

Interview with founder and CEO

# Martin Bellin



01. BELLIN founder  
Martin Bellin.

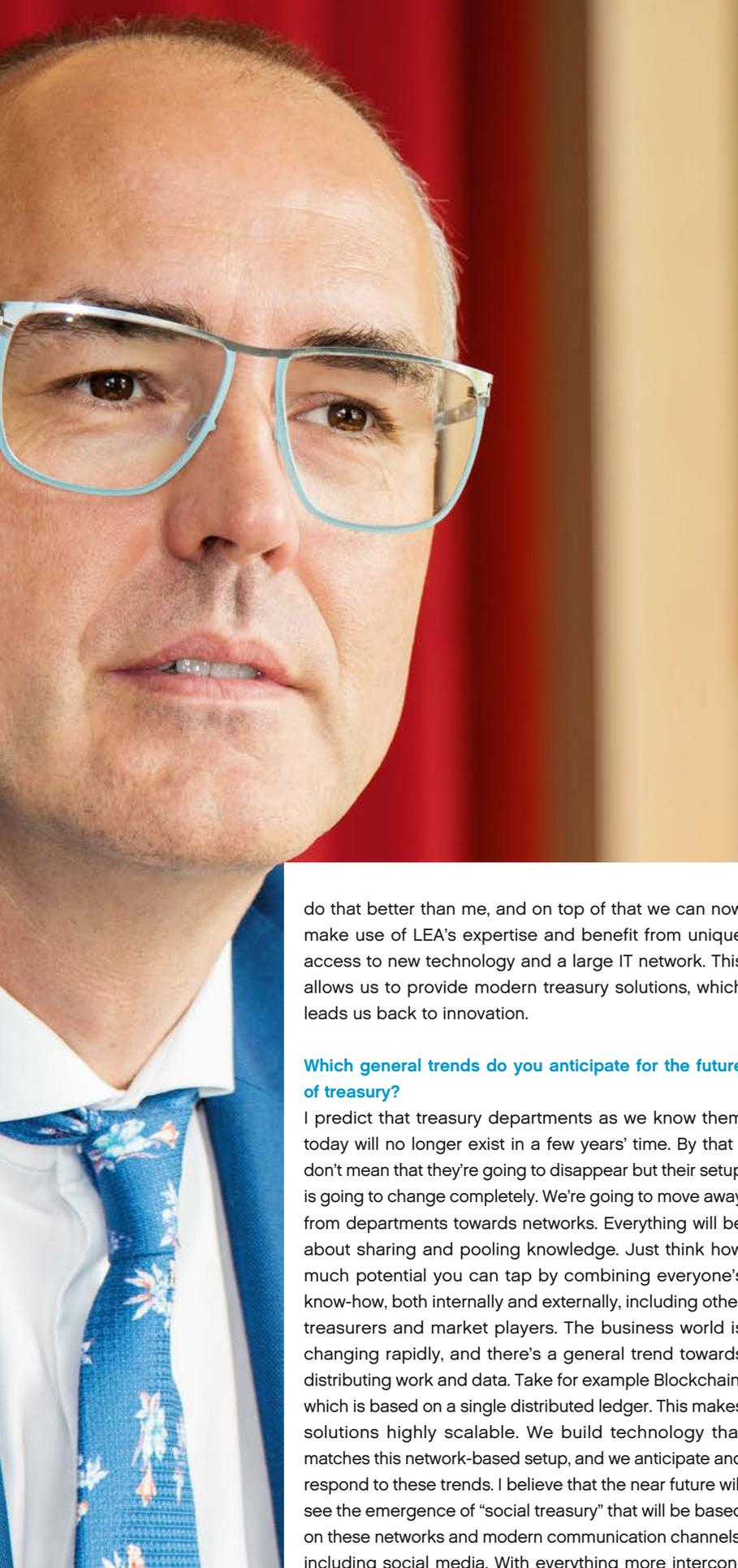
## How does BELLIN champion innovation in treasury? Why is this such a key value to you?

BELLIN is not a software company in the traditional sense. We're first and foremost treasury experts who try to find solutions for treasurers based on our knowledge of treasury and the market. We're essentially a treasury company who can also do IT. This in turn means that we always keep pace with the latest developments and trends so we can anticipate what customers need even before they are aware of it. Market conditions can change quickly, so we champion a responsive culture; we stay open-minded and flexible and therefore always ahead of the curve. We're not satisfied until we have produced and delivered what our clients need. Imagine for example banks would suddenly decide to harmonise all global payments. We would be in a position to quickly offer a plug and play solution as our software is already standardised and will be ready to go before the market picks up the trend. The world of treasury is complex. The world of finance is complex. And the world in general is complex. Our aim is to reduce this complexity as much as possible for the benefit of our client base. To achieve that we need to think differently and always look for new ways to enhance treasury. We need to find solutions to problems before they occur.

## What developments/changes did BELLIN see last year?

Another one of our core values, next to "innovation" is "Heimat" – our "home", the place we come from, where we're rooted. We are an international company, but we are intrinsically bound to our "Heimat" – our Black Forest origin and community – and we value the heritage of craftsmanship, precision and dedication that comes with it. Compared to some of the businesses we serve though, we're quite a small company. We're not yet a multinational giant. The one thing we never want to happen is that any one of our clients feels like they don't get the attention they deserve. BELLIN is expanding further and

becoming even more international. This is why at the end of last year we decided to take on an investor, the private equity firm LEA partners. They understand our business and have invaluable expertise when it comes to growing and scaling software. Supported by LEA Partners, we will be able to significantly increase investment in innovative technologies by leveraging their connections in high tech software research in Germany. This will enable us to continue pioneering the corporate treasury FinTech industry. That doesn't change anything about the fact that we value "Heimat", and that this is where we have our roots. But in a global and competitive market we need to focus even more on expansion, quality and stability, so we can give each and every company the attention, the service and the quality they deserve. There are different kinds of investors and we've found one that supports and strengthens our core business. BELLIN is a family-owned company and I continue to be the majority stakeholder, representing continuity and the values that underpin our business. I will continue to be the "visionary" behind BELLIN. Nevertheless, BELLIN is more than just Martin Bellin. I'd like to redirect some of the focus that currently rests on me to concentrate more on the values and less on day-to-day business. We're too big, too complex and too global for one person to be in charge of everything. We have so many great experts who can



do that better than me, and on top of that we can now make use of LEA's expertise and benefit from unique access to new technology and a large IT network. This allows us to provide modern treasury solutions, which leads us back to innovation.

#### **Which general trends do you anticipate for the future of treasury?**

I predict that treasury departments as we know them today will no longer exist in a few years' time. By that I don't mean that they're going to disappear but their setup is going to change completely. We're going to move away from departments towards networks. Everything will be about sharing and pooling knowledge. Just think how much potential you can tap by combining everyone's know-how, both internally and externally, including other treasurers and market players. The business world is changing rapidly, and there's a general trend towards distributing work and data. Take for example Blockchain, which is based on a single distributed ledger. This makes solutions highly scalable. We build technology that matches this network-based setup, and we anticipate and respond to these trends. I believe that the near future will see the emergence of "social treasury" that will be based on these networks and modern communication channels, including social media. With everything more intercon-

nected and everyone in a way working more openly, security becomes an even more important issue than it already is. Access and processes need to be secured and fraud protection will be top of the agenda. Even today, BELLIN fully supports this network approach. We have decentralised hubs in Canada and the UK, clients all over the world and partners in various countries, including South Africa, Sweden, the Netherlands and Japan, so we can provide customers with the best possible service wherever they are. Local knowledge is more important than ever these days. A while ago an auditor told me that clients approach them increasingly often asking for help with compliance in the various different jurisdictions they operate in. With so much and such different regulations it has become nearly impossible to stay on top of all the different rules and changes. This is why we need local knowledge, and this is why treasury needs networks. BELLIN is leading the way towards this social treasury approach of the future as we speak.

#### **What role does technology play for innovation?**

It goes without saying that technology, including treasury technology, has come a long way in the last few years. However, ultimately technology is a means to an end. Our users are interested in the end result. They want a functioning treasury and frankly they don't really care about the exact specifics of the technology behind that. Technology takes a back seat here. To stay with the image: think about a self-driving car. The driver wants to get from A to B; they don't want to know how the car works. They don't want to waste their time and energy on understanding the mechanics, just as a treasurer doesn't want to spend their time and energy on getting a system to work. They care about the results it produces. At BELLIN, we give clients access to the network behind the technology. With our expertise and comprehensive consulting services as well as opportunities for interaction (such as our exclusive customer platform "Treasury Connected") we work with each and every user around the globe. Another one of our core values is "stewardship": we empower those around us, both employees and clients, by providing a positive environment that acts as a standard for success. Just look at our recently published book "We Love Treasury 2" (complemented by videos that can be accessed at [blin.to/videos](http://blin.to/videos)), the second volume in a series portraying the vastly diverse nature of treasury and our clients with their individual requirements and specifications. We care about every one of them and we care about providing the best possible service. We want to make sure we add value. Obviously, our technology does play a role in that, but the way we look after our customers, the close cooperation and consulting services, as well as the global network that underpins all of this is even more important. ●