

Big and small ideas for rubber processing

How machine manufacturers and service providers see crises and transformations as opportunities

The ongoing economic downturn is not making life easy for machine manufacturers, especially if they serve the elastomer processing niche. But there was no complaining at the German Rubber Conference (DKT). The industry has always been inventive, and the transformations in energy and mobility offer new opportunities. The companies are pursuing a variety of paths – be it new technologies, strategies, application markets, services or sometimes just a small but important piece of equipment. K-PROFI looked around and listened at the DKT trade fair in Nuremberg.

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Under the motto “Partnering for Transformation”, the machine manufacturer Desma Elastomertechnik presented itself with a new corporate design and an inviting, open stand concept. “This year, we want to document our orientation towards turnkey systems for component production for energy distribution systems, mainly for regeneratively generated forms of energy, which has been in place for years,” explained CTO Dr Michael Zaun.

The head of technology and sales manager Harald Schmid are convinced: “Even though the automotive market still plays a very important role at our locations in China and India, this business will not return to the level of 2017/18 in Germany in the foreseeable future.” That is why the Fridingen-based company has recently stepped up its involvement in the energy sector, where it not only sees great potential but can also already draw on decades of experience. “We have been involved in this sector since the switch from porcelain to elastomer isolators a good 25 years ago,” emphasises Schmid.

“We now generate a large share of our sales at the local site in the energy sector,” says Zaun, adding: “This is not simply a case of switching to a different industry; this path is lined with challenges.” For many customers, infrastructure products for the generation, transmission and distribution of renewable energy are uncharted territory. These also include established companies looking for new business ideas. “We support this by not waiting for a customer to come to us with an item,” explains the CTO, “but by developing new production processes with the customer and offering the relevant expertise.” To this end, the mechanical engineering

company employs, among other things, special scouts who thoroughly explore the necessary knowledge.

Another consequence: “Customers expect complete solutions,” says the sales manager. “We hardly do any standard machine business anymore; instead, we do a lot of specialities.” With its broad machine portfolio, mould construction with extensive expertise in cold runner technology, and in-house automation department, Desma sees itself well positioned for this.

As a highlight, Desma presented the Sealmaster 300+ horizontal machine in Nuremberg, featuring a brushing system, Flow-Control cold runner and a dummy mould that illustrated all possible mould sizes with the respective specific usable area. The machine has a service-friendly overall design, offers precise positioning accuracy

and particularly high travel speeds. Harald Schmid is convinced: “This is the fastest injection moulding machine for rubber processing.” An additional special feature: depending on the requirements, it can be equipped with either a servo-hydraulic or an asynchronous drive. “Since both can have advantages and disadvantages, this makes it possible to choose the best option for each specific case,” the sales manager points out.

Also on display at the exhibition stand was a vertical 968.560 Z0 benchmark with 6,300 kN clamping force, 6,600 cm³ FIFO-A injection unit and silicone tamping unit, an all-rounder from Desma. The machine offers high ergonomics for the operators thanks to the Benchmark clamping system and the demoulding table, as well as good accessibility for handling systems, robots and other automation systems.

Highly automated cell replaces two machines

Compared to previous years, when machine manufacturer LWB-Steinl demonstrated its expertise in automation with complex production lines, including everything from complete post-processing to a new multi-station concept, this year’s DKT exhibit appeared rather small at first glance. Managing Director Dr Clemens Behmenburg confirms: “We transported this machine in one piece to the trade fair.” But the C-frame rotary table machine VCRS1000 not only stands out because of its new design, it also has a lot to offer.

“The trend is towards highly automated cells,” says Behmenburg. And so, the designers have integrated everything, including the automation and temperature control, and fully enclosed it. “The machine shown here is cleaner, more compact and more modern than previous ones and will serve as a



Desma CTO Dr Michael Zaun (left) and Sales Manager Harald Schmid at the versatile 968.560 Z0 Benchmark.