



Wipotec Wägetechnik GmbH is the clear market and technology leader in precision Weigh Cells for packaging machine OEMs worldwide. Julia Snow talked to international sales director Mr Michael Kirsch to find out more.

A TRUE INNOVATOR

Wipotec founder Mr Theo Dueppre presented his unique monoblock solution for the first time at the Hannover Industrial Fair in 1988. This solution represented a market first: a Weigh Cell with Electro Magnetic Force Restoration (EMFR) technology made from one solid block of aluminium, which could match the precision of a laboratory instrument whilst being suitable for an industrial environment.

Following the enthusiastic reception of this product, Mr Dueppre founded Wipotec later that year with three employees in rented premises. The business took off rapidly, and once the staff numbers reached 30 it was decided to acquire land and build the first production hall – one of six that form today's 25,000 m² production area. Still based in Kaiserslautern, the headquarters also house all sales and R&D facilities as well as a dedicated training centre for customers and employees.

Core competency: precision Weigh Cells

Wipotec specialises in the development, production and integration of precision Weigh Cells and hi-tech weighing systems for high-speed use.

Working on the principle of EMFR Wipotec Weigh Cells are designed for demanding dynamic weighing tasks. They are capable of suppressing external vibrations and of providing exact weighing results, and the measuring range, depending on the series, covers up to 120 kg. The combination of a specially-adapted measuring process, so-called 'power compensation', and a specifically-developed power diversion on the basis of a 'graduation mechanism', form the basis for a combination of high-speed and precision.

Wipotec products suit all industrial production processes, with a focus on packaging and filling machines for the pharma and food industry where the precise measuring of milligrams or even micro-

grams is of utmost importance. Exact and fast weighing systems are important because of legal for trade requirements, but also because of significant cost savings: exact filling helps to lower production costs and avoid waste. Integrated Wipotec Weigh Cells provide direct feedback to the filling machine, which results in higher quality production and reduced give-away.

Unrivalled technical expertise

One look at the company's R&D department, which employs 70 out of the total 300 employees, makes it clear that Wipotec prioritises in-house development of technology and competence. In addition to a broad range of standard solutions there is a wide array of tailored solutions that were developed in close partnership with the customers, Mr Kirsch stresses: "We have this large R&D team because we don't develop for

development's sake, but always respond precisely to our customers' requirements. In fact, many are exclusively made for their machines and applications." R&D engineers develop both hard- and software components, and as construction is integrated on the premises, all necessary production basics can be drawn up flexibly and at short notice. The central element of the 'Monoblock' is produced in-house on cutting edge CNC machines. The electronic conductor plates are produced in fully automatic fitting machines, and all components are subsequently assembled into complete Weigh Cells in the final assembly process.

Supporting the key players

"We have a healthy customer mix – we supply all leading names and key players in the pharmaceutical and food packaging sector, but we also have a very good spread of smaller clients," explains >

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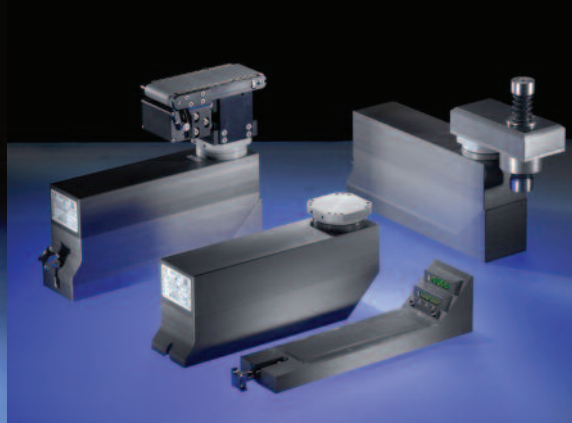
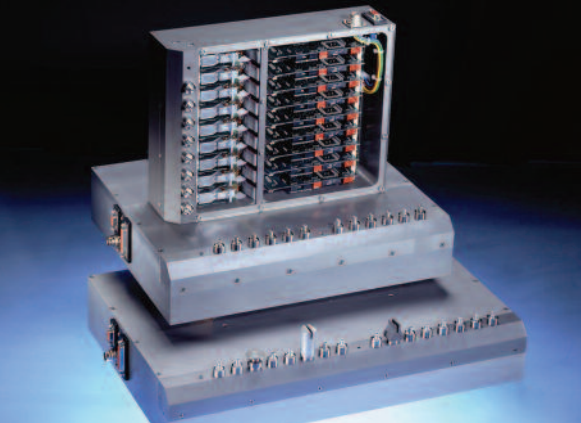
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“We were looking for additions to our portfolio, which would be of interest to our existing customers”

Mr Kirsch. “We have agreements with the large accounts like BOSCH, Bausch + Stroebel, Optima or IMA, just to mention a few.

Wipotec’s export share stands at 40 per cent and the trend is positive. There are already two sales offices in Italy and the US, and increasingly there is interest from India and Asia, according to Mr Kirsch. “We haven’t even got a presence there, but already we are establishing a reputation for superior weighing components. Therefore, further geographical expansion is a possibility for us.”

Innovations for the future

Turnover grows year on year, and so far 2010 orders have exceeded expectations. “We are confident about growth in demand, as our products offer a great ROI. Reducing give-away is key in times of price pressures. We see a huge demand in the US, where producers and packaging companies are only just realising the benefits of optimising their filling process.”

In response to new opportunities Wipotec has established two new product lines particularly for producers, says Mr Kirsch: “The OCS brand label checkweighers are developed and produced under the same roof here in Kaiserslautern, and producers worldwide can easily integrate them in their production line and begin to make savings immediately.

“We were looking for additions to our portfolio, which would be of interest to our existing customers,” he adds, “and so we designed and developed an X-ray scanner with a revolutionary technology. We see much potential for this product as it offers higher performance and better detection of foreign objects.”

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