

Impressive triple for Bocholt's automation experts

Lebbing engineering & consulting GmbH celebrates its 20th anniversary and is on its way to further steady growth

Just recently, Lebbing engineering & consulting GmbH, based in Bocholt, Germany, had no less than three very good reasons to party: Firstly, the automation experts celebrated the 20th company anniversary. Secondly, for already 10 years, Lebbing has been part of the renowned Jagenberg AG. And to put a cherry on the cake, Lebbing also inaugurated the newly enlarged company headquarters in Bocholt's technology park. Therefore, managing directors Guido and Thomas Lebbing invited friends, costumers, companions as well as representatives from politics and business to join the festive event and to look back on the company's history. On the occasion of the anniversary, Lebbing was also honoured with the Supplier Award of Ritrama. For the first time, the Italian market leader in the design and manufacture of self-adhesive materials priced a supplier for a long-lasting and fruitful partnership.

"20 years – that's a really long time," stated Thomas Lebbing when he and his brother Guido reviewed the last two decades. It all started when Thomas came back to

Germany in 1997 after living and working in the US for five years. A family friend took the chance and asked him to start a machinery business. This idea led to the foundation of Lebbing Industrieservice & Consulting. The company at the time offered services in the field of electronics and automation. The first successes and requests for the construction of new machines also attracted Guido, Thomas' older brother. So, in the next month, he was a helping hand besides his job at Olbrich GmbH, also based in Bocholt.

But very quickly, the two entrepreneurs made a name of themselves, the business activities grew rapidly as well as the further requests of customers. Finally, Lebbing engineering & consulting GmbH was founded in August 1998.

From a one-man show to an international active mid-size company

If one sees the impressive new headquarters of Lebbing today, it is hard to imagine that the Lebbing brothers started their business from the living room. Back in

1999, the first office facilities were rented and the first switchboards were built. "I designed the machines – and they worked," Thomas remembers. "At the construction sites, Guido had to pay for what I designed at the computer," he adds with a smile.

In 2000, Lebbing built the first coating line for Pagendarm, a renowned machinery company at the time and today member of the Olbrich Group. Only two years later, Lebbing set a world record which still has not been broken until today: "In 2002, we built the world's fastest coating line with an output of 1500m/min for BASF in Ludwigshafen," Thomas Lebbing underlines an important milestone in the company's history. Later, the machine was accelerated to 1800m/min. Also in 2002, the engineering and consulting experts moved to Rhede, just east of Bocholt, as the former headquarters were fully occupied and became too small.

In 2003, the crisis of the machinery industry hit Lebbing hard. But the financial investment of Bill Nasser, an American business partner and friend, brought the company back to calmer waters.

In 2005, Thomas and Guido Lebbing sold some shares of the company to the Borgers Group (Olbrich is also part of the group), also based in Bocholt. Back in those days, Lebbing engineering & consulting GmbH already had 80 employees and again, the company's premises became too small and Lebbing moved back to Bocholt. So, the experts found a new home right in the neighbourhood of Olbrich.

Three years later, Borgers and Lebbing decided to part ways, but as Lebbing realised that a "strong shoulder" has a lot of benefits, the engineering experts started searching for a new partner. And finally found it in the Jagenberg Group.

To clarify the separation from Olbrich, Thomas and Guido Lebbing decided to move again and to build new company headquarters in Bocholt's



Guido Lebbing (left) and Thomas Lebbing (right) with guests during the festive event on the occasion of the company's anniversary (Foto: © Marcus Beckmann)

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Plans for the enlargement of the new office building are already made (Foto: © Marcus Beckmann)



The new office building offers modern work spaces as well as conference and training rooms (Foto: © Marcus Beckmann)

technology park. It was inaugurated in 2009 and had to be enlarged with new offices and warehouse facilities in 2011 and 2012.

Since then, the machinery and automation experts impressed with a steady and healthy growth. In 2016, the decision for a new office building with 800m² was made. After the roofing ceremony in September 2017, the new office building was finished in May 2018. 24 modern work spaces, new conference and training rooms and new parking lots for the employees have been created.

In general, the employees play a very important role for the two entrepreneurs. "We want our employees to feel comfortable at work. They should love to come to work," states Thomas Lebbing. So, the new office building not only offers a sunny terrace where Lebbing's employees can spend their breaks. A Feel-Good-Manager (FGM), known from global players like Google and Facebook, is also taking care of their wellbeing and deals with staff matters. "It's our target to live a very modern management style," Thomas emphasises and refers to North America, where FGM's are already very popular and established.

Further enlargements on the horizon

Funny enough, one main topic at the inauguration ceremony of the new office building was its further enlargement ... As kind of a gift on the occasion of the company anniversary, Lebbing already got the approval of the city of Bocholt to buy one of the last properties in the city's technology park. "We urgently need the space," says Guido Lebbing. So it is no surprise that the plans for another 300m² office space and 300m² warehouse are already in the drawer.

Dr Erich Bröker, general manager of the Kleinewefers GmbH and CEO of the Jagenberg AG, summarises the spirit of the festive event: "The two brothers perfectly fit into the Jagenberg Group. They really have genes of businessmen in their veins. It's a pleasure to work with them." So, Lebbing engineering & consulting made a name for itself as one of the most stable companies in the Kleinewefers / Jagenberg Group. Mainly, the retrofit business is a profitable business division of the automation experts. It looks like the way is paved for another 20 successful and eventful years of Lebbing ... ■



Guido and Thomas Lebbing look back at 20 years of company history (Foto: © Marcus Beckmann)