



Interview mit Josef Winkels, Managing Director  
of Elektromaschinenfabrik Osnabrück GmbH

# Succeeding where others fail

Motors powering port cranes or on ships must withstand extreme pressures. Not only must they lift heavy loads, they must also operate reliably under extreme climatic fluctuations and conditions such as damp or high temperatures. Franz Wölfer Elektromaschinenfabrik Osnabrück GmbH produces motors that operate in places where other equipment would fail the test. That is why its motors are now in use in 70 major ports worldwide.

Franz Wölfer Elektromaschinenfabrik Osnabrück was already active in the field of motors in 1945. The company's customers profit today from this experience. "Over the years, we have carried over many traditional manual skills into our industrial production processes," says Managing Director Josef Winkels. "This combination of industrial precision, skilled craftsmanship and historic expertise is what sets our motors apart."

## UNDER EXTREME CONDITIONS

In just under 70 years, the company has manufactured around 170,000 electrical motors. These are used in port cranes, in marine and offshore technology and in the steel industry. At least 30% of the cranes in operation at the Port of Hamburg are powered by Wölfer motors. Each motor is tailored to the individual situation in which it will be used from a portfolio of roughly 25,000 basic models.

"The trademark of Wölfer motors is that they can operate where other motors no longer perform," stresses Mr. Winkels. "They operate under particularly challenging conditions. For example, the motor must lift and lower multiple heavy loads as well as continuing to func-

tion under extreme temperature fluctuations from -55°C to +60°C and humidity of 90 to 100%. A Wölfer motor continues to operate perfectly under conditions too harsh for others to even contemplate." In the extreme conditions market segment, Wölfer machines

„The combination of industrial precision, craftsmanship and historic expertise is what sets our motors apart.“



The compact special motors are built to withstand operations under the harshest conditions in the shipping industry



Franz Wölfer Elektromaschinenfabrik Osnabrück has supplied motors for port cranes worldwide





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With the new black box, we are able to offer a new Wölfer service that will revolutionize motor maintenance.

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demonstrate not only their exceptional performance and quality but also their long-term reliability and economy. That is why the purchase of a Wölfer motor is always the right choice for investors.

## A MARKET REVOLUTION

Throughout its history, Franz Wölfer Elektromaschinenfabrik has adapted continually to meet the needs of the market. Starting with the switch from direct current to alternating current motors and continuing with the switch to industrial manufacturing practices. Today, digitalization is the major challenge the company faces. As part of an EUREGIO project sponsored by the

EU in the shipbuilding sector, the company has developed a black box for motors together with a Dutch company. “This allows us to offer a new Wölfer service that will revolutionize motor maintenance,” explains Josef Winkels. “We can tell the operator exactly when maintenance work is required and thereby reduce costs.” In addition to this state-of-the-art technology, the company can also rely on the experience of its employees. Many of the roughly 85-strong workforce have been with the company for 30 or even 40 years. “Someone like that just has to put an ear to the motor to be able to tell what the problem is,” says the Managing Director. “This expertise sets

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us apart from our competitors. It also allows us to implement the approaches used by our customers in the motors.”

## NEW SYNERGIES

Wölfer has succeeded in becoming a global brand in the market for large-scale motors. The Osnabrück-based company is also

the first name that springs to mind when motors for extreme conditions are required, despite the fact that it has never invested much in marketing. In June 2019, a majority stake in the company was acquired by the Menzel-Gruppe. The merger has created new synergies that allow Franz Wölfer Maschinenfabrik Osnabrück to compete even more strongly in the global market. “In the future, we want to make the transition into the digital world,” notes Josef Winkels. “We want to achieve a similarly high level of quality that will lead to increased sales and thereby open up a new business area. With the Menzel-Gruppe as our partners, we want to establish a joint service and maintenance department and thereby offer our customers added value.”



Several lifting motors work in tandem on board ship cranes



The name Wölfer is the first that springs to mind when motors for extreme conditions are required



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