

From the ground up – an interview with Kampf Managing Director Markus Vollmer

Markus Vollmer has been Chief Operating Officer of Kampf Schneid- und Wickeltechnik GmbH in Wiehl for just more than a year. In this interview, he sums up his first few months in management and talks about changes and plans for the future.



Markus Vollmer

Mr. Vollmer, you have been working for Kampf for almost 20 years - and as Chief Operating Officer for just under a year. To what extent has that changed your day-to-day work?

My focus has become much broader. Throughout my professional career, cutting and winding have been my passion and the clear focus of my expertise. The know-how

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in this field that I have acquired in my previous positions – most recently as Sales Director – gives me tangible advantages in my new job. In addition, as Managing Director I am gaining insights into new areas. Unlike before, I work less IN the company and more ON the company. This is a completely new and extremely exciting perspective.

What advantages does your know-how in technology and sales give you – and how does it benefit the company?

My long affiliation with the corporate family is an advantage that should not be underestimated. As an employee at Kampf, you inevitably get very involved with technical processes and high-tech products, familiarizing yourself with the context in which they are created and the requirements behind them. This is the only way to fully grasp the concrete benefits of a customer-specific solution. My years of experience – also with and for our customers – make me an ideal sparring partner today for research and development as well as our employees in production.

What is your Vision for Kampf?

The acquisition of the English Atlas Converting Equipment by Kampf is a significant step towards more internationality and complexity. Essential for the successful integration of new companies are structures that allow them to continue to develop their specific potential profitably. Kampf's task is to ensure that this is the case. My vision for the coming years is for Kampf and Atlas to expand their position as THE experts for slitting and winding technology across all countries.

Our goal is to continue to manufacture the best machines – and also to offer our customers real added value in the form of advanced solutions. This includes roll handling, process automation and consulting as well as a comprehensive best-of-class service offering. Our global presence also enables us to provide our customers with tangible benefits, for example through the closer networking of our production sites. This allows us to meet customer needs even more individually than before.

You are playing a leading role in the integration of Atlas into the Jagenberg Group. How well has this process been going so far?

Our first meeting took place under the premises of the Corona pandemic and was a great challenge for everyone involved. The unfamiliar situation initially made it difficult to get to know each other, but we found productive ways to deal with it. In the meantime, there has been a lively exchange. With the 120 English colleagues from Atlas, Kampf has gained extensive expertise in slitting and winding technology. What I am particularly pleased about after the difficult start is the very open and constructive communication between our companies. For me, this is how working at eye level works.

The integration of new companies is leading to ongoing change in the Jagenberg Group. What is your current view of this?

As diverse as our business areas are in part: The pande-



mic situation and the conflict in Ukraine present us all with new tasks and challenges in equal measure. Supply bottlenecks and the shortage of drive technology – to take two current examples – are omnipresent, and the companies of the Jagenberg Group are doing everything they can to ensure that customers are fully satisfied, even under the current conditions.

Our new sister companies are opening up new areas and business opportunities for Kampf. This is one of the great opportunities of our affiliation of Kampf to the Jagenberg Group. I'm thinking here, for example, of lithium-ion battery technology. Here we need to clearly define cooperation within the Group and continue to expand it productively.

It is also clear that this development is bringing about a change in the Group's structure.

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Synergies are being catalyzed by focusing on key areas such as Industrial Solutions. The holding company's previously reserved involvement in shaping the operating business has now become an active driving force. In the search for the best solutions, Jagenberg promotes an intensive exchange.

How is Kampf positioning itself in terms of digitalization? How do you assess the opportunities of Industry 4.0 and its application to mechanical engineering?

Among medium-sized and large mechanical engineering companies, Kampf is considered a pioneer in the field

of digitalization. Solutions for remote services or our digital role protocols, for example, have long been part of our portfolio and have proven themselves many times over with our customers. When it comes to the topic of Industry 4.0, there is one thing to take to heart: Knowledge must be shared in order to increase it. An excellent example is the creation of digital interfaces between machines and systems, which Kampf is currently pursuing intensively. With the aim of making our processes even more efficient, we are currently looking at building a team of experts who live and drive digitization. We are receiving active support from the Jagenberg Group in recruiting qualified specialists. I am grateful for that.

“To the young colleagues in our company, I would advise: Take advantage of the opportunities the Group offers you! Get an insight into as many areas as possible, work at eye level and also show respect. At Kampf, you'll find a family that has your back.”

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