

FAMILY BUSINESS CONSULTANCY FIRM OF THE YEAR IN GERMANY



Wintergerst Societät für Unternehmer-Beratung
GmbH & Co. KG

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SOCIETÄT FÜR UNTERNEHMER-BERATUNG

Wintergerst provides top management consulting services for small- and medium-sized family-owned enterprises in challenging situations, where an utmost degree of excellence in the fields of Strategic Management, Corporate Finance/M&A and/or Restructuring is required.

The four partners of Wintergerst are experienced entrepreneurs with backgrounds in consulting, auditing and producing industries. They are backed by a team of highly motivated and experienced business advisers with expertise in the areas of management and finance, in addition to a broad network of industry experts, utilised by the firm to offer tailor-made solutions to clients. Today, its primary areas of specialism are Strategic Management, Corporate Finance/M&A and Restructuring. In addition, Wintergerst is a member of the International Corporate Finance Group (ICFG), a global network in sell- and buy-side corporate transactions with 24 offices worldwide.

Volker Wintergerst, Managing Partner, noted: "Wintergerst possesses extensive experience regarding the interests and challenges of shareholder families and how to maximise value for them. Our in-depth technical and operational knowledge, combined with a broad skillset in finance and banking, enable us to deliver comprehensive solutions that cover any aspect of a client's business. In doing so, Wintergerst creates a high level of trust, as well as long-lasting client relationships."

When asked about some of the challenges that Wintergerst has faced in the past 12 months, Mr Wintergerst explained that the major issue for the practice has been the ramifications of COVID-19 on

both the economy and the firm's clientele, which consists mainly of family business owners. "The demands are very different from client to client," he said. "Therefore, each situation needs to be evaluated diligently. In solving the current individual problems of our clients, we benefit from the general approach of Wintergerst to deliver customised solutions at all times."

The firm has, however, seen notable successes in the past year, including the acquisition of MBO by Komori. The MBO Group develops, produces and sells machines for the further processing of digital and offset print media, as well as for mailings, pharmaceuticals and special applications. In the first quarter of 2020, the Japanese Komori Corporation took over the traditional German MBO Group, and Wintergerst supported the shareholder family and MBO exclusively and comprehensively in the internationally orientated bidding process. Subsequently, Wintergerst provided intensive support throughout the demanding post-merger integration, which took place at the height of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The firm also advised on the merger of STOLL – a family-owned, global manufacturer of flat-knitting machinery for more than 145 years – and Karl Mayer. The merger of these two world market leaders was completed in July, 2020, enabling STOLL to become an independent division within the Karl Mayer Group. In preparation for this transaction, Wintergerst advised STOLL on various issues relating to a possible future realignment, particularly the preparation of a restructuring concept in accordance with German IDW S 6, and thus, helped to secure the planned transaction.

Last, but not least, Wintergerst consulted on the acquisition

of Gehring – the world market leader in fine machining, and a developer of tech for conventional and electrified powertrains – by NAGEL. NAGEL, Wintergerst's client, was only able to enter the transaction process relatively late – at the end of September – and was therefore faced with an extremely ambitious time schedule of five weeks. Nonetheless, with the support of Wintergerst's specialised M&A team, NAGEL expeditiously managed to submit a qualified offer for Gehring, and won the bid.

Mr Wintergerst added: "For us – like many, many others – the global pandemic was certainly the most significant challenge that we faced in the past year. As a result, it was important for us to create a work environment that ensured the health of our employees and clients and that, at the same time, enabled us to render our services to the very best of our ability. In addition to this, our clients were all affected differently by the crisis, and so we needed to devise unique solutions that addressed their concerns and challenges.

"Throughout this, we have continued to provide a leading service to our core clientele, which still encompasses family-owned businesses and entrepreneurs from the Engineering, Automotive, Software/IT and Consumer Goods/ Wholesale and Retail sectors. Moreover, our cross-border endeavours have benefitted greatly from our membership within ICFG. Being part of such a leading global network has been invaluable in our sell- and buy-side corporate transactions, as this affiliation allows our company to optimise the process and outcome for clients – operating in unison with experienced partners based all around the globe, with 24 offices worldwide."