



Founded in 1897, the family behind Puehl is still involved in the day-to-day to running of the business – with Dr Goetz and Ralf Kaltheuner part of the operational board together with CEO Joachim Rohwedder – father-in-law of Ralf. “Our great uncle founded the company, before it moved over to our grandfather and then father,” explains Ralf. “We are the fourth generation and we are very proud of the success Puehl has achieved in becoming a leading name within the washer sector and in reaching its 125th anniversary. Our aim is to continue to develop the family business for the future and go on offering a reliable and flexible service, which Puehl has become renowned for within the industry.”



Celebrating 125 years

To celebrate its 125th anniversary Puehl held a party in September last year for its employees and their families, with around 200 people attending the event, which included speeches from the owners, as well as the Mayor of Plettenberg. »



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PUEHL

We shape the future

This year Puehl celebrates its 125th anniversary as a leading washer manufacturer within the European market – with the company also looking to mark the occasion by taking the next steps in its development as a modern forward-looking business.



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» “We did not invite any customers or suppliers, as we wanted the party to be purely for our employees and their families,” states Goetz. “The event was held in our material building, which we transformed using floor-to-ceiling curtains and decorations to make it an ideal location to mark such a special occasion.”

The party included a DJ and a live band, as well as singing waiters who unexpectedly surprised the guests with opera songs. “We wanted to make it a celebration and to say thank you to our employees for their hard work and to show we are all part of the Puehl family,” adds Ralf.

Shaping the future

Puehl also decided the party was the perfect opportunity to unveil its new logo and brand – with the motto: ‘We. Shape. The. Future’. “We felt the party was the right moment to look forward and introduce a new corporate design and underline to our employees the steps we are taking as a business to ensure we continue to grow from an employee point of view, but also a corporate point of view,” explains Goetz.

Ralf adds: “We are a company with a lot of history and experience, which we are very proud of to have achieved. However, at the same time we are a young, modern and aggressive business and we want to showcase this fact. The new logo, alongside a new website that will be launched in March during Fastener Fair Global in Stuttgart, will be a better representation of who we are as a business and what our identity is as a washer manufacturer.”

To further underline what it stands for as a business, Puehl has developed company guidelines. “These company guidelines will be shared in the near future with our employees, so they can understand what we are looking to do as a company, so everybody can be focused on the same aims and targets,” explains Goetz. “It also means we can speak in the future with ‘one voice’ and we ensure we are seen as a strong and modern operation. It is a mission and vision statement, and we are confident the guidelines will help us grow in the future.”

Standing out from the crowd

Another key point of Puehl’s plans going forward is further connecting with both its existing and potential new employees. “Within the Plettenberg area we are working in a cluster of companies where there are a lot of similar businesses looking for the same kind of employees,” points out CEO Joachim Rohwedder. “This makes it very difficult to get good reliable people that are highly motivated, which is why we have taken extra steps to make ourselves more attractive – with extra employee incentives, such as working from home options, eBike leasing, opportunities for development, as well as a host of other benefits.”

Due to the lack of employees available, Puehl has increasingly relied on refugees – with the company supporting them and helping them to integrate into the organisation and local community. “We offer these employees language courses and further support, such as help with administrative tasks outside of the business, which has proved very popular,” highlights Goetz. “It is important that potential employees see us as a good and modern employer, where they can develop for the future, which is why we offer so much to our employees and have looked to develop a better employer brand within the market.”

Ongoing investments

Alongside investing in its employees, Puehl has continued to invest in its capabilities to ensure it goes on meeting the needs of



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its customers and the market. “We introduced an investment plan in 2021, which we continued throughout 2022 and will continue in 2023,” states Ralf. “As a business we are focused on the European washer market and we have made a lot of investments to remain at the forefront of the industry both now and in the future.”

A prime example of Puehl’s investment strategy is the further investment in its in-house tool shop, where all the tools for its production are produced. “We already have a high level of machinery within the tool shop, which enable us to build our tools in-house with good quality and shorter reaction time,” explains Goetz. “The investment means we have been able to replace older milling and eroding machines with the latest technology. These newer machines are quicker, faster, with a better quality, and help improve the overall department. Improving the efficiency of our

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tool shop is crucial, because if you cannot produce the tooling it can hold up the entire production process."

Other investments include the creation of a new punching and coining department, including two new pressing machines. "As a business we already owned several punching machines, but they were located outside the company at a supplier," points out Ralf. "We decided to bring these machines back in-house and this has proved a very good decision, as we are able to be much more flexible in terms of products, as well as batch sizes."

Within the punching and coining department, as well as across the entire production process, there has been investment in a high level of automation, which Puehl believes is a necessity if you are to compete within the European market. "Automation is a key aspect of our business and as a European manufacturer it is what helps us to be competitive within the market," mentions Ralf. "Whilst it is not always easy to automate, such as with stamping machines, we always look at ways we can optimise processes."

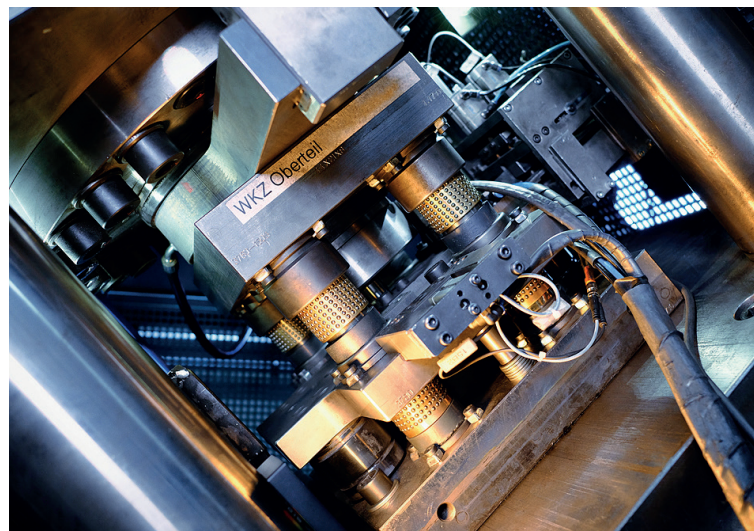
Focussing on sustainability

An area Puehl has also looked to continue investing in is sustainability, which it believes is becoming more of a requirement with markets. "As a business we can certainly see that sustainability is becoming more and more important in all the markets, especially within Germany," states Joachim. "From every customer we hear they are looking at sustainability when ordering, which is why we have made several investments with sustainability in mind."

These investments include new LED lighting, a heat recovery system, as well as changing from natural gas to liquid gas. Plus, the company has installed a new photovoltaic system, which was introduced at the end of last year. "This new system will enable us to create our own energy and will not only help us become more sustainable, but also help us to manage and reduce costs due to the current high energy prices. In fact, through the steps we have taken regarding sustainability, we are looking at a saving of between 20% - 30% of our energy costs, which is a significant amount,"

Committed to wholesalers

All of these investments are an essential part of Puehl providing a reliable service of high-quality products to its existing wholesale customers and in attracting new business. "At Puehl we are a partner to wholesalers and can provide them with the products and services they need to meet every customer request," states Ralf. "It is important to be flexible and guarantee you can meet small and big demands through good stock availability."



Puehl is able to provide two types of service, depending on individual customer needs. Firstly, it can provide standard products, with big volumes, as well as frame orders – that can be called off as and when needed. "Customers can come to us and place an order for half year or yearly demand, which we then stock at a certain level and the customers can call it off as and when they need them," mentions Ralf.

The other type of business is the day-to-day business, where customers are asking for specialties and a smaller order volume. "This is an area that is increasing and we are able to work with our partners to provide special solutions," adds Ralf. "As a company we have the employees and knowledge where we can help customers with technical questions, such as quality, etc, and provide the right solution."

The company's ability to work with customers is thanks to the knowledge and capabilities within its quality department, as well as its tool shop. "Thanks to the investments we previously mentioned, our tool shop puts us at the forefront of the industry and means we can help provide answers to technical questions," explains Goetz. "We have approximately 1,500 tools in stock – all owned by Puehl – and have a CAD system that means we can be flexible and react quickly to any requests from customers."

Goetz continues: "Through this capability we are able to work with wholesalers, or with wholesalers' customers, and offer technical help and support in order for them to find the right solution, which we can produce straight away."

"We are very proud to have this capability within our business, but our focus is still 'leading the standard' and supplying all of the standard washers needed by wholesale customers throughout Europe," emphasises Ralf. "Some companies are focusing on special parts and stepping away from standard parts, but at Puehl we are committed to the standard side of the business and we want to be the leading company for washers in Europe. Furthermore, Puehl will also be a constantly developing manufacturer in the field of special parts."

He concludes: "As a business we are well known within the industry and by working with our wholesale customers we can continue to provide the products and service that have established Puehl as a leading brand from stamping parts. Through our investments and company guidelines we will be able to optimise processes; provide a complete service to our customers; react quickly to customers' needs and requirements; as well as be more competitive within the European market – as a modern and focused family company." +

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