FROM A GOOD FAMILY

Over 100 exemplary German family-owned businesses
DEAR READERS,

We are delighted and consider it a great honour that LEITZ has been selected by an independent specialist panel and named in the book FROM A GOOD FAMILY (AUS BESTER FAMILIE), edited by Dr. Florian Langenscheidt. In this book, the ZEIT Publishing Group presents our company as one of 100 exemplary family-owned businesses. We are therefore in the company of selected family-owned businesses from a variety of industries that are characterised by a clear set of values and excellent positions in their respective markets.

This accolade confirms to us that the lived synergy of tradition and innovation over five generations at LEITZ has set us on the right path as a leader both in the technology market and on the global stage. We hope to continue with this approach, both in the future and in our day-to-day work.

The culture and values of LEITZ, a family-owned business, are the result of long-term vision and sustainable action. In this regard, we are conscious of our responsibilities to our employees, our clients and wider society. We consider ourselves one part of a community with a common purpose, and act with the awareness that the company’s success ultimately depends on the performance of the people working within it.

As a family-owned business, LEITZ stands for quality and sustainability in its products and services, and demonstrates its dependability in its dealings with others. We feel a particular sense of obligation and connection to both our clients and our employees. It is for this reason that we have long sought to combine technological progress with environmental sustainability and economic value.

We hope you enjoy reading this special edition, based on the book FROM A GOOD FAMILY, as well as the in-depth insights it provides.

Yours,

C. Brucklacher

Dr. Cornelia Brucklacher:
Chair of the Advisory Board and Group Shareholder

Jürgen Köppel
Management Spokesman

Johann Werl
CEO

Michael Voss
CEO

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The German Mittelstand, or German medium-sized enterprises, are often cited by analysts abroad as the reason for Germany’s solid economic situation. Especially in these politically turbulent times, our country appears to be a bastion of peace. It is a centre of gravity of sorts amid the centrifugal forces of global confusion – and it gives people reason to marvel. Alongside medium-sized enterprises, this is also due to the many family-owned businesses that ensure the centre of Europe is peaceful and help guarantee Germany’s prosperity, freedom, and societal stability.

We want to affirm and expand upon that statement with the book you are holding in your hands. When asked to identify the central element of Germany’s strong economic backbone, we want the answer to be “German family-owned businesses”. Why? Because family-owned enterprises are flexible and innovative. They think in terms of generations, not quarterly earnings. They make quick decisions that are also sustainable. They do business with no small measure of social responsibility – and do not look at their trusted business partners as mere cash cows. What is more, family-owned businesses find a way to connect the rational business world with the emotional world of the family. To make that possible, a balance must be found between the magical triumvirate of power, love, and money.  

The compendium From a Good Family – now in its third edition – tells the story of more than 100 exemplary family-owned business in Germany in 400 pages. It includes stories about outstanding international industries, about large and small-branded companies, and about particularly traditional businesses. It also tells the story of companies that are not necessarily in the limelight, but whose number and variety form the fertile ground of the German family-owned business landscape.

We are pleased that we were able to bring this exciting project to the ZEIT Publishing Group fold. We see it as the beginning of a medium-sized enterprise initiative, one that we can bring to a brighter future and further develop with our partners. The project’s connection with the Deutsche Wirtschaftsforum (German Economic Forum) alone shows how fruitful this initial cooperation is. The positive reaction from so many of the participating businesses emboldens us to go even further. We were able to launch From a Good Family on the evening before the 9th Deutsche Wirtschaftsforum, in the presence of many of the family entrepreneurs as well as our partners Berenberg, Obermark and the Stiftung Familienunternehmen (The Foundation for Family Businesses). We would like to thank them for their tremendous support. It is now our responsibility to help provide this joint project with as much exposure and attention as possible – as a printed symbol of the sustainable success and significance of family-owned businesses for Germany as an industrial hub.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Florian Langenscheidt, Editor  
Dr. Rainer Esser, Publisher

Frankfurt, November 2017
Renowned for precision: As a family-owned business, Leitz has manufactured high-quality tools since 1876, and now employs 4000 people around the world.
It all started in Oberkochen, a small town in the Ostalb district of Baden-Württemburg. In 1876, Albert Leitz adroitly began to exploit his proximity to the state-owned steelworks of Swabia to procure high-grade steel, with which he made drills, saw blades, and axes. To him, one thing was clear: The signs of the times pointed to industrialisation. He was proven right, and passed on to his descendants a company which to this day manufactures precision tools and distributes them globally as a premium manufacturer and full-range provider. Though still headquartered in Oberkochen, the company is now at home all over the world.

A small Swabian enterprise has grown to become an internationally active corporate group, and now employs around 4000 workers in its manufacturing operations at 14 locations across three continents. Leitz also holds 250 patents. Pioneering technologies like the intelligent tool with integrated RFID chip have not only made Leitz a global market leader but have also placed it at the cutting edge of innovation.

The fact that Leitz achieved this size and significance while remaining in family hands is primarily down to Dr. Dieter Brucklacher. He shaped the corporate group over the course of the past four decades: From 1974 to 2014, he led Leitz as Chairman of the Management Board, and later served on the company’s Advisory Board. He set the company's strategic direction, promoting growth and internationalisation through innovation, pioneering technology and quality. Another issue close to his heart was ensuring that the premium manufacturer’s clients received specialist face-to-face advice. To achieve this, he continually worked to expand Leitz’s network of sales and service companies, especially in emerging regions.

Dr. Dieter Brucklacher passed away on 27 September 2016. Since then, his daughter Dr. Cornelia Brucklacher has shaped the family-owned company's strategy as Chair of its Advisory Board. As the fifth generation of the family to manage Leitz, she draws on the values and strategic direction of her father and forebears: “Ensuring the satisfaction of our customers and their economic success, from small-scale producers to global industrial companies, has been – and remains – at the core of our business of over 140 years of tradition,” she said.

The great-great-granddaughter of the company’s founder, Albert Leitz,
"As a family-owned company, Leitz has produced and lived a sustainable corporate culture over five generations: A culture of responsibility for people, nature, society, and the environment."

Dr. Cornelia Brucklacher

Alongside precision tools, the Group’s companies also manufacture carbide and diamond-coated cutting materials and tool clamping systems.

Firmly rooted in Ostalb to this day: Leitz headquarters in the town of Oberkochen.

Company founder Albert Leitz (1854–1916)
Brucklacher has clear objectives in mind: She aims to expand the company’s position as a global market leader at the cutting edge of innovation, focusing especially on technological aspects around Industry 4.0 and networked manufacturing with intelligent tools. She also hopes to expand the company’s sales and services network—a crucial aspect in ensuring customer satisfaction—into further emerging regions.

In preserving her father’s values, Dr. Cornelia Brucklacher believes it important not only to retain an overview of the company’s products and key performance indicators, but also to nurture its corporate culture—“a culture of responsibility for people, nature, society, and the environment,” as she describes it. This culture at Leitz is the result of long-term vision and sustainable action. It can be clearly seen, for example, in the company’s training ratio—which at 10% is considerably above the average for German businesses. Leitz provides training for young people in commercial, technical, and industrial occupations before offering these apprentices positions in the company. Alongside classic vocational education, Leitz also supports dual degree courses and external advanced training programmes to gain formal certification as a Master Craftsman, Technician, or Engineer.

As the company’s success is dependent on the motivation and knowledge of its workforce, Leitz uses its ‘Zukunftswerkstatt’—or ‘Workshop of the Future’—to give its employees the chance to study further throughout their careers. The company also offers a worldwide exchange programme between its locations, giving its employees the opportunity to gain international professional experience, develop their language skills, and get to know other cultures.

Part of the Leitz world view is the notion that, as part of a society, the company shares in certain responsibilities. Consequently, the family-owned business supports education partnerships and aid projects both in Germany and around the world. Due to its decentralised structure, Leitz has a presence in various locations across the globe where it has also worked to put down roots—just as in Oberkochen, where everything began and where Leitz still has its corporate headquarters. The company remains keenly engaged in the local area: 27 years ago, it established the international ‘Jazz Lights’ festival in Oberkochen, which it helps to organise to this day.
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