

# WADER-WOŹNIAK DRIVING CREATIVITY



A GLIMPSE INTO THE LIFE OF A TOY SME

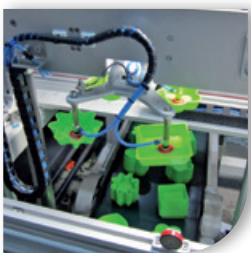
## A LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH PLASTIC TOYS

Wader-Woźniak relies on a long family tradition in the production of plastic toys. The company sells around 4 million toys per year and had a turnover of €13 million in 2012.

In the late 1960s Ryszard Woźniak established a plastic toy company in the Polish Province of Silesia to produce toys, mostly trucks and cars for young children. As the communist regime did not view private businesses favourably, Ryszard's company had to have less than 25 employees and belong to a cooperative. This entity rather than the company bought the required materials and sold Ryszard's products. After the fall of communism, Poland moved to a market economy, which resulted in significant legal changes for businesses and Ryszard eventually launched his own private company in 1989.

A 1990 partnership with a German plastic toy manufacturer gave a new impulse to Ryszard's business, which became known as Wader-Woźniak. The company grew steadily thanks to the introduction of new plastic products such as beach, garden and garage sets as well as building blocks. Since 2006, Wader-Woźniak has won the Business Gazelle's prize six times for being one of the most dynamic SMEs in Poland Today, the company employs 210 people. When the German partner went bankrupt in 2012, Ryszard's son, Marcin, who has run the company since 1999, decided to end the partnership and to go it alone by carrying on his family's tradition of developing innovative plastic toys.

## EXPANDING GLOBALLY



Since the company's creation, Wader-Woźniak has had deep roots in its region of origin. All aspects of the production, from research and manufacture to packaging and shipping, occur near the city of Dąbrowa Górnicza in the Silesia Province. The company started to export its toys to neighbouring countries, like the Czech Republic and Slovakia, soon after the fall of the communist regime.

International trade drives Wader-Woźniak's growth and it benefits from a strong distribution network with solid partnerships across the European Union (EU). The EU's Single Market is of prime importance for Wader-Woźniak as it accounts for around 43% of the company's turnover. Wader-Woźniak also has successful business relationships beyond the EU, such as in the Ukraine and Israel.

The Province of Silesia recognised Wader-Woźniak's strong connection and contribution to the region when it awarded the company the Gold Medal of Honour for Merit in 2010.

## BEHIND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Reputable toy companies such as Wader-Woźniak invest heavily in research and development in order to remain competitive. Out of the 150 toys in the company's catalogue, around 20 are novelties each year in order to meet children's latest desires. The process of developing a new toy is extremely costly as it involves creating designs and developing prototypes as well as building new injection moulds, for example. Wader-Woźniak ensures the safety and quality of its toys throughout the production process and complies with the relevant legislation. The company is a strong advocate of science-based decision making: it believes that new legal provisions should only be introduced if they provide additional protection for children and do not unnecessarily burden companies.



## BUILDING ON LICENCES



Wader-Woźniak also provides children with new play opportunities by affixing well-known characters onto its products. As consumers react positively to such licenced products, Wader-Woźniak works with Disney and a local brand, 'Friends on the move', to create licenced summer beach sets. Thanks to an innovative printing process, an image of a popular character is printed on buckets, shovels or sandshells, for instance. This diversifies Wader-Woźniak's product catalogue and allows children to choose toys with beloved characters.

## EDUCATION THROUGH FUN

Wader-Woźniak uses some of its toys to share important information with children: all of its toy police, fire brigade and hospital sets include the EU emergency phone number.



Learning through play is at the core of Wader-Woźniak's philosophy. For example, its street playsets and building blocks feature shapes and colours, which foster the psychomotor development of children between six months and seven years old. Playing with building blocks also helps children to be creative while improving their fine motor skills and spatial awareness. In 2011, the company also launched three playsets promoting the EU emergency phone number in order to raise awareness about the 112 number among children.

*'We support any legislation that is based on extensive impact assessments and robust scientific evidence.'*

Marcin Woźniak, CEO



With around 5.8 million children under 15 (15% of the population), annual toy sales in **Poland** reach around €480 million. Toy production is concentrated in the region of Silesia. The Polish toy market is very seasonal with around one in two toys bought during the last quarter of the year.

The **European Union** (EU) is the largest toy market in the world (27% of global sales), meeting the diverse and evolving demands of its 79 million children. Over 99% of the almost 5,000 toy companies are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). With over 220,000 people working in the sector in the EU, toy companies play a key role in Europe's economic fabric. The toy industry is highly international and is one of the most dynamic business sectors in Europe: around 60% of toys on the market each year are newly developed. The sector is also highly seasonal, with consumers making the majority of purchases during the Christmas period.

The **Polish Toy Association** is an organisation representing Polish industries specialising in toys and products for children. It has more than 60 company members including manufacturers, distributors, exporters and importers active in the toy sector. Wader-Woźniak is a member of the Polish Toy Association.

**Toy Industries of Europe** (TIE) is the trade association for the European toy industry. Members include companies and national associations from across Europe.

