



## WITTENSTEIN – from sewing machines to servo actuator system solutions

December 2018

### It all began with an idea

The WITTENSTEIN Group's evolution from sewing machine manufacturer to a one-stop international supplier of electromechanical servo actuator system solutions begins in 1949, when DEWITTA is founded by two spirited entrepreneurs Walter Wittenstein and Bruno Dähn in Steinheim near Heidenheim. Using borrowed equipment, this small firm specializes in the manufacture of double chainstitch machines for glove-making.

### The fifties: from Steinheim to Bad Mergentheim – and from there to the rest of the world

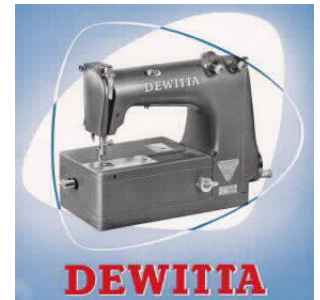
The Steinheim premises soon become too cramped to manufacture glove sewing machines efficiently, forcing the firm's proprietors to begin the quest for a new production facility and a new home. Their attention is drawn to Bad Mergentheim, where the young company takes up residence in 1952. The first production plant is a converted barracks and originally only intended as an interim solution. Before long, business with DEWITTA glove sewing machines is thriving not only within Germany but also to an increasing extent abroad.

### The sixties: the triumphal advance continues unbroken

The triumphal advance of DEWITTA glove sewing machines continues unbroken into the sixties – not least thanks to ongoing enhancements and regular innovations. From the outset, Walter Wittenstein and Bruno Dähn accord top priority to premium product quality – and attributes such as precision and reliability have remained the hallmarks of all WITTENSTEIN products to this day. In 1963, the need to expand its development and production capacities leaves DEWITTA with no option but to relocate again – this time to Herrenwiesenstrasse in Igersheim.

### The seventies: conquering new markets

The transformation of society during the seventies heralds the most difficult decade in the history of DEWITTA. Fewer and fewer women wear gloves – a



Still in use today:  
DEWITTA glove sewing machines

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consumer trend that directly impacts the demand for sewing machines. The founding fathers perceive this shift in behaviour as an opportunity to develop new solutions for new markets. The existing technical know-how of their workforce is leveraged to prepare the introduction of several new products such as guns for steel nails, machines for filling and sealing tubes or equipment for packing sliced bread.

At the same time, the way is paved for a new generation to take over the helm at DEWITTA. Walter Wittenstein, the textile maker and machine builder, goes into gradual retirement and is succeeded by his son, Dr. Manfred Wittenstein, in 1979.

### **The eighties: sewing machines make way for gearheads**

Shortly after joining the firm, Manfred Wittenstein sets to work modernizing its production and product portfolio. In the search for adequate products with unique attributes, he quickly recognizes the market potential of low-backlash planetary gearheads. He knows he can draw on an experienced team and proven manufacturing technologies for sewing and special-purpose machinery, built up over the last few decades, to make them.

The initial milestone is passed at the 1983 Hanover Fair, when Manfred Wittenstein unveils the first high-precision planetary gearhead in the SP series. The first low-backlash planetary gearhead worldwide, it enables new, precise servo applications. The SP gearheads turn out to be so successful that alpha getriebebau GmbH is set up in 1984 as an independent WITTENSTEIN subsidiary in collaboration with Bastian, a medium-sized company in Fellbach, not far from Stuttgart.

As in other boom decades earlier in the century, commercial success soon causes the company to outgrow its premises. An assembly shop, warehouse and various office buildings are consequently erected in Herrenwiesenstrasse. As a result of the new buildings constructed in the mid-eighties, floor space is more than doubled. The workforce also increases steadily in size, and for the first time a large number of technicians and engineers are also recruited.

Reaping the harvest of an impressive stream of new and improved products as well as innovative production processes and assembly solutions, the manufacturer appears to be riding the success trail permanently, regularly recording double-figure growth in turnover.

Company founder Walter Wittenstein is lucky enough to witness the continued successful realization of his life's dream by his son Manfred – right up until his death in Igersheim in 1988.



DEWITTA quick-release chuck

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### **The nineties: WITTENSTEIN becomes a globally operating provider of servo actuator systems**

The unstoppable growth of the alpha getriebebau subsidiary renders further expansion inevitable. The complete assembly side is transferred to Weikersheim in 1990. This move also marks the end of the DEWITTA sewing machine era. The entire sewing machine business is sold off, including all spare parts, milling machines and equipment.

In the early nineties, WITTENSTEIN is realigned to the international markets for servo actuator technology. As part of its globalization strategy, alpha réducteurs Sarl is set up in Paris (France) as the first foreign subsidiary, followed shortly afterwards by alpha getriebe Ltd., Tokyo (Japan). Today, the Group comprises sixty or so subsidiaries and agents in total in approximately forty countries – with exports accounting for around 60% of turnover.

The next important milestone is the establishment of WITTENSTEIN motion control GmbH in 1992, accompanied by a departure from the traditional role of pure component supplier. The newly founded company spearheads the Group's transition to a provider of electromechanical servo actuators and actuator systems.

### **The mid-nineties: expansion in Igersheim-Harthausen**

WITTENSTEIN's increasingly dynamic development leads to the decision in the mid-nineties to build a new Group headquarters on a greenfield site in Igersheim-Harthausen – in a star-shaped complex of administrative buildings, production shops and logistics centre. Gearhead cases, input shafts, attached motor components, etc. are still manufactured and machined in Igersheim while Fellbach remains responsible for gear wheels. State-of-the-art machine tools and equipment guarantee the specified high precision in all production facilities.

In 1999, the Group is able to celebrate yet another topping-out ceremony – in only three years, floor space in Harthausen is more than doubled with the erection of a development and sales centre, a training and communication centre, a second production and assembly shop and a new logistics hall.



WITTENSTEIN SE headquarters in Igersheim-Harthausen



Now and then: the company's most important capital are the people who work for it

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### **2001: WITTENSTEIN AG – a new company is born**

In 2001, the WITTENSTEIN Group acquires a new corporate structure. At the Supervisory Board meeting on September 13, WITTENSTEIN GmbH & Co. KG becomes a non-listed public limited company. Strategic leadership and control of the entire WITTENSTEIN Group pass to WITTENSTEIN AG. The newly established WITTENSTEIN aerospace & simulation gets off to a successful start in three countries. Only a few months later, in the spring of 2002, a second logistics hall and third assembly shop are officially opened in Igersheim-Harthausen; they are joined by a fourth shop in July 2007.

### **2008: WITTENSTEIN acquires a unified global brand identity**

A new, unified corporate identity fits WITTENSTEIN for the world market and the central challenges of the future. In the meantime, high-precision planetary gearheads, complete electromechanical actuator systems and AC servo systems and motors, to name but a few, are developed, produced and distributed worldwide by around 1400 employees (March 2009). An alliance of eight strong Business Units, the company presents a new, single, global face to the customer from mid-2008 with its claim "WITTENSTEIN – one with the future".

### **2015: Galaxie® Drive System – a world first – revolutionizes high performance engineering**

The Galaxie® Drive System – featuring a completely new kind of gearhead – is officially unveiled by WITTENSTEIN at the Hannover Messe 2015. The innovative core is formed by the completely redesigned gearhead kinematics, where each tooth is an independent and dynamic entity, and the hydrodynamic tooth contact over the full surface. This WITTENSTEIN world first is honoured with the HERMES AWARD technology prize, the world's most important industrial award.

### **2016: WITTENSTEIN AG changes to WITTENSTEIN SE**

On September 29, 2016 the name of WITTENSTEIN AG changes to WITTENSTEIN SE and the company is henceforth operated as a European Company.



A vision of the nineties, realized in 2003: the intelligent alpheno® IQ gearhead



HERMES AWARD 2015

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## 2017: Reorganisation Business Units

Various reorganization and restructuring measures are implemented to strengthen WITTENSTEIN's market orientation. The six Business Units at a glance:

**WITTENSTEIN alpha GmbH:**

Mechanical drive components and integrated systems, customized gearheads, complete motor-gearhead-units and gearing

**WITTENSTEIN motion control GmbH:**

Customized mechatronic drive systems for the subsea oil- and gas industry

**WITTENSTEIN cyber motor GmbH:**

Highly dynamic servo motors and drive electronics, complete mechatronic drive systems

**WITTENSTEIN intens GmbH:**

Intelligent, innovative implants for use in orthopaedics and traumatology

**WITTENSTEIN aerospace & simulation GmbH:**

Powerful, high-precision actuator systems for the aerospace and simulation market

**attocube systems AG:**

Highly precise nanopositioning devices and measurement technology for industrial applications

The digital integration of the WITTENSTEIN Group is being driven by baramundi software AG, a wholly owned subsidiary, and the WITTENSTEIN high integrity systems division, which develop secure and efficient solutions for Industry 4.0.

Products made by the WITTENSTEIN Group's seven Business Units are typically used in robotic systems, machine tools, packaging, conveyor systems and process technology, paper and printing presses, medical technology and stage and lifting technology. Parallel to this, niche markets such as the aerospace industry, drive technologies in or on the human body and offshore extraction of natural gas and oil under the ice sheet of the Norwegian Sea are systematically targeted.



WITTENSTEIN intens FITBONE® for lengthening human limbs

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## Chronology

### 1949

- DEWITTA Spezialmaschinenfabrik (today: WITTENSTEIN SE) established with headquarters in Steinheim
- Founders: Walter Wittenstein, Bruno Dähn
- Just 3 employees: Aenne and Walter Wittenstein, Bruno Dähn

### 1952

- Company headquarters relocated together with DEWITTA from Steinheim to Bad Mergentheim

### 1955

- DEWITTA renamed DEWITTA Spezialmaschinenfabrik Wittenstein & Co

### 1963

- Bruno Dähn retires from the firm owing to ill health; Walter Wittenstein continues as sole director

### 1964

- DEWITTA moves to Herrenwiesenstrasse in Igersheim

### 1979

- Manfred Wittenstein takes over the running of the family firm

### 1983

- First low-backlash planetary gearheads (WPE, SP series) built to our own design principle unveiled at the Hanover Fair

### 1984

- alpha getriebebau GmbH (today WITTENSTEIN alpha GmbH) established

### 1988

- Company founder Walter Wittenstein dies in Igersheim

### 1989

- alpha réducteurs Sarl, the first foreign subsidiary, established in Paris (France)

### 1990

- Next stage of the globalization strategy launched
- Assembly moves to Weikersheim



Unveiled at the Hanover Fair back in 1983: the first SP low-backlash planetary gearhead

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### 1991

- alpha getriebe Ltd., Tokyo (Japan), becomes the first subsidiary in Asia

### 1992

- WITTENSTEIN motion control GmbH established
- Transition from simple manufacturer of gearheads to a system provider of electromechanical servo actuators and actuator systems
- alpha gear drives Inc. subsidiary established in the USA

### 1996

- Fatec Co. Ltd joint venture set up in Seoul (South Korea); alpha drives ab established in Sweden
- Construction work on the third plant completed with a new administrative building and assembly shop in Igersheim-Harthausen
- Assembly transferred from Weikersheim to the new premises

### 1997

- WITTENSTEIN Limited Partnership (USA) established

### 1999

- WITTENSTEIN intens GmbH established in Igersheim
- WITTENSTEIN Aktiv Technologies Limited established in Bristol (UK)
- alpha gearheads Limited established in Staffordshire (UK)
- WITTENSTEIN cyber motor GmbH established in Igersheim
- Cyber Motion Park opens
- Major construction project completed in Igersheim-Harthausen with the inauguration of a new development and sales centre, a training and communication centre, a second production and assembly shop and a logistics hall

### 2001

- Merger with Bastian GmbH to form WITTENSTEIN bastian GmbH; WITTENSTEIN ternary Co. Ltd. (Japan), WITTENSTEIN Holding (USA), WITTENSTEIN AG (Switzerland), alpha getriebebau (Austria) and alpha riduttori s.r.l. (Italy) established
- WITTENSTEIN AG established
- Building work commences on a third assembly shop and second logistics hall at the Igersheim-Harthausen site

### 2002

- Two new halls open in Igersheim-Harthausen
- Igersheim production site renovated and refurbished



TPM+ servo actuator with rack and pinion



A vision for the future: highly compact electric drive system

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- WITTENSTEIN wins two coveted awards: TOP 100 (alpha getriebebau GmbH elected Germany's most innovative small or medium-sized enterprise from a field of 454 companies) and TOP JOB (WITTENSTEIN voted third-best SME employer)

### 2003

- WITTENSTEIN aerospace & simulation (former: WITTENSTEIN Aktiv Technologies Limited in Bristol/UK) established
- alpha benelux (Belgium) established
- Purchase of another five hectares of land in Harthausen
- Chancellor Gerhard Schröder visits WITTENSTEIN and alpha getriebebau
- Company founder and WITTENSTEIN authorized representative Aenne Wittenstein celebrates her 90th birthday on August 21
- impulse business magazine includes WITTENSTEIN in its list of Germany's top 50 family-owned firms (August 2003 issue)
- WITTENSTEIN honoured with Deutsche Sportbund's "Pro Ehrenamt" award for the promotion of honorary commitment to sports in February 2003

### 2004

- WITTENSTEIN Group honoured as Germany's top SME employer out of 118 entrants, winning special awards for its orientation towards family and social values and its remuneration concepts
- New Hall 5 constructed in Igersheim-Harthausen (2500 square metres)

### 2005

- alpha mechatronics (Hangzhou) Co. Ltd. established as WITTENSTEIN's Chinese subsidiary
- New Hall 5 officially opens in Igersheim-Harthausen
- N24 Good News Award presented to WITTENSTEIN in the "Job miracle" category
- Winner in the "ETHICS IN BUSINESS" competition
- December: Romanian subsidiary WITTENSTEIN transilvania SRL established in Sibiu

### 2006

- WITTENSTEIN World Garden is one of 365 locations selected in the "Land of Ideas" competition
- Award for excellent innovation management in the "Factory of the Year" competition, the toughest benchmarking test for manufacturing companies

### 2007

- WITTENSTEIN President Manfred Wittenstein elected President of the German Engineering Federation (VDMA)



WITTENSTEIN SE World Garden  
in Igersheim-Harthausen

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- WITTENSTEIN electronics GmbH subsidiary established
- New Hall 6 officially opens in Igersheim-Harthausen
- WITTENSTEIN obtains basic certification as a "Career and Family" employer

### 2008

- Spanish subsidiary WITTENSTEIN ibérica S.L.U. established
- WITTENSTEIN Co., Ltd. Subsidiary established in Taiwan
- WITTENSTEIN talent arena inaugurated
- New Romanian production facility officially opens in June
- The WITTENSTEIN Group's ambitious project to become a global, one-stop supplier of electromechanical servo actuator system solutions is taken an important step further with the launch of the worldwide WITTENSTEIN brand
- Acquisition of a majority share (74%) in attocube systems AG
- "Career and Family" certificate awarded to WITTENSTEIN in recognition of the company's family friendly human resources policy
- Presentation of the German Lutheran Church's WORK PLUS award for WITTENSTEIN's commendable contribution to human resources and employment policies.

### 2009

- WITTENSTEIN AG Switzerland (Grüsch): Construction work begins on the production and logistics centre WITTENSTEIN racks. Date of ramp-up: autumn 2010

### 2010

- Renewed participation in the TOP 100 competition: WITTENSTEIN is one of Germany's top innovators among small and medium-sized enterprises
- New WITTENSTEIN AG Switzerland production facility opens in Grüsch

### 2011

- WITTENSTEIN wins the Axia Award 2010 in the "Culture of Innovation – a Success Factor for SMEs" category
- Ground-breaking dig for the "Future Urban Production" plant in April: WITTENSTEIN invests 12 million euros in a state-of-the-art production facility with a zero carbon footprint in Fellbach
- The visionary among machine builders: Dr. Manfred Wittenstein is named "Entrepreneur of the Year 2011" in the "Industry" category and nominated for the "World Entrepreneur of the Year 2012" award. The award honours his outstanding entrepreneurial commitment
- Klaus Spitzley officially steps down from the WITTENSTEIN AG Management Board on October 31
- attocube systems AG becomes a wholly owned subsidiary of the WITTENSTEIN Group



2009: Chancellor Merkel visits the WITTENSTEIN booth at the Hanover Fair



Dr. Manfred Wittenstein is "Entrepreneur of the Year 2011" in the "Industry" category

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### 2012

- Ground-breaking dig for the Innovation Factory in April: WITTENSTEIN invests 30 million euros in a new, ultra-modern and resource-efficient Mechatronics Centre in Igersheim-Harthausen
- WITTENSTEIN do Brasil Engenharia Mecanica LTDA established as WITTENSTEIN's Brazilian subsidiary
- Dr. Manfred Wittenstein is Germany's representative in the "World Entrepreneur of the Year 2012" awards and admitted to the Hall of Fame as one of the world's top entrepreneurs
- WITTENSTEIN bastian GmbH: The "Future Urban Production" facility is officially opened in Fellbach in June
- Topping-out ceremony for the WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory in December

### 2013

- 30th anniversary: Exactly thirty years ago in 1983, the world's first low-backlash planetary gearhead was unveiled by WITTENSTEIN at the Hanover Fair. It was so successful that the company known today as WITTENSTEIN alpha GmbH was set up in 1984
- Aenne Wittenstein celebrates her 100th birthday on August 21:
- Professor Dieter Spath succeeds Dr. Manfred Wittenstein as Chairman of the Board and CEO of WITTENSTEIN AG on October 1, 2013. He is supported on the Management Board by Dr. Manfred Wittenstein and Karl-Heinz Schwarz
- WITTENSTEIN bastian GmbH and its "Future Urban Production" facility are among the 100 official winners in the nationwide German innovation competition "Landmarks in the Land of Ideas 2013/14"

### 2014

- Dr. Manfred Wittenstein steps down from the Management Board and takes over as Chairman of the WITTENSTEIN AG Supervisory Board on April 1, 2014
- Senior partner Aenne Wittenstein dies in Igersheim on April 6, 2014 at the age of 100. As company founder and authorized representative of WITTENSTEIN, she played a leading role in the mechatronics corporation's development for more than sixty years.
- The WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory is officially opened on May 23, 2014 in the presence of some 600 invited guests and philosopher Peter Sloterdijk as keynote speaker. The Development, Sales & Marketing and Production functions of several mechatronic Business Units now interact even more strongly on about 18,000 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space. The entire value creation process takes place within a thirty metre radius – from the initial idea to the finished product.



View of WITTENSTEIN bastian's new "Future Urban Production" facility in Fellbach



Professor Dieter Spath takes over as Chairman of the Board and CEO on October 1, 2013.

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- attocube systems AG acquires a majority stake in Neaspec GmbH. Neaspec, based in Martinsried just outside Munich, develops optical near-field microscopes which overcome the limited resolution of conventional optical microscopes, opening up a new era for modern nano-analytical applications.

### 2015

- The "Oscar for engineers": WITTENSTEIN is selected from a field of almost seventy entrants from ten different countries as winner of the HERMES AWARD 2015 for its revolutionary Galaxie® Drive System. The world's most important industrial award is presented by Professor Johanna Wanka, Federal Minister of Education and Research, at the Hannover Messe in April 2015. Galaxie®'s innovative core is formed by the completely redesigned gearhead kinematics.

### 2016

- Karl-Heinz Schwarz steps down from the Management Board on March 31, 2016 and leaves the company after almost thirty years.
- Dr. Anna-Katharina Wittenstein, Dr. Dirk Haft, Erik Roßmeißl and Dr. Bernd Schimpf are officially appointed to the WITTENSTEIN AG Management Board with effect from April 1, 2016. Professor Dieter Spath remains Chairman of the Board and CEO.
- WITTENSTEIN Güç Aktarma Sistemleri Ticaret Ltd. Şti established in Istanbul (TR)
- On September 29, 2016 the name of WITTENSTEIN AG changes to WITTENSTEIN SE and the company is henceforth operated as a European Company.
- The long-planned generational change in leadership at WITTENSTEIN is now complete: Professor Dieter Spath, Chairman of the Board and CEO, leaves the company on September 30. The new Management Board is comprised of Dr. Anna-Katharina Wittenstein (Spokeswoman), Dr. Dirk Haft, Erik Roßmeißl and Dr. Bernd Schimpf.
- Ground-breaking dig for the new headquarter of attocube systems AG in November: WITTENSTEIN invests 20 million euros in the new building in Haar near Munich, where also neaspec GmbH and part of the sales team of WITTENSTEIN alpha will move in.

### 2017

- Investment in the future: WITTENSTEIN acquires the entire share capital of baramundi software AG. The acquisition will strengthen WITTENSTEIN with strategically important competencies as the Group treads the digital transformation path.
- Various reorganization and restructuring measures are implemented to strengthen WITTENSTEIN's market orientation:
  - WITTENSTEIN electronics GmbH: will be integrated in WITTENSTEIN cyber motor GmbH



The WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory is officially opened in May 2014 in Igersheim-Harhausen.



WITTENSTEIN SE Management Board

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- WITTENSTEIN motion control GmbH: the business field of Industrial Systems will be divided between WITTENSTEIN cyber motor GmbH and WITTENSTEIN alpha GmbH. The business fields of Oil & Gas and Defence remain.
  - WITTENSTEIN bastian GmbH: Special-Purpose Gearheads and Gearing will be integrated in WITTENSTEIN alpha GmbH
  - The “Future Urban Production” facility in Fellbach will continue to be established as a production and competence center for gearing components and special-purpose gearheads.
- WITTENSTEIN alpha will in future be a competent partner for all aspects of mechatronic drive technology, from customized, special-purpose gearheads to standard actuators. WITTENSTEIN cyber motor will act as the company for servo motors, drive electronics and mechatronic systems.
  - The WITTENSTEIN Group will take advantage of the upcoming Hannover Messe 2017 to unveil the IDS3010 from attocube systems AG – an industrial grade optical sensor that invites superlatives.
  - From July, Dr. Bernd Schimpf will take over the role of the Spokesman of the Board from Dr. Anna-Katharina Wittenstein, who will be taking a break until the end of November due to maternity leave. The composition of the four-member Management Board will remain unchanged.
  - Dr. Manfred Wittenstein, Chairman of the WITTENSTEIN SE Supervisory Board, celebrates his 75th birthday on September 2.
  - Topping-out ceremony for the new headquarter of attocube in September.
  - The German Research Association for Power Transmission (FVA) publishes a special book to mark its 50th anniversary, in which the Galaxie® Drive System is referred to as a “milestone in engineering”.
  - The WITTENSTEIN Innovation Factory is awarded the title “Exemplary Building” by the Baden-Württemberg Institute of Architects.

### 2018

- WITTENSTEIN purchases a 10,000 square meter lot in the Augsburg Innovationspark, where a new home will be erected for baramundi software AG.
- Dr. Manfred Wittenstein is winner of the “German Leadership Award 2018”.
- The Hannover Messe 2018 centers around the Galaxie®, which has achieved scientific acclaim as an independent gearbox generation: the exhibit includes new sizes and a brand new design.
- The NanoFactory, the new headquarters of attocube systems AG, is officially opened in Haar near Munich less than two years after the



Optical sensor IDS3010 for measurement in the nano range



New, versatile Galaxie® sizes expand the mechatronic solution space

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ground-breaking dig. The new building offers space for up to 300 people.

- Ground-breaking dig for the expansion of the WITTENSTEIN AG manufacturing facility in Grüşch: WITTENSTEIN is investing 22 million Swiss francs in this future center of competence for mechatronic drive components within the WITTENSTEIN Group.
- Dr. Manfred Wittenstein and Thomas Bayer, our team of inventors, are nominated with the Galaxie® gearbox for the Deutscher Zukunftspreis 2018, the Federal President's Award for Innovation in Science and Technology. They are also officially inducted into the "Circle of Excellence".
- In 2018, WITTENSTEIN SE is honored for the development of FLASH, the employee centric troubleshooting and escalation tool, and is now one of "100 places to see Industry 4.0".



The inventor team nominated for the Deutscher Zukunftspreis 2018 with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

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