

HOCHDORF group press release: Focusing process continues apace

The HOCHDORF group focuses on the future

Hochdorf, 08. September 2009 – The HOCHDORF group announced its intention to focus on its core business in February this year and moves in this direction are continuing at a pace. The merger of HOCHDORF Nutrition AG into HOCHDORF Nutrifood AG was completed successfully and on schedule. Buyers have been found for the business areas that were no longer of strategic importance.

The food industry is subject to an ever-increasing process of globalisation and openness and the HOCHDORF group is reacting by focusing far more on its core business. This will result in a sustainable improvement in revenue and competitiveness. "We want the clear focus of our work to be on the opened markets. Our high-quality Swiss-made products have an enormous potential to succeed on the world market and we are looking with great anticipation towards the expected free trade agreement with the EU," is how Damian Henzi, CEO of the Hochdorf group, explains the ongoing restructuring programme. Henzi adds: "The divestments will leave us strongly placed for the future development of our core business of drying and mixing."

Buyers that are familiar faces in the market

It has been possible to pass on the business areas that were no longer as important strategically to well-known contract partners. As of September 11, the HOCHDORF group is handing over its business in baby foods in jars to Sunval, an organic baby foods company in Germany. In Steinhausen, HOCHDORF Nutrifood AG has been coating VIOGERM® wheatgerm crisps with chocolate. As of 1 October 2009, this sugar-coating segment will be sold to the company Hans Kaspar AG in Zufikon. HOCHDORF Nutrifood AG also filled its top cup product at the Steinhausen site. This involved filling attachable tubs for yoghurts and other applications. The entire top cup business will be taken over by the company bio familia AG in Sachseln at the start of 2010. The overall gross turnover from these three business areas was about CHF 16 million in 2008.

Employees can move too

The employees in the sugar coating and top cup business have also had the opportunity to be taken on by the contract partners. Seven employees are taking up this option and changing their place of work. The possibility of 36 redundancies was mentioned in the press release of 16 February 2009. Now, thanks to the support of the personnel department and the possibility of a switch to the takeover companies (only) 19 people will receive redundancy notices.

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The HOCHDORF group, based in Hochdorf, achieved a consolidated gross turnover of 392.5 million CHF (+19.7% compared to the previous year). It is one of the leading foodstuff companies in Switzerland, employing 402 full-time staff as at 31 December, 2008. Made from natural ingredients such as milk and wheat germ, HOCHDORF products have been contributing to our health and wellbeing since 1895 – from babies to senior citizens. Our customers include the food industry, the retail industry, bakeries and the catering trade. Our products are sold in over 60 countries. The HOCHDORF group's shares are traded at the Berne stock exchange.

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