

DENKFABRIK

NEW IDEAS FOR TOMORROW'S TRANSPORT

THINK LONG-TERM.

ACT SUCCESSFULLY.

Facing the future with strong partners

+ STRONGER TOGETHER

Partnerships for competitive strength
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+ A POWERFUL ALLIANCE

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Travelling with the Carstensen brothers in Flensburg
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ARE YOU A LONE FIGHTER OR A TEAM-PLAYER?

Does the power of community have an impact on our life expectancy? It's not just a healthy lifestyle involving plenty of exercise, a balanced diet and not smoking that plays a role. According to a meta-study by Australian scientists, "support from others" and "being involved in communities" are the two most important factors.

We all know the value of social relationships and functioning partnerships, but group activities in our leisure time or at work are also important for our health and influence our life expectancy. It seems that we still carry this evolutionary heritage within us because, even for our ancestors, community was essential for survival.

Dear readers,

The complex challenges currently facing all players in the transport and logistics sector cannot be overcome alone. Only those prepared to collaborate with others, develop new ideas and share resources such as knowledge and data will survive in the future.

This is why, at Krone, we consistently focus on long-term partnerships — with our customers, suppliers, and other companies. In this edition of DENKFABRIK, we reveal the breadth of Krone's European network and introduce you to our partners. We also introduce some of our longer-standing customers. Read on to learn about the advantages of reliable cooperation and how to achieve it on an equal footing. Success factors include trust, openness and reliability. One example of this is our partnership with Schwarzmüller: together with the Austrian manufacturer, we are expanding our expertise and portfolio. In an interview in this issue, Beate Paletar and Bernard Krone explain how this cooperation is organised and what it means for you as a customer.

Partnership is an attitude, and we are proud to walk this path with you. We would like to emphasise that we are always approachable. Please tell us how we can support you and let us know your suggestions and wishes.

I hope you find this read to be both enjoyable and inspiring!

Yours,



Dr. Frank Albers



Dr. Frank Albers,
Managing Director
Sales & Marketing

TITLE: ADOBESTOCK/VICTORIA PHOTOS: ISTOCK/SJO KRONE

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mykrone.blue is a smart platform that combines damage management, CO₂ transparency, and control over the entire trailer lifecycle, in one digital ecosystem.



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The chassis forms the basis of the trailer, with galvanised components and a high-quality cathodic dip paint-coating, ensuring stability during continuous heavy use.

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LEGAL NOTICE

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Blue Notes

News from the world of Krone



Award for the Krone Smart Assistant

The Krone Smart Assistant received a prestigious award at the **Verkehrsrundschau gala in the Allianz Arena**. This digital tool replaces paper documents with mobile solutions, such as trailer checks and damage reports, via a QR code on the trailer itself. Dr Frank Albers, Krone's Managing Director of Sales and Marketing, accepted the award: "This award confirms that we are on the right track with our development of digital services that make our customers' everyday lives much easier. The Krone Smart Assistant is a prime example of how we translate complex technical information into intuitive solutions." This accolade further cements Krone's position as a leader in the development of digital logistics solutions. [↪](#)



German bridges are more dilapidated than previously thought

Around 16,000 bridges in Germany are likely to be in a state of disrepair – four times the number previously assumed. The **investment** required for replacements could total up to **100 billion euros**. This is according to a new survey by the organisation Transport & Environment, which warns that delaying renovations would make the structures more susceptible to wear and tear, resulting in even higher costs in the medium term. The city states and North Rhine-Westphalia are particularly affected. The organisation criticises the Ministry of Transport's 2022 bridge modernisation programme as being too short-sighted. [↪](#)



Digital vehicle licence being tested

The Federal Ministry of Transport is trialling the digital vehicle registration document. Around 2,500 citizens are currently testing the **'i-Kfz' app** to see how the document could be used on smartphones in future. The digital version means that the paper document no longer needs to be carried. Several licences can be stored in the app at the same time and shared with any number of drivers. Developed jointly by the Federal Motor Transport Authority and Bundesdruckerei, it is expected to be available nationwide in the second half of 2025. [↪](#)

Cyber risks outweigh geopolitical threats

A new PwC study, **"Digital Trust Insights 2025"**, reveals that: Cyber risks are now a top priority for German companies, even surpassing geopolitical and economic challenges. Generative AI, networked systems and unclear technological dependencies are particularly concerning. Although awareness of security vulnerabilities is growing, many companies have not yet developed sufficient cyber resilience. PwC is therefore calling for closer cooperation between security and management to strengthen trust and resilience, as well as targeted investment in cyber security resilience, data protection and leadership skills. [↪](#)



Krone and Webfleet present a joint telematics solution

Krone and Webfleet are now offering a seamlessly integrated trailer telematics solution. Krone trailers can be connected directly to the Webfleet platform via the **OEM.connect programme**, eliminating the need for retrofit hardware. Hauliers can access comprehensive data, such as tyre pressure, tour history and payload, with just one click. This increases capacity utilisation, reduces downtime and improves safety. The solution is available throughout Europe and brings together trailer and lorry data on one platform. According to Maximilian Birle, Head of Krone Telematics & Digital Services, it provides hauliers with advanced data and insights at the touch of a button, eliminating the costs associated with business interruptions and installation. [↪](#)



PHOTOS: KRONE, A DOBESTOCK/FRANK WAGNER, A DOBESTOCK/PRODUCTION PERIG, A DOBESTOCK/PHOTOSTOCKATINAT, A DOBESTOCK/KARYNA

Connections with added value

Strong partnerships can offer many advantages in the transport and logistics sector. When new ideas are developed with openness, trust and fairness, the resulting cooperation is sustainable and cost-effective.

Courage

Partnerships

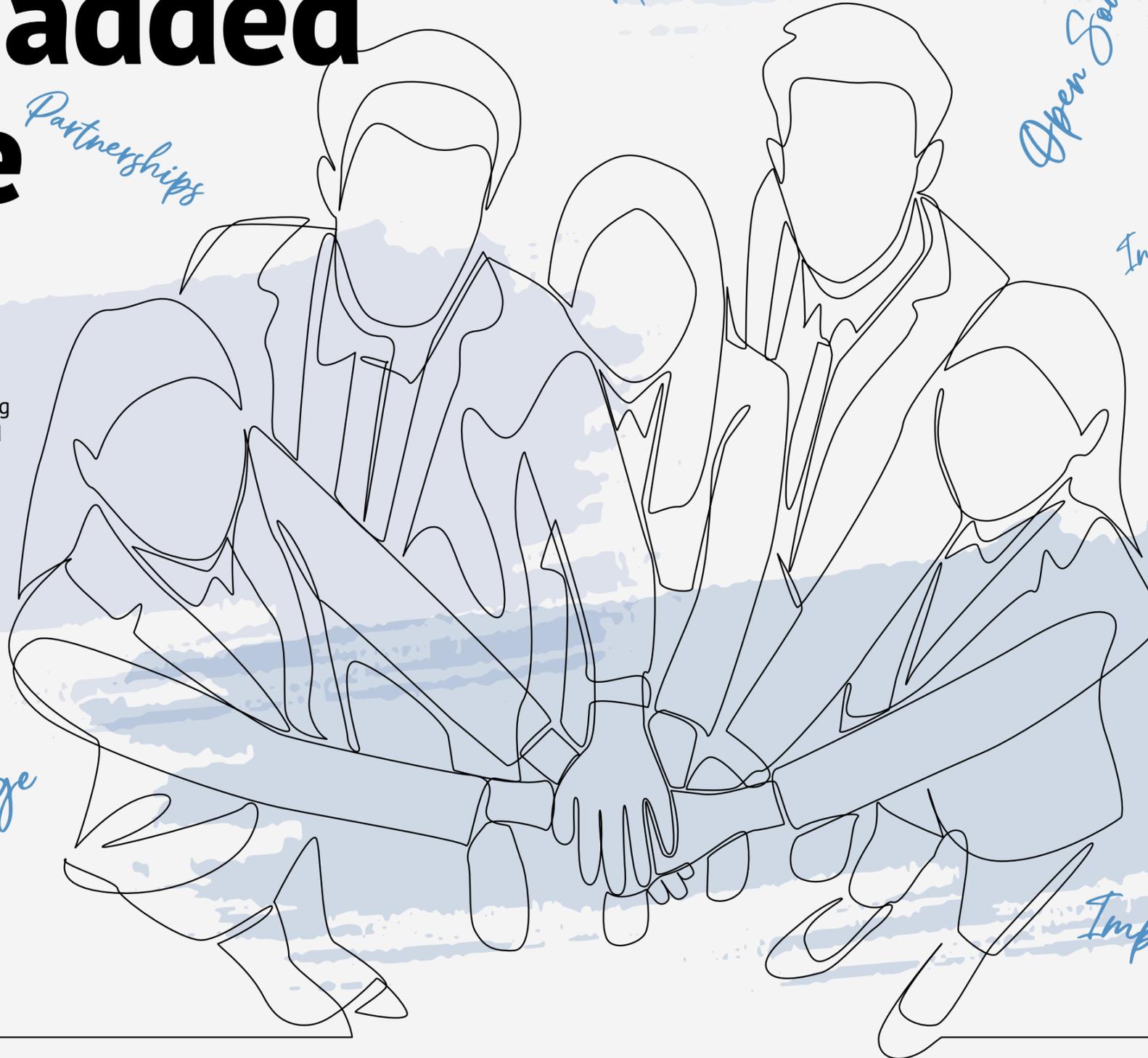
Innovations

Competitive advantages

Open Source

Innovations

Impulses



The list of challenges facing companies in transport and logistics in 2025 is long: cost pressure, technological upheaval, sustainability requirements and a shortage of skilled labour. To survive under these conditions, you need more than just good products and stable processes. Today, partnerships are an important means of gaining strength, innovation and competitive advantage: people and organisations that work together can support each other, provide impetus and achieve greater success than if they act alone.

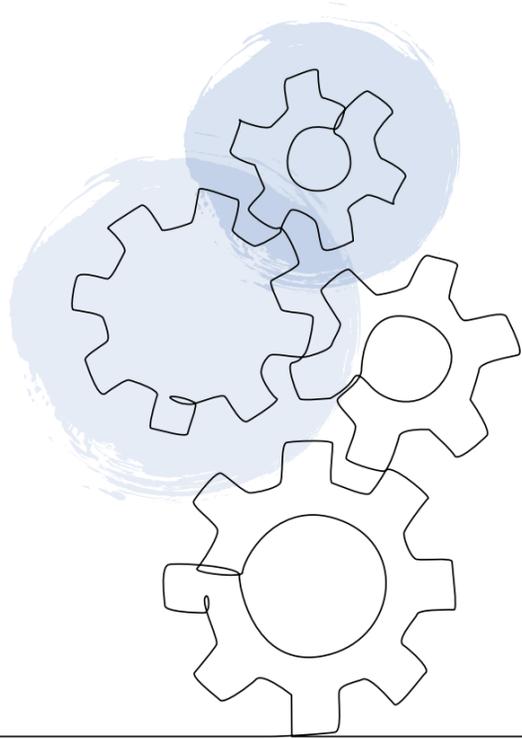
“More perspectives lead to more ideas”, says Christian Prasse, Manager of the Digital Hub Logistics in Dortmund and Senior Innovation Coach. “When I work on an innovation with others, I share the development effort and risk while increasing quality.” He sees cooperation as a key strategy for remaining competitive in Europe in particular. “Hardly any company here has the market power and resources to drive developments forward alone. I therefore assume that it will become even more important in future to join forces with strong partners. When many bright minds work on a topic, you often achieve excellent results.”

Finding the courage to open up

At the Digital Hub Logistics in Dortmund, start-ups meet established companies, business promoters meet scientists and technology experts meet businesspeople from the logistics sector. Through formats such as co-working spaces →

“More perspectives lead to more ideas.”

**CHRISTIAN PRASSE,
MANAGER OF THE
DIGITAL HUB LOGISTICS
IN DORTMUND**



and matchmaking events, companies can get involved with minimal effort, network with start-ups, initiate projects and trial new technologies. “You don’t have to change everything straight away,” says Prasse. “But you should have the courage to open up.” This is an opportunity for SMEs in particular. “Even if I don’t have an immediate need, if I make myself visible, I can demonstrate my willingness to cooperate. That can open doors — for research partnerships, innovation projects, or simply new ideas.”

“We need someone who understands us,” says Martin Möller of Möller’s Rhöntransporte. “Someone who knows our challenges and can think alongside us.” The logistics company is now in its fourth generation of family ownership and is run by brothers Markus and Martin

+ CHRISTIAN PRASSE

Christian Prasse is the manager of Digital Hub Logistics in Dortmund and a senior innovation coach. A logistics graduate, he joined the Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics in Dortmund 25 years ago, taking charge of its strategic development ten years ago.



+ MARTIN AND MARKUS MÖLLER



Martin und Markus Möller have been managing directors of Möller’s Rhöntransporte since 2009. Following their father Gerhard’s retirement in 2024, the brothers have been running the company alone.

Möller. They have been buying trailers from Krone for around 30 years and regard the company as a key partner. “We need quality, absolute reliability and simply good advice regarding our vehicles”, Martin Möller explains. He particularly likes the fact that Krone trailers are manufactured in Germany, are reliable and have a long service life. “We renew our fleet every six to eight years at the latest. However, we recently replaced a Krone swap body that had been in regular use for around 20 years — it wasn’t used much, but that demonstrates the strength of the products.”

Cooperation at eye level

Founded in 1930, Möller’s Rhöntransporte has evolved into a modern logistics company specialising in general cargo and freight transport in Germany, particularly in southern Thuringia, and boasts 6,000 square metres of warehouse space. “We transport everything from carpets to forklift trucks, and we aim to provide our customers with high-quality services at fair prices,” says Markus Möller, describing the company’s philosophy. The fleet consists exclusively of Krone vehicles. “We made a conscious decision to keep everything standardised because this offers advantages in the workshop, for example”, says Markus Möller. The first trailer that the company bought in 1994 was fitted with a Krone pallet stop bar: “That was a special design for us because our customer loaded from the side — now it’s standard.” The brothers also value the ongoing dialogue they have with Krone, which has helped to build a trusting relationship. “It’s a really big company, but when we visit, they know who we are. Whether you have 30 or 300 vehicles, you count as a customer at Krone. We speak as equals — and we never feel like just a number in the system.”

For Georg Sasse, Krone Holding’s Head of Purchasing, partnership means openness and honesty, and a willingness to improve together. The company fosters this approach with both its customers and its own suppliers. “Our strong supplier structure has enabled us to perform well in a competitive environment in recent years,” says Sasse. Even in challenging procurement situations, this structure has consistently enabled Krone to fulfil its delivery commitments.

“We need quality, absolute reliability and simply good advice regarding our vehicles.”

MARTIN MÖLLER, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF MÖLLER’S RHÖNTRANSPORTE

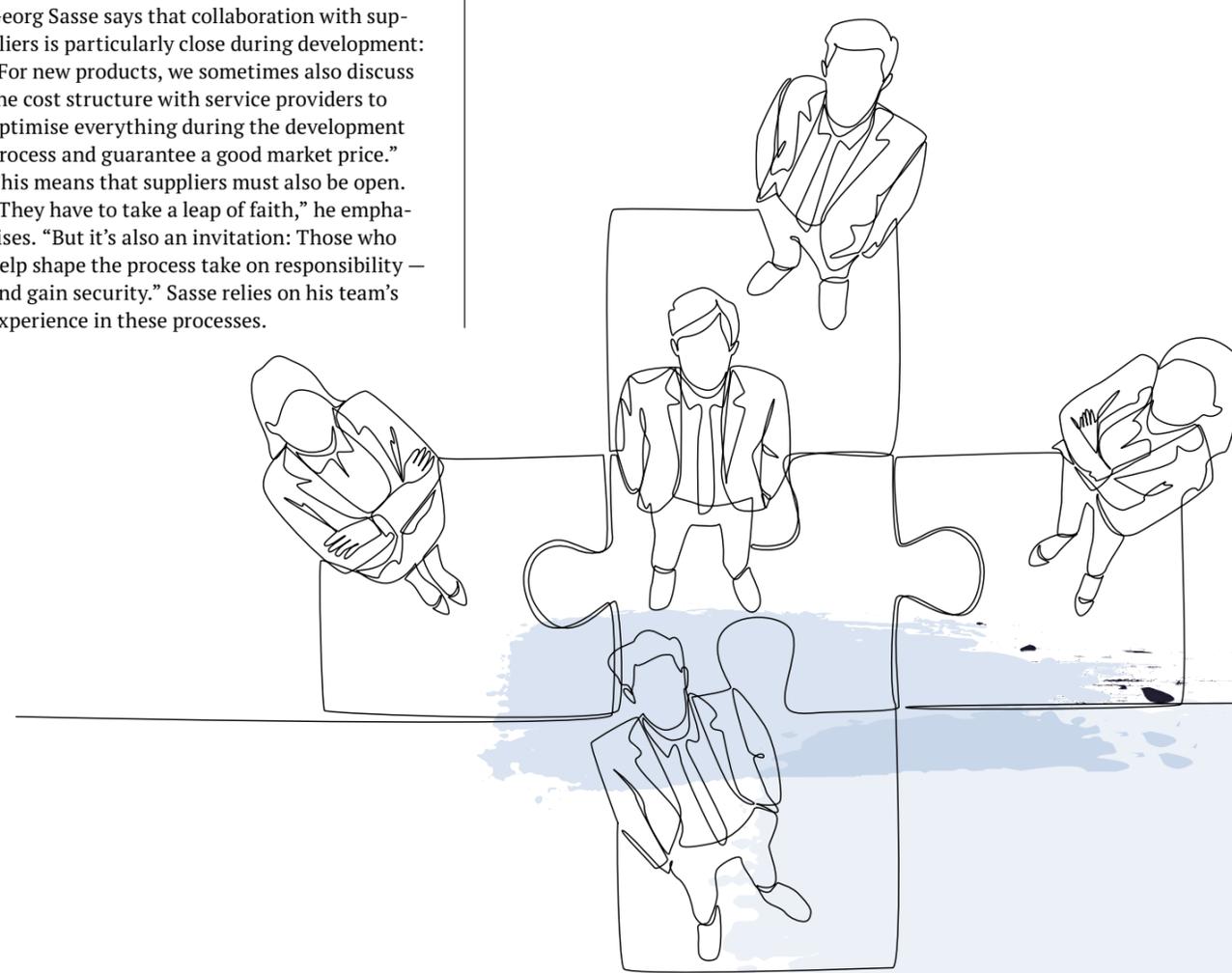
Taking a leap of faith can bring security

Georg Sasse says that collaboration with suppliers is particularly close during development: “For new products, we sometimes also discuss the cost structure with service providers to optimise everything during the development process and guarantee a good market price.” This means that suppliers must also be open. “They have to take a leap of faith,” he emphasises. “But it’s also an invitation: Those who help shape the process take on responsibility — and gain security.” Sasse relies on his team’s experience in these processes.



A stable, long-standing partnership: Möller’s Rhöntransporte, a family business now in its fourth generation under the leadership of Markus and Martin Möller, has been buying trailers from Krone for around 30 years.

He also places great importance on fairness: “If I ask a supplier to submit a tender, they must have a real chance of winning the contract. We don’t renegotiate if possible.” His guiding principle when it comes to finances is: “Everyone should earn as much money as necessary, but not as much as possible. That is partnership to me.” He sends a clear signal of reliability to those involved: “I don’t want a supplier to be constantly worried that they won’t be there tomorrow,” he says. “But the supplier itself must also ensure that it remains competitive, for example through innovation and investment.” →



Sasse points out that Krone has developed from being the fourth largest trailer manufacturer in Europe to becoming the market leader in 2001. "This is because we have been able to bring high-quality products to the market at competitive prices. We also owe this to our strong partners and the fact that we maintain our collaborations very well. We are and will remain an owner-managed company that listens to its customers and takes their needs seriously."



Digital Hub Logistics organises the annual Transfer.Festival at the Fraunhofer IML, where industry representatives, SMEs, researchers and young talents are introduced to innovative technologies and concepts.

Collaboration also means helping to shape things

Christian Prasse, from the Digital Hub Logistics in Dortmund, advises those who fear that competitors will exploit the openness that collaboration requires, can overcome this concern for all topics that do not form part of the market's core differentiation. "You just need to ensure that you don't compromise your unique selling points as a brand, restrict your competitiveness or disrupt your own business. You can collaborate on everything else, which usually creates significant added value. Particularly in

+ GEORG SASSE

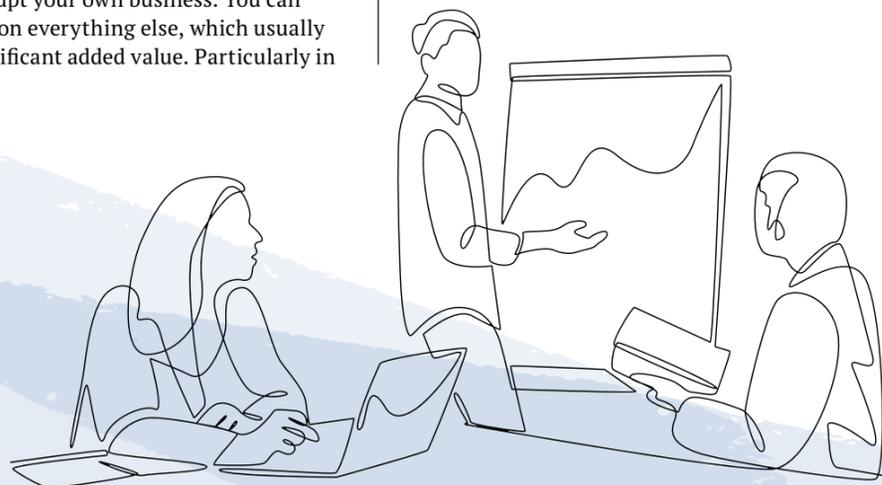
Georg Sasse, has been with Krone Holding since his apprenticeship in the 1980s, and is now Head of Purchasing. He started in purchasing and is now responsible for it across the entire group of companies.



digitalisation, transparency, consistency and automation can prevent monopolies if these topics are driven forward together." Open-source solutions, such as those developed for logistics by the Dortmund-based Open Logistics Foundation, are a good example of this. "Open source" means that the results are published and made freely available, allowing anyone to access them. At the Open Logistics Foundation, companies collaborate closely on topics such as the electronic consignment note. This cooperation also extends to direct competitors: "Because everyone benefits", says Prasse. Collaboration is not only productive, but also sustainable and cost-effective. Last but not least, participants are also allowed to help shape things. ↩

"Those who help shape the process take on responsibility – and gain security."

GEORG SASSE, HEAD OF PURCHASING, KRONE HOLDING



ILLUSTRATIONS: ADOBESTOCK/YOSSAKORN PHOTOS: DIGITAL HUB LOGISTICS DORTMUND, MÖLLERS RHÖNTRANSPORTE, KRONE

What still moves us

More inspiration, tips and thoughts

Worth seeing

In the documentary series "Unhappy", author Ronja von Rönne looks at human happiness and tries to find out what makes us happy. She meets people who have exciting and surprising answers. In the episode "Unhappy. About community and loneliness", von Rönne visits a retirement home and learns about the importance of teamwork in rowing.

Watch it on Arte.tv and on Youtube



PHOTOS: ARTE.TV, CITYMAPPER.COM, KÖSEL VERLAG, HCM KINZEL, KLIMAHaus BREMERHAVEN/ANTJE SCHIMANKE



Next Station London

This game is about nothing less than designing an entirely new Underground network for London. Using randomly revealed cards, players draw lines on their map to connect neighbourhoods, travel to landmarks and complete missions. The goal is to create an efficient network of lines with as many connections as possible, while taking advantage of bonuses. However, the lines must never cross. The key is to stay calm and not get distracted.

By HCM Kinzel

APP App-Check



A useful tool for your next city trip: This app covers the world's most famous metropolises and helps you find your way around spontaneously. Citymapper shows real-time public transport connections and departure times, provides traffic maps and alerts you to service disruptions.

www.citymapper.com

Stronger together

The new book "Together", by Ronja von Wurmb-Seibel, highlights the importance of cooperation and allies in everyday life. It highlights a central paradox: We are more connected than ever thanks to social networks and the internet, but at the same time many people are longing for real connection. The book is therefore a plea for the importance of social cohesion, arguing that the problems of our time can best be solved by working together.



Published by Kösel-Verlag

Extreme

The new permanent exhibition "Weather Extremes" at the Klimahaus Bremerhaven shows what is behind the increasing frequency of extreme weather events – and what role humans play in them. You can find out how floods, heat waves and hurricanes occur and why their frequency and intensity have increased due to global warming. Visitors can immerse themselves in these extremes and experience a wide range of phenomena on a moving platform.

www.klimahaus-bremerhaven.de



"I have tried to systematise everything in our company so that we need fewer staff and work as efficiently as possible."

Rainer van Mark, Owner of the shipping company Rainer van Mark



A master of efficiency

Rainer van Mark, a freight forwarder from East Frisia, operates a small, but highly efficient fleet, and brings with him a wealth of ideas, enthusiasm for technology, and an uncompromising view of reality.

Rainer van Mark is an entrepreneur who sees what is not working and changes it — better sooner than later. At his shipping company in East Frisia, he prioritises efficiency over size. The fleet of just six vehicles operates round-the-clock, with each vehicle covering 250,000 kilometres per year. He manages to keep everything sustainable, efficient and cost-effective. With his eye for the essentials and his commitment to fairness, he is considered to be a driving force for change in the industry.

The boss still drives himself

His fascination with lorries and machines began in childhood, when he was eager to understand how they worked. After training as a car mechanic and spending two years in the workshop, he moved to a haulage company with the intention of becoming a lorry driver. He drove across Europe — to Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland and Austria — and enjoyed every kilometre. “My father was quite strict; perhaps that fuelled my desire for freedom. I also found the technology so exciting. Driving lorries was simply my passion right from the start.”

And it remains so to this day. As the owner of a shipping company, he still regularly hits the road himself. “It’s very clear to me that I should never allow my company to grow so much that I’m no longer personally behind the wheel.” He founded his company in 1997, initially driving for a freight broker. However, he soon acquired his first customer, who quickly convinced him to expand his fleet. “I was reliable and got on well with people. I’m just a cheerful person; I like people!”

Flats as fixed points of contact

As a driver, he experienced first-hand the issues in the industry: “The conditions for truckers are poor. Often, there aren’t even proper sanitary facilities on the road. You have to wait for a long



time at the border, and how are you supposed to sleep if you’re parked in a service area with your cab facing the motorway?” He observed these shortcomings and was always looking for solutions to help his business to better deal with them. For example, he disliked the fact that drivers had to spend the night in their lorries, so he bought motorhomes.

The idea was to organise shift work with driver-swaps at strategically favourable locations. Once he had identified the ideal locations, he rented flats. To this day, these flats are still used by the drivers as a base where they can take turns sleeping, eating and showering in peace. While one driver rests, the other →

Freshly delivered: The shipping company recently purchased new curtainsider semi-trailers from Krone — with a striking red van Mark design.



Thanks to sophisticated planning, the vehicles cover around 250,000 kilometres mileage per year.

takes on the next tour. This ensures the vehicles are utilised permanently, while driving and rest times are adhered to. "I never have them lined up in the yard at the weekend," says Van Mark.

Lorries "drive like buses"

Efficiency is almost a passion for him. "I have tried to systematise everything in our company so that we need fewer staff and work as efficiently as possible", he explains. This includes "driving lorries like buses": "The load gets on, so to speak, and then the lorry drives on", van Mark explains. "I either park a trailer at the customer's ramp and pick it up when it's full, or I set clear departure times — for example, a two-hour window. The lorry drives there, the goods are loaded, and it drives straight on. For some customers, we have fixed destinations that we always drive to."

Efficiency promotes sustainability

A high level of efficiency within a company also contributes to sustainability. Rainer van Mark is motivated by this topic due to his personal experiences: On his trips to Spain, he once saw lush green landscapes that now require artificial irrigation or have become permanent deserts. "And the temperature of the North Sea has risen by two degrees", he points out. "I have children, and I want them to inherit a world worth living in." In the scheduling department, two members of staff and 13 drivers ensure that the vehicles are on the road almost around the clock. Tyres are regularly refurbished, and bio-LNG is used for fuel — he was one of the first to test this technology. Today, he is fully committed to it. "Our company is climate-neutral.

+ ABOUT

The freight forwarder Rainer van Mark from East Frisia achieves maximum efficiency with just six vehicles and operates in a climate-neutral manner — thanks to innovative shift models, bio-LNG propulsion and systematised processes, for example.

I do everything I can to make our world cleaner." He knows that many drivers would like customised vehicles, but says: "For us, the focus is on low fuel consumption and good emission values. Vehicles are simply a tool." To recruit enough professional drivers for his tours, he trains them himself. "These junior employees then know our company inside out — that's incredibly valuable."

Successor wanted

He recently collected two new two-axle semi-trailers from Krone in Werlte. "In combination with a bio-LNG tractor unit and an innovation that I am working on, this is the trailer of the future for me, offering a high payload and high efficiency", he says. Rainer van Mark is familiar with Krone, having pulled a trailer with a short coupling in his first job at a shipping company. "I was immediately impressed by the technology." He has now been working with the company for around 30 years and greatly appreciates the partnership-based relationship: "If I have any questions, I always get in touch directly and am sometimes put through to production. As a Krone customer, you are treated really well from start to finish, and it's only a short distance to the Werlte plant, so we can pick up a spare part ourselves within an hour."

His wife also works for the company. "Without her, none of this would have been possible", explains Rainer van Mark. Now in his early 60s, he is looking for a successor — someone who is "smart and environmentally aware", and whom he can train in detail. "We are an exceptional company. I would like someone to come in and maintain or expand everything. There is plenty of customer potential; we could expand at any time. After all, we are the only company in East Frisia that collects items until 5 or 6 p.m., delivers them to southern Germany the next morning, and does so in a completely climate-neutral way." ←



PHOTOS: SCHÖNING FOTODESIGN



Eye level cooperation

Through their strategic partnership, the Krone Commercial Vehicle Group and the **Schwarz Müller Group** are making a powerful statement about the future of the commercial vehicle industry. In this interview, Beate Paletar, owner of the Schwarz Müller Group, and Bernard Krone, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Krone Group, discuss opportunities and synergies, as well as their shared ambition to set new standards across Europe.

What made you decide to work together?

Bernard Krone: It had long been clear to us that, should the opportunity arise to enter into a partnership with an industry colleague, Schwarz Müller would be our first choice. Over the past two years, we have strengthened our relationship and made this decision together, for which I am very grateful. Schwarz Müller is a company that complements us perfectly, not

least because our product ranges and regional focuses hardly overlap.

Beate Paletar: Yes, that is due to our history: With the opening of the markets there, Schwarz Müller has orientated itself strongly towards Eastern Europe, establishing its own production plants in the Czech Republic and Hungary. We didn't focus on the already well-established market in the west — →

but Krone is well established there, and we can now enter this market with our broad product portfolio. Our service networks also complement each other. I am convinced that future topics such as digitalisation can be addressed much more effectively in such a strong partnership – to the benefit of customers, employees, and our companies. This collaboration enables us to develop and expand our strengths on a much larger scale.

Where do you see the greatest growth potential for your two companies?

Beate Paletar: We still have great development potential in northern Germany, as well as in Scandinavia, England, France and Spain. Previously, Schwarzmüller was not active in these countries, but thanks to Krone's sales organisation, this is now possible.

Bernard Krone: I also see strong potential in the production network. In addition to what is perhaps the largest trailer plant in Europe here in northern Germany, Krone has a plant in Turkey, which serves the entire Mediterranean region. Meanwhile, Schwarzmüller has a highly professional and flexible location in Austria, as well as plants in Eastern Europe. This expansion alone demonstrates our excellent positioning and ability to supply the respective markets with customised products from both companies. There is still plenty of growth potential for both brands: together, we are likely to have the widest range of products of any provider in Europe, including CEP vehicles, swap bodies, boxes, refrigerated vehicles, curtainsider semi-trailers, lightweight construction, standard products and specialist products such as low-loaders, tippers



"A partnership-based approach – I experienced this right from the start, and it's very valuable to me."

BEATE PALETAR

and tankers from Schwarzmüller. We have a lot to work with here, and we will certainly reach new customers as well.

How will customers perceive the added value of the collaboration between Krone and Schwarzmüller?

Bernard Krone: We are organising our cooperation as two independent, strong brands. This means that customers benefit from a carefully considered product range and can continue to use the same contacts for services or financing. They can also rely on an optimum supply of replacement and retrofit parts.

Beate Paletar: At Schwarzmüller, for example, we have decided not to produce refrigerated vehicles ourselves, but to work with partners instead. Since Krone manufactures the Cool Liner, we can now offer it as part of a network with the appropriate service. Krone has particular strengths in digitalisation and sensor technology, and we can embrace much of this for Schwarzmüller.

What are your goals for the merger?

Bernard Krone: Our goal is to become the European manufacturer that offers the logistics and transport industry the most comprehensive and high-quality portfolio. With us, customers get premium products at affordable prices, excellent sales and service, and an optimum supply of spare parts in the area, as well as many competent partners.

Beate Paletar: We will be the most dynamic force in the commercial vehicle market. Our customers will find us to be a strong partner offering a wide range of options from a single source throughout the entire life cycle of a vehicle. That has always been our claim. We are convinced that quality pays off, is sustainable, and ultimately saves costs.

Mrs Paletar, what is important to you personally as an entrepreneur? What values and principles do you bring to the partnership?

Beate Paletar: As a family business, we at Schwarzmüller stand for diligence, loyalty, performance, and reliability. Despite all the technology, personal relationships are still crucial, and a handshake counts for a lot. These are all values that I hold dear, too. I was taught these virtues by my father and uncle, and I have been passing them on for four decades. I immediately sensed that Krone shares these values in its company culture. These are qualities

PHOTOS: KRONE



"It is important to me personally that we act as equals."

BERNARD KRONE

that stem from a long-standing tradition and cannot be bought.

What do you want to achieve through the collaboration?

Beate Paletar: A partnership-based approach – I experienced this right from the start, and it's very valuable to me. The Krone team combines the highest level of expertise and industry knowledge with pragmatism, which makes decision-making straightforward. I am a very impatient person and I naturally enjoy it when things move forward.

Bernard Krone: I can only say the same in return. It is important to me personally that we act as equals. At Krone, we greatly respect everything that Schwarzmüller has achieved over the years. There are many respected commercial vehicle manufacturers in Europe that specialise in tankers, silo vehicles or tippers, but no one has managed to establish a product portfolio at such a consistently high level as

Schwarzmüller. This deserves recognition, and we absolutely want to avoid causing culture shock among customers, employees and suppliers. Maintaining the brand's identity and expertise is so important. If we manage to build even more trust, everyone will benefit.

Beate Paletar: I am also deeply convinced that Schwarzmüller cannot replace Krone, and Krone cannot replace Schwarzmüller. Both companies have earned their reputation over a long period of time. Our customers also have a wealth of knowledge – you can't fool them. There are hardly any other industries in which customers have such a high level of awareness of the various vehicle functions and makes. A forklift buyer rarely asks about the make of the axles or tyres, but this is a very important issue when it comes to trailers. Sales staff must therefore be well versed in this area.

Where do you see the two companies in five to ten years' time?

Beate Paletar: I assume that we will have established ourselves as a permanent fixture in the commercial vehicle market and be generating significant added value. If we do our homework properly, we will succeed.

Bernard Krone: In five years' time, we will certainly look back on this partnership positively. So many things fit together perfectly: the people at Schwarzmüller, the products and our reputation in the market. The owner and management have the right chemistry, too. At Krone, we have a long experience of working closely with customers, as well as with development and financing partners. We have already enjoyed success with the acquisitions of Brügggen, Knapen and Gigant. I firmly believe that we will achieve the same with Schwarzmüller. ↵



Bernard Krone and Beate Paletar regularly discuss joint goals and plans – as in our interview at Bauma in Munich in April

Germany

- WERLTE
 - Fahrzeugwerk Bernard Krone GmbH & Co. KG
 - Krone Used GmbH
 - mykrone.blue GmbH
- DINKLAGE
 - Gigant GmbH
- NEUSTADT (DOSSE)
 - Hüffermann Transportsysteme GmbH

- HERZLAKE
 - Brüggen Oberflächen- und Systemlieferant GmbH
 - Brüggen SWAP Service GmbH
 - Krone Spare Parts Logistics GmbH & Co. KG
- LÜBTHEEN
 - Brüggen Fahrzeugwerk & Service GmbH
- ELTMANN
 - Schwarzmüller Deutschland GmbH

Norway

- LANGHUS
 - Krone Norge AS

Denmark

- PADBORG
 - Krone ScanBalt A/S
 - Krone Finans A/S
 - Krone Fleet Danmark A/S

Sweden

- MALMÖ
 - Krone Trailer Sverige AB

Latvia

- RIGA
 - Krone ScanBalt SIA

Poland

- BŁONIE
 - Schwarzmüller Polska Sp. z o.o.

Estonia

- MAARDU
 - Krone ScanBalt OÜ

Lithuania

- VILNIUS
 - Krone ScanBalt UAB

Czech Republic

- ŽEBRÁK
 - Schwarzmüller s.r.o.

Belgium

- ZELE
 - P. Philips NV

Netherlands

- ROTTERDAM
 - Krone Trailer B.V.
- DEURNE
 - Knapen Trailers B.V.
 - Knapen Service B.V.
 - Trailned B.V.

Great Britain

- MICKLEFIELD, LEEDS
 - Krone Trailer UK Ltd.

France

- PUSIGNAN
 - Krone Trailer France SAS

Spain

- LA MUELA, ZARAGOZA
 - Krone Trailer España S.L.U.

Austria

- FREINBERG
 - Wilhelm Schwarzmüller GmbH

Romania

- BUKAREST
 - Schwarzmüller România SRL

Ukraine

- KYIV
 - Krone ScanBalt LLC
 - Schwarzmüller Ukraine Ltd.

Kazakhstan

- ALMATY
 - Trailer Corporation Central Asia LLP

Turkey

- TIRE
 - Krone Ticari Araçlar San. ve Tic. A.Ş.
 - Krone Trailer Int. Tic. Ltd. Sirk.
- ISTANBUL
 - Krone Trailer Int. Tic. Ltd. Sirk.

Italy

- BOLOGNA
 - Krone Trailer Service Italia S.R.L.

Croatia

- SESVETE, ZAGREB
 - Schwarzmüller Croatia d.o.o.

Serbia

- DOBANOVCİ
 - Schwarzmüller d.o.o.

Hungary

- BUDAPEST
 - Krone Trailer SE Kft.
 - Schwarzmüller Kft.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- ILIDŽA
 - Schwarzmüller BH d.o.o.

At home all over the world

The **Krone Commercial Vehicle Group** has established a strong international sales, production and service network. From Werlte to Vilnius, from Bologna to Bucharest, it offers customer proximity, smooth service with around 1,700 service partner workshops across Europe, a broad product range and a deep understanding of the regional markets. "At home all over the world" is not just a slogan, it is a living corporate strategy.

KRONE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SE

- Production Site
- Sales and Service



"In the past, everyone wanted to keep everything to themselves. But many things are easier in partnerships, including digitalisation."

Georg Dettendorfer, Managing Director Spedition Dettendorfer

The “first mover” from Upper Bavaria

Now in its eighth and ninth generations, Spedition **Dettendorfer** is an innovative pioneer in the logistics industry, offering intermodal transport solutions and its own e-charging stations, while maintaining a focus on partnerships.

S The Upper Bavarian haulage company Dettendorfer has been transporting goods for 200 years — initially by horse and river barge, and now by using a fleet of almost 250 tractor units and 470 trailers. What started as a farm and Inn shipping company in 1825 has become an internationally active family business with 15 locations. The company has always been a “first mover”: “Our ancestors had to constantly reinvent themselves — for example, when the railway replaced river and canal shipping,” explains Managing Director Georg Dettendorfer. Recently, the entire family and all employees demonstrated this innovative strength through the development of strategic partnerships, in the field of energy, digitalisation, and autonomous driving.

However, the company’s history goes back much further. “We can trace our ancestors back to 1166, when they transported wine from South Tyrol to the Baumburg monastery in Chiemgau. They were known as ‘Säumer’, or Alpine crossers.” Over the centuries, saw-mills, timber trading, agriculture and finally haulage and logistics were added. Today, the portfolio includes fuel trading, car dealerships, warehouse logistics, waste disposal and recycling, energy trading, and real estate, as well as training and further education, including via the Spedifort.de e-learning platform. “We have a wide range of services. It’s a lot of work, but it also gives us security. If one area suffers losses, others can make up for it”, says Dettendorfer. This broad positioning requires flexible structures — and the right attitude. “For us, entrepreneurial behaviour means setting up the company in such a way that the next generation can continue to run it successfully. This includes constantly scrutinising the company and setting a new course when necessary.”

Digital development with a sense of proportion

For decades, the company has relied on strategic alliances in areas such as paper and beverage logistics to organise transport more efficiently. “In the past, everyone wanted to keep everything to themselves. But many things are easier in partnerships, including digitalisation. Not everyone has to make the same mistakes three times.” This openness is also evident in innovation partnerships, such as those involving autonomous driving. “We are project partners, providing vehicles and operations facilities. I wonder when we will be able to send a driverless truck from Nussdorf onto the motorway towards Hamburg, where it will be picked up by a driver for unloading at our Geesthacht site. That’s my goal.” Dettendorfer has a clear vision for digitalisation: around 90 per cent of the company’s processes, from transport orders to invoicing, are already paperless. Artificial intelligence is being tested in the scheduling department, and the company’s own systems are constantly being developed.

Around 80 per cent of the trailers in the fleet are supplied by Schwarzmüller, a company affiliated with the Krone Group. “My father was



a personal friend of Egon Schwarzmüller. We have relied on their vehicles since the 1990s and they have proved their worth to this day,” reports Georg Dettendorfer. “Long-term partnerships are important to us – if something works well, we see no reason to change. We are very loyal to our suppliers.” Last but not least, a standardised fleet makes maintenance more efficient: “We have our own workshops. It helps a lot when axles, tarpaulins and pallet boxes are standardised.”

Entrepreneurial energy

Since 2024, Dettendorfer has been operating its own charging parks for e-trucks under the Dettendorfer Energy brand. This business area was set up entirely without subsidies. “We financed everything from our own funds. It was risky, but we wanted to be at the forefront here, too”, says Georg Dettendorfer. “The locations of our charging stations are strategically favourable on busy routes. There aren’t many electric trucks on the roads yet, but the proportion will certainly increase. And when the ramp-up comes, we’ll already be prepared.” The company sells fossil fuels, as well as HVO100 and biodiesel. Its own fleet has run exclusively on biodiesel for 25 years. Dettendorfer Energy

+ ABOUT

Spedition Dettendorfer is a medium-sized, family-run business with **15 locations** and **625 employees**, offering forwarding services throughout Europe. The company has received several awards, including the “Top 100 in Logistics” and the “Bavarian State Prize – Transport and Logistics 2025”.

www.dettendorfer.de



supports the installation of PV systems to generate its own electricity and offers its customers e-charging or conventional fuel cards. Here, energy has long been more than just an aspect of sustainability – it is a future-proof business area and a tool for independence.

In the future, Dettendorfer intends to transfer more transport to the rail network. “There is still a lot of potential in transalpine transport in particular,” they say. The Brenner Base Tunnel, which is around 80 kilometres from our headquarters in Nussdorf am Inn, is due to open in around seven years. Furthermore, additional loading terminals in Bavaria and Germany will be completed or upgraded and digitised by 2032. “We assume that this will make rail transport to Italy more attractive. I think that we will then



handle most of the traffic over the Brenner Pass by rail.” E-truck transport is already possible via the Brenner Pass. We have a charging station there; the vehicles cross the Alps at night and recharge in Bolzano.

In the eighth and ninth generations

Thanks to their clear value system and short decision-making processes, the Dettendorfers are now in their eighth and ninth generations of running the company. Georg and his brother Johannes knew from the outset that they would join the family business after completing their apprenticeships. Their three children are also employed there, with many in management positions – from legal and sales to the workshop. “Everyone has their own area; we complement each other well,” says Georg Dettendorfer. “This keeps the knowledge in-house, and the future of the company in good hands.” This is helped by the fact that Dettendorfer provides intensive training for roles ranging from forwarding agents to IT specialists in system integration. Decisions are made quickly in regular management meetings, based on facts but also intuition. Above all, Georg Dettendorfer loves his job because it is so varied, because he can help make decisions, and because it is fun when something planned works. The fact that not every project works out is all part of the job. However, as Georg Dettendorfer says, “Without risk, you’re a civil servant and not an entrepreneur.”



PHOTOS: LUKAS BARTH

All in sight, all in one system

The **mykrone.blue** platform takes the pressure off fleet managers by combining intelligent claims management, telematics and control over the entire trailer lifecycle, in a digital ecosystem.

Fleet managers are confronted with a wide range of requirements: they have to coordinate maintenance intervals, manage claims, handle alerts, evaluate reports and order spare parts – often in different systems, with manual processes and under the pressure of staff shortages. Krone offers its customers a centralised solution using the mykrone.

blue platform – a digital ecosystem of applications for fleet operators and workshops. “We offer vehicle administration, including monitoring and control for trailers and swap systems of all brands in one place, with telematics integration, data management, alarms, documentation and master data,” explains Maximilian Birle, Head of Krone Telematics & Digital Services. There are also collaborative functions: In the future, it will be possible to communicate with the driver via the system and, for example, to map the process from vehicle damage through to corrective action, from initial notification to completion. An integrated e-commerce system is also included.

Workshops are always prepared

Even with the advantages of remote telematics monitoring, efficient damage management is paramount: The driver scans the QR code on the trailer and reports the incident via Krone’s Smart Assistant. Then, the information is automatically entered into the mykrone.blue world and can be processed directly by the fleet manager: mykrone.blue shows where the vehicle is located and which workshops are available. Also, the fleet manager can inform the workshop



digitally and provide the driver with directions to the workshop. All workshop appointments can be prepared and planned: “The manager sees the pictures taken by the driver and for example, can determine that he needs to provide two technicians and a crane. Everything is seamless and very easy to use: Nobody has to remember a number of pass-

words, and all data is contained in one application: mykrone.blue brings everything together”, says Birle. Furthermore, across all brands in the fleet, every make and age can be entered into the system. “The shortage of skilled labour is no longer just about drivers, it is also about office staff. Finding a good fleet manager is becoming more and more of a challenge – and they should be relieved as much as possible”.

Not tools, but solutions

For Krone, the system also represents a strategic change: “We no longer supply our customers with just a single fix for a problem, but instead we mould everything into an overall ecosystem,” says Maximilian Birle. “The aim is to accompany the trailer throughout its entire service life – with a focus on total cost of ownership and sustainability. The latter becomes transparent for the customer, as mykrone.blue incorporates the telematics and other data directly into the CO₂ calculations. We don’t provide tools, we provide solutions,” emphasises Birle. “The critical factor for the customer is that they receive clear results: for example, how much CO₂ have the trailers created, or has the damage been repaired and the bill paid?”



"We are involved in networks in which we share our experiences with other SMEs."

Thies Henrik Carstensen, Managing Director of Chr. Carstensen Logistics

Moving forward with digitalisation

Brothers **Christian und Thies Henrik Carstensen** are the fifth generation to run a family business that is transforming itself from a traditional transport company into a digital logistics service provider. Ralf Faust, Head of Service at the Krone Commercial Vehicle Group, spoke to them about how they are preparing their business for the demands of the future.

Ralf Faust: *Thank you for the invitation to beautiful Flensburg! We are standing here at the historic museum harbor with a view of the fjord. You are on the road with your fleet: what do you move for your customers?*

Thies Henrik Carstensen: Among other things, we are the sole supplier for Flensburg beer, which is a long-standing customer of ours. Our portfolio also includes silo transportation, we drive to Scandinavia and operate a rail terminal. In order to remain competitive in the long term, we have strategically realigned the company in recent years: We are increasingly focusing on general cargo transportation. At the same time, we have built up our own logistics space and are currently planning a fully automated high-bay warehouse at the Handewitt site. This will not only expand our range of services, but also increase our operational efficiency. Our company has changed significantly as a result – now with 350 employees and a significantly expanded digital infrastructure. We have grown in recent years, with all the challenges that this presents.

Ralf Faust: *Which challenges are you particularly concerned with?*

Christian Carstensen: Attracting good specialists and retaining them in the long term: Professional drivers in particular are becoming increasingly difficult to find on the German market. I therefore believe that we will increasingly need people from third countries to fill all our trucks in the future. But the barriers to employment in Germany are extremely high. A driver who comes from Asia, for example, cannot have their driving license recognised here: He has to take the tests all over again and that can't even be done in English, only in

German. The bureaucracy leads to long delays and high costs. This puts us at a disadvantage to international competition, as other European countries create much less complicated access to the labor market. From our point of view, Germany urgently needs to become more productive, but the heavy regulation is simply a massive hindrance to our economy. Companies based in Germany, for example, strictly monitor driving and rest times, which is correct. But we keep hearing from colleagues from other EU countries that this is handled much less consistently in their home countries. Even though it is a European law and the companies also drive on German roads.

Ralf Faust: *What would you like to see from politicians?*

Christian Carstensen: Definitely a reduction in bureaucracy and more fairness.

Ralf Faust: *As a manufacturer, our aim is to provide customers with practical, digital solutions to simplify processes, increase efficiency and ensure cost-effectiveness in fleet management. With mykrone.blue, we are currently developing a central web platform that bundles all relevant trailer-related processes in one place – from contract management to the analysis of technical data. Thanks to QR codes on the vehicle components, damage can be assigned directly, suitable spare parts identified and ordered immediately. The system translates automatically so that language barriers no longer play a role. Our goal is a digital ecosystem that creates real added value for drivers, dispatchers and workshops alike. At the same time, we are continuing to develop AI-based assistance systems such as the Krone Smart Assistant – which helps to identify →*



maintenance requirements at an early stage or make loading processes more efficient.

Thies Henrik Carstensen: Such developments also open up new scope for us as a medium-sized company. For example, we used to only hire drivers who spoke German or English – simply for reasons of communication with the dispatchers. We now use tablets with a translation function, which has made language barriers less important in everyday life. Overall, we have introduced many digital processes in recent years and can clearly see how great the potential is.

Ralf Faust: *If you look at the development during the past few years – where do you find yourself as an entrepreneur today, in 2025?*

Christian Carstensen: We have successfully completed the generational change in recent years and continue to run a healthy company in which we are changing many things in order to remain fit for the future. Everyone contributes their experience and their own style. I myself have been with the company for over 20 years now, have grown into it slowly and healthily and have witnessed many developments. In any case, we are always looking ahead. We still need to gain more experience, especially in the general cargo sector, which we are building up, but on the whole I would say that we are cautious and at the same time very innovative. Incidentally, the close relationship with Krone goes back a long way: almost 50 years ago, Günter Ull sold the first vehicle of his career to our father – and the partnership has grown ever since.

Ralf Faust: *Which makes us very happy. A lot has happened at Krone in recent years, especially in the service sector. Today, more than 1,300 workshops across Europe are digitally connected to our systems. When a service technician enters the chassis number, all relevant technical data is immediately displayed. This allows processes to be managed efficiently, from ordering spare parts to digital warranty processing. We process many warranty cases completely*



“Our fleet comprises around 200 trucks, as well as around 250 trailers.”

CHRISTIAN CARSTENSEN

without paper. We are also continuously developing data-driven services: our aim is to relieve the burden on workshops and customers alike, minimize downtimes and ensure maximum transparency – in the spirit of a genuine service partnership. Data-driven services also help our customers to measurably improve the environmental footprint of their fleet, for example through intelligent route planning or preventive maintenance, that reduces unnecessary downtime and emissions.

Christian Carstensen: Our fleet comprises around 200 trucks, as well as around 250 trailers. When purchasing new vehicles, it is extremely important for us to receive good advice – especially when it comes to new technologies. Or even new options: If, for example, new developments are already being discussed politically in working groups, this is also relevant to our planning. It helps us if the manufacturers have their finger on the pulse. And in practical terms, we only want to buy what we actually need. We recently ordered curtainsiders from Krone and we configured them very specifically – with cost-efficient equipment that really only includes what we need and use. A trusting relationship with the seller is crucial.

Ralf Faust: *We are very aware that the 95 cubic meters of loading space that we sell is what our customers earn their money with every day. That’s why we focus on technical expertise, fairness and partnership-based dialog when providing advice. We do not develop any solution without clear added value for the customer – and only together with them. Because in the end, what counts is that the vehicle is precisely*



tailored to the respective application and can be operated economically in the long term.

Christian Carstensen: You can feel that. This is precisely why technical understanding is so important in sales. The contact person must be able to understand how we actually use the vehicles. For the general cargo sector, for example, we needed specially reinforced box trailers because loading is particularly demanding there – we were able to tailor the specification, together with Krone.

Ralf Faust: *We are constantly developing and optimising our service. Our aim is to provide our customers with maximum vehicle availability, regardless of the manufacturer. This is another reason why we have opened up our telematics interfaces for mixed fleets. This was a well-considered step, also in dealing with competitors – but always in the interests of our customers. Automation is also an exciting field for the future. Together with partners such as Fernride, we are working on solutions in which trailers can be moved semi-autonomously or teleoperated in the future – an important building block for mitigating driver shortages and simultaneously leveraging efficiency potential. As a medium-sized company, how do you experience the topic of partnership?*

Thies Henrik Carstensen: We are involved in networks in which we share our experiences with other SMEs. This happens on an equal footing and I think that as a company with the same challenges, we definitely show solidarity in order to assert ourselves to a certain extent against the large corporations, whether they are German, Danish or Swedish. We are well networked. And the European transport market is characterised by companies of our size.

Ralf Faust: *What is your position on the subject of renewable drive systems?*

Thies Henrik Carstensen: We tested electric mobility for ourselves and rented an electric truck a few years ago. To summarise, its use in daily scheduling proved to be very challenging and we discontinued the project after a certain period of time. However, we can imagine investing in this technology again in cooperation with customers. However, I also think that diesel still has its place – especially as it is becoming increasingly efficient.

Christian Carstensen: If I could express one wish to politicians, it would be that they should be open to new technologies. There is not one right way, but many, and they all have their legitimacy. And as entrepreneurs, we can’t



There are many stories about the hanging shoes in Flensburg’s Norderstraße. The most common is probably that people leave a pair of shoes behind when they leave the city after graduating.



implement purely ideology-driven topics, we have to have a spare euro at the end of the day. Regarding Trailer Dynamics, you are involved in some exciting developments – we got to know the vehicle at an event.

Ralf Faust: *Yes, we are involved in the start-up, Trailer Dynamics, which integrates a battery-electric drivetrain directly into the trailer. This electrification can reduce the fuel consumption of the tractor unit by up to 25 per cent, a real tool for greater sustainability. The sensors required for this are embedded directly in the bolted connection of the kingpin, for example at the interface between the tractor unit and trailer. As soon as the tractor unit is loaded, the system registers the requirement and provides active support. Together with the Technical University of Dortmund, we are continuously developing the technology further. Production takes place at our new plant in Eschweiler, where we have specifically invested in a production line for this innovative generation of trailers.*

Christian Carstensen: That’s exciting, but the battery certainly makes the vehicle heavier and that reduces the payload, doesn’t it?

Ralf Faust: *Yes, but we want to compensate for this with lightweight construction technology, for example. Thanks to our new collaboration with Schwarzmüller, a highly qualified expert in lightweight construction in the commercial vehicle sector, we have gained a great deal* →

of expertise in this area. Especially as the development of batteries is also progressing rapidly; they are becoming more powerful and lighter at the same time.

Christian Carstensen: Yes, developments are also progressing rapidly in this area. We are keeping an eye on them.

Ralf Faust: People from northern Germany are known for their dry sense of humour and a certain stoic calm. Can you say the same about yourself – and does it help in turbulent times like these?

Christian Carstensen: We are quite relaxed, you can definitely say that. We try not to let things get out of hand – even though we simply work in a very lively industry. It's a fast-moving business, but we consciously try to keep a cool head.

Thies Henrik Carstensen: I would also say that we manage the company quite well together, even as brothers. We harmonise with each other and get on really well – both in business and in our private lives. We maintain clear structures within the company and communicate them to everyone. Both of us know who is responsible for what and strictly adhere to our agreed areas of work. This in turn is relevant for our employees and our team leaders, as they always know very clearly who they should communicate with. We have grown strongly in recent years and have built the structures in such a way that further growth is possible. At the same time, we remain a family business with all the values that go with it.

Ralf Faust: That's what connects us. For me, one thing always comes first in service: helping the customer quickly and reliably – no matter how complex the environment has become. The technology surrounding trailers has changed a lot, but one thing remains constant: the customer is the focus without compromise.

+ CHRISTIAN AND THIES HENRIK CHARSTENSEN



Chr. Carstensen Logistics is a family business with locations in Handewitt, Lüdenscheid and Langenhagen. The company provides national and international transport services, including silo transport. The company has a total storage capacity of almost 100,000 square metres. It was founded in 1892 and the brothers Christian and Thies Henrik Carstensen are the fifth generation to run the company.

We live this attitude in everyday life – I can be contacted personally in emergencies, even at night. For me, that's exactly what partnership-based service is all about.

Christian Carstensen: I can only confirm that from the customer's point of view. We make our purchasing decisions primarily for economic reasons, of course, but also because we know we are in good hands with Krone. ↩

"We have grown strongly in recent years and have built the structures in such a way that further growth is possible."

THIES HENRIK CARSTENSEN



PHOTOS: LARS FRANZEN

In this case, the farewell was a Flensburger, non-alcoholic of course, at the beautiful museum harbour.



SOLID BASE

The chassis is the core of every trailer: it handles heavy loads, absorbs shocks and remains stable over bends or uneven terrain. Galvanized components and a high-quality cathodic dip-paint coating provide reliable protection against corrosion – even with tough, continuous use. This chassis carries the Profi Liner in brilliant crown blue, and responds flexibly to every transport challenge with modular and tailored loading solutions. The optimized concept of the current generation is based on a welded frame construction with continuous longitudinal beams and profiled cross beams – for maximum stability. The laterally constructed fifth-wheel plate helps to protect against rough conditions in confined spaces during ferry transport.



PHOTO: KRONE



"Thursday, Friday and Saturday are the strongest sales days in retail, with correspondingly high demand."
 Christian Matzel, Authorised representative at Havelexpress

From bananas to soup greens

Havelexpress delivers fresh fruit and vegetables six days a week, paying particular attention to handling sensitive goods and using modern, refrigerated Krone vehicles.

Fruit and vegetables are among the most important products in supermarkets, with many shops placing lavish displays right at the entrance to attract customers. "The produce must look appetising and be fresh to keep customers coming back," says Christian Matzel, authorised signatory at Havelexpress. His employer plays a significant role in this. The logistics company transports fruit and vegetables from Brandenburg to the whole of eastern Germany, including everything from apples and lemons to aubergines and courgettes. Havelexpress delivers this sensitive produce to central warehouses and around 300 supermarkets. "We deliver to the markets every night, six days a week, so they can offer fresh produce every morning," says Matzel.

Particularly busy around public holidays

Businesses dealing with sensitive goods require a high level of flexibility. According to Matzel, this depends on the season, the day of the week and other factors: "Sunday, for example, is a busy day for the central warehouses because the shelves have to be restocked with fresh goods on Monday after the weekend. Thursday, Friday and Saturday are the strongest sales days in retail, with correspondingly high demand." The volume increases significantly around public holidays such as Easter and Christmas, both before and after. This is when customers want to stock up their fridges. Special offers also, often generate more deliveries.

Consequently, a large number of vehicles start on Sundays. Given all these fluctuating parameters, Havelexpress's scheduling department has to react flexibly to changing order volumes, planning lorries and drivers in line with demand. "We are currently digitising our systems, but our requirements are very complex, so a lot is still based on our team's experience," says Matzel.

Bananas are awakened from "hibernation"

Every fruit and vegetable has its own unique characteristics. Bananas, for example, are harvested unripe in their country of origin and placed in a state of "hibernation" at around 14 degrees. They are also packed in airtight film in the cartons in which they arrive in Europe. At Havelexpress, they are brought to the perfect degree of ripeness under controlled conditions

before delivery. The company operates a modern, computer-controlled banana ripening system for this purpose. The fruit is gently ripened for around five days. The system allows the company to determine quite precisely what colour the fruit should be. The daycare centre might need them a little more yellow, while the supermarket might need them a little less ripe.

The service provider also takes care of packaging. The products arrive in Groß Kreutz on pallets, but are often not yet ready for sale. Apples, for example, are delivered in 250-kilogram containers. "We pack them here on site in 2.5-kilogram bags or place them in pre-formed cardboard trays," explains Matzel. "It's all still done by hand; the tasks are too specific for machines. In the case of soup greens, for instance, our employees tie leeks, celery, carrots and parsley together by hand."

The Krone Cool Liner holds more trolleys

All goods are cooled during transport. For example, bananas are kept at 15 degrees, while mushrooms and greens are kept at 6 degrees. Therefore, the fleet needs plenty of refrigerated vehicles. The fleet also has to be particularly diverse. "We have vans, solo vehicles, articulated lorries and semi-trailers — Krone is our main supplier of the latter," reports Christian Matzel. As well as fruit and vegetables, the company delivers plants, which are packed into flower containers. "We can load them very easily into Krone vehicles, and the extra centimetres allow us to load five trolleys instead of four."

Havelexpress employs 88 drivers on a permanent basis. Along with the 13-strong office team and two workshop employees,

Bananas are "bestsellers" in the supermarkets: At Havelexpress, they are not only professionally loaded and brought to the shops, but also brought to the desired degree of ripeness in a special facility.





The technology must work reliably – this applies in particular to the refrigeration units that trailers use when on the road. Havelexpress is currently testing innovative Mitsubishi models for Krone.

they provide the company's round-the-clock service. "Our customers have very different schedules," says Matzel. "Some need the goods at 6 a.m., while others need them at 8 p.m." The fleet includes 24 tractor units and 26 trailers. Currently on the road is a Krone Cool Liner with an innovative refrigeration unit from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Thermal Transport Europe (MTTE) GmbH. The Japanese manufacturer is regarded as a technological pioneer. Krone and MTTE are working with Havelexpress on a long-term trial. "Mitsubishi's solution works without a generator axle, purely via a battery," explains Peter Köthe, Krone's regional sales manager. "It is particularly powerful and environmentally friendly."

Christian Goetsch, MTTE's Key Account Manager International, adds, "It is also very quiet, which benefits the driver, especially if they sleep in the lorry during their rest period. When delivering to supermarkets at night, noise pollution for the neighbourhood is significantly reduced, too."

Temperature monitoring is becoming increasingly important

This technology test is very exciting for Krone, as it could soon enable us to offer customers another option in the form of modern refrigeration machines. The refrigeration machine and trailer systems must work together perfectly.

"In this test, we explore how this works in practice," says Peter Köthe. Havelexpress, the customer, is also pleased with the results so far: "We are very satisfied with it," says Christian Matzel. "The machine runs really quietly and very reliably." Being able to monitor and verify temperatures precisely is becoming increasingly important for his business. "We can see that the

temperatures are maintained particularly well during the test."

The company sometimes transports up to 2,500 pallets in one day. "Two years ago, we transported 3,000 pallets at Whitsun, so we're reaching our limits," says Matzel. He reports that retailers are selling increasing quantities of fruit and vegetables from year to year. "I think this is mainly due to consumers wanting to eat more healthily, and when there is more supply, this also boosts demand." Retailers are increasingly catering to customers' desire for a wide variety of fruit and vegetables: "You can buy strawberries in winter or asparagus, which comes from Greece. The question is who determines the market: the retailers or the consumers?" Unusual types of fruit, such as dragon fruit and mini kiwis, also find their way into the range from time to time. However, according to Matzel, one fruit remains a real classic and perennial favourite: "The banana – it's on sale all year round." ↩



PHOTOS: LIEBING-FOTOGRAFIE

+ ABOUT

Havelexpress, based in Groß Kreutz near Berlin, specialises in **produce logistics**. The company supplies **276 branches and central warehouses** six days a week – with great flexibility and a great deal of expertise in handling sensitive goods.

Smooth charging everywhere

EcoG's scalable technology provides intelligent charging stations for electric vehicles that you can rely on.

Electromobility requires a charging infrastructure that is fast, reliable, compatible and intelligent. Munich-based EcoG has developed a centralised system for this called Universal Core, which offers all the core functions of a charging station, including communication with the vehicle, compliance with regulatory requirements, connection to backend and fleet management systems, and remote maintenance. Whether it's a compact wallbox, a fast charging station or a distributed power block dispenser system: EcoG ensures smooth, efficient and future-proof processes in charging station manufacturers' systems. Charging stations with the EcoG Universal Core work reliably with any electric vehicle or truck, regardless of the manufacturer, and without communication problems or the need for adjustments – even if the vehicle and station were not originally designed for each other. In this way, EcoG supports charging station manufacturers and operators in expanding the charging infrastructure on a large scale – a decisive step towards making electromobility suitable for everyday use.

Fast charging for all brands

The EcoG Universal Core platform is already used by 25,000 devices worldwide. It enables fast, standard-compliant charging for all major vehicle brands and plug types. Manufacturers of charging stations no longer need to develop their own software; instead, they receive a modular system that can be used immediately. The platform integrates all essential functions, including megawatt charging (MCS), plug-and-charge

across operator boundaries, bidirectional charging (V2G), and over-the-air updates. This shortens charging station development time by up to 50 per cent and reduces production costs by up to 75 per cent. For this approach, EcoG was honoured with the "German Innovation Award" in the "SMEs" category in 2024.

Compatible with the latest vehicle models

"Our technology also benefits charging point operators," explains Sebastian Lucae, Chief Strategy Officer at EcoG. "They can easily monitor charging points, maintain them efficiently, and ensure long-term reliable operation, regardless of vehicle type or backend provider." Founded in a mobility accelerator in Detroit in 2017, EcoG has since developed into an international technology pioneer. In the EU, one in seven DC charging stations sold uses the company's solutions. Well-known manufacturers such as Dover Fueling Solutions also rely on EcoG's technology for their charging stations in the USA and India. EcoG is also involved in developing and standardising charging standards. The platform's high compatibility is particularly appreciated, as it avoids charging interruptions due to communication problems with vehicles. Thanks to close collaboration with over 100 technology partners specialising in everything from power modules and insulation monitors, to charging cables and chips, EcoG chargers are even compatible with the latest vehicle models before they enter mass production. ↩



The optimiser

Helen Tacke and the climate tech start-up, Cozero, demonstrate how companies can strategically anchor climate protection and develop effective solutions.

For Helen Tacke, the issue of climate protection represents more than just a social challenge; she also sees it as an important and valuable business opportunity. As the founder and CEO of Cozero explains, the company's strategy is to focus on areas where it can have the greatest impact. The company positions itself as a "carbon action platform" with the capability to record and optimise climate management. "From the outset, it was important to us that our tool not only measures emissions, but that the reduction of CO₂ can be controlled in a targeted manner." The software conducts a detailed analysis of the emissions of medium-sized and large companies, with a particular focus on their products. It then proposes specific recommendations for actions that can be taken to reduce the carbon footprint, taking into account the user's unique business processes and financial framework conditions. The basis for this is a "digital twin" that links climate data with key financial figures. This also facilitates reporting to the public as well as to customers and employees, for whom it becomes transparent how "green" a company is working.

Think strategically, act sustainably

Helen Tacke completed a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration at the University of Münster, followed by a Master's degree in Management at the HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management. She initially gained experience on the investor side, managing funds that also invested in numerous young companies. Tacke explains that for a long time, the focus was on key financial figures, but sustainability data has become increasingly relevant in terms of emissions and social and governance issues. She recognised the importance of this development and that many companies were not yet

systematically and holistically capturing this in their reporting. Concurrently, her motivation to establish her own company intensified: "I aspired to have a greater impact, to be at the helm myself. I have never sought to establish a company merely for the sake of experience, but rather to pursue a viable concept." Over the past five years, the team has strategically partnered with experienced sparring partners to further develop Cozero. One of them is Henrik Larsen, former Chief Procurement Officer at Maersk and Chairman of the Cozero Board for the past year. With his many years of experience in a key industry for decarbonisation and his sound procurement perspective, he brings valuable impetus to the direction and further development of the company. As in the world of finance, effective climate management involves more than just collecting figures. It is crucial to understand the context: What is the company's current position? Is this the most appropriate course of action? In order to ensure the continued sustainability of the project, what measures must be implemented? In 2020, she established Cozero, together with her former student Fabian, who is an expert in digitalisation, and software developer Tiago. Tacke explains that the objective was to establish sustainability as a strategic management element, in conjunction with determining the most impactful and profitable areas. She found it straightforward to become involved in the subject matter, as many people present were willing to share their knowledge. "There is a great deal of collaboration and exchange when it comes to climate protection."

Effective co-creation

Cozero's approach is particularly well-suited to logistics companies, she reports. The industry is widely regarded as a pivotal element in achieving successful decarbonisation, particularly →

+ HELEN TACKE

Helen Tacke is co-founder and CEO of Cozero. She studied business administration in Münster and completed her master's degree in management at the HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management in 2016. She then worked as an investor on the venture capital market and founded Cozero, with Fabian Schwarzer and Tiago Taveira, in 2020.

given its operation within a highly competitive environment characterised by tight margins and intricate supply chains and networks. "Logistics is an integral part of any business. If there is a change here, it will have consequences that extend far beyond the industry," says Tacke. She and her team deliberately develop the product together with the companies that will later use it: "This is how we ensure that we build exactly the solutions that are really needed." For instance, they are collaborating with the Mosolf Group, which is investing heavily in the internal transformation towards more sustainable solutions in the industry. Tacke reports that they are assisting Mosolf in implementing decarbonisation measures across complex supply chains, thereby achieving both environmental and economic benefits. The company is illustrating that environmental responsibility can be balanced with financial objectives. At Cozero, they understand that co-creation is a process that extends beyond mere consultation or implementing feedback. This approach is applicable to all development phases, from the initial product idea through to the integration of new functions.

"The requirements in companies are subject to constant change. To maintain relevance, it is essential to stay close to the action and collaborate with our users while anticipating future needs," explains Tacke. Cozero also organises regular workshops and dialogue formats for its customers, facilitating knowledge-sharing and collaborative problem-solving, often transcending company boundaries. "The challenges are frequently analogous, particularly in the realm of logistics. By sharing our experiences and setting new standards together, we can all benefit more," says Tacke. The company's own processes are also constantly being scrutinised: "For instance, we have decided not to update



certain key figures live on our platform if this is not absolutely necessary. These measurements are now recalculated every half hour in an effort to reduce energy consumption."

Complexity is not a brake

Since 2020, Cozero has experienced significant growth. To expand internationally, during 2024 the company raised 6.5 million euros in a Series A financing round. The climate tech start-up received the "German Sustainability Award 2022/23" and currently employs over 50 individuals. The company's areas of expertise include technology, the environment, corporate management and customer support, all of which are pivotal to climate protection. The project is intricate in nature, which is also its most appealing aspect. Tacke's approach to complexity is to view it not as a hindrance, but as a catalyst for innovation and the development of new solutions. She is convinced: "Sustainability must be strategically anchored in the company. It is not sufficient for the topic to be addressed in isolation; it must be elevated to the top management level and incorporated into the innovation strategy."

It is evident that climate change is reflected in concrete figures and visible phenomena, including extreme weather events and rising average temperatures. Helen Tacke is monitoring the situation closely. "I am extremely optimistic about the potential in the area of sustainability. I see this as a significant opportunity to effect meaningful change, and this energy drives my daily work." She is of the opinion that the power of change lies not only in technology. The key consideration is the manner in which companies, partners and entire industries interact and assume responsibility. "We have reached a point where we must consider matters in a wholly different manner," she stated. "We are only able to effect this transformation if we collaborate." ↩

PHOTOS: BENJAMIN TAFEL



A column by Bernard Krone

Creating something new together



The world is still in turmoil, with economic and political challenges dominating the news. The winds are blowing hard. This is precisely when it becomes clear what really matters in business: Reliability, togetherness and partnership.

For us at Krone, partnership is not just an empty phrase, but a living reality. This is evident in our direct contact with customers, our long-term cooperation with development partners and our collaborative approach to finding the best solutions. Last but not least, it is evident in our determination to keep moving forward, even in challenging times, with a positive attitude, a sense of responsibility, and a clear vision for the future.

A partnership depends on commitment — especially during challenging times. When margins shrink and resources are scarce. We don't just accept — we shape. We invest

in innovation, digitalisation and the next generation. We listen and think ahead. For us, partnership means creating something new together: new technologies, new processes and new approaches.

"Crises are touchstones, but they also open up new spaces and opportunities."

Crises are touchstones, but they also open up new spaces and opportunities. Those who remain reliable and true to themselves while having the courage to change will gain strength and, above all, trust. Trust is perhaps the most important currency in uncertain times. ↩

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