

"We shall provide a one-stop shop"

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On 1 June a new consultancy company will officially be joining the European market. Gomultimodal will concentrate on every aspect of combined transport and intermodal shipment concepts. The aim: to find holistic environmentally friendly and economic transport solutions.

Often it is the names which make a new company exciting. That is the case with the new consulting firm Gomultimodal. There is shareholder Wolfgang Osond (52), a freight-forwarding and logistics manager of many years' standing, whose interests are directed primarily to the maritime supply chain and who for some years has been an independent logistics and personnel consultant in Salzburg. And there is majority shareholder and managing director Gerhard Oswald (61), who after more than 30 years with the container-hinterland specialist TFG Transfracht – latterly as managing director – is leaving this 100% subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn on 31 May. And as a third shareholder, a sleeping partner for the time being, comes Oswald's son Reinhard (33), a graduate logistics consultant with a professional background in combined transport, who is taking a small shareholding and may later join company operations.

Thus Oswald has kept his promise. He will not be going into direct operational competition with his old employer Transfracht, from whom he is certainly not departing amicably. But he will be using both his experience and his numerous contacts, drawn from many years of marketing at Transfracht, to convince more clients of the benefits of combined transport.

Much education still needed

Despite Oswald's clear-cut professional background, Gomultimodal will not just be concentrating on solutions involving aspects of rail transport. "The question always is, which traffic carriers are the optimum ones for the transport needs in question, and in what combination", Oswald emphasizes in an interview with the DVZ.

Collaboration is a key word, declares Osond. For successful consultancy always means bringing the right people together. And Oswald confirms: "Intermodal transport cannot really be developed further without collaboration, and I mean collaboration across borders – external collaboration, and collaboration of the mind." So far, so good. What will Gomultimodal bring that other consultants do not already have or can do? He has no wish to criticize his colleagues, smiles Oswald. "But we both come with an extremely large amount of experience, of a very broad kind: Wolfgang Osond has been 35 years in his job, 25 of them in management, focusing on supply chain and personnel management, and I have been at Transfracht for 32 years, a good part of that time likewise in management, concentrating on sales and marketing." And, independently of each other, both have had the same experience: there are contexts and connections which can be clearly identified in operational working, but which cannot be put into practice due to the corporate environment. Now, in the new freedom to be enjoyed as consultants, this knowledge can be channeled into their work.

The founders of Gomultimodal intend to bring this expertise to bear on marketing, sales and operating strategies. Their target group: seaports, industrial companies, shipping lines, freight carriers, transport operators, railways, internal-waterway shippers and the government – this German-Austrian team can even supply "the practical backing" for academic projects.

Nevertheless, Osond does not intend to give up his previous consultancy business. "That will keep going."

And why are one partner from Salzburg and one from Mainz coming together in Hamburg? Well, the answer is plain: Hamburg is Europe's logistics capital, and Oswald is convinced: "So many threads are joined here, North-South meets East-West, sea transport is represented no less than continental transport; Asia and the USA are near; here sit the decision makers – here is where we want to be."

What can clients of Gomultimodal expect? "It will be a one-stop shop", explain Oswald and Osond – from analysis to realization, including personnel for intermodal transport. This remark contains two important statements: this consultant will continue with his client up to the point of realization – and he has a strong focus on personnel management.

Strong focus on personnel

The latter will not be restricted to recruitment of qualified staff, says Osond. No, Gomultimodal will also offer to train colleagues in intermodal operations. Oswald: "Intermodal transport has lost a great deal of know-how, because experienced staff have left due to their age, and good young colleagues are attracted away by better-paying industries. We are keeping our eye on capable young people and will be offering this knowledge to our clients", says the Transfracht manager of many years' standing.

But in truth "O&O" have no wish to run their new company as loan warriors. "We are open to partnerships", they both say. Nor, Oswald emphasis, will that be limited to companies. He would be quite prepared to involve qualified individuals on a project basis. "That also applies, and particularly applies, to IT questions", says Osond more precisely.

If you want to know more, from 1 June www.gomultimodal.com will be online. And you will be able to meet both shareholders at Transport Logistic from 4 to 7 June in Munich – though only as visitors, on the lookout for contacts.