

Luxury or necessity?

For professionals dealing with highly specialised mechanical components such as rolling bearings, a general technical understanding of the products can help them improve productivity and cut costs. Unfortunately, the “fomal education” at technical schools hardly covers the practical skills needed for the industry. To fill this void, many leading bearing manufacturers offer specialised training courses. One example is the Bearing College offered by NKE Austria GmbH. *PWE* reports.

Optimised efficiency in the workplace and motivated employees are just two of the direct results of appropriate bearings training for equipment end-users.

Human errors are a major cause of equipment failures. Correct handling of bearings – e.g. storage, lubrication, and mounting/dismounting – ensures less bearing damage and longer bearing service life, and also results in lower maintenance costs, improved safety and more equipment uptime.

For machinery manufacturers, design and product development engineers can maximise the equipment performance and minimise the life-cycle costs by optimal design of bearing locations. In one case, after acquiring adequate bearing knowledge, a product design engineer could save 50% costs on one bearing location without sacrificing performance.

For distributors of industrial supplies, bearing knowledge helps them gain business through technical competence rather than based on price competition. It also facilitates the development of OEM business, which is usually technically more challenging but commercially rewarding. On the long run, it fosters customer satisfaction.

Not only engineers and technicians benefit from bearing knowledge. Commercial personnel such as sales and purchasing professionals can improve their job performance through bearing training. For example, a buyer can reduce costs by choosing a technically equivalent product variant for the application, or sourcing bearings from an alternative supplier with equal quality.

How to choose bearing training programmes?

First of all, the training needs and goals of a company should be identified. It has to be determined who should be trained in which fields. Next, the bearing training has to be incorporated into the staff training plan. The



A typical bearing damage caused by improper handling. Appropriate training helps avoid such mistakes and prolong equipment service life

following factors should be considered when choosing a bearing training programme:

- **Reliable training provider:** Reputable bearing manufacturers offer well organised training seminars to business partners.
- **Curriculum design:** Ask the training provider for a curriculum outline. You should find out whether the courses are targeted to your employees (commercial, technical or workshop personnel), as well as the breadth, depth, and structure of the courses. If the standard modules do not completely suit your needs, ask for customised courses.
- **Instruction methods:** Usually bearing training is conducted in small classroom groups (maximum 10 to 15 people) for a dedicated learning environment and individual attention. Visual aids and handout notes should be provided. For practical topics such as bearing handling, hands-on exercises should be included.
- **Instructors:** The instructors should possess a combination of solid theoretical foundation and practical experience in bearing applications. They should be



NKE Bearing College

NKE Austria GmbH is a bearing manufacturer with headquarters in Steyr, Austria. Founded in 1996 by a group of senior staff members of former company SteyrWälzlager, NKE offers both standard and special bearings for all industrial applications.

The NKE Bearing College is an intensive technical training programme for all its business partners. Three independent two-day training modules are designed for different job functions. Module 1 for commercial personnel such as sales or purchasing personnel provides basic technical background about bearings. Module 2, with more in-depth technical information, is targeted to design engineers, maintenance engineers and other technicians. Module 3 provides workshop personnel with practical tips on handling of bearings.

competent in knowledge sharing and training.

Follow-ups after training

Learning does not stop when training is over. What has been taught in the classroom must be practised in the real world. Depending on programmes, the trainees should show improved performance within days to months after the training. The post-training evaluation should be taken into consideration when planning for the next programmes.

Training pays off

Training doesn't cost – it pays. It is an investment in productivity. Bearing training equips technical and commercial professionals with the essential knowledge to enhance their job performance. For the company it means optimised product development, reduced procurement and maintenance costs, increased facility uptime, enhanced safety, employee loyalty and customer satisfaction. All these contribute to the long-term success of a business.

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