

Press Release

Next generation – change at the top for the seele group

Gerhard Seele transfers majority stake to son Michael Seele

Gersthofen, Germany, 05 April 2022. The seele group of companies is regarded as a pioneer in façade construction. Among the many projects completed worldwide are numerous architectural milestones. The family-run business based in Gersthofen in southern Germany hereby announces that Gerhard Seele (66) is transferring his majority stake to his son Michael (34), thus transferring responsibility for the company to the next generation. However, Gerhard Seele will remain managing director of seele group GmbH. Siegfried Gossner, co-founder of the seele group of companies, is a member of the supervisory board and still serves as technical advisor to the company.

Gerhard Seele emphasises the fact that a successful change at the top represents an important signal for the future of the company. And he is particularly pleased that he is able to place the 'baton' in responsible hands at this stage: "After almost 20 years in the company, the obvious next move for Michael is to take over this position, especially while 'seele seniors' are still around to provide support during the transition."

Michael Seele is happy to take on these tasks and sees digitalisation, securing skilled personnel and sustainability as his key challenges. In his view, turnover growth will not be on the agenda. He favours qualitative growth - something that was always corporate policy, something he has no intention of changing. "Our façade solutions already make use of the latest digital tools. Our plants already employ the latest production technologies such as AI and robotics. This is where we want to retain leadership. And for us as a manufacturing company, minimising our carbon footprint is crucial." That's where Michael Seele sees his future role.

seele, the façade construction specialist, was founded by Gerhard Seele and Siegfried Gossner in 1984. Over the intervening 38 years, the seele group has established itself as a technology leader and pioneer in innovative façades. The company founders realised what prominent architects were looking for and provided them with innovative answers to match their visions. The much-quoted "pushing back the boundaries of the technically feasible" has always shaped the company's day-to-day operations.

The company's innovative solutions have always been accompanied by an impressive balance sheet and stable finances. So, all in all, no better time for a successful changeover at the top of the seele group.

Michael Seele has a determined approach to his new task: "This step is a strong signal for the future, this entrepreneurial vision makes us leading in many fields. The only way to be as successful as the seele group is to set up a team with strong leadership and a motivated workforce, with trust and encouragement. The founders have established a unique company. I am proud to be able to lead the seele group into the future."

Background Information

Michael Seele

Michael Seele joined the company at the age of 16. After completing two apprenticeships in metalworking and technical systems design, he sat his master craftsman's examination before studying business economics and then, at Kings College in Bristol, England, business administration. Theory was followed by further periods of practice as Site & Logistics Manager in Australia and as a project manager for several projects. Michael Seele has been a member of the management team since 2012. As Director of Sales/Estimation/Marketing, he is currently responsible for new business at seele GmbH and, in his role as managing director of seele hongkong Ltd., also responsible for the Asian market.

Gerhard Seele took over the family business in 1976 after completing his apprenticeship as a glazier and passed his master craftsman's examination in 1978. He has been managing partner of the seele group since 1984. As managing director of seele group GmbH, he is responsible for the overall management of the group.

Siegfried Gossner trained as a structural steelwork draughtsman. After 13 years in the company where he started, he set up his own design office for steel and glass structures in 1982. He has been managing partner of the seele group since 1984. Following managerial positions in various areas of the company, he switched to the group's supervisory board in 2018.

Company history

Interdisciplinary thinking and hence overcoming the separate treatment of steel and glass were the guiding principles behind the establishment of the **seele** company. The business that started with just 12 employees rapidly evolved into a source of innovation for façade construction. After just 10 years, the company had already seen a ten-fold increase in the number of its employees and its turnover. The international aims were given substance in 1994 with branches in Austria, Hong Kong, France and the UK. An additional production plant was established in Plzeň in the Czech Republic in 1996, and the company established a foothold in Singapore in that same year and in the USA in 2001.

In 2007 specialist glass processing operations were given their own company in the shape of sedak. A stake in the Italian company sunglass industry was acquired in 2018. In the project business, the seele group added membrane structures to its product range in 2007. This expansion was followed: Russia (2013), Canada (2015), Thailand (2017) and, most recently, Malaysia and India (2021).

The **seele group of companies** employs about 1,000 people and has an annual turnover exceeding €250 million. The group regularly sets standards in glass, steel, aluminium and membrane architecture through its exceptional technical developments. Projects such as the Apple Cube in New York, Strasbourg station, the European Central Bank in Frankfurt or, currently, "The Henderson" tower in Hong Kong can be counted as architectural landmarks.

Interview

Questions we put to Gerhard Seele and Siegfried Goßner:

New generation? Why now?

Gerhard Seele: The seele brand has always stood for dynamic development. The change at the top stands for diversification and new momentum, both of which take the company forward. We can regard as ourselves as lucky to have a vigorous successor in the family. My son has been steering various areas of the company for more than 18 years. He really does have the necessary entrepreneurial skills. That's why now is the right time.

Siegfried Gossner: The change at the top means that the seele group continues to be a family-run operation led by a majority stakeholder who knows the business. That was always our joint aim. We can therefore guarantee stability for our employees and customers, and the ultimate decision-maker is never far away from the action.

What's important for you?

Gerhard Seele: Most important for me is enjoying my work, personal satisfaction and good health. If you add striving for success to that, then you really have something. That is the advice I would like to give.

Siegfried Gossner: I'm certain that power of innovation will continue to be essential in all areas of the company, because processes and production demands are changing faster than ever. I keep a close eye on ongoing developments and contribute to those with my wealth of experience. In particular, the transfer of knowledge within the company, training programmes and junior staff are dear to my heart.

Questions we put to Michael Seele:

What are your aims?

We want to remain the technology leader in this sector and expand our good position in the market. To do this, I will rely on our international network and, at the same time, compact decision-making processes. Our services portfolio is well matched to our customers' requirements. We can respond to market developments clearly and dynamically. With our sturdy, healthy corporate structure, we are a guarantee of stability for our customers.

Which challenges do you see lying ahead?

There are many challenges: Some are predictable, some – like those we've seen in recent months – unpredictable. My aim is to tackle all issues with the necessary strength and resilience. For the group of companies as a whole, I regard digitalisation and climate protection as the current challenges.

Both company founders remain active within the company. Do you see that as a help or a hindrance?

The company founders have always impressed me with their passion, their flair for new ideas and their courage to take the big decisions. We like working together, exchange ideas on a regular basis and always make sure that the best solution gets priority. I'm certain that we shall continue to work together just as good and successfully as in the past.

Press Photos



Michael Seele now has overall responsibility for the seele group of companies.
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Gerhard Seele will continue to serve as managing director of seele group GmbH even though his son Michael is now the majority stakeholder.
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seele



Michael Seele has been working for the seele group of companies for 18 years and is happy to take on these tasks.

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Gerhard Seele (left) and Siegfried Gossner (right) set up seele, the façades specialist, in 1984; today, the company has 1,000 employees at 17 locations worldwide.

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