



WAFIOS Umformtechnik GmbH

Jens Gutsche, managing director

The past year brought both challenges and opportunities for WAFIOS Umformtechnik GmbH. Despite global trade tensions, and industry shifts, we strengthened our position through innovation, customer focused solutions, as well as advanced forming technologies.

Starting 2025, we had a fairly good backlog of orders carried over from 2024. There were also some positive signals from customers in the spring, along with solid incoming orders. Overall, the business situation was mixed. With the new federal government taking office in early May 2025, we expected new momentum for industrial policy. Germany is an export nation, so issues such as energy, tax and labour market policy, reducing trade barriers, as well as strengthening free trade are extremely important.

There were quite a lot of challenges we experienced throughout the year, such as increasing geopolitical tensions, global trade conflicts, growing competition with dumping prices from China, structural changes in the automotive and supplier industries, as well as a shortage of skilled workers and high-levels of bureaucracy, all of which made our business activities more difficult. To add to this, US tariffs started to slow down exports in the German mechanical engineering sector and this put a significant strain on us.

However, where there are challenges, there are always opportunities. We were able to leverage and further develop the unique selling points of our machines and processes. In this context, personal exchange with our customers, prospects, as well as other business partners about their needs, interests and goals, was, and continues to be, fundamental.

This includes reacting to the changing customer structure. The number of potential customers facing the 'make or buy' decision has increased. In this context, extensive expertise in the process chain for manufacturing fasteners in cold and hot forming is absolutely expected, which is something WAFIOS offers. In addition, we provide professional consulting, feasibility analyses, 2D and 3D simulations, as well as prototype and small batch production on our demonstration machines.

Now, customers want to personally verify the machine's performance and reliability,



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which is why producing parts under near production conditions is so important. In addition, this gives customers the opportunity for specialised technical exchange with our trained experts, providing them with confidence in handling our high performance machines. We are also happy to support them during production ramp-up and ongoing production.

For 2026, we expect the current challenges to intensify, but we also see significant opportunities. According to existing forecasts, market demand for industrial

fasteners is expected to increase by 4.6% by 2029. Growing sectors such as energy or data transmission, aerospace, and especially fastening technology itself, will, of course, play a major role in this development. Quickly responding to new customer requirements with flexibility, sustainability, as well as technological developments, will increase efficiency and productivity.

Technology has already changed and will continue to change the way we work. Key technological drivers for us, and of course for the entire fastener industry, include the expansion of resilient digital infrastructures, advancing digital transformation, the use of additional digital tools, leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) for our needs, as well as securing our data. Among the future priorities are certainly accelerating digital transformation and implementing AI in machines and processes. This will allow us to increase the level of automation and further reduce machine downtime and outages. There are therefore many exciting topics that we are already dealing with or that still lie ahead of us. +