

Doors to the think tank

Pioneering EFAFLEX folding doors lead the way to DEUTZ AG's state of the art innovation centre

A new innovation centre that incorporates the latest state of the art technology for DEUTZ AG was recently unveiled, in Cologne-Porz. The building was designed to create a flexible, 'feel good' space where employees could develop and shape prototype conceptual ideas into a projects, products, or investment opportunities. Two of EFAFLEX's EFA-SFT® THERM high-speed folding doors were installed to facilitate engines, tractors, and other large equipment to enter the 380 square metre building.

"We have approximately 40 different EFAFLEX high-speed doors already in use here at the plant," explains Harald Krämer, responsible for the plant infrastructure at DEUTZ AG Cologne. "So, it was only natural that we chose the doors from this premium manufacturer once again in this new modern building."

Michael Halfen, Head of the Agile Centre of Excellence at DEUTZ AG, describes the importance of the doors for the building in more detail: "This building is the creative heart of our company. From within these rooms, ideas are encouraged to grow beyond their departmental boundaries. Our company stands for a pioneering spirit, passion and a culture of innovation." Effective planning and logistics are required in the innovation centre for this concept to become a reality in the shortest possible time and relies on all participants and components working together in harmony.

Frank Vonnahme, responsible for construction projects at the plant, adds: "The doors have to be reliable. If we had problems with the doors, we would not be able to get the equipment into the garage where we are working on the prototypes. That would really put us under undue stress."

The door folds keep the driveway free

"The aesthetical appearance of the doors also fits in perfectly with the theme of the innovation," says Frank Vonnahme. "The planners opted for folding doors for various reasons. We have a crane runway here to move heavy equipment. Due to the sheer size and dimensions, no other door could be installed. In addition, the doors as they fold back must not block the driveway in front of the building, and so this model was perfect for us."

With the EFA-SFT® THERM now being used in the innovation centre, an innovative new development was introduced into the door curtains. The door leaf now consists of a frame which is made of highly thermally insulated steel profiles and 40mm thick EFA-THERM® laths.

Thanks to the EFA-THERM® laths which are a standard feature in this door model, a new level of thermal insulation has been achieved that had never previously been accomplished for folding doors. The EFA-SFT® has been specially developed for outdoor applications and, due to its high thermal insulation, meets the stringent requirements for installation in an existing building, e.g. for energy conservation-related renovations. The doors also have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of new industrial buildings. PMMA triple glazing can be selected as an option for the door filling and, thanks to the new holding rail in the door leaf, the filling can be swapped out quickly and easily. There are numerous additional options to adapt the EFA-SFT® optimally to every façade. The surface of the door leaf in the innovation centre was manufactured using a special coating based on the colour chart according to customer requirements. The terminal strip and safety light barrier take care of door security. If the terminal strip encounters an obstacle during the closing process, the door shutters stop. The door system opens completely and closes automatically after the auto-close delay. The safety light barriers integrated into the side of frame is offset to the door closing level, and the height of the safety light barriers is variable. As an added safety option, a light curtain can be mounted to the frame to monitor the area in front of the door closing level up to a height of 1.755m. The light curtain prevents the door system closing if an obstacle is detected.

Both Harald Krämer and Frank Vonnahme have also had exceptional experiences with EFAFLEX's customer service team which when required arrives quickly to site. "If a door wasn't working here, it could quickly have a detrimental impact on production. The doors also had to be assembled and installed under a tight time schedule. That also worked great with EFAFLEX." In the meantime, another EFA-SFT® THERM has been installed in the Kaizen workshop next to the innovation centre.

Innovation centre and DEUTZ AG information

Where employees now work together to develop and implement their ideas, previously DEUTZ AG's tractor development, test stand for engines and workshops used to be located in one of the oldest buildings. The company's Executive Board has skilfully combined tradition and innovation with the creation of the visionary facility at the heart of the plant site. Joint project work, networking and brainstorming are the focus here today. Various formats such as mentoring sessions, pitch training and creative workshops will support employees in defining and implementing their ideas in the future. The DEUTZ Accelerator innovation concept also supports them in developing the idea and a business model. State of the art technology is also available in the form of a Windows Surface Hub, 3D printing and virtual reality.

DEUTZ is one of the world's leading manufacturers of innovative drive systems. The company's core expertise lies in the development, production, sales and servicing of diesel, gas, and electrified drives for professional applications. Founded in 1864 as N.A. Otto & Cie. in Cologne, DEUTZ AG is the oldest engine factory in the world today and one of the world's leading independent engine manufacturers. With 13 sales companies, seven sales offices and more than 800 sales and service partners in more than 130 countries, DEUTZ offers its customers virtually nationwide support with very short reaction times.