Kobra Formen GmbH combines technical innovation, the promotion of skilled labour and a global presence

Continuous development as the basis for a successful future

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The requirements placed on companies in the concrete block industry have been rising continuously for years – whether due to technological changes, growing markets or increasing pressure to innovate. Kobra Formen GmbH does not respond to these developments with short-term trends, but with a long-term principle: continuous development. This principle permeates all areas of the company – from research and training to internationalisation – and forms the basis for sustainable success.

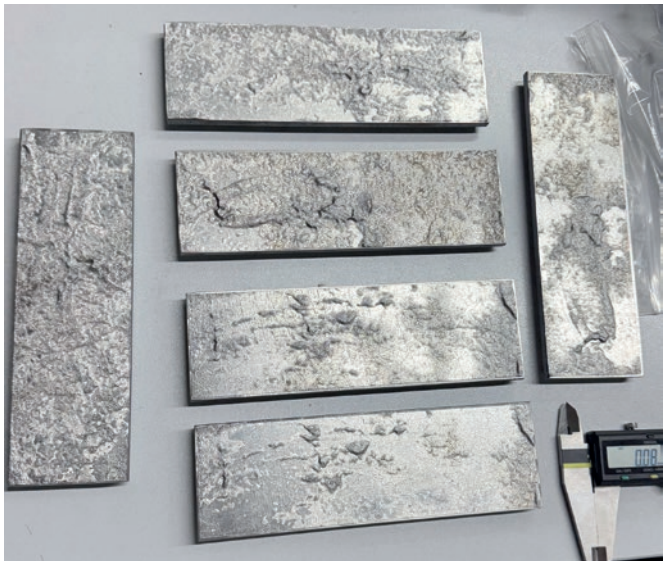
Technological development with practical relevance

Technological innovation is a central pillar of continuous development. Kobra has made it its mission not only to keep pace with the market, but also to stimulate the industry. In recent years, significant progress has been made in the design and construction of tool components. For example, new materials for heated tamper heads – the Kobra HotShoe™ feature – ensure significantly longer service lives for cable guides and connections. Another milestone was also reached with the modular design of assemblies using rubber-bonded metals (FlexShoe™): The service life of these assemblies could be multiplied, whereby the vibration range can be defined more precisely and lasts more than just one mold life without modification. This not only means greater cost-effectiveness for customers, but also increased process reliability in production.

At Kobra, continuous improvement is not based on mere theory, but on a close-knit feedback system. Sales and service employees systematically collect customer feedback, which is analysed weekly by a central committee consisting of management, design management and those responsible for service and production. The resulting findings are channelled into specific development projects, which are implemented through research & development, product development and design. This involves not only responding to customer-specific requirements, but also generally revising existing construction methods or developing new technologies. In this way, Kobra remains close to its customers and their daily challenges, which promotes understanding of expectations and requirements in the various markets worldwide and ultimately benefits all customers.

View over the company premises of Kobra Formen GmbH at the summer party

Numerous results of this work have already been presented at bauma 2025. These include weld-free and screw-fastened 3D-printed cores, which are used in grass paver molds, among other things. Maintenance, repair and replacement without grinding or welding, without distortion and with unrivalled dimensional precision. Another milestone is the machining-free production of tamper shoes with exceptionally detailed surface structures. These enable the reproduction of natural stone surfaces with a precision that conventional milling processes cannot achieve. This is complemented by 3D-printed components for core molds that are already ready for series production, such as grass pavers with completely new designs that can be produced using less material and are also individually interchangeable. This means that Kobra is already able to supply specific components for molds that are subject to extreme wear quickly and accurately. Examples include dummy joints in multi-level tamper heads or scratched parts in molds for dry wall blocks. But even special components that are required thousands of times over, which in the past tied up a lot of machine capacity or had to be bought in from suppliers, can now be manufactured using a wide variety of AM processes.



Tamper shoes with embossed surfaces from the 3D printer

Today, technological innovation also means ecological responsibility

The circular economy is a key project for the future: Monomaterials are recycled internally and reused for additive manufacturing processes using self-generated, renewable energy. In 2025, Kobra will commission an additional 775 kWp of photovoltaic capacity, bringing the total capacity to over 1.8 MW. Around 30 % of the company's annual energy requirements are thus covered by solar energy. A further novelty: Kobra will be the first mold maker in the world to use green steel from its own production in mold making.

The advantages for customers are clearly tangible. By using CO_2-reduced molds – manufactured with green steel and using renewable energy – concrete block manufacturers can significantly reduce the CO_2 footprint of their own products. Kobra thus not only supplies technologically leading tools, but also makes a real contribution to achieving the customer's environmental goals. These forms offer a measurable advantage in tenders, certification procedures or in the documentation of sustainability balances. They enable customers to make their production chain more sustainable – without compromising on precision, service life or quality. In the future, recycling concepts for wear parts will also be developed – including by taking back old modular parts for reuse.

Kobra is thus positioning itself not only as a tool supplier, but also as a genuine technology and sustainability partner. The combination of economic efficiency and ecological foresight thus becomes a further quality feature – a claim to innovation that is carried through to the customer's end product.

Skilled labour development with substance

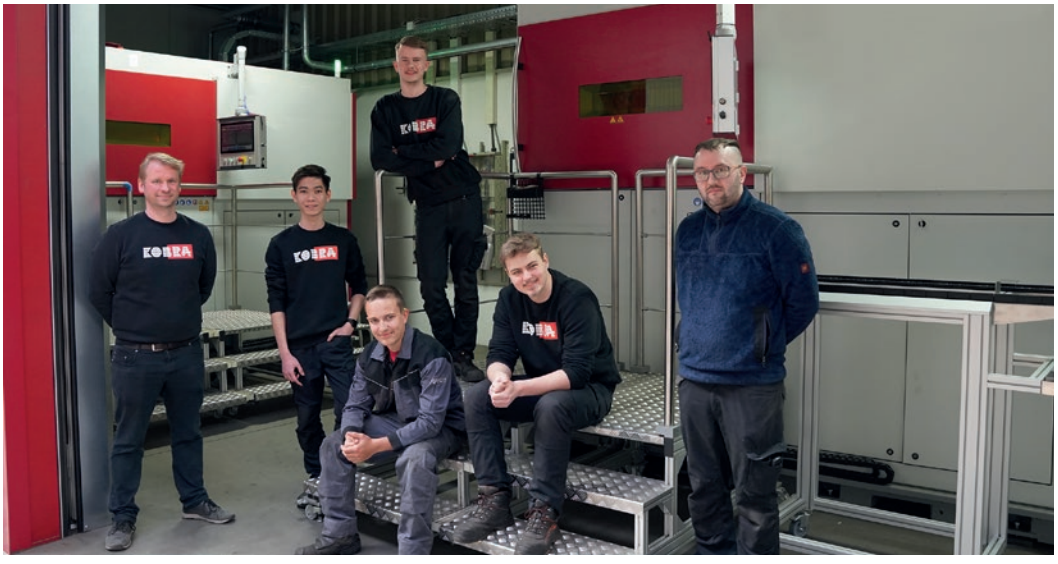
The technological development of a company is only as strong as the people who support it. Training is therefore a particularly high priority at Kobra. In the company's own training workshop, an average of 15 trainees complete a practice-orientated apprenticeship as cutting machine operators, industrial mechanics or construction mechanics. The training workshop is comprehensively equipped – with modern milling machines and lathes as well as manual workstations that specifically prepare trainees for the demands of the future world of work.

Even in the later stages of their training, Kobra trainees have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with various workstation groups in the now eleven production halls under the expert supervision of experienced skilled workers. Whether CNC machining, welded assemblies, assembly, maintenance or additive manufacturing – by switching between areas, the trainees gain a broad insight into the company's diverse technologies and fields of activity.

This results in individual perspectives: Many trainees decide on a specific field of work that matches their interests and strengths before they graduate. If an additional qualification or specialisation is required for the desired job – for example in programming, CAD, 3D printing or materials technology – Kobra expressly supports this step. This can be achieved through internal training courses, external training programmes or customised development paths. In this way, the transition from training to working life is not only facilitated, but actively organised – with the aim of retaining and developing motivated specialists in the long term.

At the same time, Kobra promotes the continuous professional development of its employees. The spectrum ranges from technician and master craftsman training courses to courses offered by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and specialised training in the field of additive manufacturing. In-house language courses also enhance the teams' international communication skills. This creates a working environment in which individual development is encouraged and specialisation is seen as an opportunity.

However, the commitment to training does not end at the factory gates. Kobra co-operates with a large number of universities of applied sciences, universities and vocational acade-



The Kobra team "3D printing"

In 2025, Kobra will commission an additional 775 kWp of photovoltaic capacity, bringing the total capacity to over 1.8 MW.

mies – both nationally and internationally. These partnerships range from joint research projects and ideas competitions to the development of new production processes. A particular highlight is the Technology Symposium, which is organised every three years in Lengenfeld in Germany and in Hudson (Wisconsin, USA) and promotes dialogue between customers, universities and the KOBRA team.

Kobra uses a wide range of measures to inspire young talent at an early stage: from traditional internships and holiday work to ideas competitions at schools. Careers fairs, school events and a targeted approach via social networks and club work complement the strategy. Team-building measures, summer parties and company health insurance for all employees and their children emphasise the company's appreciation of its employees.

An average of 15 trainees complete practical training in the company's own training workshop

Global presence with local responsibility

In addition to technological and personnel development, Kobra is focussing on international presence – not with the aim of anonymous growth, but with local proximity to the customer. The Kobra Formen Morocco S.A.R.L. subsidiary was founded in Morocco in order to serve the North African markets more directly and with a better understanding of regional requirements. At the same time, a representative office for the Latin American market was established in the Dominican Republic in order to strengthen our presence in this dynamically growing region.

In established markets such as Europe, North America, Asia and Australia, Kobra is pursuing a strategy of sustainable growth: Existing customer relationships are being deepened, supply shares expanded and innovations introduced in a targeted manner. The integration of regional market requirements is not just lip service, but an integral part of product development. Local partners – whether branches or agencies – regularly pass on customer feedback, expectations and specific requirements to the sales management in Lengenfeld. This information flows directly into the design of new products, marketing measures and technical solutions. This results in tools that are precisely tailored to the respective market – technically, economically and according to local aspects.

Corporate culture of development

The basis for this dynamic is a corporate culture that is geared towards continuous improvement. Kobra sees development not only as a technical or strategic concept, but also as an attitude – an attitude that is anchored both in the way we work together and in the structures of the company. A mission statement that promotes mutual respect, responsibility and openness creates the framework for employees to contribute and develop.

Shaping the future – in the market and with people

Kobra shows that economic success and technological excellence do not have to be an end in themselves. Instead, the company sees its role as an active shaper – both in the market and in society. "The best welding seam is the one that doesn't exist. We master the technologies of today and develop those of tomorrow," is how one of our guiding principles summarises our self-image.

This attitude is having an effect: Kobra is not only growing with the markets, but also in the markets. Success is not based on short-term goals, but on a consistent, well thought-out strategy of continuous development. This path is not an easy one – but it is sustainable, responsible and viable for the future. In an industry that relies on precision, trust and innovation more than almost any other, Kobra sets standards – day after day, worldwide. ■

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