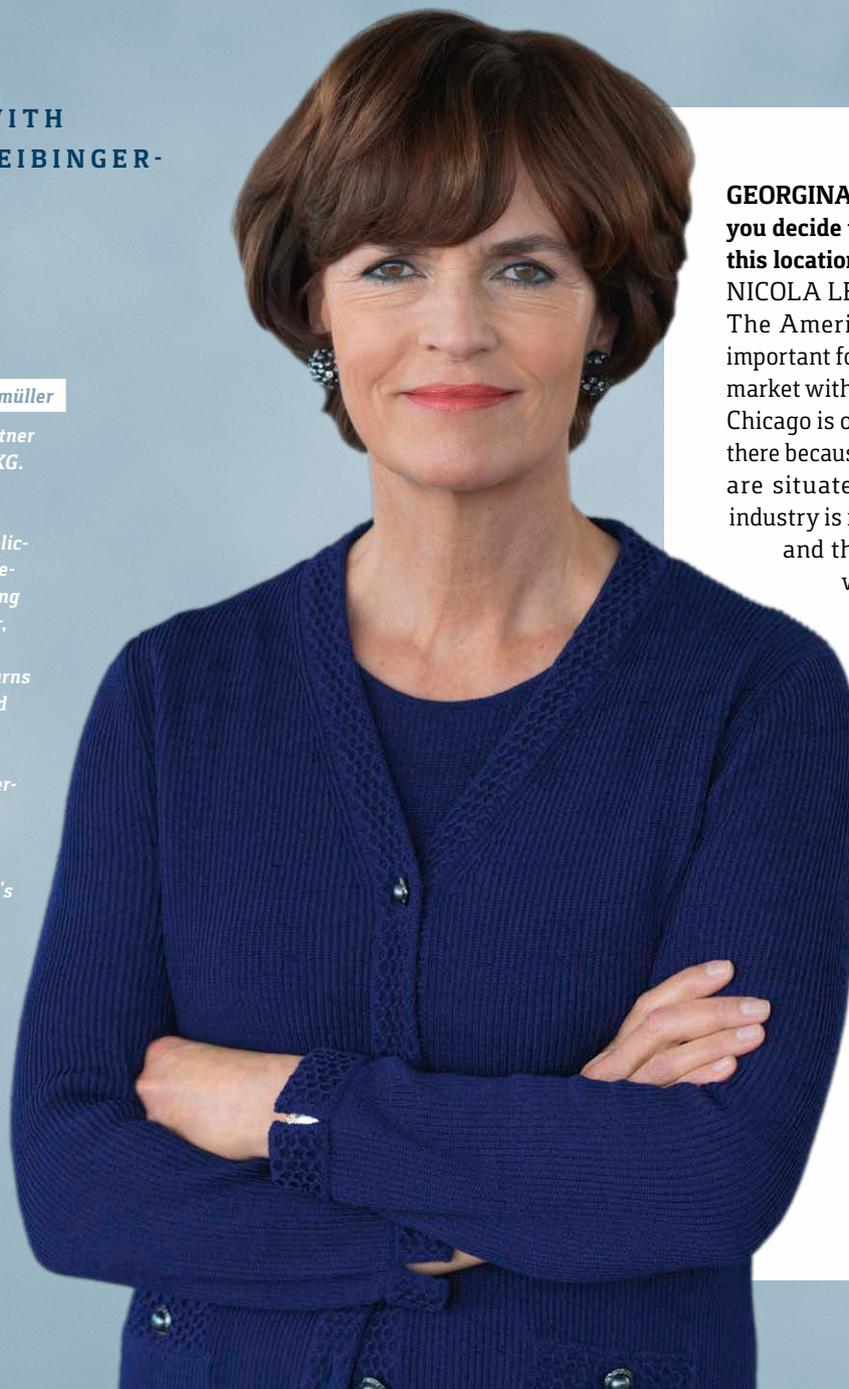


'We offer hundreds of American jobs in the US'

INTERVIEW WITH DR. NICOLA LEIBINGER- KAMMÜLLER

Dr. Nicola Leibinger-Kammüller

is CEO and Managing Partner of TRUMPF GmbH + Co. KG. The doctor of philosophy in humanities joined the company in 1985 as a public-relations and branding specialist, eventually assuming leadership from her father, Berthold Leibinger. The family-owned company earns annual revenues of around €3.1 billion and employs about 12,000 people. A mother of four, Leibinger-Kammüller has turned Trumpf into a future-oriented, family-friendly company through the firm's flexible working model.



GEORGINA PRODHAN: Why did you decide to open your new center at this location right now?

NICOLA LEIBINGER-KAMMÜLLER: The American market is very, very important for us. It's our second-biggest market with sales of up to \$470 million. Chicago is our fifth US location. We are there because a large share of our clients are situated there. The whole auto industry is in and around the Rust Belt, and that's why we're there. And we also believe this market is getting ready to take up the whole issue of digital transformation.

What consequences do current political uncertainties in the US have for you?

To be honest, there are hardly any actual consequences. Above all, we are unsettled by what we hear from the American government regarding protectionist measures — the whole "America First" policy — to seal off the American market and make it difficult

for the competition, especially Germany. Even though we manufacture in the US and understand ourselves as an American company, we still import a great deal from Germany and Switzerland and so on to America. But the American government's goal is to impose tariffs on these exports. And this would, of course, mean that our machines would become much more expensive on the North American market.

We offer hundreds of Americans jobs in the US. If our life is made difficult, we will have to cut these jobs. On top of that, this America First policy obviously also harms American industry. The US will lose its ability to innovate if it doesn't allow for competition, if it cuts itself off. And then, to put it frankly, American customers won't have any other option than to buy German or Japanese or Swiss products because the American machine-tool industry will no longer exist.

Are you talking to local politicians?

We are in contact with government officials in Connecticut, where we also have a site, so they can take our concerns into account. But you know the situation in America: It's rather difficult. Trump so often goes it alone.

Are the Americans ahead of the Germans in digital technology?

In terms of the adoption of new technologies, Americans are more open, less fearful, have fewer



constraints and try out more things — this is a great strength of America. In Germany, we also have customers who are engaged with the topic, but we have to do more to convince them.

TRUMPF increased its sales in the American market by 14% to €421 million in 2016, making the US its second-largest single market after Germany. The company plans to continuously expand its market presence over the long term. Opening the Smart Factory in Chicago in October 2017 was an important milestone in this regard.

The interview was conducted by Georgina Prodhon, Chief Correspondent at Reuters. She runs Reuters company news coverage out of Germany, with a focus on industry and infrastructure. She can be contacted at presse@amcham.de.