

HOME ECONOMY

Start-up entrepreneur Udo Geitel and recycling

Flexibility is significant

Idea stems from a glance at the "Yellow Pages"



Pick-up, disposal and recycled electric technology:
*Geitel Computer Recycling GmbH & Co KG in Mainhardt-Hohenstrassen, Germany.
Production manager Udo Geitel (pictured) consults thoroughly with his customers.
Photographs: by GARBE*

In the prevailing consumer society the volume of used and discarded electrical appliances has increased dramatically. One person who takes care of these ecologically harmful waste appliances is Udo Geitel. By flexible consultation, pick-up, disposal and re-marketing this young entrepreneur from Mainhardt, Germany, does well in the business. But he started very pragmatically.

MAINHARDT/Germany • Trained electrician Udo Geitel was still employed at a technical processing company in Hütten, Germany, when he first thought about daring to start out on his own. This was in 1996. But he wasn't quite sure into which industrial sector he should venture. So he cast a glance at the "Yellow Pages" directory to find out what industrial names "sounded good".

Geitel considered the expression "electric recycling" to be good. He found out exactly what was meant by this and discovered many parallels to his job. He copied out many operational aspects, and after a meeting with an auditor who, in view of the collected information, advised him to start up a company, everything became quite clear as to how he should proceed. However, since his bank had had some "bad experiences with the recycling industry" they denied granting him a loan, so Geitel, together with his mother, founded the certified specialist waste disposal company "Geitel Computer Recycling GmbH & Co KG" by independent financing (approximately 75,000 German Marks). "A decent amount of clear thinking was necessary to achieve this" said Geitel.

He is now production manager and his mother, Kathy Geitel, being a Bachelor of Economics, is active as managing director, although the 27-year-old takes care of most of the business. At the beginning of his quest for independence he took extensive care in setting up a nationwide customer network by calling many companies and presenting his services.

Udo Geitel describes the specialist nature of his company, which has four part-time employees, as follows: "I exclusively take care of IT appliances, and I am extremely flexible in my operation, assisted by a strongly developed co-operation with various forwarding companies." As a result, his permanent customers such as Siemens AG, Bausparkasse Schwäbisch Hall, and many state or federal ministries, can call him and Geitel is able to pick up a few tons of used PCs within 48 hours. This kind of electronic scrap is then manually dismantled and disposed of in an environmentally favourable manner or recycled and re-marketed as functioning hardware after thorough customer consultation. In addition, Geitel is also pursuing trade with commodities.

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