

PRESS INFORMATION

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SPORT 2000 International

Digital General Assembly: The human touch proves a key factor for success

This year, due to COVID 19, the SPORT 2000 International General Assembly was held virtually for the first time ever. SPORT 2000 can look back on a successful 2019 business year and achieved gross retail sales of EUR 4.94 billion. The focus remains set on intensive cross-border collaboration. Dr Holger Schwarting was once again confirmed as Chairman of the Advisory Board.

COVID-19 has shaped not only the last few weeks, but also the SPORT 2000 International General Assembly. On 20 March SPORT 2000 took a first virtual look back at its successful 2019 business year, a year that saw SPORT 2000 International, with its 3,950 sites across 23 countries, generate EUR 4.94 billion in gross retail sales. This constitutes year-on-year sales growth of almost eight percent. SPORT 2000 currently sees that the international sports sector is facing significant challenges, but also that it is harbouring numerous opportunities. The crisis strengthens and accelerates existing trends and projects. For example, SPORT 2000 has in the last few months succeeded in advancing its digitalisation on multiple levels, also implementing online shops in Germany and Austria more quickly than planned. While the company's current focus is on overcoming the crisis, its clear focus for the future continues to be on strengthening cross-national strategic cooperation with a view to supporting all SPORT 2000 retailers. *"According to a recent study, around 80 percent of Europeans have a pessimistic outlook on the economy. The market needs a positive signal now. Most people see exercise and health as closely interconnected. This is a clear opportunity for the sports sector. All the good work we've put in over the last few years stands us in good stead, particularly in the current situation,"* explained Margit Gosau, managing director of SPORT

2000 International and SPORT 2000 GmbH in relation to the study recently conducted by McKinsey¹, adding that *“We are confident that, with our mindset, which focuses on collaborative and cordial partnerships with dealers and other partners, we will prevail in these challenging times.”* The reopening of the stores after the lock-down was extremely positive for the sports sector in some countries. The further development of SPORT 2000 is, however, clearly dependent on the purchasing behaviour of the people in Europe. Gosau summed it up by saying, *“Consumer behaviour is under strain throughout Europe. Around one-third of people in Europe anticipate having less money to live on, which in turn heavily impacts trade. Not every country is the same in this respect, which means that each country group has a different set of challenges to face. Our clear priority – here, at this international level – is therefore on finding country-specific solutions so as to provide the best possible support.”*

The human touch – partnership and solidarity help in these times of crisis

The crisis has hit the entire sector unexpectedly hard. The SPORT 2000 approach is much the same as that adopted several years ago, that is, of ensuring collaborative relations with dealers, suppliers and partners, both on a national and an international level. *“As an association, we bring together brand partners, suppliers and dealers. Together with the task force set up at the beginning of the crisis, we developed an action plan that took the interests of all partners into account. This is now helping us prevail in the crisis,”* states Gosau, adding, *“We have received positive feedback from all sides. I’m very pleased to hear how important everyone considers the idea of alliance. This is what we at SPORT 2000 believe in, what we base our business on.”*

Brick-and-mortar retail – people and experience

Among the organisation's central tasks – alongside those of brand strategy, strategic partnerships, brand positioning and development, international licensing, and the expansion and further development of own brands – is the promotion of international

¹ McKinsey & Company (2020): Covid-19 response in Apparel & Fashion. Consumer Insights Injection. Edition IV, April 6th.

concepts. The current market situation serves to confirm SPORT 2000's approach of further developing retail formats for specialists and generalists with a view to providing customers a new shopping experience with added value. *"Challenging times like these often make the need for a new type of experience apparent. Around 23 percent of the people in Europe state that they will in future buy more in brick-and-mortar stores to support regional distributors. These customers need to be offered an added-value shopping experience that the digital world cannot offer. Customers tend to spend more time weighing up investments in things like a new bike or a pair of running shoes. Expert, individualised advisory services with a human touch are therefore gaining in importance,"* explains Gosau. Over the course of the last year, five stores opened under the ABSOLUTE brand name in Germany and Austria. These highly specialised running and team-sport stores offer customers individualised advisory services and exclusive access to products of all top brands. Further ABSOLUTE store openings are planned to take place this year in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Arab Emirates. The first generalist stores based on the new international concept are expected to open in 2021 in Germany and France.

Advisory Board confirmed

For the eighth year in a row, Dr Holger Schwarting, member of the Management Board of SPORT 2000 Austria, was confirmed as chairman of the Advisory Board. *"I am honoured that the Advisory Board has placed its trust in me. We have difficult times ahead and a diverse range of tasks to tackle. However, over the past few years we have succeeded in developing a sound foundation, which is now serving to bolster us,"* explained Dr Schwarting with optimism. As of the close of the General Assembly, the Advisory Board is made up of the following persons: Chair Dr Holger Schwarting, Austria; Deputy Chair Matthias Grevener, Germany; Marius Rovers, the Netherlands; Jean-Louis Parent, France; and Hans-Hermann Deters, Germany.

SPORT 2000 International

SPORT 2000 International is Europe's second largest trade organisation for independent sports retailers and has 3,950 stores in 23 countries. The sports trading company generated sales totalling EUR 4.9 billion in 2019.



Image 1:

Image caption: Margit Gosau, CEO of SPORT 2000 International and SPORT 2000 GmbH, builds on partnership-based dealings with industrial partners and the SPORT 2000 dealers.



Image 2:

Image caption: The strong team remains. From left to right: Deputy Chairman Matthias Grevener, CEO Margit Gosau and Chairman of the Supervisory Board Dr. Holger Schwarting. (Picture taken last year)

Image reference: SPORT 2000 International (print is free of charge if photographer named)



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