BUGATTI INTERNATIONAL WITH AN AMBITIOUS VISION FOR THE FUTURE



Brand Management expert Wiebke Ståhl turned the French luxury brand from Molsheim into a sought after global licensor.

To establish the Bugatti brand and products in the 21st century where both are today was not an easy task. When the Bugatti Veyron 16.4. hit the market in 2005, there had been reluctance about the product as well as the revival of the French luxury brand. While the Veyron established itself quickly at the pinnacle of the automotive industry, the development of Bugatti International as a demanded licensor in the luxury industry took longer.
Since Wiebke Ståhl took over as Managing Director Bugatti International the business obtained a clear, defined structure; the intricate trademark situation was rectified and the brand's name became globally well protected. Ståhl, an expert in international marketing and brand management with experience at Ferrari, Group Lotus, Chopard and Montblanc, transformed the brand into a profitable and diversified business. "The BUGATTI brand has always fascinated me,

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it has such a great history and so much potential. It needed to be more visible and properly re-established and that we have definitely achieved," says Stahl.

There are times when even she and her team are awed by their success. It so happened during the cooperation with LEGO Technic, initiated by her team in 2017. The outcome became by far more successful than both brands ever expected and was extended for another year. It was the first time LEGO created a 1:1 model, the LEGO Technic Bugatti Chiron - with a functioning engine, built purely out of LEGO technic elements. It took the famous Danish company more than one year to develop the model, supported by Bugatti's engineers who visited their factory in Kladno in the Czech Republic to support. When traveling around the world in 2018 the full-size LEGO Technic Bugatti Chiron drew crowds wherever it was displayed. LEGO store managers reported that children would stand in front of the 1:8 model in the store and carefully explain each detail and feature of the real Chiron[1] to astonished passers-by. "The fascination for our brand and products asserted to us what we achieved and how well-established Bugatti has become in people's hearts and minds and how positive our brand image has become again," Ståhl raves, "through such activities we strengthen the bond with our fans and customers of tomorrow."

Wiebke Ståhl, joined Bugatti in 2015, she has not only become a passionate custodian of the Bugatti trademark but also engages and leverages the brand into new, high-end and high-tech collaborations, mirroring the French luxury brand's unique image and iconic automotive product line. The challenge is to not run after the obvious but to find the right partner, to search for hidden champions being innovative, ambitious and perfectionists in their fields. "A brand which produces around 80 units of its' automotive masterpieces per year, each of them a one-of-a-kind in itself, cannot simply do what other brands do and produce a perfume or handbag line under its name," says Ståhl, "products under our name are diligently developed, their technology needs to be extraordinary, with a clear association to our brand DNA, whether they are watches, sportswear or audio-visual equipment." Everything needs to have the same uniqueness and equivalent quality as the brand's hyper sports cars.

Take Bugatti's jewelry partner Jacob & Co. for example who developed a Chiron Tourbillon watch, where the movement replicates a miniature engine block. The crankshaft turns and the pistons pump up and down, just like in our iconic 8L W16 motor. "How much more Bugatti can you become?", Ståhl asks in admiration of this truly unique masterpiece.

The senior executive has never lost her focus; she is clear in what she wants and will strive to achieve it. Bugatti, unlike many like-minded luxury brands, is not about quick wins, instead, it is about perseverance, patience and perfection. "We are heading in the right direction to shape a successful, diversified luxury brand, borne from our unique hyper sports car brand. We have found partners who reflect our vehicles' high level of excellence within their specific business; not only in their mind-set, but also through their expertise and attention to execution. We have some extremely exciting and appealing partnerships in the pipeline, which will help to elevate the Bugatti brand into a completely new luxury sector."

Ståhl's vison is to develop together with her dedicated team the Bugatti trademark into a global luxury brand spanning across different branches and standing for innovation, precision and perfection. Over the last year they have been presented so many clever concepts, new ideas and products with which Stahl and her small team can hardly follow up. "there is so much potential, we feel a bit like in the times of Ettore Bugatti, when he came along every other day with a new invention: from floor polishers, surgical instruments, fishing reels, a pasta making machine to a razor blade sharpener. Did you know that Ettore Bugatti patented more than

thousand inventions? So, there is still a lot of room for growth,'' Ståhl says with a mischievous smile.