



Common Sense on Wolfgang Grenke's Handelsblatt Interview

September 30, 2020 – Wolfgang Grenke's interview with Handelsblatt¹ is full of contradictions and self-incriminating statements.

1. Once again, Mr Grenke stonewalls questions about the identity of Sacoma AG's prior owner and discloses only known middlemen for its owners before that, claiming a "confidentiality agreement" prevents him from doing so.
2. Grenke AG states explicitly that it financed all franchise leasing agreements and provides guarantees to franchisees: Grenke AG shoulders all the risk involved with the franchise program. Mr Grenke also ignores that equity could have been granted to employees, with Grenke AG retaining majority ownership.
3. Mr Grenke's purchase of CTP Holding Vienna (now, WGW Investment GmbH, the owner of Grenke's US franchise) only implicates him further as he is now doing personal business with CTP's former owners.
4. The assertion that Grenke would have had to consolidate the franchises if they were under their ownership speaks to the suspected financial performance of those franchises, many of which continue to turn a loss years after Grenke acquisition.
5. Grenke management had previously communicated to Der Spiegel that the identities of the prior beneficial owners of CTP were unknown to them. Mr Grenke clearly contradicts this, citing a confidentiality agreement².
6. Mr Grenke claims that he believes the previous owners of Sacoma AG are two well-known German middlemen: Jorg Erich Wilhelm and Friedrich Gruber. Both are experts in hiding individual and corporate identities, something not mentioned by Mr Grenke.
 - a. Mr Grenke point-blank states that there is a confidentiality agreement with the owner of Sacoma AG from which he purchased the company, but that he "assumes" that Jorg Erich Wilhelm acted in his own interest. Wilhelm is known to act on the behalf of other individuals: in the case of FC Kaiserslautern, this was Horst Peter Petersen.
 - b. Mr Grenke goes on to assert that he assumed that Softline AG and later CTP Holding FZE were both controlled by Friedhelm Gruber. Mr Gruber's area of expertise is the concealing of individual and corporate identities in opaque jurisdictions. In Switzerland alone, Mr Gruber has held a mandate at 21 companies since 1994, only one of which is his advisory Senat Corporate Limited.
7. The timing of Mr Grenke's resignation as CEO in 2014, and his long-standing girlfriend Ms Stingaciu's involvement with Garuna in 2014 is too close to be coincidence. We believe this was intentional in order to circumvent certain disclosure rules and avoid majority control thus circumventing the requirement to disclose and consolidate franchise operations.
 - a. Mr Grenke also ignores the fact that Sacoma AG and Garuna AG share the exact same address at Geissbuelstrasse 18, 8704 Herrliberg, Switzerland.
8. The assertion that the "contribution margin 2" performance of franchisees is positive is irrelevant when the majority of Grenke's leases are more akin to unsecured loans. Several former franchise companies continue to produce losses years after acquisition.

This interview is just another in a long line of attempts to gloss over the glaring issues highlighted in our research so far. Not only does it fail to do so, Mr Grenke's responses further incriminate him. Several franchisees continue to perform poorly after acquisition, and there is still no satisfactory answer for why the franchise system exists at all. We reiterate our belief that Grenke AG's stock is uninvestable due to these and other issues.

¹<https://www.handelsblatt.com/finanzen/banken-versicherungen/unternehmensgruender-im-interview-wolfgang-grenke-wehrt-sich-nach-shortseller-attacke-ich-habe-nichts-zu-verbergen/26225784.html>

² <https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/betrugsvorwurfe-gegen-mdax-konzern-grenke-das-neue-ziel-des-wirecard-jaegers-a-2964ff21-d79d-45a1-bba0-df5f359ba230>



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