

Wiegand Glas backs infrared camera systems

Paul Schreuders describes the recent installation of XPAR Vision infrared camera systems for hot end inspection and process monitoring on all 14 production lines at the two German plants of Wiegand Glas.

XPAR Vision is dedicated to the development and implementation of innovative technology for hot end inspection, process monitoring and quality control. It is committed to assist glass container manufacturers in meeting increasing customer demand and improving their product quality, while increasing efficiency levels and also reducing energy levels and carbon emission.

Throughout its 10 years of existence, the company has built a strong and logical product range comprising an infrared dual camera system (inspection and process monitoring), infrared gob weight control system, (automated gob weight control), Gob Assist (monitoring gob loading into the blank mould), blank side temperature control (monitoring temperature distribution and the blank side) and hot end analyser (measuring absolute glass wall thickness).

Since the beginning of May 2011, Wiegand Glas has equipped all 14 production lines at its Steinbach am Wald and Grossbreitenbach factories with XPAR Vision infrared camera systems for hot end inspection and process monitoring. The investment decision is a direct result of the need for quality control at the hot end, in addition to quality selection at the cold end.

MEETING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Oliver Wiegand from Wiegand Glas explains: "Customer expectations are steadily increasing and put pressure on our inspection capabilities. In the meantime, we are faced

with environmental policy pressures regarding carbon emission and energy usage. In order to face this pressure, we simply have to move our attention from quality selection at the cold end (correction!) to quality control at the hot end (prevention!). As we want to continue to be one of the most innovative and technically advanced companies in the glass container industry and as XPAR Vision is the world leader in this field, our choice for XPAR Vision is a logical one."

Results derived from using the technology have been good, although implementation has taken some time. Implementing quality control at the hot end requires a totally different way of working. "As such, we have gone through a process of changing our mind sets" comments Josef Moehrlin. "Now the hot end operator is more self-supporting with regard to the quality and quantity of hot end output". The advantages are numerous. "Every change in the glass forming process is visualised through

the infrared images from the XPAR equipment" suggests Karl-Heinz Mann. "As a result, we are informed about any process variation in real-time and are able to make necessary process corrections without time delays".

COMPANY-WIDE APPROACH

The main reason for Wiegand Glas to equip all production lines is to create a company-wide emphasis on quality control. And not only on the level of the operators. "Through the XPAR Vision SQL database and XMIS (management information system), the supervisors including management have access to all hot end quality and efficiency data from all lines" says Oliver Wiegand. "Having this information allows us to make all kinds of internal benchmarks which, in return, allows the most relevant questions to be asked. As a result, working on structural process improvement is embedded throughout."

Consequently, hot end quality control pays off. And last but not least, XPAR Vision assists Wiegand Glas in ensuring that the systems are implemented effectively. This assistance includes training of specialists and operators, hands-on assistance and consultancy.

The fact that Wiegand Glas has decided to equip all of its lines with XPAR cameras is an important incentive for us. It is the ultimate confirmation that our technology is mature and it is the proof that hot end inspection and forming process control as an investment pays off. ■



XPAR Vision infrared camera system installed at a Wiegand Glas plant.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Paul Schreuders is CEO of XPAR Vision

FURTHER INFORMATION:

XPAR Vision BV, Groningen, The Netherlands
tel: +31 50 316 2888
email: contact@xparvision.com
web: www.xparvision.com