



SÖNKE STRAHMANN

CEO – Leader and Doer for Sales & Digital Marketing

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Dipl.- Kfm., Dipl.-Hdl.
- Born in 1969
- Married, 2 children
- Address: An Maria Glück 16, 50321 Brühl
- Tel.: +49 162 277 000 5
- E-Mail: kontakt@soenke-strahmann.de
- Languages: German, English, French, Dutch
- Passions: sport, electric bass, Mercedes 107 SL

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

1988 – 1991

Vocational qualification as a banker at Kreissparkasse Syke

1991 – 1997

University Studies:
Two degrees in
Business Administration and
Business Education at
Universities of Cologne and
Göttingen

EXPERTISE

SALES

Extensive sales management experience with a focus on increasing revenue, acquiring new customers and optimising sales. In-depth knowledge of partner management, including building strategic partnerships and maintaining long-term business relationships to increase joint business success.

PROFILE

With over 20 years' experience in senior leadership positions, I successfully navigate companies through complex challenges. My core competencies lie in corporate management, sales & marketing, digitalisation and business model transformation, as well as in leading high-performance teams. With entrepreneurial thinking, leadership and expertise, I am able to develop companies, lead them through change processes, exploit new market opportunities and ensure sustainable growth. Throughout my career, I have consolidated businesses, developed scalable business models and integrated innovative technologies into service portfolios. In my role as Managing Director and CEO, I am an expert in marketing, sales, finance and human resources - always with the aim of creating value for customers, employees and stakeholders. I believe that sustainable success is based on a clear vision, innovative technologies and value-driven leadership. As a CEO, my role is not only to drive the business forward, but also to create an inspiring culture that fosters collaboration, trust and growth.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Entrepreneurial Thinking
- Strong Leadership
- Communication Skills
- Innovation Skills
- Data-driven Decisions
- Change Management

PERSONAL SKILLS

- Goal-oriented
- Organised
- Motivated
- Team player
- Analytical
- Foresighted

ONLINE-MARKETING

In-depth expertise in Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Search Engine Advertising (SEA) on Google & Co. to maximise visibility and ROI. Focus on audience-specific content marketing and social media marketing strategies for engagement and brand loyalty. In-depth knowledge of email and affiliate marketing to drive customer loyalty, lead generation and sustainable revenue growth.

LEADERSHIP & TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Extensive experience of managing diverse teams with a focus on individual support, coaching and development. Creating clear structures and processes that inspire people while contributing to the achievement of strategic business goals.

HR-STRATEGY & PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Experience in developing and implementing modern HR strategies to drive employee satisfaction and business growth. Expertise in building and leading high performing teams and creating an appreciative culture that encourages innovation and commitment.

RECRUITING & TALENT MANAGEMENT

Expertise in using modern recruiting tools such as Indeed, Workwise or Honeypot to identify and attract top talent. Focus on data-driven decision making, efficient onboarding strategies and driving long-term retention.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CSO empulse GmbH (IT Service Provider)

09/19 – today

- **Greatest Success:** Turnaround with sales and profit growth in a challenging market environment.
- **As Managing Director, responsible for sales, marketing and commercial** at the IT specialist for software development and process digitalisation.
- **Established and developed sales and marketing channels** to maximise lead generation and reach.
- **Implemented a management committee and OKR system** for structured development of business strategy and retention of motivated staff.
- **Developed a commercial reporting, planning and KPI system** to optimise business management.

Interim Manager: Online-Marketing, E-Commerce, HR
ViA-Online GmbH, wdp GmbH

06/19 – 09/19

- **Freelance consultancy and process improvement** in sales, marketing, HR software and commercial management.

CEO Fairrank GmbH (Online Marketing Agency)

01/12 – 05/19

- **Greatest success:** Turnaround, profitable growth and sale of the business.
- **Responsible for Marketing, Operations, IT, Finance, HR and Administration** as Managing Director of the market leading online marketing specialist for SMEs.
- **Restructured, financially consolidated** and successful returned to profitability.
- **Restructured from sales representative model** to permanent sales force with newly appointed CSO.
- **Increased customer lifetime** for online marketing products.
- **Spun off the SaaS business** unit into rankingCoach GmbH.
- **Consolidated the holding structure** for the locations in DACH
- **Organised due diligence** for the sale of the agency business to the new owner Müller Medien.
- **Received BVDW quality certificates for SEO and SEA** over 7 years.
- **Developed strategic partnerships**, including Premium Partner status with Google and Microsoft Bing Elite Partner status.
- **Launched and developed the YouTube channel 'Fairrank TV'** to inform and retain customers through video content.
- **Developed and launched the online marketing learning tool 'online-marketing-pauker.de'**, which supports SMEs in their further training.
- **Invented & organised the conference/trade fair 'WebSuccess'**, a platform for online marketing in SMEs.
- **Acquired and expanded the SEO Portal platform (www.seo-portal.de)** to promote the exchange of knowledge in the industry.

COO, CMO wer-kennt-wen.de GmbH (RTL Subsidiary)

01/08 – 12/11

- **Greatest success:** Increasing user reach and activity by designing and implementing innovative product features.
- **Responsible for marketing, customer care, finance and administration** at one of Germany's most successful social networks.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT & CORPORATE CULTURE

In-depth knowledge of implementing change processes within organisations. Strong communication and stakeholder management skills to lead teams through periods of change and maintain a positive corporate culture.

COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Familiarity with tools such as M365, Slack, Trello and Asana to streamline team communication and collaboration. Experience with platforms such as Haiilo/COYO, Staffbase and Atlassian Confluence to create efficient work environments and seamless collaboration.

AI-TOOLS

Experience using advanced AI tools such as OpenAI GPT, Google Gemini and Canva. Use innovative technologies to automate processes, analyse data and produce creative content efficiently.

- **Contributed significantly to business building**, including marketing-driven increases in new registrations, marketable reach and brand awareness.
- **Designed and implemented innovative product features**, such as school and club features, to activate and retain users.
- **Developed commercial structures** to optimise internal processes and increase efficiency.
- **Successfully integrated the business into RTL Group**, including adaptation to new structures and processes.

Founder & Managing Partner

09/05 – 12/07

helpster GmbH (Subsidiary Holtzbrinck eLAB GmbH)

- **Greatest success:** Launching a start-up and establishing myself in general management.
- **Invented, founded and managed** Germany's first online health network with integrated doctor rating platform.
- **Developed and operated helpster.de**, a leading platform for health information and services.
- **Secured investment and subsequent acquisition** by Holtzbrinck eLAB.
- **Increased the platform's reach and brand awareness** to over 4 million users in Germany.
- **Built the team** and implemented all organisational processes.

Controller and Investment Manager

07/00 – 11/06

Handelsblatt Publishing Group

- **Greatest success:** Being appointed to the Holtzbrinck Academy for Media Management; developing innovative online business models.
- **Responsible for operational and strategic controlling** of Handelsblatt's internet activities and corporate functions.
- **Supported acquisitions, process implementation, controlling and reporting** as national and international investment manager.
- **Promoting digital standards** as CFO of the Internet Research Association (AGIREV, later AGOF).
- **Managed M&A projects**, including GBI-GENIOS GmbH and CircIT GmbH, to strategically expand the portfolio.

Controller and International Investment Manager

04/97 – 06/00

HiServ GmbH (IT Service Provider of HOECHST AG)

- **Greatest success:** Designed and implemented a global consolidation system to fully and accurately capture all intercompany sales.
- **Controlling responsibility** in a global organisation with a turnover of €200m and 1,200 employees worldwide.
- **Established and managed the controlling function** for the SAP Training business unit.
- **Co-designed and developed corporate controlling structures.**
- **Established and led international investment management** with focus on consolidation and controlling of global subsidiaries.
- **Supported and shaped two due diligence processes** for company sales, including data collection, structuring, analysis and valuation.