

“Family Companies are Different!”

Robert Schmitz holds one of the four seats on the Advisory Board of the HOSCH Group

At the beginning of 2018, HOSCH decided to establish a four-member Advisory Board to advise the company’s management, support it from an outsider’s vantage point, and make its external know-how more easily accessible.

The Advisory Board meets four times a year and comprises Robert Schmitz, Managing Director and co-owner of the family-run Hardy-Schmitz group, attorney-at-law Heinrich Kill, Professor Norbert A. Harlander, management expert and psychologist, and Stefan Burk, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of BURK AG. HOSCH news is introducing the members of the Advisory Board in turn. First up were Professor Norbert A. Harlander and Stefan Burk – this time we talked with Robert Schmitz.

Mr. Schmitz, when did you first hear about HOSCH?

Robert Schmitz: I have been close to the Kill-Frech family since 2004. We meet several times a year, and our topics of conversation include the company and the associated challenges. When Cornelia Kill-Frech’s father died, she asked me if I would be interested in joining the new HOSCH Advisory Board in order to support her in her new and initially unfamiliar situation for a time. I agreed immediately.

What do you see as the role of an advisory board in a family-run company?

Robert Schmitz: Over 25 years ago, the Hardy-Schmitz corporate group established an advisory board on the

initiative of my father. Its purpose was to provide support while a new generation took over the management of the company. Experienced people were chosen who had expertise in a range of different areas and could therefore advise and support the owners when they had to take decisions. It’s exactly the same at HOSCH. Cornelia Kill-Frech comes as daughter of the previous owner by the sudden death of her father in a situation where she not only has to manage a company but will also have to pass it on to the next generation later on. To get advice and expert support for this process, she is bringing in external experts – the Advisory Board.

What is your role on the Advisory Board?

Robert Schmitz: I see myself as an entrepreneur who can offer HOSCH the benefit of his experience in a family-run company that has been active on the market since 1925 and is now in the third generation. Family companies are different! That applies to the Hardy-Schmitz corporate group just as it applies to HOSCH. They are not focused on short-term business success, as is frequently the case in corporations, but on their long-term position on the market over several generations. People are especially important in family companies. I can draw on my experience of working with two generations of advisory board members in the Hardy-Schmitz group and on the founding of a young software company that is now a market leader in Germany.

Personal Info

Robert Schmitz (60) is Managing Director and co-owner of the family-run Hardy-Schmitz corporate group headquartered in Rheine, the second largest city in Germany’s Münsterland region. The group has approx. 300 employees and operates as a supplier and service partner in the fields of electrotechnology, system services and network technology. Furthermore, he is co-owner of the IT firm secova that has already won several awards for its EHS software sam® including the “Innovationspreis IT,” the “TOP 100” (Germany’s most innovative companies) and the “Great Place to Work” prizes. Robert Schmitz is married and has two daughters (30 and 32 years young) who both work in “new media.”

He spends his leisure time researching the history of his family and local history; he also uses every opportunity to attend truck trial events and to visit his favorite island, Langeoog.

