

## World Market Leader Turns 75

Nabertherm GmbH from Lilienthal/Bremen is a globally acting manufacturer of industrial furnaces with a uniquely broad and deep range of products for numerous thermal process applications. The family-owned company, founded by Conrad Naber in 1947, still produces 100% of its quality furnaces in Lilienthal and is the global market leader for applications in various sectors.

In September 1947, the 25-year-old engineer Conrad Naber founded his „business for the manufacturing of small furnaces“ in Clausewitzstraße in Bremen-Schwachhausen, laying the foundation for a 75-year success story in mechanical engineering. The 2-man company in the basement of an old Bremen house has become a global player with own subsidiaries and sales organizations in eight countries, sales partners in all important markets and customers in more than 140 countries. „Today, Nabertherm GmbH produces more than 10,000 furnaces a year and achieved an annual sales of around 65 million euros in 2021,“ says Managing Director Timm Grotheer.

### Firmly rooted in Lilienthal since 1954. The Start in Lilienthal and the Philosophy of Conrad Naber.

After moving from Bremen, the Nabertherm company has been based in the Bremen suburb of Lilienthal since the 1950s. In 1954, Conrad Naber finally found the urgently needed space for his young company with already 15 employees at the time on the property in the „Bahnhofstraße“. The team started in a 350 square meter work barrack and continuously expanded the location in the following decades. Today, the approximately 550 employees in Lilienthal have a representative production and administration infrastructure with a about 25,000 square meters at their disposal.

In addition to his construction activities, the company founder, who died in January 2018, also left numerous traces in Lilienthal near Bremen as a generous patron and sponsor of science and arts. As an employer, he has shaped a positive and respectful corporate culture for more than five decades, which his successors continued with great care. His guiding principles for customer orientation: „You may only sell a furnace if it is worthwhile for the customer“ and efficiency „Only laziness helps us. Each of us should ask ourselves: How can I do the same work more easily?“ still characterize the company and its attitude today.



Company building in Bremen (1947)



Company premises in Lilienthal (2022)



Company founder Conrad Naber

### The Secret of Success is Continuity: Nabertherm has only had three Managing Directors in 75 Years.

When the founder moves to the supervisory board at the end of 2000 at the age of 78, an external manager takes over the management of the company for the first time. As managing partner, Friedrich-Wilhelm Wentrot continued to drive forward the internationalization that began in the late 1990s. The export rate successively increased to over 70%. Innovations such as the entry into vacuum technology (2005) and the development of the first range of furnaces for additive manufacturing (2015) expanded the range and opened up new markets.

In spring of 2019, Friedrich-Wilhelm Wentrot handed over the management to Timm Grotheer and moved to the supervisory board, which also includes Conrad Naber's son Martin Naber as chairman and representative of the family. Timm Grotheer today continues the successful course of his predecessors, but at the same time sets new accents. The production area is once again significantly expanded, internal logistics gain in importance, the modernization of the administration building begins. In 2020, the export ratio exceeds the 75% mark for the first time. In 2021, in the course of digitization, the controller series 500 for controlling the furnaces and the MyNabertherm app were successfully introduced.



Managing director Timm Grotheer

### The Secret of Success is Versatility: Quality Furnaces for Artisans through to Aerospace Companies.

Nabertherm offers an impressive variety of kilns and furnaces, from standard kilns for Arts & Crafts to fully integrated thermal process solutions for the aerospace industry. The customers of the three trade business units Arts & Crafts, Laboratory and Dental as well as from the business units Fiber Optics/Glass, Thermal Process Technology, Advanced Materials, Additive Manufacturing and Foundry can choose from a great variety of standard models, which can be individually expanded and adapted to specific needs. No matter whether in the field of fuel cell production, for production of fiber optic cables or for ceramic components in the luxury watch sector, Nabertherm industrial furnaces represent an essential part of their customers' production processes.

In accordance with the company motto „More than Heat“, the solutions offered to customers often go far beyond the design, manufacture, delivery and maintenance of the respective furnaces - the company supplies complete solutions for complex industrial applications and takes care of the usage time of the delivered furnace systems via their service team.

„Individual heat treatment solutions and the efficient integration of our furnaces into the customers' process chains are becoming increasingly important,“ emphasizes Timm Grotheer. „In close cooperation with our customers, we develop custom-fit solutions that can be integrated directly into the manufacturing processes.“



## The Secret of Success is Staff: Continuity, Experience and Inhouse Education

Today around 550 of the almost 600 employees of the Nabertherm Group work in Lilienthal. The entire construction and production of the furnaces, including brick-laying, metal construction, electrics and controls, still takes place exclusively on site in our own production halls. Here, the continuity in the workforce proves to be a competitive advantage and as well a guarantee of quality because the practical knowledge acquired over the decades is passed on from generation to generation. New knowledge is introduced into the organization through comprehensive further training and education opportunities.

Nabertherm attaches great importance to training as an investment in the future. You train to take over. Most of the young trainees stay, the takeover rate is almost 100%. Many former trainees now hold management positions in the company and are personally committed to promoting young talents. Every year at least 12 young people begin their training in an industrial or commercial discipline or as part of a dual study program.

## The Secret of Success is High-Tech: Our own Engineering Department with Research and Development

Young academics will also find ideal conditions at Nabertherm. Graduates with a bachelor's, master's or even doctoral degree in technical and scientific courses find their professional home both as project engineers in sales or in design. Probably the largest department in the industry, which is also responsible for research and development, stands for unique technical competence. Nabertherm is always looking for graduates of natural science and engineering courses. More than 70 engineers are currently employed here, and the number is rising.

There is no shortage of tasks: Customer requirements for process integration are increasing and relatively young areas of application such as Additive Manufacturing (also known as 3D printing) offer almost unlimited opportunities for further development and opening up new customer segments. And -last but not least- the expansion of digital control and process technology poses new challenges for the furnace specialists in Lilienthal and their colleagues in sales and service all over the world.



Exhibition stand Nabertherm in the 1980s



Exhibition stand Nabertherm in 2019