

Press briefing on Sport-Tiedje

Company	Sport -Tiedje GmbH
Short profile	<p>Sport-Tiedje is the biggest specialist retailer for home fitness equipment with 30 stores in Europe and one of the most renowned online mail order companies for fitness equipment worldwide. Private customers order on websites in eleven languages (amongst others www.sport-tiedje.de, www.t-fitness.dk or www.fitshop.nl) or get their desired equipment compiled in store.</p> <p>Furthermore, the company provides professional equipment for cardio and strength training, as well as accessories for gyms, hotels, sport clubs, and physiotherapeutic practices.</p> <p>The company offers private and business customers a large range of fitness equipment of renowned manufacturers and high-quality own brands as well as the professional assembly and competent advice before and after the purchase. Hence why Sport-Tiedje employs several sport scientists, fitness coaches, and former top athletes.</p>
Industry	Home fitness equipment and gym equipment
Unique selling point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market leader in selling home fitness equipment in Europe• Manufacturer-independent• High-quality own brands, multiple test winners in their category• Competitive prices and thus best price-performance ratio• Sport focus on advice and consultation by trained specialists• Large range of services from assembly to financing
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home fitness equipment and accessories of all renowned manufacturers• Biggest online range of products - about 6,000 fitness-related products• Own brands Taurus and cardiostrong• Professional segment for B2B and Commercial customers
Websites	www.sport-tiedje.de , www.sport-tiedje.co.uk , www.sport-tiedje.com , www.t-fitness.dk , www.t-fitness.com , www.fitshop.nl
Place of business	Flensburger Straße 55, 24837 Schleswig, Germany
Markets	Main market is Germany, followed by Benelux, Switzerland, Austria, Scandinavia, and France; 30 specialist fitness stores, of

	it 19 stores in Germany six in Benelux, three in Austria, one in Switzerland and Denmark each. All in all, quite more than 14,000 sqm sales surface.
Founded	1984, GmbH since 2001
Management	Christian Grau (CEO, IT, Logistics, B2C Sales), Sebastian Campmann (Purchasing, store business), Dr. Bernhard Schenkel (Marketing, Corporate development, Finance, Human Resources)
Ownership structure	Owner-managed (100 percent Christian Grau)
Employees	300
Customers	1.100.000 (2015)
Sales and expansion	Sport-Tiedje is the No. 1 in selling home fitness equipment in Europe. Sales of Sport-Tiedje Group mounted to 51.4 million € in financial year 2014. About 150,000 orders were processed in 2014. The goal: Further expansion in Europe.

COMPANY & RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

History: From Northern Germany to the world

Sport-Tiedje is Europe's biggest speciality retailer for home fitness equipment with 30 brick and mortar stores and one of the most renowned online mail-order companies for fitness equipment worldwide all developed from a little sport shop in Northern Germany. In 1984, the company was founded by Ulrich Tiedje, a former player of the table tennis national league, in Schleswig. 12 years later, the computer scientist and former basketball player Christian Grau joined the company and became co-owner in 2001.

Since 1999, Sport-Tiedje customers have had the possibility to order fitness equipment on the Internet (www.sport-tiedje.de). In 2011 the name giver Ulrich Tiedje left as shareholder and from then on Christian Grau managed the company as sole owner and CEO. Today, the company has more than 300 employees from 23 nations. There are 30 stores across Europe, in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark.

Bestsellers

The bestselling product categories are elliptical crosstrainers (18 percent of sales), rowing machines (18 percent), treadmills (12 percent), ergometers (12 percent), and multi-gyms (8 percent).

Our company philosophy is to offer its customers the best product for them with the best service and at the best price-performance ratio“, Christian Grau says.

Expert Advice and consultation from top industry professionals

The company proves with facts that these are not just idle words. Having the biggest team of qualified personnel in the market – sport scientists, former top athletes, and fitness coaches – customer service is actively lived. This means purchasing the appropriate equipment as well as efficient delivery and installation and personal training services for the customers. The specialists for home fitness equipment have continuously expanded the capacities on the home market and have systematically developed the branch net abroad during the last 10 years.

“Our current 30 speciality fitness stores in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark are the first contact points regarding home fitness advice and purchase nowadays“ - Christian Grau commented.

Milestones

The Sport-Tiedje stores in Dortmund and Leipzig are currently the two biggest speciality fitness retail stores in Germany. In December 2014, the company welcomed it's one millionth customer.

In the financial year 2014, the Sport-Tiedje Group achieved sales of 51.4 million Euros.

“Our sales had continuously increased during the last years and that's mainly thanks to recommendations of our existing customer base.“ Christian Grau says

An example: After a first order from a small town in Greenland in 2004, throughout the years, it has been observed that the frequency of orders from Greenland has increased from one order a month to 4 to 5 orders nowadays and that the word-of-mouth recommendation has continuously worked it's way up along the western coast of Greenland.

Marketing and sales

In order to grow further, Sport-Tiedje's marketing and sales strategy over the next five years is to expand the business on the home market and abroad via the Internet and with new speciality retail stores.

The target group is broad and heterogenous: Sport-Tiedje caters for Olympic top athletes, active senior leisure sportsmen and women, and people of all ages, who want to get fit, stay in shape and healthy. It also targets those who want to improve fitness, flexibility, and define muscle groups with strength training or want to lose weight with cardio training. In

addition, the range of products also includes playing and leisure equipment for children as well as sport nutrition.

Exclusivity for Sport-Tiedje customers

Sport-Tiedje customers do not only value the advice and service when purchasing but importantly the product quality which results in hardly any returns. The proximity to manufacturers in Europe, Asia, and America, and the status as one of the most important clients make it possible for Sport-Tiedje to bring new products to the market exclusively. *“When something is revolutionary and new on the European market, we are almost always the first offering it“*, Grau says. Sport-Tiedje is exclusive sales partner for Hoist, LeMond, and Nautilus equipment in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The company is the biggest sales partner in Europe for most of the leading brand manufacturers.

Personalised service - Good advice is essential

Being the specialist for home fitness equipment, Sport-Tiedje currently has the biggest online range of products in stock with 6,000 products. Online customers can make use of advice and service offers. Grau explains *“For us, quality and service go together hand in hand, because training successes and fun happen, when the equipment meets the requirements and targets of the buyer.“*

More than 100 employees work at the central customer service of Sport-Tiedje, including several sport scientists, sport and fitness specialists as well as former top athletes. In Schleswig, employees of 13 nations use their native mother-tongue to help provide services in the respective markets from other countries. Sport scientists also advise customers, accomplish fitness analyses, and make proposals for training plans in the stores and online.

“For an effective home fitness training, the customer needs to know the correct training on the machine“, Grau says. *All employees of Sport-Tiedje are sport enthusiasts like himself: “Our customers feel that and this motivation is transferred from us to them.“* *After an in-store purchase, the Sport Tiedje employees deliver the equipment to the customer’s premises, install it, and answer further questions, upon request.“*

Working with businesses

Besides home fitness equipment, Sport-Tiedje offers a wide ranging selection of professional equipment for business customers like gyms or hotels. The specialists from Northern Germany advise for optimal planning and use of fitness facilities – a service, which is used by more and more companies for creating an inhouse fitness room for employees. *“This field is strongly expanding. We expect a distinct growth, because more and more companies realise the positive effects of fitness facilities for the satisfaction of their employees“,* Grau explains.

Successful own brands and development of equipment

A further advantage of the Sport-Tiedje offer are the own brands *cardiostrong* (i.e., elliptical crosstrainers and ergometers) and *Taurus* (i.e., treadmills and vibration plates). The Sport-Tiedje technicians get to know which wishes are still not fulfilled while doing the customer service. This knowledge, combined with an experience of 30 years in home fitness and professional sport, drive the development for own brand equipment. The equipment is produced by the best manufacturers with top-quality materials and is tested by professional athletes and quality control experts. The result is a high-end equipment at attractive prices. Sport-Tiedje have an own quality management department in Asia with two employees in Taiwan and China who are responsible for quality control and supplier audits.

CEO Grau summarizes the Sport-Tiedje success formula as follows: *“Thanks to our business contacts for many years, we have direct influence on each detail and are able to react quickly to market requirements. In addition, we can guarantee the high quality of our own brands at any time and this is confirmed by best rankings in more and more independent tests.”*

Sport-Tiedje facts

- Experience in home fitness market of about 30 years
- 300 employees, of it 100 service colleagues of 13 nations (customer service in 11 languages), and 50 technicians
- Highly qualified staff, of it sport scientists, top athletes, fitness coaches, etc.
- National and international customer service
- 30 speciality fitness retail stores in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark
- Online offer on various websites in 11 languages with about 6,000 products
- 14,500 sqm high rack central warehouse, 4,000 sqm store storage and small parts storage
- Stock availability of 98 percent
- More than 1.1 million customers (2015)

MARKET

Sport-Tiedje grows quicker than the market

Fitness equipment is sold through different channels:

- Specialist brick and mortar fitness retailers with online activity, whereas Sport-Tiedje is the only retailer acting multinationally and with a clear multi-channel strategy, i.e. developing both the online as well as the store business simultaneously. Most competitors act mainly regionally on a mom and pop store basis.
- General sports retailers like Sports Direct (multinational), Decathlon (multinational), Karstadt Sport (Germany), Sport Scheck (Germany), John Lewis (UK) or Sport 2000 or Intersport dealers usually devote only a small area to fitness equipment, often only in winter. In some cases these retailers do have a broad fitness range online, though (mainly entry price levels). The big stationary sports retailers cannot serve the fitness equipment market with the required expert advice. Furthermore, the square metre sales of equipment is much lower than, i.e., sports textiles, which limits the floor space dedicated to fitness equipment.
- Special promotions by food retailers or consumer electronics dealers especially in the high season in winter (i.e., Aldi, Lidl, Tchibo, Metro, Costco).

The online mail-order business with fitness equipment has continuously increased during the last years. Sport-Tiedje benefits from it with a growth, which is distinctively beyond the general market growth. Hence, in the financial year 2014, the company sold about 12 percent more than the prior year.

“Being the market leader in selling home fitness equipment, we were able to consequently expand our market advantage“, Grau explains.

There are many reasons that the growth will continue unchecked: the health consciousness of the population grows and thus the understanding to be self-responsible for the health. The demographic development also offers opportunities for Sport-Tiedje: older people want to stay fit and in shape as long as possible and purchase equipment, which they can use at home. A GfK research of 2009 of a manufacturer estimated the market for home fitness big equipment in Germany at approximately 260 million Euros. *The Sport-Tiedje CEO says: “Due to the multitude of market players in size and range of products, there are hardly any reliable figures. Though, on the basis of our business numbers and the data of our supplying manufacturers, we assume that the market volume had continuously increased in the past two years.“*

Expansion course Europe

Sport-Tiedje does not only count on the home market, but pushes the expansion abroad as well.

“Up to now, we have branches in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Denmark. We sell a lot online in Europe and worldwide as well”, Grau says. The list of celebrity customers is long: from football players and other top athletes to actors and presenters to entrepreneurs and Russian oligarchs. When an American president missed his favorite equipment in the fitness facility of the hotel throughout an important security conference, Sport-Tiedje was able to remedy within a very short time. This was due to the fact that within the last five years, Sport-Tiedje has equipped more than 80 embassies and consulates with fitness equipment at home and abroad. The good reputation of Sport-Tiedje has already reached all the way to Hollywood. Grau likes to answer with a vague statement to the question how a large order in private customer business may look like: “It depends a bit upon whether your name is Tom Cruise, Hugh Jackmann or Michelle Pfeiffer or not.” Though there is no doubt for sure: Quality of home fitness equipment is the key to international markets – and there is no alternative to Sport-Tiedje.“

In April, 2015, Sport-Tiedje took over a leading competitor in the Benelux region with the purchase of OZI Sport B.V. Under the name of Fitshop, the company operates four fitness speciality stores in the Netherlands (Bodegraven, The Hague, Rotterdam-Schiedam, and Roosendaal) as well as the strong domains fitshop.nl and fitshop.be. Furthermore, the domains fitness-rent.nl respectively fitness-dump.nl belong to OZI Sport, via which an innovative rental business and a sale platform for second choice fitness equipment are in the run. Thanks to the purchase, now Sport-Tiedje also has a central warehouse in the Netherlands, which will be developed into a hub for the strongly growing Benelux business. Until further notice, the brands T-Fitness (online business in Belgium and the Netherlands as well as branches in Brussels and Amsterdam) and Fitshop are continued parallelly in the Benelux region.

In September 2015 Sport-Tiedje acquired PowerHouse fitness, trading name Laird Limited in the UK. Powerhouse has 9 stores across the UK (2x London, 2x Glasgow, Nottingham, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Newcastle, and Leeds) it is the owner of successful brand Bodymax and the longest established fitness equipment supplier in the UK market. In 2014 the company had a turnover of 17.9m and further strong growth is forecasted.

Meet the Sports-Tiedje team

Christian Grau, Owner and Managing Director Sport-Tiedje (CEO, IT, Logistics, B2C Sales)

Even while studying, Christian Grau (born in 1976) worked as student for the sport shop of then-owner Ulrich Tiedje. Since then, the fitness expert and former basketball player has remained loyal to the company, became co-owner in 2001, and has expanded Sport-Tiedje to Europe's biggest speciality store and online retailer for home fitness equipment. Since 2011, Christian Grau has been sole owner of the Sport-Tiedje GmbH. He is 100% owner and CEO of Sport-Tiedje.

Sebastian Campmann, Managing Director Sport-Tiedje (Purchasing and store business)

Sebastian Campmann (born in 1980) has worked as managing director of Sport-Tiedje since 2010. He studied sports sciences and completed an education to sports and fitness retailer, and, since 2007, had worked in different functions for the company, amongst others as store manager in Cologne and Dortmund. Being one of the managing directors, he is responsible for the speciality store business, the expansion of the national and international store network as well as for the purchasing department and the development of Sport-Tiedje's own brands.

Dr. Bernhard Schenkel, Managing Director Sport-Tiedje (Marketing, Corporate Development, Finance, and Human Resources)

Dr. Bernhard Schenkel (born in 1977) joined Sport-Tiedje as Managing Director in July 2012 and is responsible for marketing, corporate development, finance, and human resources. He holds a degree in business administration and a doctorate in Marketing from the University of Mannheim. Before joining Sport-Tiedje he worked six years with Celesio AG, a pan-European pharmaceutical wholesaler and retailer. He passed through different professional stations and was responsible Director Global Strategic Marketing & Business Innovation there last.

UK media contact:

Ebony Gayle – freelance communications consultant for Sport-Tiedje UK
Ebonyprcomms@gmail.com