

Executive Profile: Wolfgang Ahrens

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AudaExplore is a leading provider of automotive claims, underwriting and information solutions to insurance carriers and collision repair shops. Since 2010, Wolfgang Ahrens has been managing director of AudaExplore, where he has overseen operations and accelerated the development of innovative products and services to serve the needs of the American market.

RESUME

Name: Wolfgang Ahrens.

Company: AudaExplore.

Title: Managing Director.

No. of employees: 600+.

Year founded: 1966.

Education: Master's degree in business administration from the University of Hamburg.

Birthplace: Hamburg, Germany.

Age: 55.

Current residence: 4S Ranch.

Family: Wife, Petra, Son, Max; daughter Leonora.

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY

Essential business philosophy: Work with people who have a good heart, fresh ideas, and put them in an environment to be successful.

Best way to keep a competitive edge: Listen to the market, and most importantly, customers. Be in tune with the next generation of car manufacturer technical innovations.

Guiding principles: AudaExplore follows a set of organizational principles that fosters an environment of innovation, high-performance and results.

Think 80/20: Encourages managers and associates to focus their individual efforts on the 20 percent that produces 80 percent of results.

Act 30/30: Encourages waste reduction of 30 percent and productivity increase of 30 percent.

Live 90/10: Encourages managers and associates to personally assume 90 percent accountability for team-based projects with a remaining 10 percent of accountability to colleagues.

Yardsticks of success: In others, I look for high levels of integrity and demonstrated respect for others. For myself, I always want to ensure I do the right thing.

Goals yet to be achieved: Sail across the Atlantic.

JUDGMENT CALLS

Best business decision: My decision to bring my broad international experience to the automotive claims space to eliminate paper processes and accelerate payments.

Worst business decision: To believe in the Internet bubble.

Toughest business decision: Reducing headcount in Germany, several employees with 25+ years of experience. While I met with each individually, such restructuring is always a tough job of management.

Biggest missed opportunity: As a master's student, I was part of a group project that developed software for automating the processing of cargo shipping containers and identifying their contents. We were approached by investors interested in funding a company around our systems, and I sometimes wonder if I would have been a successful entrepreneur.

Word that describes you: Authentic.

TRUE CONFESSIONS

What you like best about your job: The fact that we are positioned to take advantage of many exciting business opportunities.

What you like least about your job: Extensive traveling and spending too much time on airplanes.

Pet peeves: Poor drivers.

Most important lesson learned: When you enjoy your work, it doesn't feel like work.

Person most interested in meeting: New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. I would like to ask him how he applies the lessons learned in business to the public sector.

Three greatest passions: Riding my motorcycle to Sturgis annually, sailing, breakfast at the beach.

First choice for a new career: Manager of a 5-star hotel. I would like the fast pace and immediate feedback from customers.

PREDILECTIONS

Most influential book: "End of the Good Life" by Riva Froymovich.

Favorite status symbol: My Audi.

Favorite restaurant: Vigilucci's in Encinitas.

Favorite place for business meetings: Hilton, Chicago O'Hare Airport.

Favorite vacation spot: Hawaii.

Favorite way to spend time: Building computers from scratch using spare parts.