

Success lies in simplicity



In the North of Baden-Württemberg, in the South-West of Germany, lies the region of Baden. Famous for its beautiful city of Heidelberg, its casino in Baden-Baden and its excellent white wines, it is also home to other jewels.

ZaTeC is one of them. Led by its owners Wolfram Weber and Peter Herr since a management buyout in 1997, the small company has become a centre of gear manufacturing excellence. Thanks to an innovative and clear investment strategy, ZaTeC has doubled its productivity and has widened its product range, which now includes planetary drives, hollow gears, shafts and geared components for the general machine tool industry. Moreover, amongst its customers ZaTeC also counts car makers and racing teams. "We do not work with anything that will not have teeth afterwards, because that is what we are good at. Making teeth is our speciality."

Mr. Weber, you have actually doubled productivity. How has this been possible?

"It has been possible to increase productivity mainly by introducing new equipment. Setup and change times in particular have dramatically improved in recent years."

Mr. Weber, what is your investment strategy?

"In our opinion too much technology in one solution is not beneficial. We always ask ourselves whether we really need a particular feature."

"I need simple processes"

"I prefer a stable machine which can fully exploit its tool system. An unstable machine will cause us extra costs, which exceed the budgeted limit, for example inserted blades which have to be switched more often than expected."



The ZaTeC office building: on the left, across the street, the office building with the first manufacturing facility, and, above, an aerial view.

At ZaTeC hobbing machines do the hobbing and they must do it well. Our machines must cover a wide range of applications in order to flexibly react to customers' requirements. I am not interested in integrated gimmicks like turning or other processes.

For the additional price tag I can easily buy a dedicated turning machine. We believe in the know-how of single machine tool companies. Making gears is not the same thing as turning surfaces and vice versa. Even the current trend of turn-milling gears does not interest us; it is way too slow to give us the productivity we require.

Our idea for future manufacturing is directed towards total process control right from the roughing process. Integrated measuring, for example, is an option we are interested in, so we can reduce scrap and tool costs in subsequent processes.

We also invest in the training of our workforce. It is an extremely important part of achieving our quality and productivity goals, but we have less and less applicants, and the good ones are becoming a rare commodity”.



“Well-trained technicians are a dying species”

“Learning fast is very important in a time where employee fluctuation is a given factor. Hence the need for easy processes. It may be possible to learn gear cutting quickly, but learning more than one process on one machine becomes time-consuming, counter-productive and outright risky.



“Since we do not produce larger gears, our investment costs are not at a level where we need to save on single pieces of equipment. Also, we do not mass produce gears so we do not have the urge for process integration.”

So, why did you opt for Samputensili?

“Firstly because of your closeness to the customer. Samputensili has always worked very well: sales and service go hand in hand.

We do not choose the gear cutting tools because of price; we simply buy the gear cutting tools which, in our eyes, are just the product we need to satisfy our demanding requirements – and that is the Samputensili gear manufacturing tools.”



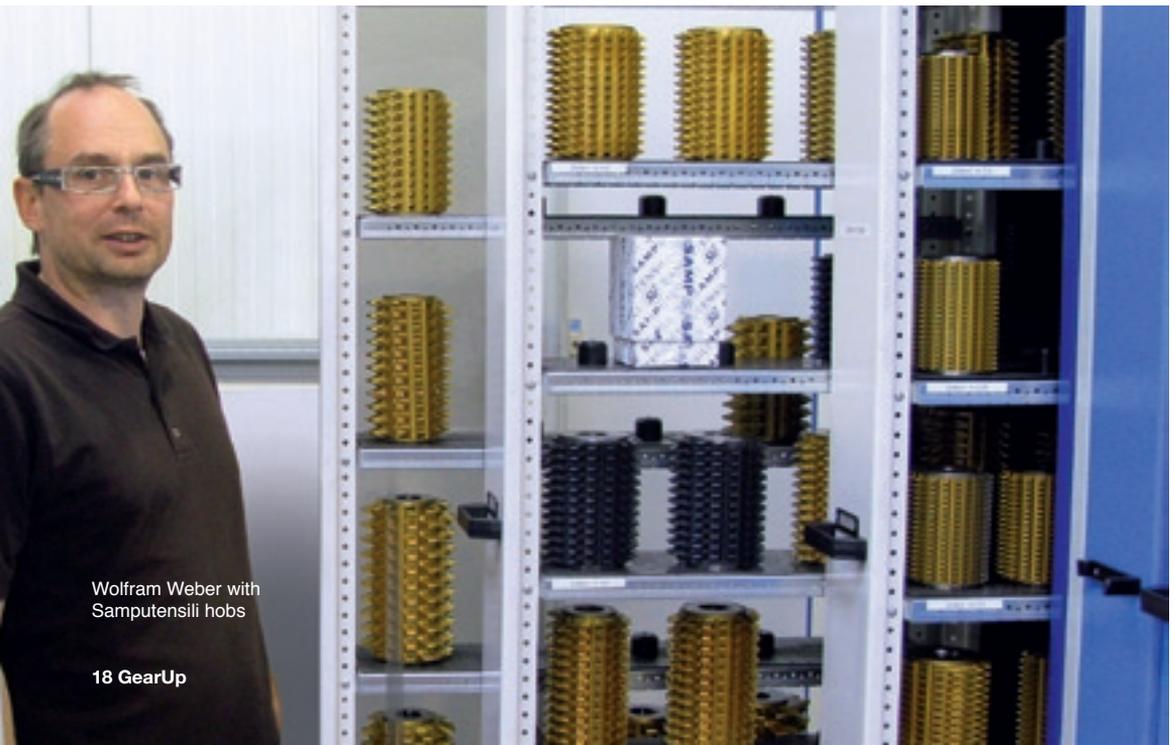
Wolfram Weber and Peter Herr,
Managing Directors of Zatec Zahnräder GmbH & Co. KG

“The supplier is not an enemy”

“For us the supplier is not an enemy. If we find partners that co-operate with us and keep their promises, we stick with them. Of course we ask a lot, but, at the same time, we treat them fairly. Partners like Samputensili will always find an open door with us at any time.”

How do you see the future for ZaTeC?

“For the future we expect even faster and more flexible customer requests. We will direct our manufacturing away from large series of gears to become more efficient in very small and medium lots.”



Wolfram Weber with
Samputensili hobs



“At ZaTeC you find Samputensili tools everywhere. No wonder – the offered delivery time and quality give us no reason to change.”

“We expect demand for even faster deliveries, smaller lots and more variety”

“Customers already order on Thursday and expect delivery for Tuesday, shipping included. For us this means top quality in the shortest possible throughput time. Processing time is a crucial factor to our business; if things do not move in and out, we lose money. We are convinced that prototypes and small lots will form the majority of our business in the future. And we do not mind at all. The key to this major flexibility and variety is profile grinding.

We often rough blanks by generating grinding, temper the gear and finish the gear by profile grinding in just 2 days.

This is our philosophy and it is the basis for our success.”

Short Facts



ISO 9001:2008 certified, regularly audited

Products gears and geared workpieces up to 600 mm in diameter, module 14.0

1997 Founded as job-shop for geared workpieces, 20 employees.

2007 New manufacturing hall, 2000 sq.m., 37 employees.

2009 New manufacturing hall, 1800 sq.m., 50 employees.

Processes applied Turning, milling, hobbing, generating and profile grinding, bore and face grinding

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