

PROFILE

American Kuhne Inc.
www.americankuhne.com
Headquarters: Ashaway, R.I.
Employees: 25
Products: High-technology extrusion machinery
David Citron: "Our growth has averaged 20 percent a year since we started."

American Kuhne caters to manufacturers of all types of extruded products, including industrial and medical clients.

As a manufacturer of high-technology extrusion machinery, American Kuhne Inc. serves a diverse customer base, Director of Sales and Marketing David Citron says. Based in Ashaway, R.I., the company caters to manufacturers of all types of extruded products, including industrial, medical and automotive clients.

President Bill Kramer and Director of Process Technology Ed Steward started American Kuhne in 1997, after working for Davis-Standard LLC, a manufacturer of extrusion systems. The two, who were once the leading extruder and barrier screw designers in their industry, formed the company in partnership with Kuhne GmbH and its president, Peter Kuhne.

Based in St. Augustine, Germany, Kuhne GmbH manufactures extruders and downstream equipment for sheet and film extrusion. "They were looking for an American partner," Citron recalls. "We were looking for a technology and financial partnership to start an American business.

"Kuhne injected the right amount of capital during our start-up that allowed us to make important long-term strategic investments in the design and manufacture of our machines," Citron says. "Initially, they were designed specifically

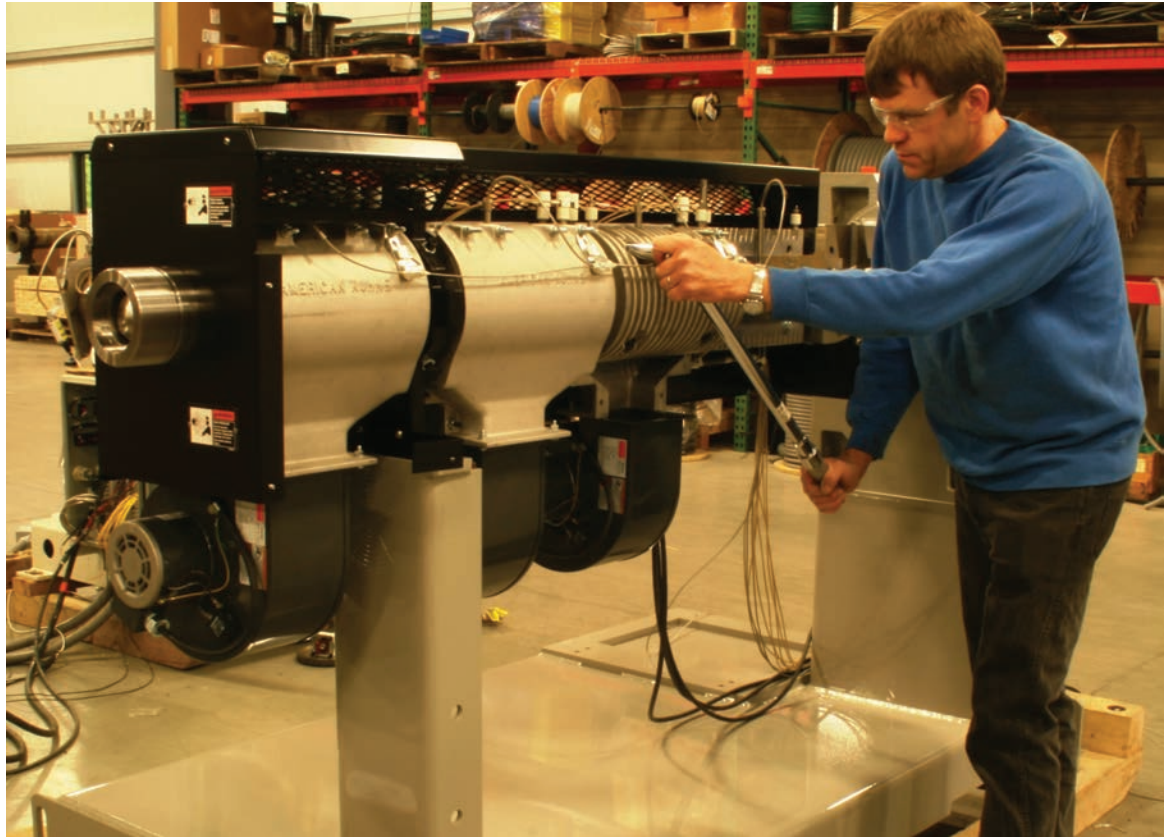


u.s. business review

BRANCHING OUT

American Kuhne says its new ESP division allows it to provide more aftermarket services to clients.

By Alan Dorich



American Kuhne produces approximately \$20 million worth of machinery annually.

► for the North American market, but they have evolved into a true international design now. Kuhne in Germany sells primarily complete sheet and film lines and we sell extruders and precision tubing lines so we complement each other rather than compete.”

American Kuhne now employs a staff of 25 and serves multiple *Fortune* 500 companies, Citron says. In addition, the company produces approximately \$20 million worth of machinery annually, including extruders for rubber, plastic and silicone.

“We have also become very well known for our cost-effective customization,” Citron says. “Our competitors typically refuse to customize or, at best, charge very high prices to customize their extruders. We have built our company and culture by embracing and seeking customization, [and] because we have the right engineering team, it gets the customer what they need at a fair price, and it really helps to differentiate us from our competition.”

KUHNE'S KEYS

One of the key factors in American

Kuhne's success, Citron says, has been the quality and innovation of its machine designs. On average, he says, the company implements at least six unique features to enhance its performance.

“All of these features are designed to improve processing performance, reduce or eliminate maintenance, and/or improve longevity,” Citron states. “For example, our unique wire management drastically reduces the time required to change a failed thermocouple and our rubber extruder's hinged opening feed throat significantly reduces the time needed for material and/or color changes.”

Another factor has been the process and technical support the company provides in the customer's plant and through its extrusion laboratory, Citron says. Located in Ashaway, the lab features a computerized data acquisition system and can be used by customers for free.

The lab features a wide range of machines and screws that enables the company to develop Steward Barrier Screw designs custom tailored for the best possible performance. “To my knowledge, we are the only ones in the industry that does

not charge for this service," Citron adds.

In addition, American Kuhne's ability to provide "good, old-fashioned customer service" has aided in its longevity, he says. This service is delivered by the company's "dream team of talented people in the industry that are not only experienced, but very customer focused," Citron says. "If you're not focused on the customer, that experience does not do much for us ... or the customer."

The company's hard work has paid off, since American Kuhne currently enjoys a high amount of repeat business, Citron says. "We rarely lose a customer, once we get them," he says.

CREATING ESP

Recently, American Kuhne has focused more on repairing, rebuilding and upgrading existing machinery.

"We've done a number of projects over the years involved in that," Citron says. "We decided to formalize our efforts and we started a new division called 'ESP,' which [stands for] Extrusion, Service and Parts."

These services are more economical for clients who want to spend less of their

dollars buying new machinery, Citron says. With ESP's services, "[They can] either repair it, rebuild it, and/or improve it typically for 50 percent to 75 percent the cost of new," he says.

In addition, for these services, American Kuhne is partnering with outside companies that will do everything from clean its clients' equipment upon arrival to completely rebuilding gearboxes when brought in for repair. Through these partnerships, "We can rely on people that have a lot of experience in this industry," he says. The company's partners have included metal fabrication shops and control panel builders.

ON DISPLAY

In April of 2012, American Kuhne will make its sixth appearance at NPE2012: The International Plastics Showcase in Orlando. "We always have a good turnout there," Citron says, adding that the company will bring a wide range of machinery to the show.

This will include American Kuhne's new high-speed extruder. Conventional single screw extruders typically run 50 to

150 rpm. "These high-speed extruders run up to 1,500 rpm and can out-produce standard extruders twice their size for almost half the price," Citron says.

American Kuhne also will exhibit its new gearless extruder, which operates without a gearbox.

"With some of the newer drive and motor technology out there, we're finding ways to adapt that technology and eliminate the gearbox," Citron says, adding that this provides users with savings in energy and space both due to the elimination of the gearbox.

EXPANDING THE FINAL FRONTIER

Citron predicts continued, steady growth for American Kuhne. "Our growth has averaged 20 percent a year since we started," he says. "New customers are still finding us every day."

Furthermore, "With the addition of this new ESP aftermarket group, we have pushed to the final frontier of extrusion machinery," Citron says. "Not only will [we] offer new machines, but also be heavily involved in the repair, rebuild and upgrading of existing machines, as well." *usbr*



EXTRUSION SERVICE & PARTS

American Kuhne offers a full range of aftermarket services to repair, convert, and/or upgrade any brand of existing extruder to cost effectively improve its performance and your bottom line.



After



Before

130 mm 30:1 L/D Water to Air Cooling Conversion

- Gearbox Rebuild or Replacement
- Water to Air Cooling Conversions
- Increase Barrel Diameter
- Modify Barrel Length
- Drive/Motor Replacement
- Controls Upgrade
- **For Any Brand**



American Kuhne, Inc. is a leading worldwide supplier of standard and customized single screw extruders, feed screws, extrusion systems and extrusion process controllers. Extruder sizes range from 1/2" (12.7mm) through 12-inch (305mm).

OUR CORE VALUES

American Kuhne was founded on three basic core values: supply the **most advanced machinery** with the **best process support** and **outstanding customer service**.

Unmatched in the industry, the company offers:

- No Risk Guarantee – for peace of mind
- Three Year Warranty* - for extended coverage (extruder only)
- 24/7 Service – for fast response
- Wet Testing Prior to Shipment – for proven performance
- Free Spare Parts – for reduced downtime
- Fair Spare Parts Pricing – for low long-term cost of ownership

*For AK systems within North America and Europe, consult the factory for more details.

AKcent Co-extruders

AKcent co-extruders are designed for maximum flexibility and value. Choose from dozens of options plus unlimited customization.

ULTRA Horizontal Extruders

Our best selling machine offers over 40 options allowing you to configure this machine for maximum performance and value.

AKcel Customized Extruders

AKcel extruders are fully customized for unique applications including vertical, angled, and articulated installations to maximize floor space and/or satisfy special operational requirements.

AKcess Touch Screen Control Systems

Utilizing non-proprietary, off the shelf hardware and software, our AKcess level I, II, and III systems can be configured for every application and budget.

Tubing, Pipe, and Profile Systems

Complete, turn-key systems are available for applications including precision medical tubing, industrial tubing, automotive tubing, specialty profiles, and HDPE and PEX pipe.

