

A Crystal-Clear VISION

From being held hostage in the Middle East to running the largest automotive glass repairer in Germany, Jean-Pierre Filippini has a wealth of experience that he believes has contributed to his success in leading Carglass.

Images courtesy of Carglass

As the leading auto glass repairer in Europe, and a member of the global Belron Group which operates in 34 countries, Carglass is certainly an impressive company. Globally, Belron serves 50,000 customers every day, employs 25,000 staff, and has an annual turnover of more than €2.7 billion.

Since Managing Director of Carglass in Germany Jean-Pierre Filippini started with the organisation, business has been booming, with increased revenue and market share. “We have grown our segment share year after year. All of our key performance indicators like customer satisfaction grow every year as well.”

Jean-Pierre started his career in business with something completely different—degrees in civil engineering and chemistry. “After university, I went to work

for a chemistry company but I combined that with an MBA in marketing and sales. Then I worked for Avery Denison and I was responsible for their markets in the Middle East, South America, and Europe. At Avery Denison I went from being a technical commercial engineer to a product and sales manager.”

Jean-Pierre believes that these different roles at Avery Denison helped shaped the way he leads Carglass, his leadership style and approach. “If I think about what experience shaped my leadership, I worked at a lot of different levels but also had a lot of different responsibilities. I think my biggest leadership learning, besides learning on the job, is respecting and listening carefully to the people that you’re working with.

“I was at Avery Denison for about five years and I went to a Japanese competitor. There was a different culture there, which was a good

learning experience again. Then I had the opportunity to come to Carglass. Carglass is a company where values, leadership and the people are important. I’ve spent 16 years with Carglass now. First, I was sales and marketing director in Belgium, then two years as an operations director, and now general manager in Germany.”

The other major impact on Jean-Pierre’s life, one that shaped his entire being, was being involved in the first Gulf War. He was very young and was taken hostage by the Iraqi army. “I was taken hostage in the first Gulf War in 1990 for four months. I stayed seven weeks in Kuwait and about 12 weeks in Baghdad.

“That experience has brought me a lot. I learned how people react around you, what people are capable of doing, and everybody is just trying to make sure they survive. That was probably the biggest learning experience I have >



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ever had. And they traded me for some medicine in the end. I was worth €25,000 in medicine. It was a life experience.”

In comparison, the challenges that Carglass faces seem relatively small. But the experience has made Jean-Pierre a better leader, more aware of human behaviour and how important people and their behaviour are to an organisation. “People are very important. It was a challenge for me, breaking down the hierarchy of Carglass and getting closer to the people. It’s now a very flat organisation.

“The challenge was leadership. It’s a journey and every leader has to develop further. That’s part of leadership, being ready to get feedback and develop further. If you have good people and good leadership who are engaged, they start to think more. If they are engaged and motivated then you get people looking for efficiencies, they get good ideas, they try to increase productivity and communicate better.”

Another challenge Jean-Pierre faced was the rapid growth of Carglass, and the issues that can bring. “The company grew fast and then we were confronted with growing pains. We are now investing more in the professional side—everything that we do in terms of processes. A complete process transformation is going on. That will be finished by the end of 2016 at the latest. And that will have a significant impact on efficiency and costs.

“The market was in our favour, everything was in our favour, but flexibility and creativity could have been at a much higher level. We are now working on those two things, especially flexibility. So we are running a program on that. You have to do the best for the big three—the shareholders, your employees, and the customers.”

“Our collaboration with Carglass enables us to grow and learn from each other. The company is very demanding in optimising impact analysis but also supports long-term partnerships. Carglass offers a unique partnership and values challenging questions as much as outstanding solutions.” - Oliver Hey, Managing Director, Mediaplus

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One focus Jean-Pierre has had at Carglass is behavioural change and training. He wants people to be happy coming to work and to exhibit appropriate behaviours. “Behaviour change is still a challenge, because it’s a tough one. Because people have competencies and values, but how do we change their behaviours to link their environment to their values? It’s the biggest task. And I think you need to invest in time. Time to think, time to listen. Behaviour can only change by asking the right questions, listening to what’s happening around you, and then repeating that over and over again.

“So much training and development doesn’t happen in people’s work environments and it’s very difficult to change anything that way. I see so many institutes, so many other organisations, management programs, conflict management—they are good from a competency level but when the people go back

to their standard normal working environment, how much of their training is forgotten after one or two months? The right coaching and asking the right questions is very important.

“You need to treat your people how they want to be treated and work with them and develop them. Many people confuse that with populism, but it’s not that. I think that’s the key. That’s what we’re doing with Carglass. There’s still a road to go, and have we finished? No. Never. You can always improve.”

Jean-Pierre and Carglass aren’t just focused on improving the work and lives of their own employees, but also in contributing to the local community. As a global group, Belron is very passionate about corporate social responsibility. Because they are spread over a number of countries, each area of Belron develops their own community engagement activities. >

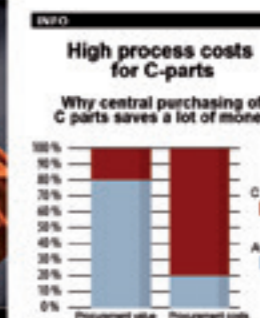


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“Carglass started a foundation in 2011 called Giving Back. What we wanted was the people in the company to do something more and give back to the community. It’s easy enough to take money and give it to a charity, but there are a lot of initiatives in Carglass to encourage our own people to give

something back as well. People give up an hour or a day to help.

“It also brings people together. We have days now where people come and bring along their families and friends. It’s a day of sport, of health, and of giving back.

“Why do we do it? For me, it’s because we have that responsibility. If we don’t give back, who does? If the business doesn’t give back, who does? It’s our obligation. If our companies here are not starting to create a good environment, who will? This is not a choice. We have to do it; we have to do this. We have to create a sustainable environment and give back.”

For Carglass, its other major relationship for the business, other than its employees, is its suppliers and partners. Jean-Pierre forms good relationships with suppliers to ensure that they fit with the company and are working to their values. “When we work together with suppliers we need to think, ‘Do we have the same values? Are they trustworthy, open, and transparent?’ And if you have that kind of relationship you can make mistakes and both learn from them.

“There’s a lot behind our business. You could say we do



“I want us to be recognised as an outstanding service company, as an example of leadership, as having engaged people and giving back.”

- Jean-Pierre Filippini

just simple glass repair and replacement, but there’s much more behind it. Where does a supplier fit in to help us deliver that? Are they committed to helping us, are they motivated to help us? Do they have the energy to solve proactive problems? We want to treat our suppliers in the same way we do our customers. So it’s not about beating the suppliers to get the maximum out of them.”

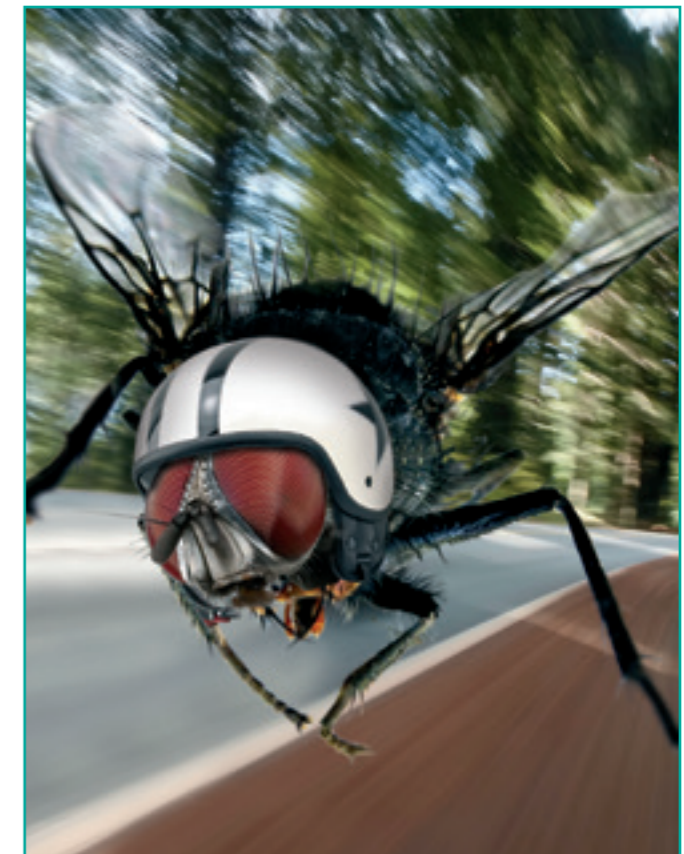
As for the future, Jean-Pierre thinks that there will be a lot of change in the digital space, even for a business like Carglass. Because of this, Carglass has developed a new IT and digital strategy, and is in the process of recruiting experts to run this.

“We have a chief digital officer now. It’s about communicating with our customers, changing all of our processes, social media, SEO, mobile, less paper. And, of course, it’s all about the World Wide Web and what is our share. Will it change us? Yes, definitely. How will it change us? I have no idea.

“Change is no problem; it’s the speed of the change. We all know that digital will be in every business. And it won’t just be having an app on your phone; there’s much more to it. The whole digital world will create new business models. We need to be a part of that.

Jean-Pierre remains positive that Carglass will keep growing and expanding in the coming years. “For the business part, it’s easy to say we want to continue our growth and to do that in a changing environment. I want us to be recognised as an outstanding service company, as an example of leadership, as having engaged people and giving back. If people would say that about us that would be great.

“I think we still have many years to grow. Will it be easy? No. Will there be a lot of challenges? Yes. But the next three to five years are very crucial in a fast-changing environment.”



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