

Special Interview with **BOSSARD**



How the Fastener Giant Sees the Fastening Future in 2025

Founded in Zug in 1831, the Bossard Group is a leading strategic partner for industrial fastening and assembly technology solutions to OEM customers globally with proven expertise in engineering and logistic services. Today, local and multinational companies count on Bossard's expertise to increase their productivity – with success. Bossard calls this concept Proven Productivity which is also a promise to its customers. This includes, among other things, optimizing processes and reducing inventories to increase efficiency and productivity sustainably. In addition, Bossard is considered a pioneer in developing intelligent production facilities in line with Industry 4.0.

With more than 2,900 employees at 81 locations in 31 countries throughout the world, the Bossard Group generated CHF 1,069.0 million in sales in the financial year 2023 and is listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange.

In this annual Fastener World Buyers' Guide, we will be looking at how Bossard concludes this year, as well as what Bossard perceives as the challenges and opportunities for the future fastener industry, followed by its latest development to stay ahead of the curve.

Q1: We are glad to have you, Mr. Andreas Bertaggia (Vice President, Head of Global Supply Chain Management of Bossard), as our guest for this special interview. For starters, let's recap 2024. Are there any critical incidents, challenges or missions that you think await the fastener industry to be aware of, to solve, to revolutionize or to break through?

A: I would like to express my gratitude for having me here today. If I may be so bold, I would say that sustainability is the key. The introduction of new regulations and legislation is a significant and growing challenge, particularly in Europe, with the result that bureaucracy is becoming increasingly prevalent. Consequently, costs are rising while profits are under pressure. The changing world, including geopolitics, politics, de-globalization, re-shoring, uncertainty, a lack of skilled workforces, and natural hazards, is impacting supply chains and business practices and influencing future decisions. The global economy is experiencing significant volatility and cost-focused pressures. The current environment can be described as VUCA, or Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous. Concurrently, we are at the outset of a transformative technological wave, marked by the rise of digitalization and AI. These developments have the potential to profoundly impact the business landscape, akin to the shifts brought



about by the Industrial Revolution and the advent of the internet.

(Editor's note: The acronym VUCA was a concept proposed by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus to describe general conditions and situations, later spreading to strategic leadership in organizations. It provides a lens for organizations to interpret and articulate how they perceive challenges and opportunities.)

Q2. You have brought up those issues that certainly speak to the minds of many fastener industry players. What do you think is the proper mindset to navigate the issues that you have pointed out? And onto 2025, what do you think is the next step for the fastener industry? What is your prospect for this industry's performance in 2025?

A: First and foremost, I believe there are significant changes occurring in our industry, and each company must determine how to navigate these complexities. I believe that the ability to adapt to new situations, environments, and circumstances is a crucial factor in success. Furthermore, maintaining awareness of and having a general overview of the changes in all the aforementioned areas is crucial for staying abreast of developments. My outlook for 2025 is that the beginning of the year will bring little change from the current situation, but I anticipate a more positive economic environment for the remainder of the year.

Q3. So it comes down to leveraging a corporate's own flexible adaptability to get through a bumpy ride ahead. How would you manifest Bossard's adaptability in this regard, as in how would Bossard position itself in such a global setting to expand sales? Where do you see your future opportunities?

A: In terms of adaptability, we are unified under the "One Bossard" banner, while simultaneously empowering our local entities to act on their local needs, environment, and circumstances. We have a defined growth strategy that combines organic growth with selective acquisitions of companies that align with our business model. Our goal is to remain a trusted partner to our customers, helping them enhance their productivity. Our comprehensive expertise and services, along with a keen understanding of the



market, ensure that our business model meets the evolving needs of both our existing and prospective customers.

Q4. Could you shed light on the acquisitions you have made, perhaps with an example? How does it exemplify your flexibility in corporate growth?

A: In terms of market segment, we are making significant investments and expanding our reach in the aerospace sector with the newly acquired French company Aero Negoce International Group, as well as the well-known German fastener distributor Ferdinand Gross Group. This will enable us to further strengthen our position in the German market, giving us greater power, capabilities, and knowledge.

Q5. Before we end this interview, for the curious eyes of Fastener World readers, share with us an update of your latest activities.

A: Our SFL-Smart Factory Logistics solution, which includes smart labels, wireless scales, and boxes, has been developed for use with our well-known logistics systems. Furthermore, we are extending our services to the workplaces of our customers' assembly lines with SFA – Smart Factory Assembly. This digitalizes the processes at each working assembly station. From box filling and step-by-step instructions to fastener tracking and torque data capture, our solutions are designed to streamline every aspect of the assembly process. Furthermore, we are currently implementing an IT platform on a global scale. This will eventually result in the entire Bossard Group operating on the same IT platform, which will provide a solid foundation for future technical developments such as AI and data analytics. However, our core business remains providing a comprehensive solution for all of our customers' C-parts needs.

The Takeaway

Rounding up this interview, here is the takeaway. First and foremost is the awareness of the global environment being in a state of VUCA, the impact on supply chains, as well as the global economy being volatile and cost-focused. While 2025 could possibly start off pretty much the same way we have been through in 2024, it doesn't necessarily mean we can't find that silver lining of positivity throughout the rest. The winning mindset is to stay alert and on top of issues such as those pointed out by Bossard, and just like how Bossard finds its way of SUSTAINABILITY, it is crucial to find YOUR OWN sustainability and adaptability. Find your ways to point yourself to seeing the needs of customers at every turn of this "VUCA" world. Build your manufacturing, technology, distribution and/or acquisition strategies anew based on those needs. That's one way to learn about what Bossard calls "Proven Productivity". We express our thank-you to Bossard for sharing its success tips. ■

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