

Guido Veit

Business Unit Director, Plastics & Rubber Plants Zeppelin Systems GmbH

in an interview with M. Noorani

In which year was your company founded and by whom?

Our company goes back to Count Zeppelin who started to build airships at the end of the 19th century. He founded his aviation company Luftschiffbau Zeppelin GmbH in 1908 and handed over the entire company to the Zeppelin Foundation. Count Zeppelin was a real innovator and pioneer who recognised opportunities and faced the challenge. His airship company was dismantled in 1947 but the experience gained from the production of airships laid the foundation for a new beginning. In 1950, the Zeppelin Foundation established Metallwerk Friedrichshafen GmbH that started by producing lightweight structures and large vessels for the chemical industry. The company was renamed Zeppelin-Metallwerke GmbH in the 1950s.

It would be interesting to know more about the choice of Zeppelin as a name?

The name Zeppelin was the family name of the airship pioneer Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin. His airships bore his name and so did his Foundation which is still the owner of the Zeppelin Group. We are proud of our origins and aim to live by the values of Count Zeppelin even today. He has been a role model for us and our company has always been striving to be as innovative as he was.

Could you tell us something about the development of the company from the 1960s onwards?

In the 1960s, Zeppelin invented silos made of aluminum. As the plastic industry was booming at that time, Zeppelin became the biggest silo supplier around the globe.

Since that time, there has been an enormous growth and diversification into many branches of industry. Today, the Zeppelin Group with its Group holding company called Zeppelin GmbH comprises six strategic business units: Construction Equipment EU (sales and servicing of construction machines), Construction Equipment CIS (sales and servicing of construction and agricultural machines), Rental (rental and project solutions for the construction and industry sectors), Power Systems (drive, propulsion, traction, and energy systems), Z Lab (new digital business models), and our Business Unit, Plant Engineering (engineering and plant engineering).

Has your company always



been based in Friedrichshafen?

The Plant Engineering Business Unit, which is called Zeppelin Systems, has always been based in Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance in Germany, although different companies are at other sites in Germany and abroad have been incorporated into the company. Subsidiaries were founded in Belgium, Italy, India, Singapore, the USA, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, England and China but the headquarters of Zeppelin Systems are still located in Friedrichshafen.

Which kind of products were manufactured during the early years?

In the beginning, the know-how, which had been acquired in the production of airships, particularly in aluminum processing technology, was used by the new company for the production of light-weight structures and large vessels for the chemical industry. So, the company initially focused on the manufacture of silos which, very quickly, have earned an excellent reputation in the market.

When and which products were further added to the company's portfolio?

Over the years, the portfolio was extended to include other key components for the bulk material industry, such as rotary feeders, diverter valves, filters etc. The company gradually developed into a specialist for the storage, conveying, mixing, metering and weighing of high-quality bulk materials.

By taking over several companies from different branches of industry and through strategic alliances, Zeppelin Systems have continuously expanded their portfolio. Today, Polyolefin Plants, Plastics & Rubber Plants, Food Plants and Mixing Technology are all handled by Zeppelin Systems. We are now the world's leading plant engineering company for the handling of high-quality bulk materials, including the supply of mixers and automation solutions.

Zeppelin has many types of mixers. What are the major differences between these mixers?

Zeppelin offers the original HENSCHTEL-Mixer® series, comprising Laboratory Mixers, High Intensity Mixers, Cooler Mixers and Container Mixers for a wide range of applications e.g. masterbatches, toners or chemicals. Furthermore, Zeppelin invented blending silos. This Silo blender can mix bulk materials up to 2500 m³. For details, please refer to our website www.zeppelin-systems.com. Our Mixers have been proven in application of mixing recycling Carbon Black and part of continuous rubber mixing processes.

Zeppelin is respected worldwide for its customer services and technical services. Apart from the service from your headquarters, do you also have service supports based in other parts of the world?

Yes, due to our global network of subsidiaries we are always near our customers so that we can support them by providing the services they need. Many of our global subsidiaries also have production facilities, so they can produce the equipment conforming to our proven

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designs. Therefore, we are not only doing services in our customers countries and time zones, but project management, site services or deliveries partly based on local production or selected suppliers are our daily businesses. For instance, in India we have one subsidiary (Zeppelin Systems India Pvt. Ltd.) and one JV partner (Smart Controls India Ltd.).

What competitive advantage does Zeppelin have in having a subsidiary and a JV partner in India?

Our competitive advantage in having **Zeppelin Systems India Pvt. Ltd.**, as a wholly-owned subsidiary, is the seamless access

to German technology for the Indian market. Further, Zeppelin Systems India offers complete services to the customers in the region, including Sales, Engineering, Project management, Installation and a complete service network. This brings a real price advantage for the Indian rubber & tire industry and also the advantage of local service and spares support. This is our Unique Selling Point. Gaurang Joshipura is the Managing Director of the Indian subsidiary.

Further, with the JV with **Smart Controls India Ltd.**, we are bringing an integrated solution including Automation from a single source. The JV provides Automation Hardware and Software for complete Mixing room, upstream & downstream. This also includes for the Projects we execute from Germany across the Globe. **Ashutosh Chincholikar** is the **Founder & CEO** of this JV.

Have you licensed manufacture of your products to companies outside Germany?

According to our strategy, only selected subsidiaries have been chosen for the manufacture of our products abroad. We do not license the manufacture to partners, sub-suppliers or other companies because we want to make sure that Zeppelin products offer the high quality our customers expect from us.

How did your business develop in 2017 as compared to the previous year?

In 2017, the Plant Engineering Strategic Business Unit achieved a sales turnover of 326 million Euros and an order intake of 318 million Euros. This has been an increase in sales with regard to 2016 of roughly 25% (2016: sales turnover: 262 million EUR). The rubber industry provides approximately 20 % of the sales of Zeppelin Systems, including the corresponding service business, and the rubber plants business unit was especially successful in 2017. This was one of our best years and we are building on this success in order to continue in this direction.

What are the success factors in the rubber industry?

Thanks to several decades of experience and the knowledge gained from hundreds of plants we have built,

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we offer sustainable and economic plant designs and support our customers from very early stages in their projects already. We use the most up-to-date tools and experienced project managers and engineers while implementing complete professional solutions for the mixing room. Due to our 3D competence in plant engineering, we are able to carry out complex modifications on existing plant systems safely and on time, even if technical documents are no longer available. And we focus on efficiency in terms of energy and material consumption.

Can you tell us something about your innovations in the rubber plant sector?

Our major innovation in this sector is our newly developed Automation platform called MIRA. This is an open platform which offers a real bunch of advantages for our customers and will also lead to new business. It is suitable for almost all interfaces to other systems with reasonable effort and opens up all Industry 4.0 opportunities for the customer.

And we also offer a new system for the dosing of liquids which has a disruptive effect on old methods with all their disadvantages such as restricted maximum accuracy, emitting of aerosols and contamination due to open systems, low flexibility and high risks of fire. Our new system is closed, it is expandable by modules according to our customers' requirements and it is able to introduce up to 36 liquids into the process at hitherto unknown

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flow rates and accuracy, at exact temperatures, partly simultaneously or sequentially. We offer a low-cost starter kit for this, so that customers can use this new technology without having to buy the big system and can expand it later on.

What are your business/turnover targets for 2018 in the short and medium-term future?

In 2018, we aim at further development and expansion of our business and expect to achieve considerable growth. In

our rubber plant business unit, we are working on downstream equipment and additional products, on improved engineering services and turnkey systems for Brownfields and Greenfields as well as expansion projects.

In addition to new products such as our new fully automatic Liquid Dosing System, we also grow in the market by opening up new regions or business areas such as consultation and engineering services for the modernisation of Brownfields.

An important asset for the future of our company is the recycling of rubber, in particular, the recycling of tires for which we co-operate with our partner Pyrolyx.

So, as an overall perspective, we are looking forward to interesting business opportunities from our innovations and further expansion in the short and medium-term future.

**Guido Veit (Dipl.-Ing.)
Business Unit Director
Plastics & Rubber Plants**

Guido Veit studied process engineering at the University of Stuttgart. He has more than 20 years of international project and plant engineering experience and is responsible for the global rubber, plastics and mixing business of Zeppelin Systems. His practical experience ranges from bulk material handling and liquid dosing through hot gas filtration to the recycling of rubber and plastics. He maintains excellent contacts with the tire industry and develops concepts for the rubber mixing room for both Greenfield and Brownfield projects.

He joined Zeppelin Systems GmbH in 1998. In his present position as Director Business Unit, he is responsible for the Rubber & Tire as well as the Plastic Processor markets worldwide. Zeppelin Systems GmbH is today one of the worldwide leading companies for processing of bulk materials as well as mixing and compounding processes. Guido Veit developed Zeppelin as a full service provider for



Mixing Room Solutions in the Tire Industry. Furthermore, he supports the development of a closed loop recycling system for tires and other technologies such as Liquid Dosing System and fully automation processes according to Industry 4.0.