

# PSI

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**Wojciech Pawlowski**

# A bubbling source of ideas

Wojciech Pawlowski is a satisfied man. The 55-year-old leads a fulfilling professional and private life. “I have a happy family and a prosperous company,” says the founder and managing director of badge4u. We portray a man whose success is based on his spontaneity.

The fact that his company is today one of the most renowned Polish manufacturers of promotional products is not least due to a friend who invited him to a trade show for promotional products in Stockholm in 1992. The graduate electronics engineer had met this friend in Sweden where he had worked during his time as a student. “At the trade show for promotional products in Stockholm, I met the owner of the Swedish company Quick Button. His company had badge-making machines and blanks for badges on offer. I was very interested in that,” recalls Wojciech Pawlowski, adding, “I went back to Poland and had a new plan for my future. I also wanted to produce badges.” He decided to give up his job at a research centre and devoted himself entirely to a completely new challenge. And it certainly was a big challenge.

## It all began with 40,000 badges

“1992 was just three years after the political upheaval in Poland. The advertising market was still in its infancy. I took some samples of my badges and showed them to the organizers of Winter Universiade. The next day I had my first order: 40,000 of my 56 mm badges were ordered. I immediately travelled to Sweden and bought a badge-making machine and blanks,” recalls Wojciech Pawlowski as he looks back on his successful beginnings 25 years ago. “Due to the linguistic similarities and the culture, I initially concentrated on the market in Russia and the Ukraine where I built up a network of sales partners and gradually expanded.” Since then, a lot has happened. After beginning in a small apartment with one employee, badge4u has today developed into a major company with 50 employees in a three-building complex on 1,700 square metres. Affordable office and production facilities eventually made it possible to expand to Western Europe. The clever entrepreneur invested in his own digital printing





and other production machines. “We are one of the market leaders in the EU-wide badge business”, says a proud Wojciech Pawlowski. However, there is still room to grow: “There is still a lot to do to become the number one.” The successful entrepreneur is well aware that this is only possible with his entire team. He also clearly expresses this: “My greatest success is the team that works with me. I know every single step in our production process very precisely. I know what my employees have to do and appreciate what they do.”

### Some orders are more than simply business

For Wojciech Pawlowski, badge4u is far more than simply a company: “It is like my second home,” he says summing up his bond. The performance of badge4u is quite impressive. 15 million badges are produced each year. In addition, a wide range of other products are also now available. In 2011, badge4u introduced the mobile phone cleaner. “We were the first to launch this product on the EU market,” says Wojciech Pawlowski. Today four million pieces are produced every year. Besides these two main products, badge4u offers magnets, iMagnets (silicone stickers) and mobile phone grips (anti-slip stickers for mobile phones). For four years, there has also been another key product. “In 2013, we developed and introduced the Card-guard. This is a special case that protects all contactless payment cards in the cheque card format against unauthorized access and data transfer,” says Wojciech Pawlowski as he expands on his product portfolio which also includes the Mobile Card Pocket made of silicone or plastic, which can be attached to the back of a mobile phone. Wojciech Pawlowski sums up the secret of his entrepreneurial success: “The market for advertising gadgets, especially for inexpensive items and give-aways, is quite stable and not prone to turbulences. We produce high-quality products at competitive prices with a short delivery time. In order to be really successful, I must sell a very large number of items. Fortunately, we have been able to do so despite Chinese competitors. “Success has proved him right, and badge4u has already received a number of exceptional orders, for example the production of badges for the EU referendum in Poland in 2004. “This was not just a business deal for me”, Wojciech Pawlowski proudly remarks, “but a huge opportunity to present badge4u on the entire EU market. Since that time, we are no longer just a Polish partner, but a European partner.”

### International presence is essential

He also attributes his international success to the numerous participations at all major trade shows around the world. For years, Wojciech Pawlowski has been exhibiting with badge4u at the PSI. He also regularly attends other trade shows such as PTE in Milan, European Sourcing

## WOJCIECH PAWLOWSKI IN PERSON

### What was your first thought this morning?

I finally slept well and did not have jet lag since my return from Cambodia.

### When is your day a good one?

Every day is a good day for me.

### What gets you in a good mood?

People with a smile on their face.

### And what drives you crazy?

People who are jealous of the success of others and constantly complain, but do not do anything about it.

### What are you most likely to forgive yourself for?

Talking too much.

### When do you lose track of time?

When I am skiing.

### If you were forced to take a four-week holiday, where would you go?

To Australia.

### What do you like spending your money on?

Travel.

### Do you let yourself be seduced by advertising?

No.

### When is a promotional product a good promotional product?

When it is inexpensive but is useful nonetheless.

### What is the best promotional product you have ever received?

I'm still waiting.

### What do you find irritating in relation to promotional products?

When they do not sell well.



Paris, CTCO Lyon, Reklama Polygraf Prague, Trade Only Show Coventry, Hong Kong Gifts & Premium, REX Kiev, COPI's Sofia and Romexpo Bucharest. “Prospective as well as existing customers therefore have a good opportunity to get to know badge4u. In addition, with our high production quality, short delivery times and competitive prices, we have been able to gain the trust of our customers,” explains Wojciech Pawlowski. “We now exhibit at 18 trade shows in Europe, Hong Kong and Dubai every year.” The fact that badge4u has long since gained a great deal of recognition can also be seen in the numerous prizes that the company has received up to now, including the “Korona Reklamy”, the highest award of the Polish advertising industry. In addition, badge4u was also nominated for the PSI Sustainability Awards in the “Economic Excellence” category in 2016. However, prizes and awards are not everything. Wojciech Pawlowski attaches great importance to certifications. In order to meet all requirements, badge4u has been certified in quality management

according to ISO 9001: 2008, in environmental management according to ISO 14001:2004, and in occupational health and safety management according to OHSAS 18001. In addition, the company has undergone several audits to ensure that its services meet the highest quality standards and environmental requirements. All processes are put to the test: services provided, internal processes, customer care and satisfaction, the implementation of legal requirements and regulations.

### Perfectly positioned for the future

Wojciech Pawlowski is not concerned about the future. “The promotional product industry has great potential. People love to receive gifts,” he says with a bright smile. In terms of ideas and technology, his company is excellently positioned for this. “For our 25th anniversary, we recently presented a ‘5-in-1 key fob’. A truly multifunctional tool that serves as a key holder as well as a shopping trolley chip, a bottle and can opener as well as bottle cap. I think this product will be very successful – not least because of the advertising we are going to do.” And with a view to technology, he adds, “We have an automatic and semi-automatic production line. Thus, we can execute large orders in a short time (60,000 pieces per day). We treat every customer equally professionally, whether he orders 50 or 500,000 pieces. “However, despite all the potential of the promotional product industry and all the ideas and technical possibilities, Wojciech Pawlowski sees the greatest asset in his son Marcin. With him, the second generation is now in the forefront. “All the expansions that I have implemented over the past few years have also been done for my son. I am delighted that he will continue to run the business,” says Wojciech Pawlowski with a smile on his face. And this radiance becomes even more noticeable when he talks about the next generation. The very proud grandfather of two granddaughters gets very excit-

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ed about this topic. The keen skier calls the little ones “my greatest treasure”, and is passionate about undertaking alpine ski tours together. He then takes out his smartphone and shows a small film in which he can be seen with his three-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter on a ski slope. “She likes red slopes,” says the proud grandfather whose heart beats faster. Moreover, he has long since changed his working hours. “She loves having breakfast with me.” So, it has worked out well after having decided that he has had enough. The future of badge4u is secured and Wojciech Pawlowski can now afford an invaluable luxury: He works just for fun. And he still has a lot of fun. <



Wojciech Pawlowski (left) sees the greatest asset in his son Marcin.