



Onwards and upwards



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Having achieved phenomenal growth since its establishment in 2001, the time is now right for CML to implement a corporate culture-transformation project.

IMAGES ANTONIO DI NUNZIO AND CML

CML are the leaders in printed circuit board (PCB) sourcing solutions. CML Europe was founded in Germany in the new millennium, and the business today has operations across Europe, Asia, and America. The CML companies employ more than 250* people worldwide to take care of various PCB projects from 'cradle to grave', providing an umbrella of services such as design, consulting, engineering, manufacturing, and logistics for all markets.

The CEO Magazine had a chat with two executives from the business: Daniel Jacob, the owner and Managing Director of CML EurAsia (pictured far left); and Moritz Hoeft, the owner and Managing Director of CML Europe (pictured left). Charlie Lang, the founder and Managing Partner of Progress-U Asia, CXO Coach, and Program Director of Asia Innovative Coaching Institute, also shared some thoughts on how Progress-U has been helping CML through its corporate culture-transformation project.

***The CEO Magazine:* What are the key responsibilities in your individual roles?**

Moritz: I am responsible for all CML organisations in Europe. We want to offer more than just PCBs to our customers. We are a solutions provider and consult >>



Names Daniel Jacob; Moritz Hoeft; Charlie Lang
Companies CML EurAsia; CML Europe; Progress-U Asia
Positions Owner & MD; Owner & MD; Founder & Managing Partner
HQ Waldbronn, Germany
Employees 250+*

“Managing and maintaining partnerships over long distances is not possible by only focusing on KPIs.” - Daniel Jacob

our customers in order to understand their individual needs. This requires flexibility, the right mindset, and processes that support individual solutions. I am committed to working with my colleagues on developing all aspects to create the best possible customer experience.

Daniel: I am in charge of all CML operations in Asia and America-Pacific. My main focus is on sustainable development with our manufacturing partners, and to ensure — together with our Quality Team — that CML stays on an excellent level to answer the needs of our customers. We have just invested in new equipment to reach our goal of a zero PPM defect rate on our products.

Charlie: I am the founder and Managing Partner of Progress-U, focusing on corporate culture transformation, developing professional coaches, and helping C-level leaders in their transformation to become more inspiring and purposeful leaders. In the corporate culture transformation project with CML, I'm the main facilitator and content specialist, supported by Terrance Leung [Progress-U Hong Kong's managing director], who is the project leader.

When you joined CML, what were the key opportunities that you saw to grow and expand the business in the regions you look after?

Moritz: I always saw our organisational set-up as one of our biggest strengths. With our broad service portfolio and close relationships to our customers, as



well as a motivated team, we create trustful, close, and long-lasting partnerships. This requires a good knowledge of the Chinese market and business culture as well as a strong organisation to deliver what is promised. When we started our business fifteen years ago, the most important thing was earning the customer's trust as well as our capability to manage the supply chain. Today, most companies are familiar with the Chinese market, but the importance of a trustful relationship will always remain.

Daniel: After my move to Asia, I leveraged the opportunities in this region and America-Pacific on the supply and demand side. Over the years, we have created a global network in the local markets. 'PCBs from just around the corner' is not only our slogan; we walk the talk with our teams. For example, we supply our service and products to Costa Rica for the automotive end customers in

Silicon Valley, all supported by our team in Mexico.

CML is currently working on a corporate culture-transformation. What are the reasons behind this?

Moritz: At first when we were established, we had only three people handling the PCB-importing business. However, today we are providing solutions with regard to all elements of the PCB, and we have expanded into different areas. We have grown very fast and many new people have joined CML. At that time it was rather simple to live the corporate culture we wanted. Then, when we had more and more leaders with different personal values and leadership styles in place, we realised there were many subcultures within the corporate culture.

Daniel: Managing and maintaining partnerships over long distances is not possible by only focusing on KPIs, and

we want to keep up the unique spirit we have in CML. Even though we are legally separate companies, we work in a close partnership as one team in most areas and want to break down cultural barriers in order to gain speed and enjoyment for all stakeholders.

What are the steps you are undertaking to make this transformation successful, and have you seen results yet?

Charlie: Progress-U developed a multi-step process consisting of: 1. Defining the optimal corporate culture; 2. Corporate culture-transformation needs analysis; 3. Describing leadership behaviours for the new culture; 4. Reviewing and designing CESystems that enable the new culture; 5. Defining other initiatives and activities to drive cultural change; 6. Rolling it out and keeping on communicating; 7. Hiring and onboarding for new culture; 8. Continuously reviewing, maintaining, and developing culture.

During the first workshop in April 2016 with the top management team, the direction was agreed upon and a first draft of a description of the new culture was established. This was reviewed with key opinion leaders and was finalised in a further workshop in June 2016. From here, step 2 will be addressed, leveraging mobile apps to measure the cultural state of CML and the most important gaps that need to be focused on.

Daniel: All members of our team are aware of what we have planned, and they have all been involved in the first steps. Our HR and management team are driving this project and people are getting curious about it. Progress-U is supporting us, and we have completed the first steps in the second quarter of this year, followed by ongoing surveys



and gap analysis. The feedback is promising and we feel that everybody enjoys working actively on our future.

CML has a global reach, but still feels local. How do you approach the different regions to deliver the best service to your customers?

Moritz: We've always wanted a close relationship with our customers. Being close has more than just a geographic meaning; we want to understand our customers' needs and provide them with the feeling that we are from their neighbourhood. This includes both soft skills dealing with language and culture, as well as hard facts like our various services and logistics models.

What will be your three key areas of focus over the next twelve-to-eighteen months?

Moritz: The first key area that we are focusing on is our customers. We want to provide our customers with the best customer experience in the PCB market. In order to achieve this ambition, we come to our second focus area: our employees with the corporate culture project. It is vital that we work together as one team, so we have a lot of coaching and training, supported by the

Harrison Assessments lined up. This will create a solid foundation and add the spirit of the new CML corporate culture. Last but not least, with our partner CMiT, we are investing in a larger IT infrastructure, including the start of our new ERP system on 1 January 2017 and creating CML clouds. Not only will this help us to improve our daily operations, but with more efficiency from us it will also enable us to bring the best experience to our customers.

Daniel: One other important point is for CML to increase its presence in the US. We are in talks with potential partners and candidates and will be able to take the next step very soon.

What is your overall vision for the future of the company?

Daniel: Moritz and I enjoy working actively in the development of CML. We care about reliable connections, and by providing excellent products with great service, CML is able to make a difference. We hope for the company to continue to grow organically and to discover new horizons to benefit our customers, our manufacturing partners, and our teams into the future. ■

**Source: cml-globalsolutions.com/imprint*