Plan B: From bodybuilder to bike entrepreneur

02/06/2025 After Markus Flossmann's dream of professional bodybuilding collapsed under the weight of a barbell, he began pursuing a new vision. Today he's the co-owner of a globally successful bicycle brand and embraces his passion for Porsche, which extends to the electric mountain bike.

Everything about this extraordinary structure exudes symbolism. Every room, every detail. Everything tells a story about him, his life, and his dreams.

Take, for example, the small, carved statue of a goat next to the stairs, whose genus is the namesake of one of his first enduro bikes. The Capra has played a key role in shaping the success of his brand and even headlined the YouTube clips he had produced as short-film thrillers featuring Hollywood stars, which took mountain bike advertising to a whole new level. Of course, the garage, too, is a symbol – of his passion for cars and his success. Three of his four Porsche models shimmer alongside other dream cars under the light of enormous designer ceiling lamps. His first Porsche, a black 911 Turbo 3.3, is parked in the study. He was given the model car at a scale of 1:54 for Christmas when he was five years old, which is what sparked his passion. The entire house is like a photo album you can walk through, and

Markus Flossmann is the protagonist.

In his home gym on a sunny Monday morning, the 49-year-old fastens a training belt that's connected by chain to 120 kilograms of iron. It's a special construction designed to shift the weight to the hips when you're doing squats. When he was 21 years old, he ruptured two discs while training with barbells for bodybuilding championships. The accident was the big bang in his story.

Strength training is part of the daily routine

The term "home gym" makes it sound small and doesn't quite seem to fit when you consider the sheer size of it. It's more of a hall. Dozens of state-of-the-art training machines are arranged close together. How many? "Everything you need," says Flossmann, laughing. The boxing area is at the back. The window front provides an unobstructed view of the beautiful landscape of Franconian Switzerland, with the morning mist now rising spectacularly from the hills. Flossmann has blocked the day for the visit and plans to go mountain biking later. Strength training is part of his daily routine. Bearing the weight of 120 kilograms, he drops to a squat and then rises again to a standing position. The belt makes the exercise possible despite the injured discs. Pure concentration is visible on his face. "Bodybuilding is self-discipline," he says a short time later, removing the belt. "At competition level, that means 24/7."

He began training at the age of 13 and put everything on the line for his dream of a professional career in bodybuilding. "I only started my vocational training in office communication to make my mom happy," explains Flossmann. A short laugh. "And because there was a gym close to the company." At the end of his day, he'd go straight to the gym to train. Flossmann became a German champion at the age of 20. And then with one false move while squatting, the weight of the iron crushed two of his discs and dashed all of his plans. It was as if a wrecking ball had come crashing through his life. The brutality of the diagnosis sent Flossmann spiraling and put an end to his dreams of bodybuilding. At the recommendation of his doctor, he took up mountain biking to fill the void in his life.

YT = Young Talent

"Another sport that demands everything of you," he says. After a ride one day, Flossmann was out with a few friends on a dirt trail. The hilly courses provide mountain bikers with the opportunity to perform spectacular jumps. Fascinated, Flossmann watched two teenagers do one stunt after another, their old, rickety bikes in stark contrast to their bold actions. Flossmann asked them why they didn't have real dirt jumpers, which are mountain bikes, usually with a smaller frame, that are designed for daring jumps. "Too expensive," was their answer.

"I thought, that's not right that kids can't afford a proper bike," says Flossmann, leaning against the kitchen counter, a cup of coffee in his hand. He turns his gaze to the mountain slope beyond the terrace with pool and takes a drink from his cup. He has the words "Good Times" tattooed on the hand holding his coffee.

The mountain bike company he founded in 2008 after the encounter on the dirt trail is called YT Industries. YT stands for Young Talent. This story has the makings for a book. The short version goes something like this: Shortly after flying to Taiwan to meet with frame manufacturers, Flossmann assembled the first 150 dirt jumpers in his mother-in-law's garage. A friend of his programmed the website for direct sales. A trade magazine named the bike "best value for money." And then something happened that Flossmann would have never thought possible. The company took off overnight. Now with more than 200 employees, YT Industries is one of the most popular brands in the scene and produces bikes that are successful in the Downhill and Enduro World Cups. How do you achieve this level of success?

A couple years ago, Flossmann had an HBDI profile created for himself. HBDI is a type of personality analysis that provides information about what makes you tick and what drives you.

According to the results, Flossmann's strength is that he can't do anything perfectly, but a lot of things very well, and his creativity is based on logic. Flossmann embraces the topics and has a sense for exactly what the target group wants: mountain bikes that are affordable, but don't have a cheap image. "You're selling a lifestyle," he explains. "Everyone laughed at me at the beginning. They said, you can't be both a discounter and a cult brand."

But that's exactly what Flossmann is. Even if premium quality comes at a price. He's a master of emotionalization and has hired Hollywood stars like Mads Mikkelsen and Christopher Walken to appear in commercials for new bikes and create a buzz. For the company's Christmas party, Flossmann had the Iron Man suit, including its special functions, reproduced true to the original. The party motto was "Superheroes." But his superpower is normalcy, even if the exclusivity surrounding him would suggest otherwise. Flossmann is an athlete. The opportunity was dangling right in front of him like a climbing rope. He grabbed it, and that's the story.

On the usual trails

It's now early in the afternoon, and the sun has warmed the air to a comfortable temperature, ideal for a bike ride. Flossmann opens the door to the garage. Even though he's used to the sight, the cars put a happy smile on his face. He heads straight to his two favorites: a Porsche Carrera GT built in 2004 and a 918 Spyder built in 2015. Two of the most spectacular Porsche right next to each other in one garage. An exclusive sight even for collectors.

"They're both simply extraordinary cars," says Flossmann. "And still they're both so different. For me, the 918 Spyder is the perfect super sports car for everyday driving. With its racing clutch and manual transmission, the Carrera GT has an entirely different character – for unadulterated motorsport feeling."

A Decoy SN – the latest evolutionary stage of YT's e-bike range – is located at the front near the motorcycles. The Ride 60 drive unit from FAZUA is located in the bottom bracket, almost invisible to the eye. For two years now, FAZUA has been a part of the newly founded Porsche eBike Performance GmbH

company based in southern Germany, which is considered to be a pioneer in the development of lightweight, compact drive systems. “The motor is positioned subtly in the frame and pushes the rider when necessary. But it still feels like a real mountain bike,” says Flossmann enthusiastically. That takes us full circle from the black 1:54 model in Flossmann’s study to the mountain bike of the brand he founded.

Person and machine – a symbiotic unit

Time is a scarce resource for Flossmann, who as CEO works long days. Still, he manages to make time to go mountain biking a few times a week. After a 20-minute drive, he gets out of his Cayenne Turbo GT.

Not far from Forchheim, his usual trail passes over a small mountain that’s perfect for downhill riding. Sporting his bike gear – dark pants, a grey shirt, an enduro helmet, and glasses with transparent lenses – Flossmann takes off.

Here and there, the sun flashes through the canopy of foliage overhead. Aside from the leaves rustling under the tires, the subtle hum of the motor, and the sound of breathing, there is only silence. Flossmann demonstrates his expertise on the trail, which is a spectacular series of turns and jumps. Person and machine – a symbiotic unit.

The sun is already low on the horizon when Flossmann gets back to the parking space, looking exhausted, but invigorated. Why does he go mountain biking? “Because it makes me happy,” he says, his answer simple and to the point. He’s about to elaborate when a ladybug – a symbol of good fortune – lands on the bike. Though it’s merely a coincidence, it somehow feels as if it were planned. There’s another one on the tire. And on his pants. It’s an actual swarm buzzing all around him. Markus Flossmann stops to take in the spectacle. “The red matches perfectly with the frame,” he says, excited. “I just might get a ladybug painted on the bike.”

Info

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[1]Cayenne Turbo GT: no offer in the markets Europe, Japan, Hongkong, Taiwan, India, Singapore

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Image Sublines

Path: Plan B: From bodybuilder to bike entrepreneur/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Markus Flossmann, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Panorama on the doorstep: Flossmann enjoys the view from his terrace.

Path: Plan B: From bodybuilder to bike entrepreneur/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Markus Flossmann, Cayenne Turbo GT, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Ultra sporty: Flossmann transporting the new YT Industries bike, the Decoy SN, to his usual trail in the Cayenne Turbo GT. The Ride 60 drive unit installed in the frame is produced by the company's FAZUA brand.

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