

CORPORATE PORTRAIT

Webasto – A tradition of progress

For more than 100 years, Webasto AG in Stockdorf near Munich has been setting new technological standards again and again with its developments. The company, which has been developing and manufacturing products for the automotive industry for more 75 years, counts as one of the world's largest 100 suppliers for the automotive industry and as one of Germany's top 15 automotive suppliers. Webasto's work consists of two major business divisions: roof systems and thermal systems.

Webasto has been a family-owned company ever since its foundation in 1901. 2010 the company gained a turnover of about 2 billion Euros with more than 8,500 employees. The company has more than 50 locations worldwide – 30 of which are manufacturing plants.

Locations Worldwide

In Germany, Webasto maintains production facilities for roofing systems in Utting am Ammersee and in Schierling near Regensburg. The world's largest manufacturing facilities for thermo systems are located in New Brandenburg. In Germany the business unit convertible, Webasto-Edscha, produces at sites in Hengersberg and Regensburg.

The company founded its first international site back in 1974 in the USA near Detroit. The first Asian subsidiary with production plant was opened in 1978 in Japan (Hiroshima). Webasto is active in Korea through the joint venture Webasto Donghee since 1988. The market leader for roof systems has been active on China's growth market since 2001 – and now has five production sites. The European production sites can be found in France, Italy, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia and Romania.

Original Equipment and Aftermarket Consumer Goods

Core competencies include the development and production of complete convertible and roof systems as well as heating, cooling, and ventilation systems for both passenger and commercial vehicles. In addition, the company offers parking heaters and sunroofs for retrofitting by the end consumer. Besides having a long tradition in both passenger and commercial vehicles, Webasto is now active in the segments for recreational, marine, and custom vehicles as well. The know-how acquired in the automotive industry is specifically targeted to other types of vehicles. One example is movable roof systems for the marine sector.

Innovations and technological leadership

Webasto is constantly setting new standards for automobile roof systems. For example, the company extended its product portfolio in 2000 with a further business unit and also established itself as a supplier for convertible roof systems. Webasto was the first to manufacture a five-part retractable hardtop (steel convertible roof) with integrated glass sliding roof for the VW Eos.

Webasto also takes the lead when it comes to using new materials. The company set up its own plastic competence centre in Schierling near Regensburg in 2003. Innovative roof elements of polycarbonate have been produced there since 2007. Webasto commissioned the second production line for polycarbonate components in October 2009 and thus underlined its determination to become the technological leader on this field. Because one of the biggest challenges facing the automotive industry at present is to reduce the fuel consumption of vehicles. This is why the topic of lightweight design and the use of materials such as polycarbonate will become increasingly important.

In October 2010 Webasto presented the next generation of parking heaters for cars: Thermo Top Evo. The new heaters are the lightest in their class, weighing significantly less than their predecessors, and use very little fuel.

Growing by acquisition

As of January 2010 the convertible roof business of Edscha AG and the Webasto convertible business unit were combined to Webasto-Edscha. In addition the Karmann business in North America with sites in the US and Mexico was taken over in August 2010.

A glance into history

Why Webasto is called Webasto? The idea came from the company founder Wilhelm Baier senior in 1908 when he moved his factory for stamped parts, wire holders and home appliances from Esslingen to Stockdorf just outside Munich. The name comes from the initials Wilhelm Baier, Stockdorf. The move to Bavaria was based on the first boom of the bicycle industry early last century and the necessary proximity to the customer. Webasto has focused increasingly on accessories such as wheels, fenders and chain guards and many of the customers at the time were located in Italy. As in the 30 years of the twentieth century, the automobile took its final worldwide triumph, Webasto turned into an automotive supplier. The project began in 1932: Wilhelm Baier constructed the first automotive folding roof that could be opened or closed with just a few simple steps. Only three years later, he created a so-called “vehicle fresh-air heater” for water-cooled engines. It later became famous under the name “Flüstertüte”, or “Megaphone”. More detailed information about the Webasto history can be found online: www.webasto.com

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