

Media release

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Thomas Studhalter to become the new CEO of BDO

Thomas Studhalter will take over the position of CEO of BDO on 1 January 2021. He succeeds Werner Schiesser, who is handing over the reins after ten successful years and at the end of his term in office.

Werner Schiesser has been CEO of BDO since January 2011. Since then, the company has grown every year despite operating in a difficult market environment. This has made a significant contribution to BDO's strong market position. Under Werner Schiesser's leadership, BDO rose to the challenges of a digitalised environment and pushed forward with digital transformation. One milestone during Werner Schiesser's term in office was the move to new headquarters at Schiffbauplatz in Zurich. BDO's relocation responded to the growth of recent years and prepared the company for the future. Werner Schiesser will leave the company at the end of his term in office and will in future focus on his work for boards of directors as well as consulting in the area of white-collar crime. He will also contribute his expertise in court and arbitration cases. He hands over the operating leadership of BDO to his successor Thomas Studhalter on 1 January 2021.

Thomas Studhalter (51) lives with his family in central Switzerland. With a degree in business economics (HWV), Thomas Studhalter is also a Swiss Certified Public Accountant and draws on a large professional and social network in addition to having extensive specialist knowledge and leadership skills. As lead auditor, he has many years' experience in auditing key accounts and listed companies. Thomas Studhalter joined BDO in 2014 as Head of Business Solutions in Lucerne. Since September 2015, he has been responsible for Business Solutions in the Central Switzerland Region and a Member of Regional Management Central Switzerland. In Thomas Studhalter, an entrepreneurial and experienced leader is taking over the reins at BDO. Previously a top athlete with a successful track record as Swiss rowing champion, his passion for the sport remains with him today. His connection to nature and the support of his family give him the balance he needs to maintain calm even in challenging times.

Focus on client proximity

Thomas Studhalter will continue the path started by his predecessor at BDO. For him, it is important to put the client at the heart of all activities: "We want our clients to sense that we're as close as they need us to be. That's not necessarily geographical proximity, it's more about the way we work with our clients. It means, for example, that we're open to new digital collaboration models in future."

"We are delighted that Thomas Studhalter will take over as CEO of BDO. With his winning and confident manner, and his professional background, he's ideally suited to tackle the challenges of a dynamic environment proactively and to drive BDO's continued growth," says Heinz Vogel, Chairman of the Board of Directors of BDO. "On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'd like to thank Werner Schiesser for his loyalty to BDO over the past 30 years. He has significantly shaped the company during this period and made a major contribution to its sustainable success," continues Heinz Vogel.

Additional changes in the Executive Committee

Due to limitations on the permissible terms in office, there will be two further changes in the Executive Committee of BDO as of 1 January 2021. Markus Helbling, Head of Business Solutions, and Martin Nay, Head of Audit, will step down from these roles and leave the Executive Committee of BDO. They will be succeeded by Marcel Rohrer as Head of Business Solutions and Beat Rüfenacht as Head of Audit.

Markus Helbling has served on the Executive Committee since 2009. He was the driving force behind the development of the 'Internet-Accountant', a web-based solution for bookkeeping and administration of SMEs and the basis for BDO's digital Client Portal. He will continue to contribute his knowledge and experience within Business Solutions at BDO in Zurich. He will also serve as a board member to support growing companies and start-ups with a focus on digital transformation. In addition, he will assist companies with succession planning. His successor Marcel Rohrer (38) is a Swiss Certified Public Accountant and holds an Executive MBA from the University of Zurich. He has worked for BDO for eleven years, most recently as Partner and Head of Market Development & Services in the Zurich & Eastern Switzerland Region.

Martin Nay took over as Head of Audit on 1 July 2008. He has been working in audit for more than 30 years, including 20 at BDO. He leads the audit area at EXPERTsuisse, is an audit expert and speaks at seminars for various training and education organisations. Martin Nay will in future contribute his wealth of specialist knowledge and experience within Audit at BDO in Zurich. The Partners' Meeting appointed Beat Rüfenacht (45) as his successor. Beat Rüfenacht will take over as Head of Audit and join the Executive Committee as of 1 January 2021. He is a Swiss Certified Public Accountant and has an economics degree from the University of Basel. He has worked for BDO since 2001, most recently as Partner and Head of Audit for the Swiss Plateau Region.

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