

28th **GSL**
MOST INNOVATIVE
COMPANIES
OF THE YEAR 2020

BURKHARDT+WEBER

Changed Their Metamorphose by Introducing
Changes in Leadership



Out with the old and in with the new. The statement might seem radical at first glance but the kind of potential it bears leads to redefining leadership style at century old organisations. Headquartered in Germany, BURKHARDT+WEBER has a legacy of strong leadership. So it was essential that whoever took over the responsibility next had to have a vision and the necessary experience to execute the change. The new CEO, Olaf Furtmeier, introduced a third parameter to initiate a series of positive changes – time.

“Change always takes time.” With those words, Olaf Furtmeier sets the tone of the conversation. A mechanical engineering graduate, Furtmeier brings thirty years of experience under his belt. He was handed over the reins of a century old business in 2016. And he has set a completely unique tone at BURKHARDT+WEBER (BW) the very beginning of the tenure.

“130 years built on experiences in machine tool manufacturing is our starting point. Over 60+ years in applications for customized hard metal machining with CNC-machining centers or CNC special machines was the next level towards success. Thus in 2017 we focused on a strong but compact machining series to answer our BW customer needs around the globe with our innovative machine series, the MCC. Despite its small footprint it is an uncompromisingly strong BW machine and expands the lower end of the BW range – a welcomed surprise for our customer potential and an opportunity for BW to enter new markets and target groups.”

He calls it his biggest challenge during the initial years. “The change from a very old-fashioned leadership style to a modern one, where the employees have to accept that they must be proactive and show more responsibility for their own work, instead of only depending on the directives given by the CEO. Adopting this new way of thinking takes time – more for some people, less for others – however as CEO you must be patient in these matters.”

More than patience, what emerges as a forerunner, in the age of effective leadership is effective communication. We all know how effective communication is a two-way street. Furtmeier agrees and goes on to add, “We have several incentive programs. One great success is where employees can share their ideas in informal fireside chats with the CEO. In addition, we sponsor several incentive programs, some with monetary awards like when ideas are submitted that help save money or they are optimizing a process. Regularly scheduled internal meetings are used to update all employees about current projects and to make all developments as transparent as possible. Of course, these take place in a relaxed atmosphere in our cafeteria with some delicious, healthy food.”

One of the simplest ways to ensure that the employees are driven and passionate is to keep the circle smaller. It allows seamless communication and strengthens trust. BW



Flexible machining centers and methods for machining complex, premium quality, hard metal parts.



operates with a small team of 220 employees despite its international roots. “Small company employees feel more connected to their employer and their work. They strongly identify themselves with company goals, realizing they can make a difference from their daily experiences. There is no stronger motivation than appreciation.”

Furtmeier adds, “We do not only see us as a traditional engineering company but as an integrated technology supplier. With special emphasis on listening to our customers, our engineers and specialists optimize not only the process but also supply a customized solution. Furthermore, the development and production of all core components by BW itself, produce the typical BW premium quality.”

What Furtmeier has very ardently observed is BURKHARDT+WEBER's recipe of success. It demonstrates a level of precision and efficiency that it has painstakingly understood and fine-tuned to meet the needs of the community. “Our claim is: Strong. Precise. Customized. Digital. – and these are not only words, this is our company culture. It is what we live and prove every day. Our customers describe BW as “absolutely sound machine engineering” but not only are our machines strong but also the company itself is strong. Especially in such unusual times as we are facing in 2020.”

In 2020, BW is aiming to expand to digital service solutions using data mining technologies, like fingerprinting, remote service support, or mixed reality technology. “With today's travel restriction, we see this as a good opportunity to help our customers help themselves. Our goal for the next few years is to not only be a machine manufacturer but more so a strong service provider and expert for turnkey-projects.”

BW is extremely passionate about sustainability and a restorative economy. Since 2017 you'll find two bee colonies on its premises. The bee queens have been named Louisa and Johanna after the founders of the company, Louis Burkhardt and Johannes Weber. “Bees make our

About BURKHARDT+WEBER

BURKHARDT+WEBER (BW) stands for high demands on performance, efficiency and economic sustainability.

BW is well established around the globe in all industries using large machining centers, wherever top quality is demanded. Over 130 years, everything revolves around the development of efficient and innovative product solutions for challenging machining of hard metal parts. Our machining centers are further developed within interdisciplinary teams. All core-components and in-house developments are made by BW. Continuing training and the use of up-to-date CAD and ERP-systems ensure our technical advantages.

A world-wide sales force and four company-owned service centers in Europe, North and South America and two in Asia guarantee a perfect customer service. World leading companies of all industries including the machine tool manufacturing market, belong to the clientele of BURKHARDT+WEBER.

Since 2012 BURKHARDT+WEBER belongs to Indústrias Romi S.A, the largest Brazilian machine tools manufacturer.



Olaf Furtmeier
CEO

landscape colorful; they preserve biodiversity and the ecology contributing an increase in nourishment. A world without bees would be inconceivable for our biological diversity and thus ultimately for our survival.

BW sponsors several inhouse apprenticeship programs for 3 to 5 young applicants every year. Typically, it takes apprentices 3.5 years to certify and provides them with a very good basic knowledge for their future careers. Employees staying more than 40 years with the company is not uncommon. And since BW is a firmly rooted Reutlingen based company, we are eager to support local charitable institutions.”

BW supplies “green” machines and is continuously advancing this technology benefitting all industries to be more restorative in the future. This is also seen in many projects for retrofitting old machines and achieving remarkable energy savings – a win-win-situation in economic terms, but also environmentally beneficial. In this economically challenging time, our experiences from the various ups and downs at BW have proven that we must be even more creative and innovative. The tendency to retrofits and modernization of the existing machineries will probably increase in the coming years, as the willingness to enter large investments will diminish. Thus, we further are challenged to enter new target markets, like the aerospace industry where we already have demonstrated success by adding our technical expertise.

Now, if that's not a vision that is progressive, modern and disruptive innovation, then what is? After all, change takes time. **BSL**

