



# “The trend goes towards small batches”

General Manager Roberto Zürcher and Sales Manager Jan Paetzold tell us what the future of the Swiss pharmaceutical and medical market looks like.

## When was the location near Basel established?

**Zürcher:** Uhlmann Höfliger Schweiz GmbH has been existing since 2005. It was the first sales and service company that Harro Höfliger founded together with Uhlmann and thus an important pioneer for the Excellence United alliance, which was established six years later. At that time we started with two people, later a service technician joined us. Meanwhile we are seven colleagues at the site.

## What characterizes the pharmaceutical market in Switzerland?

**Paetzold:** The pharmaceutical industry has changed considerably in recent years. Suppliers have relocated their mass production of relatively easy to manufacture products to other countries.

In Switzerland, the focus is increasingly on “small volume & high value products”. This means that complex powder filling technologies, small batches and development projects involving highly complex products such as pens, autoinjectors or wearable pumps are our daily business these days. With our consulting, device and pharmaceutical services, we support start-ups and small companies in quickly building up know-how in order to develop devices. We also help large companies to launch new products as quickly as possible.

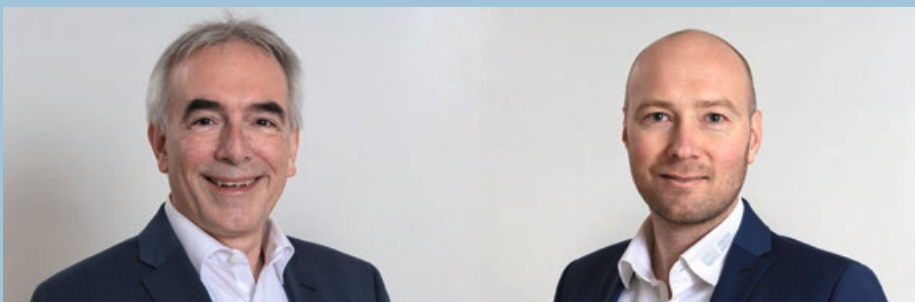
## What does the changeover to small batches mean for Harro Höfliger?

**Zürcher:** The focus on small batches places new demands on our machines. It is no longer important how fast a machine can run, but how flexibly it can be

retrofitted for batch sizes from 10 to 200 pieces. In the medical field, too, development due to personalized medicine is increasingly moving towards small batches. One extreme example is cell and gene therapy, where a drug is produced for just one person. That requires the patient’s blood to be taken, modification of certain cells and subsequent re-injection. These are one-off therapies that can completely cure diseases and spare the patient a lifetime of medication. The large pharmaceutical companies located in Switzerland are already working intensively on this new form of therapy.

## Where do you see further growth potential?

**Paetzold:** Although Switzerland is a country with high wages, there are still many companies in the medical sector that map processes manually, because the processes involving implants or surgical instruments are simply very complicated. New technologies will enable us to automate processes that until now were regarded as impossible to automate. As an example, today we have camera systems with deep learning software that allow us to identify things that were considered undetectable only yesterday. ■



For Roberto Zürcher (left) and Jan Paetzold, the future lies in personalized medicine.