



Interview Shortlisted Company – European Small and Mid-Cap Awards 2021

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| Name of the company |
| Aluflexpack AG |
| What are the key qualities your company has? |
| A key strength of Aluflexpack is its deeply integrated value chain, which allows us to have full end-to-end control over the product and which lays the foundation for our development capabilities. This, together with our competent and passionate team and its aspiration for reliability, uncompromised quality and agility, makes us the partner of choice for many renowned global brands. |
| What prompted your company to go public? |
| Happy customers. Happy customers wanting more – existing products and additional ones. Aluflexpack has achieved tremendous growth in its end markets in the past. In addition, there was a strong pull from the market requiring significant investments in our capacities and technological platform. During the careful evaluation of several possible development scenarios, going public crystallised as the best one to support our attractive growth opportunities in the long term. |
| What were the main challenges along the road to becoming public? |
| A public offering is a giant leap in the development of any company, especially for small and mid-sized companies, but by having a clear concept, a good team and the right partners, this mission can be achieved. There are variables outside of your control, like the general market environment. In our case, we initially intended to list at the peak of the trade spat between China and the US. However, due to the severe market conditions, we decided, shortly before publicly announcing our IPO plans, to postpone the listing to a later stage for reasons out of our control. In that period, it was important to keep the team motivated and to focus on the next attempt in better market surroundings. |
| What have been the key benefits (for your company) of going public? |
| We became much more professional and transparent as an organisation. Regular milestones like periodic reporting or the ongoing dialogue with investors generate great drive, positive tension and awareness in the organisation. This helps us focus on what is important, sharpen our profile and constantly question our strategy, among others. In addition, being public, well regulated and managed helped to raise the level of trust in the organisation – both with internal and external stakeholders. |

After going public, what reactions have you had from investors, customers, employees, etc.?

Naturally, there were many congratulations from all sides. For most of them, it came as a big surprise – they were not aware of what we are actually capable of! Our employees are proud that we are now a publicly listed company, they feel it is a quality certificate. And they are proud of themselves too: The listing is a great reward for the efforts they made over the previous years.

What experience/advice would you want to share with companies that are thinking of going public?

Anyone thinking of going public should have a clear strategy and a well-defined investment path in mind underlining how the company plans to create value for investors! It is important to form a strong team - engage the right and trustworthy partners. Think early about the “day after”, e.g. employ an investor relations officer already before the listing, one that will help build the bond to investors and who ideally knows you and has experience with IPOs or capital markets in general.

Where do you see yourselves in 5 years?

We want to remain the partner of choice for leading brands in Europe, continue to expand our technological infrastructure and strengthen our vertical integration. Besides organic investment programs into our existing plants (both expansion and modernisation), we are pursuing an internationalisation strategy and plan to broaden our geographical reach, e.g. establishing production facilities in the Americas and/or Asia.

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

We are very happy and proud that some of our investment programs in Croatia qualified for subsidies within the European Union’s initiative to support research and innovation projects in the industrial sector. These subsidies were not material for the projects from the financial perspective, but we applied mostly to check the quality of our projects by external and independent experts. We were happy to receive positive feedback and confirmation that we are on the right path and are capable of executing successfully state of the art as well as sustainable projects.

If you had 3 wishes: What should the EU be doing to encourage more SMEs to go public? What should the EU be doing to provide ongoing support for listed companies?

We believe it would be helpful if smaller companies get financial help in going public. Many may be concerned about the costs not just of the listing itself, but also regarding the costs of maintaining the listing. Having a strong and credible supra-national institution, which companies could rely on, would be a great help.