



125 Years of Müller Packaging

Commemorative publication for the 2022 company jubilee

History is more than just dates and events

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Müller drums keep the economy rolling

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Never say never – that includes the “Green Müller drum”

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**Ernst Müller AG
Blechwarenfabrik
in the 1960s.**

Let's Celebrate Together, Join Us!

Managing Director Roland Tanner and CEO Christian Reinau are celebrating 125 years of Müller Packaging. They're inviting staff, customers, business partners and the public to take part in the festivities. This jubilee publication honors and commemorates this milestone in the company's history.

Readers from near and far,

It is with great pride that we celebrate 125 years of Müller Packaging and 100 years of the Münchenstein site this year.

From the origins of the company in 1897 until today, the owner families have consistently worked to preserve their autonomy and independence. From the first Müller generation down to the fifth in the present day, security and stability – and therefore the sustainability of the company – have always been uppermost in our values.

This family business offers a wide variety of hazardous goods packaging for demanding customers. Having grown alongside Basel's chemical and pharmaceutical industry, today it boasts a highly diversified customer portfolio representing many different industries. Müller Packaging has earned a reputation as a quality leader that uses "lean" and "just in time" production processes. Occupational safety, energy efficiency and environmental protection are at the heart of all our activities and subject to constant monitoring and ongoing development.

In 2022, we will be celebrating this company anniversary in numerous different ways. Primarily, we will be celebrating with our employees. We thank them for their untiring work in the service of our customers. But we also want to share these 125 years with the outside world with an open day and other great events.

Please join us in our celebrations. We hope you enjoy this jubilee publication.



Roland Tanner, left, and Christian Reinau

Roland Tanner
Managing Director
Müller Packaging

Christian Reinau
CEO
Müller Group



*In its communications,
Müller AG Verpackungen
is often referred to as
Müller Packaging*

A Company Conquers the 20th Century

Müller Packaging's journey from tinsmith workshop to successful packaging company has also included wars and economic crises.

The history of the family-run company Müller AG Verpackungen began 125 years ago, shortly before the beginning of the 20th century. Today, a fifth generation of Müllers is about to take on increased responsibility. They were preceded by four generations who carefully led the company through the first 125 years, through both fair weather and storms, as a brief look back at the 20th century clearly shows. It was a century dominated in particular by the two world wars, followed by the decline of colonial empires and the emergence of the Cold War. The world population increased exponentially, leading to global food issues and environmental concerns.

The Golden Twenties and the global economic crisis

After the First World War, the 1920s saw an economic upswing and vibrant cultural activity. But the "Golden Twenties" ended abruptly in 1929 and ushered in a global economic crisis. This led to increasing social problems throughout the world. In Germany, the Weimar Republic failed because the old military, political and economic elites managed to preserve their power. Growing poverty and unemployment, as well as an insufficient post-war order, led to the spread of fascism in a number of European countries.

Second World War

In Germany, the fascist movement was represented by Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists, who succeeded in reaching the large majority of the population. All this culminated in the outbreak of the Second World War, with economic activities hampered by bottlenecks in supplies of raw materials and a lack of personnel, as many workers went to serve in the military.

After the end of the war, material goods production quickly regained momentum. This era saw remarkable increases in productivity and high profits. There was a new global economic order. Organizational structures such as the International Monetary Fund, the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and the European Free Trade Association EFTA arose. Another suspenseful development during this time was the Space Race between the USA and the Soviet Union.

Difficult 1970s

The economy weakened significantly in the 1970s. The third industrial revolution introduced computer technology to production processes. Many countries experienced high

Milestones



1888

Foundation of the Rudolf Müller tinsmith workshop in Kleinhüningen



1897

The tinsmith workshop hires its first employee and becomes a company



1910

Launch of serial production for the Basel chemical industry



1922

Purchase of a property in Münchenstein, including a factory

Historical overview

unemployment, and the oil crisis further affected the global economy, resulting in the worst economic crisis since the Second World War. In addition, the appreciation of the Swiss franc also hampered export business for Swiss companies.

In 1992, Switzerland entered into a special relationship with the European Union, which the country did not wish to join. Both sides knew that they needed each other economically and introduced bilateral agreements to regulate their dealings.



Müller Packaging has also been faced with severe weather conditions. In 1973 and 1976, floods and storms caused extensive damage at Müller Packaging.



Since the Swiss Federal Council terminated negotiations for a new framework agreement in May 2021, cooperation with the EU currently rests on fragile foundations.

On the way to the new century

Throughout the entire 1980s and 1990s, there was a war somewhere in the world. The Islamic State terrorized the western world, spreading fear in Europe and the USA.

In Switzerland, people lived in comfort, isolated from trouble spots. At times Swiss companies had a strong Swiss franc to contend with. But they generally had the support of the National Bank, which intervened on several occasions to prevent overvaluation of the Swiss franc. While Swiss banks occasionally faced an (image) crisis, there was no negative effect on the banking sector. As a wealthy country, Switzerland is among the most advanced countries in terms of infrastructure projects. The country has also achieved significant progress in the automation and digitalization of economic processes.

“Achievements” of the 20th century

The emergence of the World Wide Web and portable devices such as cell phones and tablets has transformed communications. The world has become a village: in most countries, people can communicate freely and without censorship, which leads to a flood of information that also includes fake news, disinformation and propaganda.

Mass-produced consumer goods such as household appliances, computers, audio and video equipment, and means of transport are increasingly dominant. Mechanical devices are being replaced by digital and electronic innovations. The “throw-away society” is emerging. Globalization focuses attention on hygiene, packaging, safety and mobility. World leaders agree that climate protection deserves the highest priority. With awareness of the issue growing, society calls on governments, organizations and companies to act sustainably and protect the environment.



1922

Development of serial production in Münchenstein



1936

The sole proprietorship becomes Ernst Müller AG Blechwarenfabrik



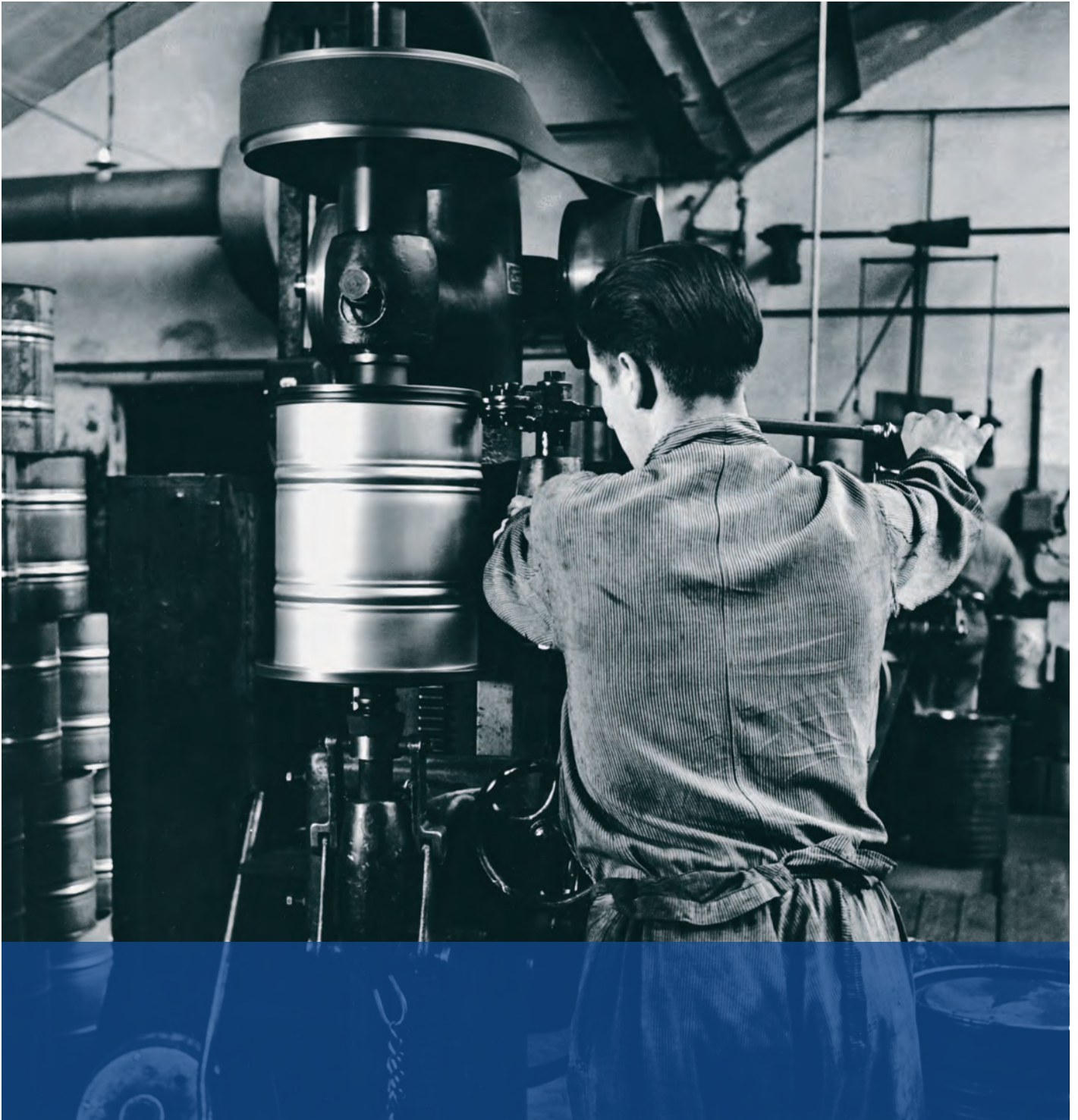
1969

Complete upgrade of production in Münchenstein



1978

Start of production at the second location in Reiden



**An employee manually
seams the bottom of a drum
to the drum body.**

History Is More Than Just Dates and Events

Representatives of the fourth Müller generation, Walter and Peter Müller, share Müller stories from behind the scenes.

There are a lot of stories and anecdotes about Müller's history. The first 125 years offer a rich source of exciting episodes and narrative strands. Here, Walter Müller (70) and Peter Müller (66), of the fourth family generation, share some of them.

Three strong women

In the first generation, Elisabeth Müller-Thommen worked in the family enterprise from 1888 to 1920. She had to face two tragedies – the death of her husband and then of her eldest son – and at the same time save the company from financial collapse. She mastered these challenges brilliantly, and in 1920, she handed on a well-positioned company to her son Ernst, who was joined in the family business two years later by his brother Karl.

The wives of Ernst and Karl played would play major roles in the second generation. After the death of Ernst Müller-Schärer at the age of 59, followed by Karl Müller-Lauber at 63, Karl's widow Rosa Müller-Lauber chaired the Board and ran Ernst Müller AG Blechwarenfabrik for 21 years. In 1950, she held 25% of shares, while Ernst's widow Lydia Müller-Schärer had a 50% stake in the company. With 75% of vot-



The driving forces of the fourth generation: Peter Müller (left) and Walter Müller

ing shares between them, the two women set the direction of the business, and provided the necessary backing for the young third-generation Müllers – Rudolf and Hans.

These three women deserve special recognition in this jubilee year. Without them, there would be nothing to celebrate today in 2022.



1989

Certification according to the ISO 9001 standard



1991

Acquisition of machines from two regional competitors and extension of the product range



1998

Winner of the Cantonal Bank Award of the Basellandschaftliche Kantonalbank



2011

2nd prize from the Unternehmerpreis Nordschweiz of the Swiss Venture Club



The new Müller AG Verpackungen building in Münchenstein went into operation in 2019.

Anecdotes

Commemoration 1947

The 1947 commemoration has a dual significance in the company history. That year, Ernst Müller celebrated 25 years of Ernst Müller AG Blechwarenfabrik, which was founded in 1922, when he moved the company to Münchenstein. In today's timeline, based on the foundation of the company in 1897, this celebration is actually the 50-year jubilee.

Paul Hof, the bridge builder

The family history of Müller Packaging extends to five generations. Naturally, generational changes don't occur to a schedule, and the history of the Müller family also includes bridge-builders between the generations. Paul Hof is one of them. He joined the company at the age of 18 in 1931. When Ernst Müller, of the second generation, died unexpectedly in 1944, Paul Hof proved a loyal and effective deputy to the new manager, Karl Müller. With the untimely death of Karl just six years later, Paul Hof became irreplaceable for the company. He formed a bridge between the second and third Müller generations, as Rudolf and Hans were still too young and inexperienced to run the company on their own in the early 1950s.

Restaurant Blume with bowling alley

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Board met in the conference rooms in Münchenstein, but kept their deliberations brief. The members of the Board and General Management at this time were said to be more sporting and social in their dealings. So the main players regularly met in the bowling alley of the Restaurant Blume, in the upper reaches of Münchenstein. At the time, people said that the most important decisions on investments and day-to-day business were made in the Restaurant Blume. This congenial atmosphere made the restaurant a favored venue for staff parties as well as business dinners. It was virtually the second company canteen.

From the Schorenwäldli to Reiden

Ernst Müller (2nd generation) was a passionate sports angler. Just before the Second World War, he acquired a plot of land at Lake Sempach. The "Schorenwäldli" became a place of peace and rest. Ruedi Müller (3rd generation) shared this passion for fishing. So in 1964, he purchased his own property next to the Schorenwäldli and built his holiday home, "Seeforelle".

Ruedi loved the whitefish ("Felchen") fishing technique, which has something meditative about it. A lot of time can pass before a fish bites. Time in which Ruedi spoke with other anglers. In the early 1970s, he was telling fellow fishermen from Reiden that the production capacities of Ernst Müller AG Blechwarenfabrik in Münchenstein were no longer sufficient and that he was looking for a second location in Switzerland. The rest is history. In 1972, the Board moved to buy a 50,000 square meter property in Reiden, near Lucerne; the foundation stone was laid in 1974 and the first drums left the factory in 1978.



200 employees currently work at Müller Packaging in Münchenstein and Reiden.



2015

Certification according to the FSSC 22000 standard



2018

Joint venture with an Indian partner: foundation of MüllerUnifab LLP



2019

Commissioning of the new semi-finished parts production and logistics hall in Münchenstein



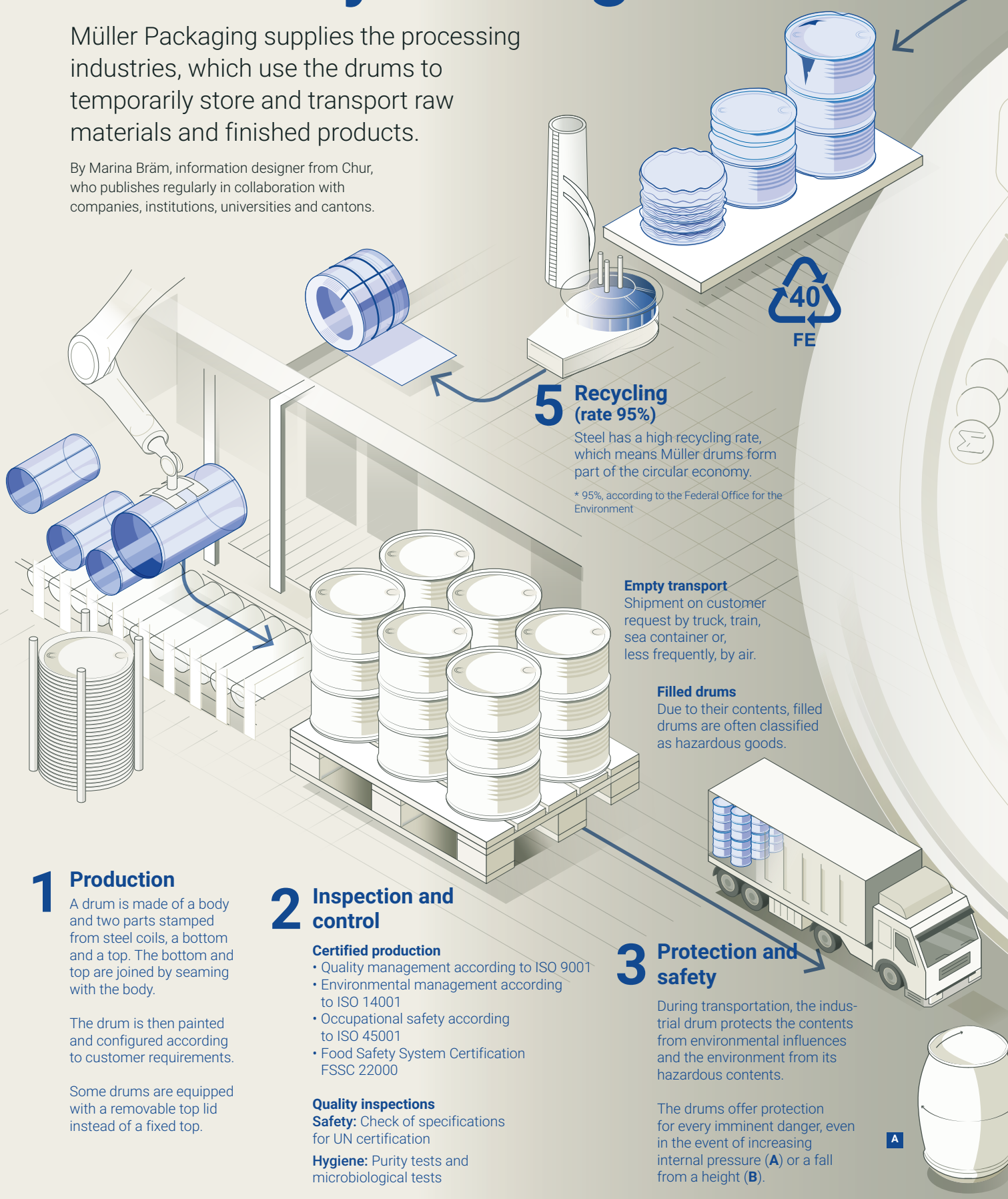
2022

Jubilee year marking 125 years of Müller Packaging and 100 years of the Münchenstein site

Müller Drums Keep the Economy Rolling

Müller Packaging supplies the processing industries, which use the drums to temporarily store and transport raw materials and finished products.

By Marina Bräm, information designer from Chur, who publishes regularly in collaboration with companies, institutions, universities and cantons.



1 Production

A drum is made of a body and two parts stamped from steel coils, a bottom and a top. The bottom and top are joined by seaming with the body.

The drum is then painted and configured according to customer requirements.

Some drums are equipped with a removable top lid instead of a fixed top.

2 Inspection and control

- Certified production**
- Quality management according to ISO 9001
 - Environmental management according to ISO 14001
 - Occupational safety according to ISO 45001
 - Food Safety System Certification FSSC 22000

- Quality inspections**
- Safety:** Check of specifications for UN certification
- Hygiene:** Purity tests and microbiological tests

3 Protection and safety

During transportation, the industrial drum protects the contents from environmental influences and the environment from its hazardous contents.

The drums offer protection for every imminent danger, even in the event of increasing internal pressure (A) or a fall from a height (B).

5 Recycling (rate 95%)

Steel has a high recycling rate, which means Müller drums form part of the circular economy.

* 95%, according to the Federal Office for the Environment

Empty transport

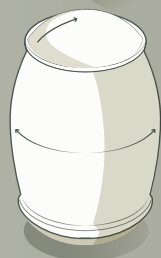
Shipment on customer request by truck, train, sea container or, less frequently, by air.

Filled drums

Due to their contents, filled drums are often classified as hazardous goods.



A





Pharmaceuticals

- Tablets and powder (for drugs or vitamins)



Chemicals

- Cleaning agents
- Adhesives
- Construction chemicals



Cosmetics

- Skin creams
- Lipsticks
- Make-up powder



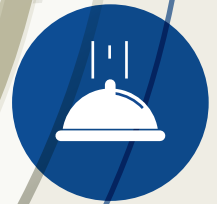
Body care

- Toothpastes
- Shower gels
- Shampoos



Flavors and fragrances

- Perfumes
- Room sprays
- Detergents



Food

- Soft drinks
- Functional food
- Jelly babies



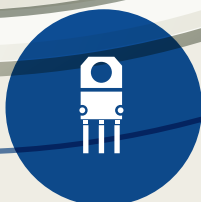
Mineral oil

- Fuels
- Motor oils
- Lubricants



Paints, lacquers

- Printing inks for magazines
- Paints
- Car paints



Semiconductors

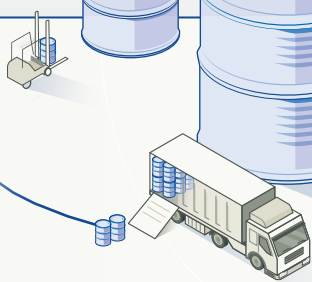
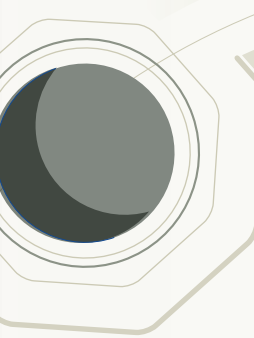
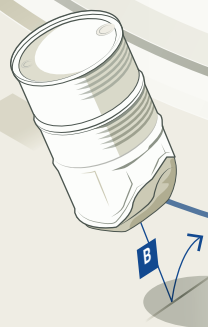
- TV sets
- Mobile phones
- Solar cells

Millions of drums

Müller Packaging produces approx. 3 million drums on order each year.

4 Müller Packaging's products

UN-approved packaging for liquid and solid hazardous goods. Tight-head, composite and open-head drums in various versions and sizes.



The People Who Shaped Müller Packaging

For over 125 years, the Müllers have made their family company a model of stability. But there are other people who have also contributed significantly to its history. An overview.

125 YEARS



Elisabeth Müller-Thommen

Role at Müller Packaging
Business owner

Time at Müller	1888 – 1920
Years at the company	33
Years on the Board	0

Greatest achievement
Continuation and development of the tinsmith workshop after the death of her husband

125 YEARS




Ernst Müller-Schärer

Roles at Müller Packaging
Managing Director, MOB

Time at Müller	1901 – 1944
Years at the company	44
Years on the Board	10

Greatest achievements
Pioneer in packaging, foundation of the packaging company, introduction of serial production

125 YEARS




Karl Müller-Lauber

Roles at Müller Packaging
Comm. Manager, Managing Director, MOB

Time at Müller	1922 – 1950
Years at the company	29
Years on the Board	16

Greatest achievements
Introduction of social welfare systems, take-over of all functions after the death of Ernst Müller-Schärer

125 YEARS



Paul Hof

Roles at Müller Packaging
Comm. Manager, Managing Director

Time at Müller	1931 – 1976
Years at the company	46
Years on the Board	0

Greatest achievement
Filling the management vacuum between the second and third Müller generations

125 YEARS



Ernst "Ruedi" Müller-Peter

Roles at Müller Packaging
Manufacturer (Technical Manager), MOB

Time at Müller	1945 – 1996
Years at the company	41
Years on the Board	47

Greatest achievements
New developments in the drum sector, driving force for technological progress, process optimizer

Eleven key figures



Müller has always highly valued its employees. Because it is the people in the factory and in the administration who define the Müller brand with their commitment and their quality work.

125 YEARS



Hans Ulrich Müller-Senn

Roles at Müller Packaging
Manufacturer (Comm. Manager), MOB

Time at Müller 1950 – 1997

Years at the company 43

Years on the Board 43

Greatest achievements
Development of customer service, creating more diversified base for turnover

125 YEARS



Marco Fischer

Roles at Müller Packaging
CEO, MOB

Time at Müller 1976 – 2006

Years at the company 31

Years on the Board 18

Greatest achievements
Strengthening of the international business, technical development of the existing sites

125 YEARS



Hans Herrmann

Role at Müller Packaging
CFO

Time at Müller 1973 – 1999

Years at the company 27

Years on the Board 0

Greatest achievement
Setting up the modern accounting and IT systems

125 YEARS



Peter Müller-Schärer

Roles at Müller Packaging
CEO, CFO, MOB

Time at Müller 1982 – today

Years at the company 40

Years on the Board 26 (still active)

Greatest achievements
Establishment of modern management systems, introduction of liberal management structures

125 YEARS



Walter Müller-Freyberger

Role at Müller Packaging
Chairman of the Board

Time at Müller 1996 – today

Years at the company 0

Years on the Board 27 (still active)

Greatest achievements
Strategic reorientation of the Müller Group for the future, integration of the fifth Müller generation

125 YEARS



Christian Reinau

Roles at Müller Packaging
CEO, CFO, MOB

Time at Müller 2000 – today

Years at the company 23

Years on the Board in his 1st year

Greatest achievement
Setting up the MüllerUnifab joint venture in India



Along with the Müller family members actively involved in the management of the group, the whole Müller family stands behind the family business. This commitment, the joint management and the uniform funding are hallmarks of the whole Müller Group, which besides Müller Packaging also includes Müller Plastics, Müller DrumTec and Müller Processing

- 1st Müller generation
- 2nd Müller generation
- 3rd Müller generation
- 4th Müller generation
- Non-family

A Reliable Partner From the Start

Müller Packaging has taken consistent advantage of its proximity to the Basel chemical and pharmaceutical industry from the very beginning.

By Natalia Chtanova, freelance copywriter based in Basel. She writes regularly for trade associations and universities on life science topics.

The Basel region is not known for its wealth of natural resources. Nonetheless, it has been producing innovations for centuries. There are many reasons for the successful development of industry in Basel.

The proximity to the Rhine – one of the busiest waterways in the world – is an advantage for production and transport. And its location at the heart of Europe, with the city bordering both Germany and France, promotes a fertile environment and sound conditions for companies and professionals. Because innovation needs creative minds, highly trained professionals and committed employees.

Along with harmonious labor relations, these were crucial success criteria for the emergence of the special products branch in the Basel region, with a high rate of exports. The growth of Müller Packaging is closely intertwined with the history of the chemical and pharmaceutical industry and the opportunities it created.

“The growth of Müller Packaging is closely intertwined with the history of the chemical and pharmaceutical industry”

Favorable location in the tri-border region

In the 16th century, Protestant religious refugees settled in Basel and founded the region’s textile industry. Spinning mills, dyeing works and weaving mills sprang up. Thanks to their trade relations, the economy boomed. The location in the tri-border region has offered Basel companies locational advantages since the early 19th century. Its lo-

cation allowed companies to take advantage of more favorable production conditions across the nearby borders. Moreover, they were able to avoid high import duties from France and Germany. The geographic location also offered transport advantages: the first steamboat berthed here in 1832, while 1844 saw the first Swiss train on the Saint-Louis–Basel line. Just nine years later, daily trains connected Basel with Paris and Frankfurt.

Until 1871, guild barriers were still in force for most trades. Only industry was free of these restrictions. The connection of ribbon looms to a water wheel in 1832 and the first steam engine in a weaving mill in 1837 were decisive steps towards industrial production in factories.

Clavel takes the first step

The chemical industry began with the tar dye production of Alexandre Clavel. This Frenchman took over a silk dye factory in Basel and in 1859 he became the first and most significant manufacturer of tar dyes in Switzerland. In 1884, this company gave rise to the Gesellschaft für Chemische Industrie in Basel, or Ciba. New foundations, divisions and mergers in the following decades led to companies with a variety of names, before a process of consolidation brought about a corporate landscape dominated by the global corporations Ciba, Sandoz and Roche.

As a business location, Basel benefited from the patent rights of its neighbor. In the second half of the 19th century, a patent right for chemicals applied in France that protected the product and the producing company rather than the chemical manufacturing process or the inventor. To avoid this, many French inventors emigrated to Basel. Until the Chemicals Patent Law of 1907, it was possible to produce products here that were patented abroad.

First pharmaceutical preparations

In the first decades of its existence, the Basel chemical in-



Ciba AG, Gesellschaft für Chemische Industrie Basel, around 1918 (image: Walter Mittelholzer, ETH Zürich Photographic Archive, Public Domain Mark)

dustry was almost exclusively based on dye production. In the 1880s, Basel companies increasingly turned to producing high-quality dyes, which called for a higher standard of research, well-trained specialists and ever more complex production facilities. The Basel dye factories also began producing pharmaceutical preparations – an inconspicuous launch for an innovation with a great future.

“Ernst Müller recognized the signs of the times. In the 1910s, he discovered a true market niche with the serial production of tin containers for the rapidly expanding Basel chemical industry.”

All of this goes back to experiments for using dyes on fabric samples. Physicians noticed that the dyes not only changed the color, but also killed bacteria. Antipyrin – a therapeutic drug for reducing fever – was patented in 1883. It was produced by Ciba and imitated by Sandoz from 1884. The production of pharmaceutical preparations in Basel was under way.

Companies that focus on research and development need reliable partners to thrive and grow. This includes special-

ized suppliers, consulting and production companies, and companies focused on sales. It also takes machine builders, equipment manufacturers, toolmakers, suppliers of raw materials, production means and auxiliary materials, industrial packaging suppliers such as Müller Packaging, logistics companies and energy suppliers. Ernst Müller recognized the signs of the times. In the 1910s, he discovered a true market niche with the serial production of tin containers for the rapidly expanding Basel chemical industry.

The Basel chemical industry experienced a significant boost during the First World War, when German competitors were out of the picture. However, the interwar years brought serious economic crises. Overall, the Basel chemical industry held up better than other export-oriented branches. It moved into new sectors such as textile auxiliaries, plastics and agrochemistry. Nevertheless, Basel was not immune to the global economic crisis.

Leading position in the post-war period

While the Second World War brought further setbacks to European competitors, the domestic chemical industry made early preparations for the post-war period in which it assumed a leading position. The upturn in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry resulted from the rapid emergence of new methods for determining the structure of molecules. Fundamental chemical and physical research fostered the development of research into modern natural products, active ingredients and plastics.

The huge backlog after the Second World War meant that all available forces were integrated into the processes. In

1945, 1.5 million Swiss francs were paid out in daily allowances to the unemployed; one year later, this amount was reduced by two-thirds. After the Second World War, Basel also became an important hub for European transport. There was a rapid increase in freight transportation through Basel railway stations and on the Rhine. The initial infrastructure for the binational airport Basel-Mulhouse was built within two months and inaugurated on May 8, 1946.



Chemical production in 1939 at Sandoz AG, Basel
(ETH Zürich Photographic Archive, Public Domain Mark)

In the face of increasing specialization in biochemical research, international competition, regulatory requirements and development costs for drugs, companies consolidated strengths by concentrating on a narrower range of therapeutic indication areas. This led to company mergers, divestments and takeovers. The most prominent of these activities was the 1970 merger of Ciba and Geigy and the formation of Novartis when Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy merged in 1996. Many other multinational corporations such as Syngenta and Clariant have their roots in the Basel chemical industry.

Challenge and dissent

Relations between industry and the city were not always harmonious. An ambivalence emerged, with affirmation and attachment to industry on the one hand, and dissent



Müller Packaging has grown on orders from the chemical and pharmaceutical industry. Today, Müller Packaging supplies a huge range of sectors, as the infographic in the middle of this brochure shows.

on the other. One dramatic event stands out: the fire in the chemicals store in the Schweizerhalle industrial area on November 1, 1986, which had disastrous environmental consequences. The Basel population experienced a night of fear, abruptly awoken by the howl of sirens. The incident eradicated all life in the Rhine for a stretch of several hundred kilometers. This chemical accident was the impetus for the Major Accidents Ordinance. This ordinance helped to significantly reduce risks associated with the handling and transportation of hazardous substances.

Today's growth driver: life sciences

Despite major changes, Basel never stopped developing as a business location. Today, the region is one of the largest life sciences hubs worldwide. The industrial transformation of recent decades has been essential for this positive development.

Where the key growth driver for the SME economy in the region was once the chemical industry, today it is primarily life sciences. Almost 70 percent of the gross added value in Swiss life sciences is generated in the Basel region. Other economic sectors also benefit directly and indirectly from this key industry. So along with research companies, local service providers and suppliers – such as Müller Packaging – also contribute significantly to the economic success of the region.

“Along with research companies, local service providers and suppliers – such as Müller Packaging – also contribute significantly to the economic success of the region.”



**At Müller Packaging,
automation has replaced most
manual production.**

Never Say never – that Includes the “Green Müller Drum”

Patrick Müller (38) has been Chairman of the Board of Directors of Müller AG Verpackungen, Müller AG Plastics and Müller DrumTec GmbH since January 1, 2022. In this interview, he tells us what drives him and explains his short, medium and long-term goals for the Müller Group.



Patrick Müller is one of the three sons of former CEO Peter Müller and Marie-Therese Müller-Schärer.



Patrick Müller in the factory in Münchenstein

Patrick Müller, you are part of the fifth Müller generation. How and when were you introduced to the Müller business?

As far back as I can remember, the Müller Group has always been a topic of discussion at home. We understood early on that the involvement of our generation was desired and possible, but we were never forced, and that's

something I greatly appreciate. I had my first experience of Müller while I was still at school, when I supplemented my pocket money working on the production of what was known at the time as the “Leichtfass”. After I completed my studies I also worked for Christian Reinau in the administration department for a few months in 2009. I was appointed to the Board of Directors in 2017.

What is important to you in life?

The most important things in my life are my family and my children, and making sure that they are all okay. When I'm with my wife and my children, I can switch off and recharge my batteries.

What values do you believe in?

Pragmatism and foresight are important values to me. I want to embody these values and I expect the whole Müller management team to uphold them.

As the Chairman of the Board of Directors, you are in contact with top-level management. How do you build relationships with your employees?

I regularly meet employees during short coffee breaks or on my way to the canteen, and I have quick chats with them. In general, I sense that we have a good working atmosphere and that people are satisfied.

Many people are talking about Industry 4.0. Is there still room for improvement in Müller Packaging's digitalization efforts?

By definition, Industry 4.0 requires a complete networking of the whole supply chain. This means that every machine in the production process is connected via the internet and can make individual decisions. We are without doubt

Handover from the fourth to the fifth generation

a long way from this. For a company of our size, it is more important to take advantage of elements of this “revolution”. Complete implementation would exceed our resources and it also wouldn’t make sense.

The first overseas project, a joint venture with an Indian partner, has just got under way. Could you tell us why Müller Packaging wants a presence in India?

The partnership started some years ago. The Indian company Transpek Silox, led by the Saraiya family, placed an order with us and were impressed by our product. It was the Saraiya family that took the first step and came to us with the idea of a joint venture. We recognized that this was a great opportunity to create something new with a local family. And it was the right moment, as some of our customers had already established footholds and set up production sites in India. We can now serve these customers locally with the usual Müller quality – with drums produced directly in India. We were also persuaded by the economic growth potential of India, and we want to be part of it.

“For years now, every Müller company has been taking concrete measures for work safety, energy efficiency and environmental protection.”

Can you imagine further international projects?

I would say “Never say never”. Our current concern is to get the joint venture in India up and running. Only then, if at all, we will look at further international projects, provided they make sense. The basic orientation for all four of our Müller companies is to give top priority to our sites in Switzerland and in neighboring Rheinfelden. The conditions here are ideal for us. We can uphold the quality of our products and plants, and we can supply the whole world from the center of Europe.

Society is increasingly calling for sustainable practices. We have seen that internally, Müller Packaging works sustainably, with measures like joining a voluntary energy efficiency program.

That’s correct. For years now, every Müller company has been taking concrete measures for work safety, energy efficiency and environmental protection. Essentially, we are



The four young Müllers of the fifth generation from left: Jonas, Ueli C., Daniel and Patrick

already very well positioned. The Board of Directors has set itself a goal for this year of developing a group-wide strategy. Our aim is to focus even more closely on this topic and to make even more of an impact in the area of sustainability. It is a matter of great importance to the Müller family, to the Board of Directors and to me personally that we optimize further in this area. My vision is a “green Müller drum” with a completely CO₂-free production process.



Patrick Müller is aware that achieving CO₂ neutrality is not easy for an industrial company. But this does not prevent him from pursuing this vision.

How will Müller Packaging be positioned in 30 years, when you introduce the sixth Müller generation to the company?

Hopefully it will be as successful as it is today. Ensuring this is the case for the coming generation is our motivation. To do so, it is important, today and in the future, to keep pace with the times, to recognize customer requirements early on and not to delay decisions unnecessarily. Besides our commitment to the Müller Group, I naturally also hope that the sixth generation will actually develop an interest in the company. That’s not a given.

How would you like people to talk about your involvement with Müller Packaging in the future? What legacy would you like to pass on to the sixth Müller generation?

For years, we have been striving to position the Müller

Handover from the fourth to the fifth generation

Group on foundations of equal stature, and to secure it financially in the long term. So we created the Packaging, Systems and Processing divisions. This is something I would like to achieve during my time here. Another concern is completely environmentally sustainable production. Unfortunately, this is not 100% possible yet with today's production methods. Implementing this during my time is a great motivation – but I am also well aware that it is a very ambitious goal.

That was a glimpse of the distant future. You've just taken up your duties. What are the current strategic topics on your agenda?

The Board of Directors is currently considering the issue



Patrick Müller recharges his batteries with his family. His wife and his children of the sixth Müller generation mean everything to him.

of process optimization (introduction of lean production in Rheinfelden). We also want to install additional photovoltaic installations on the buildings in Münchenstein and Reiden. The challenges and opportunities of digitalization are also on our agenda. And of course there are the activities for our 2022 jubilee. We are pleased to see how Managing Director Roland Tanner and his team are driving forward the jubilee year celebrations.

Can you see yourself taking up an operational position in the Müller Group in the future?

As I said before, never say never. At present, all the companies have the personnel they need, with the right people in the right place. So I'm not faced with this question for the moment. If circumstances change in the future, I can very well imagine such an involvement.

In 2022, Müller Packaging celebrates its 125th anniversary. Clearly, the Müller generations one to four have got a lot of things right. Do you feel pressure in this respect?

There is a certain pressure. But it's very much outweighed by the anticipation of new challenges and my own ambition. And remember, every previous generation felt this pressure, and they all handled it very well. I am sure that we, the young Müllers, will also shape the next 30 years successfully.

And a last question. What are Müller family get-togethers like? Do you ban business discussions entirely, or is there always a little shop talk?

Our family get-togethers are always very convivial. We try to keep business discussions to a minimum. But it may also happen that we re-visit a business decision over a good glass of wine. But we have never overturned a decision that way (laugh).

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