



## One with the future

### Dr Manfred Wittenstein turns 80

**“One with the future” – WITTENSTEIN SE’s claim is entirely in keeping with Supervisory Board Chairman Manfred Wittenstein’s own personality. Even at the age of 80, he remains true to himself as he continues to go full steam ahead with the Wittenstein Foundation. He has also maintained his multifaceted commitment to his native region, and so it is no coincidence that his birthday celebration will be themed “Origins: Future”. How gratifying it is that he is now in the fortunate position of knowing that the management of his company is in the best possible hands.**

#### Full steam ahead for the Foundation

The establishment of the Wittenstein Foundation in September 2021 was more than simply the fulfillment of a long-held dream for Manfred Wittenstein. It was also the logical outcome of a development that he himself once described as a constant succession of apprentice and journeyman years – from the “lone wolf” he set out as when he took over his parents’ small business to the “networker” who has continuously widened his circles over several decades.

Manfred Wittenstein has big plans for the Foundation – in the deep conviction that the great challenges of the 21st century can only be overcome through the closest feasible cooperation. The Wittenstein Foundation aims to make a lasting, valuable contribution to shaping a sustainable and successful future for as many members of society as possible. This is by no means restricted to technological and economic aspects but also includes regional and cultural issues across the breadth and diversity of different social groups.

The Foundation’s work focuses on clarifying interrelationships between people, technology, nature and society as well as on speeding up essential transformation processes. “By promoting and funding exciting initiatives in these areas, we want to contribute to safeguarding resources for future generations without jeopardizing prosperity and employment. The problem-solving role of innovation and technology will be crucial here, as will a critical debate. Innovative solutions can only actually be effective if they also meet with popular acceptance and if they are suitable achieving a broad

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WITTENSTEIN SE develops customized products, systems and solutions for highly dynamic motion, maximum-precise positioning and smart networking for mechatronic drive technology.



Dr Manfred Wittenstein, Chairman of the WITTENSTEIN SE Supervisory Board, celebrates his 80th birthday on September 2, 2022

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social consensus”, says Dr Manfred Wittenstein, who seeks a constant dialog with society, artists, scientists and politicians through the Foundation. One format already established there is the “enter the future” event series, which was launched by WITTENSTEIN SE in November 2020 and continued by the Wittenstein Foundation after its inauguration.

### **Close ties to the region**

Manfred Wittenstein was born on September 2, 1942 in Berlin, where he later studied and worked as a research assistant at the TU. His home, however, is the Tauber Valley. His heart beats for the region: it is here that he has the closest ties to the local population and here that he has been involved in various fields in an extraordinary way for many years. He has been guided throughout by a desire to move the region forward in collaboration with others and help people to participate in society – regardless of whether their interests lie in business, culture, politics, education or science.

DEBUT, the international Classical Singing Competition, for example, was initiated by Manfred Wittenstein; held every second year since 2002 – until 2018 in Bad Mergentheim and since then in Weikersheim – the competition aspires to support young opera singers embarking on their career. “Creative Young Minds”, the regional competition for budding inventors, was likewise launched by Manfred Wittenstein with the goal of enthusing schoolchildren about technology and encouraging inventive talent in young people between the ages of 12 and 19. In the meantime, this project is sponsored by numerous companies and institutions in the local region as is the Tauber Valley Youth Technology Learning Center, which Manfred Wittenstein helped to set up in 2012. The latter provides children, teenagers and young adults with fascinating insights into the world of technology and helps them gain a better understanding of complex technologies in workshops and courses.

Manfred Wittenstein will celebrate his birthday by taking guests on a – musical, visual and culinary – journey through time along the Tauber Valley at the TauberPhilharmonie in Weikersheim. On the one hand, the idea is to show his attachment to his home region. At the same time, the motto “Origins: Future” makes it clear that looking back only ever makes sense if you also look forward – just as the future must always be shaped by roots of the past.

### **The future is the starting point**

Manfred Wittenstein’s entrepreneurial and social achievements have been, and still are, characterized by a special spirit that relentlessly spurs him forward. He is a thought leader who inspires and engages

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people because he gets inside their heads. And he is a man with tremendous foresight, who lives completely in the moment and takes genuine notice of his counterparts. A man who has mastered the art of allowing something to grow out of encounters with others. Who is always open to discussion, thinks dialectically and is invariably alert and curious. That is why Manfred Wittenstein will not confine himself to his comfort zone in the future either; on the contrary, he is most likely to be found striding forward into the unknown.

### **A well-managed company**

Dr Bertram Hoffmann was appointed CEO of the WITTENSTEIN group on April 1, 2019 and after more than three years of working together, Manfred Wittenstein is full of praise: "I have every confidence in Bertram Hoffmann. He moves the company forward with vision and sound judgment, even at these difficult times. I'm convinced that, aside from his undisputed abilities, it's the close coordination between the Management Board, the Supervisory Board and the shareholders under his leadership that has been the key to his success to date – and it will continue to be the key in the future."

### **About Manfred Wittenstein**



Picture source: **Greg Gorman**

### **Dr. Manfred Wittenstein Chairman of the Supervisory Board WITTENSTEIN SE**

Manfred Wittenstein was born on September 2, 1942 in Berlin. He took over his parents' firm in 1979 and as President and Chief Executive Officer built it up successfully to its present standing.

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Manfred Wittenstein has performed various honorary functions over a period of many years (and in some cases still performs them today), for example as a member of the Science-Industry Cooperation from 2006 to 2013, as President of the German Engineering Federation (VDMA) for three years from 2007 and as Vice-President of the German Industry Association (BDI) from 2008 to 2011. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the Society for the Promotion of Economic Research (Friends of the Ifo Institute) since 2011 and Deputy Chairperson since 2015, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition since 2013 and a member of the Board of Trustees of acatech, the German Academy of Science and Engineering, since 2015.

Manfred Wittenstein was a committed driver of Industry 4.0 and digital transformation issues, among other things as a member of the Industry 4.0 Platform Steering Committee (2015 to 2019) as well as Spokesman and Chairman of the Alliance Industry 4.0 Baden-Württemberg Steering Committee (2015 to 2021).

In August 2021, Manfred Wittenstein established the Wittenstein Foundation, of which he is Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Among numerous other honors, Manfred Wittenstein is Holder of the Order of Merit of Baden-Württemberg (2019), holder of the Rudolf Diesel Medal 2019 and the Grashof medal of the VDI (2015), "Entrepreneur of the Year 2011" in the "Industry" category (2011) and Honorary Senator of Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University (2007).

Texts and photographs in printable quality can be downloaded from [presse.wittenstein.de](https://presse.wittenstein.de)

#### **WITTENSTEIN – one with the future**

With around 2800 employees worldwide and sales of €461 million in 2021/22, WITTENSTEIN SE enjoys an impeccable reputation for innovation, precision and excellence in the field of cybertronic motion – not just in Germany but internationally. The group possesses exceptional expertise for the mastery and further development of all technologies relevant to mechatronic drives and comprises six innovative Strategic Business Divisions. These develop, produce and sell products such as high-precision servo drives and linear systems, servo systems and motors as well as cybertronic drive systems for many areas of application including machine and plant construction, aerospace or oil and gas exploration. Nanotechnology and software components round off the portfolio. With 25 sites in more than 45 countries, the WITTENSTEIN group ([www.wittenstein.de](http://www.wittenstein.de)) is represented in all major technology and sales markets.

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