



Jewellery boxes and display manufacturer Ch. Dahlinger celebrates 150th anniversary

From Lahr into the wide world. Ch. Dahlinger is reflecting on 150 years of company history in 2021. In the course of these 150 years, the long-established company has developed from a traditional jewellery boxes manufacturer to an international full-service provider for the luxury & lifestyle sector.

Ch. Dahlinger was founded in the Black Forest town of Lahr on July 6, 1871. A great deal has happened since this time – with Ch. Dahlinger transitioning from a classic watch and jewellery box manufacturer to an international company that, alongside jewellers and goldsmiths, today also supplies global brands worldwide. The company's product portfolio encompasses everything that jewellers require. However, it also caters to the travel retail business with individually produced presentation cases for watches, jewellery, spirits, writing instruments or cosmetics, as well as presentation stands, displays and storage systems. Regardless of the sector, all Dahlinger products have one thing in common: they provide a perfect presentation environment and make the unboxing experience an unforgettable moment for customers.

The traditional company has also overcome great adversity in its rich and long history. Indeed, four generations faced the challenges of the First World War, the global economic crisis and the Second World War.

The fifth generation then had to deal with the transformation in the watch and jewellery sector, as well as ever increasing competition from East Asia in the 1970s. This required far-reaching strategic changes to be implemented at Ch. Dahlinger. Until then, sales were driven by production capacities and not customer requirements. Yet increasing globalisation at the start of the 1980s then forced the company to fundamentally realign its operations on both the procurement and the sales side. In light of an ever decreasing number of jewellery retail shops, sales markets and target groups needed to be expanded and new products developed.

The turn of the millennium was characterised by China developing into the "world's factory". This could clearly be felt in the jewellery box sector and therefore also by Ch. Dahlinger. Increasing competitive pressure forced the Lahr-based company to seek out new avenues for the future. A comprehensive strategic concept for a new business model was subsequently developed, securing Ch. Dahlinger's earning power and thereby also its future. This involved an all-encompassing transformation of the company's structures and processes. The greatest challenge for Ch. Dahlinger in this regard was outsourcing a large proportion of its in-house production to Asia and ultimately shutting down production operations at the Lahr location in 2002.

However, strong partnerships with Asian producers were quickly established. To optimise the procurement process, two subsidiaries were founded with offices in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. The objective here was to secure local quality assurance for the products, as well as to offer the partners valuable support in terms of technology and procurement. With its new approach, Ch. Dahlinger was able to focus fully on the requirements of its customers in the years that followed and establish an additional revenue stream in the major customer segment of the luxury and lifestyle sector.



After almost 20 years, the company can reflect on the successful transformation with a sense of pride. The combination of innovative product development in Germany and production with powerful partners in Asia secured Ch. Dahlinger's position as one of the leading global providers in the sector.

Germany remains a key location for Ch. Dahlinger to this day. Alongside the fact that the company has its HQ in Lahr, this is underlined by the close collaboration with the subsidiary in Thuringia/Germany. Ch. Dahlinger has been using this location for many years to produce presentation stands that are handcrafted for jewellers. All products with individual customer logo imprints are also personalised here.

Ch. Dahlinger caters to the strongly growing demand for individual consulting and customer service with an international sales team in Lahr, as well as a global network of sales representatives. In addition to this, a team of designers, product managers, international sales employees and marketing experts develops innovative product collections every year. After all, demands have also increased on the product side. Ch. Dahlinger is keen to transform its products into a visual and tactile experience for customers through appealing design and use of special materials. Indeed, the boxes and cases have long since been about more than just product protection. They are part of the experience and create a unique moment when opened.

The in-house design studio with a team of creative graphic and product designers supports customers from the first idea right up to the final concept of their own customised solution. They also work hand in hand with the Technical Design department to ensure that all designs can also be implemented. The Sample department in Lahr then takes the idea developed specifically for a customer and produces an initial prototype. This is a quick process that allows customers to actually hold their idea in their hands. Alongside traditional craftsmanship, the company today also employs the latest technology, including CNC machines, 3D printers, UV flatbed printers and so on. Manufacturers of watches, jewellery, writing utensils, spirits, champagne, wine, cosmetics and medical engineering products are served worldwide with trendsetting and award-winning packaging.

Ch. Dahlinger already took its first steps into the world of eCommerce back in 2001 with the development of an online shop available in five languages. The online shop allows Ch. Dahlinger to serve new sectors and cater to the global market. The company is also still working on expanding and optimising its eCommerce operations as a way of supporting and keeping pace with changes in the specialist retail sector.

Today Ch. Dahlinger is managed in the fifth generation by Bernd Dahlinger and Valerio d'Adamo. Bernd Dahlinger has also been the sole shareholder in the company since April 1, 2021.



Valerio d'Adamo

Bernd Dahlinger



Despite a declining trend in the specialized retail sector, the company has succeeded in increasing its sales revenue to around EUR 35 million over the last few years. Around three quarters of this revenue is generated overseas in over 90 countries. More than 100 employees of the corporate group at various locations and almost 50 sales representatives worldwide ensure that brand names appear on boxes, cases and displays - impressing end customers with their impact.

Ch. Dahlinger is fully aware of its corporate responsibility and is committed to supporting both society and the environment. The company leads by example and repeatedly sets itself new targets to develop its products in an environmentally friendly and resource-saving way, as well as to rethink existing processes. It already signed up to the UN Global Compact back in 2005. Its production partners are SEDEX-audited or ISO 9001-certified and continuously monitored by its own employees. Ch. Dahlinger has also been FSC-certified since 2019. In 2021, the company established a project team that implements various measures within the scope of corporate social responsibility.

With the introduction of the Dahlinger Eco Friendly Label, the company is keen to highlight the goals it has set itself and label products that are produced from sustainable materials. The increasing demand on the customer side for resource-saving products shows that Ch. Dahlinger is on the right track and drives the company to continue focusing both on research and the use of environmentally friendly materials.

Motivated, well trained and qualified employees are also at Ch. Dahlinger a company's most valuable asset. To be able to achieve further growth and secure further strategic development, the key is to get and then keep this manpower on board in the long term. Ch. Dahlinger is aware that its corporate culture must also grow along with its employees. Working in rigid departments is a thing of the past. The company today works with a project focus, putting together teams with expertise in various areas. To ensure that this process can succeed, everyone is involved – from management down to the individual employees. Even in times of coronavirus, this was quickly implemented thanks to mobile working. Employees were provided laptops and trained accordingly. It is now considered perfectly normal for the staff to take part in online meetings from individual locations. The company is keen to derive long-term benefits from this and offer its employees the opportunity to work flexibly, so that they can achieve a healthy balance between work and family life.

Quite a lot has also changed in terms of communication. The company will continue to react to the market through new digital opportunities. It has become common to exchange ideas and work on joint projects beyond national borders through online meetings. Maintaining a social media presence is also vital in the modern world, as this provides a good opportunity to post news and information from the company. Customers and applicants can then learn more about the people that work at Ch. Dahlinger. Whether photoshoots, new products, live reports from trade fairs or staff interviews: anyone interested can get an impression of what Ch. Dahlinger is passionate about, while getting a sense that they are also part of it.

Ch. Dahlinger will be celebrating its 150th anniversary with and for its customers from July 2021 onwards. The company has various activities planned that will underline its commitment to the sector. Due to the pandemic Ch. Dahlinger will be holding a large festival in the summer of 2022 to say thank you to its employees, who were fully committed not only during this crisis, but for the past 150 years, strongly contributing to the company's 150 years of existence.



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