



Conversation

Nicola Thibaudeau, CEO
MPS Micro Precision Systems AG

Business

Logistics solutions for
the Swiss healthcare market
Alloga AG in Burgdorf

Research & Development

“The new innovation ecosystem
for start-ups, SMEs and individuals”
FABLAB at the Switzerland Innovation Park
Biel/Bienne

Living

The chocolate stronghold
in the Bernese Jura
Chocolats Camille Bloch SA in Courtelary

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Hans Jürg Steiner, Tax Partner
Head of the Market Region Berne-Mittelland
KPMG, Hofgut, CH-3073 Gümligen-Bern

+41 58 249 20 57
hsteiner@kpmg.com

kpmg.ch



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www.oeschinensee.ch

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Dear reader,

Switzerland is at the forefront when it comes to medical technology. With annual growth of around six percent, this industry is one of the strongest in the country and also one of the most consistent, achieving constant growth since 2010. Internationally, Switzerland ranks among the top 10 medtech markets in the world. We have a higher density of companies in this sector than any country in the EU.

So why does this industry flourish so well in Switzerland? Because it has the perfect ecosystem here – especially in the Canton of Bern. In her interview (p. 4), Nicola Thibaudeau, CEO of MPS, sums it up perfectly: “In Biel/Bienne we can find all the skills that are so vital to our company’s success in a radius of just 50 km.” These skills come from highly specialized suppliers with experience in precision engineering, such as Meister & Cie AG (p. 6), innovative service providers and logistics companies like Alloga AG (p. 9), as well as Bernese innovation institutions such as the Switzerland Innovation Park, Empa Thun, sitem-insel, the University of Bern and our universities of applied sciences.

In the last part of our magazine you will find a new column, “Hidden Champions”, where we introduce remarkable Bernese companies whose products are acclaimed the world over and which we hear far too little about. Or have you heard of RONDO in Burgdorf? Check out the interview with Chairman of the Board of Directors Robert Rohrer – you will be fascinated!

I hope you will find our magazine an exciting read.

Dr. Sebastian Friess, President
Bern Economic Development Agency

Publication details

Publisher, concept and chief editor: Bern Economic Development Agency (BEDA), Münsterplatz 3a, CH-3011 Bern, tel. +41 31 633 41 20, www.berninvest.be.ch **Text:** Julia Weber **Photography:** Daniel Rihs, Bern **Design:** Casalini Werbeagentur, Bern **Translation:** Marianne Creola, lingua-communications, Thun **Printed by:** Haller + Jenzer AG, Burgdorf. Printed on FSC-certified paper. **Circulation and publication method:** “bernecapitalarea – magazine on business, science and living in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland” is published twice a year in German, French and English and has a circulation of 4,000 copies. **Picture credits:** Daniel Rihs (p. 1, p. 5–11, p. 14–16), www.swiss-medtech.ch (p. 12/13), www.chezcamillebloch.swiss (p. 17–19), www.madeinbern.com (p. 20/21). All rights reserved. Articles and pictures may only be reproduced with the express consent of the publisher.

“Anything is possible if you don’t set yourself limits”

A conversation with Nicola Thibaudeau

MPS Micro Precision Systems AG CEO Nicola Thibaudeau shares her top tips on managing a company successfully and reveals what innovations her company is currently launching in the medtech market.

You grew up as the second oldest daughter in a family of eleven children in Montreal, Canada. What skills did being part of such a large family teach you that benefit you today in your professional life?

“Growing up in a large family honed my communication skills and taught me the importance of good teamwork. I learned to be independent and achieve my goals with limited resources very early on in life. Anything is possible if you don’t set yourself limits!”

Since 2003 you have quadrupled turnover at MPS Micro Precision Systems AG to CHF 65 million and increased the workforce to 400. What are your three top tips for managing a company successfully?

“Keeping a close eye on market developments and customer needs, creating elegant, effective solutions tailored precisely to those needs, and being willing to turn a project down if you have nothing more impressive to offer than your competitors.”

Your company has a reputation for launching at least one innovation every year. What are your latest solutions in orthopedic medicine and trauma surgery?

“We recently launched a new carbon-fiber reamer handle for hip surgery. Our new handheld reamer, which we developed in close collaboration with Composites Busch SA in Porrentruy, is made of carbon-fiber composites and has half the number of components its predecessor had. What is more, it is 40 percent lighter than before. We have also developed a motorized implantable device for orthopedic purposes and have patented a new impactor for hip surgery.”

How would you sum up your company’s environmental policy?

“We are committed to using resources responsibly, using renewable ones wherever possible, and reducing waste at all levels of the company. We also bear in mind environmental criteria in our procurement and supplier selection and when we introduce new production resources and processes. We have even

installed a powerful solar system on the roof of our new 3,500 m² facility in Court near Moutier, where we merged three separate production sites in 2014, so that we can generate our own renewable energy.”

How does being based in the Canton of Bern contribute to your success in developing innovative medtech products?

“As a specialist medical technology company, being located in the traditional medtech and watchmaking stronghold of Biel/Bienne in the Canton of Bern is ideal for us. It puts us right at the heart of Switzerland and Europe and exactly halfway between the Lake Geneva region and the greater Zurich area. What is more, we can find all the skills that are so vital to our company’s success – from young trainees to specialist suppliers – within a radius of just 50 km. We also benefit from being in close proximity to institutions like the Bernese ARTORG Center and the Bern University of Applied Sciences, Engineering and Information Technology (BFH-TI) in Biel/Bienne, who help us with our research and development work, and excellent specialist networks like the Biel/Bienne Precision Cluster. The fact

“In Biel/Bienne we can find all the skills that are so vital to our company’s success within a radius of just 50 kilometers.”

About the company

Biel/Bienne-based **MPS Micro Precision Systems AG** has been developing and producing high-precision systems for a range of microtechnology applications for more than 80 years. Its products are used in sectors such as medical technology, watchmaking, automation, aviation, and optics and are always developed in close collaboration with the customer. The MPS Group, which has sites in Biel/Bienne, Bonfol, Court and Corgémont, has been part of the German Faulhaber Group since 2003 and employs 400 people.



“Biel/Bienne is the ideal location for us. We can tap into a wellspring of highly specialized skilled workers, partners, suppliers, and customers here for our high-tech projects in sectors as diverse as medical technology, watchmaking, automation, aviation, and optics.” Corentin Ryser, manager Continuous Improvement, Raynald Richard, assembly manager, Nicola Thibaudeau, CEO, and Jean-François Chavanne, laboratory technician.

that Switzerland and the Bern region are so centrally located, boast magnificent scenery, and offer world-class training opportunities and working conditions makes them second to none as a place to live and work in – for entrepreneurs and employees alike.”

Information

www.mpsag.com


About the person

Nicola Thibaudeau, engineering graduate, MBA, has been CEO and board member of MPS Micro Precision Systems AG since 2003. A dual Swiss-Canadian national, Ms. Thibaudeau studied mechanical engineering in Montreal and has worked for IBM Canada, Cicorel in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Mécanex SA (now RUAG), MPS Precimed SA in Corgémont and MPS Décolletage SA in Court. The mother of two sons lives with her family in Neuchâtel. She is a qualified pilot and enjoys skiing in winter and mountain biking in summer, as well as climbing, jogging, and reading.

“Creating innovations for the medtech industry in tandem with our customers”

Meister & Cie AG in Hasle-Rüegsau, Emmental

Meister & Cie AG Managing Director Marcel Meister explains how the medtech industry benefits from his company's products and services and why the Emmental valley in the Canton of Bern has been the ideal base for this family business for the past 140 years.



“We help our customers significantly reduce the time lag between development and serial production. With our short chains of command, we can supply solutions that fit the bill technically and economically at very short notice.”
Marcel Meister, MD of Meister & Cie AG



You have been developing and manufacturing custom biomedical textile braids for customers in the medical technology industry since 2009.

What makes your services special?

"Customers who don't have the expertise to develop or serial produce biomedical textile braids themselves approach us with a specific application in mind. Based on that, we develop custom products for them, adapting our machines for each specific order where necessary. Then the products go into serial production here. We advise and support our customers on all the aspects involved, from selecting a biocompatible material to ready-made sterile products. Because of the close links between our customers' expertise and our own, we can work on creating medical technology solutions together."

Can you describe one of these custom innovations in a little more detail?

"We worked with a German customer to develop a high-precision braided component for a medical instrument used for treating gastrointestinal diseases, which deposits an implant in the patient's gastrointestinal tract. This small-diameter textile braid, which is highly tear resistant, biocompatible and low stretch, has been serial produced here for this customer since 2012."

About the person

Marcel Meister is the fifth generation of his family to run Meister & Cie AG. He started his career as a sales representative in the family business 20 years ago and went on to spend many years heading the sales department. He has been managing director since 2009. Born in Bern, Meister grew up in Rüegsauschachen in the Emmental valley and now lives with his family in nearby Hasle near Burgdorf. In his leisure time the father of two enjoys playing sports in natural surroundings and traveling.



Developing groundbreaking solutions for medical technology with engineering ingenuity, teamwork, pride and a pioneering spirit: Meister & Cie AG manufactures all its custom textile braids at its Swiss manufacturing base in Hasle-Rüegsau. (From left to right: sales adviser Martin Lüthi and CEO Marcel Meister).

About the company

Meister & Cie AG has been developing and manufacturing technical textile braids such as fiber ropes and cords for the wholesale and specialist trade, home improvement stores, commercial enterprises and service providers since its foundation as a rope-making workshop in 1869. In addition, the company supplements its own range of commercial products and, since 2009, has been developing and serial producing custom bio-medical textile braids for the medtech industry. Meister & Cie AG is a member of the Swiss Medtech cluster.

In what way are your high-precision fine braided products breaking new ground for the medical technology sector?

"The high-strength biocompatible materials we use in our textile fibers enable us to develop innovative products like implants and components for instruments for the medtech industry. Compared with biocompatible materials made of metal, the textile fibers we use are more tissue friendly and stronger than metal fibers with the same diameter."

You are firm believers in the "clean room in clean room" concept. How did this concept come about?

"Manufacturing textile braids produces a lot of dirt, both from the mechanical processing and from abrasion of the materials and lubricants used. We therefore carry out all our manufacturing processes in our clean room, which enables us to maximize the cleanliness of the braided textile components we manufacture. With our unique "clean room in a clean room" concept, we are able to offer our customers a reliable system for manufacturing biomedical textile braids that are fully compliant with the strict guidelines and requirements in the medical technology sector."

What makes the Emmental valley such an ideal location for developing and manufacturing your textile braids?

"In the Canton of Bern we can count on a large number of highly specialized suppliers and first-class research institutions."

"For many of our products, we need to use metal instruments or combine our biomedical textile braid with a metal implant. So we depend on a large number of turning and milling suppliers. We also buy in packaging materials and send our products to sterilization service providers for final packaging. In Switzerland, and especially in the Canton of Bern and the Emmental valley, we have a network of these highly specialized companies who are already well-established suppliers to the medical technology industry and have all the necessary certifications.

What's more, the Canton of Bern is home to some first-class research institutions. Being close to all these partners enables us to implement new ideas on deadline and generally makes our work a lot easier."

Information

www.meister-ag.ch

Logistics solutions for the Swiss healthcare market

Alloga AG in Burgdorf

Head of Alloga Andreas Koch reveals some of the innovative services his company has developed for supplying pharmaceutical products all over Switzerland and explains why this prewholesaler's base in Burgdorf plays a key role in the company's success.

"We are the point of entry into Switzerland for more or less every second pack of medication sold here. National and international pharmaceutical companies rely on us to service their entire product range – from storage to order picking to dispatch," head of Alloga Andreas Koch explains. "We have been supplying pharmaceutical products throughout Switzerland on time and on schedule for over 60 years. We work with around 80 pharmaceutical partners, providing a full range of logistics services and delivering to more than 13,000 customers across the country."

"We have been supplying Switzerland with medications for over 60 years."

Ultra-low temperature logistics and solar energy

Alloga has been based in Burgdorf since 2000. The premises were extended in 2004, almost doubling the company's storage capacity to the equivalent of almost three football pitches of warehouse space. In 2015 the prewholesaler refitted 13 technical rooms which are now used to store goods with special properties, such as flammable or odorous products. Koch: "We currently have around 43,000 air-conditioned, humidity-controlled pallet spaces for room tempera-

ture goods, refrigerated products, narcotics and hazardous goods." The temperature in the coldest storage zone is -80°C . This year will see the roof of the 23,000 m² building topped with a powerful solar energy system. "This will enable us to generate electricity and will reflect the sun's rays away from the building, saving us a lot of energy, as we currently have to cool down the warehouse every time the sun shines," Koch explains. More than 100,000 orders are processed in the Alloga warehouse every year. Orders are picked and delivered reliably and on time using state-of-the-art technology and GPS navigation. Koch again: "Our vehicles are fitted with GPS modules which give us full control over the goods even while they are on the road. The temperature and location are kept under close scrutiny at all times by our remote monitoring system."

One-stop shop for modular logistics solutions

All Alloga's processes – of which around a third are fully automated – are governed by strict safety standards. It is not only pharmaceutical manufacturers who

About the company

Alloga AG in Burgdorf is one of Switzerland's leading **prewholesalers** – pharmaceutical logistics companies that act as the interface between pharmaceutical manufacturers and customers. Established in 1957 as a subsidiary of the Bern-based Galenica Group, Alloga guarantees its customers highly efficient healthcare services such as storage, order picking, and dispatch of pharmaceuticals. In 2017 the company employed around 200 people who process more than 2 million order items per year, send out around 90 million packs, and transport more than 60,000 pallets to hospitals, wholesalers, doctors, and pharmacies at home and abroad.



"We offer the pharmaceutical industry a modular range of services covering the entire supply chain. Instead of investing in their own expensive infrastructure, our customers only pay for the services they actually need." Andreas Koch, head of Alloga AG



Head of Alloga Andreas Koch in Alloga's 23,000 m² central warehouse: "Our processes are all ISO 9001:2015 compliant and are constantly being adapted to the ever stricter European guidelines of Good Distribution Practice. We are therefore playing our part in increasing drug safety, reliability of supply and patient safety throughout Switzerland."

are having to meet ever tougher demands in relation to patient and medication safety: prewholesalers are also finding themselves faced with a growing array of new challenges requiring complex measures and ongoing investment. The leading logistics provider in the Swiss healthcare

market even provides financial and insurance services. Among the innovative solutions offered by the Burgdorf-based company are the Alloga Safety Cold Box, a system developed in 2011 which guarantees passive cooling from 2°C to 8°C for small consignments for 34 hours. "The

Alloga Safety Cold Box enables us to deliver medications safely to our customers all year round, whether they are going to Samedan in winter, where the temperature can drop to below -20°C, or to Locarno in summer at 30°C or above," Koch explains.

**About the person**

Andreas Koch studied Business Management at the University of Mannheim and worked as a management consultant before joining Galexis AG in 2009 as head of Supply Chain Management. Supply chain management and logistics have been common themes throughout his entire career. Koch, who hails from Mannheim, took over as head of Alloga in 2015. He lives with his family in Oberlunkhofen in the Canton of Aargau. In his leisure time, the father of one son enjoys outdoor sports such as jogging, swimming, cycling, or skiing.

Being located in Burgdorf benefits Alloga's business in many ways. For example many of its customers and partners are also based in the Canton of Bern. "We can get to all the major conurbations quickly from Burgdorf," Koch says. "What's more, our central position at the heart of Switzerland

and Europe – and in such a picturesque setting – is one of the main reasons why our staff are happy to work here."

Information
www.alloga.ch

“We are bridge builders and ambassadors”

Swiss Medtech in Bern

Two national medtech organizations, FASMED and Medical Cluster, merged to form Swiss Medtech in June 2017. Co-president Rubino Mordasini explains what they hope to achieve from the merger and what the new sector association will offer its members.

What services does Swiss Medtech offer its members?

“We see ourselves as industry ambassadors for our 550 or so members – manufacturers, suppliers, service providers, wholesalers, and users – both in Switzerland and abroad. We have 16 different specialist groups staffed by experts from our member companies who produce strategies, solutions, and opinions on relevant industry issues and develop pioneering industry standards. Some of the services we offer our members include updates about the latest developments – at our Swiss Medtech Day, for example – and advice on regulatory, legal, and tariff issues. We also provide networking opportunities and we are constantly developing new services.

Training and professional development is another area in which we are active, including establishing new job profiles. We also provide the Swiss medtech industry with analyses and information on principles and regulations in publications such as the Swiss Medtech Code of Ethical Business Conduct and industry reports such as the SMTI Sector Study, which we produce every two years in collaboration with the Helbling Group business consultancy.”

What are some of the current challenges facing the Swiss medtech industry?

“At the moment, a raft of factors ranging from pricing pressure, competition, and regulation to the tax burden and bilateral agreements with the EU are jeopardizing the attractiveness of Switzerland as a place to do business. Action needs to be taken to stop a mass exodus of industry. With the current strength of the Swiss franc, medtech companies are having to rely more and more on innovation to stand out from other leading centers such as the USA or Germany. Last year, the new EU regulations on medical devices (MDR) and in vitro diagnostic medical devices (IVDR) entered into force. Implementing these two comprehensive regulations will place immense pressure on the whole medtech industry over the next few years.”

“No other country in Europe has such a high proportion of its workforce employed in the medtech industry.”

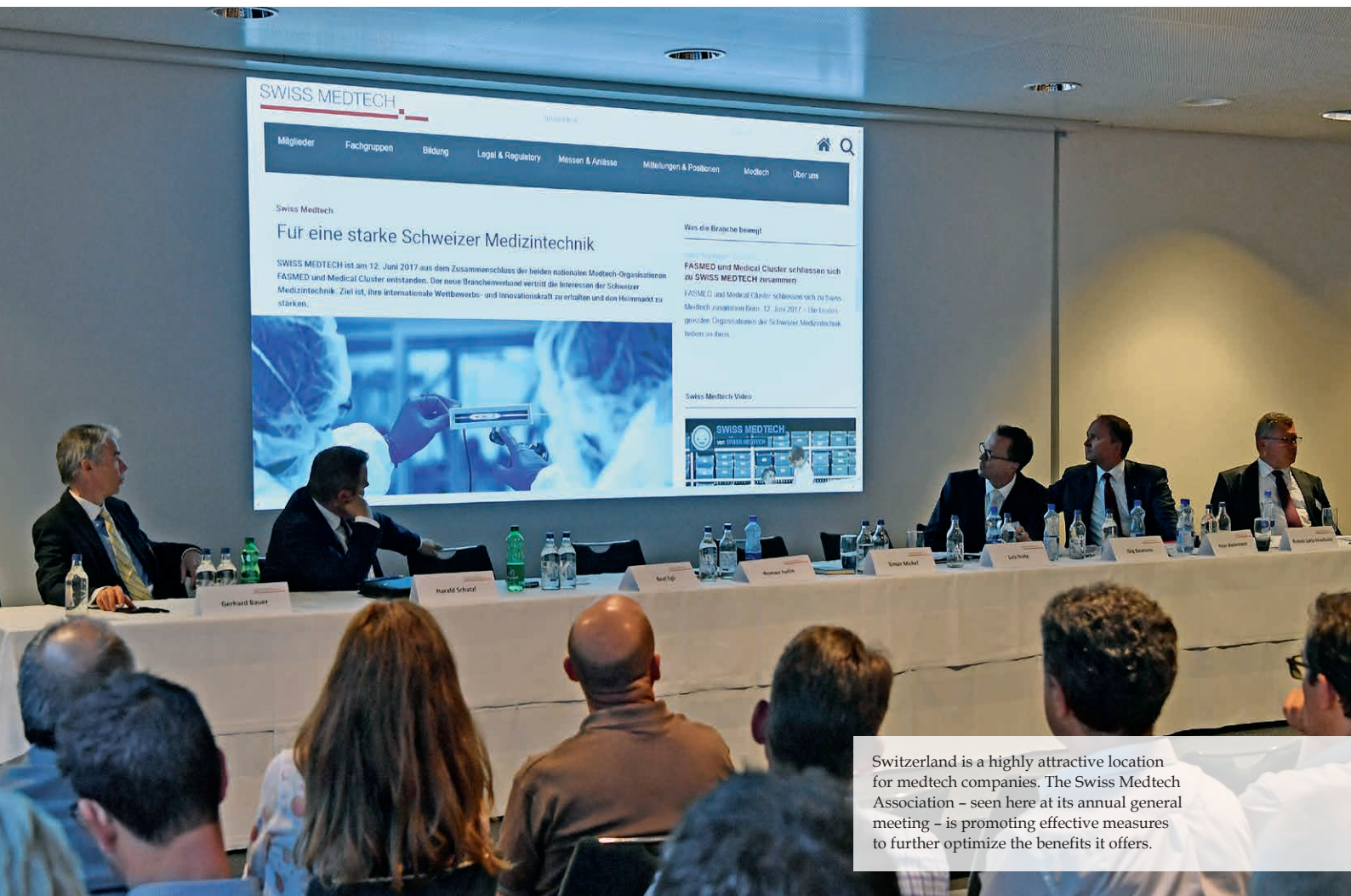
Medical technology is a key Swiss industry with relevance far beyond our borders. What special role does the Canton of Bern play for this sector?

“The Canton of Bern has been a major medtech location with numerous SMEs and international concerns for many decades. Many microclusters and commer-

About the person

Rubino Mordasini, co-president of Swiss Medtech and former long-standing president of the Swiss Medical Cluster, is a specialist in internal medicine. For 20 years he was senior physician at the Sonnenhofgruppe Cardiac Center and Department for Internal Medicine and is vice-president and long-standing secretary-general of the Swiss Heart Foundation and chairman of the Board of the Ziemer Group of ophthalmology companies. The father of three was born in Davos and lives in Bern. His leisure-time passions are sport and modern history.





Switzerland is a highly attractive location for medtech companies. The Swiss Medtech Association – seen here at its annual general meeting – is promoting effective measures to further optimize the benefits it offers.

cial and institutional start-ups have grown out of the traditional watchmaking, engineering, and pharmaceutical industries here. The Jura Arc region in particular is home to a range of technology companies that offer their highly specialized expertise as suppliers. This key position is further strengthened by the presence of sitem-in-sel, the Swiss Institute for Translational and Entrepreneurial Medicine at the Insel-spital Bern Campus. Large companies such as Ypsomed AG and CSL Behring AG are even relocating parts of their research departments there.”

How important is Swiss Medtech as a hub and a driver of innovation for the medical technology industry in Switzerland?

“No other country in Europe has such a high proportion of its workforce employed in the medtech industry. With around 54,500

jobs, the Swiss medtech industry accounts for around 1.1 percent of the entire national workforce. Its turnover has increased from CHF 0.8 billion to CHF 14.1 billion since 2014 alone. We are convinced that our industry will continue to invest and grow in our country going forward. With product innovation and process optimization, we can make Switzerland even more attractive as a medtech hub. And that's why we are committed to acting as bridge builders and door openers.”

Information

www.swiss-medtech.ch

About the organization

Swiss Medtech was established in June 2017 following the merger of two national medtech organizations, FASMED and Medical Cluster. The new Bern-based industry association represents the interests of the Swiss medtech industry, with around 1,350 companies and 54,500 employees generating turnover of CHF 14.1 billion and exports of CHF 10.6 billion per year. Swiss Medtech's aim is to maintain the international competitiveness and innovative capacity of the industry and strengthen the domestic market, for example with training and professional development programs, symposiums, export-promoting services, and supportive measures for entrepreneurship.

“The new innovation ecosystem for start-ups, SMEs and individuals”

FABLAB at the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne

FABLAB in Biel/Bienne is a unique innovation space for private individuals, start-ups and SMEs. Felix Kunz and Manuel Fernandez reveal more, and explain how the FABLAB team came to win a world record in September 2017.

“Here at FABLAB, our doors are open to everyone, regardless of whether they simply want to share ideas in the coworking space or implement their own projects with prototypes or small production runs,” says Felix Kunz, CEO of Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne AG (SIP BB). “FABLAB’s success is a small-scale example of what the SIP BB is aiming for on a much larger scale.”

Fully equipped innovation space

It’s not just the fact that FABLAB Biel/Bienne is in a bilingual region that gives it its unique spirit, Kunz believes: “We’re exceptionally well equipped, with ten different 3-D printers, various 3-D scanners, a laser cutter, a coworking space and plenty of room for events. We also have a digitization cabin for converting products or even people into digital data for 3-D printing.” In addition, all FABLAB customers get access to an electronic and a mechanical workshop. Besides the equipment that is available to all users, there are other more specialized machines for use by industrial customers. “For example, the University of Bern ARTORG Center for Biomedical Engineering Research commissioned us to produce models of aneurysms – distended arteries – on our 3-D printers,” explains manager Manuel Fernandez, who coordinates the internal team, processes customer

**“Our
FABLAB
is open to
everyone.”**

About FABLAB

Fab labs are fabrication laboratories that are open to anyone who wants to produce one-offs and prototypes using modern industrial production processes. FABLAB at SIP BB runs courses and workshops for the public on the use of 3-D printers, laser cutters and 3-D scanners. With a floor area of 300 m², FABLAB Biel/Bienne is the biggest and most modern of its kind in Switzerland. It also provides start-ups using the integrated coworking space with the facilities to translate innovative ideas directly into actual products.





FABLAB at the SIP BB is a facility where anyone can develop and manufacture prototypes and small production runs to a professional standard. The FABLAB team provide all customers with tailor-made advice and run training courses and a range of events.



World record with 55 model railway wagons from the 3-D printer: the FABLAB team at Biel/Bienne made it into the Guinness Book of Records on September 22, 2017: Felix Kunz (left) and Manuel Fernandez.

About the person

Manuel Fernandez has been with the SIP BB since August 2015 and has managed FABLAB Biel/Bienne since August 2017. After graduating in mechanical engineering from the Bern University of Applied Sciences, Fernandez joined the Packaging Innovation department at Nestlé SA. Born in Spain, he grew up in the Solothurn region and now lives in Grenchen. The father of a young daughter enjoys riding his motorbike and flying in his spare time.

orders and manages the lab's links and relationship with the Swiss FABLAB network. "Surgeons at Inselspital Bern use these printed 3-D models to run through a particularly tricky surgical procedure 1:1 before the operation itself." The SIP BB fabrication laboratory's wide-ranging portfolio also includes workshops, consulting services and events for participants at every level. "Build your own 3-D printer" is just one example of the many workshops planned for 2018.

World record to mark reopening

Following its expansion last year, FABLAB at the SIP in Aarbergstrasse, Biel/Bienne, now has 300 m² of laboratory space and another 300 m² for coworking. The new premises and the extended machine pool were inaugurated on September 22, 2017, with a spectacular Guinness World Record. "We managed to build the world's longest train made of 3-D printed wagons,"

Kunz and Fernandez report. "The locomotive – a model of the legendary Gotthard CE 6/8 crocodile – pulls a massive 55 wagons, 14 more than the train of the last record holder from France." Under the rules for the Guinness World Record attempt, all the wagons had to be produced individually using 3-D printing only, the model train had to consist of a locomotive and wagons, and it had to travel a distance of at least ten meters. Each of the winning train's wagons took at least 15 hours to print.

Felix Kunz and Manuel Fernandez: "Our FABLAB has exactly the right infrastructure, expertise, technologies and network to enable us to tackle exciting challenges such as this and many others besides."

Information

www.fablab-biel-bienne.ch

The chocolate stronghold in the Bernese Jura

Chocolats Camille Bloch SA in Courtelary

Chocolats Camille Bloch SA recently completed a substantial building project at its Courtelary base entitled Authenti-Cité. CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors Daniel Bloch explains the reasoning behind the project and what sweet delights await visitors in the new visitor center.

"After just under two years of building we opened our new visitor center, CHEZ Camille Bloch, on 28 October 2017," says Daniel Bloch, CEO and chairman of the Board of Directors of Chocolats Camille Bloch SA.

"The center is part of the massive Authenti-Cité building project, which also included expanding our existing production and logistics infrastructure and building new conference rooms and offices." The long-established family company has invested around CHF 40 million in its Courtelary site. The most eye-catching element is a 26-meter-long walkway completed in April 2017, connecting the buildings on either side of the main road. "For the first time, our manufacturing and admin departments are no longer separated by a road," says the CEO, who expects capacity to double as a result of the expansion. "Also, more and more consumers wanted to get to know us in person," he adds. "But we were only able to host a small number of visitors at a time due to ever more strict regulations. This is why we decided to go ahead with this substantial building project. Now there's enough space in our 1700 m² visitor center for up to 100,000 chocolate fans per year to experience our history going back three generations, our traditional brands and our modern production facilities at first hand."

"Now we can host 100,000 chocolate lovers a year in our interactive world of experience."



About the person

Daniel Bloch is the third generation to run Chocolats Camille Bloch SA and has been CEO and Chairman of the Board since 2005. A lawyer by trade, Bloch worked in the paper industry and for a New York law firm before joining the family business in 1994 and going on to gain MBA from INSEAD in Fontainebleau in France. Bloch was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds, grew up in Muri near Bern and now lives in Bern. The father of three loves traveling with his family, playing tennis, jogging, reading, eating out with friends, and going for walks.

At CHEZ Camille Bloch, visitors can wander at will on a voyage of flavors and discoveries which includes producing their own chocolate creations with a chocolatier.



Interactive voyage of discovery

At the visitor center, fans of Ragusa, Torino, and all the company's other products can wander at will through 7 different areas on a playful voyage of flavors and discoveries awakening all their senses. "On this interactive journey, visitors get to see the production process in real time and experience some entertaining experiments," the CEO explains. "There is even a chocolatier on hand to help them produce their own specialties!" Camille Bloch SA has also

been working with the Arc Ingénierie Saint-Imier, Le Locle, and Neuchâtel Universities of Applied Sciences to produce a unique engraving system for chocolate. Bloch again: "This innovative technology allows a personal message to be engraved on a bar of Ragusa that's good enough to eat!" Open Tuesdays to Sundays, the visitor center also houses a shop selling exclusive chocolaterie products, a bistro, and a children's playground, as well as several multifunctional rooms with two

spacious terraces and a foyer, making CHEZ Camille Bloch a highly attractive seminar and conference venue.

The official opening ceremony was attended by more than 200 guests and media representatives, including Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann, member of the Bern government Beatrice Simon, and Swiss skiing star and Ragusa brand ambassador Lara Gut. The famous chocolate producer is one of the region's big-

**About the company**

Chocolats Camille Bloch SA was founded by Camille Bloch in Bern in 1929. The company has been based in Courtelary in the Bernese Jura since 1935 and currently employs 200 people. Around 3,700 tonnes of chocolate specialties are produced there every year, roughly a quarter of which are exported abroad. Since October 2017, chocolate fans have been able to enjoy a voyage of flavors and discoveries in the new CHEZ Camille Bloch visitor center and learn about the company's history and production process in real time.

gest employers and has been closely associated with the Canton of Bern for decades. The grandson of the company's founder appreciates their close and fruitful working relationship with local and Cantonal authorities, who supported them throughout the building project. "We founded our company in Bern in 1929 and moved to Courtelary in 1935, where my grandfather Camille took over an old paper factory," Daniel Bloch explains. "We have been loyal to our location ever since and

feel very much at home here. We invented the Ragusa candy bar here in 1942, followed by the Torino chocolate bar in 1948. Our investment is a clear demonstration of our commitment to our town, the Saint-Imier valley and the Canton of Bern as a whole."

Information

www.chezcamillebloch.swiss

Canton of Bern – bastion of cycling

Out and about on two wheels in the Bern region

A cycling tour is the perfect way to discover the Canton of Bern's most beautiful hidden corners. The region is rapidly becoming a cycle sport hot spot – as borne out by the many high-caliber events held here, such as the Tour de France 2016.

The Canton of Bern boasts more than a thousand kilometers of signposted Swiss National Bike Routes and 32 mountain bike routes, three of which are national routes passing through the canton. The canton's first cycle route network was created back in 1991 to mark its 800th anniversary. You'd be hard pressed to find another region that is so multifaceted and yet so convenient to explore on two wheels. There are plenty of places to stay overnight along the routes, and luggage transfer services are available for cyclists traveling with baggage. There's something for everyone: a trip to the Seeland with the family, a gentle tour through the Emmental valley by e-bike, a tour to the picturesque mountain village of Adelboden with a mouthwatering twist, a high-speed downhill trail from Gurten, or the Racing Bike Challenge leading up to one of our 31 mountain passes. New mountain bike routes are being added all the time: there are permanent downhill and freeride trails for the thrill-seeking cyclist in many of our tourist regions, such as the Diemtigtal in the Bernese Oberland.

World-famous cycle sport events

The cycling bastion of Bern also plays host to a wide range of famous cycle sport events. In July 2016 spectators lined the streets to cheer on the Tour de France cycling pros. And cycle racing events such as the Berner Rundfahrt, the Seeland Classic, the Alpenbrevet and the iXS Downhill Cup regularly attract thousands of cycling fans to Switzerland's capital city and the region as a whole. The Eiger Bike Challenge – the legendary cycling marathon with views of the Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau mountains – celebrated its 20th anniversary last year.

Whether your ride of choice is a touring bike, a racing bike or a mountain bike – and whether you're into events, nature or culture – come and experience the diversity of the Canton of Bern from the saddle!

Information

www.madeinbern.com/cycling



The world's greatest cycle race through the UNESCO World Heritage City: the Tour de France passed through Bern's picturesque medieval city center in 2016.

Major cycling events in the Canton of Bern in 2018

- **May 6:** Seeland Classic (berner-rundfahrt.ch)
- **May 6:** 17th Berner Rundfahrt (berner-rundfahrt.ch)
- **May 26:** Ride the Alps Sustenpass (highwaytosky.com)
- **August 11/12:** 21st Eiger Bike Challenge, Grindelwald (eigerbike.ch)
- **August 24–26:** iXS Swiss Downhill Cup, Wriedhorn (ixsdownhillcup.com)
- **August 25:** Alpenbrevet, Meiringen (alpenbrevet.ch)

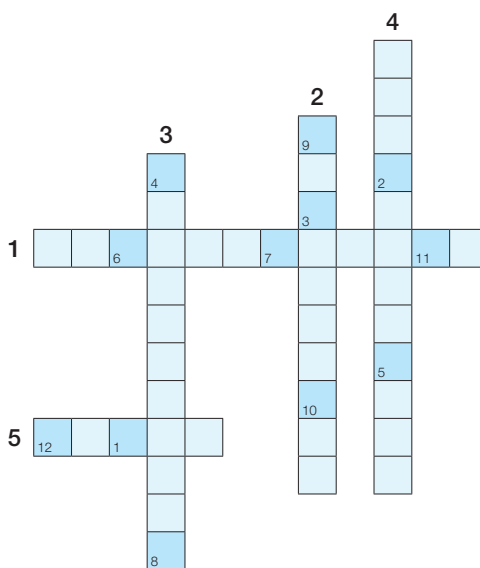
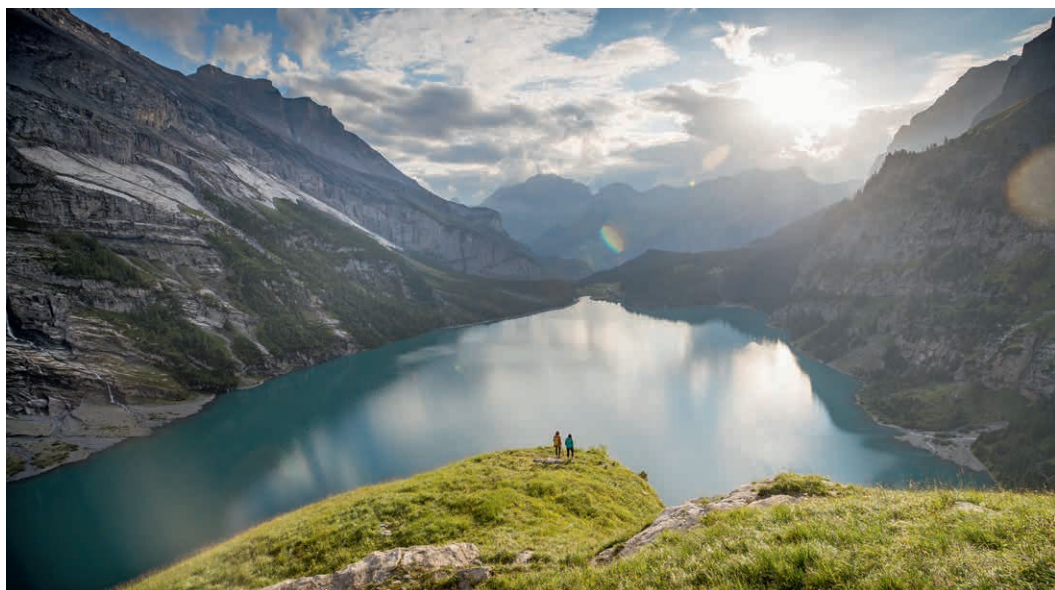
Win a cable car ride to Lake Oeschinen

Welcome to Lake Oeschinen in the Bernese Oberland! www.oeschinensee.ch

Take part in our prize draw and win two return tickets to Lake Oeschinen in the Bernese Oberland by Panorama cable car.

Lake Oeschinen lies at the foot of the Blüemlisalp massif, 1,578 meters above sea level, in a picturesque nature conservation area which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A ten-minute ride in a panorama gondola whisks you from Kandersteg up into the mountains, and then it's around a 30-minute walk through breathtaking Alpine scenery to the lake itself. Once there, stop off for a meal at one of the restaurants or stay over in the traditional Alpine hotel. In summer, sports fans, nature lovers and leisure visitors can take a ride on the popular alpine slide, swim in the lake, go fishing, or hire a rowboat. For winter visitors there's a choice of activities including ice fishing, skiing, winter hiking, and tobogganing on the 3.5 km toboggan run from Lake Oeschinen to the cable car station.

Taking part couldn't be easier. Simply find the answers to the clues and enter them in the appropriate places in the grid to find the mystery word. Send the mystery word along with your completed entry form to the address below by August 31, 2018. You can also enter online at www.berninvest.be.ch/chance. Tip: every word relates to a subject covered in this issue of *bernecapitalarea*. Good luck!



1. New visitor center for chocolate fans in the Bernese Jura: CHEZ ...
2. CEO of MPS Micro Precision Systems AG: Nicola ...
3. FABLAB is part of the ... Innovation Park Biel/Bienne
4. Alloga AG is one of Switzerland's leading pharmaceutical ... companies
5. Location of Meister & Cie. AG ...-Rüegsau

Answer

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|

Name: _____ Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ E-mail: _____

The winner will be drawn by lots and notified in writing. Employees of the Bern Economic Development Agency are excluded from entering the competition. The judges' decision is final. There is no cash alternative to the prize.

Tear out this page and send it to this address by August 31, 2018.

Bern Economic Development Agency, Münsterplatz 3a, CH-3011 Bern, or enter the competition via www.berninvest.be.ch/chance.

Congratulations to Emil Roth of Gümligen, the winner of our competition in *bernecapitalarea* 2/2017.

New arrivals in the Canton of Bern

New companies in the region

The Bern Economic Development Agency helps innovative, international companies with their decisions to relocate and settle in the Canton of Bern – like Swiss Coffee Alliance GmbH in Bern and Neubio GmbH in Brugg.



Swiss Coffee Alliance

Die Swiss Coffee Alliance GmbH moved into its headquarters in Spitalgasse, Bern, in September last year. Founded by Chahan Yeretzian and Claudinei Monteiro, the new start-up offers its customers sustainable, innovative services along the entire coffee value chain. These include providing scientific, technological and strategic expertise on optimizing business processes, improving product life-cycle management and developing and launching innovations. Swiss Coffee Alliance GmbH works closely with Zurich University of Applied Sciences, in which it has a world-class partner in research, development and innovation. It is therefore ideally placed to provide its customers with support in everything from concept creation and design to engineering, manufacturing and after-sales. The company plans to recruit another three employees in the medium term.

Some of the key factors in the company's decision to move to Bern included the comprehensive support provided by the Bern Economic Development Agency and the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa), the high quality of living in the city and the region, its convenient location at the heart of Switzerland and Europe, and its proximity to the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne, an organization that plays an important role in the start-up's strategic and growth plans.

Information

www.swisscoffeealliance.ch



neubio

Neubio GmbH has been producing and selling innovative cochlear implants, hearing devices and integrated medtech solutions in Brugg near Biel/Bienne since May 2017. The start-up, whose solutions are based on a technology developed by founder and CEO Jay Chang in the USA in 1999, started out with six employees and plans to take on more staff during the course of this year. A major factor in its decision to open in Biel/Bienne was the comprehensive support provided by the Bern Economic Development Agency. It put Neubio in touch with suitable local partners such as IL-MedTec AG and the University of Bern and also helped it to find the perfect premises, including a class 7 clean room.

Since it was launched in 2007, the highly efficient Bold V1.0 cochlear implant has transformed the lives of thousands of patients, mainly in Asia and the Middle East. The cochlear implant offers users the highest quality full-spectrum audio while boasting the lowest total device and implementation cost in the industry. Recovery after the innovative, minimally invasive operation is fast, and after-care and day-to-day use of the cochlear implant are quick and easy thanks to the new smartphone app developed by Neubio GmbH which features a cloud-based management system.

Information

www.neubio.io

“Rather a Hidden Champion than a puffed-up PR giant”

Interview with Robert Rohrer, Chairman of the Board, RONDO Burgdorf AG

RONDO Burgdorf AG manufactures machines and systems for the production of pastry of all kinds. The systems made in Burgdorf are used the world over by everyone, from small artisanal bakers to large industrial manufacturers.

Mr. Rohrer, do you feel a sense of pride when you bite into a bread roll, wherever you are in the world?

“Yes, I feel immensely proud that our machines are used to produce top class baked goods all over the world.”

What makes you a champion in your field?

“There are several factors that come into play. Firstly, it’s the outstanding quality and reliability of RONDO systems, which is almost legendary. Secondly, it’s the fact that our machines are extremely easy to use and our customer service is second-to-none that makes us a champion.”

How do you remain a champion?

“It’s harder to remain a champion than to become one, because you have to keep coming up with new ways to beat the competition. At RONDO we are very committed to digitization and the Internet of Things. We want to use them to get innovations onto the market faster and to offer our customers new, integrated solutions and services. In addition, we are constantly optimizing our processes and investing in attractive workplaces, so that we can recruit and retain the best people.”

Is being a Hidden Champion something you aspire to or is your marketing department getting it wrong?

“Actually, I like this label as it reflects the culture at RONDO. We prefer understatement: in other words, we would rather be a real Hidden Champion than a puffed-up PR champion.”

You have branches and manufacturing bases in various countries. Why is Switzerland the right place for your headquarters?

“We appreciate the flexible structures and working hours models here, which enable us to adapt to changes in the market. Another advantage is the high level of legal certainty, which means we can plan for the long term with confidence.”

Why is the Canton of Bern the right location for your headquarters?

“There are two main reasons for that. Firstly, we can find high-skilled, motivated, quality-minded staff here – and that’s just as important to us as a manufacturing company as it is to any other business. Secondly, the local authorities, such as the Bern Eco-

nomic Development Agency, are open to our concerns as an internationally operating SME and are willing to support us. We hope they will continue to do so going forward, as we are facing enormous global competitive pressure. And of course we want to remain a champion – hidden or otherwise!”

About the company

RONDO Burgdorf AG

Heimiswilstrasse 42
3400 Burgdorf
www.rondo-online.com

Number of employees: 420 worldwide,
of which 225 in Burgdorf
Turnover: approx. CHF 100 million



Robert Rohrer, Chairman of the Board.



Customers can see RONDO machines in action at the 3000 m² Dough-how Center.

Elegance is an attitude

Simon Baker
Simon Baker

LONGINES®



The Longines Master Collection