



Q&A

with

Leonhard Weixler

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Mechanical engineer. Joined BAUER in 1985 as Design Engineer. Advanced to Head of Design and Development in 1995 and then Director of Design Department in 2004. Currently serves as BAUER's Executive Director of Maritime Technologies business unit. First President of the newly formed DeepSea Mining Alliance.

Where were you born? Where is home today?

I was born in a small town near Augsburg in Bavaria, Germany. Today I am still in this small town, where I enjoy returning after my many business trips. This is where my family and friends are waiting for me.

What is your occupation?

I am a mechanical engineer at BAUER Maschinen GmbH, a market leader in specialist foundation equipment. After 25 years working in the R&D field with BAUER, I am now Executive Director for BAUER's Maritime Technologies business unit.

Why did you choose this occupation?

It was more or less a coincidence. One of my university professors did not believe that I had a chance with this company. I wanted to prove the opposite. I learned very soon that I came to a highly innovative company, which is well-stated in its slogan "PASSION FOR PROGRESS." I never had any boring moments and I never regret choosing this occupation.

What is your personal motto?

Always do your work very carefully and never forget to think "outside the box."

What hobbies do you enjoy when you are not working?

I like running, cooking, and dining. If you do it all well balanced, this is a very healthy lifestyle.

Who inspires you?

During the first years of my career, I learned many different ways of working through my managers. Today I am in the position to make my own decisions. My wife is my best advisor.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

After 25 years of working in the R&D field, I got the chance to start a completely new business unit for BAUER: Maritime Technologies. I found out very soon that there are many companies in Germany with the same ideas and views in this field. Four years later, we formed our community DeepSea Mining Alliance – a common platform for industrial and research partners to support the coordinated representation of political, industry and society interests.

What do you like most about working in this field?

I meet so many interesting people from different branches and nations and I learn many new things about other cultures.

What are some of the biggest challenges your job presents to you?

To move the current status of seabed mining from an R&D focus to an economical business model. And to convince all parties that both economic and environmental-friendly seabed mining is possible.

What technological advancements have you witnessed during your career?

The change from a mechanical engineering focus to more complex systems with a combination of mechanical, hydraulic, and electronic engineering. Even though I am a mechanical engineer, I can no longer imagine working without electronic assistance. It allows a different approach to many problems.

What does the future hold for this industry?

It could become a success story. But we have to form alliances as almost every single company is too small to deliver all solutions for the whole value chain. The DeepSea Mining Alliance is one step in this direction. We also have to consider very strongly the environmental issues of seabed mining.

What new technologies would you like to see in this industry?

To operate a mine in a water depth of a few thousand metres, you have to coordinate many actions remotely and autonomously. Industry-proven techniques are still missing here. We also need solutions for direct electrically-driven tools as oil hydraulic, which is still common in the mining industry, has too many environmental risks. Also the energy supply and storage for the subsea vehicles has to be solved. A bundle of umbilicals for all the independent operating machinery would create a chaos.

What advice do you have for those just starting their careers in this industry?

You have to understand the needs of your partners and customers.