

Faster, Safer, and Cleaner

An Interview with Christophe Gaussin,
Chief Executive Officer, Gaussin



EDITORS' NOTE *Christophe Gaussin is the CEO of the Gaussin Group, a company specializing in clean energy and smart freight transport. He joined the family company in 1992, which was founded by his great-great-grandfather in 1880. During the following two years, Gaussin got a hands-on education at the family business, gaining an in-depth perspective on the sector and acquiring expertise in the material handling manufacturing process that the company specializes in. Named General Director of the company in 1994, he went on to take the presidency of the Board of Directors one year later, succeeding his father, Henri Gaussin. He infused the company with a new vision right from the start by introducing motorized vehicles instead of the "roll-trainers" that his father had built his success on. In order to give the company greater operating flexibility, he took Gaussin Manugistique public in 2006, eventually listing it with Alternext. In 2006, the company filed nearly 16 patents, and two years later Gaussin created a new company called EVENT, specializing in research and development. In addition to introducing motorized equipment for warehousing, Gaussin also reoriented the company toward producing prototypes of hybrid and electric vehicles for heavy loads. In 2012, the company released a new range of vehicles under the name ATT (Automotive Terminal Trailer) designed for the harbor environment after six years of research. This represented a first step towards warehousing automation in this particular environment. The vehicles were especially appealing to port operators because they use environmentally friendly technology, developed in partnership with the CEA (Atomic and Alternative Energy Commission). Gaussin received an undergraduate degree from Institut de Contrôle de Gestion and an MBA from Concordia University.*



Christophe Gaussin

of batteries, in particular electric and hydrogen fuel cells. With more than 50,000 vehicles worldwide, Gaussin enjoys a strong reputation in four fast-expanding markets: port terminals, airports, logistics and people mobility. The group has developed strategic partnerships with major global players to accelerate its commercial penetration: Siemens Postal, Parcel & Airport Logistics in the airport field, Bolloré Ports and ST Engineering in ports, and Bluebus for people mobility. Gaussin has broadened its business model with

the signing of license agreements accelerating the diffusion of its technology throughout the world. The acquisition of METALLIANCE confirms the emergence of an international group present in all segments of intelligent and clean vehicles. In October 2021, Gaussin won the Dubai World Challenge for Self-Driving Transport.

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Will you highlight the history and heritage of Gaussin and how the company has evolved?

Gaussin is a French engineering firm specializing in smart, zero-emission transportation solutions. The company has been in my family since it was founded in 1880 and we have been working and innovating in the transportation sector from

that time to create the company that you see today, a leading specialist in creating clean energy products that move cargo and people.

I joined and took on the role of CEO in 1995 and the first major innovation of my tenure was to launch the first range of tailor-made electric, self-propelled vehicles for specific industries, such as oil and gas, aerospace and others. It was also then that we started developing the next generation of battery-electric vehicles as well as new hydrogen fuel cells to make a full transition away from fossil fuels, and we did it: as of 2013, everything we produce or manufacture runs on clean energy only, either electricity, hydrogen, or both.

How do you define Gaussin's mission and purpose?

At Gaussin, our motto is "Faster, safer and cleaner," and ultimately, what we're trying to do is to make transportation more responsible and efficient by developing vehicles that run on clean energy and also offering an option for driver-assisted technology across the various lines. A major motivation for our team is to help reverse the negative impact that the transportation sector has had on the environment due to the use of petroleum and the emission of greenhouse gases. We must do this without sacrificing important elements such as speed and safety, and automation helps with both factors.



Gaussin ATM H2 (above); Gaussin full hydrogen-powered truck line (top)

COMPANY BRIEF *Gaussin (gaussin.com) is an engineering company that designs, assembles and sells innovative products and services in the transport and logistics fields. Its know-how encompasses cargo and passenger transport, autonomous technologies allowing for self-driving solutions such as Automotive Guided Vehicles, and the integration of all types*

One of the biggest topics of conversation in the trucking industry at this moment is the issue of driver shortages, and automation is helping with that as well.

How critical is innovation to Gaussin's culture and where is innovation taking place in the company?

Innovation has been the heart and soul of the company from the very beginning. Today it is no different and even more evident through our partnerships, our energy solutions, and our technology. For much of my tenure as the CEO, we have focused on rolling out new zero-emission heavy-duty vehicles for the movement of goods and people in the off-road transportation segment. We also have developed our own automation technology for driver-assisted systems and robotic arm capabilities to couple and decouple trailers.

In 2021, we made our first move to enter the on-road trucking space, primarily Class 8 tractors for short-haul applications. For this expansion we launched our Road Truck Skateboard, designed as a modular platform to be compatible with cabins, truck bodies and other equipment for straight trucks and tractor trailers. We also recently unveiled our first line of on-road trucks, featuring our H2 Racing Truck, which is the first of the line to be developed, and it's functional – we entered the 2022 Dakar Rally last month in the experimental category and our H2 Racing Truck completed all 12 stages. We are really proud of how it performed.

Will you provide an overview of Gaussin's business and what differentiates the company in the industry?

Our core product line is zero-emission heavy-duty transportation for goods and cargo with a focus on seaports, logistics centers and airports. We also provide solutions for the movement of people in cities for last-mile transportation. We cover a much wider range of industry segments than our competitors with the vehicles that we offer, and our proprietary technology solutions – our battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell options, plus our modular Road Truck Skateboard, the battery swapping technology and our autonomous driving capabilities, to name a few – are also much broader in scope.

We're also thinking about the full ecosystem. When we speak to owners and operators who want to adopt clean energies, some of the challenges that they face are the upfront costs of the technology and the potential for more limited range over a duty cycle, relative to diesel. Both of these issues are addressed with new technology, but at Gaussin we are also offering turnkey solutions so that when we discuss the sale of a fleet of vehicles, we propose an end-to-end turnkey solution. People are more familiar with this in the automobile space, but it hasn't been common in the heavy transportation space.

How has Gaussin adapted its business to address the challenges caused by the pandemic?

Gaussin has always been fairly international in nature so we are used to dealing with remote work, but some of our processes have

had to change and production times are a bit slower in some cases, but it's the nature of the business. We are not experiencing this in a vacuum – we are also subject to the knock-on effect of the global supply chain issues – so for the most part the key change is our ability to set expectations with our customers.

If there is one thing that this pandemic has taught us, it's to stay prepared for the unexpected, and that's been our stance since the beginning of all of this.

How important is it for Gaussin to build a diverse and inclusive workforce?

It is very important to the success of our business to be as diverse and inclusive as possible. As mentioned, we are an international company with operations across Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North America – so this really provides us the basis for a truly diverse and inclusive workforce. Just as we want to be leaders in the industry supporting climate change initiatives, we strive every day to create a workforce that reflects the world we want to see around us and we hope we can be examples for others in our industry by taking this perspective.

What do you see as Gaussin's responsibility to the communities it serves and to being a force for good in society?

We have a tremendous responsibility as a company to have a positive impact on the communities we serve and interact with. A key part of our mission is to provide support for climate change initiatives around the world. We are the last generation that will have a chance to act on climate change before it is too late to make an impact, so if we can help to stop the

carbonization of our atmosphere, our children and our grandchildren will reap the benefits of these efforts. We're taking steps to do this on our own with our clean energy technologies and our goal is to make the transition an easy decision.

Our strategic partnerships are also a very important way to create a bigger impact. One of our most recent partnerships is with Aramco, which is one of the world's leading integrated energy and chemicals companies. For Gaussin, this is a key partnership for the business, but it is also very important for our goal of decarbonization. It's a goal shared by both companies and the collaboration brings us one step closer to achieving net zero carbon emissions.

What are your priorities for Gaussin as you look to the future?

Our next step is to deploy our Road Truck Skateboard – we'll start rolling these out first in Europe, then in North America. We'll also be building out our line of on-road hydrogen trucks and, as a result of our experience at the Dakar Rally this year, we will be making some adjustments to the truck.

Lastly, we'll be focusing on building out the business in new regions – we launched a North American subsidiary in 2021 and it's a great opportunity to introduce hydrogen energy capability – on-road and off-road – in the U.S. market. We have entered manufacturing partnerships with key companies on the continent, such as Plug Power in the U.S. and Magna and Loop Energy in Canada, and with these partnerships we will have an opportunity to address our core segments with local assembly and service. ●



Gaussin H2 racing truck