

A company with heart and soul

Raiffeisenbank Lech practices the idea of the common good in an impressive way

When it does what a bank does, when it fills gaps and stands like a rock in the swell, Georg Gundolf is in his element. In his role as the director of private banking, he practices the idea of the common good formulated by the founders of Raiffeisenbank Lech far beyond his office. The bank sees itself as a partner for all those who leave their mark on the Lech region – no matter if they are Raiffeisen customers or not.

Supporting domestic businesses and the common good was the principle behind the founding of Raiffeisenbank Lech by citizens of Lech and Warth more than 100 years ago. “This mission has remained at the core of our work to this day,” Georg Gundolf says. A classic alternative to pure profit-oriented thinking which has established profit maximisation as a company’s top priority in a world that is becoming ever faster and more willing to take risks. In 2012, Gundolf and his colleagues turned into a process what has always been practised at the bank. The first bank to do so in Austria, Raiffeisenbank Lech thus decided to create a common good report, supported by the Terra Institute. Since then, it has already published three common good reports. Volker Jäger, the auditor of the current report, thinks that “Raiffeisenbank Lech is a pioneering company which is constantly developing in the sense of an economy serving the common good.” An unusual agenda for a bank, but Raiffeisenbank Lech is no usual bank after all.

_Inside Raiffeisenbank Lech. A few minutes into the visit, you don’t notice any longer that you’re in a bank. Talking to Georg Gundolf is not about products and earnings. Instead, he talks about the longing for authenticity and security, the return to seemingly forgotten values. About good chefs, who can also conjure up something tasty from seemingly unspectacular ingredients. About experienced consultants who propose simple solutions with manageable risk. Who don’t invest in defence and nuclear power. Who are honest to the customer and also say openly which investments they would stay away from.

_Two core fields. Manageable and ethical. Private banking is one of the two pillars of Raiffeisenbank Lech. Investing money wisely and still achieving respectable returns is not a contradiction. On the contrary. The bank’s second main focus is – traditionally – lending money to Lech-based businesses. “We trust the people behind local tourism and gastronomy. The money loaned

is mostly used for improvements in quality.” A simple but effective cycle: If the economy is doing well, the region and its people will benefit. „We as a bank try to make our contribution.“

_Economic local supply. Raiffeisenbank has never before distributed profits in order to be a stable player. Instead, the proceeds were always allocated to reserves or used to increase its share capital. “And invested in projects to promote the region,” Georg Gundolf adds proudly. According to him, this is in the DNA of Lech’s only independent bank: To close gaps and help people with helping themselves – a truly special type of local supply.

_Mission. To ensure sustainability, projects that do not correspond to Raiffeisen’s understanding of Lech as a place to live are rejected. Georg Gundolf calls this „a luxury not everybody can afford. As a company listed on the stock market, we simply cannot operate in this form for the community,“ he is convinced. If we were to think only of optimising our revenues, it would make sense to specialise in the wealthy private clientèle here in Lech. But this would contradict our mission to be a powerful partner for the people and businesses in the region.”



„Our customers’ interest for ethical and sustainable investment products is growing every year.“

Georg Gundolf, Management Board Private Banking



„THE bank in Lech am Arlberg since its inception in 1901. Small picture: Raiffeisenbank Lech around 1920.“