



... don't worry, be heavy!

PES met up with Holger Dechant, CSO at Universal Transport, to learn about their new slogan and the risks involved in oversized component transportation. It's really not as simple as it looks.



Holger Dechant

PES: Welcome back to PES. Thanks for talking with us. We know the wind industry is an expanding sector, how is this impacting on Universal Transport?

Holger Dechant: This year there is a strong upturn in the wind power industry in Germany. As we don't know whether this is will continue to increase in future, we are also looking at other markets such as Turkey and Egypt.

There is a new law in Germany with new regulations. For this reason a lot of companies signed many projects last year and in 2017 these components have to be delivered. The new law is called Erneuerbare- Energien-Gesetz - EEG 2017

PES: Your company slogan is don't worry, be heavy!, can you explain why this was chosen?

HG: We had been looking for an international slogan. We wanted it to show

that the customer can feel in good hands, that we are capable of managing demanding and complex logistic tasks. The song from which we got the idea is still well known all over the world and always puts a smile on everyone's face.

As we see it, our company is like an orchestra and everyone has their part to play, it seemed to fit us perfectly.

PES: Please can you tell us about any forwarding problems, you as a company, are experiencing in the wind sector?

HG: Without blaming the authorities, the biggest problem in Germany is the authorisation procedure. The system is complicated and there are no tolerances for the heavy and oversized cargo. Due to this and with constantly increasing large components, it is always difficult to supply all parts, at the correct place, at the right time.



This means we simply have to wait for the permits. We keep our customers informed about this and we speak with them to the authorities. There is no better way.

PES: Are these problems mainly in Germany and Europe or do they extend to other parts of the world?

HG: This problem is primarily in Germany. Other countries are better organised, but then other “challenges” are faced.

Other countries have more tolerances. For example, if you plan a tour six weeks ahead you don’t know which kind of truck you will be using – Mercedes, MAN or Scania.

So it is possible that these trucks have a tolerance of only 5 cm difference between the axels. For this reason you have to ask for more than one permit. The total length could be as long as 70 m.

PES: Why do you think this is and what solutions are you proposing?

HG: Here, politicians, shipping agents and freight forwarders must work closer together. Everyone has the same aim. To be able to transport the cheapest price, in the allotted time and with less official regulations.....

PES: We would be interested to hear about the planning process before you can begin the transportation phase, how long does it take, what factors have to be taken in to account etc?

HG: There is no single solution; each project has to be planned individually.

After all, we are not transporting 33 pallets of beans or apples. It all depends on the route and the components.

All transport where the dimensions or the total weight are more than a normal truck is a special oversized load, with very tough regulations. And it doesn’t matter if the transport is “only” 20 metres or 70 metres. You have to find the possible trucks, the routes and only after this can you ask the authorities for a permit.

If everything is ok, you then have to order the police escort, private pilots and check the route again. Sometimes you have to stop the transport at the last minute because of one problem, which is only occurred the day before the start of the project. We then have to start all over again.

PES: How important is the risk analysis to the success of a project and what does it involve?

HG: It is of very, very high importance. There are many factors, are the bridges ok, do we have the permits, the time of the police or private escort and so on. Furthermore a lot of people are involved and have to be managed and co-ordinated. And of course, it is also possible that they make mistakes.

All the employees must work together. Just like an orchestra! The question is always what are the risks and how do they effect the costs. Ultimately, the responsibility is always with the shipping agent and the freight forwarder.

PES: You have an impressive fleet of vehicles, what is your load capacity?

HG: The question is difficult to answer. We focus on the needs of our customers; however, these have changed rapidly in the recent past. The components are increasing more and more in size, for example, the blades.

We have to discuss this often with our customers about what is going on in the near future. It is important for us to keep up to date and in constant communication.

PES: As we know wind farms are not always located in easy to reach places, how do you face this challenge?

HG: We can only respond to the requirement. Once again: we have simply to deliver....

PES: How do you plan your proposal to the client – is each proposal tailor made to suit specific needs, if so does this have a cost implication to the end user and what are the benefits?

HG: We plan so everything moves smoothly, like water. Because: transporting goods is like water: it finds the best and most affordable way.

PES: How is the rest of 2017 looking for Universal Transport in the wind industry?

HG: We are working to nearly full capacity (95%) and believe that some projects will be postponed by our clients until 2018

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