

WMW AG in Leipzig: From a single machine to a complete production line

Expansion of the business secures position in the market

The WMW AG, which started life as part of the state-owned WMW Export in the GDR, now operates worldwide with a large range of products. The Managing Director Hamo Gregorian anticipates a growing demand for used machines in Europe.



The glazed exhibition halls of the used-machine dealer WMW AG in Leipzig are full of life
pictures: WMW



In this hall customers can see the complete range of machine tools, industrial parts and equipment. There is a wide range of over 700 machine tools from many well-known manufacturers. All these can be demonstrated in operation to customers

The WMW AG is to be found close to the new Leipzig fairground in the Messe Allee 10a. This trading company for new and used machine-tools and sheet metal processing machines, as well as industrial plant, bears the name of the once internationally well-known state-owned export trading company WMW Export. This company, which in the GDR had the export trading monopoly for machine tools and implements, disappeared after the reunification of the two Germanies. "We were able to take over part of the business and a number of the staff and tried to conti-

nue trading, not however with new machines but with used WMW machines," reports Hamo Gregorian. In the meantime the progress has been such that, according to Gregorian, "since last year we no longer just offer WMW machines, but a complete range of machine tools from all manufacturers." Since 2001, when WMW AG was founded, Hamo Gregorian has been Managing Director. The extension of the business has secured the position of the company in the market. "We try always to take over complete going concerns", says Gregorian. In this way it is

possible to offer machines from A to Z and the pricing policy is more interesting for the customer. "We also offer complete production lines, something that our competitors seldom do", says the Manager. "In the past years we have sold complete facilities for the production of charcoal, prefabricated buildings and even power stations. We buy plant from companies which have gone bankrupt and after carefully checking its legal status and its physical condition we offer it on the international market. If the customer wants, we will organise the disassem-

bly, the reassembly and even the transport, so that everything can be coordinated”, says Gregorian, when describing the total scope of the activities of his company. WMW also undertakes retrofitting, but only if this is wanted by the customer and preferably with WMW machines such as drilling machines from WMW Union or lathes from WMW. “This is a speciality of ours”, emphasises Gregorian. Obtaining spare parts is not always easy. “In the case of Union drill-



Hamo Gregorian has been Managing Director of WMW AG since its foundation in 2001

ing machines we can usually obtain drawings and parts, because the factory in Chemnitz still exists”, he reports. In the case of machine tools there are also many old components which can be replaced by state-of-the-art components, for example by buying complete hydraulic systems from Rexroth or other manufacturers. For the manufacture of spindles or for grinding components it is normal to work with sub-suppliers. Originally the managers of WMW AG also wanted to offer new machines. “However, we soon noticed that this would have over-

strained our capacity”, recalls Gregorian. This would have been too much for the company, and so it was decided to concentrate on used machines. This does not mean, however, that things may not change in the future: And Gregorian takes another look into the future: “We are currently planning the production of a new machine, a lathe.” In Leipzig there is a total storage area of over 25,000 sqm and an exhibition hall with 8,000 sqm, and here the complete range of machine tools, industrial parts and equipment can be displayed. “Our permanent stock of around 700 machines from many well-known manufacturers is slanted towards the high demand for retrofitting and used machines”, explains Gregorian, and of course the machines can all be demonstrated under power. “In particular the German and other West European customers insist on such demonstrations”, says the Manager. “All machines which arrive”, he continu-

All machines are subjected to extensive checks before they are delivered.

es, “are subjected to extensive checks before they can be delivered. The customers are informed of any defects which have been found. Some customers prefer to deal with the defects themselves and accept that the machine is not 100% perfect, because this is cheaper for them. Others, on the other hand, prefer a machine in perfect working order. We do whatever the customer wants.” When asked about important markets, Gregorian answers: “In the old days the overseas markets were most important, particularly the Arab countries. Today our most important market is Europe and in particular Germany. After Germany comes Western Europe and only then come the Arab countries and Iran, but also Egypt and Syria. Of course we notice the effects of the current political turmoil. In spite of the troubles in Egypt we have managed to do some business there. There is also the feeling that things are getting a little better. However, Syria is currently a problem”, he says. There is an increased feeling of insecurity. “Iran was always an important market for us“, he says, recalling the

past. “But the authorities are now tending to put obstacles in our way.” Unfortunately the current political differences between Europe and Iran make business very difficult.

In Eastern Europe there are contacts to Hungary and Ukraine, but buying decisions often take a very long time. There is great interest in Russia and machines have already been delivered there. “In order to do more business, we sent two sales representatives to Russia last year“, says Gregorian, “representatives who are more familiar with the mentality there, and who are paid by us”. Business is often made more difficult because of slow decision-making and difficult logistics. The company is also looking at the South American market. To this end, WMW Chile was founded a few years ago. “Now we have someone there who sells our machines and covers the whole South American market”, says Gregorian. Business there is satisfactory, but could be better.

In Europe, Gregorian believes that there is a growing demand for used machines. There is far more interest than there was 20 years ago. “When we as dealers offer good quality machines at reasonable prices, the market will surely grow“, he says. However, one has to differentiate between used machines. For example, there are 10-year-old machines which are now obsolete, but also there are 50-year-old machines which can still be sold for 75% of the new price.

As a member of the trade association Deutsche Maschinen- und Werkzeug- Großhandels e.V. (FDM) and the European trade association EAMTM, the WMW AG is of course exhibiting at the used-machine fair Usetec in Cologne. “From the year 2000 onwards we exhibited at the used-machine fair Resale and naturally moved on to the Usetec in Cologne”, says Gregorian. For him the name of the fair is less important than the work which the exhibitor puts into it: “It is not by chance that this is the leading fair worldwide“, he says, stressing the importance of the fair and its organisers.

■ Dr. Rolf Langbein