



Frosch is making Japan's environment happier

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Japanese group and business partner takes Werner & Mertz as its role model

Mainz. Environmental protection and a powerful cleaning performance are not mutually incompatible. Werner & Mertz, the long-established Mainz-based company, pursues a sustainability approach with its "Frosch products" that runs through its entire corporate culture. And what's more, it interests its business partners: how does an SME company manage to unite quality, performance and environmental friendliness? This is precisely what Toshio Asano, president of Asahi Kasei Corporation based in Tokyo informed himself about during his tour of Europe that also led him to the "Frosch" headquarters in Mainz.



Two men who not only get on well but who also have the common aim of a sustainable corporate philosophy: (from left to right): Reinhard Schneider, owner of Werner & Mertz, and his Japanese business partner Toshio Asano, president of Asahi Kasei Corporation, Tokyo.

Since 2011 the Tokyo-based raw materials group and the Mainz producer of environmentally friendly domestic cleaning and care agents have cultivated an "intensive, happy friendship", making Japan the second-most important trading partner for Werner & Mertz after Russia. "We are both very proud and glad that the senior representative of Asahi Kasei Corporation is visiting us", said Reinhard Schneider, managing partner of Werner & Mertz, while welcoming his distinguished guest. Market leaders in the production and distribution of household film, the company's subsidiary Asahi Home Products sells in excess of thirty Frosch-branded products



including washing-up liquid, WC cleaner and kitchen deodorants. Every second Japanese knows the brand Frosch. As such “Frosch“ can be found in more than 20,000 Japanese food and drug stores. At the request of its business partner, Werner & Mertz developed a room deodorant specifically for the Japanese market that meets the special demands of the Japanese consumer – high living quality in a small space – and only contains specially tested natural and nature-identical substances.

The Japanese love the frog in its own right as they link happiness with the animal (Frosch is German for frog), but also the benefits and premium quality of Frosch products, which led to a fast and high level of acceptance for the brand. Moreover, “Frosch“ enjoys downright cult status in Japan; a bottle of Frosch washing-up liquid “made in Germany“ is seen as a designer object and can sometimes be found decorating living room cabinets in Japanese homes. It is interesting to note that the chemicals giant Asahi Kasei approached the smaller company from Mainz for support in its endeavour to achieve greater sustainability. Furthermore, the Japanese consumer pays great attention to the high quality of the product and to its design. “What comes into the market is hand-picked twice over“, confirmed Peter Kloppe, head of the export department at Frosch. The joint success story is as such very fruitful, for European quality too. Always in sight: the concept of sustainability as the company’s cornerstone. “That is our ideal“, Toshio Asano is convinced. This ideal should also become the foundation supporting the Asahi Kasei Corporation too one day.

What are the objectives of this fruitful cooperation? In the medium term Werner & Mertz wishes to achieve a market share of five percent and expand its product range distribution. The market share currently stands at 2.5 percent. Further market segments are also to be exploited as well. Reinhard Schneider sees parallels in Japan to the environmental movement that was launched in Germany in the 1980s and 1990s. After all, raw materials are scarce in Japan. “This is not a short-term trend but rather a durable, successful market segment“, the company’s managing director stated.

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