

**PRESS RELEASE**

* **Composites: Wickert transforms from press manufacturer to all-round provider**
* **Four composite trends to boost growth**

*Landau, 8. June 2021.* Wickert Maschinenbau is changing from a manufacturer of customized presses to an all-round provider for composite manufacturing. The family-run company is thus reacting to the increasing demand for supplementary services revolving around the planning and development of press systems.

These services range from component development to concept and feasibility studies through to overall planning and general contracting for complete production lines including turnkey solutions. In this way, Wickert wants to offer its customers highly productive composite processing from a single source.

The composite specialist expects to see new stimulus for growth from the increasing level of automation in production and the increased desire for greater system flexibility with the use of additional injection units. Furthermore, the company is anticipating a future rise in thermoplastic processing and has also identified potential in the use of natural fibers and natural resins. Wickert believes it is well positioned to serve all four trends.

**Wickert integrates all-round composite manufacturing**

As Steve Büchner, Sales and Project Manager at Wickert, explains, assistance is important even in the early phase of component development and in the implementation of feasibility studies, due to the fact that engineering resources are sometimes scarce for composite manufacturers: “Thanks to our experience in manufacturing, we are able to provide valuable advice in these early stages.” In this regard, the machine manufacturer from Germany’s Palatinate region benefits from its vast experience with the integration of customized presses in composite production lines.

Wickert is now putting this know-how to good use by independently offering all-in-one systems, Büchner explains: “We know which supplementary components meet our high quality standards and how we can integrate these in perfect harmony.” This insight means that the company is also able to offer turnkey solutions to interested parties. And this can all be done without having to expand the company’s own product range.

**Their own department designs concepts for automation and customized solutions**

The company’s own development department provides assistance in the planning of entire systems and designs individual concepts for automation and customized solutions. This allows the systems to be implemented with fully automated production. “We are also able to link up presses and peripheral components with other parts of the system and the primary process control systems in line with a Smart Factory”, Büchner explains.

**Increased flexibility for composite presses through the use of additional modules**

The company has seen an increased desire among customers to use composite presses flexibly for diverse applications. Even today, with relatively little effort, the presses can be extended by additional modules for injection processes such as RTM (Resin Transfer Molding) and RIM (Reaction Injection Molding) as well as polyurethane injection units.

**Thermoplastic composites for mass production**

Wickert also sees opportunities for growth from the increasing interest in the use of thermoplastic matrix systems. The company believes that the thermoplastic forming of organo sheets, in particular, is on the rise. This is because high-precision, mass-produced parts can be manufactured in stable, fully automated processes – and with significantly shorter cycle times than with thermosetting.

**Natural fibers have potential**

At least in the medium term, the composite specialists also see growth potential in the market for natural-fiber-reinforced plastics (NFRP) using fibers such as flax, hemp, jute, sisal and kenaf as well as natural resins with vegetable oil basis. In addition to the principle of unlimited availability, important advantages include their excellent compostability in comparison with glass or carbon fibers as well as stable prices. However, Büchner believes the success of NFRPs will depend on broad acceptance among customers. The systems for production already exist, as natural materials can already be processed on Wickert presses.

**About Wickert Maschinenbau GmbH**

Wickert Maschinenbau GmbH is a medium-sized, family-owned company based in Landau in der Pfalz. We are active in the development and manufacture of hydraulic presses and fully automated press systems. All machines and systems have a modular structure and feature pressing forces of between 20 and 100,000 kN, with a customer-specific layout in each case. The provided systems are used to process elastomers, composites, plastics and powder materials. In addition to the production of pharmaceutical sealing plugs, the presses are also used in the manufacture of brake and clutch linings as well as grinding disks, as fixture hardening systems, and in research and scientific laboratories.

Hans-Joachim Wickert and Stefan Herzinger are the partners and managing directors of the family business that was founded in 1901 and exclusively manufactures in Landau in der Pfalz, from where it supplies its customers in Europe, the Americas and Asia. In 2020, 172 employees generated a turnover of around € 40 million.

**Pictures:**

Ein Bild, das drinnen, Boden, Fräse enthält.

Automatisch generierte Beschreibung

Picture 1:

Organo sheets are turned into 3D components at the research institute “Neue Materialien Bayreuth” (NMB). Here you see a composite press for high-performance thermoplastics with processing temperatures of up to 450 °C. Thanks to their modular structure, hydraulic composite presses from Wickert can be customized to meet virtually all customer-specific requirements (picture: Wickert).

Ein Bild, das drinnen, Fräse enthält.

Automatisch generierte Beschreibung

Picture 2:

Roof linings for passenger cars are produced on Wickert presses like this WKP 1500 S, in some cases also using composites which include natural-fiber-reinforced plastics (NFRP) (picture: Wickert).

Ein Bild, das Person, Wand, Mann, Anzug enthält.

Automatisch generierte Beschreibung

Picture 3:

Steve Büchner, Sales and Project Manager at Wickert Maschinenbau (picture: Wickert).

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