



They are people of action, tireless, drivers, shapers, forward striving, active. They exist on the big stage, more rarely in secret, but there too. They introduce themselves. In COBURGER. One of them in each issue – men and women.

This time: Erik Stammberger, the managing partner of the upholstered furniture manufacturer Willi Schillig from Frohnlach, which today has over 1000 employees and seven locations around the world.

Are you a doer?

Yes, I think so.

Why are you a doer?

My motto is „If you don't move with the times, you move with the times.“ Doing, therefore, means constantly questioning yourself and the company, all decisions, all developments, in order to always be able to react quickly. Resting on past successes only works for a certain period of time, but not in the long term. There are always ways to move forward, to develop further, to create new products, to improve processes. For me, that is making.

What makes the difference?

Well, you need a direction, an idea, a vision that you have to exemplify, a team that goes along with you, and of course a portion of courage and willingness to take risks. The best decisions as a doer are not made with the gut, nor with the brain, but in the middle, so to speak, with the heart. This includes enthusiasm for a new idea as well as a cool head. That's why we build on a powerful management team, a mixture of experienced and fresh colleagues, absolute specialists with the necessary know-how. As a team, we have made more good decisions than bad ones in recent years, whether in the upholstered furniture or banking crisis, or currently during the Corona pandemic. We used the latter to question everything: our collections, the structures, the market. This resulted in completely new ideas and approaches.

With W.SCHILLIG Outdoor and Objects, new companies were even founded during this time, and their products were very well received by the market. And as one of the very few German manufacturers we have opened a large number of W.SCHILLIG monobrand stores in Asia through a franchise concept with our partners.

How did it all start with making?

I was more or less born into the craft through my grandfather and father. I grew up in the furniture factory, skateboarded through the production halls and travelled to the furniture fairs. But taking over the company was not the plan from the beginning, nor was it the expectation of my family. The initial spark came during the internship for my business studies in America, where I realised that comfortable furniture from Europe was urgently needed there. The passion had taken hold of me. And so I founded W.SCHILLIG USA almost 25 years ago. After Germany, America is now our second largest market. Since 2015, I have been responsible for the entire group of companies. W.SCHILLIG is now one of the world's market leaders in the upholstered furniture sector for the middle and upper target groups.

Is the Coburg region a good starting point for making?

Absolutely, I've been travelling all over the world for 25 years now, been everywhere, yet it's always nice to come home. Coburg has a lot to offer to our customers and us, both culturally and gastronomically. Since reunification, we have been located in the middle of Germany with an excellent infrastructure. We really feel very much at home here!