

My way to work at Philips. (25.01.1978 to 31.08.1978)

When we were assigned to our new workplaces on 25.01.1978 after passing the exam, I was put into production. There was already waiting a troubleshooting place for my arrival. At this place I was supposed to find the mistakes that have arisen during the manufacturing process. The repair then took place at a repair station or at my workplace.

By the way, after the training we got a book present from Philips and a book from the IHK –



Wetzlar. The book by Philips was titled "Digital Electronics Part1".

However, the technology from the 60s was described there. But the basics can even be used today. And of course, the Chamber of Commerce knew exactly which book was missing in a technician's bookcase. A spelling dude. So the technicians have it more with the numbers than with the letters. That's how the CCI thought. The ones with their eternal clichés. Jetzt aber wieder zurück zu meinem Arbeitsplatz bei Philips in der Fertigung.

The circuit boards I was supposed to test were the so-called traffic decoder. This was at the time (1978) still exists as an external board in the premium devices. My workplace consisted of a too small table and a swivel chair. On gauges I had an oscilloscope, a multimeter a power supply and a device that could simulate the traffic signals. Of course, there was also a soldering iron and a desoldering iron, screwdrivers, tweezers, various pliers and a hand full of components. The circuit board was very small and all passive components (resistors, capacitors and coils) were mounted upright. The packing density was even so great that you could recognize the color coding on the resistors only by bending the components. It was also necessary to read the resistance value because one of the most common errors was incorrect assembly. That actually affected all components including the transistors. Of course, this could happen with hand assembly. Another common mistake was defective tantalum and teardrop electrolytic capacitors.

However, there were also printed circuit boards that required extensive troubleshooting. If it did not work these boards were put aside and brought out again on a better day.

Already during the first weeks I decided not to do this work for the rest of my life. And so, early on, the idea of suitable training matured. For me, the choice was the industrial master, the technician or the engineer. There was one more problem that I would have preferred to avoid. For men there was actually no escape, the Army. Although I was patterned during my training with 3 (from 5 you are unfit, so almost disabled, I knew that even before the muster) and could not even be used professionally in the Army. I only had the service of the mountain navy or as an infantryman. No great prospects. The next problem was that I would have to work as a skilled worker for at least three years for the industrial master and technician. For

the University student, which was necessary for the study at a University of Applied Sciences, one could begin however immediately and let itself be put off for a year of the military service.

My decision for a high school diploma so unanimous. But that also meant that an end was foreseeable at Philips.

Of course you got to know a lot of other colleagues in the production. With a colleague, I was also regularly in the breakfast break and lunch break together. I was even invited on a Sunday to have coffee with her parents in Limburg.

But I also noticed that there were several hairdressers in the production. When I asked why they would work as a hairdresser at Philips shortly after training, I got very different answers. One was here because of the money, the next because of the regular working hours from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm and the third said that since she had to work on Saturdays and has Mondays free she can not stay in the disco on Fridays as long as her friends and Sundays, if she could stay longer, her friends would have to go home earlier. Here you can see that the priorities for choosing a job can be very different.

Another surprise came in my conversation with another colleague. She told me that if the CEO of Philips has a birthday, then a production worker hands over a small gift to the manager. And she finally had to know, because she was once the chosen one. That I had not noticed this ritual after 31/2 years of training, I was a bit surprised.

After three months at the troubleshooting station, I changed my job to the so-called service. Here, complete car radios were repaired by private customers and brought up to date. You have to know that Philips had an exchange service. If e.g. a customer somewhere in Europe a defective car radio at an authorized dealer for repair gave, so this car radio was sent to Philips to Wetzlar and the dealer received a similar radio model repaired after about 2 days back.

Each of the approximately 8 troubleshooters (technicians) and examiners repaired about 8-12 car radios per day. Errors such as a scratched dial or oxidized parts of the housing were also exchanged. You could say that the equipment was almost new. It was also interesting that the most common mistakes were mechanics. The spectrum ranged from dirty clay heads to faulty slip clutches and defective drive belts.

In addition to the oscilloscope, multimeter and power supply, the workstations also have special measuring devices for setting the cassette drive. These included test cassettes for measuring the jitter, frequency response, and torque from the cassette drive. An extensive collection of schematics for the different car radios and the obligatory soldering and desoldering iron or Entlötlitze were also available. Here are some more mistakes in detail. Often it was not enough to clean the dirty clay heads with alcohol and a cotton swab. These heavily soiled clay heads even had to be replaced with a new one. On some models, the

flywheel had detached from the axle and was in the case. Here probably a bad two-component adhesive was used. After the repair was over, the car radios came to the examiners. Here the device was tested under the same conditions as the new devices in production. After half a year in production, it was time to say goodbye to my training and activity. Of course, I did not come around for the mandatory standoff. I left the company on 31.08.78 and the University student at the Werner - von - Siemens school in Wetzlar already started on 06.09.1978. Since left me with rest leave about 2 weeks vacation left. Who knows what that was good for. What I did not know was that one year later I was supposed to be in the service again for three months during the holidays between University student and University of Applied Sciences. During the training and the time of my real work, Philips Wetzlar sold used and older gauges at a bargain price. Of course, I immediately accessed it and bought me an oscilloscope (7cm screen diameter), a tube voltmeter for AC voltage and a tube-mounted ohmmeter. The equipment cost between 5, - and 10, - DM. I could even then use anything that smells of electricity. Of course I towed the devices in the hammered metal housing on the train to Weilburg and then carried the whole Limburger Straße up to my burrow.