



ROBERT WALTERS WHITEPAPER  
**MENTORING PROGRAMMES AS A STRATEGY IN  
COMPANIES IN SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY**

# CONTENT

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- 01** Overview
- 02** Mentoring – Opportunities for companies and employees
- 03** Development and integration of mentoring programmes
- 04** Mentoring as a gender diversity strategy
- 05** Key Recommendations

## SPECIALIST PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

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*“How important are training and mentoring programmes in companies in Switzerland and Germany? In light of on-going candidate shortages and issues surrounding gender diversity companies may need to review and adapt their talent management strategies.*

*For employers looking to attract and retain high calibre professionals, offering mentoring programmes to support staff may be a highly effective strategy.*

*As one of the leading specialist recruitment consultancies we investigated the topic for our current whitepaper. We hope that you will find this research interesting and valuable.”*

**Nick Dunnett**  
**Managing Director Switzerland & Germany**

## METHODOLOGY

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During our study we surveyed more than 130 decision makers and professionals throughout Switzerland and Germany regarding the topic of mentoring and training opportunities. All participants were aged 25 to 65 years, 55% being male and 45% female. The main purpose of the survey was to determine the types of mentoring and training opportunities currently offered, to gain an understanding of what professionals value in a mentoring programme and to provide advice to employers on how best to develop, implement and run a mentoring programme to ensure that is as effective as possible, offering additional value to professionals and helping to attract top candidates.

Our whitepaper provides an overview about the mentoring and training opportunities employees want and how companies could implement these in order to support corporate goals, both short and long-term.

JUST

38%

OF THE COMPANIES ARE CURRENTLY  
OFFERING MENTORING PROGRAMMES.

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# 01 OVERVIEW

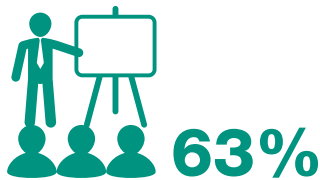
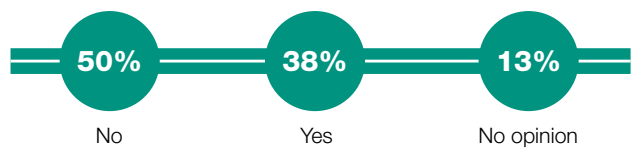


**71%**  
of all survey think mentoring programmes in companies are important.

## Top 3 facts that uplift the career opportunities:\*

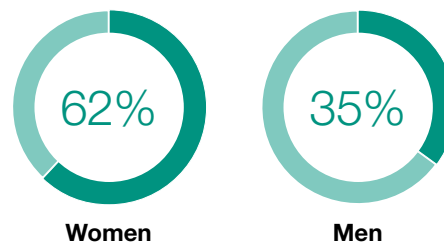
- 1 Individual training programmes
- 2 Mentor on senior level
- 3 External supported trainings

## Does your company currently offer mentoring programmes?

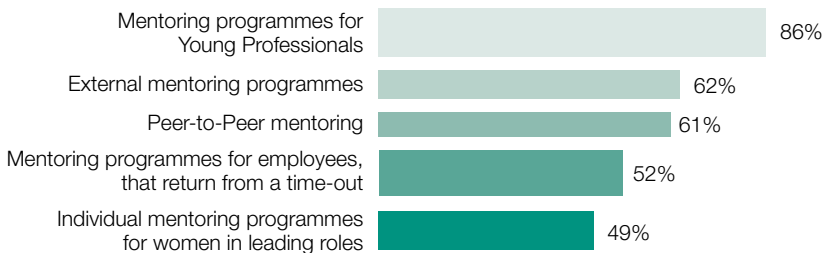


of all surveyed believe that external mentoring is sensible.

## Do you rate individual mentoring programmes for women in leading positions as important?\*



## Importance of the following mentoring programmes:\*

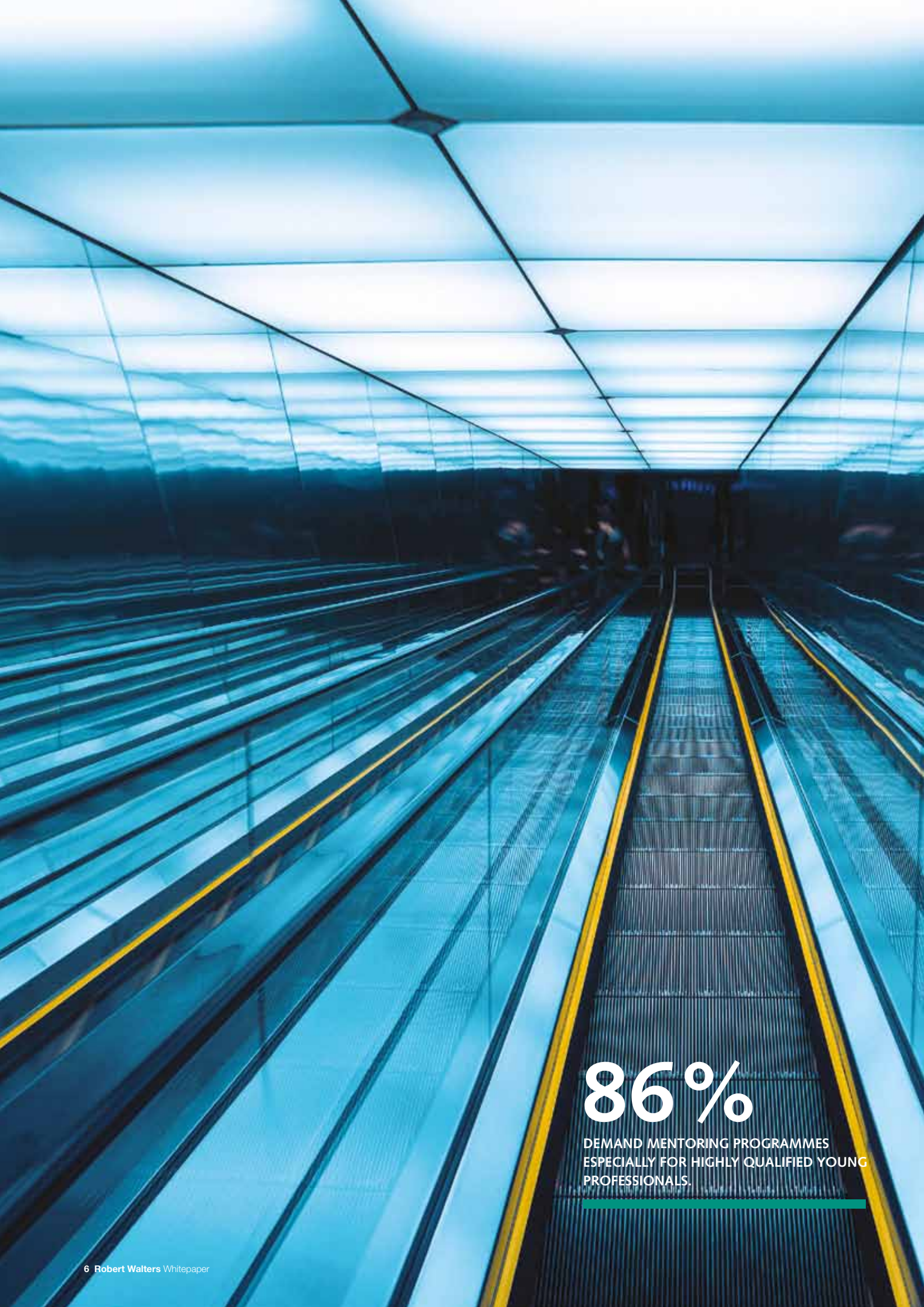


**66%**

of companies already offer mentoring programmes for young professionals.

\*Multiple choice question

The overview displays the answers of all male and female participants of the survey.



86%

DEMAND MENTORING PROGRAMMES  
ESPECIALLY FOR HIGHLY QUALIFIED YOUNG  
PROFESSIONALS.

## 02 MENTORING – OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMPANIES AND EMPLOYEES

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Attracting new high calibre staff is a high priority for employers, but retaining top professionals is also vital for long-term success.

Our survey revealed that mentoring programmes are very popular among employees – 84% of all participants consider that mentoring offers opportunities to drive their career further. However, our survey also found that just one third of employers/businesses are currently offering training and mentoring programmes.

The Distatis (Statistical federal department) confirms that the range of training opportunities is dependent on the actual head count. 95% of all companies with more than 250 employees are offering a wider range of training opportunities.

The broadest range of training opportunities is currently offered by companies in the financial services and insurance field as well as energy and water suppliers.



Mentoring is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the ranking of the most important opportunities for career progression and is rated almost as highly as the offer of personalised support (training and progression programmes).



More than half of the participants (57%) confirm that they consider a mentor on senior level a decisive factor for their own career progression.



Senior professionals in particular point out the offer of mentoring from a more experienced colleague as a driver for their career progression.

### Mentoring can be key to retaining staff

Despite the fact that professionals consider mentoring opportunities to be a high priority, just 38% of surveyed companies are offering mentoring and training programmes. While the vast majority of surveyed professionals consider mentoring programmes important, just 34% are participating in a mentoring programme if it is already offered by the company/employer.

- Employers should consider whether they are doing enough to promote the availability of mentoring programmes at their organisation and if they are sufficiently encouraging staff to take part
- Employers should also review whether existing mentoring programmes are meeting the needs of staff and providing them with the experience and support they want



We recommend companies to support the career development of the employees through mentoring programmes. In order to attract top talent and to retain existing high potentials in the company. Small and medium sized companies still have high potentials in this respect.”


**Thomas Hartenfels, Director Dusseldorf**

## 03 DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION OF MENTORING PROGRAMMES


There is a wide range of mentoring programmes companies and consider implementing, each offering different potential benefits to staff and to the employer. Individual mentoring, including peer-to-peer mentoring as well as specialised programmes for young professionals and engaging in external mentoring programmes. While many organisations will not be able to offer the full range of mentoring programmes, identifying which programmes best complement your talent management strategy can ensure that any programmes which are introduced are as effective as possible.

The vast majority of professionals and employers that we surveyed agree that mentoring strategies are important. Mentoring programmes that allow knowledge sharing between teams – and learning from more experienced colleagues – are seen as important as well as the opportunity to take part in external mentoring opportunities.

### Top 4 mentoring programmes that are currently offered by companies:\*

	Mentoring programmes for leading young professionals	66%
	External mentoring programmes	34%
	Peer-to-Peer mentoring	25%
	Individual mentoring for women in leading positions	20%

### Top 4 mentoring programmes that are important to professionals:\*

	Mentoring programmes for leading young professionals	86%
	External mentoring programmes	62%
	Peer-to-Peer mentoring	61%
	Mentoring programmes for employees, that return from a time-out	52%

\*Multiple choice question

While men and women overall placed an equal importance on mentoring, the type of mentoring they valued differed. For example, individualised mentoring for women in leading positions was considered important by 62% of the surveyed women and just 35% of the surveyed men. However it should be underlined that mentoring programmes aimed specifically at women in leading positions is ranked less important as mentoring for young professionals (90%), peer-to-peer mentoring (71%) and external mentoring programmes (64%) by women, too.

It is notable that the majority of companies which currently offer mentoring are offering a wide range of different programmes, giving them the flexibility to meet the need of many of their employees already.



“We recognize the highest demand for mentoring programmes especially for young professionals, also with the female respondents on our survey. Therefore we detected a trend for mentoring that addresses both sexes. Exclusive mentoring programmes for women aren’t as popular.”

**Christian Atkinson, Director Zurich**



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## Ideal implementation and advantages of external mentoring

In addition to offering internal mentoring programmes companies can also consider helping staff to external experts as mentors.

Overall, 63% of survey respondents felt that external mentoring programmes were an effective strategy. One reason, that has been pointed out by more than half of those surveyed (54%), is that external specialists/mentors are less likely to be impacted by operational blindness and can widen the mind set of the participants of a mentoring programme by adding their independent and different expert perspective.

**63%**

of all surveyed experience the sensibility of external mentoring.

Just one third of the companies are currently offering external mentoring opportunities. One potential explanation for this could be that companies are afraid of losing high potential staff if they help them build relationships with

external mentors who might introduce them to opportunities outside the company.

It is also possible that offering external mentoring implies higher investment that might be lost if an employee decides to leave the company. Offering internal mentoring programmes keep those financial resources within the company.

External mentoring can therefore be recommended as an opportunity to support employees with by connecting them with mentors who can offer expertise and experience that isn't available within the company. Where there are already staff within the company who have these skills and experience, employers may wish to consider internal mentoring programmes in favour of external ones.

In general, professionals and employers felt that mentoring supports overall employee development and retention (85%) as well as the education of high qualified professionals (72%).



# 84%

**BELIEVE THAT WOMEN ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED IN LEADING POSITIONS.**

Gender diversity and talent management in companies in Switzerland (Whitepaper Robert Walters 2017)

## 04 MENTORING AS A GENDER DIVERSITY STRATEGY

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In our latest whitepaper covering the topic of “gender diversity and talent management in companies in Switzerland” we highlighted the importance of this subject in daily business. The results of our current survey partly underline this thesis.

62% of the female participants regard personalised mentoring programmes for female professionals as important. However most of the surveyed women (90%) felt that mentoring programmes for highly qualified young professionals were more important than personalised support for women.

**49%**

of all surveyed see the importance of individual mentoring for women.

Employers should consider integrating individual support for women within training programmes for young professionals instead of offering separated and autonomous programmes for female employees. A programme like this could additionally support the complete integration of an overall gender diversity initiative and help women to be recognized as equal business partners and employees – instead of being seen as a separate group that requires additional support.

Essentially, the surveyed women and men have a very different assessment of the advantages that mentoring programmes can offer. 80% of the female participants are seeing the biggest advantages in the personal development especially in terms of strengthening their self-confidence and stress management – just 55% of the male participants are agreed with this opinion. For men, having the chance to develop themselves to take on a leadership position was considered important by 53% of respondents.

To use mentoring effectively as part of a gender diversity strategy, companies should consider connecting employees with internal and external mentors that can help them to drive their career development. This does not only imply the support of women in particular, but rather to the overall strategy for creating effective mentoring programmes.



“Gender Diversity remains being a highly discussed topic and is partially supported actively. In order to effectively and sustainably implement mentoring programmes for women those programmes need to be developed and implemented in cooperation with the target group.”

**Marco Hermle, Associate Director Frankfurt am Main**



## 05 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 1 Supporting mentoring programmes to convince top talents

Mentoring programmes are extremely popular with the majority of professionals. However relatively few companies are currently offering them. In order to attract top talent companies should consider integrating mentoring in the existing training portfolio and should actively communicate it to the external audience. Doing so can give employers an edge over competitors when looking to secure top talent in a highly competitive market.

### 2 Understanding and fulfilling employees' needs

Even among companies are offering mentoring programmes to their employees, relatively few professionals are currently participating. Employers should consider reviewing existing training programmes to see if they are in line with the actual needs of the employees or if the existing portfolio could be adapted and improved through on-going feedback.

Companies which are willing to adapt their mentoring programmes to reflect the needs of their employees may be more likely to retain top calibre professionals over the long term.

### 3 Implementation of external mentoring programmes

External mentoring is especially popular among young professionals. In addition, offering external mentoring opportunities to senior staff can help employers to stand out from competitors when looking to attract professionals at senior management levels. Engaging in these programmes can also help to raise the profile of your organisation through word of mouth and create opportunities to engage with high potential professionals who are open to new opportunities.

### 4 Gender diversity balance within the senior management through mentoring programmes

Mentoring programmes are an effective tool to prepare professionals to take on senior positions and to build a long-lasting internal talent pool. If companies ensure equal support of all employees – independent of gender or seniority – this can ultimately improve the gender diversity in the company over the long term.

## ABOUT US

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Robert Walters is one of the world's leading specialist professional recruitment consultancies and focuses on placing high calibre professionals into permanent, interim and temporary positions at all levels of seniority. Since 2009 our Swiss team recruits across accounting & finance, banking & financial services and sales & marketing. Robert Walters was founded in 1985 and now operates across 28 countries.

## ROBERT WALTERS SWITZERLAND AG

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### Zurich

Claridenstrasse 41

CH – 8002 Zurich

Tel: +41 44 809 3500

Email: [rwzurich@robertwalters.com](mailto:rwzurich@robertwalters.com)

Website: [www.robertwalters.ch](http://www.robertwalters.ch)



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