

Press release

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Successful half-yearly figures in centenary year: Wilkhahn undergoing dramatic worldwide expansion



In the summer of 2007, Wilkhahn, the leading international office and contract furniture manufacturer, is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The dynamic growth of the past year has also been continued in the first six months of the company's centenary year: Worldwide turnover is up 22.6 percent on the same period of the previous year. Turnover for the first six months of this year has already reached EUR 42.5 million. The company is also recording an increase in orders of around 37.7 percent. A development which also benefits the workforce – every full-time employee who has been with the company for a few years will receive an additional EUR 1,300 in July.

Bad Mnder. Particularly dynamic has been the growth in turnover in the up-and-coming Asian markets served by Wilkhahn Asia-Pacific (founded in 1999). This led to the opening of a new showroom in Shanghai at the end of May, followed by Singapore in July. Including the booming Australian market, Wilkhahn has recorded a growth in turnover here of 65.6 percent in the first six months of the year. Established last year, the subsidiary company Wilkhahn Middle East, with offices and showroom in Dubai, has also recorded disproportionate success (new orders +106.7 percent).

But it is not just in these growth areas that Wilkhahn has expanded considerably. Even the traditional, quality-conscious European markets as well as the remaining export and licensed business organised from its headquarters have recorded large growth. Especially satisfactory – Wilkhahn's home market in Germany which has been rather restrained in recent years has been revitalised by the success of the international subsidiaries, with an increase in orders amounting to 23.9 percent.

High-quality furniture a factor in success

Holger Jahnke, Managing Director and partner in



Shanghai – a booming economy and a huge growth market for Wilkhahn: approx. 40 percent of all construction projects worldwide are taking place in the Chinese metropolis

Wilkhahn, analyses this positive trend in the high quality and valuable Wilkhahn furniture: “After ‘Cheap is good’, many companies are once again concentrating on sustainable investment and the value of their business. This includes intelligent investment in furniture in order to package themselves as productive and quality-conscious partners for customers and employees.” Another reason, Jahnke believes, are the new challenges of the labour market: “The quality and reputation of the working environment will be of crucial added value when differentiating between competitors and also when retaining highly qualified employees.”

New workplaces and growth for employees too



Presentation of the new, multi award-winning Aline range (Design: Andreas Störko at ‘Indesign’ event in Brisbane, Australia)

In order to manage the dynamic growth, Wilkhahn has further supplemented its workforce: Since 2004, the number of employees worldwide has increased from 490 to the current figure of 551. Additional jobs are being advertised. Since 1 May, a working week of 38 hours with full wage adjustment has applied. In addition to benefits above the agreed pay scale such as a company pension and social allowances, employees will each receive EUR 1,300 in July from a collective payment and a profit participation certificate. This had been negotiated by the Works Council and trade union during the previous industry crisis as a pledge for better times and it is now being redeemed.

Previous investments now paying off

Dr Jochen Hahne, chairman of the board and majority shareholder, emphasises the balanced advance over previous years as a crucial factor in today's success: “We faced the difficult market situation by strengthening our investment in markets and product development. At the same time, we have adjusted costs by means of collective waivers. This has enabled us to meet our social responsibilities while retaining the important skills of the employees in the company as far as possible. As a result, we have been able to master the current stormy waters with our experienced team.” The necessary future flexibility was also accommodated. The company pension has been developed with earnings-linked factors, the working hours regulations have been made more flexible and an organisation has been established which offers employees largely individual responsibility and freedom. Wilkhahn has thereby developed a modern social orientation which accommodates the dynamics of a globalised market.

Global centenary celebrations

The centenary and the global success of the company are being extensively celebrated, beginning with a party

Wilkhahn



Famous symbol for employees and social orientation at Wilkhahn: The production pavilion designed by architect Frei Otto

on 20 July 2007 at Wilkhahn's headquarters in Bad Münden. All staff and former employees with their families as well as important business partners have been invited to this celebration. The good mood at Wilkhahn is reflected in the number of RSVPs received – already more than 1,200 guests have confirmed their acceptance. In the months following this event, many friends and partners of the company will attend celebrations at the international sales and production companies: from Antwerp, Berne, Brisbane, Dubai, Hong Kong and London via Madrid, Melbourne, Paris, Rotterdam, Shanghai and Singapore to Sydney, Tokyo, Vienna, Warsaw and Zurich.

About Wilkhahn

Founded in 1907 as a chair manufacturer in the Lower Saxony 'chair' village of Eimbeckhausen near Bad Münden, Wilkhahn has become a leading international brand for design-oriented, high-quality conference and office furniture. Based on the principles of Bauhaus and the Ulm School of Design, the typical Wilkhahn design has continually and consistently developed over decades. Wilkhahn has always set standards and industry-wide trends with its innovative, ageless and multi international award-winning products. The company now has its own showrooms and licensed dealers in major cities on all continents. In addition to its headquarters in Bad Münden, Wilkhahn also has additional production sites in Spain (Castellón) and Australia (Sydney, Alexandria).

Additional information and photos:

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