

From niche to volume with integrity and trust
CASE STUDY FACT SHEET

Bohlsener Mühle - Germany

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History

Bohlsener Mühle (Bohlsen Mill) has a long tradition as a local, water-powered flour mill in a rural area of the Federal State of Lower Saxony, Northern Germany. Since 1979, when the younger generation took over the business, the mill has been processing organic cereals and legume crops from the region. Today, Bohlsener Mühle is one of the major organic flour mills in Germany. As it has grown, the organisation, production, internal communication and marketing have been greatly modified. These changes have helped to create a successful, medium-sized, family business with around 175 employees. The mill's location and its regional embeddedness are important for sustainability and other socio-economic, environmental and cultural values, and also allow good communication among the partners in this values-based cereal and bakery chain. Bohlsener Mühle has three production branches: the mill, several bakery plants producing fresh products and also a range of dry, end-user bakery products.



Bohlsener Mühle: main office building and mill facilities (www.bohlsener-muehle.de)

"We see ourselves as living part of the society. Our key values are responsibility, trust and openness! These are key drivers for our daily activities and our engagement as a producer of healthy food and a medium-size enterprise in our rural area ."

(Bohlsen Mill CEO,
defining his philosophy)

Their product range has increased significantly since the business began. Bohlsener Mühle supplies Naturkost shops in the wider region with fresh bread and pastry, and a range of dry products such as cookies, crackers, breakfast cereals and dry convenience meals. Traditionally, the mill supplies organic bakeries with a full-range of flours, flour mixtures, semolina, grain and seeds as well as baking agents, dry fruits and other ingredients. Crucial to their philosophy is the high-quality production and processing of organic crops and the fostering of trust and openness with employees and business partners. The mill is involved in rural development in line with its environmental, social and cultural engagement in the area.

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Legal form:

Ltd & Limited partners GmbH & Co KG

Date of foundation:

Organic business in 1979

Homepage:

www.bohlsenermuehle.de

Logo:



Turnover 2013:

Turnover rose 0.2 Million € to 30.3 Million €

Product range:

15 cereal, 5 cracker, 27 cookie, full range fresh bakery goods; full bakery supply

Number of employees:

180 part-/fulltime

Distribution channels:

Naturkost shops and retail chains, wholesalers and organic bakeries

Supply chain organisation

The most important supply partners are four organic farmers associations in northern, north-eastern Germany and southern Denmark. Traditionally, the Öko-Korn-Nord producer association was founded as the group of farmers who delivered organic grain to the Bohlsen mill. Today, the association has grown into a medium-size organic grain and seeds business with significant storage and quality testing capacities. Öko-Korn-Norn has around 100 member farms marketing cereal and legume crops. Their capacity allows flexibility for a business aiming to supply volumes and qualities taking into account the needs of the organic mill. Their close connection to primary production and the regional embeddedness of the mill are important for the successful marketing of organic flour and end-user bakery products. All participating farms are members of an organic farming association (Bioland, Demeter etc.).

The mill business is continuously developing by expanding production, storage and transport capacities (see figure 1), and also by enhancing organic values, based on excellent cooperation and communication with all chain partners and stakeholders.

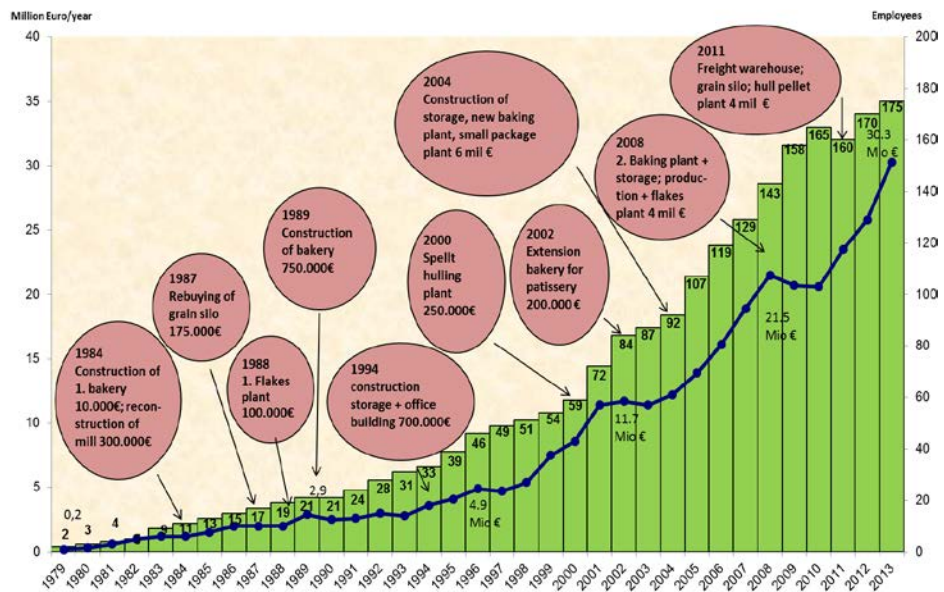


Figure 1: Turnover in million € and no. of employees (1979-2013)

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