



MACHINERY



INTERVIEW

A LIFETIME OF CHANGES AND INNOVATION

RADU GARBEA, GENERAL MANAGER, Kaeser Kompressoren (Romania)

1 Having harnessed over 100 years of expertise in the field, what was the secret of your success throughout these years?

The new Kaeser logo, that celebrates 100 years of existence, has two new words "Tradition & Innovation", that are very dear to us. The harmony between the two words that seem to conflict themselves may be the key to long term development. As a great pioneer once said "The only constant in life is change". The same thing happens in the lifetime of a company. It has to adapt to changes and, at the same time, through innovation it has to propose changes to the business environment.

2 Kaeser Kompressoren was a pioneer in adopting new technologies, like digitization and the Internet of Things. Where do you think the industry is leading and what are you doing to make sure you remain a top player in your field?

In the near future, we wish every compressed air system that we engineer has a digital

correspondent. This way we will have all the information in one place and available immediately. Then, once all the equipment are connected to a control center, we can do real predictive maintenance. The results will be a greater efficiency of using compressed air in industrial activities and cutting costs for the Kaeser's clients.

3 In light of the signs of a slowing economy and the real possibility of an incoming economic crisis, what are, in your opinion, the perspectives for compressed air businesses and Kaeser Kompressoren?

Compressed air is the second most used source of energy in every industry. Even if the whole economy grows in a slower pace, we will focus on those industrial branches that are less affected. We have been through this before. After the World War II and the separation of Germany we have lost 80% of our clients that, in majority, were from the east part of the country. But we found the energy to comeback and today we are one of the biggest player on the global market.

"Kaeser Kompressoren will become a digital company or it will cease to exist" - Thomas Kaeser, CEO Kaeser Kompressoren SE.

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4 **What are your goals for 2020 and what will be the main challenges for the next 3 to 5 years? Do you have any specific plans to address these challenges?**

Every year we wish to maintain the growth rate and by adding more products and services we aim higher. The greatest challenge that we have to overcome each year is the lack of workforce. The average age of our employees has risen constantly and we make great efforts to attract unexperienced people, willingly to learn and to continue growing the business that we have started 20 years ago in Romania.

5 **What are the most innovative products that you are offering and what are your plans for the following years (in terms of innovation)? Can you name one which you think will disrupt your field of operation?**

Maybe our most innovative product is the Sigma Air Manager (SAM) 4.0 controller. It controls efficiently the functionality of equipment from a compressed air station and can be connected to the internet through a secure connection. You may say that this is not very impressive because there are other devices that can do that, better or worse. SAM 4.0 has something more, it is the gate to IoT technology. In our data base (Engineering Base) we have all the digital tasks of all the systems controlled by SAM 4.0 and we can operate with their help, we can have a predictable maintenance. Moreover SAM 4.0 has an artificial intelligence component, an auto-learning skill that can adapt to the compressed air consumption habits of the

clients, so they won't ask for KAESER engineer's help to reprogram them.

6 **What is the most valuable lesson you, as head of a leading company in Romania, have learned throughout 2019? Based on this, what will be the best advice you can give to people working with you?**

2019 was the Centenary for KAESER, an enterprise founded in 1919 at Coburg, Germany, by Carl KAESER Sr., the grandfather of the present CEO, Thomas KAESER. The anniversary was welcomed with many festivities not only in Germany but in all of the over 50 countries where we are represented. It was a lesson about continuity and persistence under the slogan "Tradition & Innovation". Once the objectives were clearly set maybe the most important thing to us is to follow them relentlessly but also be sensitive about the business environment's needs and respond to them in a flexible manner, so we don't miss out opportunities and be better prepared to overcome challenges.

7 **What is the most important aspect businesses should pay attention to in 2020? What are you doing to address it?**

There are worries about 2020, many are talking about them. We also think that it won't be an easy year and maybe the instability will grow. We will be more careful with the relationship that we have with some of our partners, that may be more affected by the difficult times ahead, as it happened in 2009. But, as I said before, through relentlessness and flexibility, our business will continue to grow in 2020.