

## PRESS RELEASE

**"We don't think in years, we think in generations"**

- **Schwan-STABILO Group celebrates its 170th anniversary**
- **Three pillars - Writing instruments, Cosmetics and Outdoor - ensure stability**
- **Around 5,300 employees generate annual sales of 800 million euros**

**Heroldsberg/April 2025: When 25-year-old Gustav Adam Schwanhäußer took over a pencil factory founded ten years earlier in 1865, nobody could have imagined that it would grow into a globally successful company. Today, the Schwan-STABILO group of companies is managed by the sixth generation - and generates an annual turnover of around 800 million euros with around 5,300 employees worldwide. (As of 30.06.2024). This makes Schwan-STABILO one of Germany's leading family businesses, which together secure around 60 percent of private-sector jobs.**

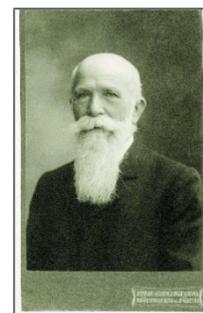
"We are and will remain a family business," emphasizes Sebastian Schwanhäußer, CEO and



executive shareholder of Schwan-STABILO. "No matter what challenges we face - we think in terms of generations, not years." For him, family businesses are characterized by flexibility, quick decisions and personal responsibility. "If we do it right, we are closer and bolder - with our strategy and the way we manage employees and develop products and solutions. We don't jump on every trend, new things have to make sense in the long term."

**A Story of Change**

The history of the company is characterized by change and the ability of different generations to courageously accept and skilfully shape even far-reaching changes. Company founder Gustav Adam Schwanhäußer already showed foresight in 1865 when he took over the insolvent pencil factory Großberger & Kurz in Nuremberg, which had been founded ten years earlier. He invested in modern machines and innovative products. "He had his colored copying pencils patented as early as 1875," explains Sebastian Schwanhäußer. "That was a real revolution in everyday office life back then. It significantly simplified and accelerated the copying of documents."



Another shining product example of innovative strength is the STABILO BOSS highlighter, which



Günter Schwanhäuser developed in the 1970s. "In the 70s, my father achieved a coup that is still significant today," recalls Sebastian Schwanhäuser. "During a trip to the USA, he observed students marking important passages in their documents in color with a fiber-tip pen." A good idea, but one that didn't

convince Günter Schwanhäuser. "Back in Nuremberg, together with his experienced chemists and product designers, he designed the first highlighter that could be used to highlight written or printed material in bright yellow - the STABILO BOSS was born," says his son Sebastian Schwanhäuser. This product is still produced in Weißenburg in Middle Franconia and has been sold over three billion times worldwide.

### **Cohesion and entrepreneurial courage**

In 1908, Eduard and August, the sons of Gustav Adam Schwanhäuser, stepped into the role of leading the company. They guided it through stormy times: the First World War and the global economic crisis hit the family and employees hard. "But even then, solidarity and entrepreneurial spirit were crucial to successfully overcoming adversity," says Sebastian Schwanhäuser.

### **Cosmetics meets pioneering spirit - an idea with a long-term effect**

As more and more women in Europe discovered the joy of make-up at the beginning of the 20th



century, August Schwanhäuser and his son Erich, who was now also working in the company, also demonstrated a true innovative spirit: they recognized the potential of an existing product - the so-called dermatograph, which was originally used as a marking

pen in medicine. In 1927, they launched it on the market as the first eyebrow pencil - an international success that also inspired customers such as the US cosmetics entrepreneur Max Factor. Decades later, this early impulse was to develop new strength. Under the leadership of Horst Schwanhäuser, who proclaimed his then new philosophy of "the customer first", the expansion of Schwan Cosmetics began in the 1970s. Today, the company is a global leader as a private label manufacturer of decorative cosmetic pencils.



### Three pillars – providing stability in uncertain

There have been a number of strategic decisions in the company's history that have set the course for the future, some of which have been surprising. In 2006, the company entered the outdoor market by acquiring the backpack manufacturer deuter, which complemented the cosmetics and pens divisions. At the time, outdoor activities were just starting to become a trend. Nevertheless, the family and management dared to make the decision and from then on put the business on three pillars to become more resilient and future-proof. The risk paid off. In addition to deuter, the brands ORTOVOX, Maier Sports and Gonso now belong to the division.



### Core values with impact

On its 170th anniversary, Schwan-STABILO can look back on an impressive company history characterized by innovative strength, entrepreneurial foresight and an attitude that combines long-term thinking with responsible action. This fundamental conviction has accompanied the family business for generations. "We have bundled our values into a common guiding principle," explains Sebastian Schwanhäußer. "It makes it clear what drives us, connects us and where we want to go together."

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### Confident about the future

Despite the current economic and geopolitical difficulties, Sebastian Schwanhäußer believes that the group is well prepared for the future. "All three of our business segments meet needs that are highly relevant, especially in these times," says the CEO and executive shareholder. "Creativity, personal well-being and outdoor experiences are global megatrends. In principle, consumer goods are the stable world on which we can build, even in tougher times." Schwan-STABILO continues to do what it does best: The teams work on products that constantly surprise with new ideas and solutions. "As a family business, we stand for stability, planning and sustainable growth, even in difficult times," adds Sebastian Schwanhäußer. "There is no shortage of ideas and topics. We are celebrating our anniversary with precisely this forward momentum and are optimistic about the coming decades."

