

The wheel turns full circle

Maike Wenzel is an outstanding example of how an international medium-sized company recognizes potential and opens up opportunities. She has been working as an assistant in the Marketing and Communications department at Jagenberg Holding since the beginning of 2022 and successfully implements a wide range of projects for the Group's companies.

Ms. Wenzel, your journey has led you to the Marketing and Communications department at Jagenberg Holding. Could you tell us more about the development of your professional ambitions and how you ended up in your current position?

My professional journey has been guided by inspiring mentors and I am grateful for where I am now! Like many children, I wanted to be a vet when I was a little girl. However, when I was looking for an interesting job after leaving school, my father suggested I start training as a marketing communications specialist. This allowed me to combine commercial aspects with creativity.

But that wasn't the end of your training, was it?

No, after my apprenticeship in Goch, I wanted to develop my skills further. So I decided to study International Business and Social Sciences at the University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, which was taught entirely in English and I really enjoyed it. Although I would have liked to go abroad and am interested in other cultures, the cost of a semester abroad in my dream country of Australia was simply too high.



Maike Wenzel, Marketing & Communication Assistant

How did you come to join the Jagenberg Group?

I had originally applied for a job at Jagenberg Paper GmbH, but unfortunately without success at the time. This rejection turned out to be a stroke of luck. Thomas and Guido Lebbing attended my interview and offered me a position at Lebbing automation & drives GmbH in Bocholt, a company within the Jagenberg Group. After the interview, I had a good feeling and decided to embark on the adventure at this company. I ended up spending a total of seven years there. I became part of a dynamic team at Lebbing and felt very comfortable there.

Did you have a clear idea of what to expect at Lebbing automation & drives GmbH?

To be honest, not really. Of course, I looked at the website before I started work and gathered some information about automation, drive and control technology and retrofitting, but these topics seemed very abstract to me at first. After just a short time, I learned what endless web guiding materials are. In terms of content, my job developed quickly: I was not only an assistant to Thomas and Guido Lebbing, but also worked in marketing and communications. My tasks were very diverse, from travel planning and scheduling to the organization of trade fairs and events to purchasing advertising materials. I was also able to acquire knowledge of the Adobe InDesign layout program and create my own designs. I've always enjoyed that. I was therefore able to combine creativity and commercial topics in this position.

This means that you were not only able to apply what you had from your training, but also to develop further ...

Exactly, and through direct contact with colleagues, I have also arrived in mechanical engineering.

**How did it come about that you then moved to Jagenberg Holding?**

The move to Jagenberg Holding was actually initiated by Thomas Lebbing. He paved the way for me to join the Holding because he knew that I wanted to make a personal change and move to Krefeld. This support shows that the personal concerns of our employees are taken seriously. The Lebbing brothers actively supported me during the transition process to the Holding, for which I am very grateful.

How does your area of responsibility at the Holding differ from that at Lebbing?

The key differentiator is that I can now focus entirely on marketing and communication. When I joined the Holding, the brand relaunch and the new j-united 2025 strategy gave rise to a large number of new tasks.

I now oversee the entire implementation of various projects for the different companies from the very beginning. This includes topics such as sustainability, employer branding, the development of social media channels and much more. In contrast to the past it's not just about practical implementation, we work in a strategic and future-oriented way. The mindset here is completely different: everything we do is based on conceptual considerations that also have a long-term impact and affect the entire Jagenberg Group. In other words, we are not just focused on a single company.

“We make it a priority to take the personal concerns of our employees into consideration.”

Maike Wenzel

“Working in an international group constantly offers new challenges and exciting topics.”

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You can tell that you like it. Or is this impression deceiving?

Not at all. I have settled in perfectly here, especially thanks to the mentoring of Silke Löser, Head of Marketing and Communications at the Jagenberg Group. She supports me with her extensive experience and expertise. It is also extremely interesting to get to know the Jagenberg Group from a broader perspective, having already experienced it from the perspective of Lebbing automation & drives GmbH. Of course, the other companies within the Group also benefit from this, as I am familiar with the processes, already know many of my colleagues and know how I can best support them. Personally, I really appreciate the fact that I can now cycle to work because of my short commute.

What would young Maike Wenzel think if she could see you today?

Everything done right! Working in an international group constantly offers new challenges and exciting topics. I met people who challenged and encouraged me. My skills were valued and I was able to develop enormously. Basically, my position as Marketing and Communications Assistant for the Jagenberg Group has come full circle - starting with my training, continuing through my studies and my experience at Lebbing and ending with my current position at Jagenberg Holding. I can work strategically, conceptually, creatively and internationally - exactly what my younger self imagined, even if it couldn't formulate it so explicitly at the time.

If you had to put it in a nutshell, what was decisive for your personal development?

The good and supportive leadership by the management at Lebbing and in the Holding was the first step. In addition, of course, there was the opportunity to communicate openly and transparently. Otherwise, my wish to move to Krefeld would not have been taken into consideration. And finally, the opportunities that a medium-sized group of companies can offer. All of this was crucial for me to find my career path - with some support, of course.

And where do you see your future? What do you wish for?

I am currently very happy in Krefeld and at Jagenberg Holding. We have a lot of different projects that we are presently working on. I am optimistic that we will achieve a lot together for the entire Jagenberg Group. What I'm still missing, however, is permission to have an office dog. But I'm working on that as soon as my private living situation allows me to keep a dog. (laughs)

Ms. Wenzel, I wish you the best of luck with this and thank you for the pleasant conversation!