

citec 3D: High-tech from Barleben paves the way for the future of metal 3D printing

A site closure has given rise to a new company: with Citec 3D, founders Martin Pagel and Peter Böttner have revitalized metal 3D printing in Barleben. Their goal is to regain lost trust - and to outperform the competition.

A new chapter in additive manufacturing has begun in Barleben near Magdeburg. In the summer of 2024, managing directors Martin Pagel and Peter Böttner founded citec 3D GmbH – a young company that focuses on the production of highly specialized metal components. Behind the name lies not only technological expertise, but also a history of setbacks, perseverance, and a determined new beginning.

The journey began back in 2010, when Martin Pagel and Peter Böttner completed their final theses on metal 3D printing at citim. Both were fascinated by the technology – complex components with integrated cooling, fewer interfaces, and undreamt-of design possibilities. A few years later, citim was taken over by Oerlikon, a Swiss technology group specializing in surface coatings. The Barleben site developed into a hotspot for additive manufacturing. Prototypes for automotive companies and components for the semiconductor industry were produced there. The aerospace industry also relied on the expertise from Saxony-Anhalt: without components from Barleben, the European Ariane 6 rocket would hardly have been able to take off. Safety-related components for compressors used to transport natural gas were also produced here.

However, at the end of 2023, the decision was made to close the site. Oerlikon focused its additive manufacturing production on the US market, as this promised faster growth. For the employees in Barleben, this initially left them feeling disillusioned. For Pagel and Böttner, however, it was an incentive. “We had big ambitions, but empty pockets,” Pagel describes the situation. Together, they took the plunge into self-employment with the purchase of technology-related equipment, four acquired 3D printers, loans, and support from the Investment and Marketing Corporation Saxony-Anhalt. Another decisive factor was that they had not lost contact with their customers.

Since then, Citec 3D has seen itself as a technological new beginning at its old location. The goal: to regain lost trust and impress with quality. “We want to get the most out of the technology and thus set ourselves apart from the market,” emphasize the founders. Their advantages are their in-depth understanding of the process, their experience from over a decade of metal 3D printing, and their willingness to engage in this highly specialized niche. After all, 3D printing remains a market for small quantities, but with a big impact: in aerospace, in safety-critical energy technologies, and in the high-tech industry.

The team is still small – in addition to the two managing directors, an employee known from many years of working together at Oerlikon works as workshop manager. Pagel and Böttner see room for a dozen employees in the future. But rapid growth is not their goal. Instead, they focus on organic development, solid customer relationships, and long-term quality.

This is how a site closure becomes a new beginning with guaranteed success. Citec 3D shows how technological expertise and entrepreneurial courage can revitalize an industrial location – and that there is room for world-class innovation even in medium-sized companies.

More information:

www.citec-3d.de

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