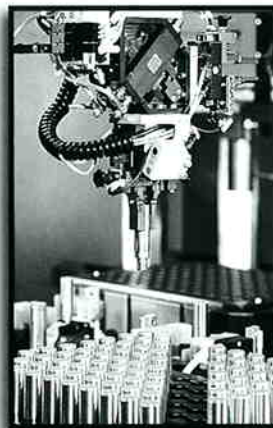


TOP[®] 100

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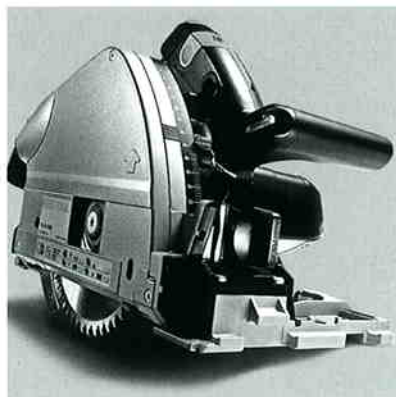


Edited
by
Lothar Späth



Süddeutsche Zeitung
Wer sie liest, sieht mehr.

Germany's most innovative medium-sized businesses



**Festool electric and pneumatic tools
are specifically designed to meet
the demands and requirements of private
customers and the trade business.**

www.festool.com



Where everything fits

If you've ever assembled a piece of flat-pack furniture you'll understand the frustration of dowels that don't fit. There is hope though – in the form of the 'Domino' jointing system created by Festool. As a solution for these kinds of problem, their team has created a dowel jointer and compatible wooden dowels. The complete 'Domino' package of jointer, accessories and dowels allows customers to make secure and precise joints in just a short space of time, cutting out the need for lengthy milling at a stationary machine.

Festool's target market is made up of joiners, carpenters, painters and vehicle sprayers – demanding customers who only purchase tools that represent value for money. Which is why they choose Festool, the tools specialist from the Stuttgart region. Every Festool product also comes with a three-year manufacturer's warranty, an assurance that is key to winning over tradesmen. In a survey conducted in Germany, 95 % of companies said they would not hesitate in purchasing tools from Festool again, whether that means jigsaws, sanding machines or cordless drills.

The company's tools are sold exclusively through trade outlets in more than 50 countries, and over 75 % of its products are exported. This is facilitated by a finely tuned 'just-in-time' logistics operation and a 24-hour repair service. An impartial tradesperson consultancy service is also offered, which gives customers the expertise to reduce manufacturing costs and times as well as optimise their workshops.

Festool's in-depth expertise derives from an 'ideas pool', a structured database of

recommendations and proposals by employees and customers, which are constantly evaluated and then incorporated into the company's 'continuous improvement process'. Staff are also granted a certain amount of free time – for example for visiting trade fairs – in order to develop innovations themselves.

Regular communication with clients is a particularly important consideration for the firm. Responsibility for this lies with its application technology department and its 'Tools for Profit' customer club. The dialogue established with end-users has a positive impact on quality levels and helps the company improve its products and develop new tools. 1,500 representative users test the products in real-life conditions and communicate their findings via workshops and reports. Their experiences are then incorporated into the development of every product. The success of this strategy is illustrated by a string of accolades – in 2002 and 2005 for example, the cutting-edge company in south-west Germany won the 'Factory of the Year' award.



Partner P. Maier and Managing Director Dr. C. Weiß:

'By consistently optimising our products and services, we have succeeded in become the leading company in the sector.'



To be the best you have to keep one step ahead of the rest. If you are an innovator, and you strive for continual improvement, then this book is essential reading for you. Year after year TOP 100 acknowledges the achievements of outstanding medium-sized businesses. **Prof. Dr. Lothar Späth**, project mentor and editor of this volume, introduces these innovative high-flying organisations in a series of illustrated company portraits, in which you can read about their recipes for success.

The book contains a well-balanced combination of theory and practice. In a series of specialist articles, renowned writers such as ifo President **Prof. Dr. Hans-Werner Sinn**, futurologist **Matthias Horx**, EU Commissioner **Günter Verheugen**, PricewaterhouseCoopers board member **Prof. Dr. Norbert Winkeljohann** and leading business consultants **Anja Förster** and **Dr. Peter Kreuz** provide insights into their respective areas of expertise. An entertaining and worthwhile book that will appeal to anyone who wants to bring their innovation management skills up to speed.

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