



PRESS RELEASE

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BERNER Group grows by more than 10% in the first half-year and sets two new sales records

- 14.5% sales increase in core business
- Sales in September rise for the first time to approx. EUR 108 million
- Chemicals segment back at pre-coronavirus level
- E-commerce sales rise by around 40%

The BERNER Group set two new sales records in the first half of the financial year (April 1 to September 30). The family-run B2B trading company increased group sales by 10.2% to EUR 554 million, thereby attaining the highest half-year sales in its history. In its core business, the sales increase amounted to 14.5%. At EUR 107.9 million, the month of September was also the strongest sales month since the company was founded in 1957. “Already last year, very high sales were generated in the months of August and September 2020. The fact that we have once again significantly exceeded these targets despite the shaky situation in the global logistics sector and the shortage of raw materials shows that we have done many things right and how well-positioned the BERNER Group is. I am very proud of the performance of the entire team,” said Christian Berner, CEO of the BERNER Group. The BERNER Group achieved its highest growth in the e-commerce sales channel with an increase of 44%.

Even global supply chain disruptions and raw material shortages have hardly affected the BERNER Group’s sales momentum so far. “We reacted very early and flexibly to the trade crisis and secured inventories for our customers in good time. We sourced raw materials from all over the world and purchased them at auctions, and we also found new suppliers. We have been very successful in these endeavors and can offer nearly a full product range. Our stocks are sufficient for several months in advance. As usual, we are able to supply our customers with most of our products within 24 hours,” said Christian Berner.

Above-average core business growth

In its core omnichannel trading business, i.e. supplying customers in the mobility, construction and industry segments, the group showed above-average growth, which was 14.5% higher than last year’s first half.

While sales in the mobility segment declined during the coronavirus crisis in 2020, the figures for the first half of 2021/22 also show that at Berner, the automotive sector is picking up speed again. The sales increase here is 14.1%, which is only just behind the still booming construction segment (+14.3%).

In addition to the core business omnichannel trading (91% share of sales), the chemicals subsidiary Caramba Chemicals Group (CCG) is also part of the BERNER Group. CCG benefited in 2020 from some major orders for disinfectants and experienced double-digit growth in 2020. Now, after the end of the coronavirus crisis and the resulting loss of these major orders, the chemicals group is back at its pre-coronavirus level, as expected, with sales of around EUR 50 million.



B2B customers continued to rely on e-commerce

In 2015, the BERNER Group was one of the first companies in the industry to invest massively in digitalization. At that time, alternative sales channels such as web stores, order apps, call centers and telesales contributed only 7% to overall sales. About five years ago, the BERNER Group announced that it intended to increase this value to 25% in the medium term.

“We exceeded this ambitious target in the past half-year. The proportion of alternative sales channels in our core omnichannel business was 25.6%. In the South-West region, this value was already just under 30%,” said Berner CFO Peter Spitzbauer. E-commerce is driving this development. For three half-years in a row, e-commerce sales have been growing at double-digit rates. Between April and September, the BERNER Group increased e-commerce sales by 44% compared to a 21% increase during the same period last year.

“During the lockdowns, customers came to appreciate the reliability and customer-friendliness of our electronic sales channels. The word is getting out in the industry, because our e-commerce channels have a higher number of new customers than any other channel. The increase in new customers here is 11%; we have doubled our e-commerce sales growth compared to the previous year and the share of e-commerce in overall sales has increased to 15,2%,” said Arthur Jaunich, who has overseen Sales and Marketing on the BERNER Group Executive Board since September.

Outlook

“We have rarely experienced times like these. Post-coronavirus, we are now seeing a global trade crisis, which makes a reliable outlook on sales development impossible,” said Christian Berner. The industry is facing supply chain shortages, bottlenecks and price increases on a daily basis. This situation will be prevalent in all the markets for a while – even in the future, large projects are in danger of coming to a standstill due to shortages of even the smallest parts. “We at Berner cannot stop these developments. But we know that we have a robust business model that has growth potential, also during pandemic crises like the coronavirus. We will fight for every euro in sales and be there for the customers, even under the current conditions.”

The Berner Group

The Berner Group is a family-run European commercial enterprise. Our vision is: “We keep the world together and moving.” This means we are the central B2B trading partner for all materials in the maintenance, repair, and production segments for our customers in the building, mobility, and industry sectors. With more than four channels we create an integrated omni-channel purchasing experience for our customers. In the steel and C materials as well as chemicals segments we are also an innovative manufacturer. We are represented in over 23 countries for our customers with more than 200,000 items and 8,200 employees.