

Special:
175 years of WaldrichSiegen

WaldrichSiegen's 175th anniversary – A smithy turns into a leading machine tool manufacturer



An illuminated ProfiMill portal milling machine was the backdrop of an atmospheric celebration

In 1840, Heinrich Adolf Waldrich founded a small smithy in Sieghütte, Siegen. From these humble beginnings, WaldrichSiegen developed into a world-leading manufacturer of heavy-duty machine tools. This year, the company celebrates its 175th anniversary.

On ordinary days, cutting-edge heavy-duty machine tools are being built here, but on September 19, 2015, the production halls in Burbach hosted a celebration of the history and future of WaldrichSiegen. A huge ProfiMill portal milling machine provided an impressive background

for the opening speech held by Christoph Thoma, CEO of WaldrichSiegen. He honored the milestones of its changeable history: in 175 years, WaldrichSiegen mastered economic crises, wars, inflations and changes of ownership, but always found its way to success. "And now we have to celebrate and look into the future with confidence!" – the closing words of the speech were the starting signal of a cheerful celebration. More than 1,200 guests, employees with their families, pensioners, friends and business partners enjoyed the extraordinary atmosphere.

The highlight of the event was an exciting panel discussion on "Generation change in owner-managed medium-sized companies", moderated by economic journalist Kay Bandermann, with well-known personalities from politics and the economy, such as CEO and liberal politician Lencke Steiner, historian Dr. Karl-Peter Ellerbrock, Siegen's mayor Steffen Mues and WaldrichSiegen's CEO Christoph Thoma.

The glamor notwithstanding, the celebration was characterized by small moments, too. In pairs and groups, employees and their families, colleagues, customers

and friends could be seen strolling through the atmospherically lit building, proudly presenting the production halls and their workplaces. The "Feuerland" ("land of fire") and many other join-in activities for children kept the smallest guests entertained. Accompanied by jazz music, people particularly enjoyed the buffet – culinary delicacies from the employees' countries of origin were served at different booths.

Another highlight of the evening was Mohamed El-Chartouni's performance of the "Waldrich-Song" and "Geschichten von Mama" ("Stories about Mama"),

in which the rapper tells the story of his and his family's flight from Lebanon in 1989. The premiere of the movie "WaldrichSiegen – heute und morgen" ("WaldrichSiegen – today and tomorrow"), filmed and produced by WaldrichSiegen apprentices under the guidance of Marita Thoma and Gökben Beyazgül, received much applause.

The ceremony ended with a spectacular fire show performed by the Evil Flames, but the celebration continued well into the late hours of the evening. The guests' consensus: it was an unforgettable event.

Topics:

- Impressions from the 175-year celebration
- Panel discussion: successful generation change
- Film project: "WaldrichSiegen – today and tomorrow"
- Milestones from 175 years

On January 26, 2004 WaldrichSiegen became part of the Herkules-Group. Since then, many things have changed. The measures that were immediately taken – limited restructuring, economical consolidation, investments, new developments and synergies, in combination with the global boom in the economy – took WaldrichSiegen back into a net earnings area. At the moment, we are facing great challenges due to the crisis. Still, despite the modest order situation, there are promising projects in sight and there is good reason to look into the future with confidence.

In order to overcome challenges, it takes the courage to implement changes. We have to move forward, reform, restructure and raise synergies. We have to go back to our roots as a medium-sized company again and enforce a radical cutback of bureaucracy. We need less paper and e-mails, more direct communication and more trust towards each other, groupwide. We have to create more centers of competence for design, manufacture and assembly and create and exploit manufacturing synergies to our customers' advantage. We have to manufacture smaller machines and whole components in small series and promote the standardization of the manufacturing and storage of components.

We have already taken some important steps to reach these goals. The new management generation is significantly younger now and we have initialized a generation change. We have won Marco Tannert, a highly qualified engineer, as our new President and COO. He will be in charge of promoting these changes. Ralf Tschersche, our new Manager of Mechanical Engineering, will support him in his efforts. We take great care to support our junior staff with an excellent apprenticeship and opportunities to study while working. We support sports and culture – one example is the “Der Siegerländer Weg” project in which we unite the commitment of young athletes with a solid professional education.

Restructuring and change are always great challenges. One thing, however, is certain: the Herkules-Group can do it all – milling, turning, boring, grinding and texturing. We have available almost the entire range of heavy-duty machine tools – not each company on its own, but the group as a whole.

The 175th anniversary of WaldrichSiegen is a milestone in the company's history. I am convinced, 25 years from now, WaldrichSiegen will celebrate its 200th anniversary as a member of the HerkulesGroup.

Christoph Thoma, CEO

Panel discussion: Successful generation change

Owner-managed, medium-sized companies according to Siegen's mayor Steffen Mues are “guarantors of prosperity, stability and safe jobs” in their region. For this reason, generation change within the management is always an exciting topic. In a panel discussion moderated by economic journalist Kay Bander mann, well-known representatives from politics and the economy discussed this issue.

How do generation changes work in owner-managed, medium-sized companies? What are the necessary preconditions for a generation change to become a success? CEO and liberal politician Lencke Steiner, well known from the TV series “Höhle der Löwen” (Shark Tank), Siegen's mayor Steffen Mues, historian Dr. Karl-Peter Ellerbrock and Christoph Thoma, CEO of WaldrichSiegen agreed: the challenge of a generation change has much in common with the risky moment of passing on the baton in a relay. However, Christoph Thoma remarked, it is “a long-distance relay and not a sprint relay. It must take place mid-run, but you cannot train for it, because it only

happens once to each single person. It must be determined, confident and right.” The necessary preconditions for that, according to Dr. Karl-Peter Ellerbrock: “The readiness to change must take place within the minds of people.” This is not only true for change within companies, but also for the profound social changes which politicians and economists currently face, and

which were a topic of discussion here, as well: the debate on immigrants. The businesspeople sharply criticized working prohibitions. “Immigrants must be integrated into the middle of society and into the job market. The whole issue of intercultural diversity is a huge opportunity for us, especially for those businesses that are in need of skilled workers”, Lencke Steiner said. Chris-

toph Thoma agreed: “Let them work, and they will pull through!” The consensus of the panel discussion: quality and values such as trust prevail even in times of change. Lencke Steiner: “If both generations live alongside each other and accept each other's different ways, the foundation for a cross-generational, successful future has been laid.”



From left: Steffen Mues, Christoph Thoma, Lencke Steiner, Karl-Peter Ellerbrock and Kay Bander mann during the panel discussion

Movie premiere: WaldrichSiegen – today and tomorrow

It could have been a movie like any other produced for the occasion of a company anniversary: a brightly polished history of success. Instead, it became a project about the future. Marita Thoma suggested to the company management that apprentices should portray the company in a film project, including the young people's visions of the future. And thus the large conference rooms turned into a think tank while the production and construction halls became a film set for a year.

One would not assume that writing plots and stage directions, acting and cutting belong to the curriculum of prospective cutting machine operators. Yet, they might – as proven in this project which offered young people at WaldrichSiegen the chance to pursue their creative ideas with confidence. Under the guidance of Marita Thoma and Gökben Beyazgül, five movies took shape right from the young people's worlds of experience.

They highlight extraordinary aspects of WaldrichSiegen today and tomorrow, original and surprising. The dedication of the apprentices can be seen in each scene. Mastering this ambitious project required hard work, over-

time and a lot of discipline. It was worth it. The result is a complex and remarkable company portrait. The apprentices turned into actors, directors, lighting technicians, camera guides and cutters and their ideas made tangible for

the audience what was celebrated on that evening: the people, the diversity of cultures, being together and working together at WaldrichSiegen.



The film team of apprentices, Gökben Beyazgül and Marita Thoma (middle)

Impressions from the 175-year celebration



CEO Christoph Thoma and liberal politician Lencke Steiner



Fire show by the Evil Flames



Guests of honor: K. Gräbener, CEO of Siegen's industrial chamber of commerce; C. Ewers, mayor of Burbach and S. Mues, mayor of Siegen



Marco Tannert, President and COO of WaldrichSiegen, Stefanie Tannert and Marita Thoma



Christoph Thoma, CEO; Max Appoltshauser, President and COO of Herkules Meuselwitz and Steffen Jost



Heinrich Haumer, President Sales of WaldrichSiegen



Gökben Beyazgül, leader of the film project for the 175-year celebration



Dr. Benedikt Sitte, President & COO of UnionChemnitz



Kids' program



Axel Barten, CEO of Achenbach Buschhütten and Dr. Gabriele Barten



R. Tschersche, Manager Mechanical Engineering; T. Mehlhorn, President and COO of RSGetriebe and F. Spannagel, General Manager of Gontermann-Peipers



Fritz Spannagel, First Chairman of Gontermann-Peipers and Michaela Helmraht-Arlt



Andrea Billig, President and Shareholder of HerkulesGroup Services and Andreas Bongardt



Mohamed El-Chartouni, B.E. der Micathlet



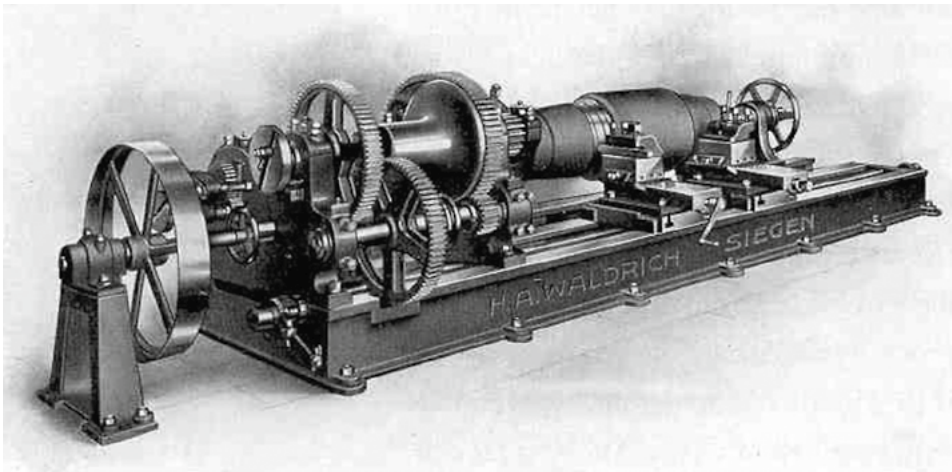
Jazz trio Jacoustics

WaldrichSiegen – Milestones from 175 years

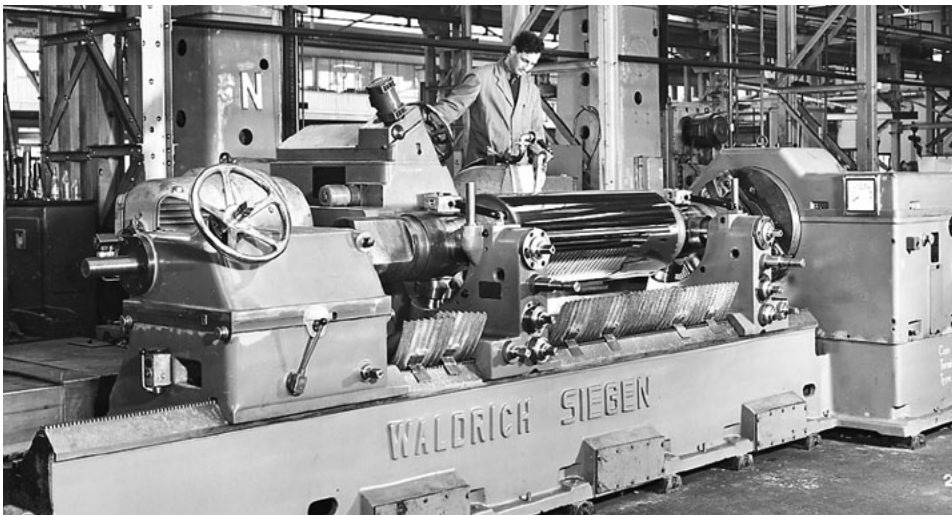
Before the small smithy in Siegen developed into a leading manufacturer of heavy-duty machine tools, WaldrichSiegen mastered wars, inflations, economic crises and changes of ownership. A WaldrichSiegen chronicle, a vivid account of this history, will be published at the beginning of 2016.

A short overview of a few milestones which characterized the company’s history:

- 1840 WaldrichSiegen is founded by Heinrich Adolf Waldrich
- 1879 After his death, Heinrich Adolf Waldrich JR., his son, takes over the company. WaldrichSiegen is moderately sized at that time. He begins to expand the product range
- 1897 In the workshops, the first roll lathes are being designed and manufactured
- 1906 Oskar Waldrich joins his father’s company. The company becomes more specialized; he optimizes the product quality and soon supplies the heavy-duty rolling mills nearby
- 1914-18 The First World War requires a conversion of production to provide war material
- 1919 Oskar Waldrich takes over the sole leadership of the company directly after the war. He continues to produce roll lathes, boring mills, planing machines and roll neck milling machines
- 1920 The production range is expanded to include roll grinders. WaldrichSiegen becomes one of the internationally leading manufacturers of machine tools for roll machining
- 1944/45 Air raids in the course of the Second World War destroy all three WaldrichSiegen production sites
- 1949 After denazification, Oskar Waldrich rebuilds the company
- 1951 The first small milling machines are being built
- 1958 WaldrichSiegen decides to take the powerful portal milling technology, which is common in the USA, to Germany. It forms a joint venture with Ingersoll Milling Machine Co. in Rockford, Illinois
- 1979-81 In order to be able to manufacture in an efficient and economical way, all production sites, as well as administration, are relocated to Burbach
- 2001 After several years of success, profitable production segments are sold in order to ensure liquidity. Soon, Ingersoll has to declare insolvency in the USA. WaldrichSiegen and Waldrich Coburg, which belong to the German Ingersoll group, have to be sold
- 2004 On January 26, Christoph Thoma, CEO and Chairman of the HerkulesGroup, purchases the Waldrich companies. While Waldrich Coburg is re-sold, WaldrichSiegen soon starts to generate profits after being restructured. A disciplined consolidation takes place, and soon the investment bottleneck is overcome
- 2009 With strong market sense and foresight, presidents Dietmar Weiß and Christoph Thoma advance an innovative product development – the new ProfiMill
- 2011 WaldrichSiegen acquires UnionChemnitz, a manufacturer of horizontal boring mills, in order to complete the product range
- 2013 The vertical lathe ProfiTurn V is developed to complete the range of heavy-duty machines. Today, in cooperation with the other HerkulesGroup companies, WaldrichSiegen covers the entire market range of heavy-duty machine tools
- 2015 WaldrichSiegen celebrates its 175th anniversary



Roll lathe, around 1900



Roll grinder, 1963



Portal mill, 2014

Chronicle: 175 years of WaldrichSiegen

Outstanding personalities, courageous founders, foresighted presidents, innovative engineers and competent specialists have shaped WaldrichSiegen’s development and its corporate culture.

With their visions and ideas they developed pioneering technologies and opened new markets and business areas. However, economic circumstances and changes significantly influenced this development and WaldrichSiegen’s history.

Marita Thoma and economic journalist Kay Banderma conducted interviews with employ-

ees and pensioners, researched and consulted documents and newspapers, associations and economic archives to uncover facts, dates and stories. They compose the chronicle “175

Jahre WaldrichSiegen“ (“175 years of WaldrichSiegen“). It will be published in 2016.



The WaldrichSiegen staff in 1933

Mohamed El-Chartouni: The WaldrichSong

Also known as “B. E. der Micathlet”, Mohamed El-Chartouni is a popular rapper. He is well known for many projects in cooperation with the Apollo theater in Siegen. On the occasion of WaldrichSiegen’s 175th anniversary, Mohamed El-Chartouni composed a song on its history and its employees: the WaldrichSong. The premiere took place during the 175-year celebration.

Mohamed El-Chartouni fled from Lebanon with his family in 1989. He arrived in Germany at age four. He later told this story in his song “Geschichten von Mama“ (“Songs about Mama“), which he also performed.

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