

Dibbern



Roundtable talk

We bring together some of the industry's brightest to hear their thoughts on pressing issues – from market growth to retail...

Tableware International: Are you seeing growth in any markets or sectors?

Martin van der Mei, proHeq: I do see a return of growth in all sectors, but of course, that always depends heavily on the respective pandemic situation in each country. The situation will still be challenging in the first quarter, but from then on we expect a recovery, and even catch-up effects.

Ben Dibern, Dibbern: Overall, we have seen growth in the retail, online and HoReCa sectors over the past 18 months. It remains to be seen whether these trends will continue during the course of this year, but we believe that especially in B2C markets tabletop products will keep the momentum that was initially ignited from the stay-at-home trend.

Rich Brinkman, Fiesta: We've seen strong growth in the majority of US department stores.

Ana Luísa Roque, Porcel: Our catalogue products generate great numbers in about 50 markets and there's also been a remarkable growth in bespoke production with

clients owning brands and coming to us with their specific projects to develop detailed and intricate porcelain pieces that challenge us to innovate, namely in the USA.

Mads Ryder, Rosenthal: We see satisfactory growth in the luxury and high-end segment with a significant

“We have seen growth in the retail, online and HoReCa sectors over the past 18 months”

Ben Dibern, Dibbern

Meet the panelists



Ben Dibern
MD, Dibbern



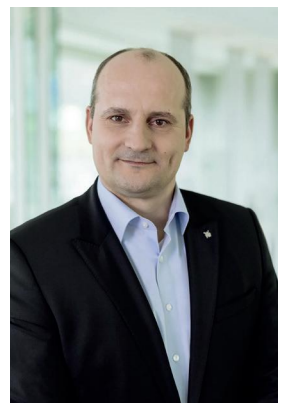
Rich Brinkman
VP sales & marketing,
The Fiesta Tableware



Ana Luísa Roque
President, Porcel



Mads Ryder
CEO, Rosenthal



Martin van der Mei
MD, proHeq GmbH



Porcel



Fiesta

increase in Rosenthal meets Versace orders. Also, online sales are exploding both in our own and our online partners' stores.

Ti: What are the key changes you are seeing in retail?

proHeq: We see some minor consolidations in our industry, but

“The future of retail has been the big question for several years”

Mads Ryder, Rosenthal

overall, our partners, customers and distributors are doing pretty well and handling the difficult situation with moderate steps and confidence. Furthermore, we continue to notice a clear trend towards serviced apartments as well as conceptual sales that cover the fully laid table.

Dibbern: The key challenge, but at the same time opportunity, is to offer a unique experience and service that will make the consumer want to shop offline. Interestingly, we observed that after the lockdowns, there was a strong demand for such interaction in the retail sector.

Fiesta: Independent retailers are doing really well, especially those who have pivoted to meet the challenges of Covid such as curbside pickup, online sales, and other creative tactics. It's also important that they put

things in their stores that the consumers want.

Porcel: Most of our retail clients are still based on the traditional physical model with shops and chains but we notice an emerging number of contacts and clients with exclusively online storefronts.

Rosenthal: The future of retail has been the big question for several years. Despite some years with Covid-19 this question is still not answered fundamentally. Generally speaking Covid-19 has taught us that survival for any retailer without some kind of e-commerce presence is extremely difficult.

Ti: What product trends do you see emerging over the course of the coming year?

proHeq: Certainly, we see some trends in the change of colours and some shapes. In addition, there is a trend towards premium, as the guest wants to enjoy the stay in a hotel or restaurant and is willing to spend more money for a flawless and qualitative event in every aspect.

Dibbern: The cocooning trend and Covid-related supply chain issues were accelerators for the consumption of regional, high-

quality and sustainable products. We believe that this development will continue.

Fiesta: Multipurpose products, like our Bowl Plate, continue to be a big trend. People are looking to have less clutter in their homes, which means their looking for products that serve multiple functions. Our Bowl Plate continues to be one of our top selling items.

We're also seeing a big trend in stacking items, such as our Stackable Mugs. Again, consumers are looking to downsize and declutter. Stackable items perfectly fit that trend.

Porcel: We are expecting, once restrictions vanish, that social events will have a boost and therefore we expect HoReCa to make a huge comeback with the return of needs for exclusive and refined dinnerware in full swing.

Rosenthal: The world is becoming more casual, but this is not new, it has been the case for ten years. It's about bowls and tableware for everyday use that reflects the way modern people live today. But anyway, it's no longer primarily about the singular product, but about the stories you tell, the inspiration you give and the values of the company behind it.

Ti: We are a year in, what impact has Brexit had on your business?

proHeq: We anticipated shipping and customs complications at

a very early stage and set up a warehouse in the UK. This served as a temporary buffer until our logistics teams could make the necessary system adjustments. As they developed very effective and quick solutions, we did not have any significant delivery, transport, or customs problems due to the Brexit.

Dibbern: It mainly had an impact on our deliveries to the UK. Lead times are still very difficult to forecast and we experience many challenges regarding the exports of our products to the UK.

“We anticipated shipping and customs complications at a very early stage”

Martin van der Mei, proHeq

Porcel: We have some direct clients in the UK and also clients that work within this market and for now they notice no signs that they will draw back because of Brexit.

Rosenthal: The UK is not such a big market for us. But what we see is the UK became the most difficult market to get products in.

Ti: What are the biggest challenges facing the industry at the moment?

proHeq: First of all, like the entire industry and whole economy, we

“We can sell it but making it and getting it out there are certainly challenging”

Rich Brinkman, Fiesta

Meet the panelists



Ben Dibbern
MD, Dibbern



Rich Brinkman
VP sales & marketing,
The Fiesta Tableware
Company



Ana Luísa Roque
President, Porcel



Mads Ryder
CEO, Rosenthal



Martin van der Mei
MD, proHeq GmbH

are facing massive supply challenges. Especially from the Asian regions. Most of the factories have reopened, but unfortunately, they are behind schedule and have huge backlogs to deal with. This will continue at least for the next couple of months. On top of that, there are high price increases for materials and in logistics. We therefore cannot avoid raising prices. But of course, we will do so with caution and act with good judgment.

“We are expecting, once restrictions vanish, that social events will have a boost and therefore we expect HoReCa to make a huge comeback”

Ana Luísa Roque, Porcel

Dibbern: The increase of raw material and gas prices are a huge challenge not only for tabletop producers. Furthermore, the Carbon Tax in the EU is new and significant cost factor for all European producers that rely on gas usage. Unfortunately, this challenge cannot be mastered without any energy alternatives for gas such as hydrogen that are not available yet to the industry.

Fiesta: Our biggest challenges have to do with supply chain issues as far as cost and availability. Labour shortages and the cost of freight are also challenging. We can sell it but making it and getting it out there are certainly challenging.

Porcel: As a manufacturer we had a number of challenges related to the pandemic. Related with our marketing and sales I guess we can all agree

that the lack of international events has been the most significant, not only because those were relevant moments to present new collections and collect new contacts, it was also the perfect moment to engage with existing clients in meetings happening in the same place. We had to look up on new ways to approach potential clients and be creative with keeping in touch with our existing ones. In 2021 we launched three new collections – one of which a completely new shape – using digital platforms combined with traditional channels – these showed to be effective and, despite the international landscape, have proved very successful by showing interesting numbers.

Rosenthal: Other than the above mentioned, sustainability is the biggest challenge we face in terms of energy and water consumption in our production. We have taken measures to reduce this and we will proceed to improve our carbon footprint.

TI: How we communicate our brand message has changed immensely in recent years, what key tools does your company find most effective for connecting with customers?

proHeq: Normally, our customers need to touch our products. Since this is not possible during the Corona crisis, we have effectively switched to animations and video as well as social media. In addition, we launched our augmented reality app StylAR, which, in combination with our catalog, gives customers a great

experience around our products. Despite this, we are very much looking forward to meeting our customers, partners, distributors and fans in person.

Dibbern: The usage of social media has helped us enormously not only to engage and interact with our customers, but also to find new ways of storytelling and cooperating.

Fiesta: Social media is our biggest cheerleader; it's a two-way line of communication and gives us a better understanding of what our customer wants. As far as the tone of our brand message, we've become much more casual in recent years. We've found it makes us more relatable to our followers, who in turn are more understanding when we do run into the unavoidable, more human side of business that might cause shipping delays, product launch delays or store closings... like supply chain issues, winter storms, Covid setbacks, etc. More often than not, our unofficial "brand ambassadors" come our defence before we do!

Porcel: We have been keeping up with the changes and engaging with the audiences using different channels. We value and believe in a proximity relationship with our clients, we long to make long-lasting business connections and be sure that there is a trusted bond between us and our partners. If social media and digital platforms allow us to be at a "hands reach" we also make sure to keep in touch using more personal and traditional approaches as we believe in empathy and humanization above all.

Rosenthal: We need to build a consistent communication along the customer journey. We need to be sharp on where the touchpoints are and then we have to place the right messages and content throughout the relevant channels.

