

Transcending the EUR 1 billion sales barrier

GW accelerates logistics solutions by investing in people, markets and infrastructure

Vienna, 19 May 2006 – Austria's Gebrüder Weiss (GW) transport and logistics company intends to clear the EUR 1 billion sales hurdle no later than 2010. The Board of Directors has thereby identified the very lifeblood of its growth strategy: major investments in existing and new employees, opening up new markets and establishing new facilities – with the main focus on the new Eastern hub in Maria Lanzendorf.

“Bold but not brash,” is the motto underlying GW's strategy for the future, according to chairman of the board Wolfgang Niessner. By 2010, Gebrüder Weiss plans to increase sales to more than EUR 1 billion. Expansion in the markets will come from both organic growth as well as new additional purchases. Apart from traditional forwarding services, Gebrüder Weiss continues to see enormous market potential in logistics solutions. “We have the ideal size and structure to provide excellent logistics solutions: sufficiently large and financially strong enough to be a reliable partner, yet regionally managed and flexible enough to respond individually to any customer's needs,” notes Niessner. As a full logistics solution provider, Gebrüder Weiss develops, runs and continually optimises entire aspects of procurement/distribution logistics for its customers.

Maria Lanzendorf – largest single investment in company history

In 2005, the foundation was laid in Maria Lanzendorf (Lower Austria) for the largest forwarding facility of the entire GW Group. Relocation of 450 employees will take place next month. The logistics terminal is poised to set new standards in warehousing and conveyance: one of the first electronic pallet suspension conveyor systems in all of Europe for logistics will provide for highly efficient operations. The Maria Lanzendorf service centre is located directly across from the new S1 light rail line and, at more than EUR 50 million, represents the largest investment in the company's entire 500 year history. GW concentrated all logistics, surface transport and Air & Sea activities at this location, thereby creating a new hub for the CEE region in eastern Austria.

Comprehensive qualification programmes for employees

To also remain a leading provider of complex logistics solutions in the future, GW invests a great deal in basic and advanced employee training. In 2006, for instance, the “Orange Future” trainee programme returns again for the second time. 27 recent graduates and high-potential candidates will be given the full ins and outs of a career in logistics. A two-year curriculum for executive personnel prepares other trainees for upper management positions. GW also has one of the largest apprentice training programmes in the industry: 120 new-generation forwarding agents are learning the tricks of the trade at GW, which is roughly 17% of the entire industry. “Our employee base is our success guarantor. The EUR 1.3 million we spend directly on their training is nothing less than an investment in the future of the company,” stresses board member Peter Kloiber. And the end effect speaks for itself. According to an employee survey conducted by an outside firm, 89% of the Austrian employees rated GW as “a very good place to work”.

Expansionist policy for “Eastern Europe” & “Air & Sea”

Gebrüder Weiss has already achieved an approximate 25% increase in value on its activities in the CEE countries. An increase to 30% is planned for the coming medium term. After taking over the two Slovakian companies M&G Expres and M&G Spedition in March 2006, further investments are now also being planned for Romania. In Hungary, GW is meanwhile developing its existing locations. Niessner reports enthusiastically: “We will also continue to intensively expand upon our network in Eastern and Southeastern Europe over the next few years. We will be developing new locations in existing countries and we will also establish ourselves in nations such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Moldavia. As a guesstimate of the geographical corridor for our growth, I see the land connection between Europe and China – the Silk Road.”

In its “Air & Sea” department, management board member Heinz Senger-Weiss notes an extremely dynamic trend: “There are approximately 350 GW employees now working in the Middle and Far East as well as in North America. I have full confidence that we will have 800 to 1000 people overseas by 2010. Immediate expansion areas for us are India and Taiwan.” Gebrüder Weiss is currently reinforcing its position as the leading service provider for transport solutions between China and the GW countries in Europe with its “Orange Dragon” campaign. This includes the establishing of 19 China Competence Centres in 10 European countries.

Seamless organisation

“Our goal is the seamless organisation, a technically-efficient logistics network based on a concerted company culture,” notes Wolfgang Niessner. A barcode system is being implemented for the entire surface transport division to allow the further streamlining of forwarding operations. “We are moreover pumping up the quality of our services,” stresses Niessner, referring to one of the central strategic guidelines: “being the best service provider in our region.”

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