



# Beauty & PRECISION

Swiss bathroom design specialist Talsee AG is a multiple award winner with a long and proud history. We spoke with Deputy MD Fabian Roth to discover the company's blueprint for ongoing innovation.

## FABIAN ROTH

DEPUTY MD, Talsee AG

**S**ince being founded in 1896, Talsee AG has drawn inspiration from its surroundings. Located within the valley of lakes in the Canton Lucerne in Switzerland, an area of outstanding natural beauty, the company has sought to bring elements of the landscape into its design processes. The result is a spectacular range of bathroom furniture and installations. A regular winner of design awards such as the Red Dot prize, the IF Design Awards and the German Design Awards, the company is now clearly established as a leader in its sector.

Current Deputy Managing Director Fabian Roth joined Talsee AG a year ago, following a management career across several disparate sectors. It was an opportunity he took up with relish.

"I was excited because Talsee is a market leader in Switzerland," Mr Roth says. "And the Swiss market has a high expectation in terms of quality. The company had high export goals, especially related to the German and Austrian markets and also with a new partner in Sweden. So I felt I was joining a company with a great history, which was also looking to expand its operations."

### Unique craftsmanship

Above all, the new deputy MD was attracted by the bespoke nature of Talsee AG's products. Each is a unique design, crafted individually, and can be tailored to the specific needs of the buyer. Within this, he saw huge sales potential. In order to try to achieve this potential, however, some changes in approach were required. →





“First of all, we made some changes to our organisation,” Mr Roth explains. “Due to a change of our strategy, we are looking to increase our export sales revenue to 25 percent within the next three years. We have identified a number of European regions as central to this. Scandinavia is important to us because we don’t feel there is anyone there offering anything comparable, so we believe our way of working will be very attractive.”

A recruitment drive followed, and a new company-wide strategic focus was introduced. Within this, three areas were identified as key to the accomplishment of these near future goals. First of these was a renewed emphasis on the end-customer within the private field, specifically individuals looking to acquire Talsee AG’s products and services for their homes. The second focus was on the pro-

ject space, looking to partner with developers constructing new luxury apartment or office buildings in which Talsee AG’s designs could be incorporated. The third focus was in the area of trade, where commercial customers were won for Talsee AG’s products.

Through these three new points of emphasis, the company intends to forge a new and



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exciting path over the coming years.

“As a result of this, I think we understand better now what the customer needs, whether they are an architect, a plumber or a householder,” Mr Roth explains. “They might all look at the situation very differently due to their own perspectives, so it’s important we are in tune with that.”

#### Future ambitions

With this in hand, Talsee AG has ambitious projections for the next three to five years. Double-digit growth figures are anticipated while the company intends to become an internationally recognised design brand within the next six years. There are, of course, challenges to be overcome in order to achieve these aims, but Mr Roth is extremely confident that such targets can be met. →

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tionships are also a crucial part of Talsee AG's ongoing story. The company has a number of longstanding, stable relationships with supply chain partners, which enables it to withstand disruption. This has been of particular importance in recent years, while the coronavirus pandemic has caused logistical upheaval around the world.

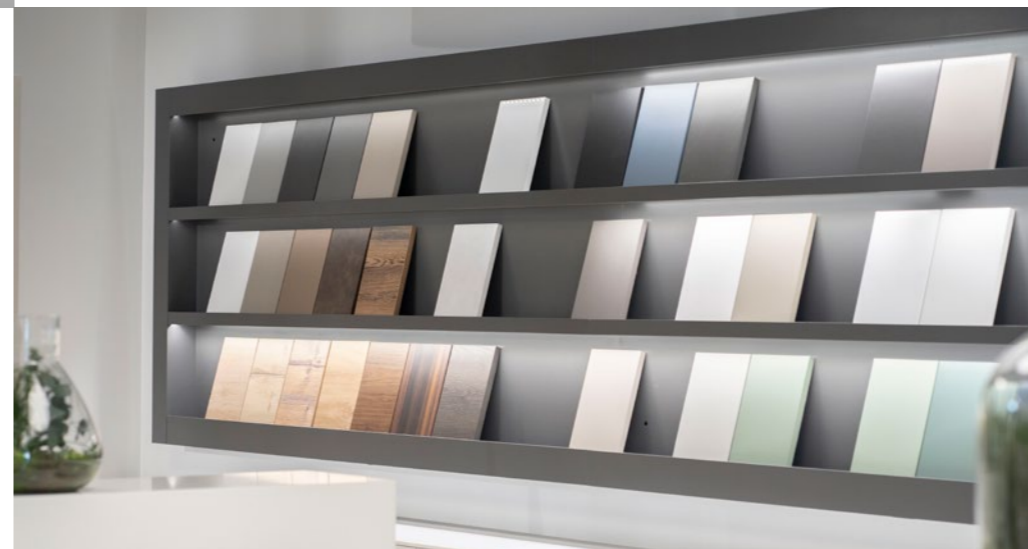
"We talk of our suppliers as partners," Mr Roth says. "And this is very important. It is not a buyer and seller relationship but one of partnership and mutual benefit. In this way, you can work to support each other, especially in periods of difficulty. Equally, we do not just take the cheapest option. We prefer to find and work with local suppliers who understand our identity and our need for quality and can contribute something to that."

**Maintaining quality in tough times**

Not only does this approach lend itself to more sustainable practices, but when the pandemic began, this attitude to supplier relationships enabled Talsee AG to react in an agile manner. Extra contracts were placed and stockpiles of essential materials created, enabling the company to mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic and continue operations with minimal disruption.

Summing up, as he looks to the future in his new role, Mr Roth is hugely enthusiastic about the Talsee AG journey.

"It's all about quality and uniqueness," he says. "That is what we bring to the market, and this approach, of making a difference to people's lives through design and aesthetics, is at the heart of everything we do. We genuinely think this is an important field of work, and over the coming years, we hope to bring it to as many customers as possible." 



"There might need to be a little bit of a culture shift," he reflects. "Because our vision is to define a unique perception of space that's not just about producing furniture, it's about making a difference. This vision is not easy to accomplish necessarily, but that is what we are about. We want to create unique and energising spaces with superlative aesthetics. It's a lifestyle thing. It's not just bathrooms."

The company's manufacturing base is located at home in Switzerland, which presents some challenges. Costs are naturally high, as are wages, yet it is felt this is also a strength of their operational procedures.

"We invest a lot in our factory," Mr Roth

explains. "There is a great deal of automation and sophistication there, operating under a lean management model. Everything is well structured and well organised, and at the end, the result is that our products are very detailed



**It's all about quality and uniqueness.**

and unique. You know, people often talk about Swiss clocks and precision, and that's exactly how it is with us. We think in millimetres, not centimetres. This is a big difference between us and our competitors."

**Image and Identity**

Set alongside Talsee AG's marketing, innovative branding, and passion for service excellence, a very defined corporate image is created. This is central to the company's identity and something to be retained in the face of any other changes which may be necessary.

As with any company with manufacturing elements within its operations, supplier rela-