

## BG-PRÜFZERT- Information Sheet

Berufsgenossenschaftliches Prüf- und Zertifizierungssystem

### Manufacturers benefit from testing and certification

#### BG-PRÜFZERT study demonstrates advantages for manufacturers

*As part of a study [1] on the importance of testing and certification for the prevention work of the "Berufsgenossenschafts" (institutions for statutory accident insurance and prevention), a survey was conducted among holders of BG-PRÜFZERT certificates. The results showed that manufacturers improve product safety and strengthen buyers' confidence in their products by working with the BG-PRÜFZERT testing and certification bodies. This BG-PRÜFZERT Information Sheet presents the key findings of the study.*

#### BG-PRÜFZERT customers

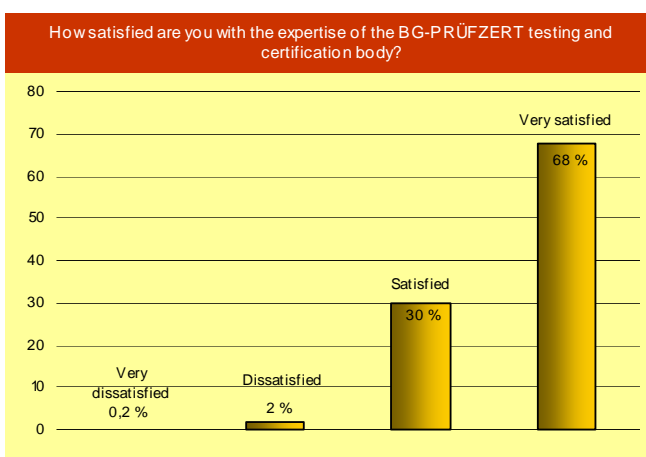
The research team sent questionnaires to BG-PRÜFZERT certificate holders in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, asking them to rate their satisfaction with BG-PRÜFZERT's services. 484 customers replied, making for a relatively high response rate of 38%. The answers showed that all of them, be they multinationals or small enterprises, felt BG-PRÜFZERT served them well.

The current certificate holders come from 30 different countries though the main one is still Germany, accounting for 76%. There is also a large proportion of regular customers, with 69% of certificate holders already having been dealing with BG-PRÜFZERT for several years.

#### Praise for the testing and certification bodies' expertise

98% of the survey respondents said they were satisfied with the testing and certification bodies' expertise.

One of the reasons for this response is doubtless the fact that the BG-PRÜFZERT testers and certifiers are very well informed about technical developments in the different product areas because of their intensive involvement in European and international standardisation. Over the past ten years, BG-PRÜFZERT employees have played a part in the drafting of almost one thousand standards.



## Voluntary testing: BG-PRÜFZERT certification mark in high demand

European directives require compulsory tests for particular products. However, most (over 70%) of the tests BG-PRÜFZERT's customers order are on a voluntary basis – predominantly with the aim of obtaining the GS mark (well established German mark for tested safety) or the BG-PRÜFZERT mark for their products.

## BG-PRÜFZERT's key asset: testing and certification of innovative products

Standard-based testing and certification accounts for the majority of BG-PRÜFZERT's business, but our key asset really comes into play when there are no official standards for the product in question or if the manufacturer purposely deviates from such standards. 49% of customers stated that they deviated from or did not apply official standards when designing their products.

In these cases, extensive specialist knowledge is required as opposed to mere rigid testing of compliance with standards. Products which pass the tests may be labelled with a mark from BG-PRÜFZERT, thus making it significantly easier for new and innovative products to get onto the market.

## BG-PRÜFZERT: Important information source for customers

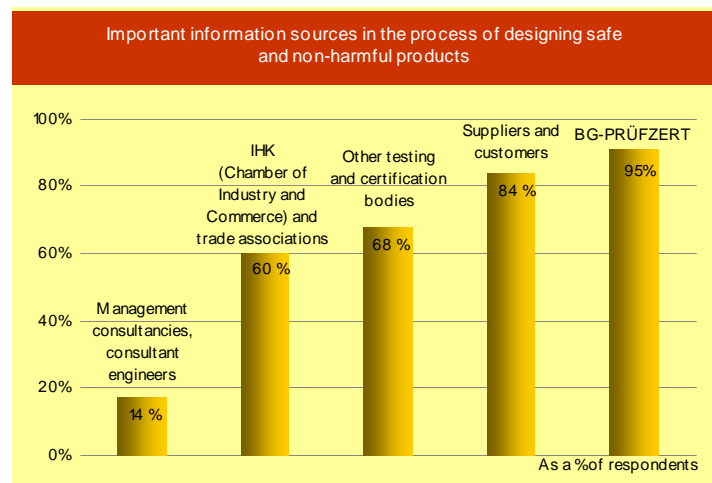
According to our customers, BG-PRÜFZERT is by far the most important source of information in the process of designing safe and non-harmful products.

### Improved product safety

More than three quarters of our customers believe that working with BG-PRÜFZERT enabled them to improve the occupational safety and health aspects of their products. The heads of

prevention at the Berufsgenossenschafts share that opinion. Testing and certification considerably reduces the probability of safety-related product faults. As a result, the negative consequences of a faulty product, such as a damaged image, product liability claims or orders imposed by market-surveillance authorities, can be avoided for the most part.

A study by the Berufsgenossenschaft Expert Committee on Food, Tobacco and Alcohol ("Fachausschuss Nahrungs- und Genussmittel") backs this up by showing that tested products in the field covered appeared much less often in accident and fault reports than non-tested ones. Calculations illustrate that the tested products are at least eight to nine times safer than non-tested products [2].

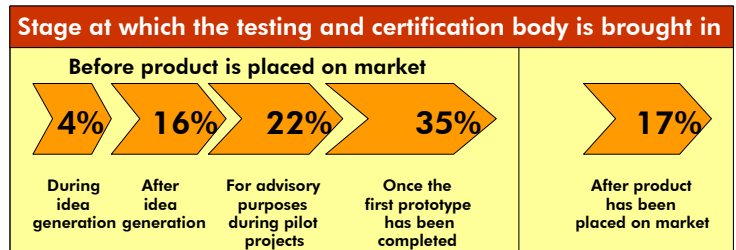


## Early involvement of testing and certification bodies

The earlier in the product-development process safety faults are detected, the easier and cheaper it is to remedy them.

Having to make a modification to a product which has already been placed on the market is a very costly and time-consuming affair for the manufacturer.

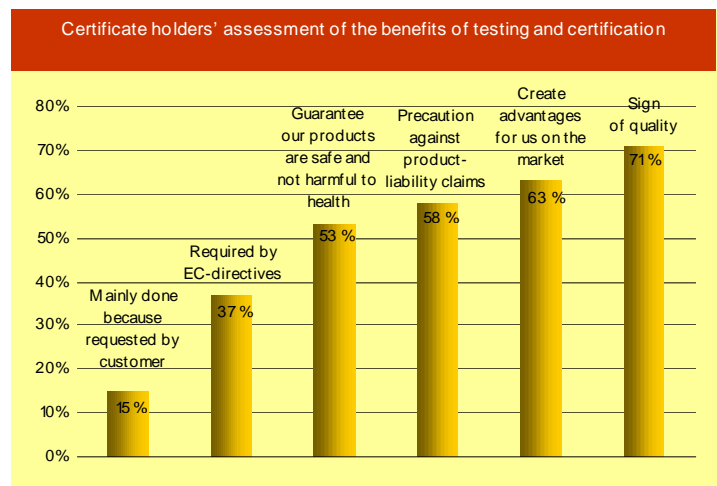
According to the certificate holders, the BG-PRÜFZERT testing and certification bodies are brought in to test the products at a very early stage. Increasingly, the testing is done alongside development.



## Product testing – a selling point and sign of quality

The reasons for bringing in a BG-PRÜFZERT testing and certification body are varied. However, only a small number of certificate holders cited third parties' (customers or the state, for example) requirements as a key reason.

The primary motives are market advantages and the guarantee of having a safe product, which significantly reduces the probability of product liability claims.



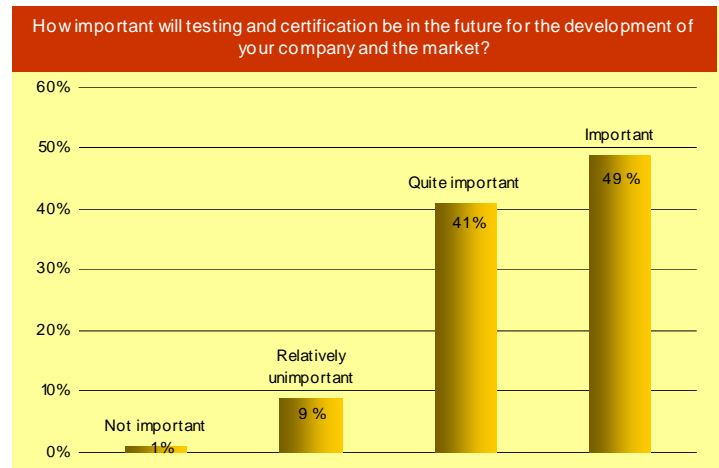
## Positive cost/benefit ratio

Correspondingly, the overwhelming majority (77%) of the certificate holders see the ratio between the cost and benefit of testing and certification as positive. However, 4% of customers feel that the ratio is not satisfactory and 19% doubt whether it is good enough to be described as satisfactory. There is need for improvement on this front and BG-PRÜFZERT will take action to meet that need.

## Testing and certification will continue to be very important for companies in the future too

The certificate holders' responses show that BG-PRÜFZERT testing and certification helps companies maintain or even boost their competitiveness.

The lion's share (90%) of the certificate holders feel that testing and certification will be important for the future development of their companies.



## Guidance on procurement of work equipment

To help procurement staff right from an early stage of the product-selection process, the Berufsgenossenschaft testing and certification bodies' provide information in their publications and on the Internet about the test certificates which they have issued. The BG-PRÜFZERT secretariat operates a central Internet database at <http://www.hvbg.de/bg-pruefzert/products>, thus providing additional support for companies in their efforts to create safe and non-harmful products.



## Further information

- [1] Reitz, Rüdiger, Dietmar Reinert and Rico Stoll: Bedeutung der Prüfung und Zertifizierung für die Prävention (Importance of Testing and Certification in the Field of Prevention). BGZ-Report 2/2004. Sankt Augustin: 2004  
Download: <http://www.hvbg.de/code.php?link=920859>
- [2] Wickert, Karl, Leonhard Blümcke: Quantitativer Nachweis zum präventiven Nutzen von Baumusterprüfungen (Quantitative Proof of the Preventive Benefits of Type Examinations). Die BG, 2005/04, p. 194 – 197

## Contact

Rüdiger Reitz  
German Federation of Institutions for Statutory Accident Insurance and Prevention  
Secretariat BG-PRÜFZERT  
Königsbrücker Landstraße 2, 01109 Dresden  
Germany

Tel.: +49 351 457-2212 / Fax: +49 351 457-2215  
E-mail: [ruediger.reitz@hvbg.de](mailto:ruediger.reitz@hvbg.de) Internet: [www.hvbg.de/bg-pruefzert](http://www.hvbg.de/bg-pruefzert)

Our testing and certification bodies: <http://www.hvbg.de/bg-pruefzert/adressen>

