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INTERVIEW

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20 years of eagleyard

"In the early days, we were virtually the only high-tech company without our own technology" - Interview on the 20th anniversary of TOPTICA eagleyard with Managing Director Jörg Muchametow

On the occasion of the 20th company anniversary of TOPTICA eagleyard (short: eagleyard), Managing Director Jörg Muchametow, who built eagleyard up, gives some insights into the company's history and what make it stand out.



Jörg Muchametow

How does it feel when your own company successfully celebrates its 20th birthday?



Jörg Muchametow and Dr. Thomas Laurent in 2002

"We've been a legal adult for two years now, and it's a great feeling! We thought it would be a lot easier at the beginning, and it makes me very proud that we've made it this far."

How was eagleyard actually founded?

"eagleyard was founded by three department heads of the Ferdinand-Braun-Institut (FBH): Prof. Dr. Tränkle, Dr. Erbert, and Mr. Sebastian. But none of them had enough time to devote to the newly formed company. That's why Prof. Dr. Tränkle approached me and asked if I would be interested in joining. Although I had already dealt with laser diodes in my previous job at Siemens, I had to familiarize myself with the subject again intensively. Together with the three founding members, Thomas Laurent and I really got down to work in May 2002. We were then released from FBH for a year, during which we wrote a business plan and applied for funding. Since June 2003, we have been based in the Innovation and Start-up Center in Berlin-Adlershof."

How did you decide on the name eagleyard? How strong is the identification with (Berlin-) Adlershof?

"The company was initially called SEMCOLAS (Semiconductor Lasers). However, further research showed us that there was already a company with a very similar name, so we had to look for another one. It seemed like all the names that had to do with lasers and colors were already taken. Via mind map we then hit upon the name of our location, because we wanted it to have a connection to the company.



Jörg Muchametow in 2002

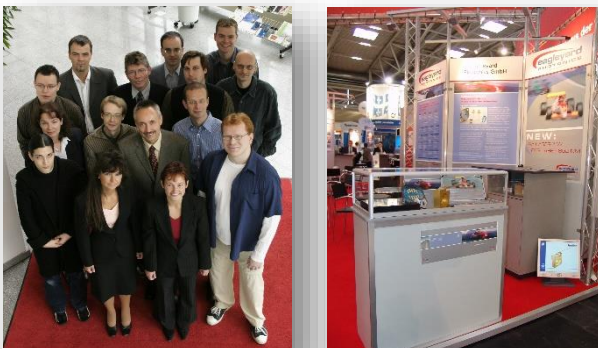
The proximity to the FBH, which is also located in Adlershof, was immensely important at the time and is still of great significance today. In the early days, we were virtually the only high-tech company without our own technology, because all of the microassembly and measurement technology was located at FBH. So emotionally, we identify strongly with the Adlershof site."

What were the first ten years of eagleyard from 2002-2012 like?

"In the first few years, the primary focus was to secure funding for eagleyard. There were various funding programs that helped us finance the necessary further development of our products. At the same time, we had to convince investors and we were often in challenging situations where our funds would only have lasted a few more weeks. But we somehow

always succeeded, and I am proud we managed to overcome the many hurdles during the first years.

In 2004, two years after the company was founded, we already had fifteen employees and were continuously building up our know-how. Research and funding projects, which contributed to our success, were of particular importance here. We found our first major



eagleyard staff and trade fair booth 2004

customer in the medical technology sector - this customer has remained loyal to us and has been with us for well over a decade.

Administration and external presentation were particular challenges we faced in the very first years - whether it was writing standardized proposals or creating a website. With almost only scientific staff on board, we had a

different focus and first had to learn to improve our positioning in these areas."

Looking back over the last ten business years, what have been the milestones since 2012?



eagleyard staff at the trade fair booth 2015

"During the celebration of the tenth anniversary of eagleyard, we had an intensive conversation with the management board of TOPTICA Photonics AG. At that time our sales were showing strong growth and customer potential and TOPTICA Photonics AG was very interested in participating in eagleyard. TOPTICA AG then acquired the shares from the financial investors in 2013. There were not many overlaps in the business in the first few years. It was only after the establishment of a micro-assembly

facility at eagleyard in 2016 that we were able to quickly and flexibly realize products for our customers and for TOPTICA. Being able to implement customer requests so much more efficiently was a real game changer for us, and on this basis the company has grown very strongly in recent years, both in terms of personnel and sales.

Of course, the expansion of sales channels worldwide was also important. We started in Germany and Europe and then quickly acquired our first distributor in Japan. We went on to the U.S., China and Israel, and today we have a total of 16 distributors worldwide."

How would you describe working with FBH over the years?

"Prof. Dr. Tränkle is almost a father figure for us: eagleyard is his "baby" and we could rely on his support even in turbulent times. That is something for which we will always be very grateful.

In the beginning, we were completely dependent on FBH in terms of technology and even today we buy the laser chips from the FBH. Overall, it's an absolute success story of how excellent research can lead to the founding of a company and thus the creation of jobs."

What do you see as eagleyard's most important product launches?

"The introduction of laser components with fiber output was particularly important because these products are easier for our customers to integrate into the system and, in addition to the absolute laser experts, have opened up a whole new group of customers for us. The hermetically protected butterfly housings are versatile enough to be used in high volumes. Our goal has always been to turn our claim of "bridging the gap between research and industry" into reality, and I'm very pleased to see how we have put this into practice, especially with our latest innovations."

What makes eagleyard stand out from your point of view and what makes you particularly proud?

"I am particularly proud of the working atmosphere at our company. We work very cooperatively as well as being friendly and understanding - and that's where I recognize my signature.



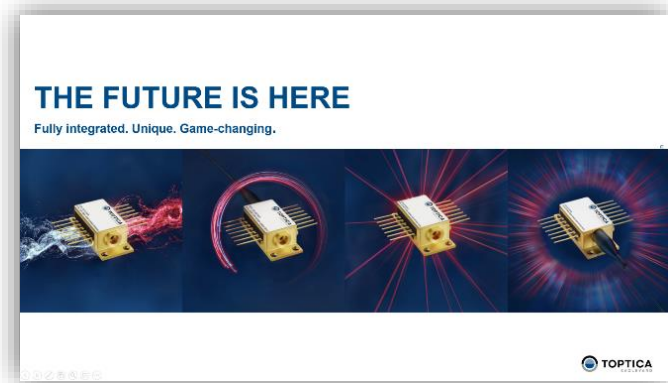
TOPTICA eagleyard staff in May 2022

Personally, I'm also pleased that even after becoming the CEO I haven't lost touch with technology and still manage to contribute my electronic expertise here and there."

Where do you see eagleyard right now and what are your hopes for the future?

"We've outgrown our current premises - I think that says quite a bit about our success. We are expanding and will soon be moving to another building. At the same time, we are

thinking about the idea of positioning ourselves even more broadly along the value chain. Our latest innovations are significantly contributing to the company's growth, including in the future market of quantum technology. I'm really looking forward to the next period, considering what's already in the pipeline and what R&D projects will soon be ready for the market."



Four new products in 2022