



October 14, 2008

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Accelerated sales growth in Q3 despite more difficult market environment; 17 percent growth in premium segment; slightly increased operating result; programme launched to leverage synergies and cut costs**

In spite of the increasingly difficult market environment, Ahlers reported accelerated growth of 7.8 percent in the third quarter. Sales in the first nine months of the fiscal year amounted to EUR 201 million and were up by 7.2 percent. At 17 percent, the increase in sales was primarily driven by the premium segment, whose three brands – Pierre Cardin, Baldessarini and Otto Kern – all achieved double-digit growth. Accounting for 47 percent of total sales, the premium segment has almost reached the company target of 50 percent.

Ahler's operating result before off period effects rose by a moderate 1.4 percent. Strong pay rises in the Polish plants and conservative inventory valuations weighed on the result, especially in the third quarter. Like the half-year report, the Group's nine-month report showed a 39 percent decline in net profit due to the non-recurrence of the previous year's positive special effects. As of the end of the reporting period, Ahlers' equity ratio remained sound at 50 percent.

In the third quarter of fiscal 2007/08, management launched a programme, which aims to cut costs and strengthen the company's performance through synergies. Examples include the closure of peripheral offices, the concentration of customer service functions, the tapping of more favourable production sources and the further consolidation of production planning functions.

Management has confirmed its operating forecast for the fiscal year 2007/08. The restructuring measures, which are expected to result in profit improvements in a high single-digit million amount from the second half of 2008/09, will lead to provisions in the current year.

Ahlers' Management Board is pleased with incoming orders for the spring 2009 season, as a moderate increase has been achieved against the negative industry trend. The company is particularly satisfied with incoming orders for the new Baldessarini premium line, which is positioned below the existing luxury line and has met with a very positive response from retailers.

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