„Today, we know the direction in which we want to develop“

Interview with Marcin Marmajewski (CEO | Promar PPH Sp. z o.o.)

Promar and Weissman Consulting have been working closely together for almost three years now. Promar is among the leading international manufacturers of functional food additives and ingredients, headquartered in Poland, with annual revenues of close to €50 million.
A lot has been achieved during this time: Promar developed a clear long-term strategy, built a structured implementation program and defined a shared leadership philosophy. In parallel, an important leadership transition took place, cooperation within the German-owned group deepened, and Promar evolved from a traditionally hierarchical organization towards a more modern leadership culture.
Today, this transformation is clearly visible: the company has completed a new production facility and is entering its next phase of growth.
Marcin Marmajewski has been with Promar for over ten years, initially as Sales Director and, since 2024, as CEO.

Looking back, what were the biggest leadership and organizational challenges during Promar's recent transformation, and how has the company's cooperation within the German-owned group evolved?

When we started this process, Promar was already a well-functioning company with strong results. At the same time, we were facing one of the biggest organizational changes in our history. For me as CEO, this meant above all building trust.

I was given a high level of freedom in managing Promar, while the overall direction was clearly defined. It is a partnership based on trust and regular dialogue, rather than day-to-day control.
The biggest challenge was not working with the group but managing the change within Promar. Trust is not built through declarations, but through consistency.
Looking at the company today, I can see a huge difference. We have a clearly defined direction, a stronger team and an organization that is able to think long term. We did not only change the strategy. We changed the way the company operates.

Promar has recently completed one of the largest investments in its history: a new production facility. Beyond increasing capacity, what strategic role does this investment play in the company's long-term development?

The construction of the new production facility was a natural result of Promar's development. We reached the maximum level of our production capacity, around 1,200 tons per month, and further growth would not have been possible without this investment. Demand was continuing to grow, while many competitors were still too slow and inflexible.

The strategic importance of this investment goes far beyond increasing production volumes. Until now, our limited capacity prevented us from taking part in some of the largest projects. Today, we can combine speed with the right production scale and become a partner for the largest food manufacturers in Europe.

We are focusing our investments mainly on automation, digitalization and the practical use of artificial intelligence, as well as the expansion of our logistics capacity. In our industry, speed of response is often a key factor when customers choose their business partner.

Our main areas of growth remain Central Europe, Western Europe and the United Kingdom, developed through direct cooperation with large manufacturing groups, traders and long-term distributors.
Most importantly, this investment gives us a real opportunity to double the scale of our business without acquiring other companies, giving us full control over quality, culture and the direction of our development.

Many companies develop ambitious strategies but struggle with implementation. What has been most important in ensuring that strategic priorities actually become part of the daily business rather than remaining management initiatives?

Strategies rarely fail because they were poorly prepared. More often, the problem appears after a few months, when the organization returns to its previous way of working. We knew that our strategy would succeed only if it became part of everyday decision-making, rather than a document for the management board.

The key was to focus on priorities: what are we consciously giving up in order to direct our resources towards the activities that have the greatest impact on the company's development? We learned that consistently delivering a few well-chosen priorities creates more value than running many projects at once.
The most difficult part was convincing the whole organization that it defined a direction we would follow consistently. Only then does the strategy stop being a presentation and become a real management system.

The first annual strategy review was an important test. We closed projects that had achieved their objectives and focused resources on what mattered most for the future.
Weissman acted as our transformation partner and trusted advisor throughout. We always defined Promar's direction ourselves, and the final decisions remained our responsibility. Weissman helped us structure the process and maintain discipline in implementation.

Looking back, what have been the greatest benefits of the joint strategy and implementation process for Promar as an organization? Which changes have had the biggest impact on the company's long-term success?

If I had to identify the single biggest benefit, I would say: structure – not more procedures, but a more structured way of thinking about the company. Today, we know the direction in which we want to develop and understand why we make specific decisions.

The deepest change has taken place within the organization itself. We have a team of the right people who understand the strategy and know the common goal. Managers have taken on greater responsibility, and cooperation between departments is completely different than a few years ago.
We have stopped operating mainly in a mode of reacting to day-to-day problems. The new facility, new product groups and investments in automation and AI are all part of one long-term plan.

Weissman brought a regular working rhythm, discipline in implementation and an external perspective. Today, Promar is much better prepared for the future, because the whole organization understands the common direction and follows it consistently.

As CEO, how has your own leadership approach changed throughout this transformation, and what lessons have been most valuable for you personally?

For many years, I relied heavily on intuition. This worked as long as the company was small enough for me to stay close to most issues. Over time, I understood that as the organization grows, intuition alone is no longer enough – you need the right structure, a clear direction and a management model that does not depend on one person.

The biggest change for me was moving from operational management to consciously building the organization. Today, I deliberately give people more space. We have leaders responsible for their own areas, while my role is to set the direction, develop the team and remove barriers.
My time horizon has also changed. Today I consider how decisions will affect Promar's position in five or seven years, because sustainable growth requires patience and consistency.

One belief has remained unchanged: people are ultimately the key to a company's success. The role of a CEO is to create the conditions in which good decisions are made every day across the organization. Today, I measure a leader's success by the strength of the team they have built.

If you could give one piece of advice to other CEOs leading their companies through growth, cultural change or integration into an international group, what would it be?

If I had to give other CEOs one piece of advice: do not wait for a crisis. We started working with Weissman while Promar was growing and delivering good results, which allowed us to think without pressure about where we wanted to be in five or ten years. It is much easier to build the future from a position of strength than under the pressure of a crisis.

A good strategic partner is not there to confirm what management already thinks. Their role is to challenge assumptions and help the company make better decisions.
A strategy cannot be imposed on people — it must be created together with them. When managers become co-authors of the direction, they take responsibility for it, and the strategy begins to work in practice.

Transformation takes time. But when you see an organization in which people make the right decisions independently, you know the effort was worthwhile.