

INTERVIEW

Emitec

Test and monitor –
then optimise > **P2**

INTERVIEW

Molecular Partners

Biotech is probably
the riskiest industry > **P3**

NEW LOCATIONS

Nationwide presence

New Neutrass offices
in Sursee and Frauenfeld
> **P4**

PORTRAIT

Experts in demand

This is how the new
Chairman of the Board of
Directors thinks. > **P7**

TALK

Cartoons

Interview with cartoonist
Silvan Wegmann
> **P8**

S//B/A**Ethical principles**

The Swiss Insurance Brokers Association (SIBA) represents 95 broker companies with more than 2500 employees who must meet strict quality standards.

**For a clean financial centre**

Neutrass is an active member of the PolyReg self-regulatory organisation. As a financial intermediary, we are committed to ensuring Switzerland is a clean financial centre.

**Certified advanced training**

We constantly need to update our expertise. At Neutrass, all advanced training programmes are CICERO certified – which is the case for only very few other brokers.

FinSA

Since the end of 2021 Neutrass has also been registered under FIDLEG. FinSA sets rules for all financial service providers on the provision of financial services.

**We make professionals**

Since 2014, Neutrass has trained young talents. Graduate apprentices also get the opportunity to start their career with us. Neutrass puts great emphasis on continuing education.



NEWS

How the (insurance) world has changed in recent months

How this economically challenging time is affecting the insurance sector and our work as an insurance broker.

On 11 March 2020, the WHO officially declared COVID-19 a world-wide pandemic. Could we have fathomed then what we were in for in the coming months? After two long years and all manner of restrictions, we thought that we finally had the pandemic under control. But the next unpleasant and formative event was just around the corner – on 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. On top of these two crises, our corporate clients are also having to deal on a daily basis with issues such as the energy crisis and the resulting massive electricity price hikes, higher and very volatile commodity prices, and rising interest rates. These are all after-effects that could not have been predicted and that heavily affect some of our clients. In this uncertain situation, insurers' appetite for risk has weakened significantly in the last few months, and insurance premiums are rising substantially in most sectors. For instance, power failure policies, which were previously not really an issue for entrepreneurs, are now unavailable. If we are

still able to offer our cyber insurance with the established wording and premiums, this is only thanks to our foresighted cyber concept. In spite of the difficult situation that is affecting the insurance market as it is everything else, we are putting all our efforts into offering you the best possible support and lending an open ear to you and your needs.

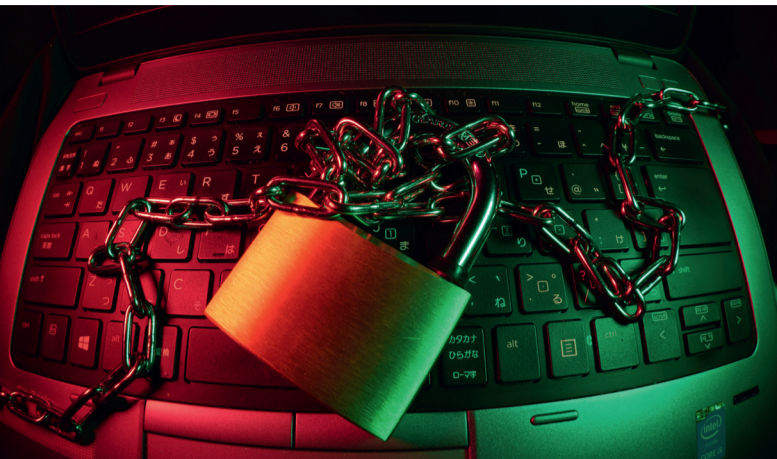
This year, the administrative board, in consultation with the executive management, has determined our strategy for the next five years. This led us to the decision to establish a team for our international section already in the current year and to start managing the aviation insurance segment ourselves as a new specialty. We have been able to recruit three very experienced colleagues – Solange Wiesendanger, Philippe Catalan and Martin Bernhard – for these areas.

The market for brokers in Switzerland has changed rapidly in the last few months. Many brokers have been sold to foreign investors or brokers. Contrary to the current trend, we have determined with our strategy

that we will carry on our business as an owner-managed Swiss company. It is important to us that we offer you Swissness and continuity, that you know your contact persons, that your confidential data are stored exclusively in Switzerland and that you have direct access to me as the CEO and owner if need be. Please support our decision by continuing to place your trust in us and recommending us to others. Thank you.



Pascal Walthert
CEO / Owner Neutrass AG



INTERVIEW

“Cyber security is becoming increasingly important for companies”

With its specialist knowledge and innovative power, Emitec supports clients with IT optimisation as well as industrial and fibre-optics measurement technologies.
A conversation with Armin Diethelm.

> INTERVIEW **MARKUS BAUMGARTNER**

You have been an independent business for nearly 30 years – what is your formula for success?

► We test and monitor – and then optimise where necessary. It's as simple as that. Our decades-long experience helps us to reach our goals quickly and cost-efficiently. Our clients' success is our success.

How can a medium-sized SME meet today's IT security requirements?

► If resources are sparse and there is just a small IT team working to ensure a secure IT environment, we need intelligent and efficient solutions. There are two central questions: how can we identify at an early stage things that don't belong in our network? And how can we monitor these processes?

Antivirus programs and firewalls are important – but not sufficient for secure IT systems?

► Our clients' goal is to be better protected. Cyber security is becoming increasingly important for companies. We need extended monitoring and regular testing to verify that our protection measures are working. It's not enough to do it once a year. We need to test on a daily, or at least weekly, basis.

Don't Swiss companies do enough for their IT security? Why are so many getting hacked?

► Our experience shows that Swiss companies invest a lot in IT security, which in and of itself is actually the first problem. Security nowadays consists of several different systems such as endpoint security and network detection and response, which need to work together perfectly like a Swiss clock. This makes IT operations more complex. Oftentimes, protection measures are not examined closely enough. I like to use the image of a bucket that leaks water because it has holes. We need to find these holes and close them.

What mistakes do companies commonly make?

► We mostly see two mistakes. The first one happens when a company establishes a new cyber security system or extends an existing one. They fill the bucket up to one quarter and observe where the holes are by running common procedures like penetration or function tests. But are there other holes when the bucket is half or three-quarters full? You need to test IT security under load to find out where the limit is. The other type of mistake happens during operation. IT systems are very dynamic. New components, applications and users are being added all the time. Configurations are adapted. This may lead to new holes, which you won't discover until it's too late. You can proactively prevent this by hacking yourself – and by doing so 24/7. By doing so, you can verify at the same time that you are immune to current threats.

What's your solution?

► We have developed “Stellar Cyber”, a comprehensive security platform that we offer as a complete solution or a service. This platform amalgamates data from various sources – for example, log and network data. These data are then converted into a uniform format, so that artificial intelligence – that is, algorithms – can compare and analyse them. The AI is like a virtual security staff member, who alerts you to anything suspicious and who can also automatically initiate countermeasures.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning may be great technologies when it comes to analysing big data, but how can we use them to ward off cyber-attacks?

► A recent study shows that 86% of companies will come into contact with AI within the next five years. If this technology is employed properly, this will also have a positive effect on defence against cyber-attacks. Security analysts are oftentimes overwhelmed by the growing number of cyber-attacks. More security-related data are collected,

which in turn generate even more security warnings. All of this leads to exhaustion. Moreover, the sector also lacks trained security analysts to process these warnings. AI and machine learning can help to automate arduous tasks such as searching for and assessing threats and reacting appropriately to them.



“Oftentimes, you won't discover holes until it's too late. You can prevent this by hacking yourself – and by doing so 24/7.”

Armin Diethelm, CEO Emitec

This sounds all very convincing. But is it efficient and compatible with a small or medium-sized company's existing IT structure?

► There are two main reasons why this solution is so helpful and effective. Firstly, it is a holistic solution. We no longer need separate tools or information silos. No need to laboriously amalgamate data by hand. It's all integrated in one solution. The second advantage is that the platform analyses not only log data – very common in IT security – but also network packet data. DPI mechanisms inspect what the individual packets actually contain.

And although this is a very comprehensive solution, it can generally be integrated fairly quickly into existing IT environments. Our products are quick and easy to install. This helps small and medium-sized businesses to get a feeling for what's going on in their world and how to react to events in good time.

Despite your products' high security, you also rely on insurance to cover risks and have been working with broker Neutrass for 20 years. What are the most important risks here?

There is no such thing as 100% security. Cyber security is about making the fortress walls as high as possible. Through Neutrass we cover everything that isn't state insured. Neutrass not only supports us with good, unbiased consultancy but also monitors market changes for us. Accordingly, Neutrass will offer us a different product if it suits our needs better. We value that very highly. Emitec and Neutrass have something in common here: we offer products not from just one but from different providers in the market. By doing so, we can always offer our clients the best products and optimised solutions.

Potted biography

After a four-year apprenticeship as an electronics technician, Armin Diethelm successively undertook further training in marketing, sales, accounting, operational management and, of course, English. At the age of 28, he became self-employed. He was able to buy a section of the company as a spin-off and founded Emitec, based in Rotkreuz, in 1993. He diversified the business in the field of testing and measurement to tune it to customer needs, offer optimal solutions and speak the language of the industry.

EDITORIAL

We live in a complicated world. Geopolitical events dominate the agenda. They also pose a threat to the values that we at Neutrass have been upholding for over 30 years: Neutrass is still a truly Swiss company and is committed to living up to the Swiss values of quality, reliability and expertise. Virtues are still required today. The word “virtue” may seem outdated, but virtue is a timeless concept: it denotes an excellent and exemplary demeanour – morally, physically and mentally.

New York Times bestselling author Ryan Holiday explains in his worthwhile book, “Courage Is Calling: Fortune Favors the Brave”, that virtue in ancient times consisted of four main components, namely courage, moderation, justice and wisdom. Many may know them as the cardinal virtues, which are still pivotal points today. They are door openers for a good life. This is what we wish you, even in these difficult times.

Hugo Schürmann
President of the
Administrative Board
Neutrass AG

Pascal Waltherth
CEO
Neutrass AG

INTERVIEW

Biotech is probably the riskiest industry of all

Patrick Amstutz (CEO) and Andreas Emmenegger (CFO) of Molecular Partners explain the biotech company's development and risk capacity in our interview.

> INTERVIEW **MARKUS BAUMGARTNER**

Patrick Amstutz, only few start-ups in the biotech sector actually make it. Your company has had a good run. Initially, you were developing anti-cancer drugs. After the outbreak of the pandemic, you courageously launched research on an anti-covid drug and were able to win Novartis as a partner for this. What stage are you at with your new medicine and what benefits can patients expect from it?

► Thank you for the compliment and for recognising that we have left the start-up stage or mere research stage behind. We are actual "entrepreneurs", who need to make conscious decisions and take specific risks. Our COVID-19 medicine, Ensovibep, is currently going through two stage 3 trials – one with patients in an early stage of illness and one with patients who have already been hospitalised. The medicine we are developing is complementary to the vaccines. So, it mainly helps those who cannot be vaccinated, who do not want to be vaccinated, or for whom the vaccine doesn't work. Ensovibep is meant to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 patients' becoming seriously ill and needing to go to hospital or be transferred to the intensive care ward.

Andreas Emmenegger, you generated revenues of CHF 9.3 m in 2020. Your expenditure on research and development, on the other hand, was CHF 56.1 m. Still, your shares have risen in value by 29%. How do you handle this as the CFO?

► We do not get our bearings from short-term share performance. Our vision is rather to create long-term value for patients with innovative, effective medicines. If we achieve this, we automatically create long-term value for other stakeholders as well, such as our shareholders and, of course, our employees.

In the biotech sector, high expenditure is usually a good sign – as long as the majority is allocated to the so-called pipeline, that is, promising research and clinical development projects. It indicates that we have exciting projects and many innovative ideas. Correspondingly, our staffing levels saw double-digit growth again last year. We plan for success and grow accordingly. The revenue from an accounting view that you mentioned is not crucial. For a biotech company, cash inflow and cash balance are much more important. We had some significant cash inflow last year, both from investors – through a share placement in the USA – and from alliances with pharma and biotech partners for our potential medicines – for example, with Novartis and the FOPH for our anti-covid drug, Ensovibep. This cash inflow has more than compensated for our expenditure and equipped us with solid long-term financing. This is something that the financial market appreciates, and doubtless it helped our share price.

People, the organisation and technology all have a strong effect on security and risks in a business. There is no such thing as a company without risks. How do you manage the risks?

► Mr. Amstutz: Yes, we absolutely agree. The motto "no risk, no fun" may sound a bit facetious, for sure, but the

financial market does talk about "no risk, no return". At Molecular Partners, we thus need to consciously take risks and make decisions accordingly. Remember that less than 10% of projects in the oncology sector make it onto the market – and they all look promising to begin with. In other words, you cannot protect yourself against all risks. Not all of our projects turn out well, either. But we can try to position ourselves as favourably as possible, for instance, by ensuring that long-term financing is in place – in our case, this is currently until the second half of 2023 – even without any additional income, that is, if all projects and partnerships should fail unexpectedly. For other risks, we obtain insurance and rely on professional expertise.

Against what risks are you insured? And why?

► Mr. Emmenegger: The biotech industry is probably one of the riskiest industries, if not the riskiest of all. The time-span from the idea to the approved drug is usually between 10 and 15 years. The costs incurred up to approval amount to more than one billion Swiss francs in most cases, and the statistical probability that an idea will lead to an approved drug is vanishingly small. Maybe one in a thousand ideas will make it onto the market. This requires great entrepreneurial spirit, patience, perseverance and a lot of money from long-term investors. The latter will only buy into a company like Molecular Partners, however, if they have full trust in the team and the product portfolio. Building such a relationship of mutual trust usually takes many years. Since we do not yet have a drug on the market, we do not currently generate regular revenue. We finance our research with funds from R&D alliances with large pharma and biotech groups, currently Novartis and Amgen, as well as with funds from the capital market. Altogether, we have brought in about CHF 600 m since the company was established. If we want to protect ourselves against the refinancing risk that lies in having to convince venture-some long-term investors, we can do so only by working successfully.



Apart from many risks that are rather specific to biotech, we are also exposed to the usual operational risks that any company has, such as currency, IT & cyber security, business interruption, fire, water, business liability, and many more. Luckily, we have been able to count on Neutrass as our professional partner for these risks – apart from currency risks, of course. The Neutrass team protects us against these risks with targeted insurance policies.

You have been relying on support from Neutrass AG since your company was founded. What are the benefits that you have experienced through working with a broker, and what is your experience of Neutrass?

► Mr. Amstutz: We are entrepreneurs and, of course, we continue to be researchers. And this is exactly what we go to work for every single day: to develop innovative drugs that help patients and to bring them to market. We want to make our G&A operations as efficient but also as professional as possible. To do so – as a fairly small company still, with a full-time equivalent staff of less than 200 – we need professional partners, especially in the risk management and insurance area. We are really glad to be able to rely on Neutrass. We are grateful to the entire Neutrass team for covering our backs, so we are free to do business and research.

► Mr. Emmenegger: What we particularly appreciate with Neutrass is the direct contact and the personal consulting and solutions tailored to our business. This close, targeted, and personal dialogue isn't something to take for granted. We have built a long-term relationship over the years and appreciate each other very much. Being the CFO, my team and I are responsible for risk management and thus for our relationship with Neutrass. I can only repeat myself in praising the exceptional personal contact with the Neutrass team. You really put your heart and soul into epitomising the catchphrase of "customer intimacy". One suggestion, however, to finish this off: how about opening a branch in Boston? At least one client would already be standing in line...



Patrick Amstutz (CEO) and Andreas Emmenegger (CFO), Molecular Partners



NEW LOCATIONS

Nationwide presence – regional ties

In 2022, Neutrass opened new offices in Sursee and Frauenfeld. This brings the insurance broker even closer to existing and future clients.

The insurance broker headquartered in Rotkreuz in central Switzerland is growing – for some time this has no longer been a secret. This year, Neutrass opened branch offices at two new locations: Sursee and Frauenfeld. This happened not only due to our great customer growth but also, and most importantly, because being close to our clients – having regional ties – is a guiding principle in our company.

“Thanks to our new office in the centre of beautiful Sursee, I can now be present in person for both existing and potential clients. This is an important prerequisite for long-term, trust-based cooperation”, said Andi Grüter, branch manager at the new Sursee office.

The new branch office in Frauenfeld opened its gates on 1 September. The office is located very conveniently



Impressions of the “Haus des Holzes” commercial and residential building in Sursee.

at Hungerbühlstrasse 22. The branch manager is Philippe Catalan, who grew up in the region and is well networked here. Robert Koch and Maya Heiniger, who both previously worked

at the Kreuzlingen office, and Martin Bernhard complete the team. The new branch brings Neutrass even closer to existing and future clients in eastern Switzerland and strengthens its standing in the region for the long term.

CLIENT PORTAL

Digital processes all the way to our clients

Our Neutrass client portal is the first, productive step toward a digital, process-oriented future.

Apart from the classic portal functionalities, our new client portal features digital signatures, secure uploads and downloads and more to ensure optimal customer service.

The portal is just the start. Our core solution, the name of which is still a secret, really packs a punch. Besides providing us with the usual benefits of broker software, automating our processes will pave the way for true digitalisation. Digitalisation is often confounded with implementing a workflow engine or an assistant. Only when user interaction has decreased to the necessary minimum are we truly digital. Is your software digital already, or are you still booking brokerage fees and recording benefits?

We are on our way toward true digitalisation for our clients! If you would like to know more about this, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are happy to help.

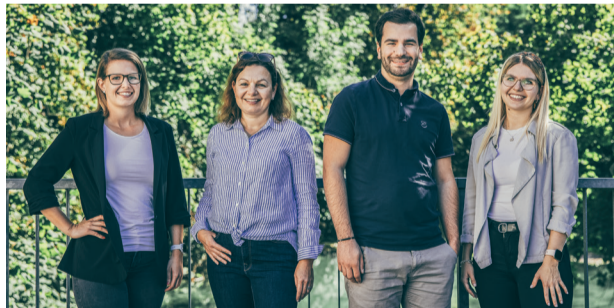
David Frick, Development and IT, Neutrass AG



Celebrating their anniversaries (from left): Armin Rüssli, Sabrina Bürgisser, Pirmin Lang, Manuela Keller and Herbert Caviezel



Andi Schwarzentruher celebrates 15 years at Neutrass.



The successful exam candidates (from left): Ramona Leu, Piera Rüegg, Dario Rotonda and Sandra Sakac. Loris Pfister is missing from the photo.



Monika Bühlmann with the well-deserved Neutrass Award and Andi Schwarzentruher receives the Innovation Award.

CONGRATULATIONS

Anniversaries and audit successes 2023

Neutrass employees celebrate audit successes and a Neutrass Award and an Innovation Award are presented for the second time in the company's history.

Anniversaries

The list of long-standing and loyal Neutrass employees is getting longer and longer. We are delighted about this. Armin Rüssli, Sabrina Bürgisser, Pirmin Lang and Herbert Caviezel are celebrating their 5th anniversary this year. Manuela Keller has been part of the Neutrass family for 10 years. Our long-standing client advisor at the Grosswangen branch, Andi Schwarzentruher, deserves special recognition. For 15 years now, he has been a dedicated and committed advocate for Neutrass customers.

Successful exams

Once again this year, numerous employees have taken care of their professional development. They have gone back to school and completed impressive training and further education courses.

Piera Rüegg completed a CAS in Health Psychology and Ramona Leu a CAS in Leadership. Dario Rotonda graduated this summer with a degree in insurance management HF and Sandra Sakac obtained a certificate in insurance.

Loris Pfister successfully completed his training to become an IAF investment advisor. We are proud of your commitment and congratulate you on your successes.

Neutrass Award and Innovation Award

This year's Neutrass Award winner is Monika Bühlmann. Apart from our CEO, nobody knows the company as well as Monika. She was the first employee to be hired by CEO Pascal Walthert 28 years ago and has remained loyal to Neutrass to this day. With her admirable discipline and precision, Monika is a great role model for all employees.

The light bulb, symbolizing the Innovation Award, went this year to Andi Schwarzentruher for his tireless and motivated work as a customer advisor. He is always finding new, innovative ways to solve his clients' concerns and challenges. His commitment and his goal-oriented, efficient and innovative collaboration are also appreciated by his colleagues. Just like the snacks and cakes he regularly offers during Andi's visits to the head office in Rotkreuz.

FINSA

Neutrass is FinSA registered

Neutrass has registered successfully with FinSA as one among very few insurance brokers. All Neutrass Account Managers who wished to be entered in the advisor register have successfully passed the exam and are now in the federal register.

On 15 June 2018, the Swiss parliament approved the Financial Services Act (FinSA). FinSA contains rules of conduct which financial service providers must observe towards their clients. On 6 November 2019,



"The regulations also include rules on how to deal with conflicts of interests and information obligations", says Christoph Allemann.

the Federal Council passed the implementation rules for FinSA in the form of the Financial Services Ordinance (FIDLEV) and the Insurance Supervision Ordinance (ISO). As one among very few insurance brokers, Neutrass decided to register with FinSA. The barrier for registration was high; together with our membership of the self-regulatory organisation (SRO) in line with AMLA, this gives us a further quality seal and sets Neutrass apart as a financial service provider. Individual client advisors must be entered in an advisor register to be allowed to carry out their work. More than ten Neutrass Account Managers have passed the exam and have been registered successfully. We are confident that this will further strengthen Neutrass's competitive position.

Says Christoph Allemann: "The regulations also include rules on how to deal with conflicts of interests and information obligations."

COMMITMENT

Neutrass stars greet from the podium

Neutrass' long-standing commitment and support of the World Orienteering Championships as main sponsor is paying off: The athletes and employees shone at the local orienteering world championships in Flims Laax.



The trio Joey Hadorn, Daniel Hubmann and Matthias Kyburz (from left to right) Simona Aebersold, gold medal winner at the 2023 World Orienteering Championships, won relay gold.



Simona Aebersold, gold medal winner at the 2023 World Orienteering Championships.

Simona Aebersold and Joey Hadorn, who are supported by Neutrass, achieved impressive performances at the highlight of the season: At the World Orienteering Championships in Flims Laax, Simona Aebersold was the first Swiss athlete to win the gold medal after the serial winner Simone Niggli-Luder. The 25-year-old athlete not only shone in the long distance, but also achieved silver in the relay. "We are incredibly proud of our ambassador Simona Aebersold. We congratulate her wholeheartedly on her World Championship gold medal," explains Neutrass CEO Pascal Walthert. The fact that 26-year-old Joey Hadorn even won relay gold with the men and silver over the

middle distance completes the pleasing picture for Neutrass. In addition, the undisputed world's best orienteer Simone Niggli-Luder continues to be one of the Neutrass brand ambassadors. Furthermore to her role as an expert commentator on Swiss television, she was also responsible for laying the course for the first time in Flims Laax.

Continuous support is crucial

Switzerland is one of the top nations in orienteering: A Swiss woman or man has stood on the World Championship podium more than 90 times, and even topped it more than 40 times. To ensure that this success continues, targeted support for young athletes is essential. Pride and recognition go not only to the medal winners, but also to the 30 or so employees from various Neutrass locations. They made a significant contribution to the success over five days with extensive voluntary work and vociferous support. Thanks to Neutrass employees, the event became a veritable home World Cup.

Neutrass CEO and owner Pascal Walthert shares the joy of orienteering out of deep passion: He used to be an enthusiastic orienteer. No wonder he and his company now help customers find their way around insurance and pension issues, as he explains: "Yes, something unexpected can always happen. But with Neutrass, they have a partner with a clear view and the right solution for insurance, pensions and finance."

LUFTFAHRT

Neutrass gives you wings

Neutrass is deepening its expertise in the demanding segment of aviation insurance.

Neutrass hired aviation insurance specialist Martin Bernhard. With over 30 years of experience and great connections on both the client and the insurer side, he is in the process of building up a respectable portfolio. Martin Bernhard started his career as an underwriter with the Swiss Pool for Aviation Insurance. After ten years in this position, he acquired broker company Aero Insurance Service AG, ran it for 17 years and then sold it to IBC. When IBC was taken over by Qualibroker, he refocused and joined Neutrass.

Driven by his affinity for aviation, he has a high service ethic with short response times. He attends to urgent phone calls and emails even outside of office hours and at weekends. Whether you need insurance for a sailplane or an Airbus, Martin Bernhard is your man and will provide you with outstanding service. After over 18 years in which the aviation insurance market was characterised by oversupply and consequent premium reductions, we have experienced a tough market in the last two years, with significantly reduced capacities from individual providers and premium increases resulting from this.

This market climate makes it more important than ever to be able to rely on an experienced specialist. Insurers tend to focus on the profitability of ever smaller market segments. This leads to individual providers withdrawing from parts of the market. It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain tailored solutions. In many cases, you will need more than one insurer to cover a certain risk. This makes it crucial to have a partner like Neutrass who will coordinate and synchronize things for you.

Last but not least, Neutrass will of course support you in the event of a loss as well. Thanks to our focused claim support, we can draw on our experience from a great number of claims managed, which allows us to know exactly when optimal compensation is reached. You are thus guaranteed to receive all the benefits you are entitled to in the event of a loss.



Martin Bernhard
Head Aviation / Key Account Manager

INTERNATIONAL

Neutrass coordinates international insurance programmes

As a business operating internationally, you know at all times how your group is insured and which country units have higher incidence of losses.

More and more Swiss companies have subsidiaries abroad or are planning to expand outside of Switzerland. This applies not only to large but also to small and medium-sized companies. Expanding opens up new market opportunities, but at the same time, it also bears certain risks. International insurance programmes are especially useful for companies with various locations abroad that would like a uniform insurance cover for the entire group. Even though the insurance concept is designed to be consistent with the group's risk strategy, it still gives you the necessary freedom to cater to individual statutory requirements in a particular jurisdiction and to adjust your insurance accordingly. When implementing an international insurance programme, the Swiss parent company will develop a solution for the entire group (a master policy) together with an insurance provider. The provider's local agencies or network partners will then issue a local policy for each country in accordance with the local statutory provisions. The primary benefits of such an integrated insurance programme are obvious: you can bundle risks and thus save insurance premiums. But there are further advantages to a multinational insurance programme: avoiding double insurance or coverage gaps abroad, on-site support in the event of damage, centralised claims controlling with analyses and information on local loss typologies, awareness of business-critical changes to the legislative framework, observing local compliance guidelines as well as on-site networks of risk experts to rely on at all times.

We are very happy to announce that Neutrass AG has further strengthened its expertise in the international insurance business. By hiring Solange Wiesendanger Jonser and Philippe Catalan, our team has been complemented with two proven experts in the international insurance segment. Mrs. Wiesendanger Jonser and Mr. Catalan are happy to support you in analysing your corporate structure and developing a suitable insurance solution tailored to your needs.

Are you internationally active or in the process of expanding abroad? Are you interested in benefitting economically and administratively from the advantages of an international insurance programme for your group? Then do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to help and to cooperate with internationally experienced broker companies abroad where required.



Solange Wiesendanger
Head International
Business / Key Account
Manager



Philippe Catalan
Account Manager
International Business

INSIDE NEUTRASS

Promoting people and enhancing knowledge

Neutrass has a new mentoring system and internal sales training sessions.

How we share our expertise

The larger the team, the more important structured exchange and an open communication culture become. To foster these, our team leaders introduced a mentoring system at the beginning of the year. The mentor from another team is a team member's first point of contact for technical questions but also for ideas, tips and tricks. This system contributes to our principle of "growing together and helping each other grow" and promotes exchange between teams.

Internal sales training

In line with the saying that "Learning is like rowing against the current – as soon as you stop, you are pulled back", we want to pass on specialist knowledge and promote networked thinking. Our back-office employees André Kretz and Hans Friedli take turns to prepare particular topics and present them in depth in our team meetings every other week. This additional internal training motivates colleagues to focus on new topics. Their enhanced technical knowledge will allow us to assign responsibilities in a more diversified way in the future.

TECHNICAL SEMINAR

About risks and passions

Neutrass has organised a network event for the third time in twelve months. This third event took place in a very special location: at the unique OYM (On Your Marks) top sport centre in Cham.

The evening offered various perspectives: Neutrass CEO Pascal Walther took stock of the current risk situation for small and medium-sized businesses and explained how to prevent these risks with directors' and officers' liability as well as cyber insurance. Dölf Käppeli, director of building insurers Gebäudeversicherung Luzern, looked back and reviewed the storm and hail losses in the summer of 2021 and their long-term consequences. The highlight of the evening were the visions and

reports presented by Dr. Hans-Peter Strebel, initiator and sports visionary of the OYM top sport centre – in other words, the heart of the business. With his sense of humour and his passionate and authentic manner, he related stories from his life, told of his passion for the Swiss ice hockey champions, the EVZ, and gave us a glimpse behind the scenes of the OYM. The event ended in a convivial evening, during which the over 70 entrepreneurs were treated to an apéro riche by the in-house star diet cook.



The speakers at the technical seminar (from left to right): Dölf Käppeli, Hans-Peter Strebel and Pascal Walther.

INTERVIEW

“The client always comes first”

Hugo Schürmann is the President of Neutrass's Administrative Board. In our interview, he outlines his views.

> INTERVIEW **MARKUS BAUMGARTNER**

Hugo Schürmann, you have worked in the auditing of banks and insurance companies for 30 years. What new impetus could you provide as an external sparring partner for Neutrass?

► I bring along a new network that nicely complements Neutrass's existing network. As an external partner, I can also sharpen our stance: I have been an advocate of a strong client focus for years. This means catering to the clients' needs in a comprehensive way. A good consultant doesn't sell products just because they are available. The client is always the focal point. Everyone should listen to the clients and understand their needs.

Then, we need to find tailor-made solutions for the client. In my work so far, we have always put the client at the centre. How can I surprise the client, in a positive way? How can I present them a new, innovative solution? I can make a valuable contribution here because I have a lot of experience and know how this works. In a similar view, meetings shouldn't be primarily about internal problems or questions within the company if the customer is central. Future Neutrass meetings at all levels will thus follow this order: client – people – firm. The client always comes first! I can also contribute my executive experience. I have led 300 to 400 employees and, together with CEO Pascal Walthert, I can contribute a lot. I can also serve as a sparring partner for HR issues.

Digitalisation opens up new opportunities for networking in the professional world as well as in the relationship between service provider and client. What developments are you seeing?

► Digitalisation clearly is a very current challenge. It is a major topic for insurance providers. Why would anyone wish to have a consultation when they can get (almost) everything on the internet? Due to the COVID-19 crisis, digitalisation has experienced a huge boost. Large companies are increasingly digitalising their client relations and processes. They are putting considerable funding into doing so. This development is not as advanced with SMEs, though – with a few commendable exceptions. Digitalisation needs to become more present in the minds of SME managers and employees. We need a corporate culture that includes everybody in the process of change in order to be able to react to changes and adjustments in a flexible way. This is the only way to reduce fear and resistance. In my experience, continuously changing existing things like processes, websites and e-commerce solutions is much easier than making one disruptive change to a company's business model. “The client first” also applies here. Although most companies have tremendous amounts of data and ideas at their disposal, they hardly ever use them for their clients' benefit. In the digital age, a new era of innovation management is dawning.

PwC Luzern has made it a habit to organise fantastic events taking place at interesting companies across central Switzerland. How did that come about?

► I started these events as a series called ‘Viewpoints’. Since then, PwC has been doing them all across Switzerland. My



“The existing brand expertise is a real added value for clients.”

Hugo Schürmann is the President of Neutrass Board of Directors

goal was not to sell something but to go into the companies and learn things from them that I don't yet know. The format is based on an event with different people being brought together by a network. PwC invites its clients, the Lucerne newspaper invites its readers, and the host company invites its visitors. Many people attend the events on a regular basis. There are no Power Point presentations. We expressly do not want this. The guests want to see, taste and hear what the company does. These ‘Viewpoints’ have now developed into a highly successful event series.

So, would you still start these events if you could go back in time?

► Yes, for two reasons. Firstly, we decided to go into the SMEs to learn from them on site. We want to gain direct insight into their market situation and their visions. And, of course, we want to get to know the people in the companies even better. We want to present a better ‘view’ of the companies. Secondly, this series of events calls in at various SMEs in central Switzerland – at various ‘points’, so to speak. We also want to ‘point’ to current and sensitive topics, questions and challenges, and to discuss them. So far, we have discovered many interesting and very successful companies in central Switzerland. I have learnt and felt that sitting at my desk all the time isn't very interesting. Things get more exciting when you start feeling at home with your clients or companies.

Neutrass has been established in the industry since 1988 and has been growing continuously over the past few years. With currently 80 employees, Neutrass is now among the largest brokers in central Switzerland. What do you see as the benefits of a broker with expanded services?

► The most important one is that clients get a complete package, which they can only get from a broker. The ex-

isting, broad expertise makes for a real added value for clients. Consulting is neutral and doesn't aim at placing products. A broker is able to make cross-comparisons, which the client can benefit from. A broker has the understanding and experience needed for various requirements such as liability or cyber insurance. You need to have a good understanding of such matters in order to give the right advice.

What prompted you to take on the role of Neutrass's President of Directors?

► I have ended my activities with PwC and now dedicate my time to selected advisory and board mandates. Becoming Neutrass's President represents an exciting challenge for me. From Neutrass and Residenz a convincing client portfolio has emerged that has been excellently managed from both a technical and human perspective by patrons Pascal Walthert and Jürg Züst. In their work, they can count on their well-trained and wonderful team. I'd be pleased to make a contribution there in the future.

Potted biography

Hugo Schürmann is a trained business economist (FH), qualified auditor and authorised audit expert. He worked as Partner and Assurance Financial Service Leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Switzerland. He has had 32 years' experience as partner at PwC in supervising corporations in the finance sector and has held several leading positions, both on a national and local level. Hugo Schürmann is happily married to Marlene Schürmann. They have two grown-up sons (“really good guys”). He lives in Hildisrieden, LU. His hobby: he's a passionate skier.

TALK

“I want to entertain, not change the world”

Caricatures get to the point, elicit a smile or trigger brute laughter. How you can achieve a lot with very little – a brief excursion into the world of Silvan Wegmann.

> INTERVIEW **CHRISTIAN WINIKER**

Caricaturist is a rare profession. How did you get into it?

► It was pure coincidence. I was already drawing cartoons in my youth, but only for myself. Including one about François Mitterand when he died in 1996. A friend told me to hand it in to the newspaper in Baden. I went there and handed it in at the reception. The next day it appeared on the front page next to the editorial.

What happened next?

► During my studies at the F+F School of Design in Zurich, I received my first commissions, and over time, I had seven newspapers as regular customers. When I was 30, I put all my eggs in the same basket. I was by far the youngest back then. Caricaturists still worked with watercolors and ink. I was the only one working with photoshop. However, I still start with a sketch even today.

A caricaturist needs special skills: quick, original, creative, surprising, emphasizing the essential, overdrawing, own style. How do you manage all?

► It is like any job, at some point you become a professional. You acquire techniques. I know how to create an idea. It is a constant search, in my head and with the pencil. You have a thought, bend it in a different direction and elaborate alternatives. Over time, I knew how to come up with a punch line. Though I always have to keep an eye on what the reader already knows about the topic. Most of my “groupies” are pensioners and are very knowledgeable.

When you get up, do you already know what kind of caricature you are going to draw?

► Generally not. I read newspapers, online and on paper, and the radio is on all the time. At some point, the brilliant idea comes.

Do you draw caricatures beforehand?

► No. There are indeed topics that you can prepare for – elections, for example. You know which party is likely to gain ground and which will lose. You can do some preliminary work. Then there is another surprise.

What do you consider good caricatures?

► The best caricatures manage without a legend or speech bubbles. That is difficult with political cartoons. You usually have to include a dialogue.

Do you have idols?

► Miroslav Barták from the Czech Republic. He is a legend, over 80 and in great shape. He has never drawn a speech bubble or legend in his life, but you always understand it. His figures have no mouths, just eyes and glasses. That is high art.

Who is suitable for caricatures?

► Christoph Blocher, Sebastian Kurz, Alain Berset, Donald Trump. If you did not know what to do – there was certainly a Trump story that could be used. Caricaturists are keen on populists; the loudest and shrillest topics are the most exciting for us.

What are difficult topics?

► Insurance matters, as they are relatively dry and involve figures and statistics. I have been working for a pension fund association for several years. Nevertheless, it is still possible to find a good punch line, precisely because it is dry. It takes more time; you have to read in more.

Do you have a mission?

► I see caricatures as entertainment, holding up a mirror to people. However, every cartoonist thinks a little differently. Changing the world... I do not think we can achieve that.



Silvan Wegmann in self-portrait.

Since the violent reactions to religious caricatures in Scandinavia and France, one question has been omnipresent: How far can satire go?

► In principle, everything must be possible. Nevertheless, Charlie Hebdo was too extreme and caused damage to our industry. Not everything is possible anymore. With the Mohammed cartoons, there was simply a lack of sensitivity and freedom of expression has been rather abused. There is a huge dispute among cartoonists about this. In the English-speaking world and in Switzerland, we see things differently than in France. You do not have to be provocative to the extreme every time. If caricaturists need personal protection or get shot, the goal has certainly not been achieved.

What is the state of humour in Switzerland?

► We have come a long way. There are also historical reasons for this. France, England and Austria were all monarchies. They had to start from the bottom. In Switzerland, the people are the highest authority, why should we beat



Silvan Wegmann in his studio in Baden.

ourselves up? The French-speaking part of Switzerland definitely has more humour than the German-speaking part.

Does satire often come from the “left”?

► In general, that is the case, and there are historical reasons for this. Incidentally, the “Nebelspalter” is the oldest satirical newspaper in the world and was never bourgeois, as Markus Somme would like us to believe. The “Nebelspalter” has always been pluralistic.

Portrait

► Silvan Wegmann (1969) is one of the most successful cartoonists in his field with over 12,500 cartoons to his name. His cartoons appeared, among others, in the “Aargauer Zeitung”, “Luzerner Zeitung”, “Handelszeitung”, “Badener Tagblatt”, “Schweiz am Wochenende” and “VPS Verlag”. He takes part in numerous exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad and is co-organizer of the annual review “Gezeichnet” of the Swiss press cartoonists as well as the satire biennial “Bissfest” in the city of Baden.

NEUTRAL AND INDEPENDENT INSURANCE CONSULTING
FinSA authorised investment funds distributor
Member of SIBA – member of the PolyReg self-regulatory organisation

LEGAL INFORMATION

Editors: Eliane Müller, Pascal Walther, Markus Baumgartner (b-public AG, Baar)
Design/layout: A4 Agentur AG, Rotkreuz
Print: Anderhub Druck-Service AG, Rotkreuz



Insurance · Provisions · Finances
Rotkreuz · Luzern · Oberer Zürichsee · Sempach · Sursee · Ostschweiz · Romandie · Tessin · Thalwil

NEUTRASS AG

Schönggrund 26, P.O. Box
CH-6343 Rotkreuz
Phone +41 41 799 80 40
info@neutrass.ch, www.neutrass.ch