

## **Claude Baumann: «Sleep Is a Personal Matter»**

Saturday, 21 November 2020 16:38

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The spring lockdown kept *finews*-CEO Claude Baumann awake at night, he told **fundplat.com in an interview**. He and his team implemented measures that worked out well. He is proud that he never had to cut wages or staff.

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***finews is developing strongly. What makes you particularly proud of your performance this year?***

I'm proud that the sleepless nights of March and April soon had found an end. The lockdown was an unbelievable experience for us all. Nobody knew what effects the measures would have in the medium term. And when the government urges people to stay at home, as an entrepreneur you kind of ask yourself how you will be able to pay the wages at the end of the month.

As a reaction to the lockdown, we strongly increased our marketing activities, hired branding expert **Roger Sandmeier** and made him our chief operating officer (COO), and we actively sought contact with our clients – be it digital, by telephone, or even in person, albeit always with a face mask on. The efforts paid off and from May onwards, my sleep pattern was back to normal again.

«I'm particularly proud of having avoided furlough for my staff, as well as wage or even job cuts»

Of course, sleep is a personal matter. As an entrepreneur, I'm particularly proud of having avoided furlough for my staff, as well as wage or even job cuts.

***finews is a digital platform. You will never go into print?***

No. The coronavirus has shown that there is no way back and that digital is the new benchmark. Why would I want to print a magazine at an enormous cost without knowing whether I can sell it in the end?

«Data is the gold of the 21st century, as the saying goes»

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The online world is a constant source of new opportunities. They are immensely fascinating and harbor enormous business potential of which we have scratched the surface at best. Think of all the social media channels, which we step-by-step are integrating into our distribution strategy.

We have only just hired an expert in this field, **Azem Fazliu**. New formats of digital advertising are developed and introduced almost on a daily basis. It is all the more important to have a specialist in this field on board. He will help us consult and look after our advertising clients.

### ***Where do you see further growth potential in your digital offering?***

In data management. Data is the gold of the 21st century, as the saying goes. And this is true. We conducted a broad survey among our readers during the lockdown to find out, who our readers are and what they expect from us. It was like a revelation.

«Some stories were read more than 40,000 times»

We knew for the first time how we were being perceived and what was most in demand among readers. It helps us work on those stories that people really want to read. And the data we collected will help us respond to our advertising clients in a more informed fashion because now we know our clients and their needs much better.

It is not rocket science for sure, but the more detailed the data we have, the better we know how to expand our offering to meet demand.

Apart from our core business of the world of finance, we see huge potential for stories on topics such as life and work – the work-life-balance – career and further education or the quest to live a more mindful and healthier life. Our sub-site [finews.life](#) (in German only) launched in the autumn of 2019 achieved an unexpected surge in relevance for our readership during the lockdown and with the shift into the home office. Some stories were read more than 40,000 times. For instance, a piece we carried on how eating well will bring down the level of stress.

### ***Apart from your main office in Zurich, you have offices also in Singapore and Hong Kong. Are you still happy about how things are shaping up in your outposts?***

Very much so. Our staff in Asia in many ways are our lookouts. When the coronacrisis started

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earlier this year, they were the first to suffer. In February, I was in Singapore, walking the streets with a face mask on and wouldn't in my wildest dreams have thought that we would be doing so here as well.

«We have many ideas that we will pursue in 2021»

Asia is a given for fifty years to come and the main indicator for all developments in this world. That's also why we added **Andrew Isbester** to our crew in Hong Kong. He used to work for «AFP and the «Financial Times» before going into banking. Now he is pursuing his real passion again and has signed as editor-at-large for *finews*.

I'm very satisfied with our outposts in Singapore and Hong Kong, even if I'm less than pleased about not having been back there for a long time.

### ***What are your wishes in professional terms going forward?***

To carry over into the new year the sense of innovation we developed since the lockdown. We have many ideas that we will pursue in 2021. It is well worth looking out for them!

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*The interview was conducted by **Thomas J. Caduff**. He is an experienced entrepreneur and author. Caduff manages the B2B-media- and event-platform [fundplat.com](https://fundplat.com), which specializes in funds and ETFs. [fundplat.com](https://fundplat.com) will host the «Mountain Talks» for the first time in 2021.*