



Interview



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Munich is a Spanish sports shoe manufacturer with headquarters in the province of Barcelona. Munich produces more than 850,000 pairs a year; half, fashion shoes, half sports shoes. The X symbol, a distinctive ornament, makes these shoes recognisable. The company is present in more than 300 outlets throughout Spain and has its own shops; in particular, in Barcelona, Valencia, Zaragoza and Madrid. In addition to Europe, the company is represented in Asia, mainly in Japan. We spoke to Xavier Berneda, the owner of the brand, about the company's plans for the future.

-You are a third-generation businessman. In your opinion, what is the formula for success: the ability to forecast market demand or innovative ideas and the ability to make quick, non-standard decisions?

-I believe that the base of success is to know your business and do it well, to be serious, to offer a high-quality product and to have a clear line. The main things are not to be a slave to a bank or an investor and to understand that it is impossible to get a quick profit at once; sometimes, it is a very long marathon. If you want to quickly make a big business, you will surely burn out.

There are probably better shoes than ours and cheaper, but they don't sell...and our brand is recognisable.

It's also important to love and protect your brand.

-Almost half of the shoes you produce are sports shoes. What sport do you practice and how has sport influenced your life and business?

-I'm a paraglider pilot. I'm far from the best, but I'm always on the top level. Paragliding helps me a lot. In the air, I am one on one with myself, I have to be able to stand up for myself. One day in a negotiation, our lawyer said, «You don't know who you're dealing with. This guy right now is flying in Pokhara, Nepal, at 4,000 metres,



Xavier Berneda

The owner of Munich brand

«We learn a lot when we have direct contact with the consumer»

on a nylon fabric...»

And also, through paragliding, I've met some amazing people that I probably never would have met. Because in the business world, you meet a different kind of people.

-What do you think is the success of the sports shoe industry?

-Have a good time, but don't get hurt! I think it's important to strike

a balance with your health. For example, carbon insoles stabilise the foot without constraining movement, they're springy and they give the athlete better traction. But won't it harm the back? Won't it provoke plantar fasciitis?

Make sports training a fun, enjoyable experience. Skiing or playing football should be done in such shoes that you don't have to

go to the doctor the next day.

-Munich is an innovative Catalan e-commerce company. Do you see e-commerce as more future-orientated?

-One of the company's innovative initiatives is its website, through which all internet users can design their own footwear by combining dozens of colours and textures. The

website allows you to select the colour of each of the nine parts of the shoe, be it the sole, the tongue, the heel or the laces. We also offer the possibility of buying the right foot in one size and the left foot in another, as some people, for example, footballers, need a larger size for the foot they usually shoot with.

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direct contact with the consumer.

-Do you plan to produce sportswear?

-We are open to cooperation with anyone who has production facilities.

-We are increasingly health-conscious and engage in outdoor sports, such as walking, running, cycling and skiing. Are you ready to meet the demand?

-We don't have an investor who will put in a lot of money, and we have to implement this growth model to guarantee a profit. Yes, there are some sports we have neglected in the past, such as rugby. We're doing boot tests now and will probably offer something soon. But there are sports that are part of Munich's heritage, like football. And we have expanded our collection, because we come from there and can't forget it.

-Workplaces and theatres are becoming more casual; people go to work and concerts in trainers... Which shoe designers do you collaborate with to create fashionable shoes for all occasions?

-Well, we have a designer, a style director and three design groups in Alicante and Barcelona. We try to meet every demand and offer a variety of colours and styles. The cost varies from 59,90 to 150 euros, so as to cover the profiles of every consumer.

-How would you like to expand your business?

-We have entered the market in Latin America; specifically, Brazil and Chile. Now, we have to look for mature countries where the prices are about the same as ours. Otherwise, we put a lot of effort into explaining to the customer that the product is worth its price. In low-consumption countries, this is costly.

-Talking about the future, what trends do you see in the industry right now?

-Well, there is now a trend of direct consumption, and big brands are looking after medium and small customers, not just wholesale.

-Today, many global brands tend to pay a lot of attention to the issue of sustainability. How important is this topic to you? Doing things that will benefit the next generation is a value we should all have. Wouldn't you agree?

-The truth is that we have a person in the company responsible for sustainability. I once said to my son, «Your father is building the company so that you and your brothers can live for the next forty years.» We all have to believe that there will be sustainability, along with price and quality. The consumer makes the decision. When the consumer changes, then the rules of the game change. And if the consumer sees that your brand is not sustainable, you are out of the game. ≡



► Xavier Berneda believes that the base of success is to know your business and do it well.