



WAFIOS Umformtechnik GmbH

Jens Gutsche, managing director

In 2020 our company turned 100 years old, something our employees, the management, and the entire WAFIOS Group, are very proud of. Unfortunately, we were denied an anniversary celebration with our customers and business partners due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a business we are committed to building on the extensive accumulated know-how of WAFIOS Umformtechnik in the field of cold and hot forming, as well as looking to the future.

At the end of 2019, in addition to the quantitative analysis of the machine range, we launched a structured customer survey in order, in a targeted manner, to bundle specific necessities, needs and wishes with qualitative statements from customers and to use these as a decision making basis for actions, product and service alignments. It is only when our customers are successful and satisfied that we can also be successful.

The strategic approaches for the individual sectors have been clearly defined to focus capacities and investment accordingly. For example, we took advantage of weak market demand, particularly in the first half of 2020, to initiate strategic and product related measures. Machines and processes were expanded to include customer beneficial and friendly features.

Investments were made in the areas of feasibility and process simulation for the production of blanks to be cold and hot formed on our machines. This area will be further expanded, which will enable us to communicate much more closely with customers about the range of challenges and to advise our customers even better on the basis of process simulations in 2D and 3D – alongside our existing process know-how.

From September 2020, the turnaround in our customers' investment approvals, which continued throughout 2021 and remains at a very high-level to this day, became apparent. Some European customers experienced great difficulties in supplying their customers with screws and other fastening elements due to the breakdown of supply chains from Asia. As a consequence, in 2021, some customers greatly increased investment in the expansion of their own manufacturing capacities in order to reduce the risks associated with supply dependency.

Here, in close interaction with our customers, and with our sister company, E.W. Menn GmbH & Co KG, we have succeeded in generating cooperation projects from wire to finished screw. With the customer benefiting from the full know-how of both traditional companies at its disposal.

In 2021, in the after-sales business, we at WAFIOS Umformtechnik were able to offer our customers significant added value and competitive advantages through customisation – by working out unique selling points, for instance by adding new features in the retrofit area and by defining service packages, all of which will be further expanded in 2022.

Our third business area, following new machines and after-sales businesses, is the production and sale of thread rolling dies, where



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we have placed a special focus for the future that concentrates on the strengths and further improvement of quality, distinctiveness and speed.

In October 2021, German machinery and plant manufacturers once again recorded double-digit growth in their orders of 19% in real terms. Domestic orders rose by 13%, orders from abroad increased by 23%. Our growth rates are still impressive, but they are now lower than they were in the spring and summer of 2021. On the other hand, we had already recorded an increased order level in October on the previous year.

The biggest challenge at the moment is to deliver the good order intake on time. We, too, are still struggling with numerous supply bottlenecks. In particular, electrical/electronic parts and components are in short supply, but also certain metals and metal products, too. Difficulties with logistics and transport handling add to the problem.

If the supply bottlenecks ease in the coming year, industry should take off again, for example in vehicle manufacturing. For us as a machine manufacturer, the enormous and, I think for many, unexpectedly strong growth of 2021 will be significantly reduced in 2022, despite continuing follow-up demand from our customers.

We can look to the future with optimism because our engineering expertise will continue to be in high demand. This will be coupled with increasing automation, digitalisation and the move towards Industry 4.0.

However, there are major challenges to overcome in our industry in the coming years. To this belong, amongst other things, digitising core processes; thinking even more globally; incorporating more sustainability; maintaining customer access; defining the Asia strategy; and creatively meeting the demand for employees, in particular skilled workers.

The next major highlight is the wire® and Tube 2022 trade fair in Düsseldorf from 9th – 13th May 2022. We are already making preparations for this and will be focusing on the efficient and resource-saving production of fasteners on our machines. I think we would all like to have a wire and Tube show just as in the old days. Even though there must, of course, be restrictions due to hygiene measures, personal interchanges are of great importance. +