

Surface Finishing Engineers Settle Only for the Best

Surface finishing technology is usually characterised by being a complex collection of separate technologies which have to be seamlessly integrated in order to work to a high standard. Furthermore, each application requires an individual, tailor-made solution. **e.luterbach AG**, of Hildisrieden, near Luzern, is the leading machine engineering specialist for the surface finishing industry of its native Switzerland.



Cleaning and preparation system as designed for Peka

e.luterbach AG was founded by Edi Luterbach in Luzern in 1981. The founder had been working as an air conditioning engineer for another company before deciding to start his own business. With setting up e.luterbach AG he began concentrating on the development of surface finishing machines, while having them manufactured by autho-

rised production partners. The company proved successful and grew steadily, necessitating a move to more spacious premises in 1993. Thus, a new company site was opened in Hildisrieden, outside Luzern, where e.luterbach AG now also operated its own production facilities. In 2003, Edi Luterbach sold the company to Jost Ettlin. To date, the com-



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pany founder still acts as the operative Managing Director. e.luterbach AG presently employs thirty members of staff.

Systems for powder coating and lacquering of surfaces are e.luterbach AG's forte. The company develops tailor-made solutions in this field which have an industry-wide reputation for outstanding quality. Says Sales Director Fabian Luccarini: *"We offer customer-specific products, essentially systems using standard components but assembled in a modular fashion according to the customer's requirements."* Thanks to its comprehensive know-how and experience in sheet metal and steel processing as well as its large pool of machines, e.luterbach AG also produces components for the construction and manufacturing industries, as well as other machine engineering companies.

The e.luterbach AG portfolio is comprised of wet paint lacquering systems for high-gloss finishing, powder coating systems, special industrial cleaning and venting systems for surface preparation and dust removal, drying and burning-in furnaces, material flow technology and automa-

tion, and environmentally protective technologies for use in its own products. For instance, the Franke Corporation, manufacturers of large-scale kitchens (for instance for McDonald's) uses an e.luterbach AG surface cleaning system. Such cleaning systems serve as surface preparation and anti-corrosion machines predominantly in the metal processing industry; in fact, some 70% of the company's turnover is generated in this industry. The company's powder coating systems find use in the aerospace and other industries; while the timber and similar sectors rely on e.luterbach AG's venting systems.

As previously mentioned, e.luterbach AG's offerings are all based on standard components, but each machine is custom-assembled so as to precisely meet the customer's requirement. No two ma-

chines are the same; virtually every customer has a different set of specifications. Says company owner Jost Ettlin: "We offer our customers everything from initial design to installation on his premises, as well as comprehensive after-sales services." Fabian Luccarini continues: "We always individually specify a machine for a single customer, as customers tend not to have any know-how whatsoever in the area of machine engineering. The customer merely knows what he wants to achieve; we offer our advice and solve the problem."

The Swiss market is in some ways different to the markets of bigger countries, simply because of space considerations. Fabian Luccarini explains: "Solving problems is our strength - we solve all problems, even those which are typical of the Swiss

market. Here we are faced with problems that, for instance, German manufacturers just don't have. Many of our customers' production facilities reside in very confined spaces. While foreign competitors tend to use up a lot of space in their system construction, we have developed the ability to think and design in terms of height instead of large footprint, and constructing around corners."

The machines developed by e.luterbach AG are not only characterised by outstanding quality and ease of use, but they also meet the most stringent environmental requirements. This is not only good for the environment; the systems' extremely low power consumption also saves customers a great deal in operational costs, and thus helps them stay competitive. "Apart from process innovations, we

always try to push the envelope in terms of environmental friendliness and energy consumption. All our machines' energy ratings are extremely low - considering today's energy costs, this is a vital aspect in our machines' design."

e.luterbach AG relies heavily on word-of-mouth recommendations. "The Swiss market is very limited in size, so word gets around", as Fabian Luccarini points out. "Our marketing budget is rather small - advertising is relatively pointless in the local market. We do place great importance on integration in databases and web links; therefore,

our website is an important tool for us." Finally, e.luterbach AG encourages editorial articles in specialist magazines. Currently, export accounts for a mere 10% of the company's business, although an increase of this figure is planned in the medium-term future, mainly through products implemented for internationally active Swiss customers. e.luterbach AG is the market leader in its field in its home market; international growth is merely a question of time. "Perfection is our vision - we are not satisfied by mediocrity", as Jost Ettlin lays out his company's philosophy.



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