

## Interview Shortlisted Company – European Small and Mid-Cap Awards 2017

<b>Name of the company</b>
Kotipizza Group Oyj
<b>Why did you decide to go public?</b>
We decided to go public so as to pursue our strategy for growth. We wanted to reorganise our balance sheet in a way that supports the achievement of our growth goals. By going public, we also laid a foundation for exploring the possibility of expanding our business abroad.
<b>What has been the reaction from investors, customers, employees, etc. following going public?</b>
Our external stakeholders have had a very positive reaction to our going public. Increasingly so, as the soaring sales figures of the Kotipizza chain have proved initial reservations wrong and that our strategy for growth works in practice. When looking at the gross profit generated for investors, it is important to note that thanks to the strong rise in share price, in the past two years we have paid out generous distributions from funds for invested unrestricted equity. Importantly, the successful IPO has further motivated Group employees and brought us together as one, driven team.
<b>What have been the benefits to your company?</b>
As a public company, we have seen our position improve especially in negotiations for funding. The abundance of positive media coverage, following the steady rise in share price, has boosted our business and supported our consumer marketing efforts. Going public has also raised our profile beyond Finnish borders.
<b>What were the main challenges in taking your company public?</b>
Our main challenge in taking Kotipizza public was to communicate our growth strategy in a manner that is comprehensible to all our stakeholders, and to prove to them that the strategy will work. Having now translated our vision into impressive and ever-increasing sales, we have found it much easier to communicate our strategy effectively.
<b>What experience would you want to share with companies that are thinking of going public?</b>
When it comes to going public, all new companies need to remember to have patience. Communications must be consistent and totally transparent, and companies must make it as easy as possible for stakeholders to receive and internalize their messages.
<b>What do you believe are the top qualities of your company?</b>
We have a strong brand that we have built on corporate responsibility: our mission is to make the world a better place on pizza at a time. We practice this in everything we do, and our entire team of staff and franchisees is rallied behind our purpose. Our business model allows for profitable growth with little capital required. Our expertise in logistics, franchising chain operations and marketing facilitates the development of new and successful fast casual concepts. In our field, we are in the forefront of consumer communications, digital solutions and product development, and have gained a name for ourselves internationally.
<b>Where do you see yourselves in 5 years?</b>
We will have developed into a much larger company that innovates new and successful fast casual concepts – as well as increasingly enticing products – grows profitably and can be relied upon to pay out generous distributions from funds for invested unrestricted equity. We will have explored the possibility of international expansion and of establishing fruitful partnerships with cutting-edge organizations in our field.

**Have you had any assistance from the European Union, e.g. funding projects, etc.**

No.

**If you had three wishes come true: What should the EU do to encourage more SMEs to go public and to provide ongoing support for listed companies?**

The EU should simplify the legislation, regulation and red tape related to going public, as well as strip away some of the legal obligations involved in the process.