

Impressively sustainable



2024

EXTRACT FROM THE SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



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Sustainability. More relevant than ever.



Dear Reader,

Some changes are immediately apparent to the eye, for example, the new reception area at our Biberach site, which we redesigned last year. It now embodies at first glance the values that set us apart as a modern family company: openness, dynamism and innovation. The same applies to our new show stand, which instantly makes clear to everyone that we stand for sustainability, with lots of space for chats with our customers and plenty of room for our innovative products and ideas.

Some of the other changes are not quite as obvious, but they are no less important. For example, we are making great leaps forward with automation in production. We are developing a more efficient, more ergonomic and more future-proof production environment in line with the 'Gluing 2.0' project. In general, we do everything we can to ensure the perfect interaction between design, functionality and sustainability in order to make the world a little more sustainable every day, thus ensuring it is a better place to live for generations to come. Whether it is through innovative packaging solutions, processes that reduce resource consumption or sustain-

nable material procurement, all these measures contribute to our long-term aim of combining economic success with environmental responsibility.

Our 85 years of experience as a family company tells us that it is vitally important not just to accept changes, but to actively progress them. This is the only way we have been able to continuously grow and successfully face the challenges of our industry. And we have our team to thank for all this, not only the above-average proportion of fresh new talent on the staff, but also the large numbers of employees who have stood by our side for decades. The wealth of knowledge and experience, and the innovation of the Karl Knauer staff are the keys to our permanent development. They guarantee that we will continue to set standards in the future with solutions that are 'impressively different'.

We look forward to continuing to share our journey with you, our partners, customers and employees, and send our best sustainable regards from the management team of the Karl Knauer Group.

Karl Knauer Group
Management Team

Marco Manna

Stefanie Wieckenberg

Nicki Eberle

Karolina Matysiak

Highlights

Cardboard, paper, corrugated board

Using a renewable resource: cardboard, paper and corrugated board. Also, using recycled cardboard and FSC®- and PEFC-certified cardboard and paper.




-160
tonnes of CO₂

In 2024, Karl Knauer Biberach offset more CO₂ than it produced.


Changing the factory hall lighting to
LED

Complete compensation
the energy balance
in Biberach




Karl Knauer receives
EcoVadis
bronze medal

Training in Biberach


 **10** apprenticeships
2 dual degree programmes
17 apprentices and students

over **600.000** €
Since its establishment in 1995, the Karl Knauer Foundation has generously supported the region every year.

SEVERAL TIMES AWARDED

For innovative packaging and industry know-how.

over **10** years
membership
CO₂ Climate Initiative
of the printing and media associations

- 1.021 m³

Water consumption could be reduced when comparing 2024 to 2023 Karl Knauer for all


Implementation of sustainable trainee projects



2.1 Company profile

The Karl Knauer Group is a successful medium-sized, family-owned company for Packaging, Promotional Products, Gift Packaging and Mechanical Engineering.

With its two locations including Biberach (Baden) in Germany, and Pniewy in Poland, the Karl Knauer Group is one of the leading suppliers in the packaging industry. Customers from the branded goods and services industry across Europe benefit from the diverse expertise and the remarkably extensive vertical integration. Together with customers, our experts design constructions that fulfil every packaging need – from product protection and safety to appealing presentation at the point of sale.

Karl Knauer offers tailored programmes with state-of-the-art packaging technologies for areas of expertise in eight industries: Cosmetics/Body Care, Pharmaceuticals/Health, Home/Industry, Environment/Nature, Food/Agriculture, Beverages, Blister Cards and Mechanical Engineering.

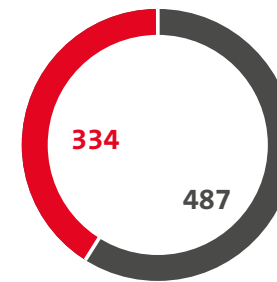
In addition, the research and development department is constantly working on innovations for future packaging demands. In the field of mechanical engineering, Karl Knauer develops individual solutions that increase efficiency in the packaging industry.

Karl Knauer is one of Europe's leading providers of note advertising media made of cardboard and paper, and offers customers in the gift packaging segment high-quality, refined and trendy packaging that can be customised on request.

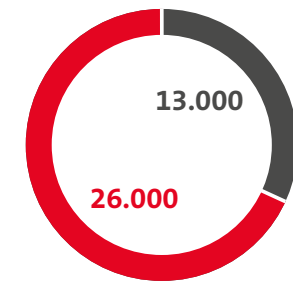
To the corporate film:



www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTQ6dai2us



Employees



Production area in m²

Karl Knauer employed a total of 821 employees at two locations

Karl Knauer produces at the headquarters Biberach (Germany) and in the modern, efficient production plant in Pniewy (Poland)

■ Karl Knauer KG, Biberach/Baden ■ Karl Knauer Poland Sp. z o.o., Pniewy

2.2

Natural advantage

Cardboard 'grows', making it one of the most sustainable packaging materials.

Cardboard consists of wood, a renewable raw material, and is therefore particularly environmentally friendly. This applies to the acquisition of the raw material as well as its manufacture, use and disposal. Using FSC®- and PEFC-certified materials also demonstrably supports sustainable forestry and consistent measures against illegal logging. Supporting sustainable forestry by using wood as a raw material helps offset the carbon footprint in the fibre cycle. Renewable forests reabsorb the carbon released by cardboard, pasteboard or paper packaging and advertising media at the end of their life cycle.

Cardboard conserves our resources: no product is as intensively recycled as cardboard, pasteboard or paper packaging. Reusing the raw material several times conserves all types of resources, including energy and water. The recycling rate for cardboard, pasteboard and paper in Europe is around 81% according to data from the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI). In Europe, 60% of folding cartons are manufactured from recycled cardboard.

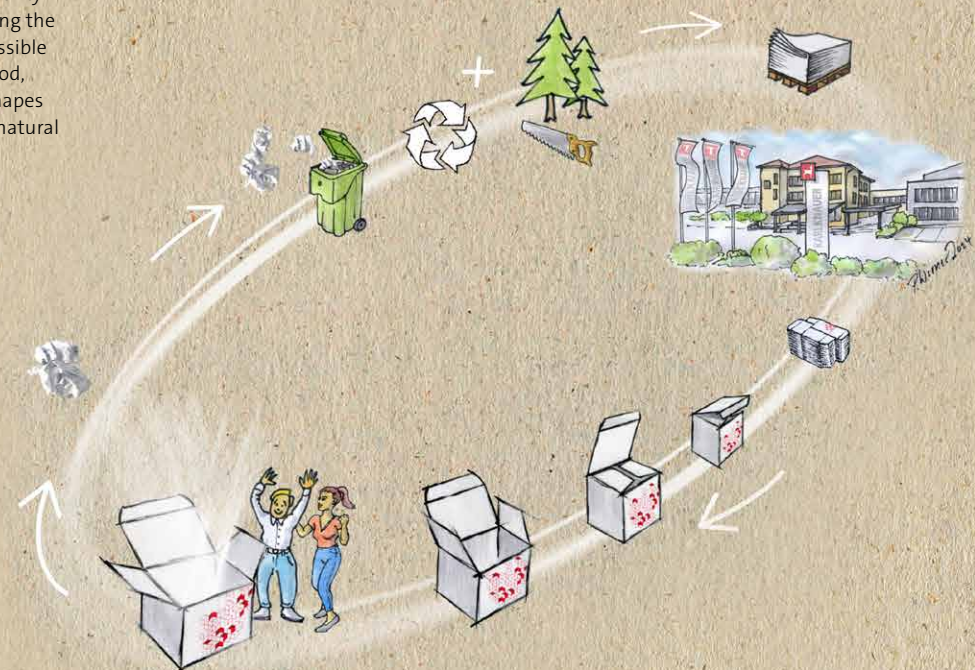
A key issue in the manufacture of folding cartons is designing them to be efficient and safe throughout their entire life cycle.

This should ensure that the packaged goods are not discarded of due to damage, inadequate hygiene or insufficient instructions for use. Simply considering these criteria helps avoid waste and thus the loss of the resources necessary to manufacture the goods.

Most consumers make their first choice based on the cardboard packaging of the goods on the shelf. The versatility of cardboard is ideal for promoting the packaged product in the best possible manner. Material, printing method, surface structure and creative shapes all contribute to innovative and natural

packaging design, and may elicit a visual and tactile experience. A folding carton can perfectly reflect the values of a brand and make it a consumer's first choice at the point of sale.

Cf. European Association of Carton and Cartonboard Manufacturers: <http://www.procarton.com/de/why-cartons/>



2.3 Current developments



A modern reception area for a modern company

The Karl Knauer reception area has been successfully redesigned. After an extensive renovation phase, the ground floor of the administration building has been given a new modern, open and inviting look.

The renovation included extensive modernisation measures. The new acoustic ceiling boards, modern lighting, radiator panels and acoustic carpeting all add up to a comfortable working environment. The whole electronics system has been brought up to the very latest standards, and all four meeting rooms are now kitted out with state-of-the-art conference technology.



The new glass partition walls give a completely different feeling to the space, with open, airy rooms.

The renovation is not only a step forward in terms of aesthetic and technical modernisation, it also signals a change in company culture. The new reception area reflects the values of Karl Knauer as a modern family company: openness, dynamism and innovation.



Insight into 'Gluing 2.0'

Automation of production at Karl Knauer is proceeding at pace. We are developing a more efficient, more ergonomic and more future-proof production environment in line with the 'Gluing 2.0' project.

Successful start for palletising cells

In August 2024, fpt robotics installed two palletising cells and the associated logistics. The test phase is now underway after successful commissioning in October. This involves monitoring the new workflows and resolving any issues. The system can then be approved for productive use.

Optimisation using automated guided vehicles (AGVs)

An AGV system is currently being installed in production. This technology will revolutionise logistic processes in the future by transporting finished goods autonomously from the palletising cells to the MSK system. The integration of AGVs into the existing processes is the first step on the road towards the production area being operated on a largely autonomous basis.

Outlook

Another milestone is set to follow in March 2025: The new Diana Easy gluing machine will bring about a significant improvement in production capacity and flexibility. This machine has been specially designed to meet the needs of faster and more flexible production. One of the highlights will be the introduction of the 'IMPACT Ergosa' system, which enables the packaging processes to be simplified and optimised. This technology allows more efficient product packaging while making the packing process more ergonomic.

With the successful start of the first system, progressive automation and planned innovations such as AGVs and the new gluing machine, Karl Knauer is taking important steps on the road towards more future-proof, high-performance and employee-friendly production.



Our new show stand: functional and sustainable

In 2024, we also developed a new show stand which is radiant in the Karl Knauer corporate colours of red and green to match the show team. The stand is made from sustainable materials and was designed in collaboration with Winkels Interior Design Exhibition. It offers plenty of space for chats with existing and prospective customers while also providing ample space to showcase new product innovations. This allows Karl Knauer to perfectly combine design, functionality and sustainability. The stand could be seen at FACHPACK 2024 in Nuremberg and at the PSI 2025 promotional products show in Dusseldorf.



2.4

Our success



Our top objective is to make our customers happy. The fact that we are often able to impress national and international juries with our creative solutions is a welcome knock-on effect.



iF DESIGN Award 2024 in Gold

Karl Knauer was awarded the iF DESIGN AWARD Gold in Berlin in 2024. The exclusive packaging for Stella Artois, the premium beer brand, impressed the 132-strong jury for one of the most prestigious design awards in the world. The award was granted for its quality sealed box containing 12 0.33 l relief bottles from the AB InBev brewery group, with the judges citing it was “perhaps the most significant innovation in drinks packaging since the six-pack”.



German Design Award

The German Design Award is considered one of the most sought-after awards in the design sphere across all industries. It awards extraordinary submissions in product design, communications design and architecture, including the premium packaging for Stella Artois beer designed by packaging experts Karl Knauer.



EcoVadis bronze medal

The Karl Knauer Group has been awarded a bronze medal in the EcoVadis ranking for sustainability, putting it among the best 35% in the world. The ranking reflects Karl Knauer’s efforts to reduce carbon emissions, use resources efficiently, and take social responsibility seriously. This reward honours the group’s continuous commitment to a more sustainable future.



Hidden champion 2024

The Black Forest Power Region is among the top 10 hidden champion regions in Germany. Hidden champions represent market leadership and innovation. A study by the Fachhochschule Dortmund University of applied Sciences and Arts confirms that Karl Knauer is one of the 44 hidden champions in this top-ranking region. This is recognition of its strength in the market and its contribution to the economic development of the region.



WorldStar Award for Pohl-Scandia

Hot on the heels of the German Packaging Prize 2023, the people at Pohl-Scandia GmbH are now celebrating a WorldStar Award in the e-commerce category in 2024. According to the jury, the innovative shipping packaging designed by packaging specialist Karl Knauer for sister company Pohl-Scandia stands out thanks to its perfect fit design for items of three different sizes, its optimised handling which enables substantial improvements in order picking times and the sustainable, easily recyclable materials.

2.5

Being green



New measure: Nesting boxes

Our trainees have been working with the in-house joinery department to build some impressive nesting boxes. This collaboration has not only resulted in the production of valuable nesting boxes, but also promoted an exchange of specialist knowledge and craft skills between the trainees and the experts in the joinery department. The nesting boxes produced are not only symbolic of our commitment to nature conservation, they are also a practical example of the link between traditional crafts and environmental awareness.

Biotope maintenance

For five of our trainees, 2023 was all about rolling their sleeves up and getting stuck in. In cooperation with the countryside preservation association Ortenaukreis e.V. and the team at Baumpflege Volk, the aim was to look after the reed canary grass, reed belt biotope and the wet meadow on the Reiherbach in the district of Prinzbach, part of the parish of Biberach, Baden.

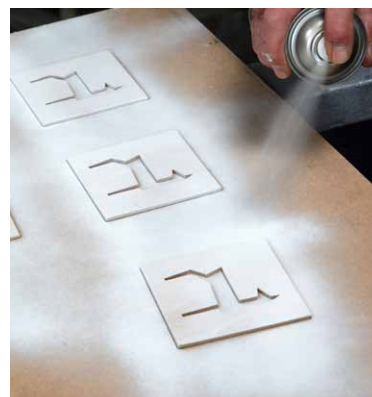
Grazing animals were once responsible for clearing the cultivated landscapes, but these days active maintenance is required, which means clearing and

cutting back by hand. And this was where the five young would-be packaging experts got their hands dirty. After a morning working in the fresh November air, the job was done and all those involved were happy with the results.

Our very own Karl Knauer insect hotel

In spring 2020, the Karl Knauer trainees also laid the foundations for a further future project. With our support, a 2,600 m² space was cleared for some 60,000 new Karl Knauer workers in Zell am Harmersbach. The idea was to set up a flower meadow which has since been in bloom throughout the summer, with a range of varieties attracting numerous insects and also providing valuable habitat to the new Karl Knauer bee colony. Decked out in their protective clothing, the Karl Knauer trainees headed off to harvest the honey under the expert guidance of 'Martin the Bee Man'. A total of 32 kilo-

grams has been extracted and filled into jars by hand. As you would expect from packaging experts, a special honeycomb packaging has been designed and produced for the honey. We're especially proud that an insect hotel built by the trainees themselves has graced the bee pasture since 2022.





3.1

Energy consumption and energy-saving measures

Efficiency

Important precautions for efficient energy use in Biberach, and Pniewy.

For all new acquisitions of machines and systems, it is a company requirement to constantly improve energy efficiency.

In addition, a certified energy management system is introduced, significant energy users are defined, consumption is measured and monthly reviews are conducted.

Saving

Saving energy and using renewable energy in Biberach, and Pniewy.

In Biberach, a considerable part of the electricity demand is electricity demand is produced via photovoltaics. Since 2021, eight charging points and two electric vehicles have been added to the vehicle fleet. In 2023, another electric vehicle was purchased to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.

The conversion of the factory lighting to LED is currently underway. As of December 2023, this has been completed to approx. 85%. Where it is already possible, the lighting is controlled automatically depending on the amount of daylight. In addition, the radiator thermostats were checked, defective equipment was replaced and 35,000 kWh of electricity were saved by switching off the oil heating of two punching machines at weekends.

CO₂ emissions from energy consumption

Biberach, in tonnes of CO₂ per year

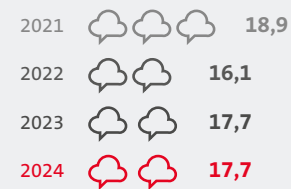


We avoid producing CO₂ emissions wherever possible and have managed to reduce them to a minimum. Nevertheless, we compensate for unavoidable CO₂ emissions by supporting climate change projects that offset CO₂ elsewhere. Thus, in 2024 alone, we saved 160 tonnes more CO₂ than we produced.

Compensation exceeds consumption

CO₂ emissions from the energy consumed per 1,000 accepted sheets

for all Karl Knauer in kg CO₂/1,000 sheets



Thanks to the numerous measures, the Karl Knauer Group was once again able to reduce CO₂ emissions from energy consumption per 1,000 sheets.

3.2

Water consumption

Efficiency

Important precautions for efficient water use at Karl Knauer.

Taps with sensors have been installed in recent years to save water. Further measures are planned for 2025 and 2026.

Biberach		2022	2023	2024
Water consumption	m ³	5.878	5.030	4.590
Waste water	m ³	2.526	3.208	2.619

Pniewy

Water consumption	m ³	4.022	4.169	3.588
Waste water	m ³	2.427	2.331	1.815

For all Karl Knauer

Water consumption	m ³	9.900	9.199	8.178
Water consumption per 1,000 accepted sheet	l/1.000 Bg	61,1	63,2	54,2
Waste water	m ³	4.953	5.539	4.434
Waste water per 1,000 accepted sheets	l/1.000 Bg	30,6	38	29,4

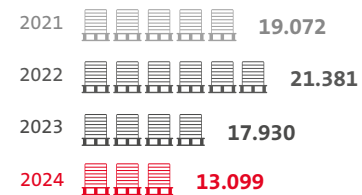
Water consumption was reduced at both locations.

Wastewater generation constant low: 6,378 m² of our outdoor facilities are little or unsealed, so that rainwater infiltrates and replenishes groundwater reserves. In addition, the rainwater from 17,248 m² is discharged into open ditches/water bodies.

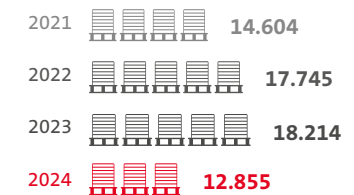
3.3

Material consumption

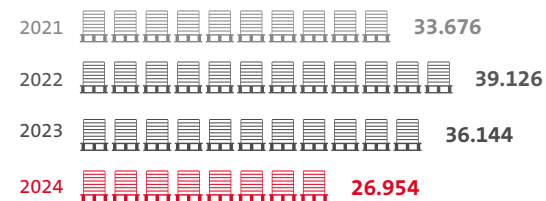
Cardboard Biberach, in t



Cardboard Pniewy, in t



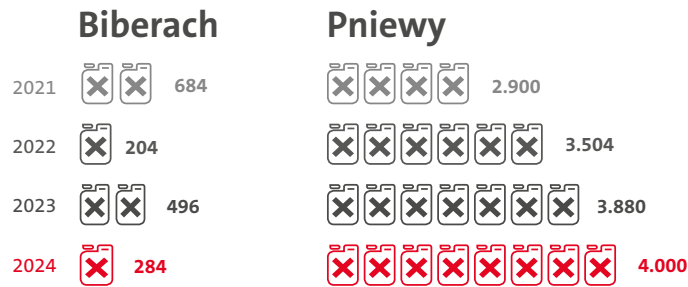
Cardboard for all Karl Knauer, in t



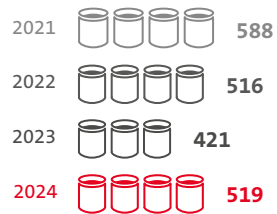
3.3

Material consumption

IPA use in l

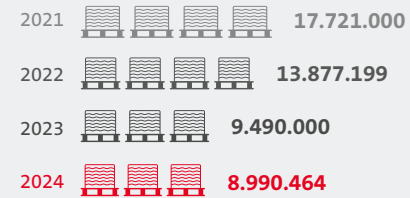


Inks and varnishes for all Karl Knauer in t



Corrugated board Biberach

Processed only in Biberach, in m²



Paper Pniewy

Processed only in Pniewy, in t



3.4

Waste

Important precautions for preventing waste in all areas

Our waste prevention strategy kicks in at the product development stage: new packaging is designed and imposed on the printing sheet in such a way as to minimise material use and offcuts. Each imposition is checked by experts and packaging technologists.

In Biberach, comprehensive waste management has been integrated into the company's day-to-day activities for many years. Here, all waste is classified and recycled accordingly, in a manner that maximises value added. Developments related to waste that is classified as dangerous are particularly positive: the volume of such waste was reduced for the third year running as a result of optimised processes and a higher degree of standardisation.

In addition, purchasing cardboard sheets in the correct format for each individual type of folding box ensures less waste and the correct separation (hazardous/hazardous/paper/metal). For the purchase of paints, varnishes and glues, the focus is on demand and shelf life.

In Pniewy, the acquisition of a new printing machine had a positive impact on waste consumption: for example start-up losses (test sheets for adjusting the machine) were further reduced. This also applied to printing errors and colour deviations, which further reduced the waste.

Due to the reduction blister film thickness, in Pniewy can be saved 20 tonnes of plastic per year.

Biberach

		2022	2023	2024
Cardboard waste	t	5.614	4.643	4.736
Hazardous waste	t	41,8	39,8	37,3

Pniewy

Cardboard waste	t	4.644	4.183	4.687
Hazardous waste	t	31,2	42,1	41,9

For all Karl Knauer

Cardboard waste	t	10.258	8.826	9.423
Hazardous waste	t	73	82	79
Total cardboard waste per 1,000 accepted sheets	kg/1.000 Bg	63,3	60,6	62,4
Total hazardous waste per 1,000 accepted sheets	kg/1.000 Bg	0,5	0,6	0,5

4.1

Employees' position in the company



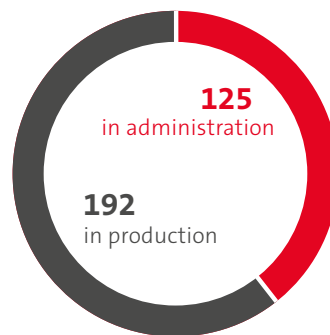
Key performers are valued both independently of and particularly for their individual and cultural diversity.

Employees are the heart of the company and essential for Karl Knauer's success. They are valued and are entitled to transparent and cooperative leadership based on clearly defined, attainable goals. All employees work together in a respectful manner, hold each other in high regard and support each other. Gender, religious or social discrimination is not tolerated.

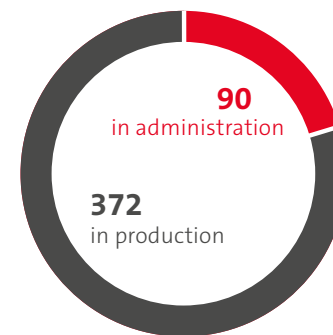
Karl Knauer has established occupational health and safety (OHS) management to promote health in all aspects of work, behaviour and the organisation. This OHS management also organises various activities related to health and prevention, and is involved in decisions relevant to employees and their health.

Both acknowledging good performance and conducting honest and transparent appraisals contribute to the efficient and harmonious advancement of all employees. Constantly assessing the working environment helps us maintain and improve our employees' health and well-being. Working methods, the atmosphere at work and health-related factors always have a high priority in evaluating the overall process.

The fact that Karl Knauer Group employees feel good and are content is amply demonstrated by their loyalty to the company. The turnover rate of approximately 13% is very low compared to the industry average.



Biberach
334 employees, including 17 apprentices and students



Pniewy
487 employees, including 25 apprentices

4.2

Training and further education



As a major regional employer, Karl Knauer accepts responsibility for training a skilled workforce and for the future prospects of young people in the region.

Karl Knauer has already received several awards as 'Training Company of the Year'

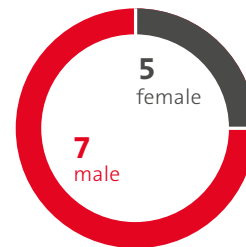
Karl Knauer helps prepare young people for the future. As an approved training company, Karl Knauer offers ten apprenticeships and two dual degree programmes in Biberach: apprentices and students totalled 17 in 2024. There were 25 apprentices in Pniewy.



Group photo at the careers fair in Offenburg

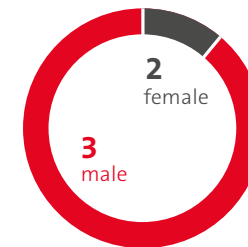
Biberach

Apprenticeships commercial professions



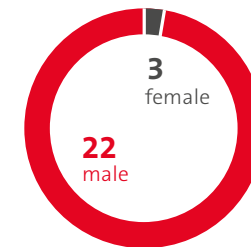
Biberach

Apprenticeships technical professions



Pniewy

Apprenticeships technical professions



Biberach

10
apprentice-
ships

2
dual degree
programmes

17
apprentices
and students

5.1

Responsibility for the supply chain

The Karl Knauer Group maintains a close partnership with all suppliers.

Karl Knauer works in close partnership with its suppliers. There have been no grievances with regard to working conditions or human rights to date. This is verified by supplier audits.

The right conditions are the prerequisite for collaboration. Beyond that, we maintain an open and transparent relationship with our suppliers.

Our suppliers are predominantly based in the EU. Sustainable forestry is preferred.

Karl Knauer purchases predominantly from EU suppliers. Supplier audits assess both environmental and hygiene aspects, as well as processes and their improvement. FSC®- and PEFC-certified

materials are purchased and used for production, if requested by the customer. In addition, Karl Knauer advises customers on ecological packaging alternatives and sustainable packaging.

Green supply chains

To navigate complex supply chains and introduce greater efficiency and sustainability, Karl Knauer relies on green transport solutions from service providers. These offer, for example, CO₂ reporting for strategic supply chain

optimisation, sustainable fuel offers and new technologies. In addition, Karl Knauer relies on FTL (Full Truck Load) when desired and possible by the customer. Efficient full truck load eliminates waiting times at loading and unloading points.



5.2 Involvement in the region

Karl Knauer is a link in the environmental supply chain. We conduct our activities with care and responsibility for the environment.

The Karl Knauer Foundation is generous in its support to regional institutions and is a sponsor and education partner.

Employees in Biberach are involved in various committees, bodies and associations, for example, as examiners for chamber of commerce (IHK) examination boards and volunteers at the German Life Saving Association (DLRG), the German Red Cross (DRK), the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) and the fire brigade.

Moreover, 24% of the employees in Biberach are qualified first-aiders.

Karl Knauer is aware of its social responsibility and is fundamentally committed to the principles of democratic basic order and fair coexistence. The Karl Knauer Foundation, which was established by Karl Knauer in 1995, donates around € 20,000–30,000 to associations, institutions and social services in Biberach, Harmersbachtal and Nordrach annually. Since it was established, the foundation has invested more than € 600,000 in the region. As a sponsor of numerous regional sports clubs, Karl Knauer sustainably supports people in the surrounding areas.

Karl Knauer, located in Biberach, has also formed education partnerships with the Heinrich-Hansjakob-Bildungszentrum in Haslach and the Bildungszentrum Ritter von Buss in Zell am Harmersbach. As an education partner, we implement practical educational projects to introduce pupils to the world of work, which helps them with their career choices down the line.

All activities including school trips, presentations about the various professions, training on how to write job applications and internship opportunities are established at the beginning of the scholastic year and reviewed at least annually.

The Karl Knauer bee pasture is a new trainee project initiated in 2020, which won the 2021 and 2022 PSI Sustainability Award. In collaboration with a local beekeeper, honey was extracted under the direction of our trainees, packaged in grass paper boxes and distributed to customers as corporate gifts.

The Pniewy factory provides financial support for kindergartens, schools and sports clubs (volleyball and indoor football through sponsorship and contributions to sports events and tournaments. Guided tours of the premises for kindergartens and schools are organised regularly. In addition, Karl Knauer Poland

has also formed partnerships with the schools in Pniewy, and provides internship opportunities and taster weeks for pupils.

In cooperation with the Landschaftserhaltungsverband Ortenau e. V., forest district manager Christoph Müller and the forestry service Schnaitter, we reforested an approximately 1,000 m² fallow area in Biberach/Baden at the beginning of March 2022. During this action, a total of 250 sessile oaks and 50 littleleaf limes were planted to recultivate a former burnt area.



6.1

Sustainability management structure



Achieving our sustainability objectives through management systems.

Within the company, interdisciplinary teams are responsible for sustainability management in close consultation with the management. Together, they are responsible for the successful implementation of the sustainability programme

and review the implementation of the environmental and energy goals which are set out in a target overview and key performance indicators. All measures are reviewed and evaluated.

Our comprehensive KPI system

We use this system to check whether we have achieved our objectives on a monthly basis. All departments work with KPIs; sustainability management is no exception.

Our KPIs include inter alia: occupational accidents, employee turnover, further education, performance appraisals, greenhouse gas emissions, waste and customer statistics.

In Biberach

- ISO 50001 – Energy management systems
- ISO 9001 – Quality management systems
- Living PSO!® certification for the offset printing process standard
- ISO 14001 – Environmental management systems
- Environmental certificate Grüner Punkt
- FSC® certification: FSC® C005891
- PEFC certification: PEFC/04-31-1318
- Certificate of participation in carbon-neutral production for environmental management
- BRC Global Standard

In Pniewy

- ISO 22000 – hygiene management systems
- ISO 9001 – Quality management systems
- ISO 14001 – Environmental management systems
- FSC® certification: FSC® C009030
- Living PSO!® certification for the offset printing process standard
- ISO 50001 – Energy management systems
- PEFC certification: PEFC/32-31-011

All current certificates can be found at: www.karlknauer.com/downloads

In 2024, the Karl Knauer Group was awarded the EcoVadis bronze medal.



7 | Imprint and contact information

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About this report

This is an extract from the Karl Knauer Group's eighth Sustainability Report. Information on developments and projects concerns the financial year of 2024 and also includes figures from previous years. The Sustainability Report is based on the German Sustainability Code (2015 version), which was adopted by the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE). The German government supports the Code as an instrument for promoting sustainable development. The German Sustainability Code considers 27 performance indicators from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G4 Guidelines. In addition to this Sustainability Report, the Karl Knauer Group has issued a declaration of conformity, thus fulfilling the requirements of the German Sustainability Code.

A free template obtained from the Institute for Sustainability (Berlin) was used to create this report.

This is an extract from the Karl Knauer Group's 2024 Sustainability Report. The full version in German is available at www.karlknauer.de/nachhaltigkeit



Location Biberach



Location Pniewy

