

“We want to continue growing and expanding!”

Stronger together. Accomplishing tasks that are difficult or almost impossible to cope with alone perfectly illustrate the strength of the group. This is the principle that Lab Logistics Group in Meckenheim has successfully exploited since its foundation making it the leading cooperative purchasing association for laboratory equipment and consumables.

As a full service provider with profound expertise and experience, LLG also takes care of purchasing and logistics. “We have high quality standards and deliver very quickly, even in the case of large orders,” stresses Hans Alfter, CEO of Lab Logistics Group GmbH. “As we operate on the international stage, we can select from the product ranges of more than 600 suppliers and offer our members very attractive prices. Another advantage is our truly outstanding service.” The company’s product portfolio covers everything a modern laboratory could possibly require. The product range includes all core areas such as general laboratory consumables, occupational safety, security, analytical measurement and testing, stirring, shaking and mixing as

well as sample preparation, distillation, separation and filtration. Additional product groups served by LLG cover heating and cooling technology, liquid handling, vacuum technology, drying and dry storage, optical instruments and microscopes, cleaning and sterilisation, environmental, soil, water and food analysis, life sciences, chromatography and cleanroom supplies. “Of the 100,000 products listed, 16,000 are kept permanently on stock in our six warehouses,” says Hans Alfter, underlining the storage capacities at LLG. “Hence many of our members no longer operate their own warehouse. The range encompasses everything from laboratory devices, agitators and incubators to medical equipment, masks and disposable gloves up

to laboratory furniture and protective clothing. In addition, we offer a range of specialist liquids, although we do not see ourselves as chemicals traders.”

Greater market power

In the mid-1970s several medium-sized lab equipment distributors

decided to unite under the name Labor Handels Union GmbH (LUH). The reason behind this move was the growing influence of American competitors who were pushing hard into the European market. The association promised a stronger negotiating position towards manufacturers.

Interview with



*Hans Alfter,
CEO
of Lab Logistics Group GmbH*



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In addition to this, the advantages of shared logistics and marketing activities could be exploited. The association's activities initially focused on the German market but soon also international partners were introduced to the group. Today, ten of the association's 34 members are based in Germany while the remainder represent 24 different countries including Italy, France, Spain, Canada, Japan, Australia and the United States.

In-house Sales Convention

LLG currently employs 120 people and generates an annual turnover of 100 million EUR – of which roughly half is generated in Germany. Besides serving its members, LLG also offers its services to third party clients who account for between 6% and 7% of turnover. "Two of our employees focus their efforts entirely on serving third party clients," says CEO Hans Alfter. "Our partners serve customers in the chemical, pharmaceutical and education sectors as well as industrial clients, hospitals and universities. We operate pretty much everywhere where laboratories are found. Our members source between 10% and 50% of their requirements from us." Due to its structure as a member's association LLG does not have its own sales force. Attending trade fairs such as Analytica in Munich or Achema in Frankfurt is an important part of LLG's marketing activities. The association is also a regular participant at in-house events of its shareholders. "We want to increase our marketing activities in order to position LLG more promi-

nently in the market as a well-known brand," explains CFO Matthias Trüberg. "A popular meeting place for our partners and suppliers is our biannual in-house LLG-Sales Convention trade fair. This major event always attracts between 800 and 900 participants."

Motivated and cheerful

As a modern company, LLG is also working on state-of-the-art digitalization solutions. "Our definition of digitalisation covers ERP, automation, logistics and processes," explains the CEO. "These are the areas we want to focus on in the future." As well

as navigating its way through the digital age, LLG is also addressing another key issue of our times – sustainability. "We have repositioned ourselves in this area and will revise around 150 processes and projects always keeping sustainability in mind," says COO Stefan Königshoven. "For instance, we operate now in a climate neutral manner, have

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switched to electric vehicles in our fleet and we are drawing energy from our own solar panels." Open and intensive channels of communication with employees and customers characterise the corporate culture at LLG. "We place great importance on personal responsibility and welcome suggestions from employees," says Hans Alfter. "I am very happy to see motivated and cheerful employees. As a typical medium-sized company we have very flat hierarchies and do our best to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and long-lasting decision making processes." For the coming years further growth through the addition of new shareholders as well as the automation of the logistics supply chain and the implementation of a new ERP system are on the agenda. "We want to continue to grow and to expand," confirms Hans Alfter. "Our product portfolio is excellent – that is something we want to draw more attention to. Our focus will be on enhancing the visibility of the company and strengthening our corporate identity."