In an interview with the major German daily newspaper Die Welt, Germany Trade & Invest Chairman/CEO Jürgen Friedrich discussed the importance of “Made in Germany” as a brand in times of trade conflicts.

Welt: What’s the secret that allowed “Made in Germany” to become such a success?

Jürgen Friedrich: The “Made in Germany” label was actually introduced by the British government in the late nineteenth century to dissuade consumers from buying cheap German imports. The label stuck, but the idea that it stands for poor quality was quickly consigned to history. For decades, German companies’ innovativeness and emphasis on quality and precision have augmented the brand and made it a success. Today, all over the world, “Made in Germany” stands for innovation, reliability and durability.

Has the brand lost some of its positive connotations, or does it still mean what it did, for instance, in the 1950s and 60s?

Last year, Germany Trade & Invest carried out studies about the image of “Made in Germany” as a label in more than forty different business locations across the world. The conclusion was the “Made in Germany” is a very strong brand, but that alone is not necessarily enough. German products are very popular around the world, but depending on the country, their high price can be an obstacle. Our surveys suggested that good customer service can justify higher prices in people’s minds. At the same time, the label – particularly with consumer goods – is a status symbol.

What is the label “Made in Germany” so important for medium-sized, smaller and family-run businesses?

Many small- to medium-sized enterprises do part of their business abroad. Among them are the so-called “hidden champions,” of which, depending on definition, there are between 1,300 and 1,500 in Germany. All these companies all leaders in a small niche on the world market, so they profit from the positive connotations of “Made in Germany” abroad.

What is the biggest threat to the label today?

Certainly, things like the diesel scandal or the repeated delays in the construction of the new Berlin airport did nothing to enhance the brand name abroad. Nonetheless, the surveys in our studies yielded very diverse results. In most countries, negative reports have not yet dented the image of German products. But regardless, German companies need to preserve their advantage in innovation for as long as possible – the competition from ambitious nations like China is
Why was the designation “Software Made in Germany” introduced?

Around the world, the label “Made in Germany” stands for the highest level of quality and innovation. The introduction of a corresponding label for the software sector allows software producers from Germany to market themselves effectively on the international market and provide evidence of their high standards.

And what’s the point of the new certification “Software Hosted in Germany?”

This seal of approval shows that German software companies offering their products for sale on the Internet conform to high standards of security.

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