

SWITZERLAND

Ceramaret's Growth Strategy

Ceramaret, a leader in the design and manufacture of high-precision components made of advanced ceramics (oxide and non-oxide ceramics, synthetic ruby and sapphire) for analytical and fluid-handling systems, was looking to expand its presence in Germany. In 2018, Ceramaret (approx. 200 employees) found MicroCeram, a high-calibre local partner with a presence in attractive markets and in complementary technologies. Following this acquisition in January 2018, MicroCeram GmbH was renamed Ceramaret GmbH, headquartered in Meissen/DE as of June 2020. Ceramaret GmbH now has more than 60 employees at the Meissen location and specialises in the production of complex parts made of alumina and zirconia as well as other high-tech ceramic materials. Hugues Leuzinger (HL), Marketing and Sales Manager Ceramaret, gave us some insights on the targets set for accelerating the development and diversification of the group.

CA: Why was MicroCeram interesting as a partner for Ceramaret AG?

HL: We had been looking for a partner in Germany for a long time because we wanted a foothold in this key market. So, it turned out well that Mathias Wilde, for whom no succession plan had so far presented itself, could and wanted to safeguard the company's future in this way. For Ceramaret, it was particularly important to get access to green machining through the plant in Meissen to cost-efficiently fabricate even very complex component geometries, in small unit numbers if required. It was also good that our customer base had practically no overlap with that of MicroCeram.

CA: How has the integration progressed in practice in recent months?

HL: Basis for this fruitful collaboration is certainly the excellent cooperation on personal level with Mathias Wilde and his team. He had already planned the construction of a second new facility. Once we became actively involved, we were able to realise its construction faster than originally envisaged. That certainly fostered trust among all the employees in Meissen in the new owner.

CA: What has changed for the customers?

HL: Our product portfolio has been widened in terms of materials. In November 2020, we approved a global sales organisation and have trained the teams accordingly. Together, we have become more effective. The customers can draw benefits from this. At the Meissen location, we can produce complex components cost-efficiently. Our developments are geared to market demand and its specific issues. Here, we now have many more possibilities.

FROM PROTOTYPE
ENGINEERING TO
MASS PRODUCTION

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Fig. 1
Headquarter of Ceramaret GmbH in Meissen



Fig. 2
Production at Ceramaret GmbH

CA: How do you rate the potential of the geographic market expansion?

HL: We are working on this intensively, especially in the USA and Asia. We are already running our own office in China. On top of this we are working with an international network of distributors.

CA: Is further external growth planned?

HL: We firmly believe that the market for technical ceramics will continue growing. We are also on the lookout for other useful partnerships and acquisitions.

CA: How has COVID-19 influenced your business?

HL: Some incoming orders have been postponed. Good as well as bad news. We very much regret the cancellation of in-person events like trade fairs. We have already adapted our market communication to this situation and hope to be able to hold more person-to-person talks in 2021. We have taken part in virtual trade fairs in China and USA. But they are not ideal tools for products that require some explanation, which for many applications only evolve from sharing ideas with customers.

CA: Thank you for talking to us.

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