



Passion means giving everything

For two months, employees discussed the values that characterise CargoLine and how we can embrace them to the full. Nearly 3,000 cards crammed with ideas and opinions were completed and evaluated as part of the process.

► Jörn Peter Struck, CargoLine's Managing Director, is as surprised as the other partners in the alliance. They had certainly hoped for an in-depth discussion about the company's values and did a great deal to facilitate it. However, they never expected it to be embraced so widely, extensively or enthusiastically. At 48 national and international locations, employees and executives discussed the aims and values of CargoLine – not just at specially planned events but during coffee breaks or lunch hours or on the fringes of routine meetings.

A grass roots definition

The initial step in the process was an intensive discussion among CargoLine's shareholders about values in general, how to define them more precisely and ways to develop goals for the alliance of medium-sized logistics companies (see CargoTime 2/2011). The discussion was moderated and supported by the communication consultants Lautenbach Sass (see interview on page 7). In their conclusion, the shareholders defined five values as key headings: partnership, responsibility, efficiency, reliability and innovation. Employees would later add a sixth: passion. (You can find more information about the precise definition and implementation of these values in the brochure enclosed with this edition of CargoTime.)

From the outset, CargoLine's management committees understood that company values cannot be imposed from above. "They will only become a part of our daily working lives if all our employees actively think about their implications and identify with them," says Struck. The first stage of the wider process therefore asked employees to answer three questions about each value on specially prepared postcards: how important is this value for you? What does it mean for the network? What in your opinion do we still have to do to ensure that this value is truly embraced? A blank

card also gave employees the opportunity to name a value of their own and answer the same questions about it.

A model "values transporter" truck bearing the CargoLine logo served as the collection point for the opinion cards. A total of almost 3,000 were gathered. An impressive 79 percent contained carefully formulated comments and 40 percent even bore the employee's name.

What matters most to employees?

From the employee's standpoint, **reliability** is the most important value. They see the key criteria here as being punctuality, speed and good teamwork. This conforms with the expectations within the freight forwarding sector in general: more than 90 percent of those in the industry are convinced that good logistics companies are characterised by reliable processing of orders.

CargoLiners associate **efficiency** above all with competitiveness, strong teamwork, customer focus and diligence.

Partnership is reflected in cooperation between network partners and colleagues as well as working together with mutual respect and trust.

Responsibility is an important standard when dealing with colleagues, partner companies

and customers. Employees identified this value with good teamwork, keeping promises and focusing on customers' needs.

At CargoLine, **innovation** is primarily seen in terms of product development and improved competitiveness.

Finally, the new value named most often by participants in this discussion was **passion**. Meaning here: a high degree of commitment to offering the alliance's customers the best possible quality logistics and reliability.

Values are the foundation for achieving goals

It was essential to involve all employees in defining these values because they "influence our behaviour in the long term and therefore also provide the foundation for achieving our strategic goals," says Struck. Within the framework of the discussion of values, the shareholders in the alliance have formulated these goals as follows:

- Secure the long-term stability of the logistics network.
- Push forward the internationalisation of the alliance and expand the network with equal partners. ►





Gaston Petersen, Managing Director of Kiel-based CargoLine partner of the same name, ...

- ▶ Develop and provide a corporate culture defined by the values of a medium-sized business.
- ▶ Act sustainably – socially, ecologically and economically.
- ▶ Achieve optimum cost transparency and maintain a high standard of quality.
- ▶ Raise the profile and attractiveness of the CargoLine brand still further.

Using the example of partnership, Jörn Peter Struck explains precisely how company values contribute to achieving these goals. Although this value is not exclusive to CargoLine, it has a special relevance for the alliance because each partner company depends on the performance of the others. If every partner treats the consignments belonging to other partners as he would treat his own, they will be delivered more punctually to even more satisfied customers.

Values and goals are the guiding principles of CargoLine and embodied in the slogan “On the road to a common future”. This is also a response by the alliance to changes in the market environment. It has become clear from studies and our own experience that punctuality and reliability are no longer enough to remain competitive in the market. Moreover, these guiding principles

can also make a contribution to recruiting employees and maintaining their loyalty.

Living by our values every day

Putting shared values into practice is a process that demands time and patience. CargoLine’s partner companies are well aware of this fact. At the last meeting of the alliance’s partners they decided to put down a visible sign of their commitment. They signed these values under their own logos and thus made an undertaking to implement them in their own companies. At least one copy of this poster stating the guiding principles now hangs in a prominent position in every partner company.

“However, this symbolic act is only the end of the beginning,” says CargoLine’s Managing Director Jörn Peter Struck. The personalities of the owners and managers themselves will play a central role in the successful implementation of these values. “If employees do not see our managers living out the values of partnership or passion, for example, in their daily work, neither the signature nor the poster will have any credibility.”

The communication consultants Lautenbach Sass therefore developed an extensive action plan to promote the widest possible

in-depth discussion of the values. This included an explanatory letter that was enclosed with every payslip at the end of 2011 as well as an informative and attractive graphic presentation that was produced for executives in the partner companies, which was to be adapted to their specific conditions. This was supplemented with tips on presentation, a discussion checklist and a list of frequently asked questions and answers for the discussion on values. “The materials provided by the system headquarters were a very good preparation for our internal events and discussions,” confirms



... and Norbert W. Höfflich (Jeschke, Hamburg) sign the CargoLine mission statement.

Anita Breit, Managing Director of Nellen & Quack in Mönchengladbach.

In addition, CargoLine set up an area for further discussion and implementation of the values in its e-learning platform. The topic also became a component of the obligatory “CargoLine driver’s licence”, which all partners use as a qualification benchmark for their employees.

Essentially, those holding positions of responsibility in the alliance believe it is important to avoid falling into a humdrum routine. Everyone should continue to seek and find good examples of how to define and anchor the values of CargoLine – and live according to these values as a community. And illustrate this – in CargoTime, for example. ◀

