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Die unabhängige Zeitung für die Armaturen- und Dichtungs-Branche

In the spotlight: ATEC Armaturenbau und -Technik GmbH, Ball Valve Manufacturer

„The best way to produce high-performance valves is to adapt the valves to the process!“

A guiding principle that requires no explanation. Adaptability is an integral component for success at ATEC Armaturenbau und -Technik GmbH. As a manufacturer of customized stainless steel and nickel alloy dead space-free ball valves, customer satisfaction is of the utmost importance. Hence, all its employees are aware of the importance of flexibility in their work. Each product is manufactured on-site and customized to the customer's individual needs. The high volume of orders and satisfied customers are proof of its success. However, the company is never content to simply rest on its past successes. It intends to arrive at more milestones by continually reinventing itself.



A view of the well-organized production hall and the modern technology that runs it



A company for which customer satisfaction is the greatest reward. At ATEC Armaturenbau und -Technik GmbH in Klein-Winternheim, Rhineland-Palatinate, we provide a tailored solution for every requirement. „We see ourselves as problem-solvers, and not simply suppliers of mass-produced ball valves from a catalog,“ explains Michael Hampel, who founded ATEC Armaturenbau und -Technik GmbH with his business partner in 1989. In 2003, he was appointed CEO and since 2008, he has been the only majority shareholder and CEO of the company. Today, the company has eight employees. The ATEC GmbH is a prime example of the advantages of a small operation and how these strengths can be leveraged to make every customer a satisfied one. Over the years, the company has grown by providing a whole array of customized solu-

tions to the special requirements of its customers. A company for which the customer is the starting point for each solution. A company that does not believe in mass-production. A company for which no request is too small.

Flexibility, made in Germany

ATEC has set itself apart from the competition. At the company in Klein-Winternheim, there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. „Practically every single ball valve is one-of-a-kind,“ explains Hampel, and emphasizes that the latest technological developments are continually being implemented. After all, the customer is king. Almost every single order requires customized fabrication. It was these customized stainless steel and nickel alloy dead space-free ball valves, available in both soft and metal seal versions, which allowed this

company, which has existed for almost 25 years, to make a name for itself. In addition to the design and development, the company

also fabricates the items in custom sizes according to the customer's specifications, using highly corrosion-resistant, even exotic materials.

Customer satisfaction is achieved via a high degree of flexibility, as all components are made

by the company itself, in Germany, emphasizes the CEO. This not only has the advantage of extremely short delivery times for customized single-unit production batches, but also results in a close relationship with the suppliers. „Cooperating closely with the clients allows us to best understand and fulfill their wishes,“ says Hampel. The company's flexibility is also evident in the short delivery times for replacement parts when it comes to repairs and servicing. Even the reconditioning of machines from other manufacturers is no problem

for these ball valve specialists. „It is not seldom that clients ask us to adapt a certain product from a different manufacturer to our standards,“ explains the head of the company.

The ATEC success story

A number of important milestones have contributed in no small way to the success ATEC Armaturenbau und -Technik GmbH enjoys today. The constant and complete inspections conducted before each product delivery which are accompanied by complete documentation and serial numbers for tracking has

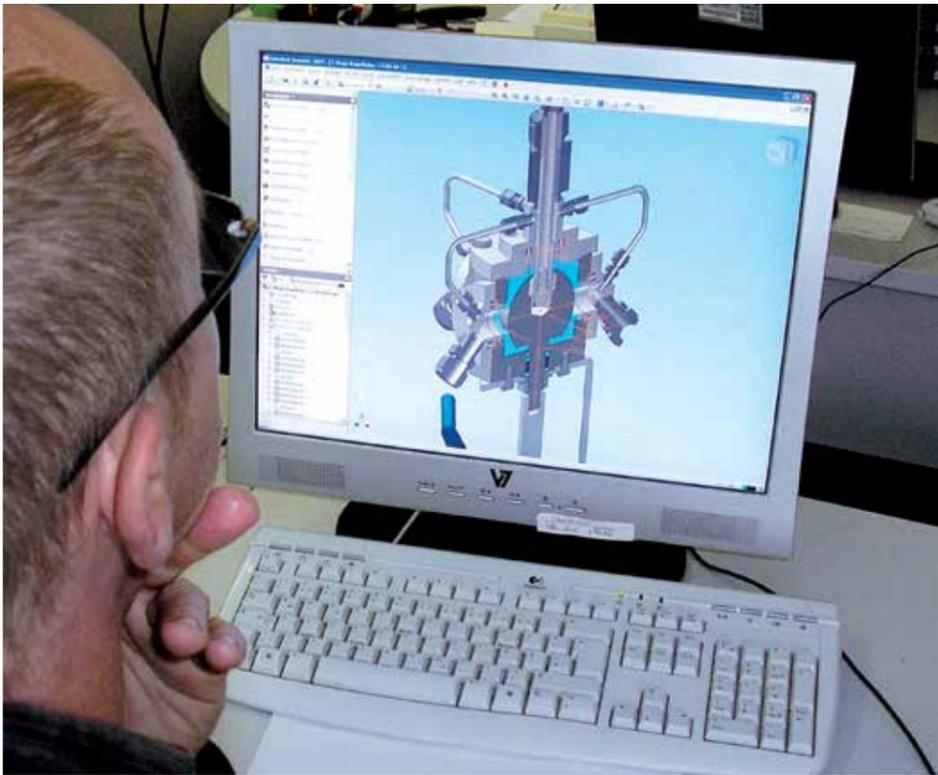


Bottom drainage ball valve for the pharmaceutical industry



ATEC employees do their own welding

SPOTLIGHT ON



When designing custom-made ball valves, you often have to rely on your instincts

yielded results. In addition to the ISO 9001:2008 certification, the company has been certified for the delivery and handover process, EC unit verification, the system for the transfer of materials identification, and welding process inspection. This proves that ATEC quality is of an international standard.

„One of our greatest achievements was the delivery of dead space-free, metal-sealed ball valves to Russia,” reminisces Hampel. Those valves were heat-resistant to over 500 degrees Celsius, and possessed spring-loaded metal sealing mounts, a selector shaft with Stellite bearings, metallic O-rings and a heating jacket. „We are extremely proud that our custom-made products are exported to international markets in Asia, South-East Asia, Arabia, Eastern Europe and Southern Europe,” reports the CEO. In addition to adding a CNC lathe for components up to DN250 to its inventory, the company has also implemented a 3D CAD system and a number of other improvements. Additional employees were hired, e.g. for preparatory work and assembly. An engineer was also brought on board for design and development, as well as a workshop supervisor.

In 2012, Andreas Hampel, the son of the CEO, joined the company as a project engineer and quality manager. Last year, a quality management system was implemented according to ISO 9001:2008. „We have forged a path with our decades of experience and know-how in the field of custom ball valves,” smiles Hampel. „Since 2008, our turnover has more than doubled.”

A corporate philosophy that lights the way

Every visitor that takes a tour of the company immediately notices that each step of the process is well thought-out and organized, and there is a constant striving towards progress. The corporate philosophy deeply influences each workflow step. „We have valued a continuous process of improvement according to Kaizen's philosophy long before the ISO 9001 norm was introduced,” explains Hampel. Kaizen is a philosophy of life and work, based on a central principle of striving for constant optimization. „The constant drive to improve and the acquisition of new and better tools and machines are of critical importance to us. Furthermore, we place great emphasis on the employees' independence when making decisions and their identification with ATEC GmbH,” he continues. Each employee knows his job well and is an extremely important link in the chain, ensuring that the entire process proceeds like clockwork. This harmony is evident to anyone pass-



The five-way ball valve is ATEC's contribution to the environment

ing through the office and manufacturing areas of the company. „In a small operation like ours, everyone has to work hand in hand,” explains Hampel. Indeed, the company is like a well-oiled machine.

A carefully tailored product line

The chemical, food and pharmaceutical industries are the biggest clients of

the customized parts. „Our ATEC dead space-free ball valves operate under extreme conditions, during which valuable substances must not be allowed to collect in the valve housing,” explains the CEO. The employees are particularly proud of one project they are currently working on, which is the production of a five-way ball valve for environmental engineering applications. The ball valve is used in waste incineration plants to reduce emissions. „We are extremely proud of our ATEC ball valves which will play a lasting role in saving the environment, e.g. by reducing emissions.” The business segment „Green Technology” also includes the manufacturing of an all-round metal sealing dead space-free three-way ball valve for

of the dead space-free ball valve with spring-loaded sealing system. The dead space between the ball and the housing is outfitted with sealing domes made of highly heat-resistant plastics. This design prevents the product in the inside of the ball valve from collecting between the ball and the housing, or even crystallizing out. „This prevents the ball valve from clogging up,” explains the expert. „The sealing system is spring-loaded so that there is still contact after some wear and tear, but also to improve the seal and reduce downtime.” Leakage tests are done individually at ATEC. Inspections are conducted according to DIN EN 12266-1 (leak rate A). The employees always strive to achieve a zero rating for leakage.

ATEC Armaturenbau und -Technik GmbH

Located in Klein-Winternheim in Rhineland-Palatinate, the company currently has eight employees. The customized stainless steel and nickel alloy dead space-free ball valves, available in both soft and metal seal versions, are all designed, developed, manufactured and delivered by the company in Germany. Its products are delivered to clients around the globe.

cesses and developments. At the top of the list is the expansion of the company's premises, as well as increasing the number of employees in order to boost future growth.

„We are committed to constantly improving and expanding ourselves,” emphasizes the CEO of ATEC. „We do not want to be left standing still, and must continue to search for ways to improve our skills. Even though our experience, employee potential and

the production of Green Mobility AA concept tires.

„We have also designed and delivered a bottom drainage DN250 ball valve with a ‚crust breaker’, as well as a three-way ball valve with bottom heating for the food industry as per client specifications,” adds Hampel.

With the help of a small model, Michael Hampel demonstrates the operation



Crust breaker

Looking towards the future

ATEC Armaturenbau und -Technik GmbH is never content to rest on its successes, and constantly looks towards the future. The company is always looking to build on its past suc-

equipment skills continue to evolve, our goal shall always remain the same: Show flexibility and reliability with our dead space-free custom-made ball valves, and continue to act as problem-solvers in order to fulfill customer requirements.“



The three-way ball valve has a metal seal and no dead space

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