

Press Release

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Tobias Wollermann to head Corporate Responsibility at the Otto Group

As of 01 March 2020 Dr Tobias Wollermann will lead the Vice Presidential Division Corporate Responsibility Otto Group. The long-serving Group Vice President Dr Johannes Merck is to take up an advisory role within the retail and services company at his own wish.

Since 01 October 2008 Dr Tobias Wollermann has been Managing Director of The Young ClassX, the music project co-founded by the Otto Group, and has played a major role in the initiative's resounding success. The 44 year-old's CV confirms that he has consistently proved able to master new challenges. Tobias Wollermann managed multimedia and e-learning projects before accepting an invitation to join the Osnabrück University academic staff as a researcher. He later held major responsibility in setting up the Baden-Württemberg Pop Academy.

He has a wide variety of connections with the Otto Group. Since October 2009 he has been a consultant to the Corporate Development and Corporate Culture Division, representing the Group on the Culture Committee of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and holding a seat on the BDI Executive Board. Besides this he is also an Honorary Professor at Hamburg University of Music & Theatre.

"In Tobias we are very pleased to have found a highly motivated, highly valued leadership figure for this important position – and one who knows the Otto Group very well", emphasises Alexander Birken, CEO and Chairman of the Otto Group Executive Board.

The change at the helm of Otto Group Corporate Responsibility is at the request of the long-serving Group Vice President Dr Johannes Merck. The 62 year-old joined the Group in 1989 as a PR Manager and as early as 1990 began to build a structured CR Management organisation under the leadership of Prof. Dr Michael Otto. He has held responsibility since 1997 for the very multifaceted Vice Presidential Division, one that is crucial to the public reputation of the Otto Group. In this period the Otto Group has set benchmarks in many respects in the topic area of environmental protection and social responsibility. Above all,

the entrepreneurial initiatives developed by this Vice Presidential Division aimed at pushing through social standards, sustainable resource management and the reduction of climate-damaging emissions have earned great respect in the sector and beyond. This has given the Otto Group a strong CR reputation in business, political and societal spheres, and has led to numerous awards and distinctions for its innovative CR Management.

Johannes Merck deserves particular recognition for consistently also taking action beyond the boundaries of the Group. He made a major contribution to establishing a whole network of sociopolitically effective initiatives that include the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection, the Aid by Trade Foundation, the company consultancy Systain Consulting, and the Foundation 2° – German Business Leaders for Climate Protection.

Dr Johannes Merck will continue to advise on special topics within the Vice Presidential Division and will manage the networking and effectiveness of the very varied sociopolitical engagement of the Otto Group and the Otto family. He will continue as Managing Director of the Michael Otto Foundation for Environmental Protection.

“We are most deeply grateful to Johannes for his many years of tremendously committed work and are delighted that he will stay with us as a key advisor and bridge-builder”, says Alexander Birken.

Otto Group

Founded in Germany in 1949, today the Otto Group is a globally active retail and services group with around 52,560 employees in 30 major company groups and does business in over 30 countries in Europe, North and South America, and Asia. Its business activities are grouped into three segments: Multichannel Retail, Financial Services, and Service. In the 2018/19 financial year (to 28 February), the Otto Group generated revenues of 13.4 billion euros. With online revenues of approximately 7.7 billion euros, the Otto Group is one of the world's largest online retailers. The Group's particular strength is its broad market presence with differentiated product and service offers to diverse customer target groups in almost all of the world's relevant economic regions. Numerous strategic partnerships and joint ventures provide the Otto Group with excellent opportunities to transfer know-how and leverage areas of synergy potential. Group companies demonstrate a high degree of corporate responsibility and willingness to collaborate with one another; at the same time this guarantees flexibility, customer proximity and optimum target-group appeal in their respective national markets.

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