

WE HAVE OUR PRINCIPLES ... WEITBLICK | GOTTFRIED SCHMIDT OHG

WORKWEAR AS A SUSTAINABLE TEXTILE LOOP!



WEITBLICK | Gottfried Schmidt OHG with about 130 members of staff in Bavaria and more than 1,000 employees in European production plants is one of the leading German textile companies in the workwear and corporate fashion segments. Originally founded 1931 in Frankfurt / Main, the traditional family-owned company, now in its fourth generation, achieves a medium sized eight figure turnover.

Quick decision-making processes, a familiar atmosphere, production exclusively in Europe, customer-specific innovations and comprehensive sustainability concepts - what does the workwear professional do differently than others?

Sales Director Philipp Hartmann (Sales Support and Customer Service) and Janine Gonglach, Head of Marketing, together with Managing Director Felix Blumenauer, responsible for Marketing, Sales, Logistics and Controlling faced the questions of Textination.

Gottfried Schmidt OHG, a family company that will celebrate its 90th birthday next year, is considered as a professional when it comes to premium workwear. If you had to introduce yourself in 100 words to someone who doesn't know the company: What makes you unique?

We are a long-established family company that has reinvented itself again and again over the course of history. In the field of workwear, we stand for the highest quality across a wide range of industry segments and attach great importance to sustainability - this is also shown by our long-standing partners who produce our clothing in Europe. With our state-of-the-art logistics center, we prove that digitization and Industry 4.0 are not just buzzwords for us.



Felix Blumenauer - Managing Director



Philipp Hartmann - Sales Director

In which markets and by which partners do you feel particularly challenged? And with which product innovations in the workwear sector do you think you can move the most?

Markets are changing faster and faster and that is a challenge per se. We want to continue to be reliable today and, in the future, that also means continuity for our partners. But how do we deal with ever new requirements from ever faster moving markets?

Focusing on the customer, we cannot remain in rigid structures. We at WEITBLICK achieve this through our corporate culture and our guidelines: courage, strength and confidence.

This culture holds our team together and this enables us to adapt structures more quickly. Due to our personal contact to our partners and our experience as a fourth-generation family business, we enjoy great trust in all markets and this assists us to make quick adjustments and changes

without questioning our DNA.

The basis of our products is the quality of the materials used, the processing by a very well-trained staff in our own European production sites and, first and foremost, a team of experts who controls everything in-house from the fiber and the design idea to production and logistics and bring it all together under one roof. So, if you ask me whether all products will be flashing in the near future, the answer is: no. Our strength is the implementation of our customers' wishes and above all we put the brand, the CI of our customers, in the foreground on the product. Because a satisfied employee in the right workwear is the best business card for a company. So, if it should flash in the clothing in the near future, this is not a problem, but we realize ourselves much more concerned with our customer requirements around the products. Based on quality and sustainability we have been driving very well for a long time.



However, services, speed in logistics, controlling, order configurators and budget management as well as interface management are the actual innovations with which we convince our customers and partners today. For some time now, we have been relying on a team of employees who implements precisely these customer requirements across departments. For example, in addition to our own CI Workwear collection, a customer can also receive a protected customer shop from us, where employees can configure the coordinated collection and order according to a defined budget. The customer's purchasing and controlling departments have live insight into costs and inventories. The dispatch including personalization is RFID-controlled in Germany, picked on the carrier and sent all over the world. Does that sound innovative?



Tailor-made or solution for the major customer? The topic of individualization down to batch size 1 is gaining in importance today. How do you manage the balancing act between major customers and individual production - what does this mean for the processes of Gottfried Schmidt OHG?

Philipp Hartmann – Sales Director

Why not the tailor-made solution for major and small customers? Until a few years ago, and even today in some cases, a customer's logo in the colors red, green, blue and white was of course displayed by fabrics of the same color combined in a four-colored scheme. This is more or less a thing of the past. Nowadays, requests for different colors are additionally solved by the possibility of combining many articles. In doing so, we fall back on thousands of active articles of our own developments and a large selection of ingredients, fabrics and finishing options. CI collections can be produced very quickly in small quantities in our state-of-the-art production facilities. In one of our six European production plants, for example, we only manufacture made-to-measure orders from piece 1. This happens within very lean processes and just takes a few weeks.



At the same time, we have large capacities for the storage of our raw materials and a warehouse for prefabricated parts, which enables us to place them into stock for the customer. Companies are aware of the great importance of workwear and the partly missing transparency in processes or costs. Therefore, it is desirable to be able to order small quantities. We have access to dozens of wearer profiles and millions of wearers from almost all sectors and are able to combine this experience with today's requirements. I don't prefer the word "standard", but the fact is that we already offer our customers a wide range of articles and colors to choose from, as we are constantly releasing new collections for various industries. The processes, scrutinized with the possibilities of new tools and systems, are consistently adapted - the other way around. This enables us to work very automatically from small to large orders and thus process orders via our customer online shops or via interfaces with our customers' order portals. Order picking and logistics from piece 1 with the shipping method of your choice are no problem for us, because we have been operating the most modern logistics center in the industry since 2018.

With WEITBLICK you have chosen the look-and-feel of a German-language brand. What prompted you to take this step and what are the consequences for your international sales?

The decision was made for WEITBLICK (*Engl.: vision, foresightedness*) because we always possessed it as a company. Not only the founder Gottfried Schmidt himself had shown vision or foresightedness. Each generation that followed also had and still has visions, that developed the company to what it is today. A company with thought leaders, doers, inventors, critics and perfectionists.



Janine Gonglach – Head of Marketing

Also, in the future, we will meet the challenge of developing our products and our actions with foresightedness - for the continued existence of the company and for the benefit of our customers.

Philipp Hartmann – Sales Director

We serve a wide range of customers, from craft businesses to large global corporations. So, we have already been internationally active in previous generations. And the name has never been a limitation. Our employees in sales and customer service are trained accordingly, our documents and systems are multilingually available and maintained.



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In which socially relevant subject areas do you see a particularly great need for innovation and action during the next 5 years? What is your assessment that your company will be able to offer solutions for this with its products?

Felix Blumenauer – Managing Director

We see a further growing importance of the topic of “sharing”. With our strong partners in professional service, we have been living this idea for many decades and see increasing importance in society. Clothing remains available in a cycle of the highest quality for many years - for us this is the sustainable counter trend to "fast fashion". In this context we offer digital solutions that satisfy our customers and our wearers and convince them, that WEITBLICK is the right choice.



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We will act on these fields and consciously set the right accents – that’s how we understand corporate responsibility towards our employees and our customers.

For decades, the textile and clothing industry has been growing steadily worldwide. In terms of sustainability, to put it mildly, there is a rather mixed feedback for our industry. What is the Gottfried Schmidt OHG focusing on in order to meet its social responsibility?

Felix Blumenauer – Managing Director

We have long anchored sustainability in our company as one of the most important priorities in our strategy. This becomes apparent e.g. by the use of Fair-Trade cotton, which we bring to the market in large quantities together with other companies and suppliers in the industry. We think sustainability comprehensively. Each area of our company contributes to the fulfillment of corporate responsibility - towards our customers and our own employees.



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There are various definitions for sustainability. Customers expect everything under this term - from climate protection to ecology, from local on-site production to the exclusion of child labor etc. What do you do to bring this term to life for your company and what seals or certifications do you rely on?

Felix Blumenauer – Managing Director

We have the highest standards in the entire supply chain, which we implement together with our partners and monitor closely. This includes fair production conditions in Europe with comparatively short distances, which are guaranteed by the internationally recognized SA 8000 seal. The avoidance of unnecessary packaging material, climate-neutral shipping and the reduction of plastic are also a matter of course for us. For example, we are currently working on using recycled polyester in the future. We are looking forward to the Green Button and want to qualify for this state seal of quality.



At WEITBLICK, you have chosen a consciously young form of communication. Whether Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest or relevant business platforms - social media clearly take a central position in your media mix. This is not necessarily standard in the textile rental service. Why did you choose this form of addressing?

Janine Gonglach – Head of Marketing

For us, WEITBLICK - far-sightedness - also means “venturing something new”!

From my point of view, in the digital age, the question for companies is no longer whether social networks should be used or not, but only how and to what extent. With more than 3 billion people who are now represented in social media networks worldwide, we no longer speak of zeitgeist, but of a must-have in the marketing mix. Our communication follows the guiding principle: "We do not conduct a monologue, but an open dialogue at eye level." Social media achieve exactly that!



FAIR

PRODUZIERT IN EUROPA,
DESIGNT IN DEUTSCHLAND



LANGLEBIG

LÄNGER FREUDE DURCH
PREMIUM QUALITÄT



SAUBER

BLEIBT ES MIT UNSEREN
TEXTILSERVICE PARTNERN



INDIVIDUELL

GEMEINSAM ZUR
EIGENEN CI-WORKWEAR

Breaking new ground means willingness to make decisions, overcoming fears - and thus courage to fail. Not every project can succeed. In retrospect, which entrepreneurial decision are you particularly happy to have made?

Felix Blumenauer – Managing Director:

The transformation of our company. With courage, strength and confidence, we managed to reposition our company almost completely within a very short period of time. This includes the modern umbrella brand WEITBLICK, which for us is also an obligation to our actions. But also, the growth that we have achieved in the past four years with around 40 new employees. We have built a new logistics center - with highly modern processes that are largely automated, e.g. with intelligent RFID technology. In doing so, we are trying to take all employees with us on this journey, which is not always easy but the right track. The positive thing about it is that our long-standing as well as our new employees work for us on their own responsibility and with enthusiasm.

The interview was conducted by Ines Chucholowius, CEO Textination GmbH