





Attraction Makers

Atlantics takes you for a slide

Germany's tallest tower slide is 30 metres high and more than 400 metres long and can be found in the Sonnenlandpark park in Lichtenau near Chemnitz, Saxony.



“ We are delighted that the world is our market. ”



Thomas Büchel (left) and René Clausnitzer head the team of slide makers

Transforming gravity into a thrilling ride by means of intelligent engineering and premium materials – that’s one way to describe what atlantics does. Located on the outskirts of Döbeln, a small town halfway between Dresden and Leipzig in northern Saxony, the company with 40 employees develops and manufactures steel slides and delivers them all over the world.

The company’s name alone evokes images of open expanses and distant lands, especially in conjunction with its exotic palm tree logo. But according to founder and technical director René Clausnitzer, everything started quite differently. When he established the company in 1992, Germany had reunified just two years previously and demand in East Germany for consumer goods was immense. His idea was to import toys from the Far East, and because the products were shipped over the Atlantic, that’s how the company got its name.

But that import business has long gone. Instead, atlantics has been manufacturing slides in its own production facilities since 2001 and exporting them worldwide, also across the Atlantic, to the United States. So the name and logo are still appropriate. The company’s products are exclusively custom-made and highly specialized. They are created in the minds and by the hands of the designers and structural engineers, project managers, metalworkers and installers. Demand for slides comes from all over the world: “We are successful on a global scale”, says

René Clausnitzer. “You can find our products in the best locations around the world, for example on the Champs-Élysées in Paris or on Times Square in New York City.”

The slides are made in-house, from the design and planning to manufacturing and installing the products, and the young, creative team embraces technical, structural and logistical challenges. The medium-sized company responds quickly to market trends and customer expectations, which in turn drives growth. Clausnitzer and his colleagues had the idea to develop evacuation slides for childcare facilities. In 1999, new legislation was passed that required every public building to be equipped with an emergency escape route. As many existing buildings had no space for a large staircase, a slide was a space-saving and low-cost alternative.

More than 1,000 childcare centres now have an escape slide made by atlantics. Today they are an essential part of new buildings, and architects have found creative ways of incorporating the functional slides: as an escape route, design element and a piece of playground equipment all rolled into one. “Children end up practicing how to use the escape route every day. Because they are having fun, they automatically lose any fear they might otherwise have. This means that in a real emergency, they can be evacuated more quickly and smoothly”, says René Clausnitzer, describing the advantages of the concept.

Atlantics also started making evacuation slides for drill rigs in the extractive industry in 2009. Its most recent customer is a mobile gas drilling platform in Russia.

Countless opportunities for growth still exist in industrial and logistical applications, according to Clausnitzer, such as chutes for freight centres and parcel services, or baggage chutes for airports and cruise ships. "You would not believe where slides are needed." They are fast, relatively easy to maintain and extremely durable. Over the last two decades, the company in Döbeln has gained experience and design expertise and further diversified its product range. In 2006, atlantics won its first contract in the extensive market for water slides in swimming pools and water parks. The company has always set itself ambitious goals that have helped it move forward, says the entrepreneur, adding confidently, "Our dream is to be the biggest slide manufacturer on the market in future. And we are pretty close to reaching that goal."

René Clausnitzer is not only the company's founder and engineer, but also a team-player and family man. His wife Birgit takes care of accounting. Co-owner Thomas Büchel has been a

loyal partner since 2006 and is responsible for the commercial side of the business and international sales. The second generation of the family has also joined the company. Nic Clausnitzer, the owner's son, studied Business Management and is now employed as an international project manager, meaning that the firm's succession is taken care of. Nic has plenty of time now to prepare for managing the business and taking over the helm. It's all part of his father's plan to anchor his ideas and quality standards in the company in the long term.

Quality takes top priority at atlantics. René Clausnitzer, an experienced engineer who trained as a motor mechanic, knows all about assembling stainless steel components to create a complex product that functions well, is safe and looks good. "We decided from the outset to focus on premium products: slides with a unique design and particularly high quality." Despite starting out relatively small, this focus has enabled the company to attract attention on the market and become firmly established.

When installing adventure slides in exclusive structural environments, such as shopping centres like the Mall of Berlin, in fun parks like Sonnenlandpark in Lichtenau (Saxony), or at





international airports like Zurich, two factors have to be taken into account: First, because they are subject to frequent use, slides must be extremely safe and hardwearing; and second, customers want to invest in high-quality slides that are also visually appealing. This leaves plenty of scope for intelligent design ideas. “That’s what we’re good at, it’s our company’s biggest asset”, says Clausnitzer.

“No two slides are alike”, the entrepreneur says, describing his products. “Customers always want something new.” Whether it’s a shopping centre, fun park, or swimming pool, they want to stand out from the competition and that every investment they make underlines their exceptional character. And the competition is international. Currently, atlantics is planning a large slide for a customer in Chongqing (China). Its engineers have visited the site and work is underway. atlantics is still a small company on a global scale, but good products always come out on top in the long term. “Every project we complete generates new customers for us”, says René Clausnitzer. In this way, atlantics has expanded into one country after the next. It owes this success to a unique product experience, elegant designs and outstanding workmanship.

“ Every new job is a challenge for the team. ”

