

DENKFA3RIK[®]

NEW IDEAS FOR TOMORROW'S TRANSPORT

ADDED VALUE

When expectations are exceeded.



LOGISTICS CAN DO MORE

This is how real added value is created.

Page 08



ALWAYS A SOLUTION AT HAND

BTK relies on flexibility and lightweight trailers.

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AUTHENTICITY ASSURED

Visiting a passionate host.

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WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?

A survey of lottery winners (winnings of €100,000 or more) has yielded surprising results: despite their sudden wealth, 95 per cent keep their jobs and continue to go to work as usual. One in four winners treats themselves to a new car, while 27 per cent now travel more frequently – mostly within Germany. Long-distance travel is the exception, with only 2 per cent taking such trips. Property purchases remain rare: only

9 per cent invest in a house or flat. The way the winnings are handled is also striking – 13 per cent keep them completely to themselves, even from their own partner, while 3 per cent share their good fortune with their entire circle of friends. In addition, 10 per cent of winners report increased jealousy among those around them.

Source: Lotto 24

Dear readers,

Added value is created through daily interaction – between companies and customers, between ideas and implementation, and between experience and progress. This issue of DENKFABRIK shows where this added value becomes visible: in partnerships, innovations, and practical examples.

We highlight how customer proximity is achieved today – how relationships are formed and maintained when so much is becoming digital. Experts from science, research and practice explain where personal contact remains indispensable and what opportunities new technologies create.

We provide insights into innovations such as the mykrone.blue platform, which centrally bundles all fleet management functions, look at electrification in transport and show what appreciation can achieve in everyday working life. We also met with Cologne's exceptional restaurateur Vincent Moissonnier to talk to him about how top quality and proximity can be permanently combined.

And, of course, we visited customers with whom we have been working in trustful partnerships for years – they know best what added value means to them, in what form they really need it and how they experience it at Krone.

That is precisely our goal: we want to develop solutions that actually make everyday life in the transport business easier. So please feel free to get in touch with us – we will listen to you to understand what really adds value for you!

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Richenhagen
Simon Richenhagen



Simon Richenhagen
Head of Marketing & Communications
Krone Commercial Vehicle Group and Schwarzmüller Group

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TITLE: ADOBESTOCK/ВИТАЛИЙ БОРКОВСКИЙ PHOTOS: ISTOCK/MYSTOCKIMAGES, KRONE

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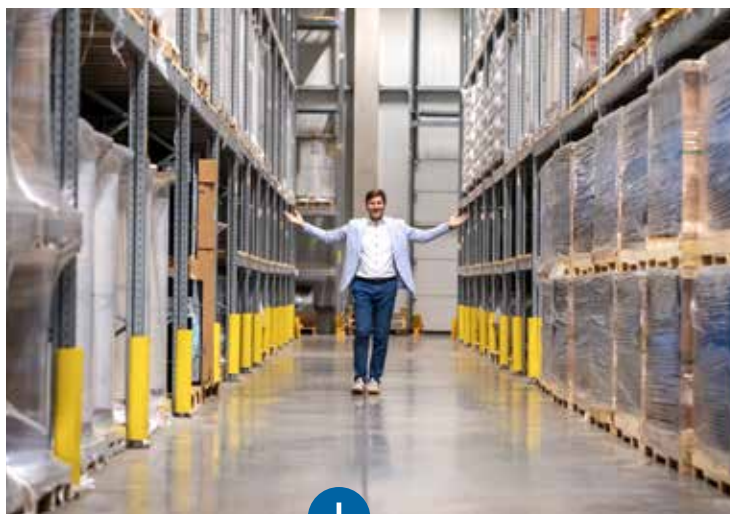
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LEGAL NOTICE

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Blue Notes

News from the world of Krone



First public megawatt truck-charging station opens

The first public megawatt charging station (MCS) has been opened at the Lipperland Süd service station (A 2). The “HoLa” (high-performance charging for long-distance trucks) research project, which is supported by the Federal Ministry of Transport (BMV), is testing charging at up to 1,000 kilowatts. This allows electric trucks to recharge quickly during the mandatory 45-minute breaks. The results will be incorporated into the planned nationwide expansion of a fast-charging network for long-distance transport. [↗](#)

Jean-Manuel Daussy heads Krone Trailer France

Jean-Manuel Daussy is the new managing director of Krone Trailer France. The industry expert brings many years of experience in the commercial vehicle and supplier industries as well as in the OEM and aftermarket sectors.

He aims to strengthen customer relationships in France through trust, responsiveness and performance. [↗](#)



VSL and Kravag launch shared truck-charging network

The Baden-Württemberg Freight Forwarding and Logistics Association (VSL) is cooperating with Kravag Truck Charging to set up a shared charging network. Members can share their private charging stations via a platform at fixed times, thereby increasing range, utilisation and cost-effectiveness. Baden-Württemberg is serving as a pilot region for this project. [↗](#)



Uwe Schöneberg joins Krone Group Supervisory Board

Uwe Schöneberg joined the Supervisory Board of the Krone Group on 1 May 2025. A trained master baker and business graduate, he is a managing partner at sugar producer and food manufacturer Pfeifer & Langen. He brings expertise in food production and agriculture, as well as in finance and energy. [↗](#)



NRW launches e-truck offensive

In North Rhine-Westphalia, 21 companies have committed to gradually converting their fleets to electric trucks by 2045. As part of the “**E-Trucks.NRW**” campaign, they signed a corresponding declaration of intent. Investments in around 1,600 zero-emission vehicles are planned over the coming years. [↗](#)



Elflein orders 76 trailers from Krone

Elflein Holding GmbH, a long-established **logistics company based in Bamberg**, is expanding its fleet with 76 Krone Mega Liner in a 2-axle version. The vehicles have a payload capacity of 20 tonnes and are equipped with a tyre refill system. Founded in 1932, the family-owned company Elflein specialises in transporting cars, food and paper, as well as deploying special equipment, and operates a fleet of 450 tractor units. [↗](#)



Interactive map for charging infrastructure

Renault Trucks offers an interactive map on its website that shows public truck charging stations in Europe. The overview is intended to create transparency and provide practical support for long-distance electric transport. Transport companies can use it to plan their routes and charging times, even over long distances. The map highlights the expansion of the infrastructure, covering both existing and planned locations. [↗](#)



t1p.de/dqrr7



PHOTOS: GOOGLE MAPS/RENAULT TRUCKS, ADOBE STOCK/VEGE

Logistics can do more

Real added value comes from trust, customized solutions, and a willingness to go above and beyond the standard. But how can companies in transport and logistics generate this added value even in challenging times – and **use it specifically** for their success?



Cost pressure, alternative drive technologies, a shortage of skilled workers, political crises, and uncertain conditions: logistics companies are under massive pressure. Securing sales is an absolute priority and the key to this is offering customers real benefits: excellent service, personal support, innovative solutions, and partnership-based cooperation ensure that customers feel well looked after, strengthen their loyalty, and form the basis for long-term business relationships.

“The quality of many products has become interchangeable, partly due to competition from Asia,” explains Dr. Mareike Ahlers from Bruhnpartner. “That’s why companies need to create added value that goes beyond traditional product quality.” This “added value” is usually

+ THOMAS DONATH

Thomas Donath is managing partner of the market research institute Nordlight Research, which he founded in 2007 with two colleagues. He has been working in market and organizational research for 25 years. The graduate psychologist regularly publishes studies that shed light on ecology and sustainability.



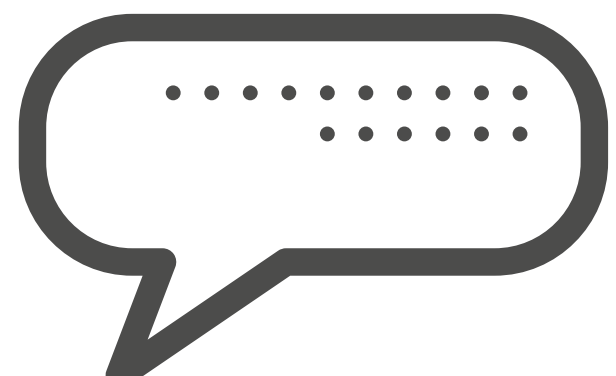
no longer found in the product itself, but in the service. Dr. Ahlers has been researching suitable offerings for many years. She recommends taking a very close look at customer needs – and asking them about these needs instead of just guessing. “These so-called customer insights are important parameters that are still too often overlooked and underutilised.”

The researcher works with driver analyses that empirically prove which factors are relevant for customer acceptance, willingness to pay or customer loyalty. “Thanks to modern methods, market research is affordable for every company today.” Making a one-time investment in an analysis often pays off more than investing budgets in digital tools that offer no added value to the customer.

“After all, there is hardly anything more important right now than knowing where to best spend your money.” A successful strategic orientation is based on three pillars: a good product, a functioning customer relationship and a strong brand. In particular, she sees great



”



potential in the area of sustainability: “It offers many opportunities for services such as take-back guarantees or circular repair offers.”

Active listening and identifying challenges

“We can handle not only emergency transport, but everything that comes before and after transport,” says Kerstin Wendt-Heinrich, managing partner of TOP Mehrwert-Logistik in Hamburg. “Added value is created when we listen actively, integrate ourselves into the customer’s process chains and adopt their perspective.”

DR. MAREIKE AHLERS

Dr. Mareike Ahlers is managing partner of Bruhnpartner, a spin-off from the University of Basel focusing on B2B companies. She was a lecturer in integrated communications management at the University of Basel for many years and has been a mentor for the past two years.



The company has established itself as a leading service provider in high-availability logistics and technical services. Back in 1997, it introduced a service whereby spare parts can be delivered anywhere in Germany within 90 minutes. In medical technology, TOP Mehrwert-Logistik also handles calibration and measuring equipment testing management for devices such as CTs and MRIs. “We simply noticed time and again that our customers needed even more,” says Wendt-Heinrich, describing the impetus that constantly inspires her team to develop further services. Often, it was small pieces of the puzzle that had “always been a red flag” for the customer. “We may then be the ones who can fill in the missing pieces and thus strengthen the entire process chain.” These don’t necessarily have to be large projects: “The best sales strategy is when customers realise that we really understand them.”

Communication in customer service has always been costly and labour-intensive. New technologies such as chatbots and AI systems can help here: they already communicate surprisingly well with customers. “This is truly a quantum leap in human-machine interaction,” says Thomas Donath, Managing Partner at

Nordlight Research. “A major advantage is that customers can simply start typing – instead of clicking through menus, filling out forms or waiting on hold on a hotline.” This works very well for standard processes such as orders or straightforward complaints – with consistent quality and no waiting times.

Chatbots with human support

The technology offers clear advantages: chatbots are always available, work without fluctuations in quality and can serve many customers at the same time. “With chatbots, we don’t have the differences that exist with staff,” explains Donath. “They are equally reliable, no matter when we use them.” The technology could provide relief, especially for companies with high sick leave rates or difficulties in filling positions.

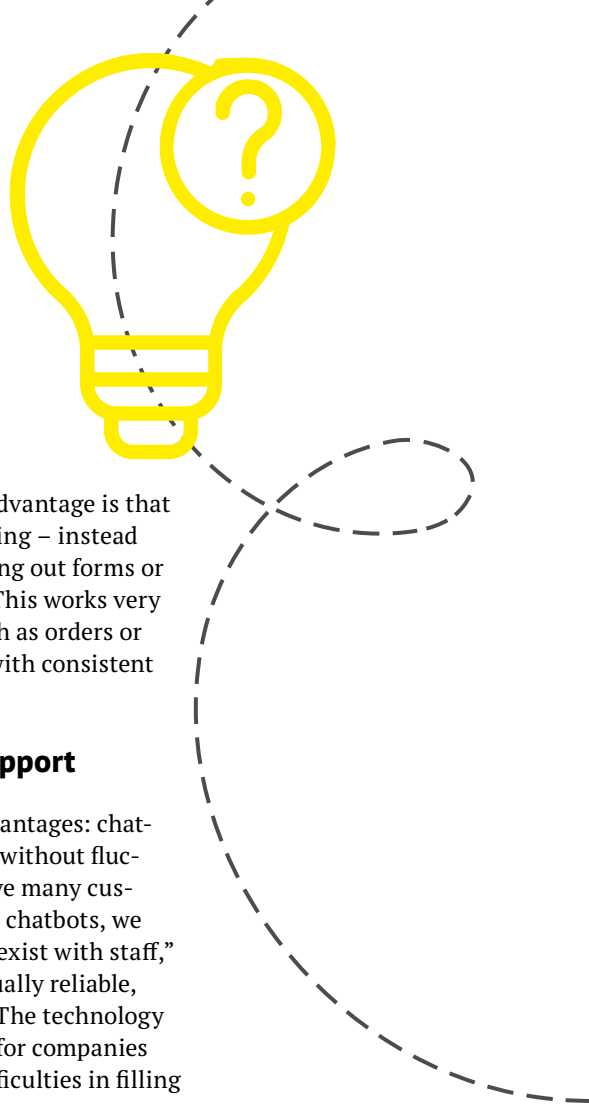
The expert sees the future in an intelligent combination: “Ideal solutions work with different levels: standard processes via chatbots, where I can get something resolved quickly, but always with the option of switching to competent human support relatively quickly.”

But a machine is not always the right point of contact to satisfy a customer. When emotional intelligence is required, technology reaches its limits. “If a customer is really upset, the machine should actually forward the query to a human being,” says Donath. Problems also arise when chatbots come under pressure and start to “hallucinate” – that is, inventing information because they assume they have to give an answer.

His research shows that around 10 per cent of citizens already see chatbots as their preferred means of communication for simple questions, with this figure rising to 15 per cent among the under-30s. The technology is therefore likely to become increasingly important and widespread. ➔

“Companies need to create added value that goes beyond traditional product quality.”

**DR. MAREIKE AHLERS,
MANAGING PARTNER,
BRUHNPARTNER**





KERSTIN WENDT-HEINRICH

Kerstin Wendt-Heinrich

Kerstin Wendt-Heinrich runs the TOP Mehrwert-Logistik group of companies in Hamburg with her family. She took over the company's human resources department at the age of 18 and joined the management team after completing her business studies degree.



Chatbots can act as effective filters and even arrange appointments for consultations. "In the B2B sector, consultations are very important because there are topics that need to be worked out in dialogue," explains Donath. "But the machine can make it easier for me as a customer to get started: I write down what I need, it can assign it and, if necessary, arrange an appointment with the appropriate specialist department."

Gradual introduction is important: "AI support should first be introduced on a pilot basis – not announced in a newsletter saying: 'From now on, we have a chatbot.' And users should be involved in the further development of the technology; they could provide feedback and help to improve the system."

Flexibility towards corporations

The value-added services must also be cost-effective. "Around 20 years ago, we developed and patented reusable packaging so that we could deliver screens to end customers and for repair without damage," says Wendt-Heinrich. "This saved on packaging, which was already very sustainable at the time, but then screens became larger and larger and their prices lower and lower, so that a ROI was no longer achievable. The customer was completely satisfied, everything worked wonderfully. But we had invested so much money in this service that it wasn't profitable and we had to discontinue it." Nevertheless, explains

Wendt-Heinrich, the willingness to try new things remained: "As a medium-sized company, we also have the opportunity to be more courageous because we decide for ourselves when to invest money." This flexibility is a clear advantage over large corporations.

At your service

What makes good customer service? Thomas Donath from Nordlight Research has defined the 'evergreens' that have remained unchanged for decades: "Accessibility, employee motivation, competence and reliability – these are the four cornerstones." Many companies are already very satisfied if they can provide these four pillars on a permanent basis: "Because that can be very challenging, for example when staff turnover makes it difficult to maintain competence in the teams."

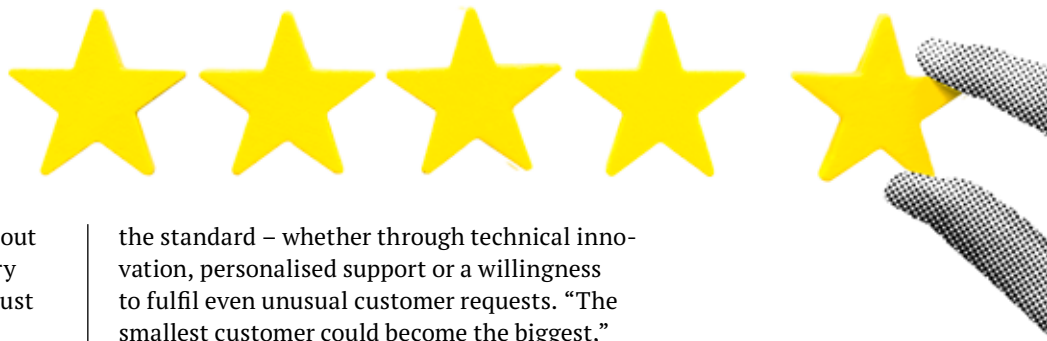
"As a medium-sized company, we have the opportunity to be more courageous."

**KERSTIN WENDT-HEINRICH,
MANAGING DIRECTOR, TOP
MEHRWERT-LOGISTIK**

According to Donath, it is only when the four evergreens are in place that individualisation comes into play as a further factor in good customer service. This is particularly in demand in the B2B sector: "If I, as a customer, have a particular challenge and feel that a service provider is addressing it and perhaps even building a solution especially for me, then that can be very convincing. As a customer, I naturally benefit above all from the company's experience: if really skilled people in engineering understand what my problem is and offer me the perfect solution, then that's a real plus point."

Openness and curiosity

Added value does not have to be a spectacular innovation; often it is about seemingly simple solutions. Kerstin Wendt-Heinrich reports:



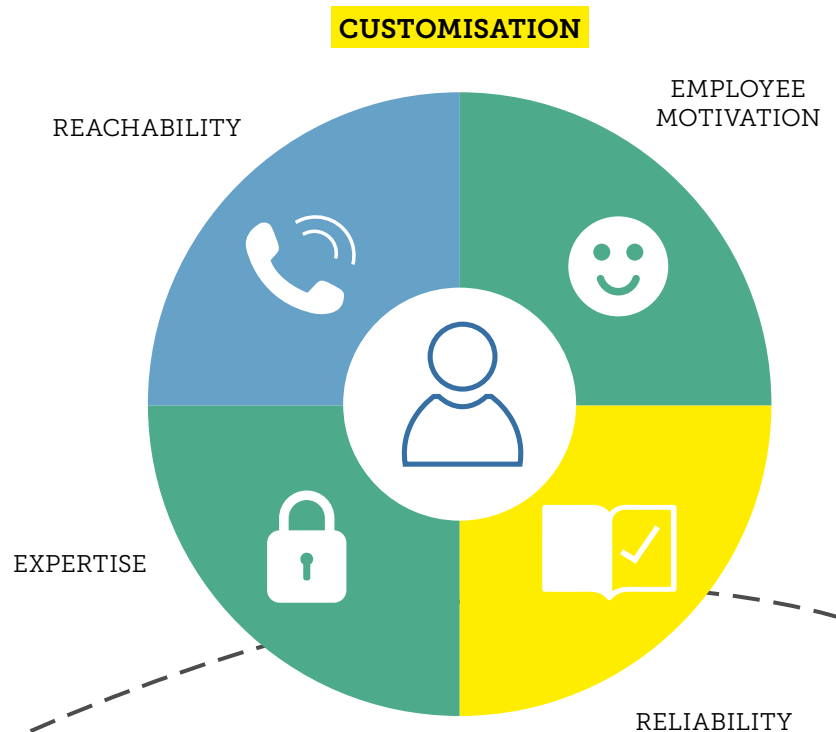
“My husband is our CIO and always says about his patents: ‘It was like tying shoelaces, very simple.’ Many things are so obvious – you just have to see them.”

Until recently, her company did not engage in marketing and yet grew steadily. “We are constantly being contacted by companies with challenges who have recognised that we can implement specific customer requirements and listen carefully to what they want.” The key to success lies in openness and curiosity: “I learn something from every conversation and always take inspiration away with me. And we always work as a team, bouncing ideas back and forth like ping pong balls. This usually makes the ideas bigger.”

Sustainability is also increasingly becoming an opportunity to offer added value. TOP Mehrwert-Logistik works on software projects as well as projects involving inland waterway vessels and uses cargo bikes wherever possible. “We always have to balance this with the service levels our customers require,” explains Wendt-Heinrich. Dr. Ahlers sees great potential here: “Logistics companies are particularly prominent in the scope 3 area of CO₂ accounting for their customers. Companies that position themselves today with sustainable services will benefit from this.”

Despite all the technical advances, the human factor remains crucial. “For us, it’s a people business,” emphasises Wendt-Heinrich. The company has been working with some of its customers for decades. “That wouldn’t be the case if we hadn’t shown that we are flexible and think proactively.” Added value is created when companies are willing to go above and beyond

the standard – whether through technical innovation, personalised support or a willingness to fulfil even unusual customer requests. “The smallest customer could become the biggest,” says Wendt-Heinrich. “And even if not, we still want them to say: ‘They are a reliable partner.’” Continuity within the team is also crucial for this: “We always honour our long-standing employees at Christmas. I also thank them for every outburst of anger – because it shows that they want things to work.” ↩





Driven by Reliability

Pink. Whenever you drive through the overseas port in Bremerhaven, you're bound to encounter at least one container semi-trailer in this colour. Or a large-capacity or heavy transport vehicle painted in a similarly bright shade. "Think pink" is the trademark of **Glomb Container Dienst GmbH (GCD)** from Bremerhaven, which operates in seaport transport and as a logistics service provider in Germany and across Europe.

The Glomb articulated trailers immediately stand out among the hundreds of articulated lorries at the Bremerhaven container terminals. Not only because of their paintwork, but also because of their sheer numbers: the company's own fleet comprises 75 tractor units, 160 container chassis, ten heavy-duty trailers and container platforms with self-loading equipment. The family business is run by Sigward Glomb (59) and his brother

Matthias, who is four years younger. With Matthias' sons Julius and Flinn, the third generation is now involved in the business. The company has a clear positioning: "Above all, we are highly professional and focused on what our customers expect from us," says Sigward Glomb. Reliability, punctuality and quality are the core values of the company, which is also known in Bremerhaven as a renowned sponsor of the Fischtown Pinguins ice hockey team.



"We are highly professional and focused on what our customers expect from us."

**Sigward Glomb, Managing Director
of Glomb Container Dienst**

The groundwork was laid in 1980 by Sigward Glomb Senior, father of the current managing partners. He was already active in the freight forwarding and transport sector when the MS Fairland delivered the first container to a German port in Bremen in 1966. "He immediately recognised the potential of standardised transport containers," recalls Matthias Glomb. His father initially followed the successful development of the container as an employee of a freight forwarding company, before setting up his own business. "At that time, he didn't have his own trucks, but only a few chassis, which he successfully rented out," reports Sigward Glomb, who joined the company in 1988 and has had his brother at his side since 1995. During this time, the colour scheme for tractor units and trailers was developed, which quickly became a trademark: truck drivers often "borrowed" Glomb chassis parked at the port when they didn't have their own semi-trailers available. "At some point, my father got tired of us constantly having to search for our chassis," recalls Sigward Glomb, referring to the decision to brand the chassis in a distinctive colour.

The Glombs' business begins where the work of the shipping companies and port operators ends. The lorries transport the containers from the port to their destination. This could be to transshipment and storage facilities near the

port or – for freight forwarding – the container terminals in Hamburg and Wilhelmshaven. Glomb also moves large quantities of freight directly to recipients inland. In addition, there are customers with individual transport orders. The family business has long been one of the largest in the industry in north-west Germany. "GCD has grown organically," emphasises Matthias Glomb. The company has achieved its current size through its own efforts and not through acquisitions. Over the years, new lines of business have developed with Germany-wide routes including high volume and heavy goods transport. The family business now operates as a multimodal transport service provider that also includes rail and waterways. "The next steps include the expansion of project logistics," says Julius Glomb. →

Reliability and punctuality are important values at Glomb Container Dienst. That is why the company relies on chassis from Krone and tractor units from renowned manufacturers.





A well-coordinated team: Sigward Glomb (left) and his brother Matthias have expanded Glomb Container Dienst, founded by their father, into one of the market leaders in north-west Germany through organic growth.



ABOUT

Since its foundation in 1980, Bremerhaven-based **GCD Glomb Containerdienst GmbH** has established itself as a multimodal logistics provider and transport service provider in Germany and beyond. With a **focus on container transport**, the family-owned company is a partner to large shipping companies, seaport forwarding agents and industry.

A large-format photograph of Sigward Glomb senior can be seen at the company headquarters and following in his footsteps is a matter of course for today's managing directors. When their father drove to the office on Saturdays, his sons came along: "That's how you slowly grow into the business; at some point, it's no longer a question of doing anything else," says Sigward Glomb. He is perfectly fine with his own children choosing a different career path: "It's their life, so of course it's their decision."


His brother's sons however, are continuing the family tradition, and gradually moving into management roles. Like their father and uncle, they received their training outside the family business – Julius completed a dual degree programme in shipping management at university and at the French shipping company CMA CGM. Flinn learned the profession of freight forwarding and logistics services at an overseas shipping company in Bremen and is currently working his way through all departments at his parents' company as a management trainee.

Julius Glomb recalls that his first days on the job after completing his training were surprising: "The biggest eye-opener was the fast pace of the business." In seaport transport, the lead time for planning shipments is short, and changes due to ship delays, for example, are part of everyday life. In overland transport, there are also the ongoing problems of the industry – construction sites, traffic jams and route restrictions. Nevertheless, GCD has one golden rule: "Customers must receive their containers at the designated time," emphasises Julius Glomb, who is preparing for his future role in management as a transport manager.

Reliability is a valuable resource – also in the relationship between employees and management. The two managing directors and their designated successors know the value of satisfied and committed employees. The semi-trailers deliver valuable cargo across the

country: "This requires responsible and qualified drivers," emphasises Sigward Glomb. The fact that there is hardly any staff turnover at the company speaks volumes about the working environment: "We have a whole bunch of employees who have been with us for several decades," says Julius Glomb.

Reliability is also a matter of technology: the average age of the tractor units is less than two years, which minimises breakdowns. That is why Glomb relies on trailers from Krone. The Bremerhaven-based company currently has 56 Krone container trailers in use, including some with GenSets, extra-wide panels for extra-wide containers and with the ability to transport 45-foot containers. "We want to get the most out of our equipment," says Julius Glomb. "This means regular maintenance, but also a robust design and high-quality corrosion protection."

His responsibilities also include future-focused topics such as environmental and climate protection. The company trains its drivers internally; seminars are held to raise their awareness of sustainable and safe vehicle operation. A bonus system provides an incentive for efficient driving. Glomb has recently started testing the use of purely electric-powered vehicles. The electric lorries normally operate within a radius of 100 kilometres around Bremerhaven. A round trip of approximately 800 kilometres to the Netherlands is planned for the near future. "For a 40-tonne lorry, this may seem unspectacular at first glance," says Julius Glomb, "but with a range of just over 300 kilometres under optimal conditions, it presents a particular challenge." In keeping with its environmentally friendly use, the eye-catching paintwork of the electric tractor unit has been slightly modified: "Think pink – pink is the better green." 

Glomb Container Dienst is and remains a family business: Sigward Glomb (left) and his brother Matthias (third from left) are currently managing partners. With Flinn (second from left) and Julius Glomb, the third generation has already joined the company.



PHOTOS: WOLFGANG HEUMER

What still moves us

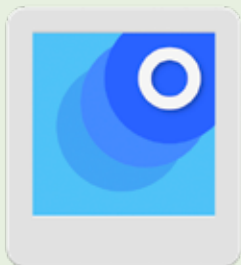
More inspirations, tips and thoughts



▶ Breaking Lab

Whether it's solar energy, hydrogen-powered aircraft, or nuclear fusion, Dr. Jacob Beutemps presents scientific topics in a clear and entertaining way on his YouTube channel "Breaking Lab." His expertise and passion inspire viewers around the world. In addition to his German channel, he also runs the English-language YouTube channel "German Science Guy."

Available on YouTube.



App Review

With the Google Photo Scanner app, you can digitize your favorite printed photos in no time at all. Simply scan the desired photo with your smartphone camera – the app automatically takes several pictures and combines them to produce an optimal result, but without annoying reflections. The digital image can then be easily processed further. The quality is impressive: the photo scanner delivers a resolution of up to five megapixels.

Google Play.



Retro Gaming



Mad Monkey's "Retro Arcade" is a charming homage to traditional gaming worlds: compact, nostalgic, and versatile – ideal for retro enthusiasts and children of the 80s alike. This game console offers a wide selection of classic 8-bit games in various genres, including action, puzzle, sports, and skill.

Seen on shop.futurium.de, among others.



Value appreciation instead of value creation

Everyone talks about the value chain, but few consider the value appreciation chain. However, it has been proven that employees who feel seen, respected and valued are more productive, healthier, more loyal, and more motivated. In his book "Die Wertschätzungskette" (The Appreciation Chain), Sven H. Korndörffer uses concrete examples to show the consequences of a poor corporate culture and how appreciation by management affects employees. His appeal: managers must be human beings first and managers second. An inspiring plea for humane leadership based on trust, empathy, and respect.



Published by Econ-Verlag.



From the ocean

Every year, 640,000 tons of "ghost nets" end up in our oceans. These are discarded fishing nets that are thrown back into the sea, where they continue to catch and kill marine life for centuries and slowly disintegrate into microplastics. By collecting the nets, this vicious cycle can be broken and the material can be processed into new products. The Swedish company Le Cord uses it to make charging cables. The "Le Cord Ghost Net" cable collection is the world's first to be made from recycled marine plastic.

www.lecord.com





Together for a smarter future

Vertex Intermodal Logistics GmbH is working together with Krone on the mykrone.blue platform to ensure that it is designed with practical applications in mind

We don't just want to digitally map processes, we want to rethink them," says Ewald Grasl, Managing Director of Vertex Intermodal Logistics GmbH in Austria. He is working closely with Krone to further develop mykrone.blue – a digital system with applications for fleet operators and workshops. It bundles all fleet management functions in a central platform, such as maintenance, telematics data, alarm functions, data analysis, documents, damage management, spare parts shop, and an integrated e-commerce system. "mykrone.blue is brand-independent," explains Grasl. "You can integrate trailers of any origin and control all processes in one place."

Round-the-clock reliability

With mykrone.blue, Krone is pursuing a clear goal: to create a networked overall ecosystem

instead of many individual solutions. The platform accompanies the trailer throughout its entire life cycle and makes it digitally controllable from day one. It integrates maintenance, damage processing, real-time monitoring, alarms, and reports into a unified user experience.

"We don't just provide tools, we deliver solutions that work in everyday life immediately," says Maximilian Birle, Head of Krone Telematics & Digital Services. "Every step of the process – from the alarm notification to workshop approval – is designed for efficiency, clarity, and automation. This is exactly what sets mykrone.blue apart from other traditional portals."

The collaboration between Vertex and Krone is deliberately practice-oriented. Instead of theoretical concepts, the focus is on everyday testing. "We take real processes, identify weak points, and rethink them without detours or workarounds," adds Grasl.

Vertex is a freight broker operating across Europe, handling around 180,000 shipments annually. Grasl joined the management team three years ago and has established a second pillar for Vertex Intermodal Logistics with a focus on combined transport. He and his team have been involved in the development of mykrone.blue from the very beginning – as users, idea generators, and test customers.

The system is designed to automate routine tasks at Vertex while reducing the workload in fleet management. “Today, you need several fleet managers for 400 to 500 trailers,” says Grasl. “In the future, a digital system could handle this with one or two people – because notifications, workshop reports, and deadline monitoring are done automatically.” This saves time, costs, and resources. “Above all, however, it creates reliability around the clock.”

System enables high transparency

Grasl emphasizes how important transparency is and that mykrone.blue actively creates it: “GPS shows us where the trailer is. Data from the electronic braking system and tyre pressure give us information about its condition. And with cameras or temperature sensors, we know how the load is doing.” mykrone.blue is designed to enable these data points to flow into a digital system that not only reports but also acts. “If a tyre is overheating, the driver receives a message,” explains Grasl. “At the same time, the system detects the position of the trailer, selects the nearest repair shop, and transmits the relevant data. All of this can happen without human intervention. As a fleet manager, I can then see on the dashboard in the morning, for example, what happened during the night – and that the process is already underway.”

If damage occurs, the driver can create a report directly in the system using the QR code on the trailer. The fleet manager then knows immediately where the vehicle is located, and the workshop can prepare for the job. “The photos uploaded by the driver allow the colleague in the workshop to see what to expect and better assess whether, for example, two people or a crane are needed,” says Grasl. “This way, everything fits together smoothly.” Such functions are crucial, especially in times of scarce resources. “When a system takes over routine tasks digitally, there is more time for the essentials. Finding a good fleet manager is almost as difficult as finding a driver these days.”

Breaking language barriers

As one of the first users, Vertex is accompanying the further development of mykrone.blue

from its current status as a central platform to a visionary, fully automated fleet manager. Vertex is currently running the basic version of the system. Tests will begin in the coming months – in the middle of ongoing operations. “For example, we simulate a loss of tyre pressure without informing the drivers and then observe how they react,” explains Grasl. Communication takes place via a multilingual chat that is automatically translated. This works smoothly and reduces inhibition. “We want drivers to be able to communicate easily, in their own language, with images and clear feedback. In times of skilled labour shortages, this is crucial.”

This is how all processes should run in the future: simply, directly, and intuitively. “The driver should be able to solve the problem independently, the workshop should be automatically informed, and the system documents everything in the background.” In addition to efficiency, sustainability also plays an important role. mykrone.blue uses telematics data to make CO₂ emissions transparent – a function that will become increasingly relevant in the future.

For Grasl, this fits perfectly with his company’s focus: Vertex relies on combined transport to intelligently link road and rail transport. “With data, we can now operate not only more economically, but also in a more environmentally conscious manner,” he says. “For us, digitalization is the key to combining both.”

Collaborating for smart solutions

According to Grasl, the success of the collaboration is due to the open, partnership-based approach. “With Max Birle and his team, there are no taboos. We don’t ask: Why should something work? Instead, we ask: How can it work?” This partnership-based thinking leads to fast results. mykrone.blue is constantly evolving – modular, scalable, and adaptable. “Every user can design the interface and functions to suit their processes,” says Grasl.

“Our collaboration with Vertex shows how practice and digitalization can come together,” emphasizes Maximilian Birle. “mykrone.blue is not just another tool, but a platform that automates processes, reduces workload, and speeds up decisions – from alarm notifications to workshop approvals.” The next few months will show how mykrone.blue proves itself in everyday use at Vertex.

Grasl is optimistic: “We are on the right track. It’s a lot of work, but it will pay off. Because when people and machines work together smoothly, real efficiency is created and that’s what logistics needs to remain viable in the future.” [↗](#)



Ewald Grasl has been managing director of Vertex Intermodal Logistics GmbH in Austria for three years. With his experience in freight forwarding, sales and fleet management, he combines technical expertise with entrepreneurial vision.

Success through sustainable innovation

Sustainability, digitalisation and employee engagement are closely related factors for the future. Companies that combine responsibility, technology and culture work more efficiently, use resources more wisely and attract more people – both customers and employees. This creates competitiveness that lasts in the long term.



SMEs focus on values and impact

Sustainability is no longer just a buzzword for SMEs. According to the study “ESG and Sustainability in SMEs 2025” by Grant Thornton and YouGov, 93 per cent of the companies surveyed consider the topic to be central. Efficiency gains, closer customer relationships and a better image are seen as the main drivers for greater sustainability..



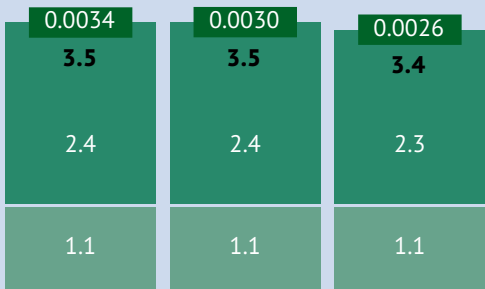
Faster digitisation

Accelerated digitisation could enable savings of up to 9.3 million tonnes of CO₂ in the transport sector by 2030, compared to around 3.5 million tonnes with conventional digitisation. A digitally networked and optimised transport system offers particularly great potential: sensors on roads and GPS data from vehicles can be used to intelligently control traffic lights, divert traffic flows in a targeted manner and use public transport more efficiently. These measures alone could save up to 5.5 million tonnes of CO₂ annually. Digitally controlled logistics, which avoids empty runs and optimises routes, also contributes significantly to reducing emissions.

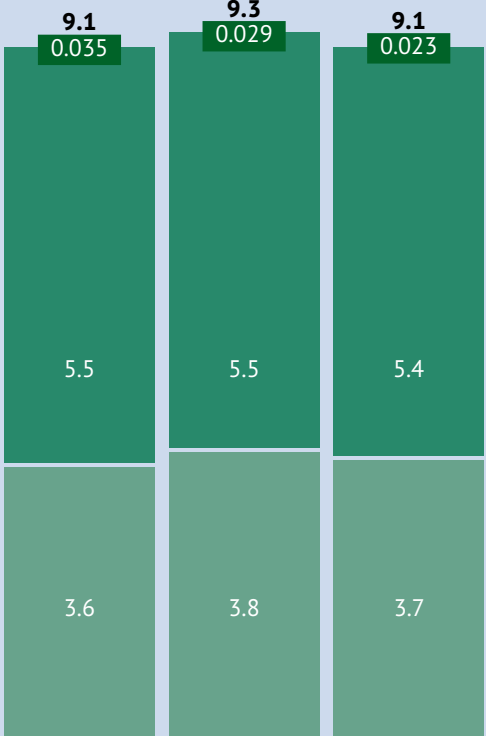


- Connected private transport
- Digital transport network and optimisation
- Digital route and freight optimisation

With standard digitalisation



With accelerated digitalisation



What does employee engagement have to do with corporate success?

The answer is: a lot! Employee engagement is not a “soft” factor, but has a clear, measurable impact on business success. Engaged employees go beyond simply fulfilling their tasks: they take the initiative, assume responsibility and make an active contribution to the company’s success. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Gallup from 2024 shows that companies with higher employee engagement achieve significantly better performance results.



CUSTOMER LOYALTY

10%

higher on average



PROFITABILITY

23%

higher on average



PRODUCTIVITY

17%

higher, measured by sales figures and production results



FLUCTUATION

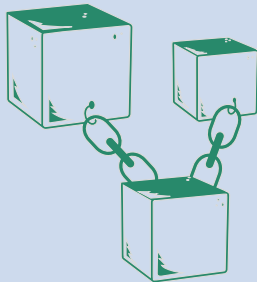
21%

lower in high-fluctuation industries and

51%

lower in low-fluctuation

€5 million



The Federal Ministry of Digital and Transport (BMDV) is funding the SKALA project with €5 million. The aim of the project is to make data exchange in supply chains easier, more secure and more transparent. To this end, SKALA combines artificial intelligence (AI) with blockchain technology to create a trust-based flow of data. The aim of the project is to make data exchange in supply chains

easier, more secure and more transparent. To this end, SKALA combines artificial intelligence (AI) with blockchain technology to enable a trustworthy flow of materials, information and financial data between different companies – especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

36 %

of Krone’s permanent staff have been with the company for over

15 years

Market-leading companies set standards

43%

of the top 100 companies automate data

18%

faster delivery times on average thanks to digital tools

27%

cost savings in warehouse management

CRITERIA:	2021	2023	CHANGE
AI utilisation rate	9%	22%	+ 144%
Data analysis budgets	1.2 Mio. €	2.8 Mio. €	+ 133%
Digitalised supply chains	37%	61%	+ 65%

Data quality is a key driver of success. Companies with integrated information systems achieve 23 per cent higher returns on sales. Yet 60 per cent of decision-makers still report significant challenges when it comes to integrating new technologies.

"The semi-trailer must be economical and as light as possible so that we can handle heavy loads."

Josef Heiß, Managing Director, BTK Befrachtungs- und Transportkontor GmbH



“We always find a solution”

At **BTK Befrachtungs- und Transportkontor GmbH**, large fluctuations in shipment volumes are part of everyday operations. Therefore, the company relies on lightweight trailers from Schwarzmüller to efficiently handle heavy loads.

Delivering two or three times more pasta, disinfectant, or toilet paper than usual: this suddenly became the norm during the coronavirus pandemic. When customers cleared the shelves completely in some cases, retailers were faced with completely new challenges – and with them, partners such as BTK Befrachtungs- und Transportkontor GmbH from Raubling in Bavaria.

The freight forwarding and logistics service provider primarily supplies retailers, which account for more than 50 percent of the company's turnover. “We are used to dealing with fluctuating volumes, including seasonal ones,” explains Managing Director Josef Heiß. “And we always find a solution.”

Charter fleet ensures flexibility

BTK handles between 650 and 700 orders every day. The company employs 360 people, including around 160 drivers. Its own fleet comprises 160 trucks, and BTK also has a charter fleet of 200 vehicles at its disposal. It is these vehicles in particular that ensure flexibility. “They are a kind of fire brigade that we can distribute among our customers as needed. If we see that volumes are increasing, we can free up capacity,” says Heiß.

A second pillar of the company is warehouse logistics: On around 40,000 square meters of space in Raubling, customers are offered a comprehensive portfolio of value-added services, from classic warehousing and order picking to packaging. For larger shippers, BTK also works with subcontractors who are used in day-to-day business for one-way transport – and with whom BTK has been cooperating for decades in some

cases. “We still know how to use the telephone: we use every opportunity to secure additional capacity and absorb peaks.” Heiß himself has been with the company for 30 years, having started out in scheduling.

Partners on an equal footing

BTK sees itself not only as a service provider, but also as a partner – for both customers and entrepreneurs – and focuses on good communication: “Of course, there are always challenges in day-to-day business. The key is to deal with them well,” says Heiß. “We always seek dialogue at an early stage.” Transparency and honesty are central to the company: “No freight forwarder can promise that everything will always work. We often hear that promises are made that ultimately cannot be kept. We don't want to be like that,” he emphasises.

BTK also fosters an open culture internally and prepares information in such a way that, as far as possible, the entire workforce is always on the same page. The topic of communication within the company is currently a focus, “because we want to optimize and professionalize it,” explains the managing director. He himself is also always available to talk to: “My door is always open.”

Heiß finds the atmosphere in the company very positive – for example, when he hears “good morning” from all corners at the start of the day. He simply enjoys working on issues together with his colleagues and seeing how the company is continuously developing. The culture is also perceived positively from the outside: “We have always been able to fill our training positions in recent years.” →



ABOUT

BTK Befrachtungs- und Transportkontor GmbH

is an owner-managed logistics company based in Raubling, Germany, which offers national and international transport and freight forwarding services using its own fleet of vehicles and modern logistics facilities. The company stands for certified quality, on-time deliveries, and comprehensive service.

Maximising space and value: BTK offers its customers warehouse logistics services ranging from traditional storage to packaging.



Same workforce – double volume

BTK has launched a systematic digitization project. “Among other things, we are planning interfaces for time slot bookings and have created a map of all IT systems, right down to the processes,” says Heiß. This has resulted in numerous projects, which are being implemented by a dedicated digitization team.

The team includes project managers and two developers who program in the system landscape. “Booking time slots in many different systems is time-consuming. We have now reached the point where we can book them relatively easily from our transport management system via interfaces.” In addition, a business intelligence dashboard has been implemented: “We set it up together with a partner, with a whole host of key figures from the company.”

Administrative processes have been made significantly more efficient: “The entire invoice booking process is automated, so that we can now actually handle twice the volume with the same team.”

As a fleet operator, BTK sees CO₂ reduction as a key challenge. “We have been working with different truck drive systems for around ten years and testing alternatives to fossil diesel fuel,” says Heiß. The company put its first LNG trucks into operation back in 2018. Today, BTK uses 25 LNG vehicles that have been fueled exclusively with bioenergy for two years.

“These vehicles save between 80 and 90 percent CO₂,” he explains. At the same time, the company uses HVO 100 and already operates around 20 percent of its fleet with renewable fuels. BTK has been testing its first electric truck since this year. All of this has an ambitious goal: “Ultimately, we want to save between 5 and



The vehicle fleet is becoming increasingly green, with around 20 percent with around 20 per cent of vehicles already running on renewable fuels.

10 percent CO₂ every year.” For BTK, however, sustainability means more than just environmental protection. The company is also socially committed and has long supported Tafel, a non-profit organization that collects surplus food and makes it available to people affected by poverty.

Reliability, stability, and service life

BTK relies on proven partners such as Schwarzmüller for its vehicle fleet. When it comes to trailers, two things are particularly important to Heiß: “They must be economical and as light as possible so that we can handle heavy loads.” The trailer’s own weight is particularly crucial when transporting beverages and paper rolls: “We load over 25 tons of beverages – and it also makes a difference if you can take one more paper roll with you.”

The quality is of the highest standard: “Schwarzmüller impresses with its reliability, stability, and durability.” And that is precisely what is essential for economic success: “Every day of downtime, every unplanned visit to the workshop is difficult for us. Margins in our industry are low: the vehicles have to keep rolling. And we want to operate them for a long time, up to eight or nine years.”

Heiß takes a realistic view of the current challenges facing the economy and the transport industry in particular: “Decarbonization and rising costs mean that we all have to optimize our businesses. We are seeing more and more small companies in particular giving up – often because they can’t find anyone to take over.” This in turn often means losing drivers who are looking for a career change. Nevertheless, the entrepreneur remains confident: “We remain optimistic. Because we are convinced that those who have staying power, who get through this phase and diversify, will definitely be better off later on.” It is clear to him that transport and logistics services will always be needed – now and in the future. ➡

Value creation through value appreciation

An essay by Sven H. Korndörffer

Everyone wants to be appreciated – as a person and for what they do. Whether someone works at a gas station, in a bank, or at a logistics company, it feels good when our work is recognized. Often, a simple smile, a sincere “thank you,” or a brief comment is enough. But we often fail to pass on this appreciation. As a society, we lack a genuine quality of interaction – the ability to approach people with joy, openness, curiosity, and goodwill. Yet it is precisely these moments of recognition that strengthen relationships, promote motivation, and bring community to life.

Trust and the courage to take responsibility

Appreciation in customer contact begins with a very simple question: Am I happy to have the customer on the phone or face to face? The other person will sense this. The trick is to inspire enthusiasm. Often, it's the little gestures that have a big impact, such as remembering an important date or simply remembering the name of the person you are talking to. When a customer leaves a conversation or email exchange feeling good, they are more likely to stay or return.

If you arrive at a hotel and have to wait ten minutes at the reception desk before someone attends to you, you will probably book somewhere else next time. As an employee, I also prefer to work for an employer who

makes me feel that my performance is important to them. Then I am

more likely to be committed and to do more than I am paid for. The formula is: appreciation creates added value.

The feeling makes the difference

As a manager, I always wanted to be sure that I had the

unconditional support of the workforce. If I act consistently in the interests of the company, this is easily achievable. What is needed is open communication: I have always tried to visit every workplace every day and get a feel for the atmosphere on site. After all, we don't manage Excel spreadsheets – we manage people. And we are people ourselves.

“We don't manage Excel spreadsheets – we manage people.”

Performance-oriented thinking and caring for people are by no means mutually exclusive. And this is about the most important form of education: education of the heart. Developing a feeling for people and understanding what you bring to them. Especially in times of tight margins, this is what makes the difference: knowing that you have a contact person you trust, with whom you have a long-term relationship, and knowing that you can discuss private matters or resolve difficult situations in confidence. That is the real added value – and those who do not understand this will sooner or later disappear from the market. ↩

+ SVEN H. KORNDÖRFFER

Sven H. Korndörffer is CEO of Korndörffer Communications Consulting, Chairman of the Board of the “Values Commission – Initiative for Value-Conscious Leadership,” and author of “The Appreciation Chain.” He worked in the banking industry for three decades, most recently as Executive Board Member for Corporate Communications at Commerzbank AG.



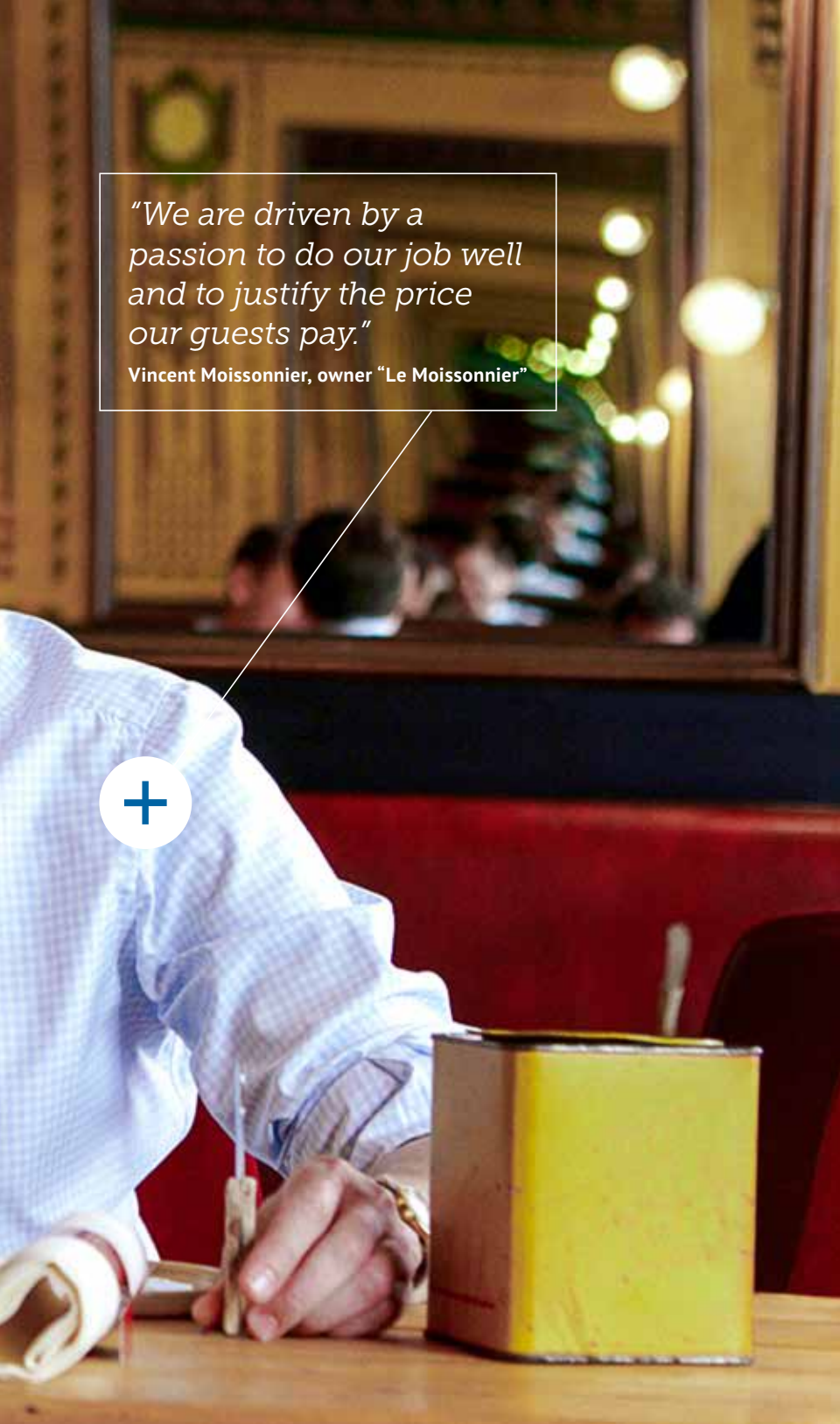


A passionate host

Le Moissonnier in Cologne is more than a restaurant—it's a culinary institution. Ingo Geerdes, Sales Director at Fahrzeugwerk Bernard Krone GmbH & Co. KG, visited owner and restaurateur Vincent Moissonnier for lunch. They discussed what it takes to truly satisfy customers and why quality matters.

"We are driven by a passion to do our job well and to justify the price our guests pay."

Vincent Moissonnier, owner "Le Moissonnier"



At Vincent Moissonnier's restaurant, he and his team serve an exquisite French lunch menu that attracts many customers.



Ingo Geerdes: *Thank you for inviting me to your restaurant, which has been a renowned and beloved address in Cologne for almost four decades—one might even call it a legend. What motivates you to be a host here every day?*

Vincent Moissonnier: My wife and I work together, but we don't see ourselves as legends. We see ourselves as hosts, plain and simple. What drives us is a passion for doing our job well and honoring the trust our guests place in us. We aim to inspire our team to give their best. For us, it's about doing the work properly—not chasing quick turnover or trying to outdo anyone else. We have "Le Moissonnier" above our door; you have "Krone" on your trailers. People who choose Krone know what to expect—it's the same with us.

Ingo Geerdes: *When you enter your restaurant, it feels like a world of its own: how do you achieve that?*

Vincent Moissonnier: I always say: the restaurant is our stage. It was important to my wife and me to give it a soul – just like in the beautiful old theatres of Europe. Above all, however, it thrives on the people here and on the fact that we have a permanent team that our guests know well. Our restaurant manager has been with us for 15 years, the head chef for 37 years, the head pastry chef for 32 years and the first sous chef for 34 years. That creates credibility. I'm sure your customers also appreciate having regular contact persons?

Ingo Geerdes: *Absolutely. We attach great importance to our teams maintaining close contact with customers and ensuring that there is always someone available to talk to directly. Logistics is also shaped by people. And we don't just want to win customers once, we want to build long-term relationships. If you had to describe your philosophy in one sentence, what would it be?*

Vincent Moissonnier: One word would suffice: authentic.

Ingo Geerdes: *Your restaurant thrives not only on its guests and on you and your wife, but also on your employees. How do you manage to motivate them every day and bring out the best in them?*

Vincent Moissonnier: I think that in a small business like ours, you have to lead from the front to motivate your staff. You have to be the first one in the restaurant in the morning and the last one to leave in the evening. You →



Ingo Geerdes visited the restaurant on a Monday, the restaurant's day off.

have to do what you ask others to do. I have no problem shopping at the wholesale market early in the morning or polishing glasses. It earns you respect when your team sees that you are walking the same path as them – and they follow suit. And we are always there for our team in times of need, when they have personal concerns or challenges.

Ingo Geerdes: *It's the same at Krone! We have many long-standing employees who help our brand maintain its appeal. Those who work for us usually stay with us for their entire working lives. At the end of the day, that can make all the difference for a company. But why exactly do your guests feel so comfortable here in your restaurant? What details, what gestures make it so interesting and ultimately make the difference?*

Vincent Moissonnier: I don't know if we make the difference, I don't like to compare myself to others. But I think we all try to take the pressure

"My wife and I don't see ourselves as legends, but as normal hosts."

**VINCENT MOISSONNIER,
RESTAURATEUR**

and worries off every guest. We convey the feeling that you can completely relax here. We are there to make sure everyone is happy. And we never put pressure on guests to spend money, by saying for example: 'Have another glass of wine, preferably one that costs 10 Euros or more.' I'm happy when a guest is satisfied with a glass of wine for 7 Euros. Then they'll come back. That's how I earn my money.

Ingo Geerdes: *You are just as familiar with challenges such as rising costs and staff shortages in the catering industry as we are and many other sectors. How do you deal with them?*

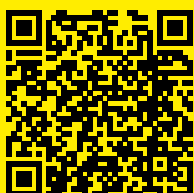
Vincent Moissonnier: I think we would all be well advised not to expect politicians to provide a solution. I don't expect anything, but focus on my business instead. In my opinion, it is always important to continue investing in the future, even in challenging times. That way, when the economy picks up again, you will be ready.

Ingo Geerdes: *What advice would you give to young companies starting out today?*



Want to see more?

Watch the full interview in the video here.



Vincent Moissonnier: I would advise starting right away, without being too afraid and without wanting to secure everything first. And the younger you are, the better. When we started our own business, I was in my mid-20s and our daughter was three years old. We didn't worry too much about our pension; we just wanted to be able to pay our rent and have something to eat. And then everything fell into place bit by bit. My advice would be: just go for it, and if you stumble, just keep going.

Ingo Geerdes: *How did you come to move from France to Germany?*

Vincent Moissonnier: In Germany, there is a belief that anyone who has an idea, sets goals, is courageous and works hard can get ahead. I liked that. In France, everything is very hierarchical. In Germany, there is the dual study programme, for example, where you gain professional experience during your studies, or others also do vocational training with their A-levels. People in France shake their heads at this: with a high school diploma, you go straight to an elite university and then you're immediately the boss. The people at the bottom may know more than you, but they have to submit to you. Family succession in companies is also a difficult issue in France: family members often take over, even if they are not qualified enough. In Germany, I have the impression that the next generation really has to prove itself.

Ingo Geerdes: *Logistics is also crucial for your business. What role does transport play for you?*

Vincent Moissonnier: I am dependent on it: my fish, meat and vegetables come from northern France. We have a large wine cellar, and the bottles for it also come from France. In Paris, there is a wholesale market where the products you buy from the big retailers are brought to a central warehouse and collected on a pallet:

"In a small business like ours, you have to lead from the front to motivate your staff. You must be the first one in the restaurant in the morning and the last one to leave in the evening."

VINCENT MOISSONNIER



tomatoes, grapes, meat, flowers, cucumbers, mustard – everything is bundled together and you can take it away on a pallet. You don't have to walk everywhere or drive to several shops. Do such logistics solutions already exist in Germany?

An uncompromising commitment to quality and attention to detail are important factors in Vincent Moissonnier's success.

Ingo Geerdes: *Bringing non-food and temperature-controlled goods together is difficult, but fundamentally feasible. This will certainly be expanded in the future, but of course it also incurs costs. Mr Moissonnier, would you be willing to pay more for such solutions?*

Vincent Moissonnier: Yes, if a small, quiet lorry delivered goods in bulk to our restaurant in the city centre, that would be an advantage for all of us – and I would pay more for it. What I'm also interested in is your stance on artificial intelligence. Does the topic scare you? Do you use AI or do you tend to avoid it? →



"I am optimistic already for our children. I think that the younger generation is learning to deal with the challenges of our time."

VINCENT MOISSONNIER

Ingo Geerdes: *We don't really feel any fear in this context. We don't avoid the topic at all. We know, of course, that we cannot avoid it, and we see not only the dangers but above all the benefits. There are structures in which AI is already being used today and will be used even more extensively in the future. In this context, the topic of digitalisation is also very important. We now offer our customers a fully networked trailer that provides all kinds of data. Automation also plays a major role. Some of our components, for example, are welded by robots. We will continue to expand this in order to increase our efficiency and make us less dependent on skilled workers – who are very difficult or impossible to find anyway. In addition to increasing efficiency, this also generates significant quality advantages for us, which are reflected in the customer's TCO (total cost of ownership) analysis. What role does quality play in your business?*

Vincent Moissonnier: A very important one. We cannot produce inferior products; we have never learned to do so. Our training, whether in the kitchen, in service or in the wine sector, simply compels us to work to a high standard. This means that we want to work with high-quality products. This includes, for example, meat from animals that have been raised in a species-appropriate manner. We accept that this means we generate less revenue because our margin is smaller, but in return we achieve consistent results over many years.

Ingo Geerdes: *For us, the first vehicle must be sold by the sales department, and the second and all subsequent vehicles by the factory that*



Two worlds, same issues: both entrepreneurs are affected by the challenges of our current world. And both rely equally on consistency and innovative strength.

+ VINCENT MOISSONNIER

Vincent Moissonnier and his wife Liliane have been running the top restaurant **"Le Moissonnier"** since 1987. It held two Michelin stars for a long time until the restaurateur changed the concept to a French bistro with lunch service in 2023 – and equally excellent cuisine. The restaurant is often booked up weeks in advance. Moissonnier himself is not a chef, but he shapes the hospitality and soul of the establishment. He is also responsible for the wine trade. He has published two books, most recently *"Ein Tisch am Fenster"* (A Table by the Window, 2025, Kiepenheuer & Witsch).



built them. Quality is also a basic requirement for us in order to maintain the relationship with the customer for as long as possible. Because only if they are satisfied will they come back. In addition to running a restaurant, you also sell wine and deliver meals that can be served at home. Does this keep your business sustainable for the future?

Vincent Moissonnier: Yes, I always say: if the restaurant ever has a cough, the wine business and our delivery service remain healthy. Having these other areas makes us less dependent on day-to-day business. How do you see it: is Krone looking confidently to the future?

Ingo Geerdes: *Of course we are optimistic about the future, even though the current circumstances certainly don't make it easy. In recent years, we have noticed that the cycles have changed completely: crises last longer and the periods in between are unfortunately getting shorter. This makes it very difficult for companies. Nevertheless, we believe we are very well positioned for these challenging times.*

Vincent Moissonnier: I am optimistic already for our children. I think that the younger generation is learning to deal with the challenges of our time – to look ahead, stand up and do their work. And in my opinion, Germany must rediscover its strength. When I talk about German brands such as Siemens, Miele or Bosch in France, everyone's eyes light up because they admire their quality. There are so many opportunities and talents here. I think that anyone who has ideas, is innovative and has skills that will always have a chance here. [👉](#)

HANDCRAFTED PRECISION

Quality is evident in the details: when a trailer leaves the Krone factory, every bolt and screw is in place. The wheels are tightened by hand using a torque wrench – with the exact specified torque. The bracket for the spare wheel and the support legs are installed at the same time. All bolt and screw connections are recorded in the vehicle file, as are the serial numbers of the tyres and rims. Every step is carried out professionally, checked, and documented. The result is a vehicle that has been proven over many thousands of kilometers on the road.

Big Picture



'We want to continue expanding our fleet and gradually increase the proportion of electric vehicles.'

Nanno Janssen, Managing Director of Nanno Janssen GmbH



Committed to electric

The freight forwarder **Nanno Janssen GmbH** demonstrates how e-mobility already works in everyday transport – even for long distances. The family-owned company has been relying on the technology for four years.

Of the more than 70 vehicles in the fleet of the East Frisian freight forwarder Nanno Janssen GmbH, 35 are already electric, and the next 23 e-trucks have been ordered: The company is demonstrating how electric mobility can soon become part of everyday life in heavy goods transport. For the past four years, Nanno Janssen has been consistently pursuing the path toward emission-free transport. “We use electric trucks not only regionally, but also in international long-distance transport – to Spain, Italy, and Turkey,” reports Nanno Janssen Jr., a fifth generation member of the family business. The switch to emission-free driving was not only motivated by customer demand, but also by personal conviction: “I grew up here in East Frisia, with wind turbines on my doorstep,” says the 27-year-old. “I’ve always been interested in renewable energy.”

“Nothing is impossible”

According to his father Nanno Janssen, the freight forwarding company sees itself as a medium-sized business that gets things done: the company has been firmly rooted in the region for more than 125 years, and “nothing is impossible” has always been the family motto. The company offers its customers tailor-made logistics solutions for a wide range of industries – from automotive and steel to energy projects such as wind turbines, photovoltaics, and transformers. It also provides hazardous goods transport, warehouse logistics, and assembly services.

The team’s stated goal is to use electric vehicles for all routes that can be electrified in the future. The company is not involved in other technologies such as hydrogen but is deliberately focusing on e-mobility in order to gain the greatest possible expertise in this area. “We want to further expand the fleet, gradually increase the proportion of electric vehicles, and thus position the company well for the coming decades.”

Janssen describes the transition as a process that requires not only financial investment, good planning, and knowledge transfer to employees, but above all openness: “It takes courage at the beginning, but eventually it becomes part of everyday life.” There are certainly customers who are willing to bear the additional costs of switching to electric mobility. However, the company sees it primarily as an investment in the future.

Overall, the differences compared to conventional vehicles are becoming increasingly marginal – particularly when factoring in benefits such as road toll exemptions for electric

trucks, or the ability to generate your own electricity via photovoltaic (PV) systems, as Nanno Janssen does. “Effective cost and energy management is, of course, crucial for the technology to deliver a real competitive edge,” he notes.

In-house energy hub

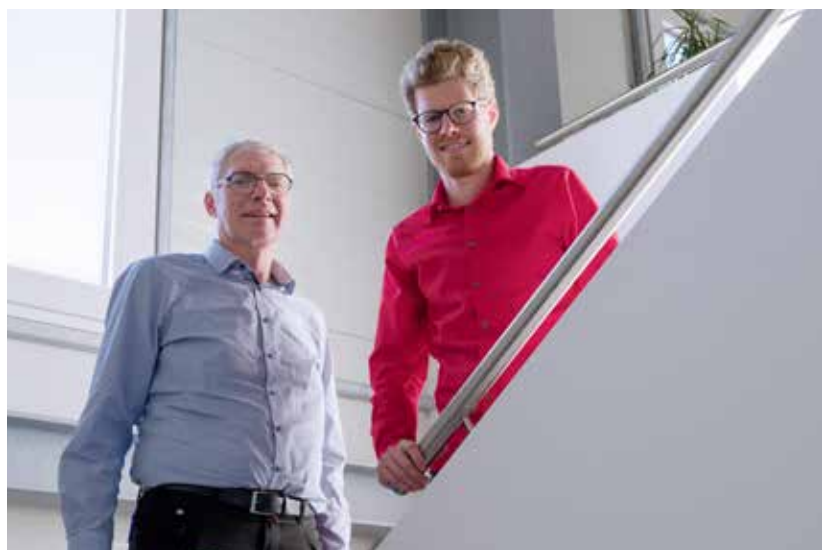
After the company decided to go electric in 2021, it submitted funding applications for the purchase of the trucks – it took around a year for these to be approved. The delivery time for the vehicles was similarly long at that time. The freight forwarder used the time to set up its own charging infrastructure: ten fast charging stations, each with 300 kW, an 800 kW photovoltaic system, and large storage facilities. An energy management system ensures that power peaks are absorbed and renewable energy is used optimally. Company vehicles, forklifts, and office buildings are also part of the energy concept.

When the vehicles are charged overnight, they start the day with a full battery. But charging on the road is also easy to organize without any loss of time, explains Janssen: “The drivers use their breaks for this. When they take their 45-minute rest break after four and a half hours, they can connect the vehicle to a fast charger.” The technology has proven itself in practice: “The driving experience is quieter, more powerful, and more pleasant. There is no loss of power uphill, and recuperation assists downhill. It’s really fun.” Janssen speaks from experience – he has a truck driver’s license himself.

“Elektrotrucker” reports on everyday life

When the technology was introduced in the company, drivers who were interested in it were specifically approached. “They were able to ➔

Since 2021, the company has been consistently pursuing an “electric course”: the management has opted for this innovative direction in order to remain fit for the future.



Nanno Janssen Junior is continuing to run the company in its fifth generation – in close cooperation with his father.



quickly convince others who may have been skeptical at first.” One of the freight forwarder’s drivers, Tobias Wagner, even provides insights into his tours with the vehicles on social media under the name “Elektrotrucker.” He was previously the founder of a start-up in the field of electromobility, which sought investment with a multi-charging box on the TV show “Die Höhle der Löwen” (The Lion’s Den). He wanted to experience for himself how the technology performs in everyday use and what is needed to enable it to be used in the same way as conventional vehicles. So, he decided to get his truck driver’s license and signed on with Nanno Janssen. His video reports from the field have met with great interest. “We are often asked for advice”, Janssen says.

The freight forwarder relies on all major European manufacturers for its tractor units. “Each has its strengths and weaknesses – range, weight, height, service. This allows us to use the right vehicle for each route and at the same time test what works best for us.” This diversity makes it possible to optimally serve individual customer needs. Some models are ideal for the automotive sector, others for international long-distance transport or particularly heavy loads. “We also see ourselves as testers and designers of the first generation of electric trucks.”

70 percent of semi-trailers from Krone

Nanno Janssen has been working closely with Krone for many years. Around 70 percent of the semi-trailers come from Werlte. “Krone offers us the flexibility we need for our broad customer base,” says Janssen, who completed the practical part of his dual studies at Krone.



“Nothing is impossible has always been the family motto.”

NANNO JANSSEN SENIOR, 4TH GENERATION MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE NANNO JANSSEN FREIGHT FORWARDING COMPANY

“Robustness, cost-effectiveness, and reliability are important to us – as is a cooperative partnership on equal terms. Here in the region, an honest word still counts.” Nanno Janssen’s team regularly supports new projects or product developments.

Janssen considers it a great opportunity to already have responsibility in the company in his mid-20s. “You don’t learn leadership at university, but in practice – with employees who respect you because you can get things done yourself.” He knows the business from the ground up, drives forklifts, and is familiar with scheduling. He receives support from his father, who continues to have a strong influence on the company – now in its fourth generation.

Despite the current economic and political challenges, the junior partner’s enjoyment of the industry outweighs everything else: “As logisticians, we are problem solvers. Ninety-five percent of the time, everything runs smoothly, but 5 percent is challenging – and it’s precisely this 5 percent that makes the work exciting. And with e-mobility, we have a field in which we can really make a difference.”



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ABOUT

Spedition **Nanno Janssen GmbH** is a **medium-sized family business** in East Frisia that attaches great importance to sustainability. In addition to transport, the company offers storage, hazardous goods transport, assembly services, and customized logistics solutions.

Vehicles without mechanical connections

Arnold NextG is working on the mobility of the future: Drive-by-Wire sends electronic control signals, making linkages and other components redundant.



The technology is used in a wide range of applications.

Could a vehicle function without any mechanical connections – without a steering column, brake cable or linkage? Arnold NextG has precisely this vision. The company is radically rethinking mobility and has an idea that could fundamentally change driving: drive-by-wire. Instead of mechanical power transmission, everything runs electronically. When the driver steers, a signal is sent to the control unit, which in turn controls the actuators. The response comes within milliseconds.

Vehicle always continues to drive safely

At the heart of the system is NX NextMotion – a platform that completely rethinks vehicle control. It combines hardware, software and actuators in a system that has been developed from the ground up for digital mobility. “NX NextMotion is not a single product, but a complete architecture,” explains Kevin Arnold, CEO and Managing Director. “It enables steering, braking and acceleration via electronic signals – and remains fully functional even if one component fails.”

This is ensured by a quadruple redundant system that safeguards every movement. The structure is designed to be “fail-operational”: even in the event of a fault, the vehicle continues to drive safely.

This is particularly important to the company: “People should be able to trust our

system, which digitises their connection to the machine – safety is paramount,” says Arnold. Every component is developed and produced in-house: from the control unit and software to the actuators. This allows the company to maintain complete control over quality, function and integration, creating a solution that could set global standards.

Opening the door to autonomous driving

Drive-by-wire is just the beginning: eliminating mechanical connections opens the door to autonomous mobility. NX NextMotion forms the backbone for vehicles that drive themselves, for machines that are remotely controlled, and for applications in which people and technology work together seamlessly. The platform enables new vehicle concepts – such as cabs without steering wheels, flexible control via joystick or tablet, and a completely new interior design.

“We want to supply the technology that will shape the mobility of tomorrow in agricultural machinery, construction site vehicles, logistics fleets, special-purpose vehicles and, increasingly, road traffic,” says Kevin Arnold. The strength of the technology is evident wherever safety and precision are crucial: “It reacts faster than humans, remains stable even under extreme conditions and continues to function even if individual system components fail.” The aim is to create vehicles that can be controlled digitally, act autonomously and remain uncompromisingly safe. ↩

Arnold NextG manufactures all components itself, from the control unit and software to the actuators.





The Focused One

Dr Sara Schiffer has built up Europe's largest hydrogen truck fleet with Hylane. The pay-per-use model enables freight forwarders to decarbonise safely and flexibly.

With courage, determination, discipline and a strong team, a good idea can quickly turn into something great. Sara Schiffer has impressively demonstrated this with Hylane. Founded in 2021, the Cologne-based company is already considered one of the leading providers of zero-emission commercial vehicle rentals in Europe – with the largest hydrogen truck fleet.

Hylane kauft die Fahrzeuge, hält sie in der eigenen Bilanz und stellt sie in einem nutzungs-basierten Mietmodell bereit. „Unsere Kunden müssen weder hohe Investitionen tätigen noch technologische Risiken tragen, um ihre Flotten zu dekarbonisieren“, so Schiffer. „Sie zahlen nur, wenn der Lkw fährt.“ Das Unternehmen hat damit einen Nerv getroffen: Partner wie DB Schenker, DHL, Rewe, Hermes und GLS setzen bereits auf die Dienstleistung. Ein starkes Netzwerk entlang der gesamten Wertschöpfungskette unterstützt Hylane dabei – von Tankstellenbetreibern wie H2 Mobility über Original Equipment Manufacturers wie Daimler Truck, Hyundai und Iveco bis hin zu Dekra, Kravag und Bosch.

Hydrogen was the starting point: Schiffer and her team developed a rental model that makes the switch to fuel cell trucks easy, economical and low-risk for freight forwarders. Battery-powered electric models have since been added: “We want to be the partner for the decarbonisation of entire fleets – regardless of the technology,” explains the managing director.

Hylane buys the vehicles, keeps them on its own balance sheet, and leases them out on a pay-per-use basis. “Our customers don’t have to make large investments or bear technological risks to decarbonise their fleets,” says Schiffer. “They only pay when the truck is running.” The company has struck a chord: partners such as DB Schenker, DHL, Rewe, Hermes and GLS are already relying on the service.

Hylane is backed by a strong value chain network, from filling station operators like H2 Mobility to truck manufacturers such as Daimler, Hyundai, and Iveco, and service and technology partners including Dekra, Kravag, and Bosch.

Sustainability with economic impact

Before founding the company, Sara Schiffer worked as an executive assistant at the insurance company DEVK, where her responsibilities included capital investments. “The topic of sustainable investment came up again and again,” says the 31-year-old, who studied business informatics and is a data scientist with a doctorate. She was included in the “30 under 30” list by Forbes business magazine.

Climate protection is very important to her personally: “I was born just before the Fridays for Future generation and never took to the streets for sustainability myself. But it’s an issue for my generation and I wanted to get involved in my own way.” With Hylane, she found a way to combine climate protection with economic impact: “In my view, the two must always go hand in hand. And I enjoy working hard – but then I also want to feel that it’s really making the world a better place.”

She began researching hydrogen early on: “Mobility was the first sensible application for this great hope for the decarbonisation of industry – because hydrogen is used in smaller quantities in transport than in heavy industry. Vehicles were therefore the most obvious place for me to enter this field.” And while the public debate focused primarily on passenger cars, she realised: “A large proportion of CO₂ emissions in road traffic are attributable to lorries. Even replacing relatively few vehicles has a major effect. That convinced me to start here.”

She spoke to fleet operators to understand how they are decarbonising their fleets: All of them considered hydrogen to be a very useful addition to battery power, because batteries will eventually reach their natural limits due to the limitations of the electricity grid. “At the same time, they all realised that the vehicles are too expensive, they don’t have the necessary capital to purchase them, and they don’t want to keep the lorries on their balance sheets.” This is how the rental model idea came about. ➔



For Sara Schiffer, it is always clear that the company's successes are only possible thanks to her strong team. This team is currently growing again, and Hylane is looking for more employees.

From Corporation to green

DEVK supported the start-up as the main investor. In the first step, 44 fuel cell trucks were purchased. "When we announced this at a major press conference, the response was already very positive," recalls Schiffer. To this day, counters in the team's office track the kilometres driven by Hylane vehicles and the tonnes of carbon dioxide saved – including emissions from the production of electricity and hydrogen: visible measurement data from an exciting corporate journey. Hylane issues accurate CO₂ certificates that are recognised by auditors: "Our customers can use them to prove how much emissions they actually save by using our vehicles."

For Sara Schiffer, leaving the corporate environment was a big step: "I basically went from an established 130-year-old corporation to a greenfield site. That trained my stress resistance very well. And when I look back, that was my biggest learning experience: dealing with uncertainty."

The market for hydrogen-powered heavy goods vehicles is still in its infancy. "This means that there is a lot of momentum: regulations, funding landscape, technology – everything is changing. We learned early on to cope with these changes," reports Schiffer. "To do this, we established our own core beliefs that give us stability – assumptions that we take for granted and use as a framework for our work."

One of these is that the market will change – away from diesel and towards alternative drive systems. "If we no longer question this, we can move forward with greater determination." This attitude has also helped her personally to deal with changing public opinion on hydrogen: "At times hyped – and then suddenly unpopular. But the facts have never changed. I try to form my own opinion and not follow every trend."

Focus as a management principle


She also gained her own insight into the everyday life of drivers: "I got my truck driving licence because I wanted to understand what those behind the wheel really need. That's the only way to develop the right solutions." Schiffer sees the company as still in its infancy: Germany and the Netherlands will be followed by other markets, and the fleet will be expanded.

"We want to further expand our market leadership." In doing so, she believes it is important to have a clear focus: "If there is one thing that sets me apart as a manager, it is always reminding myself how important it is to concentrate on the essential steps. I always advocate doing one thing at a time instead of getting bogged down in parallel work streams too early on. This applies to our decision to focus solely on hydrogen for the time being, as well as to our internationalisation strategy." She is convinced that this concept will ultimately enable the company to move faster: "I believe it is a complete fallacy to think that you can move faster by starting many things at once. The opposite is true."

One of the most important items on Hylane's agenda is expanding the energy supply for the vehicles. Rental customers can use a charging card that gives them access to affordable hydrogen and electricity. "As we are the largest consumer of hydrogen in the transport sector, we can offer very favourable terms – hydrogen, for example, at 40 per cent below the market price. We are in negotiations with other charging station and filling station operators and are continuing to expand the network."

Discipline and team spirit

Sara Schiffer almost always refers to "we" when she talks about her work. She emphasises how important the team is. It currently comprises 20 people, and seven new positions were recently advertised. Schiffer believes in working together as equals, with everyone quickly taking responsibility for their respective areas and driving them forward with great commitment.

Decisions are made jointly and new team members are selected unanimously. "We pay close attention to fit and implementation strength. A start-up doesn't just mean a modern office and colourful Post-its, but hard work and a lot of discipline," she says. "That's why we're looking for applicants who are not only capable, but also seriously committed." What she herself also maintains is the joy of work: "I enjoy every day, even if it's exhausting. We can see that we're really making a difference. That's incredibly fulfilling." 



DR SARA SCHIFFER

Sara Schiffer, founder and Managing Director of Hylane, joined DEVK in 2016 as a Scrum Master Innovation Lab/Junior IT Project Manager after completing her dual studies. She later rose to become Head of IT Development Coordination and Advisor to the Executive Board. In 2021, she founded Hylane.



A column by Bernard Krone

Added value as a matter of course



My most important goal as an entrepreneur is to always offer customers exactly what they need – and at the same time more than they expect.

For me, added value is not an option, but a given.

We all know that transport and logistics are currently facing particularly intense challenges: rising costs, global crises and a shortage of skilled workers, especially drivers, are compounded by demands for transport to become cheaper, faster and more environmentally friendly. Against this backdrop, added value is more important than ever.

It means doing more than just transporting goods from A to B. It arises when processes function reliably, when technology supports people, when partnerships are based on mutual trust and when everyone contributes a little more than necessary. In short: when economic success, responsibility and reliability come together. This is made possible through dialogue and genuine interest in the other party.

Added value cannot always be measured, but it can be felt. And it can look different for everyone – freight forwarders have different needs and priorities depending on their size, business model and customer portfolio. For some, digital solutions are particularly beneficial, while for others, services are the most important factor.

“We want to exceed expectations and create solutions.”

Genuine added value does not come from short-term calculations, but from a willingness to take responsibility – for quality, for partnership, for the future. This is also what drives us at Krone: we want to exceed expectations and create solutions that are of greater value to our customers, the industry and society as a whole. [↪](#)

