



# Corporate Responsibility Report 2021

Non-financial report in accordance with Sec. 289b (1) and (3)  
HGB ("Handelsgesetzbuch": German Commercial Code) and  
Sec. 315b (1) and (3) HGB

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# Introductory words by our Executive Board

**The year 2020 has already moved us all. It has shaken supposedly safe, efficient and learned processes and triggered reflection and strategy changes in many companies. Even in 2021, this dynamic process was not over, as the coronavirus pandemic has remained with us and is a globally influential economic, social and environmental factor.**

We are Mister Spex, Europe's leading digitally driven omnichannel optician, and as a key driver of digital transformation in online retail, we are proud of all that we have achieved and set in motion since our founding in 2007. We are a digital native, eyewear trendsetter, competitor and business enterprise at the same time and for this reason we always act in the interests of all stakeholders associated with us. With over 1,100 employees from 58 nations, online shops in ten countries, almost 50 stores and a customer base that now includes over 5.8 million people, we are always aware of our great ecological, economic and social responsibility, and we strategically align our actions with it.

The IPO in 2021 is another important milestone in our company history, and a positive testimony to what we have worked for and achieved in recent years. At the same time, this step means a further responsibility for our employees and our shareholders, which has an influence in very different places; for us, for example, it means climate-neutral and ecological management with a simultaneous improvement in results. Climate change is one of our biggest drivers,

which is why we are tackling it with consistent carbon reduction and improving our carbon footprint across all business areas. We have been climate neutral<sup>1</sup> since 2021 and support internationally active NGOs with our climate contribution. Reducing greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions, as well as paper and disposable packaging, has been an integral part of our less carbon strategy since 2020. We are constantly working on expanding our sustainable product range and have underpinned these and other aspirations in particular by implementing our own department for corporate responsibility.

The social factor and the positive cooperation within the company, as well as the ecological orientation, are at the top of our agenda. In 2021, we created channels and capacities to be able to interact with our workforce even more transparently and quickly across departments. We have focused on important socially relevant issues such as diversity and inclusion and will continue to educate, support and guide our employees at all levels through training, development programmes and 360-degree feedback processes.



FLTR: Dirk Graber, Maren Kroll, Dr. Mirko Caspar, Dr. Sebastian Dehnen

With this report, we are proud to be able to build on the success record of the previous year and are already looking forward to tackling the next ambitious sustainability goals that we have set ourselves in climate protection and the development of our workforce. We are convinced that we will achieve these next milestones through

consistent strategic measures in line with our own corporate values and in view of the steadily increasing demand for sustainable products and climate-neutral business activities from our customers.

Dirk Graber,  
Co-CEO

Maren Kroll,  
CHRO

Dr. Mirko Caspar,  
Co-CEO

Dr. Sebastian Dehnen,  
CFO

# The Sustainability Report 2021

## About this report

This report is the second sustainability report of Mister Spex SE and was published along the GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE (GRI) Standards, option „Core“. Unless otherwise stated, all information relates to the 2021 fiscal year. We have defined the focal points and topics of this report together with our employees and the Executive Board. Corporate responsibility is an integral part of our business model.

To comply with the ESG (Environmental Social Governance) criteria, we have a comprehensive plan, and have launched a number of key initiatives to focus on corporate responsibility in the eyewear industry. These initiatives are mainly aimed at sustainability efforts through the reduction of carbon emissions, energy consumption and packaging, as well as the introduction of sustainable product criteria. The promotion of inclusion and diversity, the living of our corporate values at various levels and the development of our employees is also on our agenda.

The chapter „Our environment“ summarises our environmental measures, with which we both make a positive contribution to the preservation of our planet, but also want to promote a conscious use of resources and materials within the company.

The „Our employees“ area refers to our activities aimed at creating a professional, inclusive and supportive environment for all our employees.

We describe our partnerships and cooperation with suppliers in the „Our Community“ section. This includes ensuring product quality, our social commitment and support for charitable projects and organisations, the responsible handling of customer data, as well as our activities in the areas of governance and compliance. In addition, we also present our specific goals in the individual areas, via which we would like to further improve our sustainability commitment in the future.

## The Mister Spex business model

With more than 1,100 employees from 58 countries and more than 5.8 million customers, Mister Spex is the leading omnichannel retail brand in optometry in Europe as a digital native. We offer our customers fashionable glasses in individual visual acuity, including correction glasses, sunglasses and contact lenses. Our range includes seven of our own brands, as well as more than 100 premium and luxury brands. We also rely on fashionable and high-quality independent labels and exclusive collaborations with fashion designers and influencers.

**Thanks to our seamless omnichannel approach, we create an individual shopping experience and at the same time give our customers the freedom to decide for themselves when, where and how they want to shop.**

Innovative technologies and smart, data-supported functions, such as automatic goods replenishment and real-time sorting algorithms, play a central role in our online shops. We are represented in ten markets (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) with online shops, and operate 48 of our own bricks-and-mortar stores in Germany, Austria and Sweden. We also have an extensive partner optician network with over 400 opticians.

The glasses are edged and adjusted in our own central master workshop in Berlin using state-of-the-art automatic edgers. Our logistics locations in Berlin, Stockholm (Sweden) and Karlskrona (Sweden) make it possible to supply all customers throughout Europe. Fast delivery times and uncomplicated free returns are part of our business model that has already won several awards. From our distribution centre in Berlin with a total capacity of up to 40,000 orders, we ship more than 20,000 orders every day. For more than 85 % of the orders, the shipment takes place on the day of the order.

## Risk management and involvement of the Executive Board

We use a risk management system to identify and assess potential risks and identify risk owners that could limit Mister Spex's business performance and sustainability efforts. Possible risk scenarios relate to:

- (1) Market risks
- (2) Operational risks
- (3) Financial, compliance and regulatory risks
- (4) Capital market risks

Regular checks and regulatory measures ensure that these risks are mitigated. Our Executive Board, which is also the responsible authority for our sustainability strategy, manages the alignment and coordinates the various activities with the responsible management levels and the sustainability officers. The supervisory bodies also report continuously to the Executive Board, the Supervisory Board and the Audit Committee.



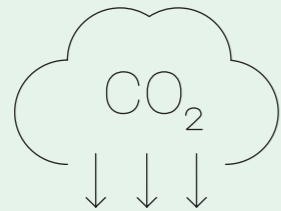
## Key figures of Mister Spex

**100%**

climate neutral by 2021

**100%**

climate-neutral shipping by 2021

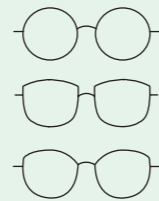


**4,000,000 kg**

CO<sub>2</sub> compensated for 2020

**400 pairs  
of glasses**

were collected and donated in Mister Spex stores in 2021

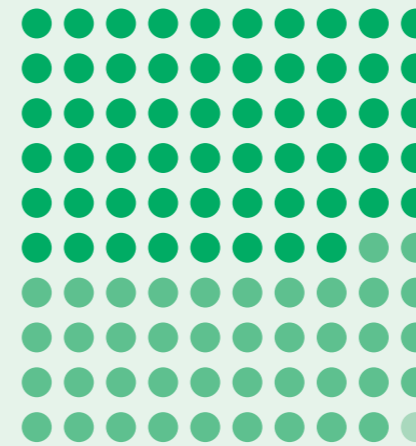


**5**

sustainable brands  
in the product range

**> 1,300 Euro**

went to the CleanRiver project – 1 Euro per pair  
of CO CO glasses purchased



**1,179**

employees in total

**58%**

female

**42%**

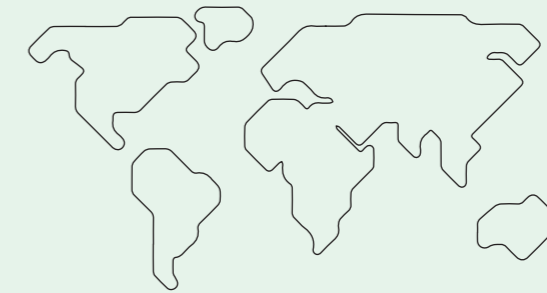
male

**1%**

diverse

**58**

nations



**37%**

female managers



**22.5%**

women in technology  
divisions

**49**

apprentices in  
all divisions

**16**

employees engaged  
in our sustainable  
team

**17**

employees  
engaged in our  
culture board

# EU Taxonomy Regulation

Pursuant to Article 8 of the Taxonomy Regulation (EU) 2020/852 and Article 10 of the supplementary delegated act of 6 July 2021, a simplified climate protection reporting obligation applies to the reporting year 2021. The share of business activities that can be taxonomized by the EU must be reported. For these taxonomic economic activities, the shares in the three defined key figures of revenue, capital expenditure (CapEx) and operating expenditure (OpEx) must be reported.

Activities not defined in the appendices or corporate activities that do not correspond to the activity description are not considered to be taxonomic activities. Our own sustainability goals can thus be seen as an additional contribution to sustainability, but are not covered by the EU taxonomy.

Article 9 of the Taxonomy Regulation sets out the following six environmental objectives:

- a) Climate change mitigation;
- b) Climate Change Adaptation;
- c) the sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources;
- d) the transition to a circular economy;
- e) pollution prevention and control;
- f) the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

The current reporting year includes the first two of the environmental objectives defined in Article 9 of the Regulation: (a) climate change mitigation and (b) adaptation to climate change. In the further course of 2022, the European Commission is expected to adopt further delegated acts to cover the four remaining environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy.

## Our screening approach

In our analysis, we have reviewed all activities listed in Annexes I and II of the delegated acts on climate change mitigation and adaptation to climate change regarding their applicability to our business activities.

After a thorough examination and discussion with different business and functional areas, we have come to the conclusion that our economic activities are not covered by the delegated act on the EU taxonomy and are therefore not taxonomic.

According to this analysis, the share of taxonomy-compatible economic activities for the three defined key figures of revenue, capital expenditure (CapEx) and operating expenditure (OpEx) is zero percent.

The share of non-taxonomic economic activities in our total sales as well as our capital and operating expenses is thus 100 percent. The share of non-taxonomic economic activities in our sales as well as our capital and operating expenses is thus 100 percent.

## Outlook EU Taxonomy

With the entry into force of the remaining four environmental targets from Article 9 of the Regulation and the elimination of the simplified reporting obligation, our reporting will also develop accordingly in the financial year 2022. From the financial year 2022, we will carry out further analyses to meet certain criteria. In addition to the evaluation of the conformity criteria, this also includes the assessment of whether the taxonomy-enabled economic activities make a significant contribution to an environmental objective defined by the Taxonomy Regulation and whether no other environmental objective is significantly impaired.

# Our environment



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## Emission reduction and resource conservation

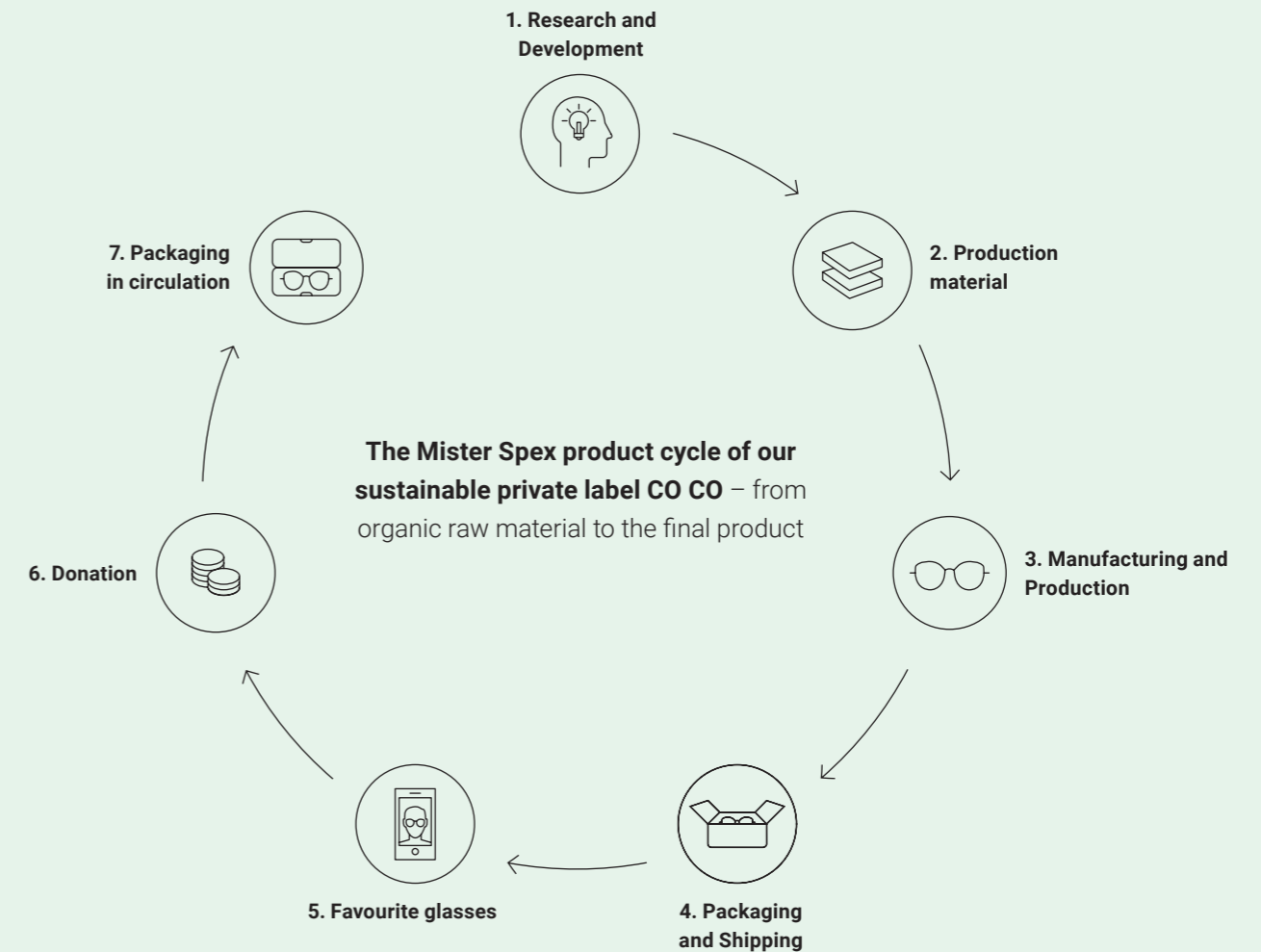
We are convinced that a responsible use of resources can only be achieved through a holistic approach to emissions measurement and reduction. In order to understand emissions and emission development in a targeted manner and to counteract them with promising measures, a data-driven analysis is required that allows the current state of emission development in the company to be viewed at any time. We succeed in this strategic position with Planetly, a CO<sub>2</sub> management system that allows us to carry out this analysis.

In order to be able to use this tool in its full range, extensive data collection is necessary, which is where we are at this point in time. The results of the company's carbon footprint are published in the same place as this report:

» [Corporate Responsibility – Mister Spex Corporate Website](#)

Accordingly, the classification of the development of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is made in our report on the climate balance 2021. At this point, we would like to emphasize that we will continue to be a climate-neutral company, i.e., in addition to emission reductions, which are strategically in our focus, we will also carry out emission depreciation to compensate for our CO<sub>2</sub> footprint.

**The measures taken in 2021 to reduce emissions include the company-wide switch to electricity from renewable energy sources, the introduction of the New Work approach, which allows general work from home, the use of digital tools to avoid travel and the consistent promotion of the use of public transport.**



**1. Research and Development**  
We are constantly researching and developing.

**2. Production material**  
100 % organic bioacetate, recyclable and biodegradable.

**3. Manufacturing and Production**  
Frames and quality lenses from renowned manufacturers (exclusively original products).

**4. Packaging and Shipping**  
Preparation for shipment at our Berlin Logistics location - Packaging with a high recycled content and 100 % recyclable Blue Ocean foil.

**5. Favourite glasses**  
Customer chooses the favourite CO CO online or offline - Services included: Virtual fitting, home trial, new lenses, on-site eye test.

**6. Donation**  
For each pair of CO CO glasses sold: Donation of 1 euro to the CleanRiver project to reduce plastic waste pollution in our oceans.

**7. Packaging in circulation**  
The customer is happy about the new CO CO and can optionally leave the packaging in the store or hand it in, for responsible recycling.

## Packaging and shipping

One of our strategic priorities as an e-commerce company is the packaging and shipping complex. On the one hand, we want to ensure that our goods arrive at our customers reliably and undamaged. However, it is also our responsibility to make packaging material and transport routes as climate-friendly as possible.

### **Our declared goal is to use only recyclable and sustainable materials and to avoid single-use plastic by 2025.**

With the composition of our shipping material, we are already on a very good path since it consists of recycled material to a large extent. Our cardboard boxes have a high recycling content and the bubble wrap used is made of Blue Ocean film, a 100 percent recycled material. Furthermore, we use recyclable pool boxes for many intralogistics processes, for example for supplying our warehouse in Stockholm or our shops.

Our shipping has been 100 percent climate-neutral since the end of 2021. In cooperation with the climate protection organisation myclimate, we have already employed a completely climate-neutral means of transporting goods for shipping our CO CO collection in the past, ranging from production and logistics to reaching our customers. Since April 2021, we have been shipping using DHL's GoGreen Solutions, DHL's environmental protection procedure, and are thus supporting the reduction of greenhouse gases. To reduce the number of shipments and returns, we have been offering the virtual 3D eyewear fitting service since 2011. Wherever possible and in accordance with our quality standards, we process returned goods at a high standard and reintroduce them into the product cycle.



## Sustainable product range strategy

**As an omnichannel brand trader, Mister Spex is responsible for sustainable business in the face of the ever-increasing climate change. As we put our customers at the centre of our actions, we strive to meet the increasing demand for sustainable materials and production processes so that they can act and buy in accordance with their ESG-compliant values. Our aim is to make the eyewear market continuously more sustainable and greener.**

For this reason, we have been working on the development and further development of our range of environmentally friendly and sustainable brands since 2019. We currently have five sustainable brands in our range: EOE, Stella McCartney, Wood Fellas, Timberland, and our own private label brand CO CO, which we launched in 2019 as our first sustainable eyewear brand. In 2020 we added the exclusive designer sub-collection „Marcel Ostertag x CO CO“. We only use bio-acetate and recyclable metal for the frames of our private label products. Bioacetate is a pure natural product and therefore 100 percent organic – two thirds of the acetate is obtained from renewable raw materials and is therefore both recyclable and biodegradable. In addition to these already achieved goals, our efforts are

towards the continuous development of sustainable product criteria, which we will develop and roll out in a strategic action plan in the coming years.

We have been working together with the non-profit organisation CleanRiver Project since 2019, to which we donate one euro for each model of our sustainable own brand CO CO sold. Our internal Corporate Responsibility working group is continuously expanding these and other social initiatives.

Furthermore, we want to ensure that our products and their materials are of very high quality and thus durable, so that they can be recycled if possible. For this purpose, we offer, for example, a re-glazing service for old frames, as well as a collection service for discarded frames.



## Interview with Constanze Burda, Lead Corporate Responsibility at Mister Spex



**“Clear positions are needed for consistent and entrepreneurial sustainability”**

In a retail company like Mister Spex, which operates internationally, where products are shipped, people interact with each other and there is an automatic influence on our environment and our communication. Mister Spex has set itself ambitious goals and is pushing ahead with further development in these fields. At this point, the Lead of our Sustainability Department, Constanze Burda, describes her area of responsibility and her perspective on the topic of corporate responsibility in today’s world.

**Constanze, why don’t you tell us a little bit about when you joined Mister Spex and what your new role in Corporate Responsibility is?**

My journey with Mister Spex began five years ago. At that time, I was the assistant of our CEOs, Dirk Graber and Dr Mirko Caspar. In this role I was given the opportunity to work repeatedly in different projects, so that after my parental leave, we agreed with Maren Kroll that I would take over Corporate Responsibility. An area that immediately convinced me in terms of content, because it ultimately covers all topics that are very close to my heart: our environment, our society, our employees and our company itself. In my new role, together with my colleague and in close cooperation with our Executive Board, I develop the strategic direction of our CR initiatives and, in cooperation with virtually all areas in various projects, I am able to work on making our company more sustainable piece by piece.

The latter is particularly important to me – it is not enough to have a department responsible for sustainability. We are only sustainable if all departments are held accountable.

**What opportunities do you see in this area, both for Mr Spex in particular and for corporate sustainability in general?**

Mister Spex has incredible potential for sustainability issues. This is mainly due to the fact that the general attitude prevails, that these issues are important and that we have to deal with them. And that is because it is the right thing to do. This attitude greatly facilitates strategic and project decisions. Ultimately, it is as simple as it sounds: if the company’s attitude is the right one, the path to corporate sustainability can be pursued consistently.

**Are there any specific challenges or hurdles that you have to overcome in connection with this complex topic?**

Whenever we talk about attitudes, we talk about the beliefs of people that are so deeply rooted and learned that it takes the longest to change them. The road to corporate sustainability is a marathon, not a sprint. And it is important to take everyone – management, employees and customers – along this path. In addition to the content-related work, the challenge lies above all in the continuous communication and involvement of everyone in the company.

**In your opinion, what are the strongest levers for a sustainable corporate strategy?**

In addition to levers in terms of content, such as active emission reduction, a holistic diversity, equity and inclusion strategy and a sustainable product strategy, I see the strongest levers above all in the mobilisation of all departments.

Yes, Corporate Responsibility is the department that primarily drives the topics. However, we are usually not the ones who implement. This is what the respective departments do, which is why it is absolutely crucial to integrate them from the outset into strategic considerations and projects. Another lever is to use the commitment of the employees. Our dedicated sustainability project group (working title: “the CR Champions”) is a fantastic group, with which we combine many different attitudes and views on a common goal: to position Mister Spex even more sustainably.

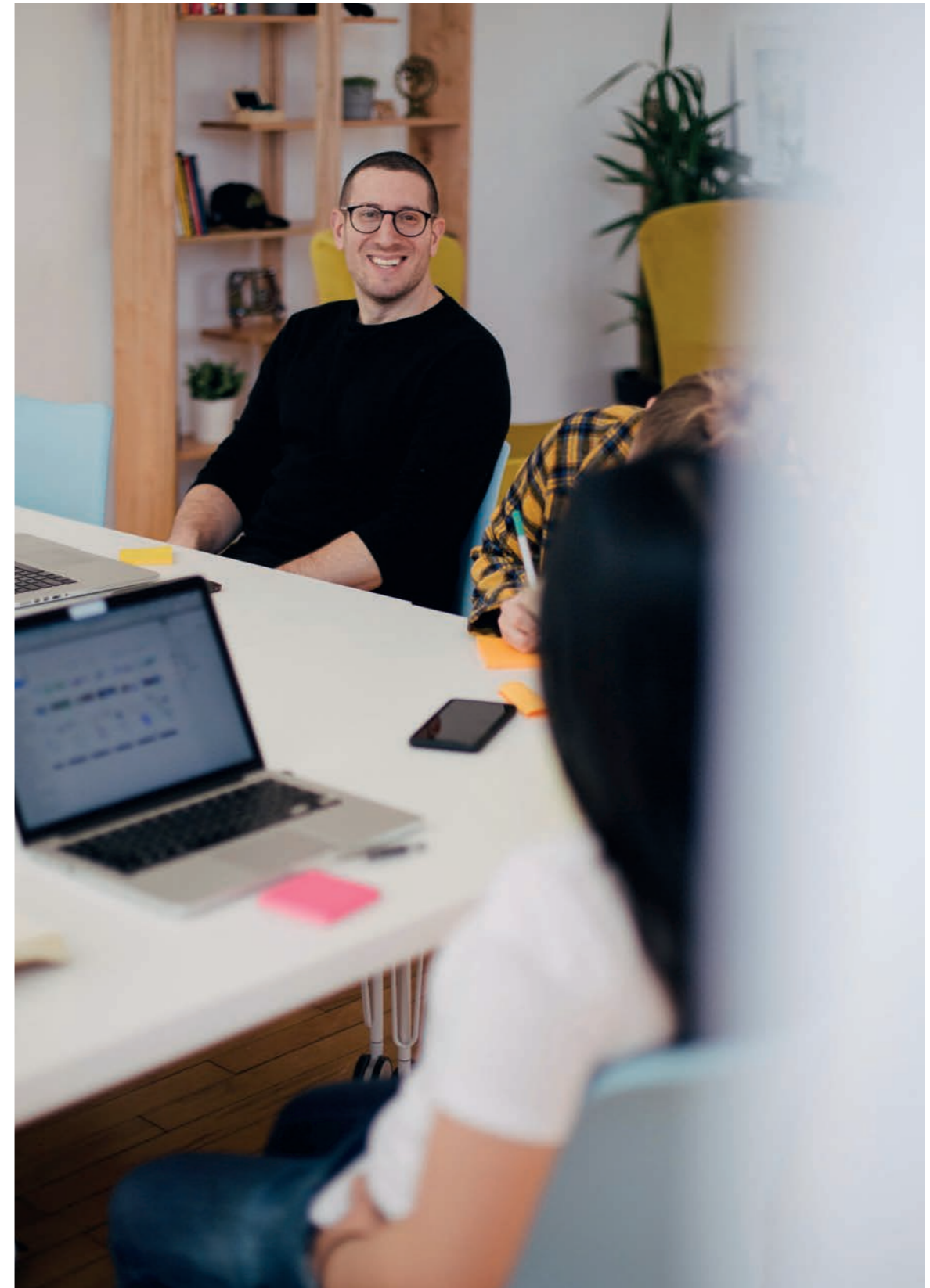
## Our ESG initiatives and objectives

As part of our ESG strategy, we have asked ourselves how we can take up the existing energy and many good impulses from our own employees on the topic of sustainability, bundle them and transform them into new initiatives. For this reason, we have set up a 16-member sustainability project group consisting of employees from different departments and levels.

**Divided into three thematic priorities along the ESG orientation Environment, Social and Governance, the employees of the team ensure that sustainability issues are addressed, discussed and initiated internally as well as externally.**

In a very short time, we have already been able to implement a number of successful projects: the reuse of our bubble wrap and eyewear pads initiated by our store and logistics employees, the introduction of sustainable office materials in numerous Mister Spex stores, the mobilisation of many colleagues for urban sustainability events and the conversion to the purchase of regional and seasonal (organic) food in our Berlin headquarters.

At the same time, we have initiated further long-term projects, which we will gradually focus on and expand. We want to improve our internal communication at Mister Spex, by obtaining regular feedback from our employees on various channels in order to become aware of potential improvements in recurring formats. We also create space and forums for exchange on the promotion of gender equality in the company, a uniform tone of voice strategy and a focus on socio-politically relevant issues. To this end, we also enter into dialogue with experts in the field and pass on this knowledge to our staff.



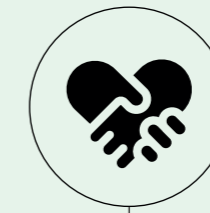
# Our people



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Head of Corporate Communications
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**At Mister Spex, we know that our employees are our greatest asset. With their commitment, enthusiasm, and spirit, they have made Mister Spex what we are today, and every day they make an enormous contribution to our further development. We are aware of our responsibility for the more than 1,100 Spexies and are therefore taking measures for their well-being, health and safety. In 2021, we also focused more on the topic of diversity. In doing so, we are always guided by our five corporate values, which determine our actions and our corporate culture and whose safeguarding and further development is monitored by the Culture Board.**

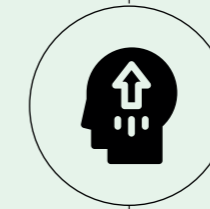
## Five values that count



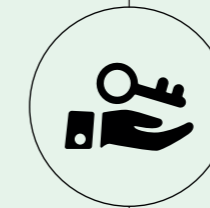
1. We respect each other



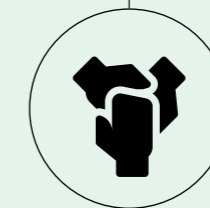
2. We are open and give & take feedback to learn



3. We stay hungry



4. We take ownership



5. We win as a team

## Health and well-being

**The second year of the pandemic has kept us busy at Mister Spex. We have provided both primary, secondary and booster vaccinations via our Medical officers and thus enabled everyone to have faster access to the protective vaccination against Covid-19.**

For our employees in the stores, we implemented a comprehensive hygiene concept for daily work with customers, so that we were able to keep all stores open in 2021.

As everywhere else, the ongoing state of emergency of the pandemic has led to new challenges for our employees. The ongoing work in home office offers advantages for some employees that are not optimal for others. On the one hand, home office can mean a better balance between private life and work, but on the other hand it can also mean a double burden for families with children, for example. Working at home can lead to better concentration and thus to increased productivity, but it can also promote loneliness and overtime. In 2021, we tried to tackle this complexity in two ways.

We have redefined our approach to New Work. In this context, we offer all employees whose activities allow them the opportunity to generally work in home office and to spend 20–40 % of their time in the office. The teams are free to schedule the office days. In order to ensure that all employees also have a workplace, we have introduced the Tableair booking tool. This approach also applies to our colleagues who do not live in Berlin and are therefore rarely in the office. However, in order to keep travel activity to a minimum in terms of climate protection, adapted regulations apply here. For colleagues abroad or who live more than 100 km away from Berlin, the regulation is to come to the office two to four times a year. We also offer our employees, who can generally work remotely, the opportunity to work from abroad.





We are convinced that, despite the flexibility that we want to offer, we must not lose our mutual cooperation in order to maintain our special culture, which is why we have opted for a hybrid New Work model that includes the presence of the teams in the office.

**In addition to the high flexibility in the design of their everyday work, we want to support our employees in being able to better deal with challenges at the workplace or in the private sphere and to protect their mental health.**

To this end, we entered into a partnership with OpenUp at the end of 2021. The Dutch company offers users the opportunity to receive psychological support and advice quickly, free of charge and in a highly confidential manner. In addition to psychological support, employees have the opportunity to reflect on their individual challenges via self-assessments, to use inspiring videos or to participate in mindfulness seminars. For our employees, the offer is free of charge.



Our employees have also been committed to helping shape digital work and to maintaining cooperation. For example, the Corporate Responsibility Project Group SOCIAL has launched a series of virtual events in which employees offer sports or yoga units for colleagues.

As a regular offer to our employees, we provide free fruit and vegetables, regular massages and cooperation agreements with gyms. We also offer childcare in the event of daycare closures, strikes, or other shortages. Other benefits include employee discounts and vouchers for our range of eyewear, allowances for public transport, and the company pension scheme. To further promote the well-being of our employees, we conduct regular surveys. In the monthly Pulse Check, we survey the general mood in the company, and in the large annual employee survey we look at topics such as leadership, working conditions, and corporate culture. We strengthen cohesion with team events, which we also organized digitally during Covid-19 times. In many departments, we have introduced a mentoring programme where new team members are supported by a colleague for the first few weeks. We always communicate our business development and goals openly and transparently to the entire workforce, so that everyone knows where our journey is going.

## **Employee safety in the workplace**

Particularly in times of the pandemic, we place a special focus on the health and protection of our employees and ensure that the workforce can safely carry out its tasks at all times and at the various locations. Our company doctors are always available online and offline for health-related questions.

**In close cooperation with TÜV Rheinland, we conduct regular occupational safety meetings and inspections of the individual sites by the safety officers.**

At our head office, in logistics, and for the individual retail locations, we have first aid personnel and fire protection assistants on duty who receive training updates every two years. In addition, we offer the entire workforce first aid and fire protection courses and equip all new employees with an updated information folder with the corresponding operating instructions for occupational health and safety.

In addition, since the beginning of the 2020 pandemic, we have been pursuing a comprehensive hygiene concept based on the recommendations and guidelines issued by the Federal Government for pandemic containment. In addition to distance, test and hygiene rules, this includes disinfection dispensers installed in all facilities, maximum approval for simultaneous attendees in our offices and the exclusive implementation of video conferences instead of live events, wherever possible. We have re-evaluated this concept weekly with regard to the respective incidence situation, revised it if necessary and consistently implemented it.

## Inclusion and diversity

At Mister Spex, we believe in the threefold DEI – Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Where diversity is ultimately the product and result of lived equity and inclusion. This set of three is also deeply anchored in our values. We are convinced that we are only successful in working together and as a company if we accept, see and promote each in their individuality. It is a marathon – not a sprint – to put this into practice in its entirety. We are aware that we are embarking on a long journey that affects all areas of our company and our business activities, but we are happy to take on this challenge with a positive attitude. Mister Spex now employs over 1,100 people from 58 nations. We have a wide range of jobs in divisions such as optometry, finance, customer service, logistics and production, human resources, retail, marketing and technology. We are a young company, with an average age of 35 years. 37 percent of all leadership and senior management roles are held by women, and just under 58 percent of our entire workforce is female. In our tech divisions, 22.5 percent of all positions are held by women (the national average is 16.9 percent). In the future, we would like to progressively increase the proportion of women in management positions and technical engineering professions, and we would like to hire more people with disabilities. The number of apprentices is to be significantly increased by 2024, and the current proportion of almost

30 percent of employees with an international background is to be further increased. In 2021, we mainly dealt with the effect and power of language and initially switched to inclusive language in German external and internal communication and introduced the spelling of references to persons with an asterisk (gender star). In this way, we want to ensure that all people feel addressed at Mister Spex, regardless of their gender identification. We accompany this change in communication with measures to raise awareness of our employees on how to use inclusive language, even without using the asterisk. Furthermore, we develop guidelines that can help with the use. In a next step, we initiated a project that deals with the introduction of inclusive language on our website. We proceed holistically and involve as many relevant departments as possible, so that this is a joint project of Corporate Responsibility, Corporate Communication, Brand & Marketing, Product Management and User Experience. Here, too, the more diverse the composition of the project group, the more diverse the result. We also continue to communicate internally in the three languages German, English and Polish and, if necessary, commission a sign language translator for our hearing-impaired colleagues. In addition, we have several staff members on site who are proficient in sign language and who can translate.



Our clear goal is to work without gender pay gaps to ensure equity for all of our employees. Among other employees, our equal opportunities officer is focused on handling this task. Another topic to which we devoted ourselves in 2021 is accessibility – both in the real workspace and digitally. In the interior design of our new office building, we have taken care to keep access to and use of all communal and office areas barrier-free, in addition to providing accessible toilets. The equipment of the workstations is also designed to be as barrier-free as possible, for example with height-adjustable tables. We also think accessibility holistically, which is why we have initiated projects on digital accessibility, with which we want to make our website more accessible for visually impaired people. We are aware that DEI includes many other features and will also explicitly dedicate them to us in the course of our journey. Ultimately, we are firmly convinced that we are at our strongest when everyone can contribute their individual abilities and talents. We stand for open

and creative cooperation, for equal treatment and diversity. The socio-cultural diversity, the different nationalities and the balanced part of women are our greatest strengths, which we want to not only maintain but also continuously expand in the future. Respectful interaction with each other is enormously important to us in that regard. We always treat each other with respect and in a positive spirit, and speak out against any form of discrimination. Different backgrounds, approaches, ideas and opinions make up the potential of a team, and everyone can and should make their contribution to the further development of Mister Spex.

## Interview with Judith Schwarzer, Head of Corporate Communication at Mister Spex



**“Communication is the key to sustainable success”**

The multifaceted world of optics, an ever-changing political or economic environment and an international, diverse workforce shape the working life at Mister Spex. This wide range of topics makes it necessary to communicate professionally both internally and externally at all times and to educate, raise awareness and take employees with them. In this context, we are talking to Judith Schwarzer, Head of Corporate Communication at Mister Spex.

**Judith, as Head of Corporate Communications, you have a lot to do with the spoken and written word every day. At the beginning of a conversation, be it professional or private: How do you get off to the ideal start and does that even exist?**

For me, good communication is characterised by openness and appreciation. In my conversations, I try to create an atmosphere on an equal footing, because I am convinced that this will create a productive, trusting basis that is fruitful for all sides – completely true to our corporate value; „We respect each other“. This starts with the way we address each other, whether we are on first or last name terms – and also the use of inclusive language.

**What has your journey at Mister Spex been like so far and what is your focus today?**

I joined Mister Spex in 2013 and have worked in the field of PR and communication from the very beginning. From day one, I was able to support both internal and external communication,

I did everything from product PR to classic corporate communication to internal communication – until I focused more and more on the area of corporate communication and gradually took on more responsibility for personnel. In 2017, I left Mister Spex for a few years and went to Hamburg, but I had the chance to come back in June 2021, just in time for the IPO, and I am even more pleased that I have been able to lead Corporate Communications as Head of Corporate Communications since the beginning of 2022.

**Which communication channels does Mister Spex use and which channel is used most often?**

At Mister Spex, the selection of the best communication channel is always based on the occasion and the target – and is also constantly adapted by us due to the influence of external factors. Keyword Covid-19: the face-to-face meetings were, of course, limited, while at the same time, digital communication increased considerably. As a company, we already had an appropriate infrastructure and have already worked in a cloud-based manner. Nevertheless, the use of a channel is only one side of the coin; it also depends on how it is used. A virtual meeting with a camera image creates a stronger proximity than a call where no one can be seen.

**What major issues do brand dealers such as Mister Spex have to deal with in a communicative way today and what has changed in this regard in recent years?**

From my point of view, these are above all the topics of inclusive language and attitude. Meanwhile, customers, employees or cooperating companies no longer just want to know what kind of products a retailer sells, but also who is behind it, what the company stands for – and

what is communicated in what way. These are topics such as diversity, expressed for example via inclusive language, but also questions on topics such as sustainability, politics or social crises. Transparent, sincere communication can bring real added value in these areas.

**From your point of view, are there elementary keys in corporate communication in order to take along and retain all employees and customers in the long term?**

For me, this means in particular transparency and communication on an equal footing through appropriate channels. For example, our employees work in different locations, some work primarily on the computer, others work in our stores and then there are many more specialists in our logistics - and they work all over Europe. Here it is crucial that we do not just choose one way of communicating, but ensure that we reach them all through appropriate language and digital as well as analogue channels.

## Employee development

**The success and future competitiveness of Mister Spex depends on the motivation and skills of our employees. By supporting development and promotion at the workplace, we encourage our employees to take things on proactively and to take charge of their work and performance.**

The combination of individual responsibility, collaborative exchange, team goals and impact, as well as the desire to continuously improve knowledge and skills is our key to building and maintaining a committed, high-performing workforce. We encourage our employees to acquire new skills and take on new challenges constantly by living our corporate value of „We Stay Hungry“, which is underpinned by our comprehensive onboarding, our academy offerings and our corporate culture events.

In 2021, we launched new employee health and wellbeing programmes for executives, enabling them to review their mental health and talk to their teams about their wellbeing. In addition,

we have introduced assertiveness training and stress management training, which focus on topics such as difficult conversations and the question of how employees can shape their schedule and their environment in such a way that they are professionally successful. In addition, we have continued our digital compliance training to ensure that we are informed and know how to protect our employees' and customers' data and how to prevent cybercrime. In order to understand the needs of our employees and to provide them with relevant and effective tools, products and support, it is part of our corporate culture to seek and provide feedback. Our feedback, performance and development



process at the end of the year underscores this by enabling our employees to shape their own careers. Together with their superiors and colleagues, they can share their strengths and areas of development, review their knowledge and performance against global role expectations, and set personal development goals. This allows them to develop not only themselves, but also the company as a whole.

Our performance management process begins with the collection of 360-peer feedback, in which employees provide each other with transparent feedback on their strengths and development opportunities. At the same time, employees and supervisors perform performance evaluations based on the agreed performance

expectations, our organisational job architecture and the global competence matrix. All of this aims to bring together the performance and development aspects of the work so that our employees have a complete picture of the impact they have directly on their development. And most importantly - what opportunities they have to successfully grow personally and professionally. Our annual process concludes with calibration and exchange discussions before we begin development planning – a continuous schedule of check-ins between employees and executives to investigate employee growth and progress toward development and performance goals.

# Our community



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**Every successful, growth-oriented company leaves its mark. Not only in terms of influence on our climate, but also socially. At Mister Spex, we always take a holistic view of our actions and act in the spirit of sustainability. Not only do we want to consume and generate, but we also want to make our social contribution and give something back to society. For example by maintaining a trusting cooperation with our partners and suppliers, by complying with data protection regulations as well as regulations of conduct and compliance, or by supporting charitable organisations.**

## Partnerships and supplier relations

In addition to a unique customer experience, we at Mister Spex want to establish ourselves as the first point of contact that offers the most attractive and extensive range of fashionable glasses on the market. We rely on well-known and renowned luxury brands, young and innovative independent labels as well as high-quality private labels, offer only original goods and purchase spectacle frames and contact lenses from all well-known manufacturers. For glazing eyewear, we only use high-quality lenses from brand manufacturers such as SEIKO Optical, Hoya Lens and Essilor. Professional partnerships and supplier relations are of great importance to us. In this context, we ensure that they

offer their own employees appropriate working, health and safety conditions in accordance with human rights standards and behave responsibly towards society and the environment. In addition to our approximately 10,000 eyewear and sunglasses models from over 100 brands, such as Ray-Ban, Calvin Klein, Prada, Tom Ford and independent highlights such as Vasuma, EOE, L.G.R and Akila, we are particularly proud of our high-quality private labels and design collaborations in the range, for example CO Optical, the sustainable brand CO CO, an Ultralight Series or exclusive collections by designers such as Michael Michalsky, Marcel Ostertag and well-known social media influencers.



## Product safety and quality

Within the meaning of the European Medical Devices Regulation (EU) 2017/745 and as a distributor of medical products<sup>1</sup>, we have a quality management and post-market surveillance system and employ a so-called responsible person who is trained and responsible for compliance with the relevant regulations. This ensures in particular the verification of the products manufactured by us in accordance with the quality management system, but also the technical documentation and the EU declaration of conformity, which is drawn up regularly and kept up

to date. For example, our correction and glazed sunglasses are tested in accordance with DIN EN ISO 21987:2017 (Ophthalmic Optics - Mounted Spectacle Lenses). The control criteria here are primarily the material and surface quality, the alignment of the frame, colours and colour gradient planes, the direction of the cylinder axis, the grinding-in height and the image-side peak refractive index of the lenses. The glasses are sharpened and adjusted in our own central master workshop in Berlin using state-of-the-art automatic edgers.



## Protection of customer data

We fully respect the privacy of our customers and make every effort to ensure that their data is protected throughout Europe, because protection and trust are among the most important fundamental values of Mister Spex.

### **Mister Spex regularly carries out IT checks and initiates technical improvements so that our data protection and data security measures are always up to date.**

Therefore, every colleague attends regular trainings on the subject of data protection, so we guarantee that all employees contribute to effective data protection and always keep the security of personal information in mind.

Since data protection is one of the central corporate goals for us, our data protection team is in close contact with the Executive Board of Mister Spex SE and works together with our external data protection officer to resolve data protection issues. Authorisation concepts also ensure that any collection, storage and use of customer data is only carried out for predefined purposes at the designated location. We carry out careful checks on all external service providers we use to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In the case of third-country transfers, we take care to implement the requirements of the European data protection of service providers regarding technical measures and further guarantees.

Regarding renewed processes and tools, we introduced relevant, automated processes for the deletion of personal data within our operating system at the end of 2021 and implemented a SaaS-based directory of processing activities in the company, which is designed to be user-friendly and thus makes it easier for our company divisions to record their processing activities efficiently and independently.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to our frames of the company Aoyama and contact lenses of the Bausch & Lomb und Unicon brands.

## Community engagement

**We are happy and proud to make a difference with our colleagues at Mister Spex. We support non-profit organisations with our financial, temporal or social commitment and thus bring them more into the focus of our attention. Our employees decide where our commitment goes, because they in particular are closely connected in the social community and capture moods, grievances or needs particularly quickly. Everyone can place such impulses within our ESG project groups and then take direct action.**

We have been supporting some organisations for many years, as we have had very good experiences with them and would like to continue the successes achieved, including the following initiatives:

### Share

Since December 2021, we have been partners of the first social eye-wear collection of the social brand share. This trendy collection – available exclusively at Mister Spex – includes a total of 26 exceptional models that are fashionable and practical for everyone. For example, timeless metal glasses made of stainless steel and plastic frames made of bio-based cellulose acetate in modern design. With every pair of glasses sold, share provides a person in need with eyeglasses and a basic eye-optical care – where exactly these glasses go can be seen by scanning a QR code inside the case.

### CleanRiver Project

CleanRiver is committed to clean rivers and seas and affects plastic pollution by actively clearing the waters. Since 2019, we have been supporting the project with our sustainable proprietary brand CO CO, and donate a fixed amount of 1 euro per pair of glasses sold. We are delighted about this regular contribution that we and our customers can make to the benefit of global environmental protection.

### Brillen Weltweit

More than 100 million people worldwide lack adequate visual aids and are therefore considered visually impaired. The organisation Brillen Weltweit, with its headquarters in Koblenz, distributes glasses free of charge to those in need in developing and emerging countries. Since 2020, Mister Spex customers have been able to place their used and no longer needed glasses in our stores nationwide which are then given to Brillen Weltweit.

### Mosaik

The Berlin-based integration company Mosaik offers work and housing for people with disabilities. We have been working with Mosaik since 2020 and currently provide 5 jobs in our logistics operations. To that end, we participated in the „Shift Change“ campaign for the first time in 2020. The campaign offers participating companies the opportunity to change workplace for a day and gain insight into other work processes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have paused the initiative in 2021 but we are sure to resume the project as soon as external circumstances allow us to.



## Corporate governance and compliance

To ensure all compliance requirements, Mister Spex follows the recommendations of the German Corporate Governance Code in accordance with Section 161 of the AktG (German Stock Corporation Act)\*, the declaration of which is permanently publicly available and can be read on our website. In the course of the IPO, we revised our articles of association and the rules of procedure for the Supervisory Board and the Executive Board and adapted them to the requirements of a listed company. At the same time, the Supervisory Board reconstituted itself and formed committees with the tasks assigned to the Supervisory Board in the Articles of Association and the Rules of Procedure for Corporate Governance and Compliance Cases. We have established a risk management system, implemented an anti-bribery and anti-corruption policy and regularly provide training to our employees. This includes the prohibition of offering, accepting or granting benefits, whether in the form of money, gifts, donations or other incentives, as well as the acquisition of an unethical, economic, contractual or personal advantage. It also provides guidelines to facilitate analysis and management of potentially problematic conduct. In addition, our legal and compliance team, which meets quarterly, set up a compliance management system to ensure the lawful conduct of our employees.

Our compliance system has been live since June 2021 and is designed to identify potential violations in advance and to systematically prevent their occurrence. This system includes, among other things, guidelines that provide an overview of our binding compliance policies, regular employee training on relevant compliance risks and measures, and a whistle-blower system that enables employees and third parties to report possible compliance violations. This concerns in particular the prevention of bribery and corruption as well as the prevention of violations of anti-money laundering, sanction control, data protection, antitrust and anti-discrimination laws.

In addition to the topics of data protection and cybersecurity, the e-learning program for employees has been expanded to include training on the basics of compliance, the General Equal Treatment Act and corruption prevention. For selected employees, further training on anti-trust and anti-money laundering law is in preparation for 2022. In addition, we installed our own internal audit function in October 2021.

## Internal Audit

The topic of sustainability is an essential area for the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board, and should be anchored in the Executive Board at management level. In our view, sustainable transformation can only succeed if it is lived, designed and managed by management. Regulatory requirements have also made sustainability a central governance aspect in recent years.

As part of the successful IPO, Mister Spex, as a listed company, is now subject to various regulatory requirements, which have, among other things, led to the implementation of the function of internal audit on October 1st, 2021. The internal audit serves as the self-audit of the management system and is defined as a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and for its objective evaluation. The so-called Audit Committee approves the audit programme and the Head of Internal Audit informs the affected areas and carries out the audits. Corrective measures are derived and defined from the deviations found in the audit.

The Head of Internal Audit coordinates this list of measures with the management and the measures are then implemented by the management. The conclusions drawn from the audit also flow into the continuous improvement process of the management system. The effectiveness of the implemented corrective measures will be continuously monitored and verified. The primary objective of the Mister Spex internal audit is to uncover non-conformities or the need for action within the organisation and to counteract them sustainably. This continuously improves the quality of our products and services and thus also increases customer satisfaction.

# Outlook



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# Further development means to keep moving. We have been doing this since our foundation and will continue to do so.

## A changing industry

There's no question – the Covid-19 pandemic has also hit the optometry industry, in some cases heavily burdened it and caused uncertainty and high losses in many places. Nevertheless, renowned industry experts are optimistic about the future, because according to their statements, optometry is systemically relevant, technically highly innovative and extremely resilient. The four key future trends of the optometry industry are sustainability, digitisation, customer orientation and telemedicine, and thus have a clear focus on interpersonal values. It is about trust, simplicity and honesty as the basis for a successful future in eyewear.

Digitisation is at the centre of attention and requires new and targeted impulses around successful digital customer communication. This involves the latest technical possibilities, digital interaction, marketing tools such as corporate influencing via LinkedIn and Instagram, the use of your own customer base for user-generated content, and the incorporation of playful elements in the course of a growing gamification – the impulses from the community are almost limitless. For Mister Spex, this mainly means one thing: we are already in the middle of the road and are initiating the necessary undertakings to take up and further develop the global trend as a digital omnichannel player.

## Our vision – our goals

2021 was another special year and we are proud of what we have achieved in these 12 months. We have further sharpened the path for sustainable growth and initiated or already implemented important projects. We of course also have many plans for 2022.

We want to expand our range of sustainable collections and enrich them with targeted collaborations with sustainable labels. In order to make our offer easily accessible to customers and thus make a sustainable purchase decision possible, we will revise the presentation of our sustainable products on the website.

After a successful analysis of our carbon footprint, we will focus primarily on possible reduction areas and develop strategies for sustainable reduction as well as tackling initial projects. In this context, the cross-functional team will also be further expanded and consolidated, as we are convinced that we can only be success-

ful in the long term with a cross-team collaboration.

The project of inclusive language will continue to accompany us in 2022. Since a holistic approach to our topics is important to us, we will now focus on inclusively communicating with our customers via our website, newsletters and other channels after a successful transition to inclusive language in our internal communication. In addition, we want to increase internal attention to diversity issues and further raise awareness of our employees through events on various topics. Diversity training is also planned, for example on unconscious bias.

We look forward to continuing to take the next steps towards a holistically sustainable company with Mister Spex in 2022.

