

PRESS RELEASE

To ensure a harmonious transition and solid prospects for long-term development, Shark has opted for an MBO together with AtriA Capital Partenaires

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Shark has announced that it has been bought out by a management team led by Robert Carvaillo and with the backing of AtriA Capital Partenaires.

Shark

Shark has a somewhat unusual history for a family-owned company in that it has succeeded in becoming an international leader in its field thanks to judicious choices and the entrepreneurial drive of its management. Founded in 1929, the company originally operated a bicycle and motorcycle shop in Marseille. In 1965, it became the French importer of the renowned Moto Guzzi line. In the 1980s, under André and Robert Teston, the founder's grandsons, it turned to the distribution of motorcycle helmets before creating its own brand and beginning to manufacture helmets in the 1990s. Today, Shark is the leading brand of motorcycle helmets in France and a global leader as well.

The company continues to be based in Marseille, and has manufacturing facilities in Thailand and Portugal. It currently has 640 employees and sales of around €30 million, more than half of which are generated outside of France. It sells nearly 400,000 helmets a year in 35 countries and boasts 25 world motorcycle championship winners among its customers.

Management

André and Robert Teston have handed over the reins to a long-standing management team under chairman Robert Carvaillo, who was previously the head of the Thai subsidiary. Jean-Marc Manuguerra, the sales manager for France and Competition, Christophe Miravals, the head of export sales, and Christian Roux, the head of finance, have taken equity stakes in the company along with Carvaillo, and Robert Teston continues to head strategy and marketing.

Management Buy Out

Previously, Shark was majority-owned by André and Robert Teston and by Crédit du Nord and Naxicap Partners (formerly SPEF Développement), which had supported the company with growth capital since the end of 1996.

The MBO was led by AtriA Capital Partenaires, which managed the project's structuring and funding, with Crédit Agricole Alpes Provence arranging the senior debt.

Following the transaction, AtriA Private Equity Fund II owns a majority stake in the takeover holding company with Shark managers owning another 20%.

Strategy and outlook

Management's business plan, which has the support of AtriA Capital Partenaires, forecasts continued growth for the company in its markets, continued technical leadership, the development of products for segments new to the company (e.g. its urban "jet" helmet) and more rapid expansion into high-potential regions. There are a number of market segments and countries that have barely been penetrated but where the Shark brand is well-known and in demand from retailers. Management's plan involves exploiting these opportunities and satisfying this demand.

AtriA Capital Partenaires

With a professional staff of ten, AtriA Capital Partenaires is managed by one of the most experienced private equity teams in France. Wholly owned by its staff, AtriA Capital Partenaires has the independence needed to become fully involved in projects led by entrepreneurs. It manages funds of €325 million and is specifically devoted to medium-sized growth companies. It makes equity investments in Growth Buy Out projects such as leveraged management buy outs, spin-offs from larger companies, public-to-private deals and management takeovers of family-owned businesses. Alongside large French and international institutional investors, the Club des Entrepreneurs AtriA brings together some 30 company owners/managers who have also invested in AtriA funds and contribute to creating value for the companies in its portfolio.

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