

PRESS RELEASE

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Financial year 2023/2024: BERNER defends billion-euro turnover and invests anti-cyclically in the business

Despite a massive deterioration in general conditions, the BERNER Group closed the 2023/2024 financial year at almost the same level as the previous year. Adjusted for consolidation effects, the trading company generated sales of more than EUR 1.15 billion and thus remains one of the leading providers in the industry. Growth momentum was driven primarily by the growing mobility segment (+4%), the successful expansion of the key account business (+8%) and double-digit growth rates in eCommerce. The B2B specialist was thus able to make numerous investments from its own financial resources – including the biggest brand relaunch in the company's history.

"Like all of our competitors, we have been struggling for a long time against the persistently weak economy, particularly in the construction segment," says Peter Schmidt, who is responsible for the core business of omnichannel trading with the BERNER and BTI by BERNER brands. "Against this backdrop, it is all the more impressive that we were able to defend our sales revenues and remain profitable. Even though we have recently seen one or two small signs that give us hope for a slight improvement, the market situation remains generally challenging. No significant improvement is expected in the short term. We feel this every day. However, thanks to the strategic and transformation successes of the past and our organizational structure with three regions and three divisions, we are so robustly positioned that we can compensate for individual declines."

Growth momentum with mobility and key accounts

The BERNER Group also benefited from its resilience in the past financial year. The lower demand in the building trade was offset by strong trading business with vehicle and commercial vehicle workshops. The company also remained on track for success in international key account management, where existing contracts were expanded and extended on a long-term basis and attractive major customers were acquired.

Double-digit growth in eCommerce

Around 5,000 sales experts, who advise BERNER customers personally, continue to generate the majority of sales. At the same time, the trading company is consistently expanding its range of alternative channels. In several countries, their share of sales is already over 35% (including France). The driver of this development is the rapidly growing online sales. In the past financial year, the Group achieved growth rates of more than 50% in key European markets such as Italy, Poland and Portugal. In total, the company now earns almost one in five euros through the eCommerce sales channel.

Depot strategy pays off

The strategy of opening depots in conurbations and metropolitan regions is also increasingly paying off. With Valencia, Brescia, Rennes, Regensburg and the Azores, five new locations were added in the 2023/2024 financial year. In addition to the shopping/testing opportunities, the services offered by the stationary shops are particularly popular with trade professionals. BERNER recorded strong sales growth in same-day/scheduled delivery of products over the last mile to the construction site (+20%) and in the self-collection of goods ordered via Click & Collect (+120%).

Chemical innovations and smart services

As one of the leading providers in the industry, the BERNER Group was able to make extensive investments from its own financial resources. For example, the B2B specialist intensified its research and development activities and was able to launch new products such as the innovative XTREME Parts Cleaner and the two-component adhesive 2K Fill&Fusion with patented clip technology. Digital services such as BERA SMARTscan and BERA SMARTscale also heralded a new era of customizable modular shelving systems.

Strengthening the brand

In addition, the brand identity was completely revised and the strongest communicative repositioning since the company was founded in 1957 was implemented. Part of the rebranding is also the definition of a new purpose. This reads: "We are pushing the limits of the possible for the shapers of a better tomorrow". "Pushing the limits" means that the culture and DNA of the family business have been characterized by achieving top performance and constantly pushing the boundaries of what is possible for its customers since the times of founder Albert Berner. Business partners and employees are also the "shapers of a better tomorrow". After all, sustainability, social commitment and responsible behaviour with regard to future generations are an obligation for the B2B specialist.

Strategy to be continued

"With our new brand, we are now confidently presenting to the market for the first time just how much we have changed in the course of our transformation since 2012," emphasizes Peter Schmidt. "We are convinced of our strategy, which is why we are continuing on our chosen path despite the difficult conditions and driving forward our investments anti-cyclically. Our focus is clearly on our operating business. In addition to the consistent expansion of our sales channels and the further development of our product and service range, we have planned targeted measures for example in the areas of IT, digitalization, supply chain and logistics in the current financial year."