



Hermann's



Natural

With 13 different foodservice brands, casualfood, the German travel-location caterer, can be found since 2005 at airports, railway stations and motorways. In 2017 there will be over 60 units, including convenience stores, restaurant and snack formats. Since 2015 the multi-brand players have also been operating outside Germany: at LJU Ljubljana Airport in Slovenia. Further European expansion not ruled out. www.casualfood.de



The Taste of Travelling

When, twelve years ago, Michael Weigel and Stefan Weber opened their first mobile snack counter, serving pretzels, sandwiches and beverages at a departure gate in Frankfurt Airport, they did not know what a growth and success story they were triggering. By going for the location – still only sparsely provided with foodservice facilities – the pair of young entrepreneurs, with no experience at all of the sector at that time, proved they had a good sense for what was to come in the travel-location category. Stefan Weber, still working in his own advertising agency during the launch stage, was the ideas man from the beginning. Michael Weigel threw his experience as a marketing expert into the scales and is still in charge of statistics and operations.

In the launch year of 2005 the young company, in just under five months, with two Mayer's snack trolleys at Frankfurt Airport, earned around €250,000 of sales revenue (net). Five staff served some 60,000 guests.

In 2017, the 'little' idea of selling pretzels at the airport, has grown into a 'big' catering empire, with net annual sales revenues at the last count of €43.7 m (2016). The number of guests has risen to over 7 m a year. Mobile pretzel counters continue to be the core of the business, but Weber and Weigel have gradually expanded the concept range and created a multi-brand company with 13 different types of outlet – clustered in three categories: mobile snack bars, fast-casual bars and restaurants, and convenience stores. This year will see numbers pass the 60-unit mark.

Hand in hand with this, the two casualfood players have expanded their location philosophy. If until 2011/12 they were still based exclusively in airports, in the following years the business took off in railway stations and motorways, too. At the end of 2016, along with 47 stores at airports, casualfood had seven outlets at railway stations and three in motorway service stations. Examples of the company's own successful concept developments are brands such as Mondo, Goodman & Filippo and Hermann's.

Whether the first year was the most challenging one, or whether the first five years have remained in memory as a particular growth

challenge, is something about which the two 50-year-old entrepreneurs, who get on well privately, are – unusually for them – in disagreement.

They realised early on that a high visitor-frequency location such as Frankfurt Airport could be handled more effectively and with less risk with a mix of different concepts and pillars. "So, it was our aim, along with the mobile outlets, to take fixed sites into the portfolio, with long-term contracts, focusing on fast-casual food," explains Stefan Weber.

The two entrepreneurs took the next step towards multi-concept expansion at the same time as they were expanding their mobile outlets: in 2006-07 they added Quicker's Convenience Stores, the first at Dusseldorf Airport, the second at Frankfurt Airport. The combination of shop, kiosk, bakery and cafe offers everything which travellers want to buy quickly before their flight departs, from a snack to toothpaste. A good third of the casualfood outlets belong today to the C-store category. The importance enjoyed by the convenience concepts in the sales mix can be seen by their share of turnover, which is 50%.

After casualfood began by sharing management of the Quicker's Stores with the duty-free specialist Heinemann, in 2010 they took

casualfood in Figures

Founded	2005 as Mayer's Mobil at FRA
Headquarters	Frankfurt, Germany
Executive Partners	Stefan Weber, Michael Weigel
No. of outlets	59 (all company-owned and run under own management) at 5 airports, 5 railway stations and 2 motorway service stations (as of June 2017)
Distribution focus	FRA – 29 outlets
Brands	basta! Pizza & Pasta, Beyond, Goodman & Filippo, Hermann's, Italissimo, Kilkenny Irish Pub, Mayer's, Mondo, Mondo Bianco, Natural, Quicker's (some under varying formats from mobile outlet to bar, restaurant or C-store), plus 2 outside brands: Kamps, DB Service Store
Sales	€43.7 m (2016) vs. €37.1 m (2015)
Sales target	approx. €49 m (2017)
No. of guests	about 20,000 a day
Staff	>600