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## A Place for Good Times

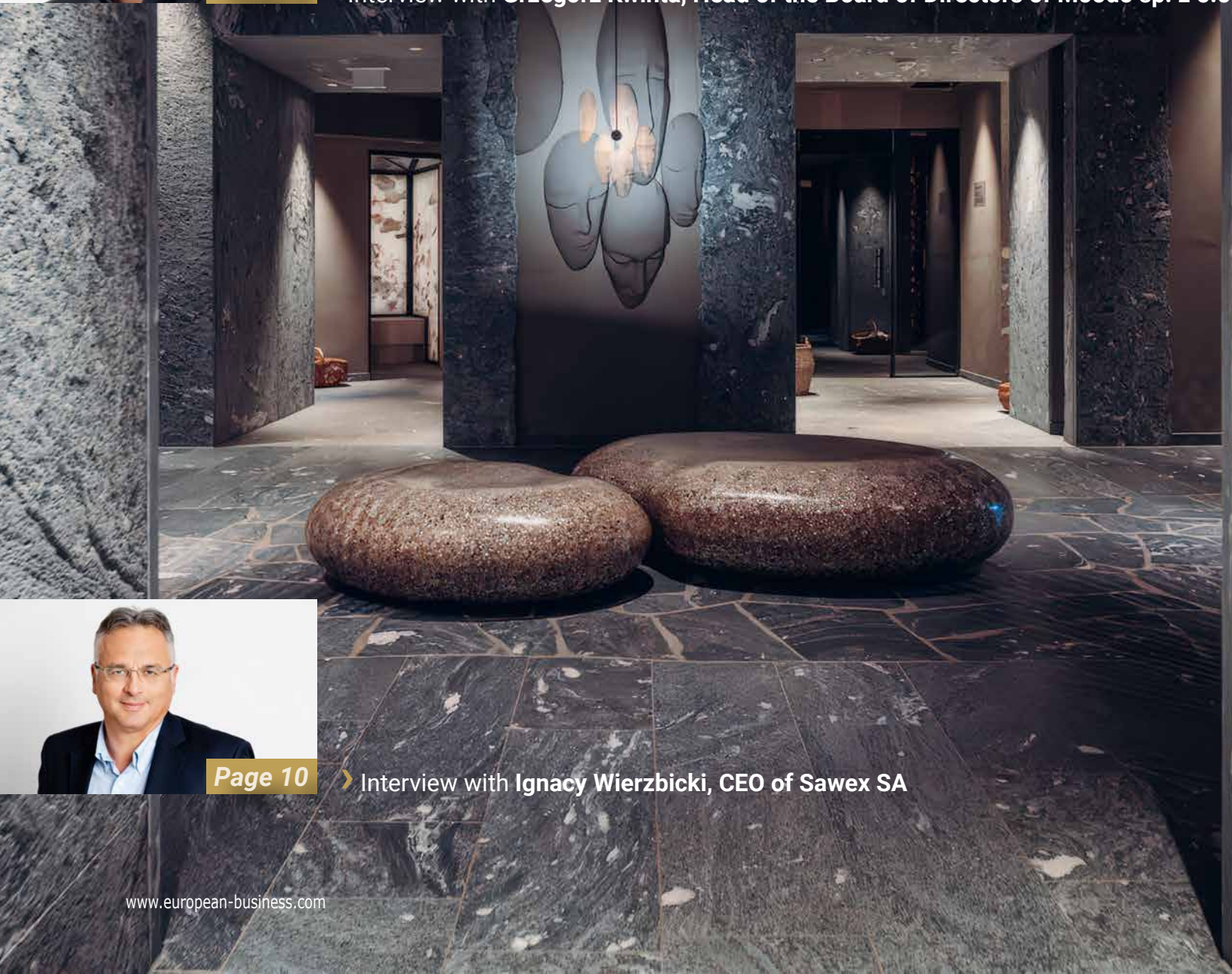
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# Closing the Loop on IT

INTERVIEW WITH



*Dimitri Wams,  
CEO of  
Circular IT group*



INTERVIEW WITH



*Daan van Nieuwenhoven,  
Director ITAD of  
Circular IT group*

From secure data erasure to refurbished devices with a second or even third life: Circular IT group has built a business model around the idea that IT hardware should never become waste too early. CEO Dimitri Wams and Director ITAD Daan van Nieuwenhoven explain how the company combines sustainability, profitability and international growth – and why the end of an IT asset's life cycle deserves just as much attention as the beginning.

**European Business:** Mr. Wams, Mr. van Nieuwenhoven, Circular IT group is still a relatively young company. How did it come into being?

**Daan van Nieuwenhoven:** The group was founded in 2022, but the companies behind it had already been active in the market for decades. Some of them have more than 25 years of experience. What made Circular IT group special from day one was the idea of bringing together all parts of the circular IT chain under one roof.

**Dimitri Wams:** Waterland Private Equity brought nine companies together with one shared vision: creating a true circular IT platform. Some companies specialized in supplying new IT hardware, others focused on IT

asset disposition, logistics or recommerce. Together, we cover the entire circle. That is still quite unique in Europe.

**European Business:** What exactly does the company do?

**Daan van Nieuwenhoven:** We focus strongly on ITAD – IT Asset Disposition. In simple terms, we take responsibility for IT hardware after its first life cycle. For companies, two things are critical at that stage: secure data removal and sustainability. We make sure all data is erased in a certified way and documented properly. At the same time, we prepare devices for a second, third or even fourth life cycle.

**European Business:** So recycling is only one part of the business?

**Daan van Nieuwenhoven:** Exactly. Recycling is important, but ideally it is the last step. Every laptop that can be reused avoids the emissions and raw materials required to produce a new device. That is where the real environmental impact lies.

**Dimitri Wams:** We often describe ourselves as covering the process from "cradle to grave." We can advise companies on which devices to buy, manage those assets during their life cycle and then handle them responsibly at the end of it. The circle only works if all stages are connected.

**European Business:** Who are your customers?

**Dimitri Wams:** Mostly large corporations, cloud operators, hos-

pitals and public organizations. These companies manage thousands of devices, and eventually all of them reach end of life. Many organizations put enormous effort into buying IT equipment, but much less attention goes into what happens four or five years later. We think that is a mistake.

**Daan van Nieuwenhoven:** End-of-life management should be handled just as professionally as procurement. There is still financial value in these assets, there are important sustainability aspects and, of course, there is the security side. Companies need certainty that their data is truly gone.

**European Business:** Circular IT group is active across Europe. How international is the business today?



**Daan van Nieuwenhoven:** Around 70% of our volume comes from outside the Netherlands. We have locations in the Netherlands, Belgium, the UK and Denmark, and we operate across large parts of Europe. We are currently expanding further in the UK and are also building a dedicated German team.

**Dimitri Wams:** Germany is an exciting market for us. We see enormous potential there because sustainability and compliance are becoming increasingly important topics for companies.

**European Business:** How do you position the Circular IT group brand in the market?

**Dimitri Wams:** That was actually a major challenge. We merged 15 different brands into one new identity. Building recognition takes time. Today, however, Circular IT group is becoming a strong European brand. We invest heavily in digital marketing, LinkedIn campaigns, radio advertising and outdoor campaigns. We want

customers to understand that circular IT is not a niche topic anymore – it is becoming mainstream business practice.

**European Business:** Sustainability is obviously central to your business model. How do you define your mission?

**Dimitri Wams:** We call ourselves “emission-driven pragmatists.” We are mission-driven, but we are also very pragmatic. We want to build a successful and profitable company. The two things belong together. Every asset we extend creates avoided emissions that are significantly higher than the



emissions we produce ourselves. That is what motivates us.

**European Business:** What role does company culture play in such a fast-growing organization?

**Dimitri Wams:** A very important one. We now have around 330 employees from different companies and backgrounds. We are building one culture, one strategy and one shared set of values. Of course, systems and processes matter, but culture matters just as much.

**Daan van Nieuwenhoven:** People genuinely like the mission behind

the company. There is a strong sense that our work has impact beyond business alone.

**European Business:** What kind of impact do you mean?

**Daan van Nieuwenhoven:** One important topic for us is digital inclusion. Refurbished devices can help close the digital divide. We work with organizations that provide IT equipment to people who otherwise could not afford it. For many companies, the “S” in ESG is difficult to address. We can help them there as well. That makes the work meaningful on a very human level.



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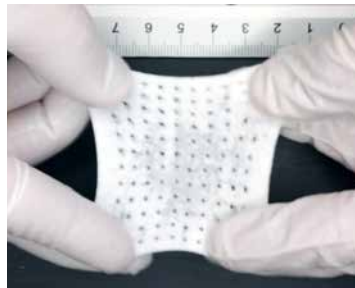
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# The Future of Regenerative Medicine

Polyganics B.V., now rebranded as Regenity Biosciences, is redefining how biomaterials support healing. Its successful legacy in polymer science is being fused with collagen expertise to drive next-generation regenerative devices – positioning the company at the forefront of a rapidly evolving medtech landscape.



Regenity's next generation bioresorbable implants combine synthetic polymers with collagen to improve clinical performance



Regenity Team driving innovation at its state-of-the-art polymer science center of excellence in Groningen, The Netherlands

Founded nearly three decades ago as a spin off from the University of Groningen, Polyganics has evolved into the “synthetic polymer center of excellence” within Regenity Biosciences, following its acquisition and a rebrand completed between late 2022 and April 2023. As Vice President of Marketing Jessica Swanson explains, “the combined organization brings together polymer and collagen expertise across continents to transform biomaterials into products that repair, regenerate and treat injuries and diseases of soft tissue, bone and organs.”

## Engineering better healing

At the heart of the company's strategy lies its ability to merge polymer, collagen and bioceramic technologies into composite materials. “By integrating synthetic polymers with collagen, we can create matrices that are both

strong and biocompatible,” says Jessica Swanson. This approach addresses a critical gap in regenerative medicine – improving durability in applications such as rotator cuff augmentation, hernia repair and bone grafting. Products must meet rigorous testing standards, leveraging proven materials to accelerate regulatory pathways while maintaining safety and performance.

## Portfolio and partnerships

The Groningen facility manufactures a portfolio of proprietary ENT solutions for a leading medical technology partner; however, the facility also serves as a strategic development and manufacturing partner across multiple regenerative medicine applications. “Contract development and manufacturing is a key growth driver,” Jessica Swanson notes, with customers ranging from major global medical device

firms to emerging innovators. The company supports more than 125 partners and a broad product range, emphasizing collaborative innovation and partner-led commercialization. Internally, the team embraces the identity of “material transformers,” reflecting a culture of innovation, integrity and patient impact.

## Scaling innovation globally

With approximately 250 employees worldwide and a significant manufacturing footprint in Groningen, Regenity produces millions of devices annually while maintaining capacity for expansion. Around two-thirds of sales are generated in the United States, with additional growth across Europe, Asia-Pacific and emerging markets, such as Brazil. “We provide the expertise and capabilities to support our partners’ global expansion,” Jessica Swanson emphasizes, highlighting the com-

**INTERVIEW WITH**  
*Jessica Swanson,*  
*Vice President of Marketing*

**Regenity**

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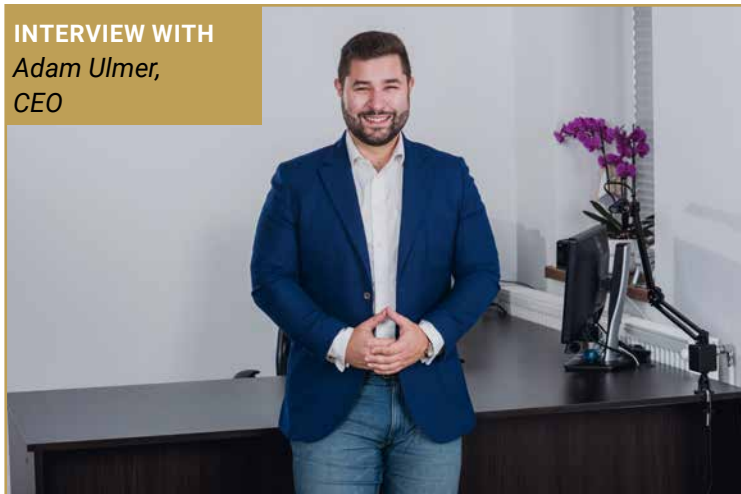
pany's role as a trusted partner in helping customers grow and enter new markets.

## Future frontiers in medtech

Looking ahead, Regenity is focused on expanding into high-growth markets, including sports medicine, plastic and reconstructive surgery, while advancing drug delivery combination products. The company's strategy is driven by a robust innovation pipeline, advanced manufacturing capabilities, more than 170 global regulatory approvals and an unwavering focus on accelerating time to market on behalf of its partners.

# Packaging Precision from Poland

INTERVIEW WITH  
Adam Ulmer,  
CEO



Over the past 30 years, Ulmer S.K.A. has grown into one of Eastern Europe's leading fruit processors, guided by its credo: "frozen with passion, packed with precision." "When my parents, Paweł and Danuta Ulmer, founded the company in 1994, they immediately leveraged their academic background in food processing," says CEO Adam Ulmer, who now leads the family business. "From the outset, we focused on processing frozen fruits – strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, and more – sourced from around the world and delivered to our facility." In its early years, the company focused on its core processing activities. "Initially, our operations were limited to basic production: sourcing fruit, freezing, sorting, and packaging it in bulk – typically in 10- or 20-kg bags – for other processors who would then go on to produce jams or juices," Adam Ulmer explains.

## Innovation That Never Stands Still

Over the past decade, Ulmer Spółka has significantly broadened its scope to include value-added packaging services. "We began with 500-g foil bags and later introduced fruit blends tailored for smoothies and similar applications with single packaging weight of 120 to 150 g," says Adam Ulmer. "These customized portion sizes required us to develop new capabilities and expertise, which have since become a cornerstone of our growth." This evolution culminated in the launch of the company's "kliklok" packaging in 2018 – an innovative solution designed to preserve the freshness of organic products, particularly in response to demand from Germany, the Nordics, and the Benelux region. "Building our strategic capabilities in packaging required substantial investment in machinery, technology, and know-how," Adam Ulmer notes. "At the same time,

For more than three decades, food retailers across Europe have relied on Polish packaging specialist Ulmer – not only for high-quality frozen fruit, but also as a trusted partner in packaging innovation. Even amid challenging market conditions, the company continues to expand its footprint and innovate with new services.

Western European customers were actively seeking reliable production partners in Poland, where raw materials, skilled labor, and technical expertise are readily available."

Despite the passing of founder Paweł Ulmer in 2023, the company remains firmly committed to its founding vision. "My mother, our entire team, and I are dedicated to continuing his legacy of constant innovation," Adam Ulmer emphasizes. "We are actively developing new packaging concepts that will enable us to grow alongside our customers – many of whom are leading European retailers such as Lidl, REWE, and Albert Heijn." At the same time, innovation at Ulmer extends beyond products to internal opera-

tions, as the company continues to invest in automation and robotics to enhance efficiency and productivity – ensuring it remains a competitive and forward-looking partner in Europe's evolving food supply chain.



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Ulmer's food processing plant

# A Two-Decade Journey in Women's Fashion



**INTERVIEW WITH**  
*Grzegorz Kwinta,*  
*Head of the Board of*  
*Directors*



Moodo has established a strong presence with its flagship stores in Poland. Now, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Greece are exciting new markets the everyday classic fashion brand is aiming to tackle

For more than two decades, Moodo has focused on delivering everyday, classic fashion for women aged 30 to 65. Now, after establishing a strong wholesale presence across Central and Southern Europe, the Polish brand is entering a new phase – launching franchise stores beyond its home market for the first time. In an interview with *European Business*, Grzegorz Kwinta, Head of the Board of Directors, reflects on this pivotal year and the strategy that has driven Moodo's success over the past two decades.

**European Business:** Mr. Kwinta, for the past 20 years, Moodo has stood for everyday and classic fashion. What lies at the heart of your business – and who are your target customers?

**Grzegorz Kwinta:** Our approach is fundamentally people-centric. Every collection we create is designed with our customers in mind. We focus closely on their needs, aiming to develop clothing that makes them feel comfortable in a wide range of settings – at

the office, at social gatherings, and at home. Collections are built around the idea of “everyday fashion & classic,” which perfectly reflects the brand's character and its mission—to dress women for every occasion while truly understanding their needs and lifestyle. At MOODO, tailoring is redefined: blazers, shirts, and full suit sets are designed to be both comfortable and elegant, proving that style and ease can go hand in hand without compromising sophistication. When designing new

collections, we typically have two brand personas in mind: “Anne,” aged 30 to 45, and “Eve,” aged 45 to 65. Some time ago, we brought these concepts to life in a “mother-and-daughter” photo campaign that highlighted the combination of style, comfort, and sustainability that defines our brand.

**European Business:** Since Moodo was founded in 2006, your company has evolved significantly—less in its core philosophy, but

more in its distribution channels, markets, and logistics.

**Grzegorz Kwinta:** In 2005, together with our co-founders, Arkadiusz and Przemysław Szyszko, we traveled to various countries, signing our first sourcing contracts. That marked the beginning of Moodo as a wholesale business. Over the course of some time, however, we recognized that the market was changing rapidly. While we have never abandoned our wholesale operations – we



Women aged 45 to 65 as well as 30 to 45 are Moodo's key fashion customers



...30 to 45 are Moodo's key fashion customers



A mother-and-daughter photoset has highlighted Moodo's target demographics



Comfortable, stylish and sustainable: the values Moodo and its customers hold dear

continue to distribute across Central and Southern Europe that way – we opened our first franchise stores in Poland as early as 2007, setting us on the path we are on today. Just a year later, we also implemented the first version of the ERP system we still rely on, which has played a key role in our operational development.

**European Business:** Most brands rely exclusively on franchise retail. Why did Moodo choose to maintain its wholesale business?

**Grzegorz Kwinta:** Wholesale has been instrumental in building our presence internationally. While identifying the right agents across Europe can be challenging, this channel has allowed us to establish visibility in markets where we might not otherwise have been able to operate. Now, we feel ready to take the next step. This year and next, we are opening our first franchise stores outside Poland – starting in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Athens, Greece, where we have already built strong brand recog-

nition through wholesale. At the same time, we continue to invest in increasing our visibility across all markets.

**European Business:** What lessons have you learned as an entrepreneur over the years?

**Grzegorz Kwinta:** We are a team of hard workers, and we learn something new every day. One of the most important lessons for me has been the value of listening – both to our customers and to each other. This has helped us build not just a team, but a company with a strong, family-like spirit. Ultimately, everyone at Moodo contributes to our success. Without their commitment and passion for serving our customers, we would not have achieved the growth we have seen. Over the past 20 years, we have undergone numerous changes from evolving our distribution strategies to relocating our headquarters in 2014, rebranding our logo, and launching our e-commerce operations. There may have been moments when we could have moved more aggressively to

expand our brand across Europe. However, I believe it is better and less risky to grow in a measured, disciplined way. A good example is our recent omnichannel integration. If a customer cannot find the right size in-store, they can now order it directly from our central warehouse and have it delivered quickly. This is a step that enhances both customer experience and operational efficiency.

**European Business:** How challenging has your growth journey been, and what have you learned from it?

**Grzegorz Kwinta:** To be honest, it has never been easy. Like many successful companies in Poland, we started out as a family business and remained one until last year, when Arkadiusz and Przemysław Szyszko sold their shares to the investment fund Omikron Capital. Importantly, this has not changed our day-to-day operations or our core values. If anything, it has reinforced our commitment to getting our processes right, even if it sometimes

takes time for those changes to be fully understood and embraced internally. Whenever we introduced new systems or process improvements, there was naturally some initial hesitation. But once our teams experienced the benefits the value became clear, and we were able to take the next step and grow further. That philosophy will continue to guide us. Our 20th anniversary this year is not only a significant milestone in the company's history, but above all a new beginning – for both our employees and our customers. We have many exciting initiatives ahead of us in the coming months, and we can't wait.

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# Turning Disruption into Opportunity

For many companies, geopolitical disruption can threaten years of growth within a matter of months. For Polish chemical distributor SAWEX SA, the consequences of changing global trade structures were dramatic. Yet instead of retreating, the Warsaw-based company used the crisis as a catalyst for transformation. Under the leadership of Ignacy Wierzbicki, President of the Management Board, SAWEX has restructured its supply chains, diversified its markets and repositioned itself for long-term growth across Europe.

INTERVIEW WITH  
*Ignacy Wierzbicki,*  
CEO



SAWEX SA headquarters in Warsaw: From here, the company coordinates international chemical supply chains and drives its strategic expansion across Europe

Today, the privately owned stock company operates with a clear focus on flexibility, customer proximity and entrepreneurial decision-making – qualities that have become increasingly valuable in an unpredictable global market.

## From corporate experience to entrepreneurial leadership

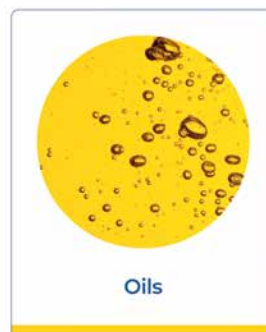
Ignacy Wierzbicki joined SAWEX in 2019 after a long international career in the chemical industry. A chemical engineer by training, he previously held management positions at companies such as Dow Chemical, PPG and Selena Group. His experience in research and development, sales, marketing and strategic leadership provided the foundation for guiding

SAWEX through one of the most challenging periods in its history. "What attracted me to SAWEX was the combination of chemical expertise, international reach and entrepreneurial freedom," explains Ignacy Wierzbicki. "In a private company, decisions can be implemented much faster, and you directly influence the future of the business."

## Rebuilding the business model

Only a few years after his arrival, SAWEX faced a major turning point. Before 2022, a large part of the company's business relied on petrochemical products sourced from Russia for the European rubber and tire industry. When geopolitical tensions escalated and sanctions were introduced, the company lost a significant share of

its turnover within a short period. "We had to rebuild almost everything," says Ignacy Wierzbicki. "Suppliers, customer structures, cost models and financing systems all had to be reorganized very quickly." SAWEX responded with a comprehensive transformation strategy. The company reduced costs, strengthened its sales organization and established new supplier



A broad portfolio of product groups: SAWEX SA offers specialized chemical solutions for industries including rubber and tire processing, plastics, packaging, piping and construction



The people behind SAWEX SA: A dedicated international team driving growth, innovation and reliable customer partnerships across the European chemical industry

relationships in regions such as the United States, the Middle East, China and India. At the same time, it expanded its focus beyond its traditional core business.

Today, SAWEX continues to specialize in the rubber and tire processing industry but is also entering new segments including plastics processing, food packaging, piping and construction-related applications.

#### Logistics and customer focus as key strengths

A key success factor for SAWEX is its close relationship with

customers. According to Ignacy Wierzbicki, understanding customer needs and reacting quickly to market changes are essential in today's business environment: "You must listen carefully to your customers, they are also under pressure and need reliable partners who can provide stable deliveries and flexible solutions." Logistics and warehousing have therefore become central elements of the company's strategy. Since many products are sourced from Asia and North America, maintaining reliable supply chains

requires strong inventory management and efficient European warehouse infrastructure. "You cannot allow interruptions in supply," explains Ignacy Wierzbicki. "Reliability and delivery performance are critical in our industry." The company's strong logistics network and flexible sourcing capabilities have become important competitive advantages in a volatile market environment.

#### Focused on sustainable growth

While Central and Eastern Europe remain the company's core markets, SAWEX is also strengthening its presence in Western Europe, particularly in Germany. The company follows a traditional B2B approach focused on direct customer relationships, personal meetings and regular participation in international trade fairs. Internally, SAWEX combines structured management processes with entrepreneurial flexibility. Financial controlling, strategic



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A variety of liquid chemical formulations in laboratory test tubes, reflecting SAWEX SA's broad expertise and diverse product portfolio for multiple industrial applications

planning and employee development play an important role within the organization. Continuous education and professional training are actively supported to strengthen expertise across the company. For Ignacy Wierzbicki, long-term success depends not only on strategy and market knowledge, but also on ethics and responsibility. "Ethics in business is essential because it builds trust," he emphasizes. "You must take calculated risks, but every decision has to be responsible and sustainable for the company." After successfully navigating a period of major transformation, SAWEX is once again focused on growth. The company's mission today reflects its ambition to support customers with reliable products, strong service and long-term partnership in an increasingly complex global market.

# A Place for Good Times



At a time when digitization and artificial intelligence are reshaping industries across the globe, Austria's Hotel Jungbrunn remains convinced that genuine human connection is what makes or breaks the experience their guests can enjoy. Combining exceptional wellness facilities, personalized service, and a strong commitment to employee development, the family-owned hotel has built a reputation as a true "place for good times."

**European Business:** Ms. Gutheinz, Hotel Jungbrunn describes itself as a "place for good times" – a destination where guests can truly enjoy themselves. What does that promise mean to you?

**Viviana Gutheinz:** For us, people will always make the difference, especially in a world that is increasingly shaped by digitization and AI. This philosophy is largely driven by our family: my parents, who transformed the hotel into what it is today, as well as my brother, who took over in 2016 as the third generation, and myself, having joined the company five years ago. Together with our staff, we share a common goal: creating genuine human connections. From our welcome tour, the stay itself, and a pleasant depar-

ture after a relaxing visit, we strive to make every interaction as meaningful as we can. For us, the most powerful marketing tool is a happy guest. If someone enjoys an unforgettable stay in a beautiful setting, they are likely to return in the future.

**European Business:** The hospitality industry changed dramatically after the pandemic. How has Hotel Jungbrunn responded to these market shifts?

**Viviana Gutheinz:** Many hotels reacted by removing services from their standard offering and turning them into paid extras. We chose a different path, because we wanted to continue inspiring our guests by enhancing their stay with a spa treatment or an evening cocktail. With a spa that

spans 8,000 m<sup>2</sup>, three restaurants to choose from, and a wide range of additional amenities, our goal remains to provide a truly comprehensive experience.

**European Business:** At the same time, budgets of consumers and travelers are becoming tighter.

**Viviana Gutheinz:** That is certainly true. One noticeable trend is that average lengths of stay have become somewhat shorter. For us, this means that we must help guests unwind more quickly so they can fully enjoy their time with us and return home not only with wonderful memories but also with a renewed sense of balance and well-being. It also becomes increasingly important to attract the right guests for our hotel. Based on what we know about previous



**INTERVIEW WITH**  
*Viviana Gutheinz,*  
*Co-Owner*

visits, we want to communicate with our guests in a much more targeted way, depending on whether they particularly enjoyed the spa, our restaurants, the 40 sports classes we offer, or the natural environment that surrounds our estate. That approach is far more effective than broad, generic marketing campaigns.

**European Business:** It also requires significant digital expertise, though.

**Viviana Gutheinz:** Absolutely. We have designated 2026 as a key year for optimizing our internal



Set in Tyrol, Austria, Hotel Jungbrunn boasts one of the most beautiful landscapes in all of Central Europe



Guests of Hotel Jungbrunn can truly enjoy the great outdoors



A place for community and relaxation

processes, including through the use of AI. We operate a highly sophisticated systems landscape that spans guest management, spa bookings, payment processing, and many other areas. Our focus now is on integrating these systems more effectively so we can unlock the full value of the data they contain. Naturally, this will also improve efficiency, but our primary goal is to free our employees to focus on what they do best: engaging with our guests on a genuinely human level.

**European Business:** That is no small task given the ongoing labor shortage in hospitality, particularly in a highly competitive market like Tyrol, Austria.

**Viviana Gutheinz:** It is certainly a challenge, but it is also an exciting one, and we have been addressing it proactively for many years. Back in 2016, my brother launched our employer brand, the Jungbrunn Crew, complete with its own logo, values, and in-house academy – long before many other hotels adopted similar concepts after the pandemic.



Enjoying a drink and a pleasant conversation at a bar: What unwinding is truly about

**European Business:** How does your approach work?

**Viviana Gutheinz:** Our strategy rests on three pillars: leaders, employees, and apprentices. We support all three groups through ongoing workshops and development programs. However, these initiatives are not primarily about technical skills such as setting a table correctly or ensuring perfect room cleanliness. Rather, they focus on personal growth and human development: How can I grow as a person? How can I give effective feedback? How can I manage stress constructively? We firmly believe that anyone can continue to grow, regardless of their background, and that hospitality can be an incredibly fulfilling profession. Helping a couple or a family enjoy a memo-

orable evening through meaningful conversations, genuine interactions, and authentic emotions is a truly rewarding experience.

**European Business:** Before joining your family's business, you spent many years working as an actress. What inspired your career change?

**Viviana Gutheinz:** When I started out as an actress, that was a choice for my original profession and not against my family's hotel. I remain deeply grateful to my parents for the support they gave me then and continue to give me today. When I turned 30 and continued to be a free spirit, I began looking for new ways to grow as a person. At the same time, I saw the remarkable business my parents had built and felt a desire to

contribute to it. There is a saying that has always inspired me: "If you never leave, you can never truly come home." I think that sentiment captures my journey perfectly.



Guests can look forward to a spa that spans 8,000 m<sup>2</sup>



Hotel staff calls guests the night before arrival to make their stay as pleasant as possible from the start



Beautiful rooms, in a mix of modern and traditional styles, are only part of a relaxing vacation



"Guests must be able to unwind quickly", says Viviana Gutheinz



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DER GUTZEITORT

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Behind every product stands a dedicated team. With around 80 employees, Ölmühle Solling has created a culture built on trust, continuity and shared responsibility – values that have shaped the company's development for 30 years and continue to drive its future success



# Expanding the Boundaries of the Organic Oil Business

INTERVIEW WITH  
Sarah Baensch,  
Managing Director



Organic food, sustainability and conscious nutrition are becoming increasingly important to consumers around the world. For 30 years, Ölmühle Solling GmbH has been combining traditional craftsmanship with organic expertise, offering a broad portfolio of oils, specialty foods and nutritional supplements. In this interview, Managing Director Sarah Baensch talks about the company's journey from a small family business to one of Germany's leading organic oil producers, the role of digitalization and AI, its commitment to sustainability, and the vision for the next generation.

**European Business:** Ms. Baensch, Ölmühle Solling has grown from a small organic oil mill into a well-established brand. How did it all begin?

**Sarah Baensch:** My parents, Gudrun and Werner Baensch, founded the company in 1996 after returning from China, where my father worked as a food technologist. Starting with three organic oils – rapeseed, linseed and sunflower oil – they built the business on a commitment to organic quality and the values of true organic pioneers. We have been a Naturland partner ever since. Today, my brother Sebastian and I run the company in the 2.

generation and are celebrating our 30th anniversary with a large mill festival at our headquarters.

**European Business:** How is the company structured today?

**Sarah Baensch:** My brother and I each hold 50% of the company and took over management seven years ago. Our parents still advise us informally. We employ around 80 people and generate close to 20 million EUR in annual revenue. A major milestone was the move into our purpose-built production facility in 2018, which created the capacity for further growth.

**European Business:** What products and services define your business?

**Sarah Baensch:** Our core business remains cold-pressed organic oils, but our portfolio has expanded significantly. Today, we offer around 250 products, including seasoning oils, vinegars, pestos, protein-rich flours, natural cosmetics, animal nutrition and food supplements. Omega-3 products and other nutritional supplements are currently among our fastest-growing categories.

**European Business:** What makes Ölmühle Solling different from other producers?



  
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SOLLING**

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Driven by organic expertise: Every Ölmühle Solling product reflects a commitment to natural ingredients, careful craftsmanship and uncompromising quality



From cold-pressed oils to innovative specialties: With around 250 products, Ölmühle Solling's exceptional product diversity is one of the company's defining strengths

**Sarah Baensch:** Our combination of product diversity, craftsmanship and organic expertise is unique. While many competitors focus on a limited range, we offer a broad portfolio of specialized products. At the same time, we combine quality, transparency and authenticity with the continuity of a family-owned company whose employees often stay with us for decades.

**European Business:** Which markets and customer groups do you serve?

**Sarah Baensch:** Germany remains our most important market. We serve health-conscious consumers through our online shop, organic and specialty food retailers, selected food retailers and private-label customers. Exports account for around 15% of sales, with activities across Ger-

many, Austria and Switzerland, as well as the Benelux countries, Scandinavia and even Taiwan.

**European Business:** How important are marketing, digitalization and AI for your business?

**Sarah Baensch:** Our online shop has become our most important sales channel, supported by content marketing, newsletters, digital advertising and social media. Beyond e-commerce, our website serves as a valuable knowledge platform featuring recipes, product information and expert content. We maintain a strong presence at industry events such as Biofach and its regional counterparts across Germany. Digitalization plays an important role throughout the company, from production and logistics to quality management and administration. We also use AI-supported tools

for forecasting, analytics and marketing.

**European Business:** Sustainability has always been part of your positioning. How do you put it into practice?

**Sarah Baensch:** Sustainability has been part of our DNA since day one. It starts with organic raw materials and long-term relationships with farmers and continues through our Naturland Fair certification and regional value creation. For us, sustainability combines ecological, social and economic responsibility, and we aim to keep as much of the value chain as possible at our own site.

**European Business:** What are your goals for the coming years, and what motivates you personally?

**Sarah Baensch:** We want to further strengthen our brand, expand direct customer relationships and develop international markets. Our long-term ambition is to become Germany's best-known organic oil mill. Our focus is not growth at any price, but stability, process optimization and resilience in an increasingly challenging market environment shaped by economic uncertainty, digital transformation and AI-driven change. Internally, we foster a culture of respect, open communication and close collaboration. A first-name culture and regular company-wide meetings help keep everyone connected and engaged. Personally, I am motivated by the opportunity to preserve the values my parents established, work with a dedicated team and combine tradition with innovation for the next generation.

# Building the Future of Childcare



A mixed-use development in Lübeck combining residential, social and educational spaces, the project reflects a forward-thinking approach to urban planning – creating sustainable, community-focused environments that meet growing local needs

**European Business:** What was the idea behind founding AUDERE?

**Heinz Eder:** We founded AUDERE in 2019 with a clear focus on social impact investing. Early on, we identified daycare facilities as an area with enormous shortages. Access to early education is essential for equal opportunities and social cohesion, so our goal was to create attractive and sustainable educational infrastructure that supports communities in the long term.

**European Business:** How does your business model work in practice?

**Heinz Eder:** We cover the entire value chain. We identify suitable sites, develop the concept, plan the buildings – partly in-house, partly with external architects – and realize the projects as

developers. Once completed, the properties remain in our own portfolio and are leased to operators. That long-term perspective sets us apart from many players in the market.

**European Business:** What makes your daycare concepts unique?

**Christian Quendt:** From a technical and planning perspective, flexibility is key. Our buildings are designed to adapt over time – spaces can be reconfigured as requirements change. We also ensure that facilities cater to different age groups, with distinct solutions for under-threes and older children in terms of room layouts, equipment and safety features.

**European Business:** What are the most important planning considerations?

Since its founding in 2019, AUDERE Group has pursued a clear mission: to combine social impact investing with sustainable real estate development. Managing Director Heinz Eder and Head of Project Management Christian Quendt explain how the company addresses childcare shortages with flexible, forward-looking daycare concepts. From inclusive design and scalable campus models to long-term ownership strategies, AUDERE is redefining how educational and social infrastructure can serve both communities and future generations.

**Heinz Eder:** Accessibility and affordability come first. We want our daycare centers to be available to the broad majority of families, not a select group. At the same time, we place strong emphasis on outdoor play areas, multifunctional indoor spaces and fresh kitchens. The goal is to create holistic environments that support development, health and inclusion.

**European Business:** How do regional differences influence demand?

**Heinz Eder:** The demand varies significantly across Germany. Some regions have already invested heavily in childcare infrastructure, while others are still catching up. In southern states, for example, traditional structures often dominate, with fewer private operators active. Meanwhile,

INTERVIEW WITH

*Heinz Eder,  
Managing Director*

*Christian Quendt,  
Head of Project Management*

**audere.**  
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demand for places for children under three continues to grow, reflecting broader social changes.

**European Business:** You are increasingly developing campus-style daycare solutions. Why?

**Christian Quendt:** Campus models offer clear advantages. By combining several daycare centers in one location, we can achieve economies of scale in

areas such as kitchens, maintenance and staffing. Larger sites also allow for better outdoor spaces and infrastructure, while shared resources make operations more efficient. At the same time, the concept must fit local conditions such as transport links and topography.

**European Business:** What role does sustainability play in your projects?

**Christian Quendt:** It is embedded in every stage. We integrate photovoltaic systems, energy storage, and where possible geothermal or groundwater cooling. Rainwater is reused for irrigation, and buildings are designed for durability and low operating costs. Importantly, we avoid overly complex smart technologies and focus instead on solutions that are practical for everyday use by staff.

**European Business:** How do you address long-term challenges in the sector?

**Heinz Eder:** Many existing childcare facilities are outdated, sometimes even in poor condition. At the same time, demand is increasing. We therefore see a continuous need for modernization and new construction. Our approach is to build high-quality, sustainable facilities that remain functional and attractive for decades to come, rather than short-term solutions.

**European Business:** What are your growth ambitions?

**Heinz Eder:** We currently complete several projects each year and aim to scale up further, but always with a focus on quality. We are in a strong position where we can choose projects carefully and

work closely with municipalities that share our values. Our objective is not rapid expansion at any cost, but sustainable, long-term development.

**European Business:** Beyond daycare centres, are you expanding into other areas?

**Heinz Eder:** Yes, within the broader field of social infrastructure. For example, we are involved in student housing projects, often combined with childcare facilities. These mixed-use developments create synergies, improve land use efficiency and reflect changing societal needs. However, daycare remains at the core of what we do, and our primary focus going forward.

**European Business:** What ultimately drives AUDERE's work?



Focused on daycare development, AUDERE creates flexible, sustainable educational spaces that combine social impact with long-term value, supporting communities, operators and families alike

**Heinz Eder:** At the end of the day, it is about creating places where children can thrive. High-quality educational environments are not just a social necessity, they are the foundation for economic strength and democratic stability, as well as long-term social cohesion. That is what motivates us every day and guides every project decision.

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REAL ESTATE

# Service Beats the Lowest Price

Supply chains remain fragile, materials are not always available, and downtime costs companies valuable time. This makes reliable partners who respond quickly and provide practical solutions more important than ever. PKS electronic Vertriebs GmbH, based in Hohenbrunn, Germany, delivers exactly that through technical expertise, high product availability, and personal service.

Josef Pill founded PKS electronic Vertriebs GmbH ten years ago. What started with a small office and one employee has grown into a company with nine staff members and annual sales exceeding EUR 10 million. Early milestones included ISO certification and surpassing the EUR 1 million sales mark. "From the very beginning, we wanted customers to know they could rely on us," says Josef Pill.

The company supplies electro-mechanical components, including switches, connectors, relays, transformers, cable systems, and cable protection solutions. Its key customers operate in civil aviation, defense, and the construction equipment industry. Thanks to its continuously expanded warehouse, PKS can deliver many standard products at short notice while also handling highly specialized requests.

## Solutions Instead of Delays

PKS focuses not only on products but on creating real value for customers. Required components are stocked, sourced worldwide, or obtained quickly through a trusted supplier network. "Our

strengths are service and honest communication," emphasizes the managing director. Delivery delays are communicated openly, alternatives are explored, and customers are informed early. Each employee manages customer projects independently, from quotation and procurement through to delivery. This saves time and eliminates unnecessary handovers. "Customers receive faster answers, and we can act more flexibly," explains the head of the company. Especially during periods of long lead times, this approach proves highly effective. Short decision-making paths and close contact with the products also ensure a high level of technical expertise throughout the team.

## Experience with a Clear Vision

PKS continues to invest in digitalization. Alongside a modern ERP system, the company increasingly uses artificial intelligence for research and data processing. "You have to learn how to use AI, but people always remain responsible," underlines the company founder.

He is also planning the company's future. His daughter is expected to take over the business while he passes on his knowledge and experience. "There will always be work. What matters is genuine interest and taking customers seriously," says the electronics expert. This philosophy has shaped PKS electronic Vertriebs GmbH from the very beginning and remains the foundation for sustainable growth and long-term customer relationships.



INTERVIEW WITH  
*Josef Pill,*  
*Managing Director*

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An overview of connector solutions, showcasing expertise in high-quality interconnection systems



The team dedicated to providing high-quality connector solutions and trusted customer service

# Good Jobs for a Changing World

Artificial intelligence is transforming the labor market at unprecedented speed, reshaping job profiles, creating entirely new skill requirements, and rendering others obsolete. For recruitment specialist home of jobs, these changes represent not only a challenge but also an opportunity to support professionals throughout their entire careers. CEO Frank Lambert explains why recruiting must evolve beyond traditional job placement and how technology can empower employees to navigate the future of work with confidence.

INTERVIEW WITH  
Frank Lambert,  
CEO



"There are professions whose requirements have changed dramatically, jobs that are disappearing altogether, and entirely new business needs for which the labor market offers very little talent as of now," says Frank Lambert, describing the challenges companies face in finding qualified employees. For decades, his own company, home of jobs, has positioned itself at precisely this critical intersection, guided by its longstanding mission of delivering "good jobs for good people." Frank Lambert also sees the rise of artificial intelligence as a

major opportunity for his company – and, more importantly, as a chance to support the people whose careers will be most profoundly affected by the transformation that is already well underway: "In the near future, we will launch an app that provides a scientifically validated analysis for virtually every profession, showing what percentage of its typical tasks is likely to be automated by AI in the short and medium term. Based on this objective assessment, users will be able to draw meaningful conclusions and take action quickly – whether

by retraining, pursuing additional qualifications, exploring new job opportunities, or simply learning more about adjacent career paths where their skills may remain valuable. If the results raise concerns and users feel they need psychological or legal support, the app will also direct them to specialized organizations that can provide professional guidance and ongoing assistance."

## A trusted career partner

At the same time, home of jobs aims to remain a trusted point of reference for professionals even when they are not actively looking for a new position: "We want people to stay connected with us throughout their careers," Frank Lambert explains. "That means informing them about attractive job opportunities in their region that may offer greater responsibility or higher compensation, but also keeping them updated on broader developments affecting their profession and industry. Our ambition is not merely to support active job seekers, but anyone who wants to make informed decisions about their professional future. We want home of jobs to become a trusted career partner throughout your entire working life."

Against the backdrop of growing mass layoffs across Germany, Frank Lambert believes recruitment firms should become involved much earlier in the transition process. "When layoffs occur, employers, legal advisors, works councils, unions, and employees all share one immediate objective: bringing the existing employment relationship to an orderly conclusion. That process alone often takes weeks or even months. During that entire period, however, hardly anyone focuses on what really matters next, which is helping employees affected by these layoffs secure new opportunities. In our view, that must become the highest priority from day one. Companies like ours could play a far more effective role in supporting that transition if we got to be involved earlier in the process."

**homeofjobs**

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# Reinventing Fleet Management in Europe



INTERVIEW WITH  
Majk Strika,  
CEO

Through a flexible and customer-centric approach, Holman has been able to make rapid headway in the German market

With a fleet of more than 2 million vehicles under management, the name Holman has stood for effective, customercentric fleet management in the United States for decades. Just over a decade ago, the company expanded into Europe, entering the UK and German markets with a flexible fleet management approach previously unknown in the industry there. In his interview with European Business, Managing Director of Holman's German subsidiary Majk Strika discussed the company's growth trajectory and the spirit that makes Holman unique as a family-owned business.



**European Business:** Mr. Strika, when the Holman family opened their first Ford dealership on the US East Coast in 1924, few could have imagined it would one day become a global leader in automotive services.

**Majk Strika:** By the late 1940s, the company had already expanded into fleet management, offering the full spectrum of services – from vehicle procurement and financing to maintenance, logistics, and accident management. In Germany even today, we think in terms of the vehicle's entire lifecycle, divided into three phases: "Getting in", meaning vehicle selection and ordering; "Driving", where we support customers with maintenance and repair services; and finally "Getting out", when the vehicle is sold at the end of the lifecycle.

**European Business:** In 2013, Holman expanded into Europe by entering the German and UK markets.

**Majk Strika:** We remained true to our American business model because we believe it is both more cost-effective and more transparent. The established players in Europe traditionally operated with a closed-cost calculation model rooted largely in insurance logic, offering comprehensive one-size-fits-all packages that often lacked transparency and were not cost effective compared to the pay as you go services or open end leasing. We believe customers are often far better served – both operationally and financially – by an à la carte model tailored precisely to their needs.

## LEBENSZYKLUS IHRER FLOTTE



The fleet life cycle spans the phases "Getting in", "Driving", and "Getting out"

**European Business:** How does that approach work economically for Holman?

**Majk Strika:** That was a question many customers asked us in the early days. Essentially, all we do is demystify the traditional leasing model and allow customers to benefit directly from our pricing and scale advantages. For example our customers benefit directly from our scale, technical expertise and purchasing power – something that is far less transparent in a closed-cost structure. With our Flex Lease offering, we have taken that philosophy even further.

**European Business:** How exactly?

**Majk Strika:** Traditional lease agreements are typically tied to fixed terms and predefined mileage targets. In reality, however, only a fraction of vehicles actually

end up matching those exact conditions. Usage patterns change, operational requirements evolve, and sometimes vehicles are no longer needed for the full contract period. In other cases, leasing providers may want to remarket vehicles earlier due to favorable residual-value developments – as happened during the Covid-19 pandemic. After all, that is where a substantial share of leasing banks' earnings comes from. Our approach considerably differs in all of these regards, as we have significantly loosened that rigid framework. We don't create friction around how a vehicle was used, and we seek straightforward solutions when value deviations occur. In some cases, customers may simply keep the vehicle a bit longer; in others, they may benefit financially from stronger residual values. And at the end of the contract, customers are spared the dreaded end

### EINSTEIGEN

Finanzierung  
Holman Supply Chain  
Elektromobilität



### FAHREN

Nutzung & Instandhaltung  
Schadenmanagement  
Technologie & Datenintelligenz

### AUSSTEIGEN

Holman Asset Management  
Remarketing



Holman's German subsidiary currently has more than 150,000 vehicles under management

of contract damage inspection process.

**European Business:** How difficult was it to introduce this concept in Germany? The fleet life cycle spans the phases "Getting in", "Driving", and "Getting out". How does that approach work economically for Holman?

**Majk Strika:** In the beginning, we felt a bit like salmon swimming upstream. Naturally, that prompted questions about why we were going against established industry practices – and where the catch was. Through patience, transparency, and reliability, we were able to convince many customers that our approach is both sustainable and has a thoroughly proven track record in the US market. It was important to us to accept "no" as an answer and to promise only what we could truly deliver. That approach has paid off: today, we manage more than 150,000 fleet vehicles in Germany alone, and that number continues to grow rapidly.

**European Business:** So the Holman's mission slogan of "Driving What's Right" applies in Germany as well?

**Majk Strika:** Absolutely. Holman became the company it is today because it treats people as equals – employees, customers, and suppliers alike. I actually joined Holman somewhat unexpectedly 12 years ago. At the time, I was searching for a new fleet solution for the German subsidiary of a major American corporation where I was working, and I met with Holman representatives as part of that process. I was so impressed by that conversation that I wanted to join the company myself. Our credo – to build a company that enables better lives for our partners and communities – is genuinely lived out in everyday business, whether in customer relationships or the way we treat and motivate our employees and the communities they live in. Being part of that journey has been tremendously rewarding.

**Holman**  
Driving What's Right

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