



TEN YEARS OF DR. ZITELMANN P.B. GMBH

A TRIBUTE BY CHRISTOPH A. KAHL ON THE COMPANY'S ANNIVERSARY

” Let me start by offering you, Dr. Zitelmann, and everyone in your team my heartfelt congratulations on your tenth anniversary! I do believe, though, that the ground for the formation of the company was actually laid twelve-and-a-half years ago:

In March 1998, real estate journalist Dr. Zitelmann set up the Berliner “Immobilienrunde” panel. I have no idea how many participants signed up for the first event hosted by the panel, but I vividly remember that several other organisers in the field of specialist congresses and real estate topics were already well established on the market. So people were not exactly waiting for another real estate panel. Today, with nearly 200 events hosted by “Berliner Immobilienrunde,” the other organisers have been relegated to the sidelines. With his characteristic straightforwardness and tenacity, Dr. Zitelmann pushed the project through, from the very inception all the way to market leadership. The latest issues, the best speakers, and Dr. Zitelmann’s stringent hosting of most events, all combine to attract 50 attendees or more to over 30 events a year – and this despite a price tag of around 850 euros plus VAT per person. Virtually anyone active in the real estate fund industry will keep attending these events.

Having tested the water parallel to his job as journalist, he went for the deep end. I still remember a meeting with Dr. Zitelmann in Berlin at some point during the first semester of 2000, when he let me know, much to my surprise, that he was planning to wind up his journalistic career, and to freelance it instead as positioning consultant in the real estate industry.

I was impressed by the personal courage of relinquishing the secure position with DIE WELT and to plunge himself into the adventure of self-employment – and this as consultant, of all jobs. And, I did not immediately grasp what he had in mind with “positioning consultancy.” But before I had time to reflect whether he had what it takes to succeed, Dr. Zitelmann seconded his revelation with the question whether he could count JAMESTOWN among his first clients. During what has become ten years now under a long-term consultancy agreement, the fees transferred into the company’s accounts have added up to a tidy little sum, but it has been worth every penny of it because we always received valuable services in return. And since others appear to have felt the same way, Dr. Zitelmann has managed to expand his clientele from an initial two to nearly 50 clients under long-term consulting agreements today. Dr. Zitelmann can take pride not only in the number of clients as such, but also in their names and market standing. They represent a Who-Is-Who in the real estate industry, the best and biggest in their line of business.

So what is the secret of his success? For one thing, it is that Dr. Zitelmann clearly positioned itself, and has consistently communicated and maintained that position: We are not journalists, but advisers. In many ways, we operate differently than most other players. The positioning consultant started by brilliantly positioning himself first.

A second aspect is that Dr. Zitelmann will positively grill you with questions. He will put his finger on the sore spot – always, everywhere, and in any matter whatsoever. He will not stop until he has gotten to the bottom of things. Initially an awkward experience for the client, it pays off in the long run.



A third aspect: Most consultants will respond to the questions raised by their clients; rarely if ever will they approach the client with ideas of their own. But this approach is precisely the forte of Dr. Zitelmann and his team.

Here is another aspect: Dr. Zitelmann's positioning consultancy is more than just a PR firm. The performance of him and his staff in positioning companies – and specifically products, too – is without analogue in the real estate industry. They deliver genuine added value. But added value is delivered by you, too, dear team members, who are always cooperating with us in

*drafting and revising texts,
developing ideas for communication, and
discussing both subjects and formats for the presswork.*

With your day-to-day dedication you create elements that would be inconceivable without sound positioning.

Yet there was another challenge that Dr. Zitelmann – the academic and journalist turned entrepreneur – had to master. As scholar, as author, even as journalist you work mainly on your own. You are not anybody's employer, superior, ideal, and you do not have to lead. Having started out with one employee in October 2000, his workforce has meanwhile swelled to more than 40 staff. Finding excellent employees for any given company is difficult enough, but the decisive factor is cultivating, praising and motivating the best of them so as to make them stay on. In any company subject to steady growth, recruiting and developing human resources becomes a never-ending challenge.

And it is here that you scored again. You have managed

to secure the loyalty of valuable employees and to close emerging gaps with qualified new rookies.

So let me congratulate you on this special day. I am sure that most of the guests here today are with me in congratulating you specifically on

*how honest and reliable,
how straightforward and critical,
how committed and competent,
how inquisitive and creative,
how open-minded, yet result-driven*

you yourself are while expecting the same from your employees when dealing with clients and business partners. You impress every one of us, be it through your cornucopia of ideas or your in-depth expertise, your networked thinking and forward-looking power of judgement, your enormous self-discipline, and the high requirements you subject yourself to.

Thus, I wish you and everyone in the team of Dr. ZitelmannPB. GmbH all the energy and brilliance it takes to support us for a long time to come in the same way you have been doing all along! ☺

Christoph A. Kahl
Founder and Managing Partner of
Jamestown US-Immobilien GmbH