

PULSE conquers Katek: Three lines with installed smartwatch and tablet monitoring

PULSE is on course for success – more than 40 lines with PULSE have been sold already. Three PULSE lines have been installed at Katek since May 2017. The Bavarian electronics service provider recognized the benefits of PULSE early on and therefore opted for the solution from the start. The company can now give initial feedback on the added value provided by the mobile assistance system – and it turns out PULSE has really hit the mark.

The "Test first pay later" trade fair campaign run by ASYS in 2015 encouraged Katek to use the PULSE software and devices for its production systems. The campaign gave Katek the opportunity to get some hands-on experience of the solution over four months. "PULSE immediately grabbed our attention. So it was an obvious choice for us when the campaign came up. A bit of time passed to get through our internal processes before the final decision, but installing PULSE was ultimately a logical step for us," explains Georg Fahringer, Technical Officer at Katek.

Convinced right from the start

Katek was already using the ASYS OIC software package. The IC Run component was a particular hit. Fahringer confirms: "Automatic product changeover for the whole line took us a big step forward." The aim was then to take production optimization even further by integrating PULSE.

ASYS supplies PULSE as a complete system – connections, software and devices – from a single source and uses an open interface to connect other machinery, including third-party systems. This was a positive factor for Katek in particular. It is possible to connect modules yourself and give machine suppliers clear instructions for the functions you want to integrate into PULSE.

Katek is using PULSE to solve the challenge of microstops on the production line. Its own system only generates an error message after five minutes at a standstill, so microstops often fall through the net. PULSE is able to catch and reduce the number of microstops. The "Alerts&Info" app reports factors that may lead to line stops – before they occur. The operator accesses a clear to-do list on a smartwatch or tablet, which prioritizes tasks by the remaining response time. The operator can effectively avoid line stops and recognize microstops early on so that action can be taken immediately.

PULSE also comes with the benefit of faster response times for loading and unloading the line. At Katek, for example, PULSE displays pre-warning limits for the PCB destacker and the magazine controller right on your smart device, so the operator can plan the next steps and change the magazines at the right time. This also means the operator can respond more quickly to problems with specific modules on the line.

A rock-solid solution with potential for more

"At Katek, PULSE has meant fewer machine stops and therefore increased line productivity. Those of our operators who use smartwatches find their work easier and are now planning their tasks in a totally different way. This shows that we can deliver exactly what we promised with our PULSE solution," reports Wolfgang Heyder, Sales Engineer at ASYS, who has been providing support for the project from the start.

Four months have now passed since the PULSE software was integrated into production at Katek. As of today, 40 percent of employees are using the PULSE smartwatch. Fahringer is optimistic. "As with any system when it is first introduced, there is a bit of skepticism about PULSE. But I am convinced that employees will recognize the benefits of the solution eventually and then everyone will be using it." The electronics service provider will then exploit the full potential of PULSE.

Connecting third-party systems to PULSE is another area with potential for more. ASYS has created the PULSE Community to bring together all the system manufacturers in the electronics sector with products that are "PULSE-capable"

because of custom connections to the open interface. The company is constantly working to expand the Community: "Our aim is to give customers a solution for the entire production line, and we're following that up across the board. In our eyes, it means we will be able to respond appropriately to our customers' requirements in the future in an open way that is not manufacturer-dependent. We are trying to bring this philosophy to all the system suppliers on the SMT line," says Erwin Beck, Senior Vice President Product Management & Marketing at ASYS.

A solid start

"Collaboration has been a success," says Fahringer. "Organization has gone very smoothly with ASYS, and we have always been able to rely on their support". ASYS will continue to provide support for the PULSE lines at Katek and monitor developments in production. The PULSE system may be extended to the remaining three production lines in the future, and the package will definitely be installed if production lines have to be replaced.

About ASYS Group

The ASYS Group is a global technology company and a leading manufacturer of handling, process and special machines for the electronics, solar and life science industries. The corporate headquarters in Dornstadt near Ulm, Germany controls the activities of the subsidiaries in more than 40 countries. The ASYS Group employs over 1000 staff worldwide and supplies both standard products and customized solutions.

About Katek

The Katek Group with production sites in Grassau (Headquarters) and Győr (Hungary) employs around 1000 people. The services provided by the Katek Group cover the complete lifecycle of electronic components and devices, from development support, through material and project management, to production, logistics and aftersales service. Recognized national and international companies from the automotive, telecommunications, consumer electronics, industrial electronics, medical and metrology sectors rely on the service and solution expertise of the Katek Group.

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