

# FOCUSING ON PEOPLE

**If you want to do business responsibly, you need to focus not only on economic and ecological goals, but also on how you treat your employees and customers. Jens Karolyi, Senior Vice President Corporate Marketing & People Development at Interroll, discusses the company's responsibility in this area.**



Jens Karolyi, Senior Vice President Corporate Marketing & People Development

## **Has social responsibility only moved to the top of Interroll's management agenda with the 2022 Sustainability Report?**

**Jens Karolyi:** No. Independently of our sustainability reporting, we have long had a clear code of conduct that doesn't tolerate discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment based on gender, race or disability. The same applies to ethnic or cultural origin, religion, belief, age or sexual orientation. In addition, we expressly committed to the principles of the UN Global Compact years ago by joining it, and we support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations with our own measures. We also assume social responsibility for our corporate actions, especially in our dealings with the people with whom we work.

## **What role do employees play for your company?**

They are essential and not just for ethical reasons. They are key to our business success because, ultimately, everything depends on people. We need their skills in our plants and offices to meet all our customers various needs. That's why our human resources development work far exceeds relevant legal requirements. We invest specifically in our employees' qualifications, further training and talent development.

## **How do you go about this?**

At the core of these activities is our Group-wide training and development center, the Interroll Academy in Baal near Düsseldorf. We work with a modern integrated learning concept, called blended learning. It enables us to combine the advantages of a wide variety of learning formats according to specific

needs and various target groups. One example is interactive e-learning with classroom training or coaching. Virtual training options are not only extremely efficient, but also make it possible to better address the respective needs of training participants, and to do so on a worldwide level.

**Why do you rely on your own resources?**

One important reason is that we want to recruit a large proportion of our international specialists and managers from our own ranks. In this way we ensure that we have the right employees in the right place at the right time, even in a tight labor market. This strategy, which also includes a Group-wide training program for managers, not only increases our clout, but also enables employees to acquire skills that broaden their individual perspectives and help them advance professionally at Interroll, as countless examples that extend to the highest management levels clearly show.

**But first you need to find people with the necessary talents and commitment.**

That's why we operate a dedicated, international program to find and develop talent. We are guided by clear strategic goals and portfolio analyses. Where are we today? Where do we want to go? Since we know the answers, we also know which competencies need to be developed at which locations and when. But our human resources development work begins strategically much earlier, for example, in our support of trainees or our cooperation with universities. To establish close contact with young, talented students who might be suitable for our company, we support them with their final theses, for example, or use university events to talk to this target group.

**How do you engage with customers?**

We approach this issue holistically in several ways. On the one hand, we look very closely at how, when and with what focus we can best support customers. To do this, we identify the key contact points and the corresponding tools along the so-called “customer

journey” – regardless of whether they are in the digital or analog world. Right from the start of the coronavirus pandemic, for example, we not only took responsibility for our customers in terms of production and service, but also enabled them to exchange technical information with us through various online formats. During this period without trade shows, we parked our show truck in front of their company buildings Europe-wide to ensure safe personal contacts. Our engagement with customers, however, isn't limited to the sales level alone. Working with commitment and passion for them, even behind the scenes of direct, personal customer contacts, is one of our four core values. Our employees are the most important ambassadors for advancing our brand.

**Medium-sized customers, in particular, have special requirements. How do you deal with them?**

As an international technology leader in material flow solutions that has been operating in the industry for decades, we have achieved a special credibility and are considered an authority in the market. We view this status as an obligation to assume responsibility. Years ago, we institutionalized our exchange with small and medium-sized customers via our international Rolling On Interroll competence network. Through eye-level partnerships and a regular exchange of know-how, we help these companies implement technologically demanding, sustainable projects for their customers.

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