

# The bridge builder: Interview with HR specialist Heinrich Thorwesten

Heinrich Thorwesten has been in charge of Human Resources Development at the Jagenberg Group since April 2023. In this interview, the Human Resources Development Specialist explains why he sees himself as a bridge builder and how e-sports inspired him for his job.



Heinrich Thorwesten, HR specialist at Jagenberg Group

***Mr. Thorwesten, you are still quite new in your position as personnel developer at Jagenberg AG. You were already familiar with the Group from your work at Kampf - how have you settled into your new role?***

I have arrived in the truest sense of the word: I always wanted to work with teams in an advisory capacity and now I can focus on developing people and groups. Before, this was only possible to a limited extent, for example as a swimming coach and on the games console ...

***... on the games console?***

This may be an unusual comparison, but even in good sports games, the team is more than the sum of its parts. It's just like in real life: A good coach gets everything out of a team. I have been incorporating this aspect of teamwork into my HR work at Kampf since 2016. And this is now my main task, which combines everything that I previously enjoyed doing both professionally and privately!

***What exactly does this involve?***

I see myself as a talent scout, to use the soccer image again. My job is to find people who fit in with our Group and then retain them. I work closely with managers to do this, because in my experience, employees don't leave companies, they leave their managers.

That's why I started my new role by first talking to the managing directors of the companies in person: Where do the companies stand? Where do they want to go? Are there any special wishes with regard to HR work? The appointments on site also allowed me to get a feel for the employees in the companies and get to know the working environment.

Following this first step, we are developing structures to further improve HR work. This includes creating uniform standards and using synergies, for example through Group-wide software solutions. This will then benefit all companies in the Group, including the smaller companies.

“Employees do not leave companies, they leave their superiors. “

**Heinrich Thorwesten**

***You mentioned that you were previously employed in HR at Kampf GmbH. What has changed for you as a result of the move from Kampf to Jagenberg AG?***

Even though I am still based at Kampf in Wiehl on a daily basis, I am now much more mobile: I work from my home office and part of the time in Krefeld and at the other locations. As a result, I am not only close to the people and the companies, but can also build bridges between the companies and their cultures. That's an enormously exciting task!

I can now apply many of the methods that we have already used successfully at Kampf to the Group: Management training, a training catalog, company health management and occupational safety are topics that make us more attractive as an employer overall.

Concepts such as cooperation with schools and appearances at training fairs are also very well received. In this way, we get schoolchildren interested in mechanical engineering at an early stage. And I see a great opportunity here: there is competition for skilled workers and motivated trainees, especially in the MINT fields (mathematics, IT, natural sciences and technology, editor's note). We can attract them to the Jagenberg Group with good HR work.

Another focus of my HR work is to retain people in our company. We can achieve this if we have good managers who trust and value our employees. This has a direct impact on the working atmosphere and applicants sense this.

In this way, we can attract new people and ensure that those who work for us continue to enjoy doing so.

***If you look a few years into the future: What is your wish for personnel development in the Jagenberg Group, Mr. Thorwesten?***

I want to play in the Champions League of personnel development with the Jagenberg Group. This means that we have a team that supports all companies equally. On this basis, we can inspire motivated, committed colleagues and ensure the long-term success of the Jagenberg Group.

I [...] can build bridges between companies and their cultures.

**Heinrich Thorwesten**

**Mr. Thorwesten, thank you very much for taking the time to talk to us!**

