

# The market is changing, and so are we

We talk to Wiktor Sawosz, owner of the Brand Distribution Group, about the beginnings of the company, its continuous development, innovative approach to change, and expansion into new markets.



## The beginnings of the company date back to 1993; please tell us about the development of the Brand Distribution Group over the years.

Since I set up the Brand Distribution Group in 1993, the company has undergone huge changes. At the beginning, the main people involved in the project were me and my wife Angelika. We could only dream of the possibilities and tools that we now have. The range of products we offered to our business partners was more limited than it is now. Our geographical scope was similar – initially we focused only on Poland and the countries of the former „Eastern Bloc”, which were only beginning to undergo economic transformation. However, we had ambition, perseverance and a very strong belief that if we work hard to provide our business partners with the highest level of service and with the highest quality of products, they will appreciate it. After 27 years, we still believe that these values are the foundations of the Brand Distribution Group. If it hadn't been for this belief and all the members of our group who share it, I think we wouldn't be now in our current situation – a strong group of companies exporting various FMCG products to more than 90 countries, with companies not only in Poland but also in Germany, Spain, Great Britain and, more recently, in Singapore. It

is those values that make it possible to effectively support our business partners and we are one of the key suppliers of FMCG products on the international market, not only for distributors or wholesalers, but also for large retail chains.

## The market is constantly changing, the expectations of business partners are growing. How can they be met on the international arena?

Two issues seem to be crucial to me. The first one is the need to constantly develop and adapt to the changing market. A company that forgets about the need to grow can very quickly stop offering the solutions that its partners expect. We must not forget that the market is not sleeping and it is necessary to follow current trends, but also to anticipate the behavior of market by reading the silent signals that come from it. In international business, this is obviously more difficult because it requires monitoring the situation in many different markets and reacting dynamically to it. In response to the needs of our partners, we try to expand our product portfolio with further categories, e.g. beer, wine, oil, selective cosmetics.

The second element that I would like to emphasize is the partnership attitude and treating contractors as business partners with whom we build something together, with whom we try

to help find the best solutions for them, using our experience, skills and knowledge. Such an attitude seems to be crucial for achieving long-term cooperation satisfying both parties.

## Do you think innovation is one of the basic requirements to remain competitive on the FMCG market today?

Definitely yes. The market is changing faster than ever before – new products, new sales formats, new trends are constantly appearing. The life cycle of products is shortened and consumers constantly need new products. Business partners also expect more and more from companies, because what was recently a market novelty is now a standard. Without efforts and investment in fostering innovation, it is now difficult to plan a business, not only in the FMCG industry. That is why we are so keen to continue to expand our portfolio with product and business solutions that meet the modern needs of the market and our partners. The market is changing, and so are we.

I would also like to point out that nowadays, more than ever, we understand the great impact of human activity on the environment. The development of science and the availability of research and social campaigns are the reason people are also becoming more aware which food and hygiene products are good and which are harmful to them. As a Brand Distribution Group, we want to support those products that are beneficial to people and improve their quality of life. We also want to promote solutions that are good for the environment, because it is up to each one of us to decide which world we will leave for future generations. That is why we not only strive to continuously expand our portfolio with „eco” products, but also invest in such solutions within our other market brand. Recently, our German subsidiary has launched a TRIUMF laundry detergent, which is sold in innovative packaging called “bag in box” to reduce the plastic used in households.

## A modern business model includes presence in the e-commerce channel.

E-commerce is a constantly growing distribution

channel, which is gaining on importance year after year. I am convinced that in the coming years its growth will not slow down, but will accelerate additionally. We can observe that e-commerce contractors are becoming an increasingly large group of our customers. In addition, many of our regular partners who previously worked with consumers in direct retail have recently expanded their services to include online shopping. We are also trying to take advantage of the new opportunities offered by the e-commerce channel – among other things, we have been an active supplier on Alibaba for over 15 years.

## Wide range of distribution is also an important asset of Brand Distribution Group.

Actively operating on the market for many years, we have managed to develop and improve methods of working with various types of business partners. We work with large networks as well as with distribution companies, wholesalers and e-commerce companies. As we operate on a global scale, we also remember about the additional specifics of the FMCG industry in the single countries our partners come from. We provide each partner with an individual approach as well as with business and product solutions tailored to their needs. I am convinced that is the reason why the number of satisfied customers is constantly growing and the products we offer reach over 90 countries.

## Complex commercial, marketing and logistics solutions in the FMCG industry would not be possible without a good, professional team.

At Brand Distribution Group we realize how important a professional and committed team is. We are constantly trying to raise the level of our qualifications, that is why we invest in people and develop their potential – our employees are provided with attractive trainings and workshops, language courses and postgraduate studies. One of our priorities is that the business partners working with Brand Distribution Group should feel that they are working with real experts.

Our sales departments consist of experienced managers who work in a linguistically and culturally diverse environment on a daily basis. Their in-depth knowledge and awareness of the supervised markets allow them to provide our partners with the highest quality of service and proactively support them in creating solutions to face market challenges. Knowing the specific bu-



siness environment and requirements of a given market, they can advise on optimal actions, tailored to the expectations of a particular partner. We also conduct market analyses and satisfaction surveys among contractors, thanks to which we can constantly monitor the situation and improve our service and range of services offered.

Working with business partners in so many countries, we try to offer a wide range of services, including issues related to customs and documents necessary for a given market. The experts working in our customs department will prepare the necessary certificates and documents for a given market, so that our partner receiving products from the Brand Distribution Group will also obtain all necessary certificates and permits. We want to make processes as easy as possible for the other party, we want to relieve our business partners of the burden as much as possible so that they can fully focus on the challenges they face in their target markets.

When sending products to so many different countries, we want them to reach our partners in perfect condition. Our transport department offers comprehensive transport solutions and our experienced warehouse team is able to prepare and secure goods for shipment even to the most remote parts of the world. In our warehouses we are also able to offer services like wrapping goods with markings in the language of the destination country or repacking them according to customer expectations. Our warehouses are also a place where we consolidate products for order to our partners – very often products included in one order come from different countries and sources, as the width of the commercial offer we can present to our customers is important for us. However, every time, our partners can be sure that the products they receive from the Brand Distribution Group will be original, of the highest quality and in accordance with previous arrangements.

## Please tell us about the most important achievements of the Group and the prizes won.

Over the years, the joint efforts of the Brand Distribution Group's employees have often been

recognized and rewarded by independent Polish and international industry institutions. The companies in our group have received such awards as Business Gazelles, for innovation and dynamic development or the prestigious Forbes Diamonds for their reliability as a proven business partner. We have also been awarded the European Medal as a company promoting the development of European trade and European products at the highest level. Each such award is for us an additional confirmation of our efforts. However, our greatest satisfaction and the most appreciated distinction would be satisfied partners who come back to us to develop cooperation.

## What was the year 2019 like in the company and in the industry?

The year 2019 was another year of growth and further development of the FMCG industry. We could enjoy and take full advantage of the stabilized situation on the global markets.

It was an extremely busy period for the Brand Distribution Group – not only were we present at the most important industry events, but we also introduced a new organizational structure within our group. That will allow us to better optimize processes, achieve even better results and increase the satisfaction of our business partners. In many respects, we managed to develop and the 2019 summary showed that our decisions and solutions were the right ones.

## Your plans for 2020 and beyond are...

We will continue to develop the Brand Distribution Group. We are planning a dynamic expansion into other markets – North and South America, Asia, Australia and Oceania. Our position in Europe is very stable and we feel that it is time to intensify our activities in other areas. This will not be an easy task, of course, but all of us in the Brand Distribution Group have been preparing for it for a long time and 2020 will be a breakthrough year. We are, of course, planning to be on a winning streak, constantly expand our product range and improve all aspects of our business. However, we still want to continue what I started with my wife 27 years ago – a mission to provide our partners with the best possible business and product solutions in the FMCG industry.

As we are committed to further development, all experienced salespeople and managers who would be interested in working for the Brand Distribution Group are welcome to contact me via LinkedIn.