

SUCCESS STORY

› **GEHR GMBH**



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GLOBAL SUCCESS – NOT LEAST THANKS TO ABAS ERP!

INDUSTRY

Plastics

PRODUCTS

Plastic semi-finished products,
filaments for 3D printers

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

250

LICENSES

49

ABAS ERP USER SINCE

2003

LOCATIONS THAT USE ABAS

Two sites in Germany, respectively
one in the USA and Hong Kong

WEBSITE

www.gehr.de

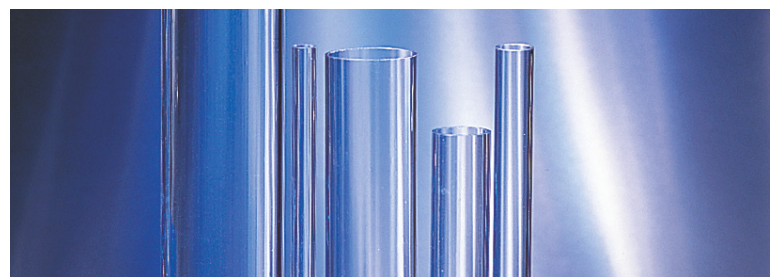


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From its headquarters in Mannheim and numerous sites and representatives around the world, GEHR produces and distributes innovative plastic solutions and filaments for the 3D printer market, relying fully on abas as its ERP partner.

Established in 1932 and continuously family-owned ever since, GEHR GmbH has been among the world's leading companies in the field of plastics production and processing for many years. 250 employees deliver ISO9001-certified quality to well-known branded companies such as STABILO with sleeves for writing implements, cosmetics manufacturers with sleeves that can be sharpened, and users of the latest 3D printers with innovative filaments. GEHR is also an industry leader in environmental protection and resource conservation – the company is ISO 14001/50001 certified and has been recognized with the city of Mannheim's environmental award. Since 2016, GEHR has covered its entire electricity needs with renewable energy sources.



"In keeping pace with the always changing needs of the markets, we benefit from the long-term partnership with abas, providing us with a solid software basis for basic functions in production, scheduling, materials management, sales, and so forth, along with innovative applications such as mobile apps on tablets, smartphones, and handheld scanners or the sheet cutting calculator in the online shop. abas is reliable and has the flexibility to grow with us, supporting the future, healthy growth of our business!"

Silke Bartolf, Marketing



The success story and positive business development of GEHR GmbH has reflected its cooperation with the ERP provider abas in recent years. "Our partnership actually began for a not so pleasant reason!" says Martin Heusel, Head of IT at GEHR. "We were quasi forced to find a new software partner after our previous provider declared insolvency. But even the start of our cooperation with abas was positive compared to the experiences made by industry colleagues. The implementation went well. We noticed from the outset that we speak the same language, and approach tasks with a focus on goals and solutions. Thanks to our expertise as a developer, we know how to approach, structure, and plan a software project to bring it to a successful conclusion. We were and are particularly impressed by the adherence to the quoted prices and schedules – certainly not a matter of course in the software industry, but indispensable for us since a lack of reliability in our sector can quickly finish you in the market!"

Important software components were first put into operation in a phase without restructuring. Initially the fundamental objective to map existing processes as ideally as possible was achieved both in administration (Materials Management, Sales, Scheduling, Financial Accounting, and Asset Accounting) and in production. Multilingual solutions were implemented in key areas as well (for example, text on documents in D, E, and F) and made available for use at the foreign sites (Hong Kong). As the confidence in the new ERP partner grew, numerous ideas were then implemented quickly in order to pursue the actual purpose of deploying the software in the company ever more consistently: Optimizing internal processes, simplifying procedures, streamlining routine tasks, and ultimately the innovative

development of the ongoing convergence of machines and IT as well as IT-based solutions to streamline and improve communication, both internally and with suppliers and customers.

"We consider it very positive that abas, like us, takes the approach that 'Software has to pay off!'. When we look at the interim results today from that perspective, the conclusion is clearly very positive: Our investments have definitely paid for themselves, several times over! Good communication between us, the company and user, and our ERP provider – always with a practical orientation – is certainly a key success factor.

Perhaps a concrete application is the best way to illustrate the efficiency improvements," Martin Heusel says. "Let's use warehousing as an example: Here we now consistently use abas barcode scanners and intelligent software. Previously, many things were handled using paper: Order confirmations were printed, brought to the shipping department, the papers were sorted and the pickers took the top one and then set out with their pens. Even lists had to be retyped or copied by hand. The problem was that this required significant effort for searching and finding, provided no exact overview of warehouse stock, and led to continuous queries from the accounting department, because handwritten lists had to be 'interpreted' before documents could be produced and the supply chain could continue. Now all of this is virtually paperless and with much less movement for people and machines. Many error-prone process steps have been eliminated thanks to consistent inventory management and software optimization. Cooperation between our own employees and the



abas programmers was exemplary as they worked hand in hand: We designed the screen concept and user interfaces according to our high requirements regarding the flexibility of customer needs. The programming was completed by abas as specified in approximately 60 man days, and they even stuck to the bid price. Since then we have an actual real-time system, stock-taking is possible anytime, searching has simply been eliminated. Thanks to long-range scanners, we have excellent distance and radio coverage, even in a warehouse with heights up to 8 meters. All paths have been reduced drastically while freight costs have been optimized! In short, we achieved a terrific 98% time saving in this area alone! For us, that means we can move a lot more volume with the same staff and fewer errors caused by incorrect picking due to product similarities.

Or let's take a look at production: Here we initially implemented basic production data acquisition. However, this was not pursued further because there were other, more urgent priorities. The effects of the consistently pursued developments that followed really are astounding: The previously available, rather imprecise feedback about machine operating times, idle times, and production status after the end of a shift always had the disadvantage that we quasi only learned after the fact what was not ideally produced and where, that is to say, with the best possible utilization of personnel, machines, and resources. With a wheel on the machine and the connection to the Siemens control unit and a link to an FTP server, a file is generated with all necessary parameters such as the machine number, millimeters of movement, and so on. This file is picked up by abas and interpreted by machine, weight per meter, output in kg/hour, and so forth! The benefits are that nothing has

to be communicated verbally, perception and transmission errors are excluded, and the data is transferred directly into the system, compared to set values, and evaluated. Each machine status (for example, "Machine idle", "Machine running", "Setup", and so on) can be specifically evaluated and fast intervention is supported with immediate troubleshooting and correction. And the show-stopper: Thanks to a mobile link in strict compliance with data security, the team leader can even control the whole thing from home! This is how systematic software deployment and development makes sense, resulting in concrete, measurable benefits. It pays off."

Classic SMEs like GEHR need to continuously optimize processes in order to hold their own in tough, globalized competition and thereby to survive. Savings that result from process optimization help protect jobs, but such margin buffers can also be used for more competitive offers in the market or new innovations.

"Our software investments, which are experienced quite directly by our customers, were very well received by the market," says Silke Bartolf. "Thanks to a stock check via the website and our abas online shop with sheet cutting calculator, our customers reap concrete benefits. Manual calculations are entirely eliminated. A pricing procedure that terminates in the order makes the whole thing convenient and beneficial for the customer and our sales staff - which in turn builds customer loyalty and makes us that much more unique. Another win in competition."

"Based on our highly positive experiences to date, it's easy for us to say: We look forward to our continued partnership with abas!"

"Without abas we would not have been able to keep our business on the road to global success over the last few years. abas represents a healthy mix of owner-managed family business and globally leading innovator. In almost all areas of the company, abas helps us meet our own high standards in terms of quality and environmental and resource conservation. abas also supports us in the area of compliance and enables us to continuously meet the high demands of our customers."

Martin Heusel, Head of IT



Martin Heusel adds: "We still have a few things in mind. Most of our employees have been with the company for a long time, which is unusual in the industry. Their input is valued and appreciated. Thanks to our company improvement and suggestion scheme along with an open door policy of managers, all the way to the top, good ideas are always being generated internally without engaging costly external consultants. For example, we want to integrate our machines even more closely and precisely with IT – in the interest of more optimal utilization, more flexible production, and even better coordination of additional machine parameters. Always as mobile applications as well, thanks to the system's flexibility."





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