

SPECK PUMPEN *HISTORY*

The special issue of BADU® NEWS for the 100th anniversary of Speck Pumpen

Speck: 100 years of innovation in pump making

What started was a father's dream of independence which then became reality 100 years ago and has continued through to his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons and is still continuing today.

100 years ago, on a summer Sunday morning in Nuremberg, the Speck story began. While walking along the Schweiggerstrasse, Daniel Speck and his eldest son Otto, then 19, discovered an empty workshop, which (as often happens) allowed them to dream vividly about their own small business. A clumsy attempt to peer through a half-open window brought a paraffin can crashing to the floor of the workshop thus attracting the attention of the owner who lived above. The inquisitive pair were not in the least bit embarrassed about their strange behaviour and announced their serious interest in the property. A very relieved owner whose small business was coincidentally for sale then joined the two Specks for a few beers in a nearby beer garden. A missed lunch with the family and a surely heated debate between father and son sealed the purchase of the machinist's workshop by handshake that same afternoon.



Emilie and Daniel Speck with their five sons at the time of the foundation of the business. In the background, the fateful window of the workshop.

At the time Daniel Speck was employed by MAN as a foreman. Even in his childhood in Karlsruhe his fascination for mechanical functions – which he passed on to all five of his sons, resulted in memorable stories. As a small boy Daniel, who was born in 1864, was supposed to have filched kitchen knives from his mother, fitted them to wooden strips which he then used as very functional ice skates.

After the purchase of the property, the second son Kurt, a freshly trained mechanic immediately started work in the workshop. The third son Walter followed as an apprentice. Otto was responsible for the financing and handled the sales on the sideline. Daniel Speck remained faithful to his job at first and spent evenings and nights dealing with the family business.



Daniel Speck, the company founder



The first trademark, drawn by hand: "Daniel Speck Nürnberg" (DSN)



Family council in the kitchen: Mr and Mrs Speck with the three eldest sons



Patent document
and plunger pump
from 1912



The first products produced by Speck were transmission parts which sold well but with their limited capital could not be produced in large quantities. In 1910 Daniel Speck invented a garage compressor for pumping up vehicle tyres which could be produced at a much lower cost.

At the time father and sons often stood in the workshop from 6am until well after midnight until one day their wife and mother Emilie Speck declared that work must be finished by 9pm. This was not up for discussion. In his then enforced compulsory free time, Daniel designed a pump for which he obtained the German imperial patent in 1912 for its discharge device. With the production of the plunger reciprocating pump, “DSN – Daniel Speck Nürnberg” laid the foundations for its successful history in pump building.

For a long time the building of pumps was not the main source of income which supported their large family. Various kinds of machinery were built for the agricultural market in which the requirement for technical equipment was growing rapidly. This often involved producing brand new designs for various inventors for the first time. The commercial basis for the gradually expanding enterprise was put in place by mass production of the circular saws “Runda” and “Puck”.

With the start of World War I orders collapsed. Only immediate re-orientation to punching tools and stamping moulds for leather goods factories ensured the company’s survival. The three eldest sons and their most competent craftsmen were enlisted into the armed forces when Willy Speck, their fourth son, left school. He immediately proved to be a reliable support to his father. At the time even the youngest son Karl would give up playing cops and robbers with his friends in order to work in his father’s company.

In 1918 the company moved into new premises in the Hadermühle in Nuremberg and within four years expanded into the adjacent building with its own 6 horsepower water-powered mill.



“Runda” circular saw and an advertisement
for the Speck brand of circular saw blades



A waggon load of Runda circular saws in front of the Hadermühle
in Nuremberg.



“The apprentices have whitewashed the workshop”

Although a new circular saw was produced every 48 minutes, an end to this business was foreseeable. For over a year Kurt Speck buried himself in the private study of pump building and designed a centrifugal pump for domestic water supply. This was followed shortly afterwards by a “large pump” with a 50 mm pipe connection.

This was a rewarding investment. With the progress of electrification in rural areas the demand for electric pumps grew enormously as a replacement for human labour for the water supply. With further developments Speck pumps were then also in demand in the industrial field.



Country people at the manually pumped spring: "I am the only one to suffer – I'm out of work because of the Speck pumping station".

The need to react quickly and economically even for express orders was the incentive for buying the site Lohmühle in Hilpoltstein. Here the company's own foundry began operation in 1926. During the years of the world economic crisis, this step would above all turn out to be vital for Speck's survival.

After his commercial education Karl Speck joined MAN and returned in 1929 as foundry foreman. He then took over the responsibility and management of the family foundry.

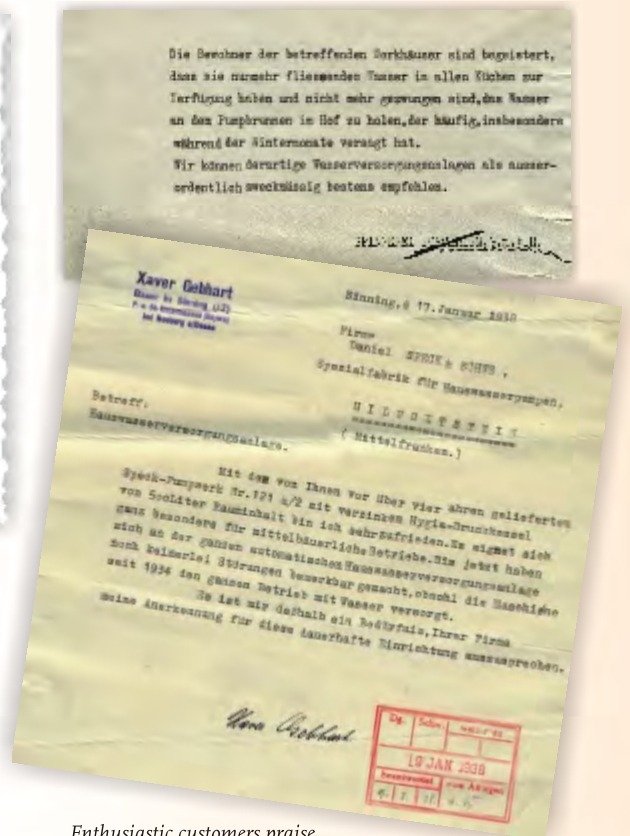


The Lohmühle in Hilpoltstein when it was bought in 1925.

Walter Speck travelled as far as Norway to inspect Speck pumping stations in operation and trained the master craftsmen there. He brought home important experience for new design of further types, an indispensable knowhow for the evolving position of the company in the market!

In 1925 Daniel Speck was awarded the title of Gewerberat (commercial counsellor) by the Bavarian state ministry. In 1926 this was raised to Landesgewerberat (state commercial counsellor).

Due to the gradual reduction in pump requirements for domestic use, Speck then redirected their concentration to larger systems for industrial purpose. At the end of 1928 the whole production was moved to a new building in Hilpoltstein. Their first overseas order was obtained a year later and the first Speck pumps found their way to Mexico.



Enthusiastic customers praise the quality of Speck pumping stations



Karl Speck's master craftsman's certificate of 1926 as foundry foreman



Well packed – the long journey to Mexico begins in Hilpoltstein



Exhibition in the 1920s or 1930s



The original version of the gearwheel man, from the pen of Daniel Speck, 1924



Advertisement for the Büffel pump, in rhyme

During the mid-1920s, Speck began to exhibit at exhibitions and trade fairs. In this connection, the “gearwheel man”, which Daniel Speck himself designed in 1924, was born. The original version consists of various mechanical elements, of which the toothed rack and gearwheel are still recognisable in today’s version.

The businessman Willy Speck also followed his technical inclination and dedicated himself to studying the theory of centrifugal pumps. As his first design, he succeeded in designing a sectional centrifugal pump with an 80 mm pipe connection which remained unchanged in the product range for decades.

In the early 1930s, commercially difficult times caused the family council to take precautionary action which in the end was unnecessary. Kurt Speck declared that he was ready to leave the company and become independent from the Nuremberg parent plant and goods in stock. If necessary, his wholesale business in transmission and water pipe items would be the foundation for reconstruction of the family’s existence. As history shows both companies survived the crisis, established the name Speck and evolved further.

As well as many mechanical designs, some poems which Daniel Speck wrote himself have been handed down – even if he was not quite as successful here as in pump building. With “A people’s cry of misery” of October 1931, he helps us to understand the dire situation then in the country and also in the Speck company:

*Give work! Give bread! A cry goes through the land,
a cry from torment, from the aching brain.
Help! Help from misery, quench the burning of the heart!
Give work! Give bread, cool the feverish brow!*

*You sated people, you from every class,
you who were sent to the forum as messengers,
instead of work, instead of bread, you bring us into misery.
You know only one thing: your parties;
instead of unifying the people, you could divide it in two.*

*You do not know the nights full of care and misery,
through which the mother wakes because of the children’s bread;
though which a father thinks in nameless pain
about whether he will ever again join the producing ranks.
Instead of discussing “How to banish misery”
in the high house, they beat themselves to death.*

*When will the word ring out from the appointed mouth:
“This house is not the place
where chaos can revel in orgies.
Our people, under the spell of the harshest misery,
finally wants to see actions,
and anyone who does not act with them should go to the devil.”*

*Give work! Give bread! The cry goes through the land.
Will the cry soon be detected up there?
Will it soon be seen up there at the top
that it can’t go on like this here below?
The people want work, do not want party politics,
take warning, patience is soon past;
it is one minute to twelve!*

After the crisis was overcome in a noticeable commercial upswing, it was possible to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the formation of the company. The number of employees had grown to over 50 and the factory in Hilpoltstein was rapidly expanding.



The Hilpoltstein company site.

In 1936, the four sons Otto, Walter, Willy and Karl were taken into the company as shareholders and its name also changed to “**Daniel Speck & Söhne (sons)**”. The number of employees grew to 70 so that at the end of the 1930s two omnibuses were necessary for company outings.

In 1939 Daniel Speck celebrated his 75th birthday where he handed over the management to his eldest son Otto and withdrew from active business life. Even so there was never a day that passed where he did not look round the workshops and offices.

During the war in order to meet the state-dictated regulations of “German production forces” the expensive pumps had to be excluded from the production programme. After the war ended, above all, centrifugal and reciprocating pumps for dairies, breweries and market gardens were important products for reconstruction. In the early 1950s, they were followed by tractor pumps and pumping stations for local water pipes.

In 1947, the founder Daniel Speck died at the age of 83. His four sons led the company to new success after World War II.

In the commercial upswing of the postwar period, trade fairs and exhibitions became more important than ever for the sale of Speck pumps. One of the most outstanding pumps was the Büffel (buffalo) pump. An amusing anecdote has survived the decades, enthused by the quality of the product – a customer enthusiastically thanked Willy Speck personally at a trade fair with the words “*Mr Buffalo, your pumps are really first class!*”.



Karl Speck in conversation with a customer at a trade fair in the 1950s.



With children and ninepins – a company outing in the 1930s



The Büffel pump by Speck Pumpen



Willy and Inge Speck at the exhibition in Rosenheim



Invitation to the craft fair in Munich, 1950



Munich 1952:
Bavarian state prize
for craft quality



The gearwheel man at
the 50th anniversary
in 1959



Nuremberg folk festival in 1968 – for a long time,
company outings were a fixed part of working life



In 1952, at the craft fair in Munich, the Bavarian prime minister Dr. Hans Ehard awarded the state prize (a gold medal) for outstanding craft products to the Daniel Speck & Söhne company.

Due to the constantly increasing diversity of products, the product range and the company itself were gradually divided into specialised individual companies which, however, continued to work closely together.

What Otto Speck recorded helps us to understand the family atmosphere which ruled even when the father's enterprise was divided, and is still effective today: "... Particularly on the most stressful days, we arranged gatherings in which the events of the time were discussed, and then we went abruptly into conviviality. We mostly met at our parents' house, sometimes at a brother's, and created an atmosphere until late in the night or even the next morning.

The good spirit that guided us was home-made currant wine, which our father knew how to prepare so that it was delicious. In these hours, the Speck family forgot all the rigours of the working day, and felt the bonds that held them together and made them strong, in mutual understanding. In this way the feeling that one could rely on the other was strengthened again and again.

The awareness of the necessity of this solidarity is the result of the influence of our mother, who brought up us sons (and I make so bold as to say our father) in this way ...".

In 1954, Otto Speck founded a branch enterprise in Geretsried, "**Speck-Kolbenpumpenfabrik Otto Speck**", which his sons-in-law Paul and Erwin Zinnecker managed after him, and is now managed by his grandson Otto Zinnecker. Speck Triplex GmbH in Bielefeld, founded in 1977, still belongs to this branch.

In 1959, Karl Speck was the second son to leave the family company, and with his son Willy made himself independent as "**Speck Pumpen Verkaufsgesellschaft Karl Speck**", which took over the task of central sales and marketing for all products of all Speck companies.

In 1961, Walter Speck founded the "**Speck-Pumpenfabrik Walter Speck**" company, with the factory in Roth. The management of the company passed from him to his son-in-law Harry Steindorf and in turn to Harry's son-in-law Wolfgang Krüger.

The Hilpoltstein parent plant remained with his brother Willy Speck, and continued under the name "**Speck-Pumpen Daniel Speck & Söhne**". The management passed later to his son Walter Speck.



The sales company's eleven, at a tournament against Speck Hilpoltstein.

The sales company moved into the Hadermühle in Nuremberg, which had been destroyed in World War II and was then rebuilt. In 1976 a company site was acquired in Lauf. At first a central warehouse and the plastics and repair departments were housed there until finally in 1980, with several new buildings, all departments moved from Nuremberg to Lauf. The company management passed from Karl Speck to his son Willy Speck and then to Willy's son Hermann Speck.

Willy Speck, who was a swimming pool enthusiast, established at various European trade fairs that all the swimming pool pumps on the market were produced in the USA. Thanks to his conviction that "... we can do that too!", this situation would soon change.

In the mid-1960s, swimming pool technology had become the central topic in the sales company. So in 1965 and 1967 the entrepreneur, who was innovative and prepared to take risks, was able to bring his first two pool water circulation pumps, the cast metal BADU®₁₃ and BADU®₁₇, onto the market. But two disadvantages disturbed him: bronze pumps were expensive, and if iron pumps were idle for a long time, they put rusty water into the pool. In 1968, experiments with a new material for pump building produced the world's first functioning, corrosion-resistant all-plastic pump, the BADU®₁₉.

Initial disputes with a fitted carpet manufacturer who had also called a product "BADU" were settled peacefully. The housing colour, orange, also finally prevailed, and it was never again necessary to bring a replacement housing in green to the trade fair, out of fear that someone would forbid exhibiting the orange one.

With the encouragement of a customer, in the early 1970s the BADU®Jet counter-flow swimming pool system was developed and produced. However, Willy Speck could not wait until the moulds for the plastic parts were produced before his new private pool was built – his cousin Walter Speck cast a unique bronze BADU®Jet for him. The pool was opened in 1972, and for professionals it was even worth a special edition of the pool magazine "Schwimmbad & Sauna"!

Willy Speck never lost his entrepreneurial spirit. Thanks to his own swimming pool, he experimented at home – to the great suffering of his wife – with cleaning filter cartridges in the washing machine. This apparently unusual method finally worked better than he had ever hoped.

Over the years, the sales company made a respected name for itself far beyond the German market, above all in the field of swimming pool pumps. In January 1998, under the leadership of Hermann Speck, it took over the whole of plastic pump production from the Hilpoltstein factory. Thus this offshoot of the family enterprise had its own pump production again, as well as production of the Jet systems. Together with other products for swimming pools, and thanks to high quality, market leadership in this sector was quickly achieved.

In connection with the development and sale of swimming pool products, under the leadership of the sales company, several companies were formed abroad: 1969 Speck-Pumps South Africa, 1975 Speck-Española, 1978 Speck-Pumps Australia (later Speck-Pumps International), 1981 Speck-Pumps-Pool Products USA.

Despite further new building, the growth of production meant that the company site in Lauf became too small. In 2004, it was possible to move to a suitable site, with potential for the future, in Neunkirchen am Sand.

In 2007, cast metal production, BADU®block and standard block pumps, were added to the sales company.



The company head office in Lauf an der Pegnitz



1968: the BADU®19 – a world novelty, already with water-cooled canned motor for low-noise operation



Willy Speck's pool party was already legendary in 1972 ...



Another year for celebration: 1984



Hermann Speck makes foreign contacts, 1997 UAE



Speck Pumpen in Neunkirchen am Sand



Rollout in Neunkirchen am Sand: in 2004, Hermann Speck was able to present the first pump (BADU® 90) produced at the new site.



Family-friendly: a party for employees and their families



Anniversary celebration for long-term company employees, 2008

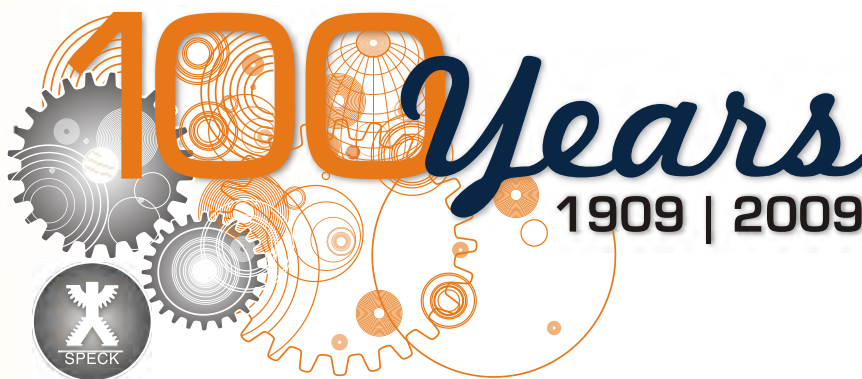


Already a tradition:
the Speck ducklings

Today, the three independent Speck companies, with 900 employees in production sites throughout the world – including about 650 employees in Germany – are well positioned internationally.

Despite the different specialisations and the independence of the individual companies, the origins have not been forgotten. Just as in the old days the family council met regularly in Emilie Speck's kitchen, today the chief executives meet for regular discussions, to maintain common values and a uniform image, or to implement projects together.

Many customers have had close links to the house of Speck for many years – certainly one of the most important reasons that today we can look back over 100 years of successful company history! It is often a joy to see the relationships between customers, employees and chief executives continuing into the next generation, and the children continuing their fathers' work together.



100 years of Speck Pumpen: not quite an everyday reason for celebrating!

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