

# “DECISIONS TO BENEFIT EVERYONE”

Monika and Marcus Wörwag are CEOs of WÖRWAG Pharma. In an interview, they talk about the benefits of a family business, overcoming cultural differences, and why every employee should think entrepreneurially.

The history of WÖRWAG begins with the city pharmacy in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen which your father founded more than 45 years ago. Do you still stop by there from time to time?

**Marcus Wörwag:** Our family is from Zuffenhausen – we are deeply rooted here despite our international orientation. Even today, our pharmacy is still part of our company – this maintains my close contact as a foundation, so that I understand the needs of pharmacists, physicians and most of all, patients. After all, our core task has not changed over the past 45 years: supplying people who need treatment with the best possible medications.

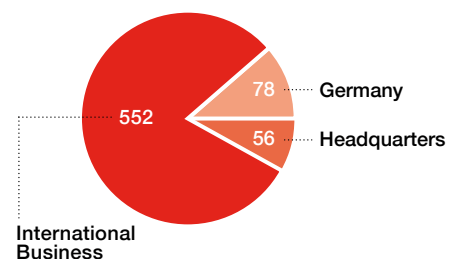
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From a city pharmacy to an international player in more than 30 countries – how does such a success story come about?

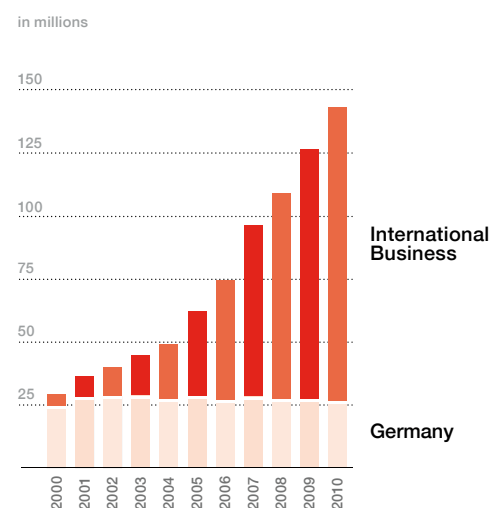
**Monika Wörwag:** Our father fully identified with the company from the start – a life's work. His philosophy still applies today: “People are at the centre.” Namely, the people who suffer from diabetes and its accompanying symptoms: cardiovascular disorders and diabetic neuropathy. Aside from products which are suitable for this purpose, mineral substances and vitamins – so called biofactors – are other focal points of the company in natural medicine.

**Marcus Wörwag:** With our successful products such as Milgamma, Thiogamma and Magnerot, the company not only focused on the right products – the right markets were also important for success. WÖRWAG Pharma was one of the first companies to recognise the potential of Eastern European markets and establish a separate business there. People – our employees – were likewise at the centre of this expansion. We focused on these employees from the beginning, hiring ex-

WÖRWAG employees



Sales development in 2000–2010



perts from the respective countries who have a direct line to us and are also close to customers.

**Monika Wörwag:** Employees involve themselves in WÖRWAG Pharma specifically because we pay close attention to



### WÖRWAG Pharma Team Spirit

*The success of WÖRWAG Pharma is based on many aspects. WÖRWAG employees are among the most important ones.*

*Four core points represent our company philosophy. On the one hand, there is the willingness to accept responsibility; on the other hand, a readiness to adapt to changes and constantly make improvements. The third central theme is to provide our customers with the best possible service; and mutual appreciation within the team forms our fourth cornerstone.*

independent, confident employees. The combination of this know-how, the quality of all our work and the required foresight and speed in making important decisions are decisive factors in the success of our company.

### What does such growth mean for WÖRWAG Pharma?

**Marcus Wörwag:** Most of all, it means being able to continue to concentrate on the most important things. Not losing sight of small and large objectives, just as we have done in all the previous years: steady expansion of our markets, distribution and product range. All decisions arising out of this are based on an attitude which focuses on everyone's well-being. Therefore our business decisions never aim at short term goals, but always sustainable, self-sufficient successes.

**Monika Wörwag:** Last but not least, we owe this attitude to our employees and their families. We place value on the company's financial independence, the feeling of not being dependent on banks or investors. And the independence of our employees. They are allowed – and even expected – to participate in shaping the company, assuming responsibility, both as individuals and as team players.

"It is not for nothing that we view ourselves as a large team which operates on the principle: All for one and one for all."

### Why are you so successful particularly with diabetes medications and biofactors?

**Marcus Wörwag:** We have a clearly delimited position with a definitive profile: customised products for a core target group. In brief, we are specialists who apply their entire know-how and expertise to this target group. Therapeutic concepts and service materials offer additional significant benefits for patients. And the number of diabetes disorders will dramatically increase on a global scale in the coming decades. We have recognised this, and see our engagement for the future in it.

**Monika Wörwag:** Not only do we offer high-quality medications. We have also placed strict ethical and environmentally friendly standards upon ourselves. WÖRWAG medications are well tolerated, with minimal risk to the patient. They aim to encourage a healthy lifestyle and support preventive health care.

### You have ambitious objectives – how do you intend to fulfil them?

**Marcus Wörwag:** I can only repeat: by concentrating on what matters. First, developing new markets. Second, expanding our product range, partly through our

“We accept the challenge of continuing to develop our company – but we want growth with a human face.”

own research and development. Third, expanding and further developing our team.

**How are you able to motivate employees from a large variety of countries for these objectives?**

**Monika Wörwag:** We know the value of the people who work for us. Therefore personnel development is an immensely important subject in our company. It is not for nothing that we view ourselves as a large team which operates on the principle of “All for one and one for all”. We provide training and support – anyone can bring in their own entrepreneurial thinking and actions. And if mistakes are made once in awhile: we are a learning organisation that accepts these mistakes and transforms them into something positive. Living this team spirit engages every individual. And their humanity and ability to create something together – that is the core of WÖRWAG Pharma.

**Still, it is surely not easy to realise the team spirit beyond national and language borders and give it life – and still make strong decisions.**

**Monika Wörwag:** Of course, cultural differences in particular are a major challenge. It is not always easy to accept them – but our respect for intercultural individuality is the core of our team spirit. We place great demands on our employees in this regard as well: the willingness

to change must be there, and it is mandatory to speak English.

**Marcus Wörwag:** Our teams have continued to grow in recent years. While country managers were responsible for five people not so long ago, today they have 100 employees working under them. This requires high qualifications from everyone, as well as a willingness to learn constantly. But our flat hierarchies and the transparency of our processes allow us to leave no one behind – beyond national borders, but also beyond the limits in our minds.

**What does the future look like for the company?**

**Monika Wörwag:** Above all, we are and will remain a family business! And we will know how to make the most of this advantage: our down-to-earth attitude makes us reliable partners – short decision-making channels within the company allow us to react quickly and flexibly. Last but not least, it is the team spirit, our shared way of wanting what is best, which lends us all wings in our daily work. A better foundation is hard to find.

**Marcus Wörwag:** Of course we want to continue our current growth dynamics. It has taken hard work thus far, and this will

continue to apply in coming years. We accept this challenge – but we want growth with a human face. This also means securing workplaces. Since our teams are highly motivated, we will attain our objectives.

**And what are your personal wishes for the future?**

**Monika Wörwag:** Seeing our children grow up healthy. And making professional challenges work together with private challenges – not always a simple matter.

**Marcus Wörwag:** To continue to find time for our family in the future, along with our successful work.

