



COMPANY
PROFILE

ZOLLER INC.

FAMILY OWNED, GLOBALLY DRIVEN

The ZOLLER »hobCheck« can also
measure hobs loaded into a spindle,
as well as between a tailstock.
(Photos courtesy: ZOLLER)

ZOLLER Inc. combines hardware, software, and services to create optimal system solutions for presetting, measuring, inspection, and management of tools.

By KENNETH CARTER, Gear Solutions editor

With a focus on cutting tools and the solutions around them, ZOLLER Inc.'s place in the machine tool universe holds a special philosophy.

ZOLLER prides itself in being not just a supplier, but a strategic partner in the industry, according to Rita Conroy-Martin, director of marketing for ZOLLER Inc.

"I think that's a unique advantage that we have as well: being family owned, but globally driven," she said.

And that drive pushes ZOLLER to be there for its customers globally — but especially in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico — offering services and products solutions that include tool presetting, tool measuring and inspection machines, tool management software, heat-shrink systems, and balancing machines.

"In the gear industry, we really focus on measuring hobs, shapers, gunning tools, grinding wheels, and form tools," said Product Manager Werner Lueken. "We come in and focus on custom solutions while working very closely with the customer."

PRECISE STANDARDS

Standards in the gear industry are quite rigid, according to Lueken. Those standards work well when it comes to measuring hobs, and the equipment ZOLLER uses is extremely precise.

"We have the ZOLLER »hobCheck«, which has a probe and has two cameras," he said. "The second camera is a 3D scanning camera. And we can bring that technology to the gear market."

ZOLLER's six-axis CNC machine uses three-dimensional digitalization for workpieces and tools. The combination of a 3D sensor with CNC control and automated incident light image processing allows performing coordinate measurements and reverse engineering for quality assurance in R&D through 3D simulation. Objects including cutting tools, grinding wheels, plate pockets, and implants are recorded quickly and accurately.

Lueken mentioned a recent client that reaped the benefits of ZOLLER's scanning technology. The company was approached to check out a part to see if it would function properly. The problem was that the part's teeth were alternating, which makes it difficult to create a compound form with a probe.

"It was extremely hard for the customer to simulate that with probes because there was never a complete tooth," he said. "Our camera was actually able to simulate the cut and do a true form scan and simulate what the part would look like."

QUICK TURNAROUND

Not only does ZOLLER have the technology necessary to go that extra mile for customers, but it also can do so with a quick turnaround thanks to ZOLLER being a family-owned business, according to Lueken.

Conroy-Martin agreed.

"There's a very short decision-making process, which is really refreshing in the machine tooling industry," she said. "And I think that's unique that ZOLLER can offer that."

The quick turnaround that ZOLLER offers can also



The new North American Headquarters for ZOLLER Inc., in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

be attributed to its total customer care philosophy, according to Conroy-Martin.

That means not just selling a product but also making sure that product is going to be the right fit for a potential customer, said Marketing Specialist Michael Kroodsma.

"It's 100 percent driven on: Before we get to the numbers and pricing, let's look at what your process is, what the application would be, and have one of our technical consultants go out and understand that, so we can work with you and tailor a solution for what you are doing and how it will be the most beneficial to you," he said.

And that means ZOLLER's experts will be with a customer from start to finish, according to Kroodsma.

"We're there with you from the beginning to understand what you need, and if we don't already offer that, then we are very flexible and willing to work with you to help develop something that will be a good solution for you," he said.

TECHNICAL TEAM

And that's also where Lueken and his technical team come in, as well, according to Conroy-Martin.

"They work very closely with the inside and outside sales team," she said. "We have this perfect triangle of communication between the commercially driven aspect, the technical aspect, and the management."

Those in-house and external service teams are available to answer any type of technical support question, according to Conroy-Martin.

"It's this very advantageous scenario where the customer can be served in the way they need to be served and not in the way where some companies may try to shoehorn them into a specific solution," she said.

"We're finding out what really is required," Lueken said. "And the machine would be the tool that serves them as part of the solution. And then we start to implement it."

Another time ZOLLER was able to help out a customer was with a project involving measuring rifling broaches for a cannon, according to Lueken.

"A man inspected those, and he retired. And they couldn't find anybody in the world to replace him, and we took it on," he said. "Now the machine tells them if it's a good broach or not. That's what we do. We love finding solutions for that kind of stuff."

SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

An area where ZOLLER is increasing its influence and expertise is with its TMS-tool management software solutions, according to Kroodsmma.

"One of the things here lately that's been a big push is our software development," he said. "In our new facility, we've almost doubled our in-house software development team over the last year."

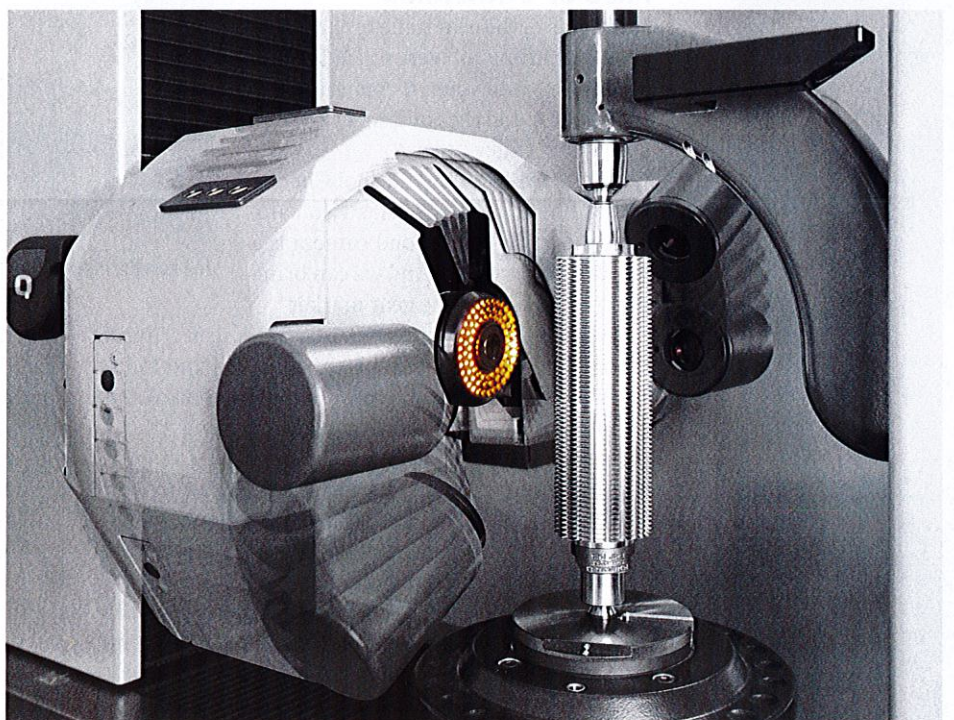
ZOLLER's software, used for tool presetting and measuring, also guides its customers quickly and securely through a measuring program. It efficiently provides precise results to every user, ensuring perfect quality components from the beginning.

Lueken said ZOLLER also is using RFID technology to help track parts.

"The whole thing is about integration," he said. "There's not many components in gear hobbing, but other tools consist of many components that need to be traced."



For the Gear Industry, the ZOLLER »hobCheck« is the universal measuring machine for fully-automatic measuring and inspection of cylindrical hob cutters.



The ZOLLER »hobCheck« comes equipped with two cameras, a touch probe, and a swiveling optics carrier.

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ZOLLER Inc. recently inaugurated its new North American Headquarters. Here Alexander Zoller (left), Christof Zoller (middle), and Eberhard Zoller (right) officially cut the ribbon on the new facility.

A full range of hardware and software solutions will be on display at ZOLLER's booth (#432018) at the IMTS show September 10-15 in Chicago. Conroy-Martin said Leuken will be available for one-on-one consulting appointments at the booth with anyone in the gear industry during the show.

NEW FACILITY

ZOLLER has been serving the North American market since 1997, but the company recently inaugurated its brand new North American headquarters and Industry 4.0 Tech Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"We had an amazing inauguration where the building was dedicated on May 18," Conroy-Martin said. "(Company president) Alexander Zoller spearheaded this vision to have a headquarters of this magnitude in North America, specifically in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to serve the customer base in that holistic, whole way that we wanted to do with state of the art training facilities, an Industry 4.0 level show room that could demonstrate

all of our hardware and software solutions, and a large warehouse where machines are stored to rapidly fulfill machine and spare parts orders for the North American customer base. The building is one of the most high-tech buildings I've seen in the machine tool industry. Everyone who comes in is just wowed by the sheer magnitude of what has been created here."

Even though ZOLLER Inc. has only had a North American presence for a little more than 20 years, ZOLLER has been serving the machine tool industry since 1945 when Eberhard Zoller developed the company to become a leader in the measuring sector and to eventually become a global player.

And continuing to be family owned is what helps make ZOLLER a global player with quick and accurate results, according to Lueken.

"We're family owned; we don't have to answer to anybody," he said. "If Alexander Zoller walks into a room and decides that we're doing it, then we're doing it." ❧



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