

Taking the weight of a growing industry

Words: Tom Schumann, Sales Director, LIFTKET

In the wind power sector, importance is given to developing solutions to cater for individual requirements. This is one of LIFTKET's core competencies, with quality products that are adaptable to the versatile requirements of the wind power sector.



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In the mid 1980s, a new branch of industry developed, initially starting in Europe; energy generation from wind power. LIFTKET became one of the market leaders in the field of electric chain hoists for wind power applications. In close cooperation with customers worldwide, its tailor-made solutions are designed near Leipzig in Germany.

'As a leading supplier of service cranes for the wind industry, nowadays we offer a complete service crane that meets the requirements of the sector effectively,' explained CEO Jürgen Dlugi. 'In Wurzen, around 250 employees ensure that thousands of electric chain hoists leave the factory every month, all designed, developed, produced, and tested with its actual capacity here.'

In classic wind turbines in the onshore sector, the electric chain hoist is usually installed as a stationary 'service crane' and used for service and maintenance work. It can also be used as a mobile crane, for example for

repairs and the replacement of turbine parts.

The company supplies products for different load capacities and lifting heights. One of the standard products is designed for a lifting height of 200m, with a load capacity of 800kg and a lifting speed of 20 m/min. Depending on the requirements, lifting heights of up to 250m can be achieved, with lifting capacities of several tonnes achievable with its compact products.

A compact design is essential, especially in wind turbines where space is very limited. In addition, there is a wide variety of installation situations to which the product must be adapted. LIFTKET provides a plug and play solution for simplified installation. Designed for voltage levels from 110 to 690 V and 50 or 60 Hz, the prefabricated installation solution can be used worldwide. In addition, all adjustment ranges for beam widths can be covered to ensure correct installation.

In general, the chain hoist can be adapted to the different turbine situations with the use of a wide variety of accessories, with different solutions for trolleys or cranes. Tube solutions are also possible instead of chain boxes at the unit, which then guide the chain into the bottom of the nacelle. Since enormous heights sometimes have to be overcome on wind turbines for maintenance work, radio remote control solutions with several transmitters can reduce waiting times and thus also costs.

To prevent damage from the load hook to the inside of the tower during the lifting process, an electric chain hoist for wind power applications is equipped with a 'rubber sleeve'. When replacing existing unit, e.g. due to age, the company offers simple solutions that make the replacement of even 'third-party old equipment' possible.

In addition to the onshore sector, the company also offers adequate solutions for offshore

plants. Because of the rough conditions there, the products usually have to withstand heavy strain. The main difference in the offshore sector is that the product requirements are much higher. Special corrosion protection is required, other painting is needed, and in general, other materials are sometimes used. For such applications, its products can be equipped with stainless steel chains and hooks, to prevent corrosion, while the electric chain hoist can also be equipped with a more robust aluminium version instead of the usual plastic caps.

Due to the worldwide use of LIFTKET electric chain hoists, global support is of course also a major issue. Thanks to its extensive partner and subsidiary network, the company can guarantee worldwide technical support. Spare parts are available for almost all products, complemented by full project support, from idea to final implementation.

The German brand also delivers tailor-made service and training concepts for its customers, establishing a training centre, the LIFTKADEMIE. Maintenance work for hoisting equipment must be carried out by trained and authorised professionals only, with theoretical training as well as experience in the field of cranes and hoists. They must have excellent know-how of the special regulations and be able to decide whether the lifting equipment is in safe working condition or not. The training centre provides customers and their employees with the necessary know-how to ensure safe working on and electric chain hoists.

Three standard training subjects are available; Repair & Maintenance, Train the Trainer and Sales Training. In addition, a bespoke training course can also be delivered to customers' requirements, held either at the training centre or at the customer's premises worldwide.

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