



Gordon Riske

Chief Executive Officer of KION GROUP AG

Introduction to Gordon



I have always had a passion for engineering. I started my career by studying Electrical Engineering at the Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield/Michigan (USA) and working at DeVlieg Machine Company, Royal Oak in Michigan. Then I moved to KUKA robotics where I held various positions, most recently as Managing Director of KUKA Roboter GmbH in Augsburg, Germany.

In parallel, I completed my Bachelor of Business Administration at Oekreal School of Business in Zurich, Switzerland, and subsequently was in the MBA Program at the GSBA also in Zurich in collaboration with the State University of New York.

In 2000, I became Chairman of the Executive Board of Deutz AG in Cologne, Germany for more than 7 years. In 2007, I moved to Linde Material Handling GmbH as Chairman of the Management Board in Aschaffenburg, Bavaria, and COO of KION Group GmbH at the same time.

I became CEO of the KION Group GmbH in 2008. The KION Group is among the world's leading suppliers of industrial trucks and supply chain solutions. Its portfolio encompasses industrial trucks, such as forklift trucks and warehouse trucks, as well as integrated automation technology and software solutions for the optimisation of supply chains, including all related services. Across more than 100 countries worldwide, the KION Group's solutions improve the flow of material and information within factories, warehouses, and distribution centers.

Since the IPO in 2013, I have been Chief Executive Officer of KION GROUP AG, based in Frankfurt am Main.

Industry Leaders In the Spotlight

The logo for KION GROUP, featuring the word "KION" in a large, bold, blue font above the word "GROUP" in a smaller, blue font. The background of the logo is a light blue and white geometric pattern.

KION in a few words



The Group, which is included in the MDAX, is the largest manufacturer of industrial trucks in Europe in terms of units sold in 2020. In China, it is the leading foreign manufacturer (as measured by revenue in 2020) and number three overall. The KION Group is also one of the world's leading providers of warehouse automation (as measured by revenue in 2019).

At the end of 2020, around 1.6 million of the KION Group's industrial trucks and over 6,000 of its installed systems were in use by customers of various sizes and in numerous industries on six continents. The Group currently has almost 40,000 employees and generated revenue of €8.3 billion in 2020.

Biggest challenge for the industry?



Material Handling depends to a considerable extent on free trade and open markets.

The benefits of free trade are obvious: no tariffs, a wider and above all better choice of products, and lower prices for consumers. Free movement and free trade are the lubricating oil of the global economy, creating jobs, prosperity, and future opportunities for many people.

At KION, we have worked very deliberately and intensively over the past few years to build up global production capacity. Our goal has always been to produce close to our customers so that we can supply them quickly with customised products rather than just standard ones.

In addition, we in Europe and especially in Germany must ensure that raw material prices, above all for energy, do not get out of hand. Otherwise, we will not remain competitive.

Furthermore, we all need to do more to promote sustainability. Only in this way will we be able to curb climate change and master the greatest challenge of the century

Industry Leaders In the Spotlight

KION
GROUP

How has COVID-19 changed the landscape?



The pandemic has spurred e-commerce and with it the digitisation and automation of an entire industry. Digital transformation and the steadily increasing level of automation will remain a decisive differentiating factor in intralogistics in the future: Fast, reliable, and efficient supply chains are the decisive competitive advantage in the Internet economy. And KION is right at the forefront of this.

Benefits of adapting to the challenges and changing landscape?



We recognised early on that digitisation and automation will determine the future of logistics in warehouses, which is why we established warehouse logistics as a second Group pillar alongside material handling equipment.

As an innovation leader in our industry, we use state-of-the-art technology: sensors, software, big data, cloud solutions and much more. We combine the art of engineering with state-of-the-art information technology – and are thus increasingly transforming ourselves from a hardware to a software company.

What is coming in the next 5 years for you and your company?



The future looks promising for the KION Group. So far, only 10 percent of the world's warehouses have been automated; the total market is expected to grow by around 13 percent a year until 2023. The market for the automation of warehouse logistics is still highly fragmented, so KION is ideally placed to take a bigger slice of the pie in this competitive environment.

You have to imagine: Modern distribution centers are high-tech masterpieces. They are the realm of robots, controlled by humans only from control panels. The scale that these automated warehouses have now reached is demonstrated by our project for the Landmark Group. The central warehouse in Dubai covers 265,000 square meters, the equivalent of about 40 soccer fields. At the end of this development is the so-called "dark warehouse" – in other words, a fully automated warehouse that theoretically manages without any light at all because the processes function smoothly even without physical human support.

