

FORUM

The Stieglmeyer-Group's company magazine



11. November 2021 // **Inside**

New subsidiary in the megacity of Foshan near Hong Kong

Even the view from the new office window makes the size of the task clear. A Manhattan-like skyline is rising on a greenfield site in Foshan. The city of nine million is one of numerous mega-metropolises in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, 130 km air-line distance from Hong Kong. This is where the office of Stieglmeyer China Co. Ltd. has been located for several weeks.

Jochen Zhu-Schleiss is the managing director of our new subsidiary in the People's Republic. A native of Germany with decades of business experience in China, he has moved into a modern office on the 30th floor of a skyscraper. A showroom will also be set up there



As General Manager, Jochen Zhu-Schleiss brings with him extensive experience in the China business.

Mr. Zhu-Schleiss is still working with only one other colleague, but the young company is expected to grow quickly. Already for the coming summer, 2,500 square meters have been reserved for a production facility where our beds will be assembled for the Chinese market. All the necessary components will come from

China. This is possible because important European suppliers of our drives or castors also operate Chinese branches in the vicinity.

This will be followed by the establishment of a trans-regional network of distributors. The retail partners in the cities and provinces should also have their own showrooms and bed storage facilities and be able to supply smaller retailers locally.

Geriatric care also a fast-growing sector in China

China is a highly interesting market, especially for care beds, explains Jochen Zhu-Schleiss. As in Europe, the percentage of elderly people is growing here, not least as a result of the government's long-standing one-child policy. At the same time, growing prosperity is causing a change in lifestyle in many regions. "Until now, people here have often lived together in three-generation households and looked after each other," says Mr. Zhu-Schleiss. "But young people don't want that anymore." They want to live independently and individually.

As a result, nursing homes are being built in many places for the first time. Attention is being paid to high quality, and German operators are also active locally. At the same time, the homecare sector is booming with increased demands. For the beds from Stieglmeyer and Burmeier, this offers excellent opportunities, because German engineering is very popular in China. German cars are just as much in demand as German kitchens, explains the managing director.



The modern Stieglmeyer office in Foshan will soon coordinate trading activities in many regions.

What fascinates him about Chinese business life is the fast pace. "When it comes to realising projects, the Chinese are often three times as fast as us Germans," says Mr Zhu-Schleiss. "Even if they make a mistake in the process, they get back up, keep going and are still faster in the end." The managing director has a lot of experience in working with Chinese partners. His Chinese wife, who runs a German architecture firm, can also support him.

Successful CV with valuable experience

Jochen Zhu-Schleiss comes from the German city of Nuremberg, is a trained electrician and studied engineering. He worked in Germany in the pioneering years of mobile telephony and first came to Hong Kong in the 1990s to sell mobile phones, which were not yet produced in China at the time. In 2004, he moved to Hong Kong completely and worked as a quality controller in the furniture industry. This was followed by the establishment of a local Italian furniture factory and successful development work with two car parts manufacturers in the 2010s.

So, at Stieglmeyer he knows exactly what challenges lie ahead. Jochen Zhu-Schleiss is certain: "This will be the last job of my professional career."