

Power transmission / design engineering / machine elements / connection technology / machine and plant construction

“We have always been thinking globally”

Component manufacturer RINGSPANN is rigorously pursuing its expansion course

With the commissioning of its second production plant in Bad Homburg, RINGSPANN has achieved a key milestone in mid-2017 on its way to becoming a full-range supplier of high-quality power transmission components. For Managing Director Fabian Maurer, however, this is just one small part of the globally aligned corporate strategy that aims to bring all product groups to the level that RINGSPANN’s freewheels division has been at for decades: At the forefront of international markets! In an interview, the company boss outlines the measures that are on his agenda for 2018.

Mr Maurer, why build a second production site in direct proximity to the RINGSPANN headquarters in Bad Homburg?

Maurer: Within the scope of the corporate strategy we formulated in 2014, we took the decision to develop RINGSPANN into an international full-range supplier for high-quality clutches and brakes for industrial power transmission. It was therefore necessary – among other things – to create two fundamental conditions. Firstly: We want to be able to assert our market leadership in the freewheels segment and keep the competition at a clear distance. And secondly: We need more space for development for our other product lines of industrial brakes, shaft-hub-connections and overload clutches and shaft couplings to help pursue their growth and particularly generate more exponential growth. With the construction of the second plant, the investment in numerous new machinery and the establishment of modern lean management processes, we have now created excellent development and production conditions for all product lines.

Are these measures already yielding visible effects for customers?

Maurer: While 2016 was characterised by numerous innovations in our freewheels product range, this year primarily showcased the field of industrial brakes and shaft-hub-connections, which have made significant strides with a wide range of new standard and premium solutions. In terms of shaft-hub-connections we were also able to release an online shop with an innovative new calculation tool for engineers. Our couplings division, meanwhile, is poised to come out in full force in 2018. Generally speaking, the improved development and manufacturing environments – flanked by further modernisation measures – will enable us to significantly energise our product

policy. This is crucial for our future positioning, because you will only be taken seriously as a full-range supplier or one-stop supplier once you can present a portfolio that is truly representative with regards to selection and type diversity.

What market coverage do RINGSPANN products currently achieve for power transmission?

Maurer: When it comes to freewheels, we are world market leaders; here, our range of products covers more than 90 percent of all currently conceivable products, models and variants. When it comes to brakes, we are among the manufacturers who can present an almost comprehensive technological cross-section of the world of industrial brakes with a market coverage of almost 80 percent. It is similar for shaft-hub-connections. And our overload clutches and shaft coupling portfolio currently represents approx. half of all existing products...

...which is presumably why you see the greatest potential for growth here?

Maurer: We are already noting significant growth impulses in these areas. We already expanded the product range for overload clutches in 2016, and once more this year. Our shaft coupling portfolio was also greatly expanded in recent months and supplemented by many new coupling types – we are currently working on the last pages of the new product catalogue, which will be coming out in 2018.

Just to clarify, let us ask once more: Your market analyses are always oriented towards events on the world markets?

Maurer: Correct, we have always been thinking globally – by the way, this also applies to our other product lines of clamping fixtures and remote control systems. Worldwide, RINGSPANN now has seven production sites and 13 international companies. And irrespective of whether its gear manufacturing, vehicle or aircraft construction, railway or marine engineering, wind power, mining or the raw materials industry – our more than 6,000 customers operate largely globally. This alone is why it is so fundamentally important that we continue to pursue our development, also through the international expansion of the RINGSPANN Group, towards becoming a full-range supplier.

How are you progressing in terms of the continuing internationalisation of your company?

Maurer: Every year we are growing a great deal in this area. Let me remind you that a representative office in Singapore and subsidiaries in Sweden and South Africa have been part of the RINGSPANN Group since 2015. And that our Italian company was added in 2016. As of 2017 we have a subsidiary in Austria, and our next steps on the international stage are right around the corner. During this process of internationalisation, we have kept an eye on both our product lines

for power transmission and our product areas of clamping fixtures and remote control systems, i.e. mechanical remote control systems such as push/pull cables.

Could you offer us a glimpse behind the scenes?

Maurer: On 1 January 2018, we will again be strengthening our industrial brakes division with the takeover of a north Italian manufacturer. Furthermore, my calendar already holds the next promising discussions due to take place with foreign representatives. We remain well on target because improving customer orientation through a stronger local presence is another firm target of our medium and long-term corporate strategy.

What are the objectives of what seems to be quite a comprehensive overall strategy?

Maurer: Our Group strategy is indeed comprehensive and bundles a whole host of measures and objectives at different levels. A lot has already been mentioned over the course of this discussion. I would, however, also like to mention that we are currently implementing various measures on increasing efficiency, process optimisation and on the structural modernisation of administration and procurement. Other areas of activity include the further development of our industry managers, who possess special and detailed knowledge on our target groups and key markets, as well as the continued improvement of employee qualifications – for example with the help of our RINGSPANN academy. And finally, as part of our overall strategy we are working on the systematic digitalisation of all company processes.

The digitalisation of all company processes? That sounds like no end of work...

Maurer: ...it is, especially considering this not only means the company-wide introduction of SAP and the integration of new 3D CAD and CRM systems, but also the digitalisation of production and business processes. It also incorporates the functional further development of the RINGSPANN website with interactive tools for purchasers and design engineers. Within the scope of the digitalisation process, we are cooperating very closely with the specialists at CiP Lernfabrik at Technische Universität Darmstadt. This cooperation has provided us with a whole host of innovative ideas.

What timetable have you set to implement your strategic objectives?

Maurer: The numerous measures of the overall strategy were divided into short and medium-term individual projects in 2014, and we have since been able to successfully complete many; some projects that were launched later are still in progress. Overall, we are making excellent time and, as has been mentioned previously, the commissioning of our new plant in Bad Homburg represents the realisation of a key milestone. Many projects that build upon it, as well as various longer-term

undertakings, will naturally accompany us a while longer. We assume that most of the measures and objectives will have been realised by 2020, but I am sure that at this point we will have long since added many new ideas to our to-do list.

Mr Maurer, thank you for this interview.

1,255 words with 8,138 characters (with spaces)

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Note for editorial staff: Text and images available at www.pr-box.de!

Captions (5 pictures)

Figure 1: When it comes to freewheels RINGSPANN is the world market leaders; here, the range of products covers more than 90 percent of all currently conceivable products, models and variants. The images shows a big housing freewheel of the model series FH during a test run. (Image: Ringspann)

Figure 2: RINGSPANN Managing Director Fabian Maurer: "During the internationalisation process of our business group, we have kept an eye on both our product lines for power transmission and our product areas of clamping fixtures and remote control systems, i.e. mechanical remote control systems such as push/pull cables. (Image: Ringspann)

Figure 3: Brakes for energy technology: As well as modern electrical brakes, RINGSPANN also offers numerous models with pneumatic and hydraulic brakes. The figure shows brake caliper HS 075 FHM (spring activated/ hydraulically released) in a Pioneer Wincon P750/49 wind turbine. (Image: Pioneer Wincon/ Ringspann)

Figure 4: The shaft coupling portfolio of RINGSPANN was greatly expanded in recent months and supplemented by many new coupling types – the image shows a gear coupling. The new product catalogue will be coming out in 2018. (Image: Ringspann)

Figure 5: Torque limiting at its best: The RINGSPANN friction torque limiters RSHD are fitted with first-class components and designed in line with RINGSPANN's RIMOSTAT® principle. They are able to keep even the highest slipping torques of up to 60,000 Nm constant over a very long operating time with minimum wear. (Image: Lindner-Recyclingtech/ Ringspann)

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