Winning Cooperation

ACBC in Anyang, 500 kilometers to the south of Beijing, responded at an early stage to this trend. This young company, with 3,000 employees and annual sales in 1998 of more than 245 million Euro, is one of the top 300 companies in China. Within nine years, ACBC has set up 13 production lines with a combined annual capacity of around 24 million television screens and funnels.

Schott has much experience in making television glass. It produced its first glass bulbs for television in 1936. With its wealth of know-how, this specialist glass manufacturer is now the market leader in Europe for large and very large size screens (diagonal of 66–86 centi-
meters). Schott’s annual production is on the order of 25 million television glass parts, whereby funnels predominate.

The alliance between ACBC and Schott generates many benefits for both companies. By combining the screens from ACBC with funnels produced by Schott at both its headquarters in Mainz, Germany and its Czech subsidiary STV Glass, Schott is able to accommodate TV tube makers who prefer to buy screens and funnels as sets. This arrangement centers around small screens, which are no longer produced in Germany because of cost pressure.

Further, as soon as ACBC’s productivity and quality reach the necessary levels for large screens, Schott will also supply ACBC with the corresponding funnels, also to be combined and sold as sets in China.

Success together

Active cooperation in the production of large screens commenced in mid-1999. The larger the screen dimensions, the more important the process management. The production process at ACBC was computer-simulated and potential for improvement was found through virtual test runs. Working with their Chinese colleagues, Schott engineers drafted a detailed action plan specifying guidelines for the entire process and quality management system. By modifying the technical facilities and adding new control systems that ensure a fast response to any disruptions, the production process was stabilized and redesigned for greater efficiency. Then early this year, Chinese technicians came to Mainz for intensive training. This intensive exchange of experience helps both partners ensure joint success.