95 percent of its output; 75 percent of these exports go to the USA and Asia.

Managing director Wilhelm Ebner does not expect major sales problems in those markets. Europe may prove more difficult because of rising prices. Nevertheless, the Gail Valley company expects growth of more than 30 percent this year. Its growth markets are the USA and Asia.

The company is currently not supplying Russia. That market accounts for around three to four percent of total exports, but the boards fall under the embargo.

Like many businesses, Capita faces very high production costs as energy prices soar. Snowboard production is particularly energy intensive, Ebner explains: the factory needs 3.6 million kilowatt-hours per year. Capita therefore needed to find ways to reduce its energy costs quickly.

"Solar thermal systems, photovoltaic installations and pellets are projects we have in mind for the coming years. But none can be implemented as quickly as we need," says Ebner. Those projects would take at least six months to two years.

The company therefore brought in a consultant. The outcome was a project to save energy in compressed air generation.

In March, Christian Steinbrugger's Klagenfurt company Druckluftoptimierung was commissioned to analyse and assess the existing situation.

"We were able to implement the project as early as April. The investment is around EUR 80,000, and energy savings are between 20 and 30 percent," Ebner explains. An Airleader compressed air control system with energy monitoring was installed.

Environmental considerations increasingly influence purchasing decisions, especially among younger customers. The "Mothership" factory, built on a greenfield site, has therefore been CO2 neutral for years. Energy from the River Gail is used via a heat exchange pump.

The factory's entire flat roof is also fitted with photovoltaic modules, so part of its electricity is already generated on site. Spurred by the energy crisis, the company plans to expand this capacity in the coming years.