

Media release

Tom Winter becomes new CEO of BERNEXPO AG

Bern, 1 February 2021 – The Board of Directors of BERNEXPO AG has elected Tom Winter, a 46-year-old EPFL engineer, as its new CEO. In addition, the company is optimistically looking to the future with the Neue Festhalle planned for 2024. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has now forced BERNEXPO to cancel the traditional BEA spring trade fair once again.

New CEO Tom Winter will be taking up his post on 1 March 2021. As a manager with national and international experience as well as a strong entrepreneurial flair and sound knowledge of marketing, sales and digitalisation, he has all the skills needed to guide BERNEXPO down the path of a successful future. He has proven his great expertise in the areas of leadership and corporate development in positions that included deputy CEO of Globus Switzerland and director of UPC Retail. As head of the sales and distribution department at an international telecommunications group, Tom Winter gained valuable experience in how to attain success even under difficult conditions.

Exceptional communication skills

“With Tom Winter, we managed to recruit our preferred candidate as CEO,” Franziska von Weissenfluh, Co-Chair of the Board of Directors, explains. “After the drastic restrictions in response to the COVID-19 situation, BERNEXPO must now face the challenges of the digital transformation and the rising demands of its clients that go hand in hand with it. When we appointed Tom Winter as CEO, we brought a talented individual on board who will expertly represent our company to the outside world as a point of contact with strong communication skills and who will quickly press ahead with the innovation processes needed internally.” Tom Winter grew up in the Weissenbühl district of Bern, is married and has three children.

No BEA due to lack of certainty in the pandemic situation

The coronavirus continues to have a major impact on the activities of BERNEXPO. After being cancelled in 2020, the BEA will again fall victim to the crisis situation in 2021. The measures taken by the federal government to contain the virus have resulted in a ban on events at least until the end of February 2021. The lack of certainty needed for planning is now putting a strain on the implementation of trade fairs in the first and early second quarter of 2021. In order to clarify the situation for all partners involved, BERNEXPO has decided to cancel the traditional BEA spring trade fair in 2021 as well. The company tried to keep all options open for a successful implementation, examining various scenarios until the last reasonable moment. Because of the long lead time needed for a consumer exhibition on the scale of the BEA, it is no longer possible to prevent its cancellation. The decision also affects the 2021 Suisse Toy fair, which was

scheduled to take place at the same time as the BEA. The next edition of the BEA is now scheduled for 29 April to 8 May 2022.

Neue Festhalle starting in 2024

BERNEXPO is looking ahead to the time after the pandemic with the aim of consolidating and further expanding the company's position as an innovative leader in the live marketing sector. A modern, flexible and multifunctional infrastructure will be more important than ever. The Festhalle on the BERNEXPO site, originally constructed as a temporary solution in 1948, has reached the end of its life cycle. "Starting in 2024, the Neue Festhalle will offer a variable infrastructure that will also enable hosting of hybrid event formats. It will thus fill an important gap in the Bern market, as the capital city currently does not have a venue for events, exhibitions or worlds of experiences with a capacity of 9,000 people," Franziska von Weissenfluh explains.

Broad support for the project

On 7 March 2021, the people of Bern will be able to vote in a referendum on the "Mingerstrasse – Papiermühlestrasse" building plan and on the city of Bern's planned contribution of CHF 15 million to the infrastructure of Messepark Bern AG for the Neue Festhalle. The project is supported by a broad-based co-chairship comprised of leaders from business, culture, sport and tourism as well as supporters from a wide variety of fields of interest and sectors, all of whom are standing together in support of this generation project. Further information is available at www.neuefesthalle.ch.

The BERNEXPO GROUPE is rising to the new challenges

In order to consolidate and further expand its position as an innovative leader in the live marketing sector, BERNEXPO intends to systematically continue on the path it has pursued up to this point. The focus is on the further development of the core business with new, digital business areas. In addition to the opportunity to experience special moments live and in person that trade fair and event visitors have always come for, it should also be possible for them to take advantage of digital services offered through state-of-the-art and mobile communication channels.

For enquiries, please contact:

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About the BERNEXPO GROUPE

Every year, live communications company BERNEXPO GROUPE plans, realises and holds more than 30 exhibitions and guest exhibitions, over 300 congresses, trade shows and other events of all sizes. Live communication allows the BERNEXPO GROUPE to deliver memorable moments, create spaces where people can come together and offer a wide variety of platforms. The BERNEXPO site is one of Switzerland's largest exhibition premises. Eight exhibition halls across two building complexes offer around 40,000 square metres of event floor space and 100,000 square metres of outdoor areas. The BERNEXPO GROUPE employs roughly 130 people. Generating a gross added value of around CHF 260 million, it is a leading economic driving force for the city and region of Bern – with a nationwide impact.