



insight

Magazine for customers

Issue 2 2023 - October



25 anniversary

▲ MBS Frankfurt celebrates its 25th anniversary. A look into the past and the future!



▶ **Anytime** for all channels. An exciting project for Qvest.

▶ **Logistics from the heart of Europe:** The new office in Zurich.



▶ **From Xiamen,** around the world - driven by personal dedication.



Dear Readers,

This year continues to be a test of mettle for the logistics industry. Fluctuating freight costs, staffing shortages, capacity issues and inflation have all created waves across global supply chains. Yet, amidst these uncertainties, we at MBS Logistics find many reasons to remain optimistic.

As a Group, we're thrilled to share our continued global progress with you. In June, we proudly opened our first office in Switzerland, marking a significant step in our focus on international expansion. In this issue, we explore not only our new ventures, but also the adaptability of our existing offices, with spotlights on our bustling Xiamen branch and our 25 years of success in Frankfurt.

Our agile approach, driven by a commitment to digitalisation, streamlined processes and innovative solutions, helps form the foundation of our strength. Dive into our insights on smart e-commerce and learn about our implementation of a Transport Management System in China, which is based in artificial intelligence. These articles embody our dedication to future-proofing our business to ensure a seamless experience for you, our valued customers.

Amidst these uncertain times, our commitment to personal service has also never been stronger, as exemplified by our 'MBS Spotlight' feature highlighting bespoke solutions offered by our Anytime department.

As we navigate this ever-changing landscape together, we hope you will find inspiration and optimism through the stories within these pages. These narratives echo our Group's resilience, growth and innovation, only made possible by your unwavering support. In turn, our commitment to empowering our customers continues to be at the centre of all that we do, and it even serves as the inspiration for our 2024 motto and calendar motif. We're already looking forward to the big reveal at the end of this year!

Thank you for your continued trust and support. Enjoy reading!

Warm regards,

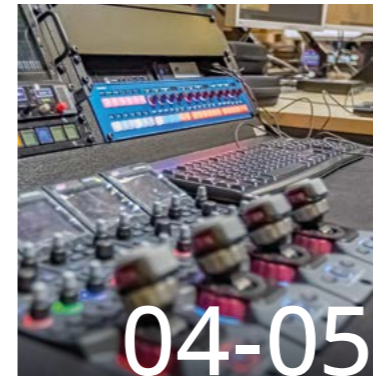
The MBS Holding Management Board

Daniel Steckel
CEO MBS Holding

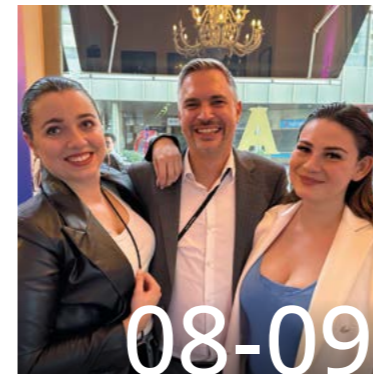
Joerg Roehl
CEO MBS Holding



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Frankfurt celebrates 25 years of excellence

Over the past quarter century, Frankfurt has experienced a multitude of changes. This year marks the branch's 25th anniversary.

Anytime for all channels

As the credits roll, the news anchors relax. Inside Asharq News' cutting-edge TV studio in Dubai, the latest technology ensures a flawless live broadcast – punctual, glitch free and polished in every way, from visuals to audio. But the journey to this point, where everything runs seamlessly, began with a crucial step: the careful transportation and timely delivery of essential equipment. This is where MBS Anytime stands in the spotlight.

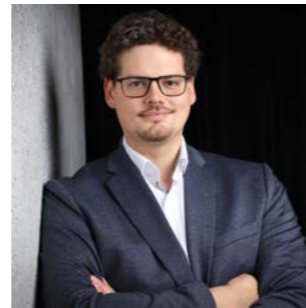
At the beginning of 2021, Asharq News moved into its new media headquarters in Dubai. The space not only includes three studios, but also a newsroom, data centre, production and post-production rooms, control rooms and office spaces – all spread across four floors and 5,300 m². To equip this space with the latest technology, the multi-platform news channel enlisted the technical expertise of the Qvest Group in Cologne.

Qvest's role encompassed planning, commissioning and training staff to operate the cutting-edge technology at the new Asharq News headquarters. Advanced solutions from over 25 manufacturers were seamlessly integrated into the facility. In addition, Qvest designed and equipped a 180 m² mobile TV production facility in Riyadh, complete with 40 workstations dedicated to journalists in a newsroom.

“Anytime's dedicated support ensures that our concerns are treated with the highest priority.”

Marcel Fiedler, Head of Logistics, Qvest.

Marcel Fiedler
Head of Logistics, Qvest



Pioneering digital transformation

Qvest positions itself as a trusted partner in digital transformation within the media/broadcasting sector and beyond. This entails offering innovation consulting, planning, system integration, software development and support from tech and media experts for setup, commissioning as well as personnel training. Qvest's footprint spans Europe, the MENA region, Oceania and, recently, the USA. In Australia, for example, Qvest provided the Nine Network a newly equipped post-production and newsroom. Additionally, in Berlin, the Qvest team took charge of the technical design for Welt, a prominent German TV news channel, within the new Axel Springer building.

Despite utilising the most advanced digital software and solutions, Qvest's technology must still be physically transported to the studio locations. To meet the expectations of highly demanding customers, Qvest needs a flexible and reliable logistics partner. Given the tight timelines for studio renovations and construction projects, any disruptions in broadcasting can incur significant costs.

Time-critical and transparent logistics

To transport goods to the MENA region and handle ad-hoc shipments in Europe, Qvest relies on MBS Logistics, and, in particular, its Anytime division. The department's expertise ensures the swift delivery of vital goods, often utilising on-board couriers to prevent disruptions or critical delays for clients.

Anytime's values closely align with Qvest's standards. Barbara Moll, Head of MBS Anytime, explains succinctly: “Excellent service, 24/7/365, worldwide. Transparent cargo tracking and continuous communication – these are the commitments Anytime clients can anticipate.”

Anytime ensures its customers always have a dedicated point of contact. For Qvest, staying informed about the transport's progress is crucial. In the event of any delays, Anytime promptly provides updates. Moreover, Anytime utilises flight trackers to pinpoint current aircraft positions, ensuring Qvest can consistently meet its customers' information requirements, whenever necessary.



The Asharq news studio in Dubai, equipped by Qvest. Copyright: Qvest.

A close collaboration

In addition to continuous communication, Marcel Fiedler, Head of Logistics at Qvest, reports MBS ensures seamless collaboration within the supply chain to guarantee quality, punctuality and intact deliveries.

Marcel describes the complex import regulations as the biggest logistical challenge in the MENA region: “Customs clearance in Saudi Arabia, for instance, demands extensive internal preparations and the involvement of at least one external certification body. It can take weeks for a shipment to actually take off.” Nevertheless, having the right partners generally results in a smooth process for air or sea freight.

“Many shipments pass through our warehouse in Cologne,” Marcel adds. “Depending on our agreements with customers, we sometimes pre-assemble, requiring goods to be initially stored in Cologne. However, to prioritise sustainability and efficiency, we strive for the shortest possible delivery route and often opt for direct shipments from the manufacturer to the destination.”

Qvest's choice to designate MBS and, more specifically, its Anytime division as its primary logistics provider was a natural progression. Having successfully managed multiple shipments for Qvest in the past, MBS solidified the partnership after handling a special, time-critical air freight shipment to the MENA region. The results left both Qvest and the final customer highly satisfied. “Everything went off without a hitch,” shares Marcel. “Anytime's dedicated support ensures that our concerns are treated with the highest priority, and we are always able to provide information to our customers. It's a recipe for excellent teamwork and, ultimately, complete customer satisfaction.”



To explore the technical equipment at the Asharq Media Center, scan the QR code:
www.qvest.com/de/spotlight/asharq-news



For questions about MBS Anytime, please contact Barbara Moll at anytime@mbslogistics.com.

It's for kids!

MBS Logistics sees itself as a family. Employees share a strong bond and readily lend support to one another whenever and wherever it's required. This focus on supporting people also reaches beyond the company's walls, extending to customers, partners and those in need. The It's for Kids foundation supports MBS in its mission to help.



From left to right: Ralf Meurer, Gesellschaft für Kommunikationstechnik mbH, Maximilian Moll, MBS, Joerg Roehl, MBS, Frank Quabach, COMUS International Zweiradteile & SportartikelHandelsgesellschaft mbH.

■ Sometimes, it's simple: Instead of disposing of empty toner and printer cartridges as hazardous waste, these items are collected at MBS Cologne and then reused. The company Denner collects the empty cartridges in special bins and recycles them. The money made from this recycling effort goes to the It's for Kids foundation. Since the year 2000, the foundation has actively helped abused, mistreated, neglected or otherwise disadvantaged children, using its resources to support various child protection projects and organisations throughout Germany.

It's for Kids specialises in creative donations. This includes encouraging donors to collect old cartridges. But it also extends to donating items like discarded mobile phones, leftover foreign currency from international trips or even cut hair braids. Traditional monetary donations are also highly appreciated, as demonstrated by MBS. Last year, MBS converted customer Christmas presents into a charitable donation for It's for Kids and will do the same this holiday season. Additional options include fundraising through activities like charity runs or online donations, as many internet platforms offer the option when making a purchase.

Some projects are directly managed by It's for Kids, like the 'Mutwald' (translated as 'forest of courage') initiative. This project's goal is to establish several small forests where children battling life-threatening illnesses can visit to gather strength and resilience. The children have the opportunity join a forest festival filled with diverse activities, and here, they can even plant their own tree. Donations play a vital role in making the forest festival days possible, acquiring trees and maintaining the forest areas.

To support the forest project, which organises one to two tree-planting events each year for young patients, It's for Kids held its first golf tournament in September. The proceeds from the charity cup, hosted at the Land and Golf Club Düsseldorf Hubbelrath, went entirely to the Mutwald project. All spots in the Texas Scramble, which was played in pairs, sold out. Two MBS employees also participated in this event, each with a customer.

Thanks to the foundation's unwavering commitment and the strong backing from companies like MBS, It's for Kids has achieved remarkable results. At the end of 2021, the foundation reported raising over 6.5 million Euros, thus providing support to approximately 250 child protection organisations. Looking ahead, MBS is actively exploring opportunities to strengthen its partnership with It's for Kids and expand its charitable initiatives to other branches, aiming to make an even greater impact for children in need. ■



Interested in supporting?

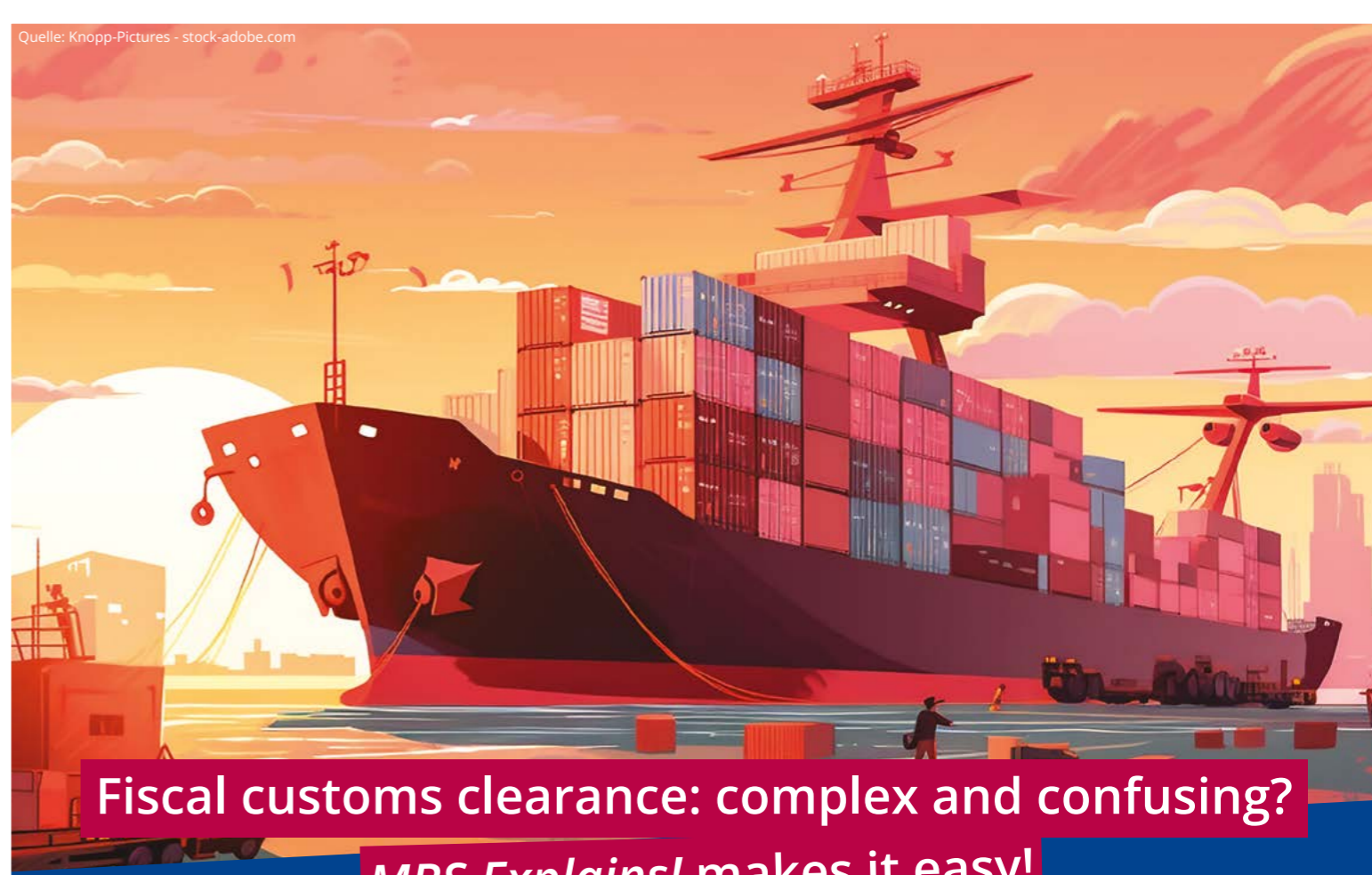
If you would like to donate or find out more about the individual projects, please use the details below or scan the QR code:

www.its-for-kids.de

It's for Kids, Klotzstrasse 33, 40721 Hilden, Germany
Phone: 02103 986670, Fax: 02103 3999409, info@its-for-kids.de
Donation account: DE48 3008 0000 0228 2288 00

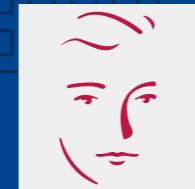


Quelle: Knopp-Pictures - stock-adobe.com



Fiscal customs clearance: complex and confusing?

MBS Explains! makes it easy!



MBS LOGISTICS

Explains!

Fiscal customs clearance can greatly relieve cash flow when importing and is therefore very worthwhile - but is the procedure too confusing and complicated for you?

MBS Explains! quickly shows you how fiscal customs clearance works and how we can help you make it convenient and secure - all in under 4 minutes.

Scan the **QR code** now and visit our YouTube channel to watch the video on **fiscal customs clearance**. Alternatively, you can also find our YouTube channel via the name below.



[@mbsspeditionsgesellschaft8240](https://www.youtube.com/@mbsspeditionsgesellschaft8240)



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mbslogistics.com

Logistics from the heart of Europe



Situated in the centre of Europe, surrounded by major economies and key trading partners, Switzerland stands out as a dynamic location for logistics. Recognising the vast potential for integrated freight forwarding solutions in the country, MBS recently opened its first Swiss branch in Zurich: MBS Logistics AG. After the office's ribbon was cut on 1 July 2023, the team hit the ground running. Now, the branch is offering a range of agile logistics products.

■ The Swiss logistics landscape is significantly evolving. From shifting trade patterns and customs regulations to demands from emerging businesses like e-commerce, logistics requirements are changing.

Across the country, businesses in every sector need a logistics partner to help them navigate new conditions. Amidst this backdrop of transformation, MBS Logistics AG is making a distinctive mark with its hands-on, dynamic attitude.

A reliable partner in a changing Swiss market

MBS's Switzerland office is IATA certified and conveniently located at Zurich airport. It offers a complete portfolio of air, sea and road freight forwarding services. In addition, the branch provides time-critical delivery services with MBS's 'Anytime' 24/7 logistics product.

MBS Logistics AG is primarily focused on providing comprehensive solutions for general cargo, with an emphasis on meeting the unique demands of the e-commerce sector. Clients benefit from the Zurich team's extensive customs knowledge, robust experience in the local market and, above all, their highly individualised approach.

The new office is guided by the expertise of two seasoned logistics professionals: Joerg Roehl, CEO MBS Group, and Fabian Heil, Managing Director Switzerland. From MBS's corporate headquarters, Joerg provides strategic oversight, enriched by his more than six years of experience working in the Swiss logistics market. Meanwhile, Fabian manages day-to-day operations and leads the Swiss team.

Joerg underscores the branch's hands-on philosophy stating, "Tailoring solutions to the individual needs of every client is part of the MBS Group's DNA, and the newly established Swiss office

upholds the same guiding principle. A personalised approach sets the Zurich branch apart in a market often dominated by one-size-fits-all services."

"We believe in going above and beyond to cater to our customers' needs, while offering competitive rates," emphasises Fabian. "It's about striking that perfect balance between price and service."

A people's business

The ability to develop competitive logistics solutions in Switzerland hinges on understanding the market's intricacies and having strong relationships with local partners – both of which Fabian brings in spades.

Born and bred in Zurich, Fabian's career spans over two decades in the Swiss logistics industry. Over the years, he worked his way up to become Branch Manager at an international freight forwarder prior to joining MBS Logistics AG.

"From international airlines and customs authorities to local couriers and truck drivers, I am grateful to have meaningful connections with so many people in this business," tells Fabian. "These relationships now weave into our branch's success, enabling us to collaborate and offer expert solutions for any challenges clients bring to the table."

Fabian also serves as the Zurich Customs Commissioner at SPEDLOGSWISS, the Association of Swiss Freight Forwarding and Logistics Companies. This role emphasises his deep involvement in the local market, enhancing MBS Logistics AG's ability to provide expert guidance, particularly amidst challenges such as the current customs regulatory changes.



Joerg Roehl, Daniel Steckel, Johannes Steckel, Fabian Heil, Katrin Drotlef and Bernd Wilkes (from left to right) celebrated the opening of MBS Zurich with many guests.

Adapting and innovating

When Fabian says the branch offers solutions for any challenge clients bring its way, he truly means it. "In addition to meeting current market needs, one of our biggest tasks is to anticipate developments," he explains.

The branch is also proactively broadening its horizons, positioning itself to cater to even more specialised sectors. This expansion includes handling transportation logistics for radioactive materials, pharmaceutical products and project logistics.

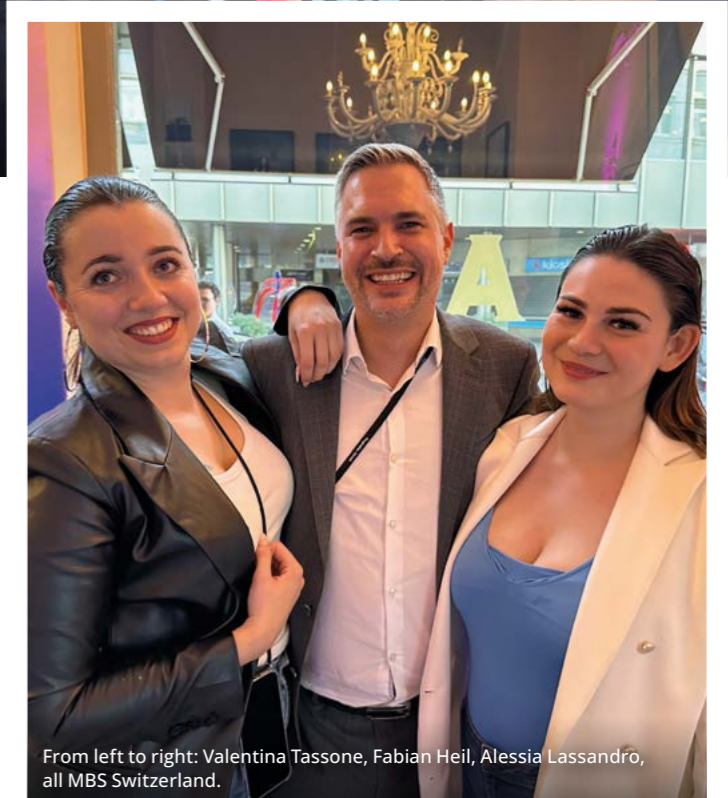
Individual strengths, united

Fabian credits the branch's ability to be active in so many areas to the versatility and dedication of his team. Spanning several generations, the newly appointed MBS Logistics AG colleagues bring unique perspectives, yet are united by their unwavering commitment.

"I'm so proud," Fabian raves. "Working alongside such dedicated people here in our Zurich office is simply amazing. My team invests so much effort to ensure our customers' success. It's been a truly sentimental journey thus far."

And the journey has only just begun. With its agile approach, tailored solutions, strong local connections and dedicated team, MBS Logistics AG is uniquely poised to guide customers towards a successful future and make an impact in the Swiss market. ■

Interested in logistics services for Switzerland? Contact Fabian Heil, Managing Director MBS Switzerland, at Fabian.Heil@mbslogistics.com.



From left to right: Valentina Tassone, Fabian Heil, Alessia Lassandro, all MBS Switzerland.

Did you know?

The e-commerce boom is significantly impacting the Swiss logistics sector. Between 2019 and 2022 alone, Swiss online trade reportedly grew an impressive 44%, creating a sudden pressing need for additional logistics solutions. This growth is only expected to continue over the coming years.

Harmonising man and the machine

Artificial intelligence (AI) – who isn't talking about its potential? As AI continues to dominate global conversations, industries across the board are racing to harness its transformative possibilities, logistics included. With AI's unmatched ability to process vast amounts of data and make informed decisions, the logistics landscape is evolving, promising unprecedented efficiency and innovation. But while AI is growing in importance to businesses, the role of humans remains critical.

■ In freight forwarding, the ability to navigate complex regulations, negotiate contracts and handle unexpected challenges requires human judgment and experience. Plus, in the industry, relationships are the foundation of success. However, as the digital logistics landscape continues to evolve, the old ways of doing business are likely to fall short.

By combining the power of human expertise with AI, freight forwarders can unlock new opportunities and achieve the best of both worlds. This approach is known as 'human-in-the-loop AI', and it is delivering exciting possibilities for logistics.

Human-in-the-loop AI

Human-in-the-loop AI empowers freight forwarders by enhancing – not replacing – employees' decision-making capabilities with AI-powered insights. By analysing vast amounts of data, AI algorithms can provide recommendations and predictions, enabling forwarders to make more informed choices and optimise client solutions.

Today, there are several real-world examples demonstrating the possibilities of human-in-the-loop AI:

- **Scheduling and route planning:** AI algorithms are already being used to make informed route planning decisions. By analysing vast amounts of historical data, congestion information, weather conditions and real-time updates, AI algorithms can swiftly generate optimised route suggestions for human operators, minimising delays and reducing emissions.
- **Automated documentation:** With optical character recognition (OCR) and natural language processing (NLP), AI can efficiently extract relevant data from carrier contracts, shipping documents and other paperwork. This extracted information can then be seamlessly populated into other forms or systems. Additionally, AI-powered systems can automate the generation of critical shipping documents, such as customs paperwork, commercial invoices, bills of lading and certificates of origin, ensuring compliance with regulations and streamlining the entire documentation process.

Daniel Steckel
CEO MBS Holding



- **Fraud and anomaly detection:** AI enables the swift analysis of extensive data to detect potential risks and fraudulent activities in freight transactions by monitoring shipment histories, supplier credentials and payment patterns. Moreover, AI systems quickly identify errors and anomalies in master data and processes. With AI, faults are detected and flagged for human review before they cause damage.
- **Customer communication:** AI-powered chatbots can offer real-time customer service. As an example, ChatGPT can be leveraged to create chatbots that offer immediate support to customers, such as resolving queries, delivering order updates and addressing complaints, all of which can significantly decrease response and wait times. This approach frees up customer service agents to focus on more complex issues, thereby improving customer satisfaction.

By combining the power of human expertise with AI, freight forwarders can unlock new opportunities and achieve the best of both worlds.

The future ahead

AI has the potential to transform logistics, much like the internet and mobile technology changed the way we live and work. The current focus is on building AI solutions to automate tasks, cut costs and enhance efficiency. With developing technologies and algorithms, we can expect even more advanced AI applications in logistics, driving innovation and competition. ■

Interested learning more about digitising and modernising logistics operations?

Contact Daniel Steckel, CEO MBS Holding, at Daniel.Steckel@mbslogistics.com.

MBS embraces smart technology

MBS is also exploring the potential of advancing technology, such as AI, for its own operations. For example, MBS China launched CargoPlus on 1 August 2023. This innovative operations system enhances logistics management and will soon be adopted by branches in Hong Kong, Vietnam and Singapore, marking a new era of smart logistics for the Group. Leveraging the 'human-in-the-loop AI' concept, CargoPlus boosts team agility and responsiveness through improved tracking, resource allocation, communication and data analytics.

Key benefits of MBS's CargoPlus

- **Real-time tracking and visibility:** With CargoPlus's real-time tracking feature, operators can keep tabs on shipments at every step of the journey, ensuring timely deliveries and minimising delays. Clients, too, can stay informed about their shipments with ease.
- **Efficient resource allocation:** By utilising intelligent algorithms and data analysis, CargoPlus effectively allocates resources like vehicles, warehouses and labour. The result? Streamlined operations, reduced costs and enhanced productivity.
- **Seamless communication and collaboration:** CargoPlus facilitates seamless communication and collaboration by integrating all relevant parties into a centralised platform. From suppliers and carriers to customers and third-party service providers, everyone involved in the supply chain can communicate in real-time, ensuring a smooth flow of information.

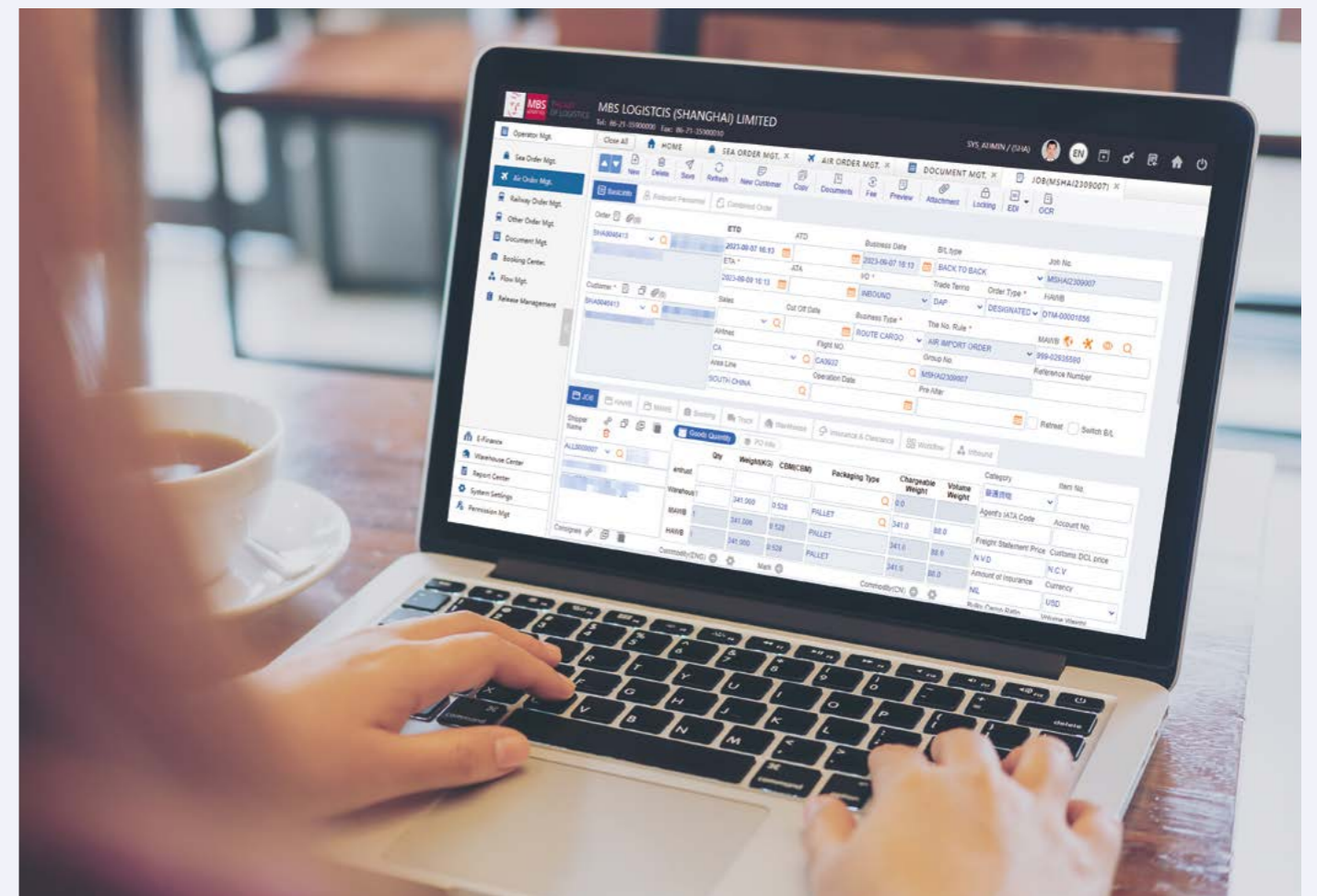
- **Automated processes and workflows:** Data entry, document processing and repetitive administrative tasks can be replaced by CargoPlus's automated features. By reducing the reliance on manual work, the system not only minimises errors but also frees up valuable time for employees.

- **Data analytics and insights:** CargoPlus offers comprehensive data analytics capabilities, providing valuable insights into operations, optimising routes and enabling data-driven decision making for the experts at MBS.

Next wave of innovation

Soon, MBS will introduce more digital products and services, leveraging AI and other technologies that are currently in development. This continuous pursuit of cutting-edge solutions reflects the company's commitment to pioneering innovative logistics to offer the best possible service to its valued customers. ■

Want to learn more about MBS China's digital solutions? Contact Abraham.Tao@mbssha.com, Managing Director MBS Asia Pacific.



MBS Xiamen: Up close and personal

At MBS Xiamen, logistics isn't just a business; it's a personal commitment. Since opening its doors in 2009, the Xiamen branch has consistently developed close customer relationships while tailoring logistics solutions to meet unique requirements. The secret? A committed team. Over half of the Xiamen employees have been with MBS for over a decade, while the others have dedicated five years or more to the office and its customers.

■ What began as a modest representative office with just one team member has blossomed into a thriving independent branch over the last 15 years. Today, the Xiamen team consists of 13 talented individuals. With every passing year, the office not only grows in size but also in heart, as the team members continue to further improve the branch's personal service offering.

Upon stepping inside the Xiamen office, visitors immediately feel the team's commitment to treating everyone with care and respect. A welcome board at the entrance is decorated with handwritten messages and artwork to personally greet visitors, reflecting the team's genuine enthusiasm and dedication.

Within the office, a multitude of departments work diligently to support customers' transportation needs, whether by air, land or sea, across continents or across the globe.

In March, the team moved into a new building located in the city's vibrant Free-Trade Zone, a hub for trade, shipping and logistics. This relocation is a testament to the branch's continued success and positive outlook. The new office provides space for expansion as the Xiamen team continues to grow and refine the branch's services for its valued clients. ■

Interested in MBS Xiamen's logistics services?
Contact the branch at xiamen@mbslogistics.com.



The new MBS Xiamen office.



The MBS Xiamen team.

From Xiamen, around the world



The 'Asia Overseas Team', a department at the Xiamen office, delivers the branch's exceptional service worldwide. This team serves as a single point of contact in Asia for overseas agents, ensuring seamless collaboration and smooth operation.

With their extensive expertise and unwavering dedication, the Asia Overseas Team focuses on four core pillars of service, collectively referred to as SCGS: Searching, Connecting, Guiding and Solving.

- **Searching:** The Overseas team diligently seeks out partners sharing MBS's vision and values. This proactive approach forms a solid foundation for customer success.
- **Connecting:** Acting as a bridge, the Overseas Team connects partners with local teams. This ensures efficient shipment handling and effective service coordination, enhancing the overall customer experience.

- **Guiding:** Across international borders, guidance is often needed. The Overseas Team provides guidance to local offices seeking overseas partners for seamless door-to-door services. Their expertise and support help navigate any challenges that may arise, ensuring reliable service.
- **Solving:** In the face of any dispute or problem that arises during the communication process between local teams and overseas partners, the Overseas Team swiftly steps in to resolve issues. Their proactive intervention ensures that concerns are addressed promptly, maintaining the strong relationships that are at the core of MBS.

Personal service takes flight

How has air freight transportation evolved over the decades? A group of experts at MBS Logistics in Cologne reflect on this question and offer insights into what the future might hold.

■ Peter Reschke, Oliver Hamacher, Lisa Reschke and Martin Richrath collectively bring nearly a century of air freight expertise to the table. All four are full-blooded air freight specialists and represent a significant part of MBS's expertise in the skies. Peter began his journey with MBS in air freight imports in 1991, following 17 years of prior experience in the industry. He became part of the management team at MBS Logistics in 1998, serving for numerous years, and today acts as a consultant to the company. His daughter Lisa joined the air freight export team in Cologne in 2011. Meanwhile, Martin came on board at the company 19 years ago, and Oliver began leading the air freight department at MBS in 2011, after joining the team in 2008.

“Personal connections are still very strong in this industry, and it's one of the reasons why this job is so enjoyable.”

Oliver Hamacher, Air Freight Manager, MBS

A game changer: electronic airway bills

When asked about the most significant change in recent decades, the four air freight experts unanimously agree: digitalisation! They consider this development to be a game changer for air freight because it replaced the traditional paper airway bill (AWB). “In the past, every

shipment's AWB used to travel on board in a special large bag alongside the cargo. Now, they're generated digitally, and the data is automatically transmitted. Exporters no longer need to wait until the goods arrive by truck and then clear them in a night shift. And import forwarders no longer need to collect the papers for their consignments at the airport,” explains Peter. He also notes that customs clearance has become much faster for both imports and exports because it no longer requires in-person visits to the customs office. Only a copy of the AWB is printed and manually signed as a delivery receipt at the airport.

“The downside of all this streamlining is that the personal contact with customs, as well as with other forwarders at the airport and airline staff, is not as intensive as it used to be,” notes Oliver. “This sometimes creates challenges in finding quick, unbureaucratic solutions and mutual support. Nevertheless, personal connections are still very strong in this industry, and it's one of the reasons why this job is so enjoyable.”

China remains the primary country of origin

In addition to operations, the types of products transported and cargo flows in air freight imports have changed significantly in the last 30 years. Mass-produced items from China – such as plastic garden gnomes, textiles or ceramics – no longer fly. “These goods are too heavy and inexpensive, so they now travel to Europe by sea,” explains Peter. However, China remains the primary country of origin for air freight, accounting for more than 70% of imports at MBS. Following closely behind in the import rankings are several other Asian nations, along with India and the United States.



From left to right: Martin Richrath, Lisa Reschke, Oliver Hamacher.

High-value and urgent exports

High-value paintings and sculptures, machinery, equipment and spare parts continue to be a significant part of the export business today. “Valuable cargo, as well as urgent cargo, remain essential pillars of air freight,” reports Lisa. While art objects are primarily delivered to the USA and Hong Kong, engineering marvels are transported worldwide.

The ability to transport steadily increasing air freight volumes is partly due to the growing number of passenger planes carrying travellers, thus providing more capacity in their cargo holds. According to Oliver, more than half of global air freight volumes are transported by passenger planes.

Competition from CEP companies

Small consignments – once a market for air freight forwarders – are now handled much less frequently by freight forwarders. “CEP companies are taking over this business with their own flights and expanding it significantly based on the e-commerce boom. This development has led to some e-commerce retailers even owning their cargo planes,” says Martin. However, the expansion of e-commerce is not only interesting for CEP companies. Freight forwarders like MBS are also continuously expanding their range of services in this area (see also pgs. 16-17).

Focus on environmental protection

Over the past three decades, the issue of environmental protection has also gained relevance in aviation. Aircraft manufacturers are responding by optimising planes in terms of production, size and fuel consumption. Alternative fuels are also being explored. Looking ahead, Martin expects digitisation and process automation will continue to increase, bringing cybersecurity to the forefront of the agenda.



Peter Reschke today and in his early days at MBS.

Trust at the heart

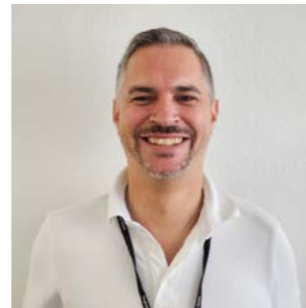
While air freight ensures swift delivery of goods, there are instances where the most critical spare parts and urgent medical products demand an even faster response. Any delay can lead to production standstills or jeopardise life-saving procedures. To address these critical needs, MBS Logistics developed a dedicated emergency logistics product known as ‘Anytime.’ This service operates globally with a vast network of on-board couriers and is committed to responding to every request within 15 minutes.

Air freight is evolving rapidly and dynamically, but one thing has remained constant over the past 30 years: the trust customers place in MBS air freight solutions. “Even though there are much larger players in the market, MBS is often the partner of choice. Our customers have a single point of contact for all their needs, usually someone who has been with the company for many years,” says Peter. Digitalisation and automation are certainly two significant factors in the industry, but knowledge and personal attention still make all the difference. ■

For more information about air freight, please contact Oliver Hamacher at Oliver.Hamacher@mbslogistics.com.

A new era in e-commerce logistics

Fabian Heil
Managing Director MBS Switzerland, Zurich



The COVID-19 global e-commerce surge was born out of necessity. Online shopping provided an alternative as retail locations closed and people stayed in to avoid the virus. Global e-commerce increased from 14% of total retail sales in 2019 to almost 20% in 2022. With this online shift projected to persist, there is mounting pressure to offer new solutions for customer-centric supply chains – and MBS stands ready to meet these demands.

■ For companies offering online sales, the end-to-end customer experience will become increasingly imperative: According to Insider Intelligence, e-commerce is predicted to account for around 21% of total global retail sales in 2023 – reaching \$6.3 trillion. And over the next several years, the sector is projected to maintain a compound annual growth rate of at least 8%.

As the e-commerce market continues to expand and enters the next stage of its development, customers are demanding new and more sophisticated logistics services for online purchases.

Radical transformation underway

Not too long ago, online retailers put a large part of their investment and focus on innovation in the front end, but only up to the point of order placement.

Today, a high logistics standard is gradually becoming the industry norm.

“Businesses are faced with the challenge of reshaping their logistics strategy to put the customer at the centre of the supply chain,” explains Fabian Heil, Managing Director MBS Switzerland and e-commerce expert. “The world of e-commerce is changing, and logistics services are now a customer-value differentiator. At MBS, we are dedicated to transforming logistics experiences for our clients through flexible, bespoke e-commerce solutions.”

Increased demands for specialised logistics services

The growth of e-commerce has created a demand for specialised logistics services, including:

■ **Faster delivery:** Today’s consumers increasingly make purchasing decisions based on which retailer can deliver their orders the fastest. McKinsey reports that almost half of shoppers abandon their online carts if shipping times are too long or aren’t provided. Retailers have no choice but to respond, which often requires significant changes in technology, processes and logistics partnerships.

■ **Smart reverse logistics:** Steady growth in internet shopping has been accompanied by steady growth in returns of all kinds. In fact, Deloitte reports online purchases are returned three times more often than brick-and-mortar store purchases. An efficient return experience is now also differentiating factor for online retailers to attract and retain customers.

■ **Hyper personalisation:** Consumers not only expect rapid deliveries but also tailored experiences. This demands logistics strategies that enable order tracking, delivery time customisation and even personalised packaging. Adapting to these heightened expectations necessitates advanced data analytics and AI-driven solutions to create seamless and personalised delivery journeys.

Emerging e-commerce models

As e-commerce demands begin to outpace the capabilities of many traditional post and parcel services, more retailers are investing in their own transportation capabilities or extending their collaboration models.

For example, in a strategic move to gain more control over its logistics, TikTok recently launched its ‘Fulfilled By TikTok’ (FBT) programme in the UK. Taking notes from Amazon’s ‘Fulfillment by Amazon,’ FBT provides comprehensive picking, packing and shipping services to UK merchants for products sold via TikTok Shop.

Among other benefits, FBT offers same-day, automated fulfilment, a premium next working day delivery service and enhanced customer feedback. This service showcases TikTok’s commitment to conquering the dynamic e-commerce logistics landscape, prioritising speed, precision and cost effectiveness.



“Every country presents its unique set of challenges, particularly concerning customs clearance. As a freight forwarder, global expertise is paramount.”

Fabian Heil, Managing Director MBS Switzerland

Navigating sales across borders

The expanding footprint of e-commerce is also leading to an increased focus on international sales. Cross-border transactions are projected to grow twice as fast as the broader e-commerce sector.

However, this opportunity comes with its own set of challenges, especially when keeping in mind end consumer demands for fast and/or reliable delivery, a good returns policy and personalisation.

Fabian emphasises the intricacies of cross-border e-commerce, stating, “Every country presents its unique set of challenges, particularly concerning customs clearance. As a freight forwarder, global expertise is paramount. At MBS, we ensure our clients can navigate these challenges efficiently and with complete compliance.”

The success of online fast-fashion retailer Shein can partly be attributed to its savvy cross-border e-commerce logistics. The company transformed its supply chain from a mere support function to a central driver of its business model.

With its global network of fulfilment centres, warehouses and key logistics partnerships, Shein achieves swift and dependable worldwide customer deliveries. It also tailors its approach to regional preferences and customs, ensuring a smooth customer experience, regardless of location.

Logistics as an ace card

As examples from TikTok and Shein illustrate, logistics is no longer an afterthought or a cumbersome last step for merchants. Smart logistics has become a must-have for customers, and companies that fail to keep up with logistics trends risk losing competitive advantage and falling out of favour with consumers.

For most SMEs, taking full ownership of the logistics process is out of reach. However, by working with smart freight forwarding partners, merchants will be able to tap into the resources of numerous established logistics providers with the experience and technological capabilities to deliver superior service for their customer base.

To navigate this new era of e-commerce logistics, Fabian firmly believes in the power of partnership. “At MBS, we take pride in being the complete e-commerce partner for our clients, handling everything from warehousing and transport to customs clearance and returns,” he shares. “Leveraging our expertise, we work closely with global clients to craft tailored strategies and develop comprehensive supply chain solutions, enabling our clients to meet the growing demands of their end customers.” ■

Contact Fabian Heil, Managing Director MBS Switzerland, at Fabian.Heil@mbslogistics.com.

Did you know?

MBS Logistics is a member of the World Cargo Alliance (WCA) e-commerce network. With more than 200 member companies across 45 countries, the network supports and equips members to operate as competent, certified e-commerce service providers in and beyond the network. Through its affiliation with the WCA, MBS clients gain access to a global network of premier e-commerce logistics specialists, guaranteeing efficient cross-border trade and an uninterrupted supply chain.

Frankfurt celebrates its 25th anniversary – and has a lot in store

1998 – a time when the internet was just beginning to come on the scene, the cellular revolution was taking off and the world brimmed with anticipation for the new millennium. Amidst this era of change, a transformational venture within MBS also took place: the establishment of a branch in Frankfurt. The launch of MBS Frankfurt solidified the Group's commitment to growth and opened doors to global opportunities. To celebrate the branch's recent 25th anniversary, we're looking back on the last quarter century – and ahead to an exciting future!

■ From its founding days, MBS Frankfurt has been fuelled by two things: innovation and a distinctly personalised approach.

"Since we first opened our doors, we've aimed to offer exceedingly personal and flexible logistics solutions," shares Monika Geier, the founding Managing Director of MBS Frankfurt. "We've consistently demonstrated our willingness to craft tailored solutions for our clients. This approach still remains our USP, particularly when compared to larger multinational freight forwarders."

Given Frankfurt's status as Germany's air freight hub, it was a strategic move for the MBS founders to establish a presence here during the Group's formative years. However, Monika swiftly transformed the branch into something even more dynamic than a provider of air freight services.

Leveraging her extensive network and visionary outlook, Monika strategically built the Frankfurt business to be a multifaceted provider of comprehensive logistics services. Today, under the additional leadership of Managing Directors Stefan Wischrath and Jannis Friebe, MBS Frankfurt carries forward this legacy.

Agile logistics solutions

"Our approach is centred around meeting market demands. We're dedicated to utilising our resources to deliver precisely what our clients require, when they require it," says Stefan.

Stefan's journey with MBS Frankfurt began in the sales department in 2006, and in 2012, he teamed up with Monika to co-lead the branch. The management team was further strengthened in 2019 with the promotion of Jannis, who has been part of the MBS Frankfurt branch since 2012.

Despite entering the business at different periods, Monika, Stefan and Jannis agree on one pivotal aspect: the value of adaptability in an ever-evolving industry.

In fact, the business's first major success can be attributed to this agile approach. "We had the chance to meet the supply chain demands of the emerging mobile phone market. But we needed to act quickly," Monika explains. "Pretty much overnight we developed logistics solutions and hired a warehouse team. The mobile phone business proved very profitable for us and served as an opportunity to establish the company on a solid footing."

Fast forward to today, and alongside conventional transport services, MBS Frankfurt has successfully implemented solutions to cater to numerous other niche sectors, such as exhibition logistics, Anytime time-critical logistics and iShip digital parcel shipping.

Bonds that build business

From the beginning, the branch thrived on deep connections with colleagues, clients and partners. Jannis summarises the MBS Frankfurt ethos when he notes, "This isn't just a workplace; it's a family."

This family, however, is a patchwork of many diverse perspectives. "From the start, I recognised the value of hiring a multicultural team, fluent in various languages," recalls Monika. "This meant we could speak to agents in other countries in their mother tongue and connect on a more personal level."

For Stefan, the spirit of close connection is something he feels across the wider MBS Group, and he sees it as another key ingredient in MBS Frankfurt's success. "The MBS founders deliberately set up the Group to encompass a wide array of expertise," attests Stefan. "When customers come to us with new challenges, our colleagues in other branches are a huge source of support. We take pride in being part of a culture of knowledge sharing."



From left to right: Jannis Friebe, Monika Geier, Stefan Wischrath.



Teamwork and good spirits: The Frankfurt crew had many good things to celebrate.



Monika Geier, Bernd Wilkes.



Furthermore, partnerships with freight forwarders across the world are a large part of the branch's DNA. Through affiliations with networks like the World Cargo Alliance, MBS Frankfurt has nurtured numerous connections with independent freight forwarders across the globe over the past 25 years. This has empowered the branch to present clients with an even more diverse array of dynamic solutions.

Fit for the future

Looking ahead, Stefan and Jannis foresee two major themes to shape MBS Frankfurt's path: digitalisation and sustainability.

"Absolutely, digitalisation is a core focus for us. The younger generation is really engaged in discussions about it, and the demand is clear. There's also growing focus on CO2 footprint and green logistics. Our role is to work closely with our clients to come up with smart solutions," Stefan explains.

Jannis envisions the road ahead to be continuation of the branch's founding principles.

"As we take bold steps forward, I imagine a journey marked by the same unwavering dedication and genuine customer focus," Jannis continues. "While we're committed to innovation, digitisation and expansion, we're equally determined to preserve the human touch that has been the cornerstone of our success."

Indeed, it's been a journey marked by hard work, perseverance and human connections. And Monika, Stefan and Jannis share the same belief: The journey continues, and the next 25 years are likely to be as exciting as the preceding ones.

In closing, Monika shares: "I am so proud of MBS Frankfurt's success, which was made possible by the support from our dedicated team, steadfast partners and loyal customers. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you. I also give a special thanks to Bernd Wilkes and Johannes Steckel, the founding MBS shareholders, for giving me the opportunity to open this branch. Here's to many more years of victories and growth, together with the incredible individuals who have been the heart of our journey." ■

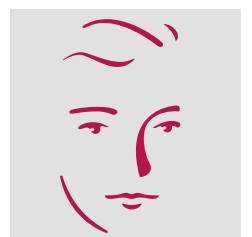
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Print product with financial
climate contribution

ClimatePartner.com/53516-2309-1014



Imprint

Publisher / Editorial / Layout
MBS Speditionsgesellschaft mbH
Hansestrasse 57, 51149 Cologne
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