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uvex group successfully closes financial year 2019/20

The Fürth-based family company records growth of 1% and is aiming to emerge stronger from the coronavirus crisis – business model based on protecting people gains in significance – broad diversification and proprietary factories represent keys to success

The uvex group safely and successfully steered its business model focused on protecting people at work, in sport and during leisure pursuits through financial year 2019/20, which has been shaped by the coronavirus crisis. Total sales stood at around EUR 480 million, equating to year-on-year growth of 1%.

Michael Winter, Managing Partner of the uvex group, says: “Considering the challenging financial year now behind us, the stabilisation of the uvex group at this high level is extremely pleasing. As a corporate group, we are widely diversified in addition to being well-positioned on an international basis, which has proved to be a relatively robust business model over the course of the coronavirus crisis”. At the start of the year, the uvex safety group registered enormous demand for respirators, wide-vision goggles, disposable protective gloves and coveralls.

However, there were significant sales declines observed in other product groups such as the ski helmets and ski goggles offered by uvex sports due to the abrupt end to the season brought about by the coronavirus crisis. Meanwhile, a totally different picture emerged for the cycling segment, as Michael Winter explains: “The severe slump during the lockdown weeks was followed by an explosion in growth – both in store and online. This is a trend that we are familiar with from previous years and which was maintained and accelerated due to the coronavirus crisis”.

uvex safety group on growth path

In financial year 2019/2020, the uvex safety group generated a 4% sales increase to EUR 365 million. With a share of 76% in consolidated group sales, the uvex safety group remains the backbone of the family business. Growth drivers here included the helmets (visors), safety eyewear and respiratory protection product groups, with each contributing double-digit growth rates. Meanwhile, protective footwear, hearing protection, safety gloves, clothing and laser protection were product groups impacted by short-time working hours that have been introduced across many industries as well as by the ongoing structural transformation within the automotive industry.

Sport and leisure segment adversely impacted by coronavirus

With its well-known brands uvex and ALPINA, this subgroup has experienced a substantially adverse impact from the coronavirus crisis, generating total sales of EUR 128 million; this equates to a decline of 3% year on year. Both the lockdown affecting many commercial sectors and distribution channels as well as the introduction of new hygiene regulations deterred many consumers from making spontaneous purchases of sunglasses and reading glasses offered under the Filtral and Primetta brands. The differing growth developments within the uvex sports group – significant increases in the cycling segment and substantial sales declines due to the winter sports season coming to an abrupt halt – were also reflected in the markets and regions. The result from the equestrian sports segment was on a par with the prior year.

Innovations “made in uvex”

The fact that the uvex group has been able to maintain a steady course even during the coronavirus crisis is down to the “made in uvex” philosophy: the family company manufactures 71% of its products in its own factories, of which 43% can be attributed to Germany alone. Both proprietary innovations for products and services in addition to solutions that are specially tailored to customer requirements are key pillars of the uvex group’s success. As Michael Winter explains: “Because most of our factories are located in Germany and other European countries, we are able to react flexibly to order fluctuations and either ramp up or scale back production capacities accordingly”. In this way, the uvex group has been able to offset losses incurred in the winter sports segment at the Lederdorn factory with orders attributable to the uvex safety group.

Outlook 2020/2021

“During this crisis, our ‘protecting people’ philosophy is even more firmly entrenched in our minds”, explains Michael Winter, before adding: “This means developing future-orientated products and services together to protect people today in order to emerge stronger from the crisis tomorrow”. The “protecting people” mission also represents a duty to safely manage the uvex safety group, which has grown to around 2,900 employees over the course of financial year 2019/2020, through the coronavirus pandemic. To this end, the company is enforcing on-site safety concepts for daily interactions in offices and production facilities, enabling mobile working where possible, and is constantly further developing digital competencies in contact with both employees and customers.

About the uvex group

The uvex group brings together three globally active companies under one roof: the uvex safety group, the uvex sports group (with uvex sports and ALPINA), and the Filtral group (Filtral and Primetta). The uvex group is represented in 22 countries by 49 subsidiaries but chooses to do most of its manufacturing in Germany. In total, 60% of the company’s 2,900-strong workforce (as at: FY 2019/20) are employed in Germany. uvex is a global partner to international elite sport and equips a host of top athletes. The motto “protecting people” is at the heart of the company’s activities. uvex develops, manufactures and distributes products and services for the safety and protection of people at work, in sport and for leisure pursuits.

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