

Peerless Under Pressure



Technology and ingenuity are no strangers to ARMATUREN-WOLFF, the valve and technology manufacturing specialist behind many of the maritime sector's most vital mechanical advances.

"The company was founded in 1945 by my grandfather, although it is my father, my brother and I who oversee the company's operations today," Mr Hendrik Wolff, Managing Director of the business, revealed. "Although initially we built valves for a wide array of industries, the operational years of our business saw us hone that approach ever more, until we reached the specialisation in supplying the shipbuilding industry with valves that we hold today."

International Ambitions

ARMATUREN-WOLFF's Hamburg facility remains its headquarters today, although highly effective partnerships and alliances have secured the firm a global client base.

"In Hamburg we operate an in-house production site, with a staff complement of 30," Mr Wolff elaborated. "That number of employees is very much a conscious business choice – the gains that we make in flexibility by means of our headcount enable us to operate with the speed and efficiency that we do, over a wide scope of activities."

Beyond its borders, ARMATUREN-WOLFF sustains strong ties to its network of agents and authorised dealers worldwide. "Because of those valued partnerships, we can perpetuate a much larger corporate presence than our legal entity alone," Mr Wolff explained. "It greatly enhances our international market capabilities."

In recent years, Mr Wolff said the company has prioritised the strategic and proactive development of this dealer network, to an extent that ARMATUREN-WOLFF now works with over 15 partners across the globe.

"Those among them who are connected to our Hamburg operation in a more formal manner are regarded as direct representatives of our brand, which entails services beyond the sale of our products alone. Conversely, authorised dealers are companies with whom we work with a high degree of knowledge regarding our products, enabling them to propose the right solution to clients in regions far more culturally diverse than our own."

Recognising the Potential

September sees Hamburg once more open its embrace to the maritime sector, with the SMM trade fair scheduled to showcase a host of players from throughout the world – and ARMATUREN-WOLFF will stand tall among its peers at the September showpiece.

"It is the event that everyone in the industry is anticipating, and we will be displaying numerous product innovations while fortifying our key message to the market," Mr Wolff confirmed.

More immediately, ARMATUREN-WOLFF continuously heeds the nuances of the shipbuilding and maritime industries, which enables the business to advance in the most advantageous direction. "Geographically speaking, quantities alone signify the undeniable importance of East Asian markets," Mr Wolff remarked. "However, we regard the Western European market as showing hugely positive

The valves and associated shipbuilding components produced by Germany's ARMATUREN-WOLFF are well regarded by the market – with good reason. As companies worldwide compete for ever more contested market shares, the company's Managing Director, Mr Hendrik Wolff, shared the enterprise's vision for lean management and cost efficiency. Tony White reports.

ARMATUREN WOLFF

signs of recovery as far as shipbuilding is concerned. Germany has invested in numerous new partnerships, which has heralded the arrival of several new shipbuilding corporate entities and alliances. More broadly, the development of legal restrictions and environmental regulations tightening both create conditions highly suited to our brand of innovation."

Exceeding Expectations

Environmentalism and automation are critical points of discussion in shipbuilding today - and ARMATUREN-WOLFF is maximising its capabilities in those areas, among others.

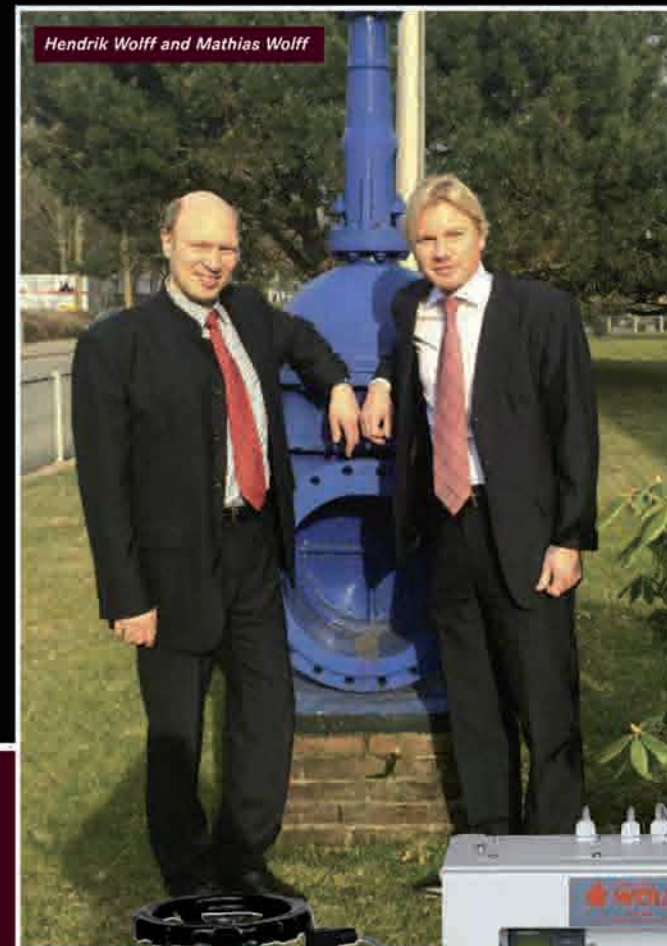
"Those conditions give shipbuilders active in Western Europe better prospects than they would have in less regulated environments," Mr Wolff affirmed. "The market is moving towards ships that are highly demanding, technically."

The products that ARMATUREN-WOLFF is capable of developing more than prove the firm's capacity for keeping its finger on the pulse of trends in the industry. "In recent years, we have developed an electric quick-closing valve that has seen extremely positive market uptake," Mr Wolff highlighted. "The system that we have developed has won us many new and valued clients. Today, leaders in cruise ship operation have joined those ranks, because electric quick-closing valve systems are perfect for the new ships that they are building. That has led to a number of large and significant contracts."



Defining the Market

Proactive technical know-how and cost-effective progression reinforce the leadership that ARMATUREN-WOLFF commands in the industry. "We have an internal structure for managing our quality levels and sustaining our technological edge," Mr Wolff said. "Our lean management and manufacturing strategy requires a great deal of stringent balancing, although it results in a highly effective corporate approach that does not negatively impact the high quality of our products."



Hendrik Wolff and Mathias Wolff



Having recently integrated new ERP software into its operations at every level, it is apparent just how much ARMATUREN-WOLFF considers the conditions of its staff and the efficiency of its business model. "We couple that strategy with our philosophy of forming strong partnerships on both the client and supplier sides," Mr Wolff added. "A stable network and co-operative approach generates incredibly valued rapports - our suppliers and our clients are each regarded as trusted partners."

ARMATUREN-WOLFF has identified safety awareness, green technology and automation as the three major trends defining the shipbuilding market going forward. "Cost effectiveness remains an industry concern, although low oil prices have diminished its influence," Mr Wolff reflected. "Crewing costs are nevertheless one of the major expenses to be factored. Low cost manufacturing countries remain poised to enter Western markets, for which we must all be prepared by sustaining our competitive edge. We will fortify the relevance and reputation of our organisation by promoting the cost effectiveness of our solutions, while improving our products in parallel with the integration of further lean production and lean management strategies in the time ahead."



Specialisation and optimisation are very much the core of ARMATUREN-WOLFF's growth strategy - and in a market more than receptive to the innovations that it provides, the success of this storied organisation will only continue to be galvanised through its products, processes and potential.

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Mobile: +49 152 5464469 Web: www.impreglon.de
 Fax: +49 4131 882 250 Email: molloy@impreglon.de