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PORTRAIT OF A CEO

Andrea de Luca

HIDDEN CHAMPION

Temmentec AG

START-UP

Four new, ambitious companies
introduce themselves

LIVING / CULTURE / TOURISM

Espace découverte Énergie – the art
of smart in using nature's strengths

The Land of the *Tüftler* – Precision Craftsmanship Through the Ages

Get clarity

The Federal Act on Tax Reform and AHV Financing (TRAF) has transformed the Swiss tax landscape. The changes are relevant not only for companies that previously enjoyed cantonal tax status, but all taxpayers in general.

That's why it's so important to clarify the impact of the reform on an individual basis and examine applicability of the new measures.

Our tax experts are ready to answer your questions. [kpmg.ch](https://www.kpmg.ch)

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#cantonofbern

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Dear reader,

We were full of optimism this spring. We were sailing along at full speed, the economy was buzzing, and we were singing the praises of businesses in the Canton of Bern. Then a tiny biomolecule happened, forcing the Federal Council to take action and bringing our businesses to a halt through no fault of their own. More or less overnight, we found ourselves in a new reality and the spring took on a whole new guise.

Nevertheless, I remain positive. I continue to believe in competitiveness, innovative strength, and resilience. I continue to place my trust in the adaptability of healthy companies. And I am convinced that the courageous action the Bern government has taken has enabled us to provide rapid and targeted assistance. The Canton of Bern was one of the first cantons in Switzerland to enact emergency legislation. Thanks to the special measures pushed for by BEDA, we were eventually able to retain almost 1,500 employees in research and development and therefore keep them working on their innovation projects without losing them to short-time work.

We have not made any major changes to the content of this current issue to reflect the crisis. We continue to report on Hidden Champions in the Canton of Bern, tried and tested products and surprising achievements. On masterpieces of precision manufacturing, in which every screw and every wheel is the result of decades of meticulous, finicky work. On specialists beavering away in the background, without whom no well-known watch brand could survive.

The limelight belongs to the unknown hidden market leaders and suppliers. Our cover story features Laubscher Precision Ltd with its turned parts which have been used in exclusive watches for 170 years. In our CEO Portrait we introduce you to Andrea de Luca, the supplier with a passion for surfaces and thrills. Yet another Hidden Champion in more than one sense of the word is Temmentec AG in Sumiswald, whose products dominate the world market for high-end cosmetics.

Take a well-deserved break from the happenings of the day and immerse yourself in some completely different reading matter. My team and I send you and yours our very best wishes.

Yours truly,
Dr. Sebastian Friess
Head Official, Office of Economic Affairs
President, Bern Economic Development Agency

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The Land of the *Tüftler* – Precision Craftsmanship Through the Ages

When it comes to punctuality, we Swiss take matters extremely seriously. And we can, of course, because our watches are so precise. After all, they are high quality – which is something else we take very seriously here too. Precision also underpins every tiniest component produced by the Bernese watch industry. And that is what has brought it global fame, as the Canton of Bern's export statistics reveal, placing it in second place behind machinery. How has this major branch of industry developed over time, and is there truth behind the expression "As precise as a Swiss watch"? To find the answers, we need to take a look back over time.

Stronghold of timepieces

The unlikely catalyst for the Swiss watch industry was the reformer John Calvin, who in the mid-16th century condemned jewelry as vain frippery and had goldsmithing banned in Geneva. The Huguenot refugees who brought their clock- and watchmaking skills to Geneva were permitted to ply their trade, however, so the unemployed goldsmiths switched to making portable timepieces. Geneva soon became the Swiss stronghold of watchmaking, exporting its masterpieces to places as far away as Constantinople. Watchmaking in the Canton of Bern started to gather steam in the mid-19th century, and Bern would go on to become the new stronghold by the end of the century. To begin with, the main regions were Vallon de St-Imier, Franches-Montagnes, Ajoie and Biel/Bienne. Although the advent of mechanization saw the industry spread to other regions of the country such as Schaffhausen and Basel, in the 20th century it began to cluster in the Jura region, where the watch industry still dominates today. Technically highly complex as they were even then, watches in the 17th century called for a division of labor and led to a differentiation of professions. An ecosystem of suppliers, assemblers and dealers developed. It is these suppliers with their globally unrivaled precision engineering skills that have also helped other industrial sectors flourish.

A *Tüftler* from Täuffelen

A shining example of this evolution is Laubscher Precision Ltd, a company specializing in precision turned parts and one of the oldest and largest independent suppliers to the Swiss watchmaking industry. Laubscher's screws and other turned parts can be found in exclusive watch brands such as Patek Philippe, IWC and Jaeger-LeCoultre. The company's founding father Samuel Laubscher, originally an agricultural laborer by trade, first came into contact with the watchmaking industry when he moved from his home town of Täuffelen to the Neuchâtel Jura region in the 1830s in search of work and took on watchmaking work to do at home.

In the Canton of Bern, watches are much more than just practical wrist jewelry. They are an important cornerstone of society and our economic system and have spawned a whole host of *Tüftler*, as they call them in German – engineers and craftsmen who are highly skilled at performing tricky or finicky tasks. And that includes the supplier Laubscher Precision Ltd.



FINISHING SHOP

Production staff in the Laubscher finishing shop in the 1950s.



“The typical successful supplier is usually a creative *Tüftler* who is obsessed with detail.”

Raphael Laubscher, CEO Laubscher Precision Ltd

Fascinated by watch movements, he trained as a mechanical engineer and learned how to manufacture watch screws. In 1846 he opened a workshop in Malleray in the Bernese Jura, thus laying the foundation for the successful family business. In 1850 the workshop moved back to Täuffelen, where it built its first factory two years later. Laubscher started supplying major watch brands while at the same time working on improving its production processes. The breakthrough came between 1870 and 1875, when Laubscher developed the first mechanical sliding headstock lathe, which became known as the Swiss turning machine, in collaboration with mechanical

engineer G. Tschopp and Jakob Schweizer. In the early 1890s Laubscher introduced a series of groundbreaking improvements to his machine, which enabled milled slots to be produced in one pass instead of being added retrospectively by hand.

Little has changed in the basic design of the machine over the past 170 years, as Raphael Laubscher, the sixth generation at the helm of the company, explains: “The concept of the cam-controlled lathe has remained largely unchanged. It may come as something of a surprise, but mechanical cam-type machines are still more efficient than CNC machines.”

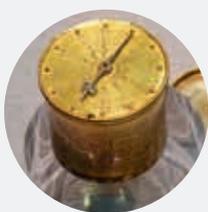
But developments in the manufacturing process have not stood still. Ever higher quality standards, the diversity and complexity of new products, and the use of new materials that are difficult to machine are putting companies under constant pressure to innovate.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating

Innovation in turned parts manufacturing is based largely on empirical knowledge and learning by doing. The conventional theories of cutting speeds, feed rates and wear and tear fall by the wayside when turning in the smallest diameter range. The ideal manufacturing process providing optimal interaction between machine, tool and material must be developed on the shop floor. “Our staff have to work things out for themselves – often in many hours of finicky trial and error. That is how you hone your skills and innovate in manufacturing processes,” Laubscher says. All this research, tinkering and learning new skills is an absolute must in this work. “The typical successful supplier is usually a creative *Tüftler* who is obsessed with detail,” he reveals.

With their expertise in microtechnology and meticulous eye for detail in their work, suppliers to the watch industry are also attractive to other industries, particularly in the medical technology sector. “Our flair for precision and miniaturization in the combination of microtechnology, electronics, and mechanical engineering gives Switzerland a skill set like no other in the world,” Laubscher confirms. The main reasons for this are the expertise that has developed historically with the growth of the watch industry, but also the excellent training and development opportunities available in this field. Laubscher also started supplying other markets besides the watch industry at an early stage.

The wristwatch – a success story



Portable timepieces emerge in France and southern Germany. Peter Henlein from Nuremberg is generally regarded as the inventor.



At St-Imier, Longines brings its staff together under one roof and starts to use machines for the first time in the history of watchmaking.



Cartier develops the Santos pilot wristwatch for his friend, Brazilian aviation pioneer Alberto Santos Dumont.

1510

1810

1867

1870

1906

1914

Commissioned by Caroline Murat, Queen of Naples and youngest sister of Napoleon, Breguet produces the first watch specifically designed to be worn on the wrist. Women increasingly adopt the wristwatch, while men prefer pocket watches.



With the industrialization of watchmaking, watches become affordable.



Wristwatches for men become established in World War I. Soldiers wear the trench watch, a hybrid between a pocket watch and a wristwatch.



"We have looked into which industries in Switzerland are the most promising and have focused on those," the CEO says. One of the leading ones is medical technology. But this also places demands on suppliers: "Digitalization doesn't stop at the gates of the component industry. In medical technology, the customer expects every product we supply to be 100% reliable, flawless and precisely documented."

Process control, quality assurance, and documentation call for smart solutions. "And these days, that usually means digitalization – so the smarter and better we do things, the more likely we are to hold our own in the market."



From watches to medtech

The past few years have seen the Canton of Bern evolve into a major player in medical technology. Pivotal in this development is our ecosystem of highly skilled people, modern infrastructure, and specialist suppliers, most of whom come from the watch industry. Research and education also play their part, of course. We spoke to Yves Mussard, head of the Micro- and Medical Technology Division at Bern University of Applied Sciences.

Bern University of Applied Sciences introduced the disciplines of Microtechnology and Medical Technology at an early stage. How did that come about?

These disciplines emerged from the crisis in the watch industry in the 1970s. As crises tend to do, they force those affected to explore new avenues. What happened in this case was that specialists began to combine their mechanical design expertise with electronics and sensor technology. This resulted in the discipline of microtechnology, with medical technology coming on board around ten years ago.

Is medical technology poaching specialists away from the watch industry?

No, the watch industry is very happy with the engineers we train for it and looks after them well. We offer our students a versatile and multifaceted education in design engineering, electronics, computer science and materials so that they graduate with a broad portfolio of skills. Although we no longer specialize in the watch industry per se, many of our graduates make their way into the sector.

Why is Switzerland, and the southern Jura region in particular, so strong in microtechnology and precision engineering?

There are historical reasons behind this too. German-speaking Switzerland has traditionally been home to companies operating large-scale machinery, such as ABB, Sulzer, and Schindler. In French-speaking Switzerland and the Jura region, on the other hand, the watchmaking industry and the use of small materials predominate.

Between the Bernese, Neuchâtel, and Solothurn Jura regions there are large numbers of small suppliers who produce microcomponents for the market.

Dr. Raphael Laubscher

joined the board of directors in 2003, taking on an operational role in 2010, and has been the sixth generation at the helm since 2016. Besides his responsibilities at Laubscher Precision Ltd he is on the board of Swiss Medtech. Raphael Laubscher is father to two adult sons and is a passionate endurance athlete.

You won't find a microcosm of precision craftsmanship like it anywhere else in the country. This precision, which requires high levels of expertise, knowledge, and experience, also benefits our competitiveness in the international arena. This is boosted by our dual-track VET system, which equips the specialists of the future with the practical skills and the theoretical knowledge they need. One of our priorities as an educational institution is to teach our students to analyze, understand, synthesize and, ultimately, to improve.

Where is the trend heading?

In the medical technology sector, everything is shifting from standard production to single-unit manufacturing. The keywords are 3D printing, or additive manufacturing, and digitalization. Developments therefore also have to switch from mass production to one-offs.



John Harwood invents the first self-winding wristwatch which is wound by the wearer's arm movement.

1923

ROLEX launches the waterproof Oyster wristwatch. As an advertising stunt, Mercedes Gleitz wears it on her first attempt at swimming the English Channel. Gleitz fails, unlike the Oyster, which remains in perfect working order.



Warren Alvin Morrison and Joseph W. Horten unveil the first quartz clock. The first quartz wristwatches only appeared in 1967, developed among others by the Centre Électronique Horloger (CEH).

1926

1927

Engineer and inventor Peter Petroff develops a digital wristwatch. His prototype is refined jointly by the Hamilton Watch Company and Electro-Data and marketed as the Pulsar.

1970



Nicolas G. Hayek makes Swatch a worldwide success and helps the Swiss watch industry out of the crisis.

1984

The Smartwatch Pebble is the first commercially distributed Smartwatch. Although not successful itself, it ushers in a new era.

2013



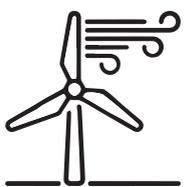
STARTUP

BREATH OF FRESH AIR



Cleveron

Cleveron is a clever solution for reducing energy usage. Or — to be more precise, a smart plug-and-play solution for central heating systems. Cleveron enables the room temperature in each room in the building to be individually and optimally controlled, saving money and energy. The start-up and its technology are playing an active role in reducing CO₂ emissions. To maximize the impact, they are particularly keen for the system to be used in large public buildings such as schools and administrative buildings. Their aim is to have 100 buildings in Switzerland fitted with Cleveron technology within one year and to save 1 million kg CO₂.



FACTS

Ideas, new technologies and inquiring minds constantly inspire new business ideas that give rise to start-ups. We present four examples in our start-up parade.

Start-up stage:

Product and campaign launched

The inventors:

The Cleveron team members bring together engineering, software, sales and communication skills to actively fight climate change.

Stettlen

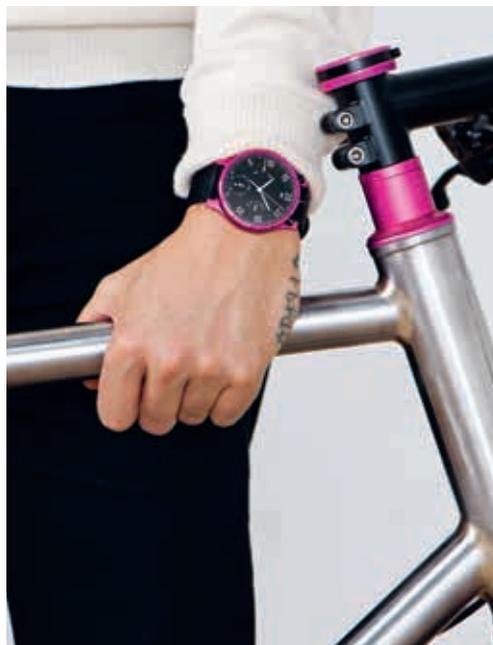
www.cleveron.ch



legal-i

This start-up has developed a virtual research lawyer specializing in medical insurance law that operates using artificial intelligence. To achieve this, the originators have combined the strengths of man and machine: those of the human being who plans and makes decisions, and those of machines that efficiently process huge volumes of data and find patterns in them.

The platform can be used in liability insurance claims related to disability, accident, sick pay and health insurance. Legal-i extracts a unique DNA from every claim and every document. It then uses this DNA to identify similar documents and claims in insurance companies' and law firms' archives. In doing so, legal-i has found a way to give data archives a more relevant role in routine tasks.



Moskito Watch

Everything's going smart these days. First it was phones, now it's watches. Now there's a smart watch designed specifically for cyclists from Swiss start-up Moskito Watch. Manufactured entirely in Switzerland, this analog timepiece can either be mounted on the handlebar or worn as a watch in the conventional way. Besides the usual time display and stopwatch functions, it can also be used as a speedometer. The speed and distance traveled can be transferred to a smartphone by Bluetooth and logged in a special app. But that's not all: the Moskito Watch also notifies you of incoming emails, texts and calls. The watch is Strava and Garmin compatible. The perfect solution for every cycling fan who wants a cycle computer that looks like a timeless, stylish watch.



Dokoki – the smart bodysuit

Every parent knows the feeling: one minute you're happy that your baby has settled down, and the next you're wondering if she isn't just a little too quiet. The Bernese start-up Dokoki wants to help parents relax with its bodysuit with integrated sensor technology, an innovative new baby monitor and a matching smartphone app. The system is designed to enable serious health issues to be detected early and prevent more severe consequences. The alarm only sounds if there is something wrong with the baby.

Dokoki is currently almost ready to go into series production and is working towards medical certification. Once the measured values are officially certified, signifying that they are of hospital-grade quality, Dokoki will, for the first time ever, enable fact-based remote diagnosis by a doctor and save parents from a dash to the emergency room. Hence the name: *Doktor k(c)onnected to the Kind (child)*.

Start-up stage: Product launched
The inventors: The members of the legal-i team have a proven track record in building up successful LegalTech, AI, Big Data and FinTech start-ups.
Bern
www.legal-i.ch

Start-up stage: Product launched
The inventors: Three cycling aficionados together with a team of engineers, developers and designers.
Wohlen bei Bern
www.moskitowatch.com

Start-up stage: Investment cycle completed, product launch planned for 2021
The inventors: Marc Zinner, father, creative talent and passionate product developer, ably assisted by Tobias Wegmüller, inventor and marketing specialist.
Hindelbank
www.dokoki.ch

Passionate about surfaces

“Frankly, I didn’t like working when I was young,” Andrea de Luca grins. “But when I was 14 I just had to have a new skateboard – and I didn’t have enough money to buy one.” So his father organized him a holiday job at the company where he worked as an electroplater. “That’s when I finally understood what my father did. I was fascinated and decided to follow in his footsteps,” says Andrea de Luca, founder and CEO of DM Surfaces SA. Here is his story.

The creator

I find ideas everywhere and all the time – in the clouds, in the water when I go diving, in conversations, in films. As a Star Wars fan, for example, I am fascinated by the motifs from the film. At the EPHJ trade show in 2015 we used motifs from Star Wars to demonstrate what our technologies could do. Darth Vader put in an appearance too, of course. Creativity is hugely important to me. We want to create something new and innovative every year. At DM Surfaces we develop our own designs, but we also make sure they are workable. That is why our two designers work with the engineering department on the production process. My credo is: We want to achieve extraordinary things – but at a price customers are happy to pay.

The risk-taker

I love taking risks, both in my private life and at work – that’s just part of who I am. When I go diving I always want to go that little bit deeper. In 2013, when I separated from my business partner with whom I had built up DM Surfaces from scratch in 2007, I took quite a lot of risks on the professional front: I bought an old building in St-Imier, built a new building on the site and relocated the business there from La Chaux-de-Fonds. Not all our customers came with us, and we also lost some orders. But it was worth it. Today we have more loyal customers, more lines of business, more machines, more expertise. Luckily, my staff, my friends, and my family believed in me despite all the uncertainties.



His journey to becoming a successful entrepreneur was not without risks, but risks are a big part of his life, just as much as Star Wars.



Andrea de Luca is an avid diver. He likes to get to the bottom of everything he does.





“The world has only grown because of the impossible things that have been achieved.”

This quote from André Maurois means a lot to me. That's me and DM Surfaces down to a tee.

CEO Andrea de Luca founded DM Surfaces SA with a colleague in 2007. He has been running the business on his own since 2013, when he also built a new 3,000 square meter building in St-Imier. Today he employs a staff of 70. Andrea de Luca is 44, married and has two daughters.

The non-conformist

When everyone turns right, I like to turn left. In the crisis that affected the watch industry and its suppliers in 2015/2016, instead of cutting back I invested heavily in laser technology and high-skilled people. The work and risks this involved were omnipresent – not only in the business but at home too. My family thought I was mad. I kept asking myself – and still do – whether I went down the right track and where we will go next. Today, four years later, I know it has paid off.

The techie

Laser technology fascinates me: since the crisis I have invested several millions in it. Today we have 30 state-of-the-art laser machines, keeping us at the forefront in terms of technology. We work and engrave surfaces and materials with new structures and textures that were inconceivable in the past. Developing new methods has become part of what we do every day. It keeps us one step ahead of our competitors. We want to be constantly coming up with something new: not only for the watch industry but also for the automotive, medical, and microtechnology sectors. Our specialty is bespoke, personalized luxury accessories and watches.

The entrepreneur

I have worked in industry, sales and as a technical customer adviser. After a technical change, customers would often ask me several times about the right way to use the innovation. That was a light-bulb moment for me: I realized I was something of a specialist. And that is when I decided to set up my own business. To some extent I believe we are a showcase for our customers. For example, you can't galvanize things without using toxic substances, so I invested in an ultramodern water purification system. DM Surfaces has Responsible Jewellery Council certification and we will also be ISO 13485-2016 certified in a year's time. So our customers will know that what they get from us is peace of mind, certainty and sustainability.

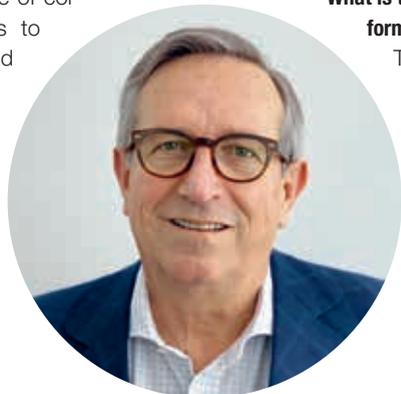
Cosmetics from Emmental feature in world's top labels

Temmentec AG has its roots in the town of Sumiswald in the rolling Emmental hills, where chemist Paul Müller set up his cosmetics manufacturing business back in 1916. Today the company is part of Torte Holding AG. In its state-of-the-art labs and production facilities it develops and manufactures high-end cosmetics that form the essence of many world-famous cosmetics lines, as we discover in our interview with CEO Peter Schweikert.

Before a product such as a face cream reaches the retail counter, Temmentec goes through the formulation with the customer, works out every last detail of the manufacturing and quality process, and, if required, will even develop the product design and packaging. "We work closely with our customers all the way from the idea to the fragrant, retail-ready, attractively packaged cosmetic product," Peter Schweikert says.

Mr. Schweikert, the foundations of Temmentec AG in Sumiswald were laid by the chemist Paul Müller. What would impress him the most if he were to see the company as it is today?

First of all, can I just say how impressed I am by Paul Müller, who had the courage to travel to New York in the 1920s with a couple of colleagues to find new products to make in Switzerland. And he did just that: he came back with products which he went on to produce under license in Sumiswald, including world-famous brands such as Lis-



terine mouthwash and Cutex nail polish remover. Now, a century on, he would be impressed that we manufacture products for so many well-known international cosmetics labels.

Temmentec is a contract manufacturer. What does that entail?

All our customers are companies that have an idea but no manufacturing department of their own. As a full service partner, we work with our customers right the way through the value chain from the idea to the finished product. We also advise them on finding the appropriate container for filling or the right packaging solution. But first and foremost we specialize in formulations.

What is the secret to a successful formulation?

That's in the hands of our in-house scientific committee, on which my brother Dr. Kuno Schweikert sits. Kuno is a biochemist and head of development. This committee evaluates and

tests the latest findings in dermatology and new ingredients and keeps its finger on the pulse of current trends. All this goes into the mix when we formulate a product; it's a highly creative process.

Can you talk us through this creative process?

All our products must be compatible with the human organism. On our skin we have millions of bacteria – beneficial, harmful, and neutral ones. Our job is to control the balance between these bacteria, for example to eliminate redness or to achieve better protection. To do this, besides studying dermatological and microbiotic findings, we are constantly on the lookout for new techniques, active ingredients, and treatment methods. We combine all these factors in our products and check the efficacy of the new combination of ingredients. This is the creative process that inspires our innovations.

Do you have to meet particular authorization requirements?

No, because we are subject to the Food Act. However, as a manufacturer we are responsible for ensuring that we don't use prohibited ingredients such as allergens or carcinogens. We also have our own internal blacklist of problematic ingredients. We don't accept any formulations that contain such substances.

What makes you a Hidden Champion?

Well, we're tucked away in Emmental... (Peter Schweikert chuckles). Our products can be found at every airport and in all four corners of the world, but always bearing the label of the cosmetics line we produce them for. Another reason why we are less visible is that our market is so small. But all cosmetics manufacturers know each other very well. And maybe we're a Hidden Champion because as a traditional Swiss company we have built up a reputation as a quality contract manufacturer.

How does being based in Sumiswald benefit you?

Our roots are in Sumiswald and we are committed to continuing Paul Müller's legacy here. Together with our predecessors, we have invested more than CHF 20 million here, in modern manufacturing facilities and, as a major energy consumer, in sustainability as well. Emmental may not be ideal in terms of logistics, but we have been able to find a loyal and reliable workforce here. Some of our pensioners worked with us their entire working lives, for example.

“A major element in our success is our clear focus on high-end skin care cosmetics.”

Peter Schweikert, CEO Temmentec AG



Temmentec's scientific committee is made up of highly experienced experts in dermatology, formulation, marketing, and basic dermatology research.

With its state-of-the-art infrastructure, Temmentec operates to the highest safety, hygiene, and sustainability standards.

Certifications:

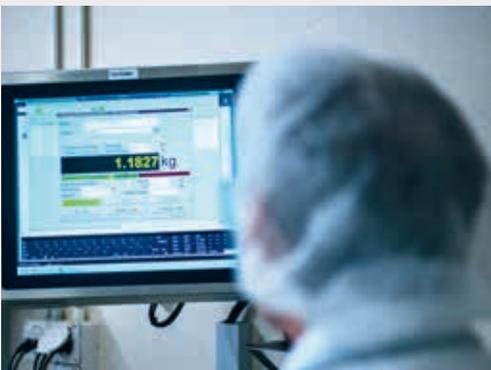
- ISO 9001
- ISO 14001
- Cosmetic GMP 22716

Temmentec builds long-term relationships with customers who sell their high-end cosmetic products all over the world:

- More than 130 employees from 20 nations
- In the market for 104 years
- 5000 m² of manufacturing space
- Ongoing investments in cutting-edge production technologies



Temmentec manufactures exclusively in Switzerland, allowing customers to use the coveted "Swiss Made" label on their finished products.



Temmentec manufactures emulsions, liquid products and sticks in various types and pack sizes from 10 kg to 10 tonnes per batch. It also provides filling and packaging services.

Every batch delivered is meticulously logged so that Temmentec can trace the product right back to the raw materials from which it is made.



Procurement 4.0: CMarit shakes up the procurement market

The start-up CMarit from Thun is digitalizing the procurement process and making it faster, more efficient and therefore also more cost-effective for the companies involved. Besides large corporations, this new system is of particular benefit to SMEs, for whom an e-procurement solution of their own is often out of reach.



A TEAM

CMarit AG CEO Rolf Duda (r) and his partner David Schwichtenberg (SIO).

CEO Rolf Duda and his partner David Schwichtenberg launched CMarit in 2018. Before that, the two founders had gained many years of experience in procurement consulting with their first company, Peakwise Consulting. Peakwise specializes in providing indirect procurement support services for larger companies. Indirect procurement involves consumables and services that companies need for day-to-day administration, equipping their premises, operating their infrastructure, etc., rather than for their actual output. “The conventional procurement process is highly complex and involves a large number of suppliers and items, so it is virtually predestined for digitalization,” Rolf Duda explains.

Beating heart

Fortunately, the young company did not have to completely reinvent the wheel, as there are already tried-and-tested solutions available for various parts of the process. “But what was lacking in the past was a system that brings together all the parties involved in one place,” Rolf Duda says. The beating heart is now the online marketplace CMarit. It is the first B2B platform in this market in Switzerland that connects companies and their suppliers anywhere in the country. Since all the procuring companies’ internal processes are also mapped on this platform, their staff can buy items directly without having to involve their central procurement department. This digital shortcut allows companies to significantly reduce the administrative expense of procurement to around a fifth of the costs previously incurred. “The potential for savings is massive,” Rolf Duda points out. Purchasing an item in the conventional way, whether it is something small such as a pen or a more substantial item such as a PC, generally incurs administrative costs of around CHF 250. This digital method slashes that to just CHF 60.

The CMarit solution has other benefits as well. Larger companies that already have their own procurement software can store their data on the CMarit marketplace so that their ordering processes run automatically. Companies also no longer have to deal with a multitude of individual suppliers. A presence on this one single B2B platform allows business transactions with all suppliers to be handled quickly and efficiently.

Millions of items

Two years after its launch, around half a dozen major customers are using the platform as buyers. That may not sound like a particularly large number. But when you consider that they include several multibillion concerns such as the building materials supplier

“The Canton of Bern is the perfect base for what we do. We have plenty of successful companies and a vibrant start-up community here.”

Rolf Duda, CEO of CMarit



Geberit, for example, this represents a vast number of transactions. Companies of this size rely on several thousand suppliers and external service providers for their procurement, all of whom have now been brought onto the platform as well. "In any event, we already have very good coverage in the indirect procurement market, which probably involves around 500 well-known suppliers in Switzerland," Rolf Duda estimates. Two years after its launch, CMarit has become an attractive transshipment point with an impressive range of around three million items for practically any need.

The platform is also accessible to SMEs, which may otherwise find it difficult to connect to the digital world without making significant investments of their own. Besides SAP, CMarit's programmers are currently working on making the platform compatible with typical SME business software such as Bexio, Abacus and Sage, giving SMEs access to digital tools tailored precisely to their needs which previously only large corporations could afford.

Eco-friendlier and more regional

CMarit may still be at the start-up stage at the moment, but it has a range of expansion projects in the pipeline. It has already completed a project to make free-text orders and services catalog-compatible. This entailed defining standard criteria for classifying and entering tenders and quotations, an essential element in brokering transactions transparently and in a way that allows easy comparison via digital channels.

The start-up has already invested heavily in making the procurement process customer-friendly. The platform features smart search and filter functions which accompany the user through the electronic ordering process, guiding them intuitively and accurately to the right supplier. Artificial intelligence is used to keep incorrect orders to a minimum. Because all the data entered are stored, the procurement process is also fully traceable. "This allows us to make the process eco-friendlier and more regional," Rolf Duda says. The CEO is referring to the fact that environmental criteria are playing an increasingly important role in the procurement process, as companies that commit to doing business sustainably want to be fully informed about all the steps in the procurement process.

Financing round for further growth

The start-up generates revenues by charging buyers who use CMarit a SAAS (Software as a Service) rental fee in line with the size of the company. Suppliers or providers who operate on the CMarit marketplace pay commission on sales.

Having been financed with its own funds so far – around CHF 1.3 million – the young company looks set to break even this year, although it is now planning a financing round in order to push forward with its growth. It aims to generate additional funds of around CHF 2 million from investors. "We need to grow our workforce," Rolf Duda says. The MD expects to be hiring at least five more people over the course of the year.

Espace découverte Énergie – the art of smart in using nature's strengths



THE FASCINATION OF WIND POWER

There are lots of fun facts and interesting information about energy sources such as the sun and wind to discover along the walking trails in the energy park. The Sentier des Monts connects the Mont-Soleil solar power plant with the Mont-Crosin wind power plant.



GUIDED TOURS FOR GROUPS

Guided tours of the wind and solar power plants are available by reservation all year round.

The energy transition started to take shape in the minds of pioneers on Mont-Soleil and Mont-Crosin in the Bernese Jura back in 1990. Today this smart mountain is an acknowledged center of excellence for renewable energies. Espace découverte Énergie is also a popular visitor attraction, with its themed walking trails leading through stunning countryside and providing fascinating information for the interested visitor.

“Today there is a 70 km/h wind – that’s ideal for full output. We can produce power from as little as 14 km/h, and the rotors only switch off automatically in gale force winds above 90 km/h,” explains Pierre Berger, manager of the Espace découverte Énergie visitor center in the Bernese Jura. Rotating at between nine and 15 revolutions per minute, the three 56 meter long rotor blades on the wind turbine cut through the air with a soft “tsss.” The 16 installations spread across Mont-Soleil and Mont-Crosin together make up Switzerland’s largest wind farm. Not only is the facility open to the public, it even has a network of well-developed walking trails and information boards, making it a popular destination for company and club outings, families, and people with an interest in technology and renewable energies.

Energy, watches, cheese and chocolate

Back in 1903, a funicular railway was built to take Vallon de St-Imier’s watchmakers and other visitors up the 1200 meter high Mont-Soleil. At the time, the boom in the watch industry and the founding of Longines turned St-Imier into a cutting-edge watchmaking center with electricity, light and modern office

buildings. The Énergies horlogères themed trail along the route from the station to the funicular railway provides insights into this history.

The “Funisolaire,” as it is known, connects the valley with the top of Mont-Soleil and the starting and end point of the two themed trails, Sentier des Monts and Sentier du Vallon. With its breathtaking panoramic view of the Chasseral mountain to the south and the Vosges mountains to the north, the Sentier des Monts features a series of fascinating stations with a wealth of information on the sun, wind, climate change, geology, and meteorology. More information, including on the games along the Sentier des Monts trail, can be downloaded from the internet. The Sentier du Vallon runs for 6.6 km along the Suze river from St-Imier to Courtelary through the villages of Villeret and Cormoret. It is an easy walk themed around the use of hydroelectric power and the area’s industrial development. Along the route there are plenty of culinary stop-offs, including several inns, the Spielhofer cheese dairy selling Tête de Moine AOC, and the Camille Bloch visitor center with its Discovery World, chocolate workshop, and shop

selling its famous Ragusa and Torino bars fresh from the factory. For those who prefer to linger a little longer, this is the perfect place for a weekend away from the hustle and bustle of the main tourist areas.

Harnessing the power of the sun

The sun has been recognized and venerated as a source of heat and light since time immemorial. But even as recently as a few decades ago, the idea that it could enhance our modern lives as a major generator of power was mostly greeted with skepticism. The inauguration of Switzerland’s first solar power plant on Mont-Soleil (‘Sun Mountain’) in 1992 – the largest in Europe at the time – therefore marked a turning point in the history of energy generation. Even the mountain’s name was a good omen for its future success.

The foresightedness of the engineers at the time is also illustrated by the fact that the original objective remains virtually unchanged to this day. The Mont-Soleil solar power plant is a Swiss research, development, and demonstration project for photovoltaic electricity generation which can also be used for training purposes and generates electricity for 130 families. The solar array is the part that is visible to visitors. The long-term behavior of these modules is one of the focal points of the research. After 30 years it is now known that their life span is much longer than originally assumed and could potentially reach as much as 35 to 40 years, with annual degradation at just 0.13%. Tests are also being conducted on new components using technologies that impact positively on efficiency, cost, longevity, recyclability, and aesthetics.

The research being conducted on Mont-Soleil has often been the catalyst for major technological breakthroughs, such as the construction of the

“Switzerland’s largest wind farm generates electricity for more than 16,000 Swiss households.”

Pierre Berger

“Solar energy will deliver the benefits we are hoping for if it can be fine-tuned to our demand for power using smart control and storage systems.”

Dr. Martin Pfisterer, President, Société Mont-Soleil



**LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION
IN BETWEEN SOLAR PANELS**

A flock of sheep acting as "bio-lawnmowers" keeps the grass short in summer.

world's largest solar catamaran, MobiCat, and Bertrand Piccard's solar plane, Solar Impulse. Giving professionals hands-on experience with novel energy technologies and the opportunity to contribute to developing a power supply that is fit for the future remains one of the facility's core tasks. It is also seeking to intensify collaboration with national and international institutions and industrial companies. A graduate school set up at Mont-Soleil in 2018 in conjunction with ETH Lausanne has got off to a very successful start. "It is not enough to simply install solar panels. Smart storage systems and clever network integration are a must," explains Dr. Martin Pfisterer, President, Société Mont-Soleil. For many years, these issues have been a key focal point of the research and development work being done on Mont-Soleil, including in its postgraduate training.

New information pavilion for groups

Alongside its research work, Société Mont-Soleil has since its inception been committed to informing the public about the opportunities photovoltaic technol-

ogy presents. Its new information pavilion is proving extremely popular with groups. Guided tours of the solar and wind power plants and the observatory are also available. The smart mountain makes an excellent destination for a company outing, with a choice of fun enhancements such as Trott'energy (scooter) downhill runs or Velectro (e-bike) trails on the mountain, or a more leisurely journey across to Mont-Crosin by horse-drawn carriage and returning to the valley by Jurabus.

"We consume nine times more energy now than we did in 1950 – despite the many improvements and efficiency enhancements we now have. Private households, industry and transport each account for a third of that consumption," Pierre Berger explains. So there can be no doubt that energy is a subject that should be on everyone's minds. Espace découverte Énergie in the Bernese Jura is making that happen in a fun and enjoyable way.

“Opened in 2017,
the visitor center for
groups welcomes around
11,000 visitors a year.”

Pierre Berger

Competition

Relaxation days on Mont-Soleil

First prize: Chill-out Days on Mont-Soleil – Win a weekend break in the Bernese Jura

For devotees of the unusual: The Auberge Mont-Soleil Chez l'Assesseur is a traditional Jura-style chalet hotel that is accessed by funicular railway from St-Imier.

Perched 1200 meters up the mountain, an oasis of tranquility awaits you with breathtaking views of the Chasseral and unexpected attractions such as a real brocante and a stud farm. Experience unforgettable moments in a unique environment and pamper your taste buds with the hotel's exquisite cuisine.

Up for grabs in our competition are two nights in a double room for two people with half board (worth CHF 600) at the Auberge Mont-Soleil (www.mont-soleil.ch).



Second prize: Discover Espace découverte Énergie on a team, family or friends day out

This prize consists of a guided tour of the Mont-Soleil solar and wind power station for up to 10 people. The facilities are around a 20-minute walk from the funicular railway or 10 minutes from the Mont-Soleil mountain pass car park.



1 Question 1:
Who said: "A major element in our success is our clear focus on high-end skin care cosmetics."

- Rolf Duda, CEO CMarit
- Peter Schweikert, CEO Temmentec AG
- Andrea de Luca, CEO DM Surfaces SA

2 Question 2:
In which year did Paul Müller start manufacturing cosmetics in Emmental?

- 1901
- 1916
- 1932

3 Question 3:
Which of these two images shows the wind power station on Mont-Soleil?

Image A Image B




Competition prizes

1st prize:
Two nights in a double room for two people with half board (worth CHF 600.–) at the Auberge Mont-Soleil (www.montsoleil.ch)

2nd prize:
Guided tour of the Mont-Soleil solar and wind power station for up to 10 people.

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

You can enter the solution at www.berninvest.be.ch/chance by **September 15, 2020**. Or send it by postcard to the Bern Economic Development Agency, BCA Competition, Münsterplatz 3a, Postfach, 3000 Bern 8, Switzerland.

Many congratulations to the winners of our competition in «berncapitalarea» 2/2019. 1st prize: Pia Schweizer, Lindenweg 5, 2572 Mörigen; 2nd prize: Stefan Bütikofer, Fabrikstrasse 9, 3250 Lyss; 3rd prize: Marc Truetsch, Im Annagarten 48a, 9230 Flawil

Feel free to ask

The Unemployment Insurance Office

The Unemployment Insurance Office (AVA) was created in May 2019 from the restructuring of beco Berner Wirtschaft. The office incorporates the canton of Bern's employment agency and unemployment insurance fund. Let's take a brief look at some of the questions the office is often asked.

.....
Question: *Is there an easy way to access profiles of jobseekers registered with the Regional Employment Centers (RAV)?*

Answer: The Job Room on the SECO website www.work.swiss is the biggest job platform in Switzerland on which job seekers and employers present themselves. You can publish vacancies and search for candidates free of charge there.

.....
Question: *When can a company apply for induction training grants?*

Answer: When you find a person registered with the RAV who would be suitable for your vacancy but who lacks certain skills, the unemployment insurance fund pays part of their wages during their induction training period. This period is to enable your new employee to obtain the necessary skills for the work they will be doing in your company. You will receive compensation for this.

.....
Question: *Can I take on people registered with the RAV for a limited period of time to bridge a staff shortage?*

Answer: Yes, the compensation system for temporary employment (Zwischenverdienst) has proved its worth. It enables you to give jobseekers the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, remain active in their profession and earn some money for a limited period of time. You can register your needs with the RAV.

.....
Question: *Who can apply for compensation for short-time work and bad weather?*

Answer: Companies have to bear the risks of normal economic fluctuations and weather patterns themselves. When an unusual event occurs, the unemployment insurance fund can provide compensation



COAT OF ARMS: CHAPTER HOUSE IN BERN

The Chapter House (*Stiftsgebäude*) on Münsterplatz, built between 1745 and 1755.

for short-time work or bad weather. This helps companies to avoid redundancies and preserve know-how and jobs. The compensation amounts to 80 percent of eligible earnings. Website: www.be.ch/kurzarbeit.

Companies affected by Coronavirus-related non-productive time can apply for short-time work and bridging loans. Full details can be found on the website www.be.ch/corona.

.....
Question: *What are the current arrangements regarding the job registration requirement?*

Answer: The Federal Council has decided to waive the job registration requirement for six months from

March 26, 2020. All associated duties and obligations will cease to apply during this period. The latest information on the job registration requirement can be found on the Seco website at www.work.swiss

.....
Question: *When the job registration requirement is reinstated, what is the most efficient way to fulfill it and receive applications?*

Answer: The job registration requirement is likely to be reinstated in October 2020. Register on the platform www.arbeit.swiss. You can post your vacancy, contact potential candidates directly and find detailed information there. A list of the types of professions subject to the job registration requirement can be found on the SECO website www.work.swiss. These are professions with at least 5 percent unemployment throughout Switzerland.

As a reliable and competent partner, AVA's mission is to provide services tailored to the needs of job-seeking customers on the one hand and employers on the other. In addition to its role as a regular employment agency and its mandate in respect of the job registration requirement, the Office is also affected and influenced by the dynamic environment of the job market in issues such as residual unemployment, skills shortages, cost pressure and digitalization.

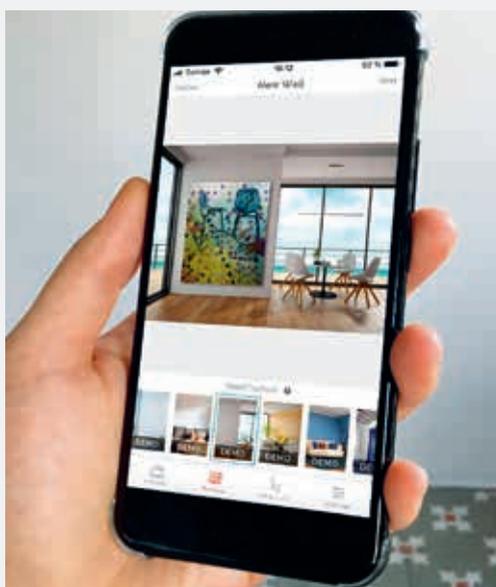
Companies can address any queries concerning its individual services to the RAV at: +41 (0)31 635 37 80; info.ams@be.ch

“Report vacancies to the relevant RAV quickly and easily online via the portal www.work.swiss, by telephone or in person.”



New arrivals in the Canton of Bern

The Bern Economic Development Agency helps innovative international companies with their decisions to relocate and settle in the Canton of Bern – like iazzu GmbH and neocredit.ch AG.



iazzu GmbH

iazzu has been developing technologies to better present art digitally in order to make it more easily accessible since 2017. Specifically, the company has developed an augmented reality app that guarantees and extends easy digital access to physical exhibitions and collections. With the free app, users can discover artworks and visualize them in their own environment to make sure the artworks are a good fit for their premises before going ahead with the purchase.

This successful start-up decided to relocate its headquarters from Zürich to Biel/Bienne in 2019, making them one of the first companies to move into the new Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne (SIPBB).

www.iazzu.com

neocredit.ch AG

As the name suggests, neocredit.ch is a new solution in the field of SME financing. The crowdlending platform has been online since the end of 2019 and is specifically designed for SMEs. neocredit.ch offers entrepreneurs rapid, easy and transparent financing for their ideas and projects. Thanks to the rigorous selection of investment projects, investors are offered attractive investment opportunities with a balanced risk profile. Investors can thereby actively supporting regional development.

neocredit.ch was founded by the insurance company Vaudoise Assurances and credit.fr. The aim is to provide quick and easy financing for Swiss SMEs and to offer investors attractive local investment opportunities.

www.neocredit.ch

#cantonofbern

Bernese pastries – a piece of cake!

If you happen to have some flour and butter stashed away, here are two recipes of delicious Bernese specialty pastries for you to try.



Meitschibei

Meitschibei, or *croissants viennois* in French, are traditional Bernese horse-shoe-shaped pastries with a hazelnut filling. They are also often known as Glücksbringer, or lucky charms.

Method

Dough: Crumble the yeast into a bowl and dissolve in a little lukewarm milk. Leave to stand for 30 minutes. Combine the flour, sugar and salt and make a well in the middle. Pour the dissolved yeast and the remaining milk into the well and add the butter. Mix well and knead to form a dough. Set the dough aside to prove at room temperature until it has doubled in size.

Filling: Mix the hazelnuts, sugar, cinnamon, softened butter and water to form a thick mass.

Roll out the dough into a square on a lightly floured surface and cut into 18 x 7 cm rectangles. With the long side facing you, spread a quarter of the filling on each rectangle, leaving a border around the edges. Moisten the edges with water, roll up the rectangles starting at the side facing you, and pinch the ends together to seal.

Shape the rolls into a horseshoe shape, place on a tray lined with baking parchment and glaze with beaten egg. Bake in a preheated oven at 180 C for about 20 minutes.

Ingredients for 4 portions

Dough

70 g butter
1 egg (for glazing)
½ cube yeast
300 g plain (all-purpose) flour
150 ml milk
1 pinch salt
30 g caster sugar

Filling

300 g ground roasted hazelnuts
1 tsp cinnamon
120 g icing sugar
50 ml water
20 g butter

Berner Bretzeli

Method

Cream the room-temperature butter with the sugar and vanilla sugar in a bowl. Add the eggs, Kirsch, salt and lemon zest and beat well. Sieve the flour into the mixture and mix well to form a dough. Let the dough rest in the fridge for about two hours.

Roll the dough into small balls (approx. 1.5–2 cm) and bake in a bretzel iron greased with butter until golden brown.

Ingredients for 100 portions

125 g butter
2 eggs
2 tsp Kirsch
250 g plain (all-purpose) flour
1 pinch salt
¼ sachet vanilla sugar
¼ unwaxed lemon, zested
125 g caster sugar



Corona changing how we communicate. Statistics with a difference:

Swisscom registers more mobile calls

Since the start of the extraordinary circumstances we find ourselves in, Swisscom customers have been using the phone much more and for longer. Swisscom has seen a 70% increase in the number of mobile phone calls compared with the previous month. Calls on its mobile network are lasting one minute longer on average than in "normal" times.

Source: Swisscom



Die Post breaks parcel record

All-time record: Swiss Post handled over 17 million parcels in April. That is more than 24,000 parcels every hour of every day of the month. By comparison, PostLogistics handled 15.7 million parcels in December 2019. And that despite the fact that coronavirus protection measures such as social distancing had to be observed in April.

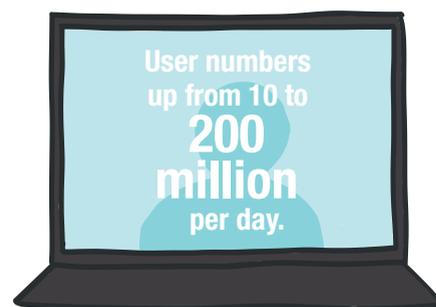
Source: Post via Twitter



Zoom for all

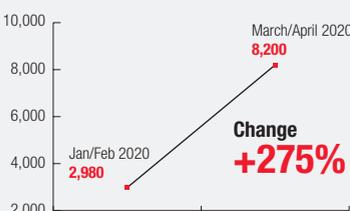
With the sudden sharp rise in staff being asked to **work from home**, professional communication and home-office tools are in great demand. The app download statistics are currently dominated by **home-office tools**. Featuring in the top 10 of most frequently downloaded apps in the stores is the **videoconferencing app Zoom**, which has seen user numbers rise from 10 million to 200 million a day within the space of just a few weeks.

Source: similarweb.com

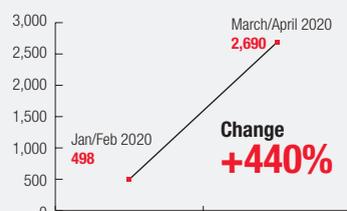


Canton of Bern: Statistical data (not including the police department)

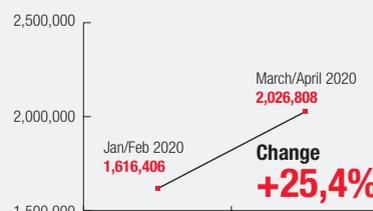
IT authorizations for home offices



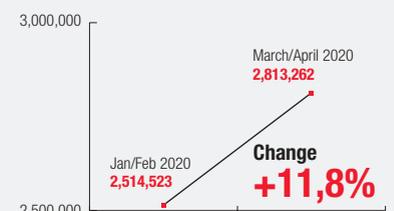
Parallel home office users



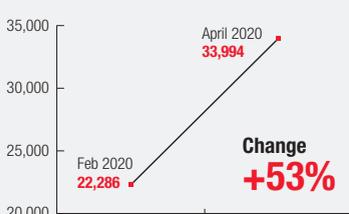
Emails sent



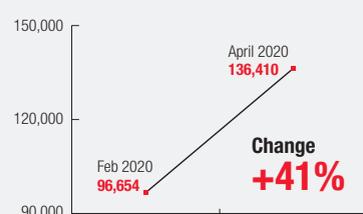
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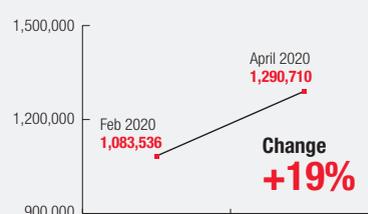
Virtual meetings held (Skype)



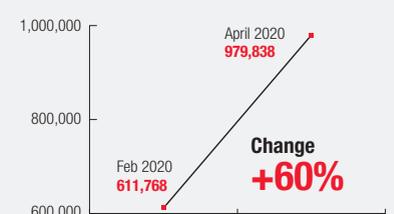
No. of meeting participants (Skype)



Phone calls (Skype)



Chat messages (Skype)



Source: KAIO

LONGINES

MUSÉE LONGINES

A la découverte d'un patrimoine horloger, industriel et culturel
Entdeckungsreise in ein Uhrmacher-, Industrie- und Kulturerbe



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