

# TRANSFER

THE STEINBEIS MAGAZINE 02|22



**GOOD PROSPECTS  
FOR EDUCATION AND  
THE WORLD OF WORK**



**Steinbeis**

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The platform provided by Steinbeis makes us a reliable partner for company startups and projects. We provide support to people and organizations, not only in science and academia, but also in business. Our aim is to leverage the know-how derived from research, development, consulting, and training projects and to transfer this knowledge into application – with a clear focus on entrepreneurial practice.

Our platform has now resulted in the foundation of more than

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The result is a network spanning more than **5,500 EXPERTS** in approximately **1,100 BUSINESS ENTERPRISES** – working on more than **10,000 CLIENT PROJECTS** every year.

Our network provides professional support to enterprises and employees in acquiring competence, thus securing success in the face of competition.

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## DEAR READERS,

Looking at the working world of the future is always a bit like gazing into a crystal ball. Recent studies clearly show that the work tasks of the future will require more interaction with others. The key technologies of the future – robotics and data analytics – will have the biggest impact on the world of work, and consequently, there will be a lot less routine to jobs and more analytical thinking and human interaction.

So what does this mean for education? How can we prepare for the working world of the future? At our Steinbeis Centers for Business Development at Pforzheim University, we have been looking at these questions for many years and have identified two important starting points: entrepreneurship education and diversity.

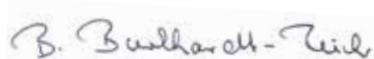
At the heart of entrepreneurship education lies research-based and project-oriented learning: People receive personality training that enables creative and innovative behavior. The entrepreneurship education toolbox comprises a combination of being open to new things, believing in your personal effectiveness, perseverance, and divergent thinking skills. Both the nationwide YOUNG FOUNDERS competition (JUGEND GRÜNDET), which we have been running for almost 20 years, and the Start-up BW Young Talents project in Baden-Wuerttemberg challenge students with a task that requires them to complete independently, if possible as a team using previously acquired knowledge. The students learn to analyze tasks, gather and evaluate information, make decisions as a team, implement those decisions, and then monitor impact. Coming up with creative solutions, planning, deciding, executing, checking whether the goal has been achieved – these are classic features of entrepreneurial activity, the skills that will play a decisive role in the working world of the future. And they can already be learned today.

Our second starting point is diversity. The future will be female – at least that's what trend researchers say. We need a corporate culture for the working world of the future that facilitates female leadership, positive role models for female junior executives, and women who are committed to the future issues of digitalization and sustainability – and thus actively help shape change. Experience with the pandemic and the associated "retraditionalization" of women's roles have shown that this cannot be taken for granted.

Our Spitzenfrauen BW project allows us to campaign for more women in leadership positions, in the firm belief that the transformation that will occur – the transition to the working world of the future – will only succeed if women in various leadership positions help shape it. A defining feature of future-ready, successful leadership is emotional stability, extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness – and women score better on those crucial personality traits. This potential must be exploited!

With this insight into the working world of the future, we introduce you to this latest edition of TRANSFER magazine – and wish you a fascinating read.

With kind regards,






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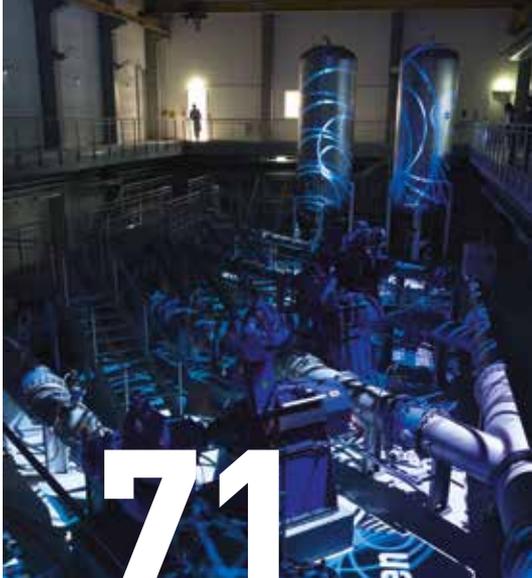
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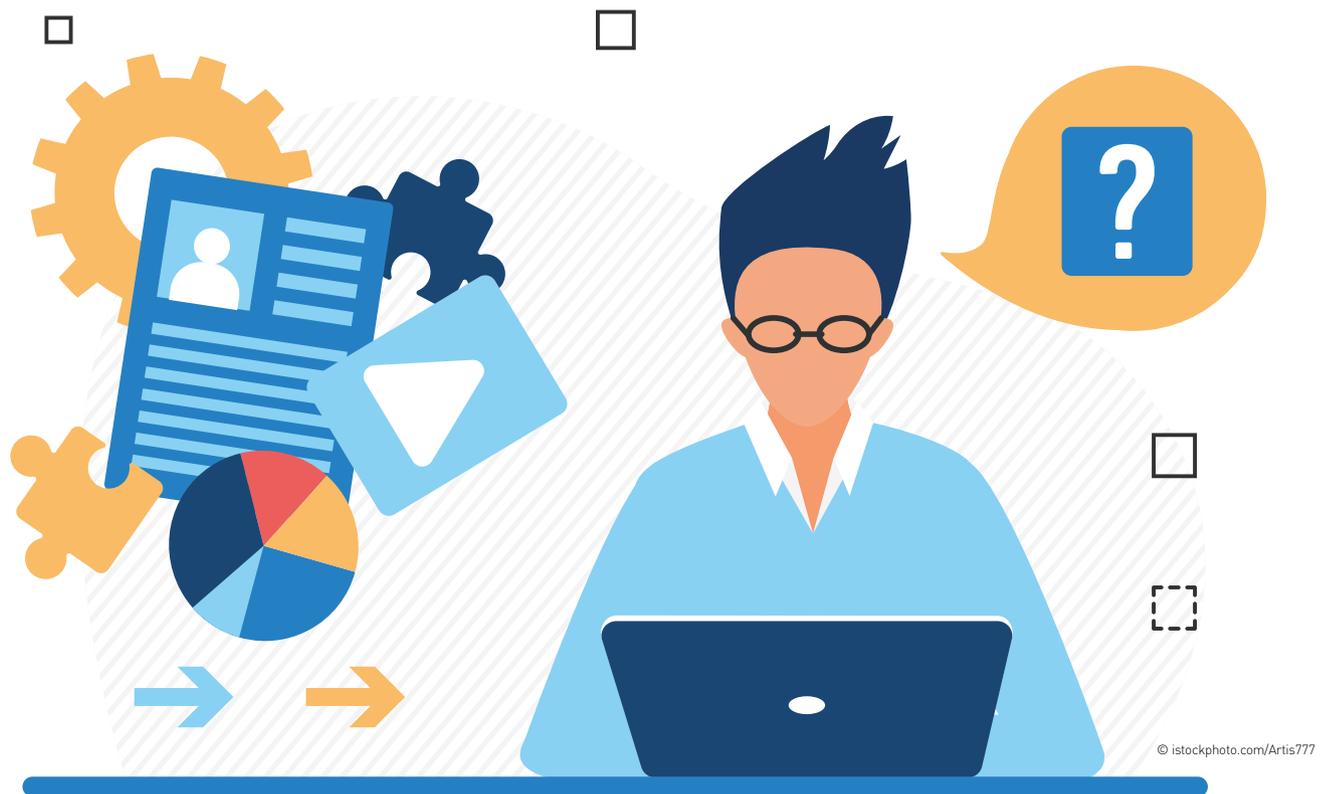
# GOOD PROSPECTS FOR EDUCATION AND THE WORLD OF WORK



**JOHN F. KENNEDY** summed it up nicely more than **60 YEARS** ago: “There is only one thing in the long run more expensive than **EDUCATION**: no education.” His statement feels more relevant today than ever: The world is undergoing upheaval on an unprecedented scale. **DIGITALIZATION, EMERGING TECHNOLOGY, GLOBALIZATION** – these are just a small number of the factors that make **LIFELONG LEARNING** essential, throughout people’s **WORKING LIFE**. At the same time, these factors are also resulting in dramatic changes in education and the world of work. We asked Steinbeis experts where the **JOURNEY** will take us and how **BUSINESS** and **SOCIETY** can prepare for future developments in education and the work environment.

# DIGITAL BUSINESS COMPETENCE: FOCUS ON PEOPLE

STEINBEIS GROUPS SHOW HOW DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITHIN COMPANIES CAN BE MASTERED



Digitization is accompanied by a fundamental transformation process in companies. It only succeeds if the employees concerned will help shape it. Future competition will be about people, not only about exceptional products and services. But it is also about shaping participation, meaning new models and formats of cooperation. There will be no transformation without it. This makes New Work a crucial factor in corporate culture. Companies are well advised to develop their own strategy here. The experts from Steinbeis Consulting Group Personnel (SCGP) and Steinbeis Consulting Group Digital Business Transformation (SCG DBT) provide support from development to successful implementation.

Digital technologies have a tremendous impact on the organization of companies, the people there and their skill requirements. If we understand competence as a well-rehearsed process for activating, bundling, and using per-

sonal resources, in order to be able to successfully deal with demanding and complex situations, actions and tasks, then we will be able to locate company-specific competences beyond the personal level of employees and man-

agement in every functional area of companies. Taking digital technologies as a driver of business competence, it ultimately leads to digital business competence.[3] This requires digital business models as well as employees

and managers who implement innovative digitization activities. Digital business competence is characterized particularly by the human factor, but also by the factor information technology, both building the basis to implement digital transformation.

### **HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH AS A BASIS**

Within the network of Steinbeis, both groups, SCGP and SCG DBT, deal with these two dimensions when supporting companies holistically to implement digital transformation with simultaneous consideration of their business competence. Together, the Steinbeis experts digitalize and transform business processes, especially those of medium-sized companies in manufacturing, engineering, and public administration. They apply data-driven consulting methods, by optimally using needed and occurring data, and by breaking down areas of overlap between data silos. With a human-centered approach, the Steinbeis experts want to develop a user-friendly software solution by using the latest methods of UX/UUX development. IT solutions should support users in their daily work by relieving time. The users will feel more competent and will experience their work as goal oriented. For users to be able to carry out their daily work as precise and efficient as possible, user interfaces must be task oriented. The two groups offer employee-centric digital transformation in partnership: Starting from the business model to digitized processes through business excellence, business process excellence, IT excellence, data excellence and technology excellence. Digitization must also be kept in mind when developing modern qualification concepts in a VUCA environment. VUCA is an acronym for "volatility", "uncertainty", "complexity" and "ambiguity". Above all, living in a VUCA environment means that facts can no longer be

planned, as they occur suddenly and in many ways. This makes digitization so important in continuous training. Goal orientation in a VUCA environment can be kept up when considering long-term visions. Steinbeis experts rely on the Steinbeis company competence check. Regarding to strategy, to organizational and personnel development, it is important to continuously focus on the future vision of a company over several years. Respecting future company goals the main focus of organisational development is to be broken down to the operative level of personnel development.

### **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ENSURES DIGITAL BUSINESS COMPETENCE**

According to the continuous training report of the German Government, three quarters of further training activities are organized by companies and are commissioned and documented by employers. It is essential that staff trainings are up to date and customized and, by extension, training offers must be of high quality, and they must satisfy employees.

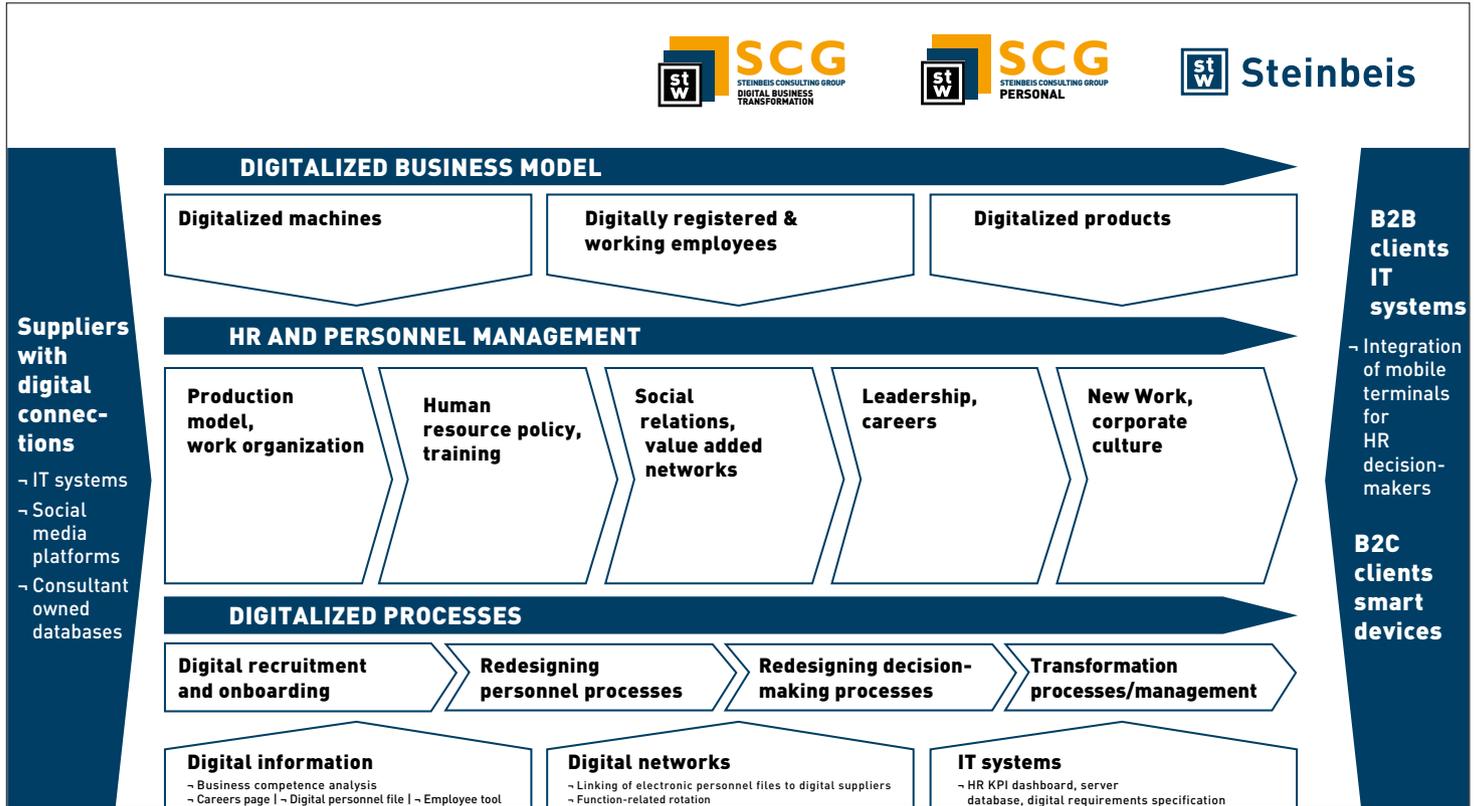
SCGP and SCG DBT have developed special training and qualification programs in order to take the chance to use digitization in companies. As a first step, an awareness of openness, creativity, and the willingness to tolerate mistakes is raised in the company. This is often a major challenge for management. Furthermore, developmental possibilities for employees are designed with the aim to find together new ideas in the company, as well as trying them out in safe areas of learning and experimentation, and to learn the required skills for the transformation process and New Work. In a moderated incremental work and learning process, digital skills and digital mindset are developed for all employees. Moreover, human, organizational, and technical requirements are created to digitize work

processes. As a next step, requirement specifications for the use of mobile and digital work and learning tools are formed, digital networks between people, people and machines and between machines are created, which are then placed as a factor of success for New Work – because checked, valid and transparent information is a basic element to achieving objectives. The data obtained is processed and combined into decision-oriented knowledge for the purpose of making operational and strategic decisions.

At the same time, crucial motivators for New Work are used in learning and experimentation rooms. Also, important skills are trained, such as building teams that mutually trust another and teams that collaborate, or such as improving the teams' communication, presentation and negotiation skills. Leadership happens by competence and recognition of the team, considering defined principles as a clear goal orientation. Self-organization and responsibility of everyone for the result of the team, as well as networking and transparency among the team members are also trained. Due to this, added value increasingly develops from within the team. As a framework for decisions and actions, values and meaning are defined by all employees with whom they want to work with and for each other. As a result, thinking remains with the people and is not only set by rigid rules.

During this process, other needed competences for New Work are strengthened:

- **Being able to better deal with stress;**
- **Strengthening of self-esteem and self-regulation;**
- **Increased attention and the ability to focus on oneself as well as others and work;**
- **Ability to flexibly adapt and having a clear goal orientation.**



➔ Based on Appelfeller and Feldmann [1], the above figure shows the practical and implementable steps involved in recognizing, comprehending, and implementing pressing digitalization issues within the context of digital business competence.

This increases personal and team resilience and promotes success-oriented work, decision-making and acting in the VUCA world.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF DIGITAL BUSINESS COMPETENCE**

§ 81 BetrVG (German Industrial Institution Act) stipulates that the employer must inform the employee about tasks, responsibilities, the type of activity and about how it is supposed to be integrated into the work process. Employees must also be informed about changes, health risks and safety aspects in time. Work performance of employees can be boosted by providing them with accurate information. Information also helps to build and strengthen trust. It vitalizes the relationship between employees and the company. § 81 BetrVG also stipulates that employers must

inform employees about all aspects of their responsibilities. And employers are responsible for enabling employees to do their job competently. From this point of view, employers are obliged to act, whereas employees receive information and are entitled to comment this. Commenting applies in particular to the required training. But is that still enough, given the rapidly accelerated changes, which digitization is only one of, albeit important, driver in the process of change? If "New Work" is really filled with content, then it moves away from the dichotomy of employer and employee with sharply separated roles and in the direction of § 2 BetrVG, which postulates the cooperation of employer and employee representatives. Accordingly, both parties must work together for the benefit of the company and the employees, and both are responsible for this well-being.

**NEW WORK: ABANDON OLD THOUGHT PATTERNS**

But what does the term "New Work" actually mean? Basically, it means to acknowledge that the accelerating transformation needs to be shaped and that this can no longer be dictated by the employer alone; the best way must be discussed by all stakeholders in an iterative process. Nobody has the sole wisdom anymore, but progress comes from the participation of everyone. This again means that trade unions and works councils must become active partners of employers in finding this way through transformation and also have to be recognized as such. Employees are increasingly becoming the designers of their work and their work environment, which might be a major challenge for many. But if it is true that for people compe-

tence, importance, self-determination and influence are decisive for their efficiency; if it is true that the experience of autonomy, experience of competence and social integration are the essential drivers for human activity, then this is no longer a challenge, but an additional gain through successful transformation. The role of a consultation within the transformation process must then be to introduce this point of view to all stakeholders, to focus on competence and creative will of others and to come together for work.

In this sense, agreed changes in work organization are to be considered as a living object that must constantly be adapted, even if they are "fixed" in company agreements. In this respect, even large-scale operational changes become a permanent task. Living and working in that kind of environment requires the courage of all those involved to go beyond previous limits in thinking, to always regard § 2 BetrVG as the most important paragraph while complying with legal regulations, and to abandon old thought patterns. This is "New Work" then and it is beyond hyped changes in work organization such as home office, working time autonomy and agile work group models. Instead, it is about active participation, about enabling a process of dialogue and a process of design to determine work organization and to define working conditions.

### **DIVERSITY AND VERSATILITY IN CORPORATE CULTURE**

Organizational development, in conjunction with education and promotion, forms personnel development in the broadest sense and is defined as a strategy of planned and systematic organizational change by influencing the organizational structure, corporate culture and individual behaviour with the greatest

possible consideration of the affected employees. A characteristic feature of the transformation are new technological convergences that trigger always new mergers between organizations, hierarchies, specialist disciplines, working models and cultures. This leads to a large diversity, which is both an opportunity and a challenge. The origin of New Work is to be found in these cross-sector interfaces. Digitization works like an amplifier here. New Work influences the corporate culture through new models and formats of cooperation. Companies should pay attention to this in their strategy.

A modern, open-minded corporate culture is not just a figurehead for companies, it is the basis of every transformation competence. This fact is just as diverse as the group of participants with their expertise. Once the actors have been identified and are ready, it is important to establish equal rights for all those involved, across hierarchies and sectors. Without this, employees will not constructively support decisions and change. Every change requires both the technical qualification and the mental readiness of the employees, the much-cited "mindset". Having knowledge of the diversity in a workforce is therefore a basic requirement for the successful development of New Work with target group-specific addressing, motivation, role allocation and participation. New Work therefore always means New Leadership, which analyses new management tasks and questions about personal assessments and experiences in relation to hybrid work or remote leadership. But "leadership versatility" is rather needed, a paradigm shift that assumes emotionally mature leaders: "Compassionate managers are leaders with a high degree of versatility, who can adapt to requirements and people individually and situationally, and who are able to treat themselves and the employees entrust-

ed with dignity and respect", says the personnel consultant Dr.-Ing. Peter Becker.[2]

### **DIGITIZED PROCESSES WITH A COMPETENCE AND TRAINING MATRIX**

The development of a database of requirements and competence with the extension to a competence and training matrix is an exemplary pilot application of the successful cooperation between the Steinbeis Consulting Groups Digital Business Transformation and Personnel. Preparing such kind of a competence and training matrix is one way to analyse and document in-house training needs of a company. This means that qualification needs must be collected, training dates must be organized, to be in constant contact with participants and speakers, and to organize necessary resources. Based on internal offers and external training certificates, the courses carried out are recorded in a staff development database or in a three-dimensional training matrix in the next step. All training participations are stored in this system in order to get an overview of the training each employee received as well as the skills acquired. The profiles can also be used for the process of recruitment. Embedded in a digitized recruiting process, suitable candidates are identified or put down in the company's own talent pool.

Development and application of the qualification matrix can basically be divided into three steps. In the first step, the requirements for a given position in the company are defined as well as the qualifications and skills that a person should have for this requirement profile. Based on this initial target profile, that is put about by requirements, qualification and competency, the employee is then asked about the "current actual characteris-



## DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF THE QUALIFICATION MATRIX CAN BASICALLY BE DIVIDED INTO THREE STEPS.

tics". For an objective assessment of the actual profile, both external and self-assessment from the point of view of superiors and the employee are necessary. Qualifications can be assessed objectively, as they are usually certified. When assessing a person's level of competence, it is often easier to evaluate professional and methodical competences through work performance than social and personal competences.

After having defined requirement and competence characteristics, the scaling for requirement/competence comparison will follow. If an expert is needed while someone with knowledge is filling the position, the comparison of current and target skills shows the difference and thus the employee's qualification needs. The further expansion to a three-dimensional competence-qualification matrix includes an adequate assignment of the determined qualification needs to the offered staff training program. A competence and qualification matrix can be used to ensure comparability and objectivity, since all employees are viewed internally based on the same requirements. Once implemented, a competence and qualification matrix should be freely accessible to everyone.

This ensures that particularly a company's requirements towards their managers are disclosed. Prospective managers and those who already are

managers should be able to take individual responsibility for meeting the requirements. Each necessary competence must be linked to a training offer that takes place at regular intervals. It is important to make the presentation of the matrix as simple as possible. The matrix must be clear and easy to understand, otherwise there is no guarantee that the three-dimensional database will be used.

### NEW WORK AND THE ROLE OF IT

When it comes to IT in connection with New Work, the focus is usually on the new challenges of working outside the company's network, as well as bring-your-own-device approaches with regard to IT security, data security, software and hardware equipment. Secure environments on employee laptops, single sign-on solutions, and VPN integration into the corporate network, reliable and data protection-compliant collaboration platforms – all of this is of course part of it, as is raising employee awareness of new risks and challenges. However, if New Work is to become a fixed element of corporate strategy, then IT must be included in the design of this strategy in the sense of a lived IT-business alignment. It must not remain a cost center for the necessary infrastructure but must become a profit center in the sense of a holistic understanding of New Work described above: Experiencing autonomy, com-

petence, social inclusion, self-determination, and influence are essential drivers of human performance and motivation – New Work strives for working conditions that make this possible. Therefore, IT must ask: What (technical) means can we use to create such working conditions?

The SCG Digital Business Transformation pursues complementary approaches here: Standard software is always selected independently of the manufacturer, so that a precise fit to the company processes is guaranteed without prior specifications. This in turn enables employees to work purposefully and efficiently, relieving them of tedious routine tasks, which lead to a feeling of competence and recognition of special personal skills. In the selection process, we make sure that future users can influence the selection. However, standard software does not always bring the desired result. Many negative experiences with the digital transformation are based on the fact that suddenly "everything is different with the new software", which leads to a feeling of loss of competence and demotivates staff. In almost every case, it is justified by tailor-made software not being available on the market and customization being too expensive. In these cases, the Steinbeis experts follow the approach of human-centered development of individual software: Employees are direct part of the decision-making

process what the digital version of their previous working methods will look like here, and they will be more motivated to use it accordingly. The special technological approach (model-driven development) ensures that this is also possible in a cost-efficient manner. Another focus is on the support of specific engineering processes, an area where Steinbeis experts contribute their many years of experience to find effective solutions.

For the areas of personnel development and recruitment, the two consulting groups develop and implement tailor-made digitized business processes in cooperation. The latest project here is an integrated solution for the areas of recruiting, qualification management and continuous training based on the competence and qualification matrix approach described above.

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# “YOUNG PEOPLE DESERVE RESPECT FOR THEIR GOALS – AND OPEN DOORS”

AN INTERVIEW WITH HORST SCHEU, STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEUR  
AT THE STEINBEIS TRANSFER CENTER FOR SCIENCE  
TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION



Science, technology, education – topics that have defined the career of Horst Scheu, not only as a lecturer in physics education at the University of Constance, but also as principal at the Friedrich Wöhler High School in Singen – and as a Steinbeis Entrepreneur. Scheu spoke to TRANSFER about the importance of these topics for business and for society in general.

**Hello Mr. Scheu. Your Steinbeis Enterprise focuses on the natural sciences, technology, and education. Why is the interface between these topics so important to you?**

I believe that a scientific and technical understanding is essential these days, especially for non-technical professions and decision-makers such as politicians, attorneys, and public administrators. It must be of central interest to society to provide a broad-based, fundamental education in this area. This concept has been with me and motivated me all my professional life.

The idea of founding a Steinbeis Enterprise with this focus arose during work on Science and Technology as a new Abitur subject – or secondary education qualification – which is now established in high schools in Baden-Wuerttemberg. The goal was to create a curriculum subject that's interdisciplinary and focuses on actual practice and action, that students majoring in the natural sciences could choose if they're interested in science and technology.

We formed a working group at the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with experimental schools, universities, and industrial enterprises to identify classroom topics that were both comprehensible and motivating for young people. To do this, we toured companies, sometimes spending several days at a time with engineers, and learned about development and production methods, always with a view to transferring them to the classroom. Based on this process, many extremely fruitful educational

partnerships developed during my later time at Friedrich Wöhler High School in Singen. We realized that businesses have a strong interest in showcasing their work, but often lack the resources or access to young people to make things happen. And thus the idea was born of technology transfer in the opposite direction – from companies into educational institutions.

**What offers do you intend to use to interest children and young people in nature and technology, and what role does business play in this?**

At this point it's worth mentioning the recently founded student research center in Singen I'm involved in. Our offerings are aimed at all age groups, starting with elementary school, and initially we're intending to run events that can be attended in groups. For example, there's Calliope Mini, a miniature computer that introduces elementary school children to the world of programming in a fun manner, or Mobility of the Future for young people aged 16 and over in partnership with the Ferdinand Steinbeis Institute of the Steinbeis Foundation. The courses are an opportunity for our young guests to get to know the research center and find out more about our offer to conduct their own experiments for free, or do research under the supervision of experienced instructors and students.

The Singen student research center is supported by a powerful network of universities, the City of Singen, and the County of Constance, as well as a whole variety of leading industrial enterprise, whose task is also to input with ideas and provide support with the topics.

Young researchers in action: The student research center in Singen (Schülerforschungszentrum Singen) is targeted at third-graders and older children with an interest in science and technology topics.





**New technologies, digitalization, demographic change, globalization – these are just some of the drivers of change in the world of work and the evolving demands facing the future workforce. What can schools do to prepare children and young people for this?**

All of those topics found their way into the curriculum and school lessons some time ago. But if they're only dealt with in the classroom, they'll only circulate on a relatively abstract level and they'll be looked at less in concrete terms. So the aim should be to bring young people directly into contact with as many

professions as possible. Unfortunately, however, they're usually only exposed to the working reality of their teachers or, if at all, their parents.

For young people at all types of schools, vocational orientation and opening up companies to students – for example by organizing education partnerships, but also internships, or vacation jobs – is an important prerequisite of carefully considered career decisions, and incidentally this offers important benefits to local companies looking for qualified workers. Some firms also organize days for parents to invite their children to work, and the members of service clubs

visit schools to present their professions. These are all important building blocks.

**People continually maintain that Gen Z has little interest in technical or scientific professions. Do you also believe that's the case? And what can be done to counteract this?**

Those are always generalizations, and they're rarely helpful. But it's true: Unlike my generation, you can't simply inspire young people with technology to encourage them to come out of the woodwork. It's important to think about the meaning or benefit of certain tech-

nologies, and answers are needed from a societal perspective.

Also, people's individual training and career paths are very different and they rarely go in a straight line. Young people deserve respect for their goals – and open doors. For education, this means

there needs to be a high level of absorption between the different education pathways, and plenty of options for sideway entry or re-entry.

Something I'd particularly like to emphasize is the possibility of gaining vocational qualifications in order to study,

which unfortunately is only common practice in some federal states. People who follow this path bring valuable professional experience to their degrees, and they know exactly where they want to go.

## AT A GLANCE: THE STUDENT RESEARCH CENTER IN SINGEN

The focus at the Student Research Center in Singen, Baden-Wuerttemberg, lies in what are called the MINT subjects in Germany: math, IT, the natural sciences, and technology.

Students interested in MINT topics from the 3rd grade and upward are offered the opportunity to conduct experiments or attend lectures, workshops, and courses. They are also supervised by dedicated instructors and students from partner universities.

In 2019, the Student Research Center entered its model in a concept competition organized by the Joachim Herz Foundation and the foundation behind the youth research initiative Jugend Forscht, winning a prize worth €15,000.

The Student Research Center is open to children and young people attending all kinds of schools. It recently moved into premises at the former Tittisbühl elementary school in Singen.

The Student Research Center was founded following successful collaboration between three secondary schools in Singen, the City of Singen, and regional marketing agency Singen aktiv. In 2021, the center was recognized as an Extracurricular Research Center (AFZ) by the Baden-Wuerttemberg Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports.

The work of the Student Research Center is funded by a support association comprising more than 40 founding members from the world of politics, business, and education, and the association is open to new members.



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# THERE IS LITTLE CHOICE: NEW WORK REQUIRES INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECTS

THE PIPE MODEL BRINGS TOGETHER STUDENTS,  
PROFESSORS, AND COMPANIES

The opportunities offered by a concept called PIPE, which was developed by two professors at Constance University of Applied Sciences, almost sound too good to be true. PIPE allows different worlds to be brought together, merging the working world of companies with the student world of universities. Dovetailing a project training method seamlessly within both worlds paves the way for authentic, real-world, lifelong learning for students and business professionals alike. The PIPE concept (short for project-in-project experience) was developed by Professor Dr. Ralf Schimkat and Professor Dr. Rainer Mueller as part of an eight-year trial conducted at Constance University of Applied Sciences. The model was then optimized as a part of master's courses.

Have students learned the "right" things for their degree? Are they well prepared for professional life and the new working world of modern companies? Do they meet the expectations of future employers and co-workers? What can be done to improve the competencies of students by organizing projects and assignments with a direct bearing on business practice? The PIPE concept addresses all of these issues in the form of a multifaceted, project-based university training concept in authentic, carefully positioned learning environments that place emphasis on business practice. All involved in the process expand their personal spheres of knowledge and competence in the long term.

## WHAT'S TYPICAL IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK?

"Project work is an increasingly important core competence in our Western industrial world. Complex, unpredictable workflows require more project-like approaches – unlike process-like approaches, which are often not such a good fit," explains Ralf Schimkat, who teaches health informatics with a focus on software development at the University of Applied Sciences in Constance

and manages the Steinbeis Transfer Center Agile IT-Management.

Physical separation within teams, i.e. the fact that they work virtually, is already common practice and this will increase significantly in the future – not just because of experience with the pandemic and endeavors to improve sustainability.

Knowledge is highly ephemeral in the modern world of work, in many industries and domains. Once acquired at university or in training, know-how quickly relinquishes its relevance. Modern professions require a strong ability to learn things by yourself, something that may be seen as a "new" approach to enhancing professional standards in everyday work settings. Skills shortages and ever-changing job profiles – coupled with increasing employee workplace volatility caused by the changing nature of remote working – require employers to be more willing to adapt work and role descriptions to the individual.

## HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THE NEW WORLD OF WORK?

An alternative approach to on-the-job training and university courses, PIPE

involves close collaboration between companies and universities. Representatives from companies are an inherent element of training for the entire process, which can last a semester of 15 weeks. For example, they may act as a Scrum Product Owner. "A central element of PIPE is the combination of project-based training – the training project, in which a real project, or application project, serves as a real training scenario, so it's a project within a project," says Rainer Mueller, explaining the approach behind the concept and the reason for its name. Mueller teaches business informatics at Constance University of Applied Sciences, where alongside colleague Ralf Schimkat, he heads up the PIPE Institute, which pools their accumulated experience in the design of agile training and running courses.

PIPE allows all stakeholders, i.e. the employees of participating companies, students, and university lecturers, to assume roles in rotation and thus change responsibilities. There are roles such as team leaders, project moderators, product managers, clients, regular project staff, but also coaches and lecturers.

The project topics and tasks are provided by the companies themselves and are based as realistically as possible on authentic situations – ideally with real clients. Training is provided on modern tools of communication and collaboration, as well as agile methods of distributed and remote working. Based on this, new methods are developed, tailored to the individual needs of the companies and their employees.

### IN WHAT WAYS DOES THE PIPE CONCEPT ADD VALUE?

With PIPE, students and trainees are supported with a variety of individual, initial requirements, as well as development rates and objectives. Taking a fine-grained incremental approach to individual training objectives, and organizing regular sessions for reflection as a team – but also individually with the instructors acting as coaches – helps each participant with individual learning paths. Ultimately this even applies to the coaches of the process themselves.

A central focus of PIPE lies in social and personal competencies through the development of communication skills, collaboration and teamwork skills, leadership and management skills, interdisciplinary work, self-reflection, dealing with conflict, and critical questioning. Such competencies play a central role in working independently, but also in shared tasks in distributed project teams. To help students deal with the challenges of uncertain working methods – in an autonomous, responsible, reflective, and well-founded manner – it's not enough to simply impart knowledge, skills, and capabilities. Organizational factors and situational, contextual aspects also play an important role in the development of competencies.

### CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT IN THE PIPE CONCEPT

With roughly four hours per week allocated to the project phases (sprints) of the application project, a representative of the selected company participates in courses and is given a specific role (for example, Chief Product Owner). Such sprints usually last around three weeks and are concluded from a retrospective angle. The company representative does not play an active role in the preceding two-week technical creation phase.

The time budget is divided up differently across the overall training course. Initially, company representatives tend to be kept in the background, until they finally come together 100% with the trainees and students – face to face or virtually – for the final sprint before the end of the training or semester.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE PIPE CONCEPT

The continual nature of working and learning within the two project units of PIPE (training and application) is typical for students involved in the process. There is no summative assessment at the end of the training period, such as an end-of-semester exam. The continual alternation between theory and practice phases during sprints happens several times during the training period, with students continuously adopting different roles. The theory phases offer new training and learning insights inspired by technical factors, and these insights are worked through individually during the following practical phases and transferred to an individual's personal area of competence. This is always an active process, supported by teaching staff as learning companions and coaches (live coaching).

### FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

"The strong emphasis on practical application is highly appreciated by almost all students and trainees. Being able to expand your own areas of expertise in a safe setting – for example at university, with real people from companies – is perceived as unique and extremely enriching on a personal level," says Ralf Schimkat, who is delighted with the feedback until now. The PIPE model stems from an initial idea of treating the course itself as an agile project lasting one semester. Dealing with uncertainty and the unknowns of that "project," individually defining project and learning objectives with the students, and continuous feedback loops regarding current project and learning progress are all defining features of agile project management in general – particularly for PIPE within the context of training and learning.

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# “BEING AWARE AND ATTENTIVE, BEING OPEN AND WILLING TO ENGAGE WITH NEW THINGS”

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEUR PROFESSOR SUSANNE RADTKE

When considering education and the working environment of the future, it is essential to look beyond personal cultural values, especially given increasing globalization. After all, as we are all part of global society, we find ourselves interacting with people who have grown up in different cultures, which have shaped who they are. *TRANSFER* magazine talked about this with Susanne Radtke, who experiences such challenges every day, not only in her work as a professor of design and media design at Ulm University of Applied Sciences, but also as a Steinbeis Entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Consulting Center for Intercultural & Corporate Design (I&CD). In the interview, Radtke speaks of the role played by “interculturality,” especially in the field of design, and how both society and business are in a position to address this.

**Hello Professor Radtke. You’re very closely involved in the topic of interculturality. What role does interculturality currently play in education, as well as the world of work?**

In a global world, where physical distances and different languages play only a very minor role nowadays, it’s a topic nobody can avoid. The world has become a village, and everyone thinks they un-

derstand everything and everyone. But that’s a misconception – there are so many things and situations we don’t understand, and more often than not we misinterpret them. For example, in our

society we express agreement by nodding, whereas in Asia or Bulgaria people shake their head to the left and right, which we tend to interpret as a no.

It's similar with design: Colors, combinations of color, fonts, and shapes don't have the same meaning everywhere in the world. Good global branding and marketing agencies understood this some time ago by adapting their product advertising on a local level. So in Japan, for example, deodorant labels have soft shapes and pastel colors, whereas in the United States, they prefer to use more dominant lettering and brash colors. There are also colors that are not culture-specific, like green. Green is used for canned vegetables in China, South Korea, Germany, and the USA; it's a color that's associated with nature worldwide. Lots of people assume that perceptions, taste, and judgments in a global world are also the same everywhere. But what's good, bad, pretty, or ugly, is mainly driven by the respective culture. This is exactly what I try to convey to my students, but also to anyone planning to work in a different cultural environment.

### The design courses you offer focus a lot on cross-cultural design basics. What does that actually mean?

Design basics, as the name implies, are the fundamentals or individual attributes that go to make up a design, such as shapes, colors, or fonts. Unlike art, design always revolves around application – so above all, what's important to the beholder or consumer is its function. Conveying information through so-called signals, for example red as a signal color, should match what you're trying to achieve, i.e. it should hit the target group. Students have to learn how to design a poster for a cultural event, an advertising animation, or complex branding in such a way that it can be understood by different audiences. To do that, you first have to research and

analyze their visual, auditory, and stylistic preferences.

### What influence does globalization have on the work of design teams, but also on collaboration? What do you observe in your workshops?

In a globalized world, signals and signage always relate to the cultural con-

text, so they can only be understood or interpreted within that context. That's why, as early as their first semester, my students examine international designs and styles that many of them are less familiar with. Looking at Asian, African, Latin American, and Arab designers encourages us to examine our own, minimalist design language, which was shaped by Bauhaus. This is juxta-

## EXCERPT FROM THE MODEL OF CULTURAL SPACES AND THEIR COLOR MEANINGS

(© Susanne P. Radtke)

### THE WESTERN WORLD

EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND

- Manliness, love, power, energy, Communism, erotic, hot, positive, strength, danger, anger, rebellion, the Devil, prostitution, warning
- Nature, ecology, money, happiness, fertility, the environment, manliness, freshness, health, inexperience, envy, jealousy
- Joy, happiness, warmth, the sunshine, freshness, jealousy, envy, unfaithfulness, persecution
- Manliness, truth, coldness: reliability, cleanliness, calm, professionalism, dignity, authority, trust, neutrality, purity
- Purity, truth, spirituality, cleanliness, the bride, joyfulness, elegance, peace, sterility
- Exclusivity, power, seriousness, strength, formality, sexuality, fear, mourning, death, evil, sin, emptiness, anger

### ASIA

SOUTH-EAST ASIA, EAST ASIA WITH CENTRAL ASIA

- Love, adventure, good taste
- Purity, adventure, the spring, youth, birth, desire, danger, illness
- Happiness, good taste, earth, power, royalty, the Sun, manliness, happiness, holiness, neutrality, heroism, mourning, authority
- Quality, heaven, water, trust, coldness, sadness
- Purity, innocence, morality, the west, the fall, death, mourning, bad luck, nature, neutrality, respect
- Exclusivity, power, water, secret, life, stability, the unknown, wealth, health, death, mourning

### JAPAN

(SPECIAL ROLE ASIA)

- Love, energy, speed, strength, passion, the Sun, warmth, attentiveness, joyfulness, anger, danger, blood, sacrificial death, protection
- Love, joyfulness, youth, vitality, nature, endless life, healing
- Good taste, courage, grace, the sunshine, danger, vitality
- Quality, trust, heaven, life, purity, calm, stability, loyalty, coldness, youth
- Holiness, purity, honesty, goodness, reverence, simplicity, cleanliness, the bride, purity, sterility, trust, innocence
- Power, the unknown, exclusivity, sophistication, formality, sexuality, mystery, depth, regret, non-being, bad luck, fear, evil, mourning, anger

posed with previously acquired design norms such as clarity, conciseness, guiding the eye, and “less is more,” and this is subjected to scrutiny.

You have to allow yourself to embrace designs and their intercultural diversity, because an increasing number of design teams now work internationally, which means they no longer just design things for domestic markets. In the intercultural workshops I run, the participants get to experience themselves within the context of a mixed international team, so as they work together this allows them to shake off their initial reticence and become more confident. They discover new strengths and, ideally, become motivated to engage in areas they’re not familiar with, alongside team members from other cultures. Ultimately, this allows them to navigate more successfully in the international job market and to prove themselves.

**What do you see as the biggest challenges in training and continuing education in the future, especially from an intercultural perspective?**

The first thing that comes to mind for me is the switch to online teaching during the coronavirus pandemic. Everyone involved in education struggled with this at first, but in mixed, intercultural teams, online teaching is an even more complicated challenge. The advantage in terms of timing and financial investment is that people no longer have to travel to attend a workshop, but the disadvantage is that a major part of your body language, which plays a crucial role when you’re imparting knowledge, falls by the wayside. Not only that, but the course participants are more isolated and arranging group tasks becomes complex. So it’s essential to use interactive icebreakers and do warm-up games. What’s also important is that anyone involved in international teaching should understand that the process-

es of socialization between the student and the teacher are completely different. In the United States, you’re almost a buddy; in Indonesia you’re a very strong symbol of authority, so you’re treated accordingly. Over the many years I’ve been conducting workshops, I’ve learned some of these idiosyncrasies and have worked out how to deal with them.

**What can society, but also business, do to ensure workers are trained and educated to shape the workplace of tomorrow?**

There are always people behind an economy, as well as society, and they have very different interests, needs, and priorities. We have global corporations to thank for the economy, and the economy is also capable of reacting much faster to new demands than society. To secure its existence, it has to solve problems before they arise. Society usually lags behind in this respect, and it often only acts when a problem meets it head-on. Let me give you an example: During the Covid-19 pandemic, companies were very quick to switch to online meetings and working from home, setting up the necessary infrastructure and making software and hardware available. At schools, which are an important part of our society and politics, that didn’t happen so quickly. When they were forced to switch to online lessons, the first thing they realized is that there was neither the right hardware in place nor the right software, not just in the schools themselves but also at home with the students. By the end of 2021, only 1.27 billion euros of the 6.5 billion euros that had been signed off in federal funding had actually been spent. That’s not even 20 percent! What this clearly shows is how different things work in business and politics – at least in terms of the speed they operate at. One thing they do have in common, however, is interculturality: Neither is intercultural per se, they’ve become so, but only through the people who have automatically and

unconsciously acquired this behavior during childhood. Language acquisition and learning cultural values are closely interlinked – you learn by interacting with your parents and the things around you.

If we want to function properly in what’s a new cultural setting to us, we first have to work out our own behavioral norms, our value system, but also our own cultural patterns, and question whether they’re beneficial to us in a new or foreign context. Being aware and attentive, being open and willing to engage with new things, treating others with respect – these are good prerequisites.

Intercultural education is not only part of my teaching, it’s also something I apply to the work at my Steinbeis Enterprise. I’d like to impart this knowledge regarding the necessity of culturally sensitive action and work. For me, there are three qualities that all of us should hold on to: Be curious about the things we don’t know, explore things courageously, and then act decisively and be sensitive to different cultures!

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# NEW FORMS OF WORK – TOXIC OR FORWARD-LOOKING?

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY THE NEW WORK PHILOSOPHY

Welcome to VUKA and the brave new world of tomorrow. Job profile: the ideal candidate masters volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in their everyday work – and can expect more to come! In the continuously accelerating context of Working World X.0, the new control panel is going digital, agile, and flexible, and is adopting the New Work paradigm. As such, it's an indispensable currency of the transformation process. New professions, organizational models, or even virtual office landscapes: The theoretical future of work appears to be dynamic, agile, and digital. We seem to be on the cusp of a transition from modern to post- and meta-modern organizations. The principles of industrialization are about to run out of steam and companies are trying to respond to current demands by becoming adaptable, resilient, and innovative. Steinbeis expert Daniel Müller-Rang shows the options available to companies to make a success of this process.

How can we design a world of work that allows people, companies, and technology to interact in the best possible way? Some believe there is no alternative but to become flexible and agile, while others fear that increasing digitalization spells an age of alienation and the demise of human interaction when it comes to social identity and the processes of mutual interaction. Do human beings, self-realization, and vocation still lie at the heart of work processes, or do the extrinsic structures of opportunity – and the demands these place on us – lie at the crux, or perhaps the drive to maximize economic efficiency by raising the tempo? And how can organizations engender trust among employees and even learn how to cope step by step with agile disappointment? The aspect of learning, creating a desire to learn, responsibility, and a commitment to collaboration in digital fields of learning – potentially the catalysts of an

emerging transformation – are tremendously important.

This also raises a question regarding successful virtual leadership and the conditions that are required for the inception of collaboration: What can be done to shape relationships in a digital format and make collaboration dependable? What is crucial is that people are taken on the journey, and their relationship with digital technology. Is there, as it seems, really no alternative to digital transformation, or is this bogus consensus born of convenience and an unwillingness to pose critical questions?

## NEUROPSYCHOLOGY AND REMOTE WORKING

To acquire an image of the danger posed by the toxic elements of endeavors to achieve new transformation, we first need to look at the remoteness fueled

by digital work forms, particularly from the perspective of neuropsychology. When social or collegial aspects of working in teams – and thus physical encounters – fade into the background, factors relating to appreciation, trust, attention, and recognition become all the more important and must be actively transposed to the new forms of interaction, with plenty of sensitivity. Alternatively, corresponding experiential spaces must be created for this. Emotional resonance is an important factor when it comes to cooperation based on trust, because it conveys appreciation and recognition. Without regular exchange when people work from home, employees increasingly feel socially isolated, eroding their attachment to the company and raising their likelihood of switching jobs. Managers are then called upon to bolster team spirit, whether through online team events, joint coffee breaks, or regular staff meetings. Social factors must not be forgotten and should be actively worked on. Only in this way can the limbic system – the area of our brains that deals with emotions – continue to receive calming stimuli. There is a difference in neuropsychological terms between meeting someone in person and seeing them on a screen, because attachment feeds on encounter. A crucial role in this is played by neuromodulators and oxytocin (also known as the bonding hormone). Oxytocin has a stabilizing effect on performance and relationships, and it plays a crucial role in job satisfaction and achieving goals with others. Its impact is “pro-social,” so it promotes social interaction and, at least under certain conditions, can have the effect of reinforcing trust.[2] Companies and managers must rethink this more consciously under virtual working conditions.

### **PERSONALITY TYPES AND NEW WORK COMPATIBILITY**

A world of work that is ambiguous, complex, and strongly based on agility and

employee empowerment requires certain things that come more easily to some people, whereas others need more support and time to learn. People with a high level of ambiguity tolerance are at an advantage in situations when it is acceptable to think more openly and there are fewer distinctions between right and wrong. They may even feel motivated by the unknown. Personality factors such as extraversion, being open to new things, and sharing emotions have a positive correlative influence on the context of New Work requirements. They also shape them positively. Factors such as intelligence, being able to identify with others, and company affiliation also have an effect on this.[6] People with low levels of ambiguity tolerance, however, feel threatened by uncertainty, vagueness, and hard-to-fathom situations. As a result, they attempt to avoid them. Introverted personality types may therefore run the risk of being separated from the process of identifying with others, or social cohesion with colleagues, which may call into question the aforementioned concept of life, as well as work motivation and the identification it gives rise to, and in some cases this can be extremely pronounced. Deprived of the daily social rituals that shape identity, emotional people who are introverted are more likely to have difficulty adjusting to the new world and react to demands with a sense of anxiety and stress. Factors that favor such developments must be taken into account by companies and avoided if they want to embrace human diversity. Another crucial aspect of this is psychological safety. When people can be themselves and don't have to worry about raising their voices or asking questions, everyone's an important step closer to becoming a fearless organization.[3]

### **THE NEW WORK PHILOSOPHY – A REALITY CHECK**

The New Work paradigm is not only increasingly calling into question tradi-

tional and proven work structures, but as flexibility improves and people assume responsibility by focusing more on themselves, working independently and identifying with one's own work are also placed on a new pedestal. The image of human nature is in a state of upheaval, emerging in a new form as it shifts from the tendency to seek self-realization, toward a search for meaning in one's existence through work. For many, a reality check and comparisons with the vision of New Work entailed a view of the past characterized by pragmatic traits: Those motivated by an ambition to get ahead at work must function, not reflect. The more professional we are, i.e. the more we succeed in adhering to the rules of our job and disregarding other considerations – which in rational terms go beyond purpose – the more likely we are to gain the recognition of others (meaning the organization we work for, our boss, our colleagues, and society in general). Yet the reality, assuming we're open to it, is often more mundane than visionary or revolutionary. We strive continuously to fall in line with the expectations others have of us, which are often only assumptions. This entails a constant sense of skepticism toward our social environment, as well as a feeling of insecurity and, to a certain extent, distance to our real selves. This is because we don't adopt a stance that we arrived at ourselves and we don't feel effective based on our personal sense of responsibility. [1]

To get to this point, we must be bold in dealing with the desired change, also so that we are able to realize it within ourselves and seize any opportunity to shape that change, even if it at first this may feel unfamiliar. But an agile mindset that embraces values such as openness and the willingness to learn is not something that happens automatically – solving the problems of our economy, our working environment, and society at the push of a button. Above all, agil-



## AGILITY 2.0 IS NOT ONLY ABOUT CUSTOMERS AND THE SUCCESS OF INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES, IT IS ALSO ABOUT PEOPLE – I.E. HUMAN DIGNITY

ity entails the realization of an inner process of transformation, not only reacting quickly and flexibly to market developments and focusing on the customer, but, above all, going further on a holistic level and evolving. If we fail to achieve this in our professionalism, exercised in ambition, we are pulled in different directions, forfeiting ourselves as moral individuals and subordinating the standards by which we make judgments, personal resourcefulness, and our views of life to the goals of the collective – thus sacrificing them in the long term. The requirement within a New Work philosophy and the process of personally developing in this direction is thus to see through inner stress caused by adapting, to endure that stress, to boldly confront the intrinsic maxims that express our values, and to position ourselves. And to do that, it's important to not just see professionalism as a virtue.

### CAN TOO MUCH AGILITY BE HARMFUL?

The biggest danger is that the new understanding of organizational processes, team interactions, and customer focus is often simply imposed on people, without any form of shared internal process. Furthermore, agility is often introduced inadequately or incorrectly, which can lead to inconsistencies with other important rules, and thus result in friction and conflict. There is also a misunderstanding that this is a tool for enhancing efficiency and innovation,

without taking human factors or cultural aspects into account, and this causes confusion in the development process. Further difficulties stem from agile working itself, which requires a strong degree of personal competence and transfers many tasks to employees who did not have to worry about them before. To avoid negative impacts, stakeholders must, from the outset, become involved and be allowed to participate in decision-making. It may also be necessary to be selective in the use of agile forms and processes, and if in doubt even do without them.

### AGILITY IN DEVELOPMENT

Agility 2.0, which is encouraged in this context, is not only about customers and the success of individual companies, it is also about people – i.e. human dignity. This is also referred to as post-agility.[5] This also places the focus on people and the common good, and ultimately, both are needed: a sense of responsibility for the business and society, quick reactions, reactive reflection, action in the here and now, but also an out-and-out drive to shape the future. Qualitative aspirations and corresponding expectations in the long term set the bar extremely high. This is also a matter of establishing how sustainable benefit is delivered. The way forward is signaled not only by agile values, but above all by the broader context within which measures and decisions are embedded. This creates opportunities to

include social values as a benchmark for entrepreneurial action and to lay those values as a cornerstone of business activity. But the image of human nature this conveys also highlights the need to position things correctly. Do we want adult, self-sufficient consumers or do we want data-driven robots that allow themselves to be pushed in a certain direction? What's called for in the here and now is not only innovation, but community-centric advancement and a clear commitment to values through close interaction between business and society. Post-agile leadership and decision-making focuses on people – the community in which things are created, beyond the interests of companies. This is about the ideas that we as a society want to move forward with, ideas we identify with, and how we want to live and work. It's about a vision of an economy that revolves around sustainability and the common good. Anything else will not be sustainable for long – also due to the collapse of ecological systems.

Committing to social factors as points of reference is an opportunity to establish intrinsic leadership guidelines, to safeguard value, and to do away with personal arbitrariness in the fundamental decisions affecting corporate development. Leading means observing this value set even more faithfully. It becomes essential and valuable to adopt long-term perspectives, even if agile action is taken in the short term due to

the current situation. Post-agile leadership sees the future as a place of opportunity, something that has to be shaped, hand in hand with values held by a broad population. One aspect this highlights is that a distinction can no longer be made between working and learning. Business development is only possible if acquiring, applying, and sharing know-how and skills is raised to a new level, throughout the organization. This is because new approaches to learning will only work in the organization if those who are learning receive appropriate support and information. In turn, those individuals will only embark on learning processes if they consider them to be meaningful on a personal level.[4] This requires positive mission statements, underpinned by action taken by role models within the context of transparent, people-oriented leadership. Changing the culture of an organization thus always requires the development of a learning culture, which must therefore be kept up to date to reflect new forms of work and digital technology. New Work is a learning process, one that takes place holistically on all levels, as part of a continual and continuous loop of reflection.

## PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

All in all, it is clear that digital transformation can help with the introduction of positive and attractive measures. That said, every company has different requirements and needs, as does every individual employee – and things become highly individual when it comes to work and personal well-being. In the future, the art will therefore be to provide a variety of services that are needed by different target groups according to their respective stage of life.

We are therefore standing on the cusp of an epoch-making transformation in work culture. Once you embark on this journey, you find that the goals of digi-

tal transformation and becoming agile still require advice when it comes to the demands that are placed on people. Despite the functional benefits and universal remedies promised by new approaches and (learning) methods, it is the people who have to deal with the personal impacts of transformation. And thus the process of becoming agile is being extended to include the topics of New Work and new forms of learning. The challenges with this process are that leadership and organization, but also learning on all levels, go hand in hand with one another if the transformation process is to be mastered. The topic of learning, and the targeted development of human resources on all

levels of the business, are thus of tremendous importance; and to prevent the process of transformation taking on potentially unintended forms, or having unintended impacts on people's work environments, learning must be a requirement of the transformation process.

The experts at Steinbeis Consulting Group Personal (SCGP), which focuses on effective organizational consulting in the conflicting area between transformation and HR management, and Steinbeis Consulting Group Digital Business Transformation (SCG DBT) support companies in successfully shaping this transformation process.

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# DIGITALMA MATER – VIRTUALITY AS THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF THE FUTURE

AN EXPOSÉ ON TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE DIGITAL SPACE



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**What do people need to enjoy success with digital education? We're so preoccupied with new technology, virtual platforms, and virtual environments – but also digital teaching and instruction – that we lose sight of the real goal: education. Tilo Staudenrausch, freelance project manager at the Steinbeis Consulting Center for Management Moves, Brand & Innovation, who is also a professor at DIPLOMA University, presents one possible solution to the digital dilemma at universities: the DigitALMA Mater.**

When Tilo Staudenrausch walks through the university where he teaches, he realizes the importance of his alma mater – not only to himself, but also for the educational establishment: “For generations, people with similar goals have brought science to life here. So one can speak of a spiritual home.” Home – a place or at least an environment that, in the broadest sense, also includes the things we're familiar with, the language, culture, or people. The pandemic suddenly shifted that home onto a virtual plane, with cameras, microphones, and multiple screens becoming standard features of work desks. It also spelled new challenges when it comes to knowledge-sharing: People still met one another, but they weren't “really” there (in physical terms). The technology left people feeling insecure; there were difficulties communicating. “I sometimes felt like a film director: I had to understand the technology and work with different platforms. The focus shifted away from the content to the situation,” says Staudenrausch, looking back at the early days of his virtual teaching (experience).

### **THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN EDUCATION AND LOCATION**

Education is closely linked to the location, because people socialize with others in spatial environments. They go to kindergarten, school, university, or work. They enter a space that's familiar to them, a place in which they have social relationships and emotions, a place they

also shape, which thus becomes their home.

But how do you create a virtual home, and can a success be made of virtual education? What's key is the attitude of those involved. If people are against virtual environments, this rubs off on other participants. This became very clear during the first round of school closures during Covid-19, highlighted by the term “distance learning,” which already signals reluctance in the word itself and implies that it's not possible to replace a “real” learning space. Staudenrausch disagrees: “Well-socialized, virtual learning groups have closer bonds than real ones. The participants make more intensive use of their time together and even link up outside official hours.”

### **CHANGES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Conventional knowledge-sharing in the form of lectures or talks is becoming obsolete as a model. This is based on a construct revolving around processes, in which teachers provide coaching on the learning process of those learning. [1] This also changes the role of teachers within learning groups – from knowledge mediators to moderators.

“If virtuality is understood as an opportunity to get closer to the audience, you scarcely sense any resistance,” says Staudenrausch with conviction. The virtual space opens the door to inclusion:

People who are unable to attend an event in person, for whatever reason, are still offered an opportunity to participate.

### **HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF THE DIGITALMA MATER**

Education is always tinged with uncertainty and there is no guarantee it will succeed, but people can create circumstances that help ensure teaching is a fruitful exercise. This is not primarily about teaching practices or pedagogics, but about feeling at home and elements associated with that feeling: the location, familiarity, distinctiveness, social relationships, emotions, and active influence.[2] The central aspect of this is the location. Different digital platforms offer different ways to design the location – as in the real world, where there are lectures, Sharing circle, or laboratories. All such situations are unique and require participants to personalize the location as best suits them. Familiarity is created by the interplay of three factors: Customs are created by rituals, for example when events start with a certain melody, after which the participants still have time for small talk or a microphone test. Changes occur in content, but also in terms of responsibilities: The further participants progress with lectures, the more responsibility they are given for technical and content design. The third aspect – suspense – is created in a similar way to TV series, using cliffhangers that stimulate anticipation and attention.



## EDUCATION IS CLOSELY LINKED TO THE LOCATION, BECAUSE PEOPLE SOCIALIZE WITH OTHERS IN SPATIAL ENVIRONMENTS.

All Zoom meetings look similar and there is very little one can do to influence the design of the location. Despite this, some form of distinctiveness should be added, for example by using visual elements, music, other sounds, or even haptic elements. This means that physical features should be included in learning methods, especially in virtual learning environments, for example in the form of serious games or rock, paper, scissors. Participants in online events often turn off their cameras and microphones, making it difficult to develop social relationships, yet it is these interactions that make such an important contribution to successful learning. Learning is not just about acquiring knowledge – when you learn, links are made between different forms of information and ultimately, that's what results in knowledge. Connecting to learning events on an emotional level fosters

individual experiences and that creates a stronger affiliation to learning content.

This can be supported by methods such as flipped classroom or eduScrum. Actively shaping events requires the active involvement of participants.

### THE ATTITUDE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Institutions should clearly communicate their opinion of virtual teaching, different methodological concepts, and didactic modules. This is because the framework of a DigitALMA Mater stands and falls by the underlying attitude of the teachers – they are its representatives and are more readily accepted by groups of learners. Few analog learning techniques or exercises can be transferred to the virtual space without adaptation. “But our experience has been that such

adaptations work across all specialist fields, no matter how theoretical or practical,” reports Staudenrausch.

To derive benefit from teaching and learning, it's important to also involve learners and allow them to participate in the development of new formats. And finally, it's fairly easy to transfer most of these virtual concepts the other way around: back to real events.

Staudenrausch currently designs his events in his office, where everything is set up for virtual lectures – reliable internet access, large monitors, two cameras, strong lighting, and a clear microphone. He's pleased with this development: “The first generation of academics already has the social skills it needs for science and creativity to come alive in the virtual space. This is our spiritual home.”

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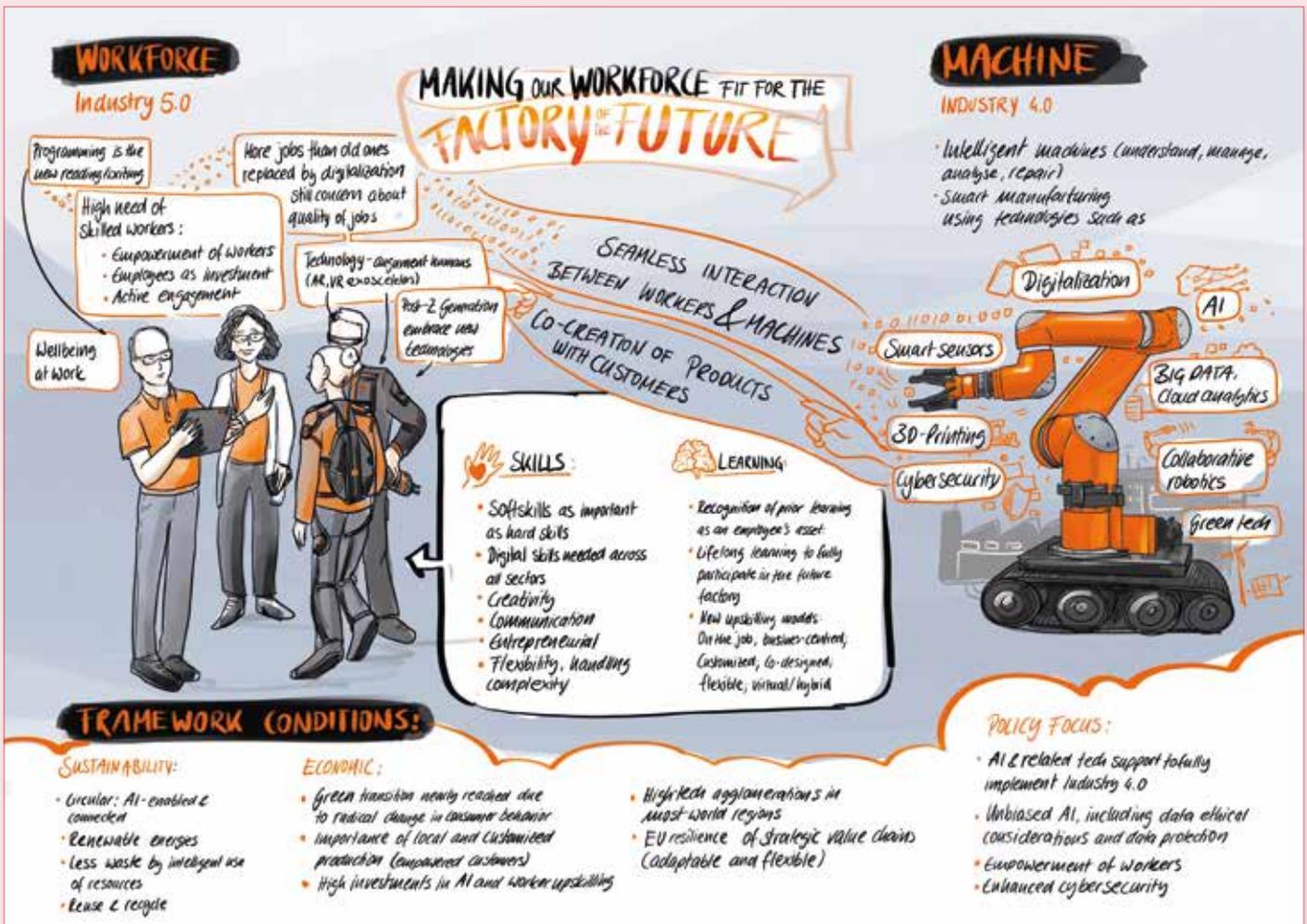
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# TAILOR-MADE COMPETENCY ACQUISITION FOR THE FACTORY OF THE FUTURE

AN INTERVIEW WITH SABINE HAFNER-ZIMMERMANN, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER AT STEINBEIS EUROPA ZENTRUM AND PARTNER OF THE EU FIT4FOF PROJECT

↙ A graphical representation showing the most important features of the implemented Future Factory work scenario



**FIT4FoF, which stands for Fit for the Factory of the Future, was a three-year EU project that came to an end in December 2021 following the development and testing of different methods for preparing workers for the factory of the future.**

**Steinbeis Europa Zentrum played a role in FIT4FoF. TRANSFER spoke about the project with project partner Sabine Hafner-Zimmermann and heard about the lessons learned when it comes to future qualification needs and training measures.**

**Hello Ms. Hafner-Zimmermann. What was Steinbeis Europa Zentrum's interest in the FIT4FoF project?**

We were extremely interested in taking part in this project because when we submitted our application there'd been insufficient work on future qualification needs in the manufacturing sector. Our hope as a partner in the project was to acquire additional know-how on the demand for future skills in manufacturing in order to offer our customers in industry effective support with their training activities. The most interesting part about FIT4FoF was the participatory approach to jointly identifying future qualification requirements and suitable training measures – involving staff, management, and education partners. The practical method used for the very different regional pilot projects also allowed us to learn a lot of things that would help with the support projects we work on. And then finally the European aspect of the project was important to us, because at Steinbeis Europa Zentrum we always strive to transfer examples of best practice beyond the local ecosystem.

We want European stakeholders on a broad level to have the opportunity to benefit from the results of our projects.

**What role do current and future technology trends play in the project?**

The project has allowed us to identify the technology trends that will be relevant to industry in the future, in order to provide information to the project partners implementing the pilot on how manufacturing will change in the coming years. Our experience is that the pilot partners and their companies find

it challenging integrating this information into their established projects, so the main goal was to raise awareness for the changes in future developments and encourage our partners to consider how this will affect them and their business. The most important information that came from this project was not about future technology trends per se, but about trying to change the mindset of our industry partners and encouraging them to incorporate future thinking into their everyday activities.

**One of the methods you used was co-design, which involves all stakeholders working together on the development of a solution. What's your assessment of this approach?**

I think the co-design method that was developed and piloted in FIT4FoF is extremely relevant and it's a useful way to identify the training needs and pathways of stakeholders within an organization on a broader basis. It's been common until now for management or HR departments to simply suggest training to employees without involving them in

the decision regarding the training they should receive, or how to train them. This is where it becomes clear how profoundly innovative the FIT4FoF approach is.

**Communities of practice, or CoPs, are committed communities that share similar interests and work toward a common, pre-defined goal. How important is this approach for a project like FIT4FoF, and what benefit do participants derive from it?**

The communities of practice method is closely connected to the co-design process we use for FIT4FoF. Both are highly participatory and bring collective intelligence to the project, so they generate additional know-how that wouldn't be so readily available otherwise.

So the CoPs were an important cornerstone of FIT4FoF, not just for the development and implementation phase of the pilot projects, but also beyond that. At the same time, the CoP members also benefited by increasing their knowledge, and similarly they benefited from the network that evolved.



**FIT4FOF STANDS FOR "FIT FOR THE FACTORY OF THE FUTURE"**



A profile developed as part of the EU FIT4FoF project

### Could you briefly summarize the key results of the FIT4FoF project for us?

Aside from the co-design method that was developed and tested for FIT4FoF, one of the most important outputs of the project was the future-of-work scenario that was developed. It offers an extremely concise and precise representation of the most important aspects of working in a "future factory," including the technological factors that are im-

portant for Industry 4.0, but also social and societal aspects highlighted by the new approach to Industry 5.0. Without these, the European economy will be unsuccessful in the long term and we'll struggle to achieve goals in areas such as sustainability, resilience, and strategic autonomy in Europe in the coming years.

In addition to the FIT4FoF pilot projects, we also worked together on so-called "personas" or profiles, which describe

the challenges and opportunities that might arise for employees in the future and the competencies they'll require to deal with those challenges.

The results obtained from the project are extremely well suited to stimulating and supporting discussion, not only on future developments, but also regarding training and further education requirements in manufacturing, even after completion of the project.



... and another profile developed for the EU FIT4FoF project.

They can only be actively shaped by companies and their employees if they also actively think about their expectations of the future. And that's precisely

what we're aiming to do with the FIT-4FoF project: provide food for thought and offer access to good examples.

The FIT4FoF project was funded by the EU as part the Horizon 2020 program, Grant Agreement #820701, October 2018 – December 2021.



[www.fit4fof.eu](http://www.fit4fof.eu)

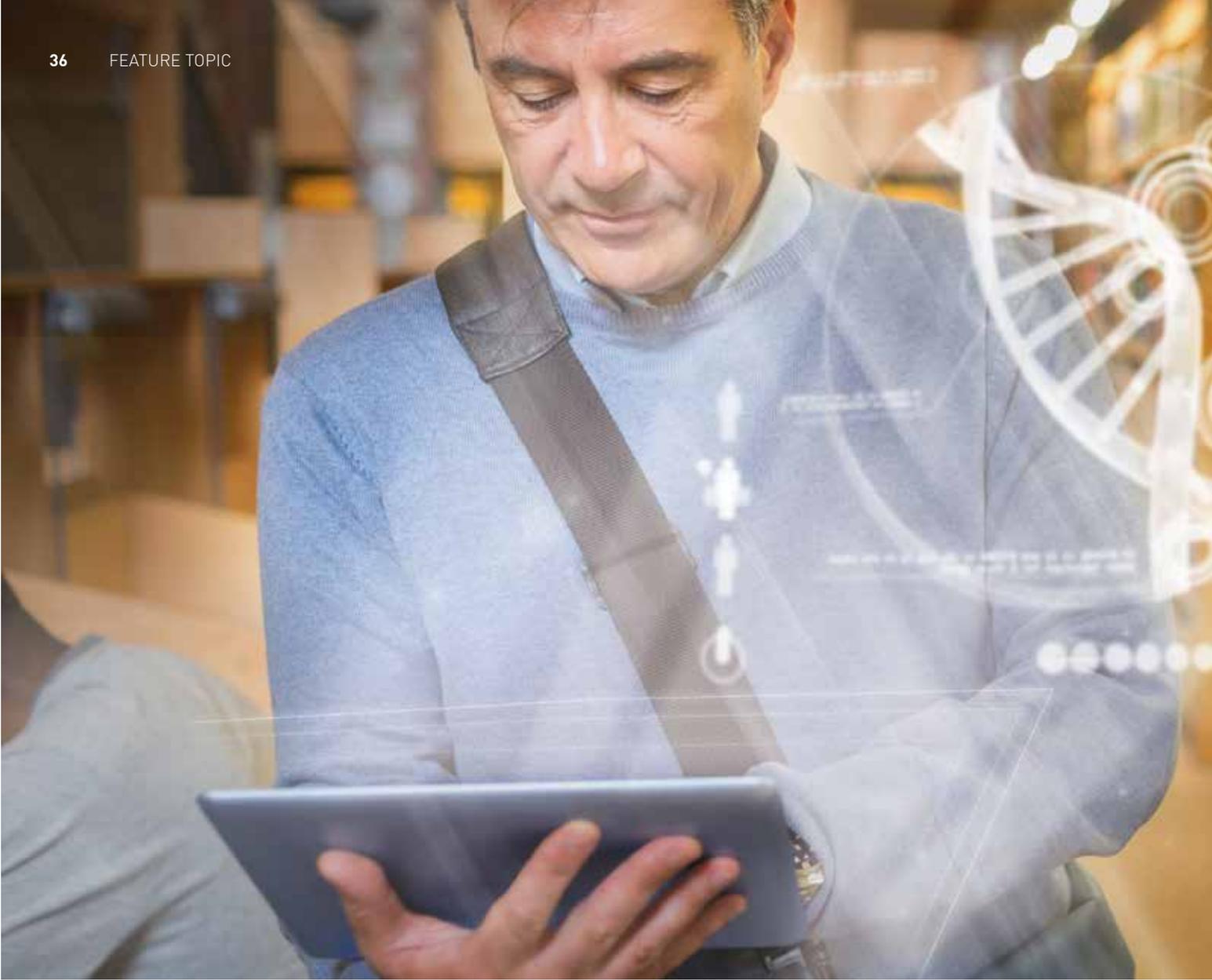


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# LEARN4U – PERFECTLY EQUIPPED FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

STEINBEIS EXPERTS SYSTEMATIZE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AT COMPANIES

Enabling learners to benefit from personalized skills development is increasingly regarded as a grand design of the education system – a decisive approach to making lifelong learning attractive to all stakeholders, in order to remain capable of creative action in increasingly complex and dynamic situations, at work and in other areas of life. On the other hand, designing, analyzing, and supporting learning processes that are variable in nature, in order to personalize the acquisition of important competencies, has often until now been complex, anything but transparent, and rarely efficient.

For its Learn4U project, the Steinbeis Innovation Center for Innovation Engineering looked at different ways to gear companies and workers to the demands of lifelong learning, also examining factors offering orientation in coping with the diverse selection of continuing education topics.



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In the fast-moving world of digitech, young people consider it crucial to be flexible when it comes to knowledge acquisition in order to remain permanently attractive on the labor market. These were the findings of a Future Skills 2020 study conducted by Stifterverband, the German association of sponsors and donors. To meet these growing challenges when acquiring new skills in a business setting, it's important to design and implement learning processes (so-called corporate learning) in such a way that they specifically strengthen the competencies of employees, not only in terms of hard technical skills, but also in the area of interdisciplinary or soft skills. In business, currently the following challenges are faced:

■ **There is insufficient awareness of the knowledge and skill requirements that are relevant to companies:**

What must companies know and be capable of in their field and business environment (products, industries, markets, competitors) in order to not only remain viable, but also to prepare for the future?

■ **There is insufficient definition of the need to take action in different areas (the company, teams, individuals):**

How does a company learn as an organization? What does this mean for team training? What do individual employees need to learn and how can they learn efficiently?

■ **Measures and learning opportunities are often only accepted hesitatingly by employees:**

What can be done to encourage employees to want to change? Which options are right for employees and which ones can best be implemented on/near/off the job?

■ **There is no systematic approach when monitoring success with respect to the fulfillment of learning objectives:**

What are the concrete benefits of training measures – for the company, teams, and ultimately employees? What can be done to determine or quantify the actual success of continuing education?

With many of the existing learning platforms, there's an implicit expectation that technology such as artificial intelligence will provide the solution to all problems – for example, by lining up the demand and supply of learning content (matchmaking). Professor Dr.-Ing. Günther Würtz, Steinbeis Entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Innovation Center for Innovation Engineering, knows that as a concept, this is too simplistic: "What we've discovered with the Learn4U project so far is that the challenge is to formulate the current and future skills requirements of the company clearly and unambiguously, to work out the actions required to select and implement employee training, and – based on this – to make learning success measurable." In practice, however, systematically planning, running, and monitoring staff training is far too often a black box activity and is not dealt with properly.

### MADE-TO-MEASURE LEARNING THANKS TO LEARN4U

In recent years, individualized products and services have even become a regular feature of our everyday lives at home. Products can now be customized according to people's individual expectations and companies are capable of producing them at low cost. This has and still does make it necessary to find new methods, and translating those methods to the product of personalized learning lies at the heart of the Learn4U research project, which lays emphasis on practical application. The project is receiving funding and support from the Adolf Leuze Foundation. Learn4U is about using established methods and, in particular, defined processes to comprehensively and systematically understand the individual requirements of companies and their employees, to assess potential, and to make use of that potential in operational terms.



## THE LEARN4U PROJECT IS BASED ON A PROCESS MODEL OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING.

"On the one hand, this is achieved by merging the methods of engineering and complexity management, and on the other, you use the methods of human-centered design and agile development," explains Günther Würtz. Essential engineering approaches are, for example, classic requirements engineering as a basis of product development, as well as lean and agile processes in conjunction with the recognized evaluation metrics of process management (such as Balanced Scorecard). With human-centered design, use is made of profiles specifically created for users (such as personality types/profiles), user-specific requirements (such as reframing), and modern forms of problem-solving (such as design thinking). By allowing both methods to interact within the personalized learning process, the specific skills requirement of a company and the individual abilities (skills) of employees can be brought into harmony.

### PROCESS MODEL OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING

The Learn4U project is based on a process model of personalized learning.

Its essential features include definition of a new process called "requirements development." This acts as a basis for closing the gap (skill gap) between the demand for skills and the offer of training, particularly with regard to future skills. An important aspect is also systematically mapping existing training in the form of processes in order to make such activities more achievable (management) and controllable (controlling):

- **The "offer-screening" process:**  
What is offered by education providers?
- **The "learning content delivery and training" process:**  
Which offers are suitable for which employees?
- **The "performance review" process:**  
How are the learning outcomes of individual employees measured?

It's also important to identify "matching points" at the overlap between processes in order to avoid the incorrect or incomplete sharing of information.

For the Learn4U project, the Steinbeis Innovation Center for Innovation Engineering created three assessments for the development of a corporate learning system, spanning processes, tools, and learning tools. This forms the basis for personalized learning.

### → ASSESSMENT 1

#### **The process of ascertaining knowledge requirements stemming from business/project goals:**

Based on an assessment of the maturity of projects or the business model, methods are used to determine changes required to products and processes, and those requirements are mapped with additional skills requirements. From this, it is established which additional knowledge is required and priorities are set.

Example: Offer digital services in the future – different skills are needed for different tasks and roles.

### → ASSESSMENT 2

#### **The process of ascertaining skill requirements stemming from knowledge requirements:**

Based on target tasks and roles, specific to the context, a selected or existing competence model is used to identify the skill gaps of teams and employees. From this, the required learning needs and the level of needs are ascertained using self-assessments/third-party assessments and “transition paths” are defined.

Example: Data acquisition for digital services – who needs to know about/be able to do things with big data?

### → ASSESSMENT 3

#### **The process of ascertaining learning content/formats stemming from skill requirements:**

Skill requirements and learners are clustered (learning types, learning profiles) and, based on this, appropriate learning paths (learning formats, learning units, etc.) are created. If necessary, these are aligned with existing skill models and personnel development concepts.

Example: Learning module on the fundamentals of big data. Same learning content delivered individually through different learning formats (podcasts, videos, etc.)

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# “WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO FUTURE GENERATIONS!”

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEUR PROFESSOR DR. BERND JÖRS

Education will be even more important in the working world of the future, not only when it comes to initial training, but above all in terms of continuing education and lifelong learning. This poses unprecedented challenges for schools and universities alike. But are they ready for it? Bernd Jörs is a professor of information economy at Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences and a Steinbeis Entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Online Marketing Engineering & Business Analytics. In an interview with TRANSFER, Jörs makes a critical assessment of the current situation in higher education, calling for a different understanding of the task and role of university teaching staff.

**Hello Professor Jörs. You’ve been teaching for 35 years now. How has university teaching changed during this time?**

Lecturing at university has undergone huge changes over the past few decades. This is mainly due to the growing number of possibilities offered by technology, be that presenting or providing teaching materials, or hardware- and software-based tools, or the improved technological standard of the equipment in lecture rooms, such as whiteboards, or being able to offer courses online and run live sessions, but also providing learning videos that can be accessed anywhere, anytime. But there’s also the recording of lectures, Moodle platforms, open-book exam options, hybrid teaching and learning formats, and online supervision meetings – it’s completely changed everyday life for university staff.

**We now live and work in a world that feels like it’s changing more and**

**more rapidly, placing new demands on us every day. What does this mean for university teaching and anybody involved in teaching?**

I believe the future of university teaching will be driven by an all-important question: Who has the right stance, the teaching know-how, a “burning desire” for subjects – and understands how to apply that properly to teaching, whether that’s teaching offline or online? We should still heed the results of the international education research conducted by John Hattie, and his search for the key success factors of teaching: The key determinant of successful learning remains the actual teacher, despite all the endeavors to introduce digital technology or use gamification elements in teaching.

You have to remain conscious of this responsibility to train the generations to come. It should always be clear to you that you chose this profession in order to be there for the students, not the oth-



er way around. You’re primarily teaching people, with all their strengths and weaknesses, and only after that come the topics themselves.

Above all, university teaching must connect with young students on an affective level, because without emotional appeal, teaching doesn’t work. You can see that a lot of university lecturers find teaching tedious – apparently the students are less and less capable, less committed, less hard-working, and lazy, and then there are the customary references to the old days. They’re not enjoying what they’re doing. More than anything, they don’t appeal to young people with their authoritarian understanding of teaching, claiming to be on a higher level of knowledge; they’re not interested in making things comprehensible, and they still think their lectures and exams, and



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the high failure rates, are a reflection of their particularly high scientific standards. It's not their thing to make knowledge productive or share it. But having an intellectual responsibility for something is about expressing things so clearly that if someone says something that's wrong or unclear or ambiguous, it can be proved that that's the way it is. Too many German-speaking university lecturers have rejected or still reject this approach to comprehensible knowledge-sharing. According to Peter Drucker, the management professor, if knowledge is to be made productive, we can't abide this arrogant approach to teaching and science. This is something that's been known for decades. Softly-softly, usually ineffective didactic attempts to change this and finally make teaching comprehensible have tended to be unsuccessful. Apparently, nobody wants to do anything about this.

The fact that things have gone wrong, which everyone finds regrettable, is usually attributed to the students.

The most important ability of a university lecturer will be their capacity to share content in an understandable way and enjoy seeing the failure rates go down. Fostering understanding is then the most important task of lecturing for knowledge to become more productive. If anyone thinks that's not what's needed they should switch professions. We can no longer allow inadequate teaching to happen at university, or knowledge to be imparted without regard for the specific target group, because failings in university teaching are unacceptable and irresponsible in economic terms. We're already seeing clear efforts to move more and more to online teaching – not just because of coronavirus – with stand-

ard, on-demand packages of learning videos. University administrators and chancellors are halting the construction of new lecture halls, because some university teaching will probably be offered at home using digital technology. This will exacerbate the sense of alienation between lecturers and students, in a world of on-screen teaching. There are plenty of lecturers who'll say good, then I won't need to teach so much and I've got more time for what I prefer doing – research, without being interrupted, and writing papers, which in more than 90% of cases never get read or cited. Also, remote professors save themselves long and expensive journeys to work. Indifference will take on a new dimension. Teaching assessments are unlikely to result in improvements, and lots of university lecturers won't want to see them either. They often have a



## WITHOUT TEACHING, OR INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION, AND ESPECIALLY WITHOUT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, YOU GET NOWHERE; EVEN GOOGLING IS POINTLESS WITHOUT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

fixed and unshakable opinion of students and rarely budge from that opinion. Any critical self-reflection regarding the quality of their own lecturing is usually brushed over. Lecturers who think students are lazy and lethargic, or not interested, see no need to actively address their own shortcomings or reluctance to teach.

Basically, a professional commitment as a lecturer requires constant interest in the profession, plus contacts with other scientists, companies, and institutions. Acquiring know-how through training, that's relevant to the labor market, early and with forethought, and also being able to impart that know-how early, with the future in mind, is one of the obligations of university lecturers. After all, the world of vocations and the labor market are changing radically and getting faster and faster. Continuing education will become much more important than the phase of training and study. Some academic qualifications that are extremely sound – and traditionally highly recognized – are more than threatened by automation trends and AI developments, and in many cases they're being made redundant. According to the forecasts, this will impact more than 25% of existing academic qualifications.

This is why I plead for a radical change in the understanding of university teaching – we have a responsibility to future generations! In an age of continuous academic learning, university degrees with shortening half-lives, and an urgent need to introduce changes to the world of higher education, we need to raise our relationships to students to a new level. Which is why I find it so important to do away with this tendency for students

to feel alienated from university lecturers. The working world in the generations to come will be characterized by freelancing, project work, a reduction in the number of salaried employees, and constant pressure to undergo more training. There'll soon be even stronger emphasis on "next qualification = next job" thinking. We can't afford to wait much longer. Teaching behind a screen and this primitive and naive concept of establishing a passive "understanding of a learning coach" as the ideal type of university lecturer comes across as backward in this context and, above all, it's not focused on the future or expedient. University teaching must go hand in hand with professional university supervision for students. There should be even more contact between students, especially alumni, obviously not less. It's no longer enough to arrange simple, occasional alumni meetings. University officials and the labor market need to form much stronger links in this area.

**Allow me to play devil's advocate: Is university teaching still important at a time when it feels like knowledge is just a couple of clicks away?**

One thing that's clear from the most recent insights from teaching and learning research, which is well founded and underpinned by neuroscience – as well as insights into educational psychology, general and specialist teaching, and scientific discussion on different forms of analog and digital knowledge-sharing – is that without teaching, or intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and especially without prior knowledge, you get nowhere; even googling is pointless without prior knowledge. This outdated concept that simply clicking away in Google will be

enough to acquire all kinds of knowledge has always been an utterly stupid, naive, and illusionary notion. As John Hattie notes, learning is very often hard work.

The much-cited notion of information or media competence, especially when discovering or discussing fake news, is an illusion. It's non-competence. Without the right prior knowledge, you can't have – or much less "possess" – "any kind of competence." Learning takes motivation and the will. As mentioned earlier, it's that leading role in successful learning, played by teachers, and the associated role model they play, that should fuel the will and willingness of students to learn, that ignites their interest in a certain topic, especially if we want to combat that well-known concept of just doing enough – with the minimum amount of effort, the so-called copy-and-paste culture – for the sake of personal or intrinsic motivation. After all, lifelong learning should become a goal in life. In energy terms, that can't always be possible through continual, intrinsic motivation, or encouragement and discipline; teachers always play an important role in this. As we all know, students usually remember the teachers that inspired them the most and encouraged them. That just about says it all.

**If we go one step further, from studying to work, what role does continuing education play in this area, and how do you think it will develop in the future?**

As I already said, in terms of importance, the phase of continuing education will radically overtake the training or study phase. You have to think about the mot-

to of Anja C. Wagner: Training is never over. This viewpoint has to go hand in hand with the half-life of knowledge, which should make continuing professional development a must-have, even more so than in the past. Accordingly, universities, businesses, and other organizations must put anticipatory infrastructures in place. They need to offer a much broader range of training options, based on much more varied time frames – from four weeks to as much as three years. After all, in industry AI-based automation is knocking on everyone’s doors. A lot of things have to be learned and taught more quickly. Add to this the fact that Germany is being thrown out of kilter in demographic terms, which is devastating. So the courses at universities have to consider everybody, from the baby-boom generation to Gen Z and Alpha. Offering staff the option to continue their education, or obligating them to do so for five or ten hours per week, for their personal development, as is required and supported by the workforce at AT&T America, must become the norm. Steinbeis can and must take on a pioneering role in this area, otherwise other large companies from California will do it. On average, employees in Germany presently receive 17 hours of training per year! The decline is virtually hot-wired. Also, most continuing education programs are not actually pertinent to the work or job market, except that they’re kept short. It’s usually not real or efficient training – it’s more like occupational therapy. What we need is qualifications from training – and for once please without the continual German thirst for certificates – something that engenders new opportunity in the vocational world of the future. We need something that offers new prospects!

**Your Steinbeis company offers your customers “training and workshop programs of excellence” in online marketing engineering and business**

### **analytics. What’s special about the programs?**

There’s little willingness among German companies to organize staff training, especially in the online marketing engineering and business intelligence sector. As a result, there’s little continuing education investment in two areas that are important for the future. More importance is given to retirement schemes than this or that training – especially the demographically arduous “disposal” of employees, by promoting early or premature retirement programs, which are a burden on the following generations, who play no part in this but have high pension contributions. Continuing education for retirees – why? It’s dismissed as a waste of money. But especially for startup projects, qualifications in online marketing engineering and the field of data science and business intelligence would be positively helpful, also for older workers. In the United States, 25% of people over 55 start their own business. Of course that’s not always voluntarily. Many have pension payments which are verging on the edge of old-age poverty. A number of years ago, I tried to launch a continuing education program at Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences in the field of online marketing engineering/business intelligence. The concept was in place, based on many years of teaching experience in these areas, also with input from a large number of lecturers with the right qualifications. But the university saw no need for such continuing education concepts. People are guided by their own interests and prefer to work on new bachelor’s and master’s degrees. The result can be seen all around us. More than 20,100 bachelor’s and master’s programs have been launched now. How are you supposed to wrap your head around that? For young people, selecting a degree is like some sort of decision-making jungle. Everything’s broken down into so much detail and in the end, companies

have no idea what professional or social training is actually available. If something’s not done soon to address the situation in continuing education, we’ll miss the boat.

In many areas, the often-cited and bemoaned shortage of skilled workers is of our own making. It would have helped to provide early training in the important areas where future qualifications are needed, and this would have helped mitigate the situation. But the will and the money to make such investments in education weren’t there, and they’re still not there today. The example with cybersecurity issues, and the fact that there are over 100,000 unfilled openings in IT, go to show these failings are detrimental to everyone. Universities bear a fair share of the responsibility for this. But responsibility, or continuing education within university teaching, or permanently staying in touch with alumni: They’re not the issue when there’s this tendentious reluctance to teach in this country – or indiscriminately produced educational videos that will be stored on servers for the next ten years. Maybe that will change one day.

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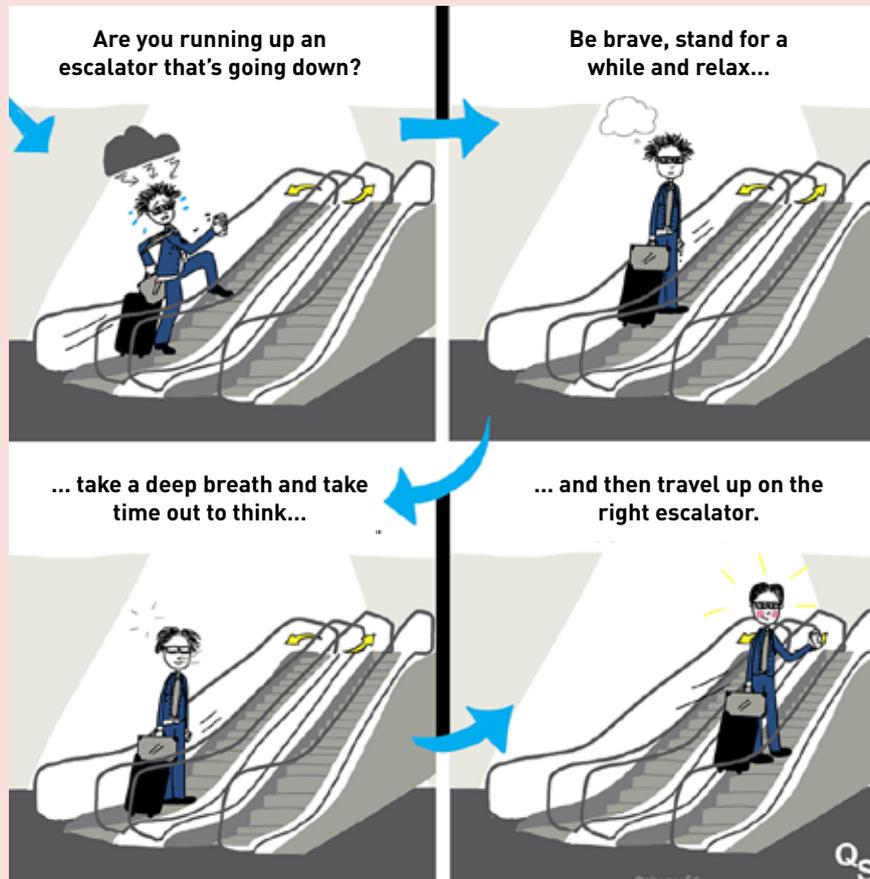


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# PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE – WITH A TABLECLOTH

STEINBEIS EXPERT HELPS COMPANIES WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMS



The pandemic exposed our deficits and dependencies when it comes to the sustainable, smooth functioning of the future world of work. For many companies, the prevailing attitude revolves solely around increasing profit. This has led us into a state of dependency and distorted our view of the broader picture. The working world of today is still shaped by the fact that for many years, the focus lay in building vast amounts of know-how, but what lacked was the “know-why.” There’s no use in saying it’s business as usual, so how do you deal with transformation at a company so that it is prepared for the working world of the future? The Steinbeis Consulting Center for Business Development and Digital Accessibility has found an answer to this question with what it calls the Tablecloth Process.

Steinbeis entrepreneur Stefan Wilke knows from experience which three elements are crucial for transformation processes at companies: First, there needs to be a willingness and readiness to really change something – and not just talk about it. Then, a company must put sufficient time aside for planning and implementing changes. Having the best possible consultant come in from outside is of no use whatsoever if internal resources aren't made available. And third, a company needs the courage to follow simple and clear processes and make decisions: What are really the must-haves, and what can be left out? Adhering to these points can be considered an investment in the future, although there may be a dip in profits at first.

Change is a permanent process, and the first step may be to just reflect for a moment and not simply react and do something for the sake of it. Wilke compares this to an everyday situation: "Don't keep running up an escalator that's traveling downward. Just stand still. Travel down, see what needs doing, and then you can relax and go back up again."

**THE TABLECLOTH – A USEFUL SOLUTION**

There are some things you can't change, but you can make things easier for yourself by working out your own solutions. Although Wilke deals with a variety of products and services in his work as a Steinbeis Entrepreneur and managing director of an IT company, for years he has relied on a simple but very effective tool in both of his roles. The term he coined for the tool: the Tablecloth Process. This everyday object provides him with support in the form of an analogy for quickly and efficiently analyzing different issues, based on just four questions that also allow him to work out matching solutions. "This approach did an excellent job getting us through the

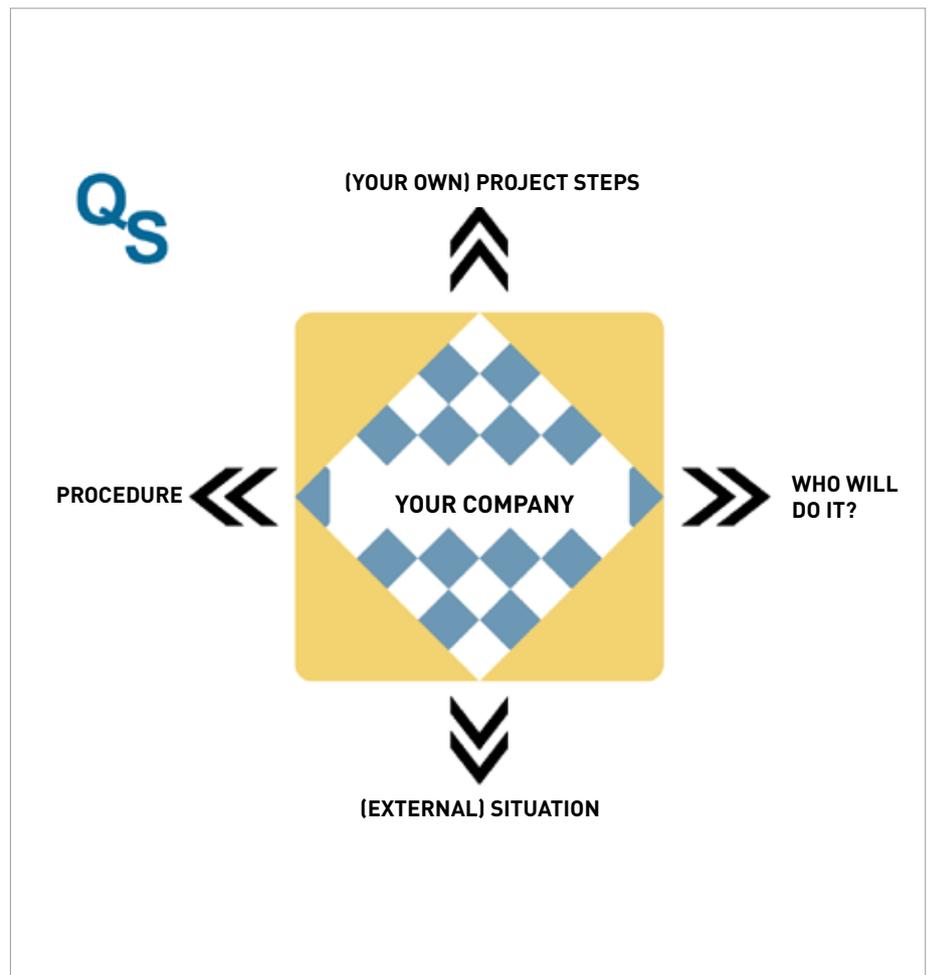
pandemic. For example, it enabled us to spot early on that switching from classroom teaching to online seminars and courses would keep us going," explains the Steinbeis expert from Durmersheim.

So what does the tablecloth consist of in practical terms? In the middle stands the company and the four corners point to the following: project steps, personnel (who does what?), the procedure (what needs to be done?) and the external situation. The procedure is an ongoing process. By providing a good overview of all processes it should also encourage people to keep things simple. In addition

to shedding light on internal processes, the model also looks at overall parameters surrounding the company.

"Bottom line, among other benefits the tablecloth results in significant savings and increased employee satisfaction. The fewer pointless processes, the better," says Wilke, summarizing the process. In a world of work increasingly characterized by complexity, to a large extent being future-proof is about separating the important from the unimportant. Methods like the tablecloth help give structure to topics and identify core criteria.

➔ The Tablecloth Process developed by Steinbeis Entrepreneur Stefan Wilke to quickly and efficiently analyze issues and find matching solutions.



## AT A GLANCE: THE TABLECLOTH PROCESS

Drawing on the example of remote working, Stefan Wilke demonstrates how to use the tablecloth method.

### → PROJECT STEPS

- Clarification: Where is remote working possible, dependent on each respective activity?
- Definition of technological prerequisites
- Determination of the required need for remote working Clarification of legal and safety issues
- Cost-benefit analysis
- How do I monitor the work of employees?
- What ratio of remote work to time in the office should I plan for?
- Ensuring digital accessibility of processes

### → PERSONNEL (WHO WILL DO IT?)

- To be clarified by HR: Where is remote working possible, dependent on each respective activity?
- IT department: Definition of technical prerequisites
- IT department in conjunction with Procurement: Determination of the required need for remote working
- Legal department: Clarification of legal and safety issues
- Accounting: Cost-benefit analysis
- Middle management: How do I monitor the work of employees?
- Middle management: What ratio of remote work to time in the office should I plan for?
- IT department: Ensuring digital accessibility of processes

### → PROCEDURE (WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?)

- HR drafts list of potential tasks
- IT creates checklist and technical implementation procedures
- IT drafts list of requirements – Procurement does the buying
- Legal: Draws up contracts and other relevant provisions
- Accounting: Cost-benefit calculations looking at all relevant cost centers
- Based on the results of projects: How do I monitor the work of employees?
- Give it a go: What ratio of remote work to office time should I plan for?
- IT: Implementation of existing guidelines and efficient testing by respective target groups

### → (EXTERNAL) SITUATION

- Are the necessary technical conditions met for employees (internet, office, etc.)?
- Which legal requirements have to be met?
- What interfaces are there with the outside world and are there defined procedures and specifications?

Possible outcomes of increased remote working may be that there are significant savings in time and money due to less commuting, a reduction in office space, and less need for paper and printers.

### STEFAN WILKE

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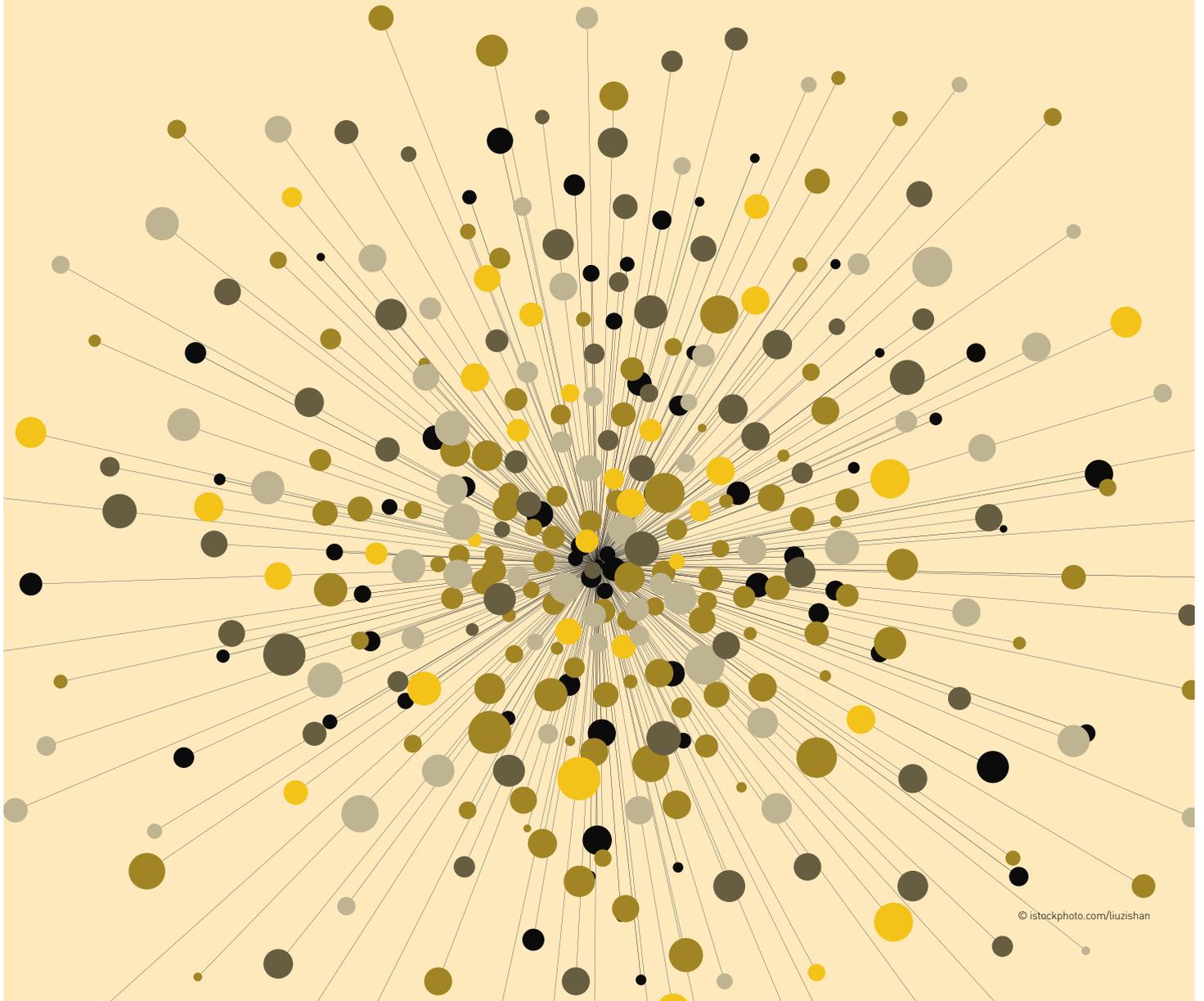


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# THE SELLING OF TRANSFER SOLUTIONS – TRANSFER SOLUTIONS IN SALES

**SALES AND THE TRANSFER OF SCIENTIFIC KNOW-HOW ARE CONVERGING.  
OUR AUTHORS SHED LIGHT ON THE OVERLAPS AND INTERFACES.**



# WHEN SELLING AND TRANSFER START TO CONVERGE

THE PANDEMIC AND THE SURGE IN DIGITALIZATION HAVE ACCELERATED THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SELLING TECHNIQUES



For decades, the Steinbeis Network has stood for excellence in technological expertise, management competence, and training services. Striking the right balance between the community offered by a headquarter organization and value creation at a local level results in highly specialized transfer solutions and services. But how do such offerings find their way to potential customers, and in what ways have the underlying conditions changed for selling these services? Also, what role do transfer solutions, scientific research, and teaching play in selling, as both an area of consulting and a core business function? The answers to these questions are the focal topic for the Steinbeis Network and this issue of TRANSFER magazine.

For many years, Steinbeis transfer in the traditional sense – as a spin-off activity of academic and scientific institutions – has kept going by itself, without a dedicated “sales function.” Existing contacts generated through [scientific] projects with industry and the continual stream of new contacts forged at conferences, symposia, trade shows, etc. also paved the way for projects in-

volving the sharing of know-how with business. Even before the pandemic and the upheaval it caused, this *modus operandi* was coming under pressure. It is becoming increasingly important to be present in digital channels and for transfer services to be findable, it is more and more important to present services professionally. Last but not least, customers are also changing. An increasing number of technological developments and value creation processes require engagement in business ecosystems, to which access is sometimes only gained incidentally.

### SELLING IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN BANK ON

Many transfer entrepreneurs realized some time ago that more thought will need to be put into selling their services. The developments brought about by the pandemic and the surge in digitalization have intensified this process, especially given that for a long time, there was only limited access to many of the established sales channels, and in some cases they disappeared entirely. More and more websites are being set up or expanding, with new ventures into social media and advantage being taken of the wide reach of multimedia formats. There is also a push to embark on more extensive sales activities, sales strategies are being developed, selling partnerships are being entered into, and companies are bringing in professional sales support.

This trend is highlighting many obstacles. Previous synergy effects, especially during project initiation, are disappearing, and generating new synergies is time-consuming. There is often a lack of understanding of – or no access to – certain sales methods or corresponding expertise and tools. Often, people are unwilling to even think about this issue, making it all the more important to continually sensitize people to this topic, to share examples of good practice, to discuss tools and methods, and

to allow sales experts to express themselves.

### KICK-OFF OF THE STEINBEIS CONSULTING FORUM

This important topic got off to an encouraging start at the end of March during an internal forum for consultants on the Steinbeis Campus in Stuttgart-Hohenheim. Winfried Küppers, entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Consulting Center for Sales Analytics, gave a thought-provoking speech on how changes in the economy affect the selling of consulting and transfer solutions, also offering recommended courses of action for Steinbeis Enterprises. He also highlighted the benefits of the Steinbeis brand, how to actively leverage headquarters media and communication channels, its social media presence, the reach of the Steinbeis Network, the foundation and backbone of scientific knowledge it offers, sales partnerships, and the power of the Steinbeis Network. He also pointed to the rich supply of “on-board equipment,” which not only requires little effort, but also – in the right combination – can be used to great effect.

In a talk on the success of triangular relationships, Professor Dr. Rainer Elste (Sales and Marketing Institute (VMI), a Steinbeis Consulting Center) introduced a second aspect of this topic to the Consulting Forum by examining the influence of transfer solutions and scientific research on sales consulting, also offering an introduction to the Marketing & Sales Digital Transformation Index. An example of a consulting project worked on by Elste showed how collaboration between his Steinbeis Enterprise, the auditing and consulting firm KPMG, and Esslingen University of Applied Sciences resulted in the development of a tool for determining the degree of digitalization within company selling processes. Developed on the basis of research results, the tool is now available to all companies and consultants. Experience has shown that time

and again, scientific insights and methods provide important inspiration for ongoing developments to the sales approaches used by companies.

Customers also increasingly expect consulting methods to be underpinned by scientific understanding, and this aspect influences purchasing decisions, a potential factor in bolstering the competitiveness of transfer-based consulting.

A number of completely new structures and approaches are also now entering the picture. One is the Steinbeis Expert Network X.0 (E X.0), in which Steinbeis technology experts come together with management and strategy consultants from the Steinbeis Network, medium-sized companies, and scientists, not only with the aim of developing new collaborative services, but also in order to sell and market services jointly as part of a growing business ecosystem. In addition, the Steinbeis Consulting Group for Marketing & Sales has been formed, pulling together as an association of Steinbeis Enterprises offering collaborative sales consulting services from within a network, also acting as a partner to the Steinbeis Network in order to make itself available to other Steinbeis Enterprises.

In the articles that follow, experienced Steinbeis experts offer insights into their methods, and the challenges of transfer-based selling and of selling transfer solutions. Our aim is to stimulate broad-based dialog on experiences within the Steinbeis Network and beyond, and we look forward to hearing different views and opinions.

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# A SALES LAB FOR ALL EVENTUALITIES

SBZ SALES ANALYTICS, THE STEINBEIS CONSULTING CENTER, SUPPORTS STARTUPS WITH SALES PROJECTS – WITH SOME IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

Selling has witnessed sweeping changes during the last three years. Many trade shows had to be cancelled with only limited face-to-face contact and most communication taking place online. Shortly before the pandemic, SBZ Sales Analytics launched its sales lab with the aim of supporting salespeople in their work during times of difficulty. The lab makes it possible to test selling hypotheses, gain insights into customer acquisition, and develop sales strategies for new business models.



Hypothetical selling situations are normally validated by conducting simple surveys, but in some cases they produce extremely inaccurate results, especially with new customer acquisition. This was the starting point for Winfried Küppers, Steinbeis Entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Consulting Center for Sales Analytics, and his sales lab. Küppers uses his lab to offer services, products, and knowledge transfer services on the market and to gauge reactions. Which selling arguments pique the interest of decision-makers? What would the ideal trigger line be? Which approach is most likely to succeed for which product? In which price bracket do solutions-as-a-service succeed? Based on these questions, tens of thousands of interviews and measurements were conducted during the pandemic for the lab run by SBZ Sales Analytics. They showed how much selling has changed in recent years and

what we should expect the new normal to be. "Combined with our offer to drive new customer business for our partners, this knowledge is currently in great demand," says Winfried Küppers, with a sense of delight.

### STARTUP SUPPORT FOR STARTUPS

A number of startups and new business units within existing companies are experiencing difficulty at the moment attracting enough attention – partly due to the fact that many trade shows are no longer taking place, or because they lack salespeople or a chief sales officer (CSO). By offering support with topics such as approaching new customers, contractual arrangements, billing options, and target group analysis, the sales lab run by the Steinbeis Consulting Center for Sales Analytics is an opportunity for firms to react effectively and quickly, without having to climb a steep learning curve. "Our extensive network also makes it possible to arrange direct access to potential sales leads," explains Küppers. This is also how the German-Israeli startup Inspekto was put in touch with V-ZUG, the leading Swiss manufacturer of premium kitchen appliances. As Vanessa Pfau, an officer with procurement at Inspekto, recalls: "We were able to speak directly with the key decision-maker and have very honest and open conversations. Steinbeis opened up a special door for us there."

Another startup that approached the Steinbeis experts from Hilzingen is Cadon. The tech startup performs spectral color data measurements with a focus on multicolor and patterned materials. For example, it allows car interior carpets to be precisely matched to the type of plastic used, or optical and metrological readings to be captured in digital data sets. Because the devices and software required to do this can be quite costly, the sales lab and other experts from banking were called in to research

an appropriate billing model and a corresponding concept was created.

### SELLING TRANSFER SERVICES

Another lesson learned over the past two years was that selling transfer services needs a complete rethink. Against this backdrop, the sales lab run by the Steinbeis Consulting Center for Sales Analytics has developed a new method that will not only benefit enterprises belonging to the Steinbeis Network, but also other companies. One such firm is SCHUNK, an automation specialist that wanted to proactively approach potential clients in order to organize a workshop and showcase the current capabilities of robots. To ensure its offer delivered sustained impact, as many decision-makers as possible should attend the workshop and recognize the fundamental potential to introduce automated systems at their own companies. The sales lab took care of cold calling and the approach was so effective that it aroused the interest of 28% of contacted companies, resulting in many appointments being lined up immediately on the phone. Sebastian Höpfl, Vice President for Product Sales and Product Management at SCHUNK, who is responsible for the project, is delighted: "The speed at which we achieved such amazing results through the intensive collaboration between SCHUNK and Steinbeis caused excitement among both teams. Customer feedback on the workshops has been overwhelmingly positive." As a result, SCHUNK invited the Steinbeis experts to design its booth at automatica, the automation and robotics trade show, in June 2022.

The new concept resulted in follow-up meetings with two-thirds of visitors to the booth. As Küppers confirms: "The booth team at the show was by far one of the best I've had the pleasure of working with. What stood out was that the SCHUNK booth was constantly busy, whereas others hardly had any visitors."



➤ Winfried Küppers (right) in conversation with Inspekto authorized officer Vanessa Pfau

➔ Satisfaction all around at the automatica trade show: Winfried Küppers (left) with Sebastian Höpfl, Vice President for Product Sales and Product Management at SCHUNK



HUMMEL, a systems specialist and leading provider of, among other services, charging infrastructure, has also enjoyed a fruitful partnership with the Steinbeis experts. Following its acquisition by Züblin several years ago, there are now plans at the former family business to scale up operations. To compensate for outdated know-how and reservations within the workforce, managing partner Frank Hummel and his

colleagues have developed a knowledge-sharing concept and an app to determine the demand for charging infrastructure.

The Steinbeis Consulting Center for Sales Analytics was assigned the task of putting the concept through market testing, arranging appointments with sales leads and lining up access to decision-makers. Hummel has observed

the fruits of working with the Steinbeis experts: “The speed with which we were able to enter into dialog with leading companies and subsequently carry out an actual project has spurred on the entire team. Our staff were given training by Winfried Küppers and his team so that they’re now in a position to acquire transfer services and customer projects themselves.”

### HOW THE SBZ SALES ANALYTICS SALES LAB HELPS ITS CUSTOMERS

- Presentations are arranged with companies to provide information on the new normal in sales and share certain tricks learned from business practice.
- Workshops and courses are organized to train sales teams and managers in business practice, and know-how is adapted to their individual circumstances.
- A cold-calling unit establishes contact with interested decision-makers and potential customers.
- When selling new business models, which are often digital, different methods are worked out for approaching customers and these are tested directly in the market.

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# THE SELLING OF CONSULTING SERVICES GOES ONLINE

HOW DO YOU PLAY THINGS IN A BUYER'S MARKET IN TIMES OF DIGITALIZATION?



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Digital transformation has had a massive impact on the way markets work. A seller's market, which was about stimulating customer demand, is increasingly changing into a buyer's market, in which the focus lies in answering a specific requirement. Before private households and companies consider a purchase or investment, they can obtain extensive information about the providers of products and services via the internet, with no limitations in terms of time or location. The selling of consulting services and know-how transfer must also face this reality. Steinbeis consultant Holger Hagenlocher knows from his own experience how best to achieve this. Hagenlocher summarizes the most important factors for TRANSFER magazine.

In addition to networking, maintaining personal contacts, public speaking, expert interviews, and client referrals as tried-and-tested factors of success,

an increasingly important role when it comes to finding, acquiring and holding on to new clients is now played by digital communication.

Digital communication spans all legs of the customer journey of potential clients, and where that journey will go depends on touchpoints to the company. That al-



## PRODUCING SUITABLE CONTENT AND PLACING IT ONLINE REQUIRES A CERTAIN DEGREE OF CONSIDERATION BEFOREHAND

so applies to the selling of consulting and transfer services.

### **THIRD-PARTY CONSULTING: ADVANTAGES – AND PERSONAL RESERVATIONS**

It's therefore important to make it clear to potential customers from the outset how they stand to benefit from support from third-party consultants. An important advantage with external consultants is that they have specialist know-how and experience that was acquired elsewhere. In addition, third-party consultants come to companies with an open mind and are only paid temporarily for specific services.

Despite this, external consultants entail additional expenditures and smaller firms are particularly likely to shy away from them. It's therefore important that they are aware that transferring theoretical knowledge into practical business settings is an intrinsic element of successful consulting processes. Acquiring know-how costs money, and possessing know-how is correspondingly valuable. This explains why consulting fees are not cheap, but applied sensibly, companies do stand to benefit in the long term.

A further obstacle may be that external consultants often struggle to gain ac-

ceptance. Not only are they expected to offer practical, quick-fire answers to different issues, but they are often not trusted within companies because of their methodical way of thinking, which is sometimes difficult to understand.

Personal reservations are expressed in a number of ways, with everything from "ivory tower" to "out of touch with reality."

If you want to sell consulting services and knowledge transfer, you need to be aware of such obstacles. Ideally, reservations should be dealt with before the first meeting. Transparency regarding fees and examples of successfully completed projects establish trust and can ease personal misgivings regarding high costs or the concept that consulting can be removed from reality.

### **USING THE RIGHT MESSAGING TO HIT THE RIGHT CUSTOMER**

Producing suitable content and posting it online requires a certain amount of consideration beforehand. It makes sense to check whether the products or services you offer and current forms of digital communication do enough to address the following: What are the core competencies of your consulting services and if necessary, what can you use to access a niche that would differenti-

ate your portfolio from competitors? To answer this, it can also be helpful to look into the latest trends regarding wording.

Looking at things from a different angle may also unearth the possible needs of potential clients. After all, sales leads only continue on their digital journey if they find that answers provided online actually do match the customer need.

This is also why content creation should be based on the aforementioned considerations. Search engines are more likely to rank content highly if it's particularly relevant to certain groups of users. On the other hand, it is becoming less and less important to optimize keywords.

### **BUILDING KEY CONTACT DATABASES AND TURNING THE SPOTLIGHT ON CUSTOMERS**

Using the right content also makes it possible to collect the contact details of potential leads, assuming, of course, you've considered data protection and the required consent of interested parties. Prospective customers can be offered the opportunity to download a case study, white paper, or success story by first registering with their contact details and agreeing to receive more information or newsletters. One should, however, always ensure customer

needs remain the focus of subsequent mailings. To do this, it may be helpful to enroll professional help when creating text or graphics, for example from editors, graphical designers, or copywriters.

### ADDING STRUCTURE WITH THE PESO MODEL

It's important that your content is not only available on your website, in company newsletters, or through your own social media channels. A good way to manage content sharing and ensure it's made accessible to potential customers is to use the PESO model, which stands for Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned:

- **Paid:** Paid advertising, but also advertorials in magazines or on online portals. Since advertising is becoming less and less accepted, native advertising – i.e. digital versions of advertorials – is becoming more and more important.
- **Earned:** Journalists write about us, editorial offices use our press releases or articles, or influencers pick up on topics – without us even paying for it. This will, however, entail a great deal of effort and preparation.
- **Shared:** Content (paid, earned, or owned) is shared and discussed in social media and spreads virally. Messaging and information are distributed free of charge and reach people we have had no previous contact with.
- **Owned:** This refers to content we create ourselves and publish through our own communication channels.

The PESO concept adds structure to the digital communications used by consult-

ants. Under certain circumstances, it may also pinpoint neglected areas that will need working on.

### SOCIAL SELLING – COLD-CALLING 2.0

Reaching out to customers with the tools of digital communication and online marketing is an excellent way to get in touch with people for the first time, pique their interest, and come into contact with potential customers you were previously unaware of. When it comes to consulting services, however, this is not enough to secure actual business. Ultimately, it will always be necessary to get in touch personally and offer some convincing selling arguments.

This personal approach should not, however, be confused with the kind of social selling that is so revered in social networks like LinkedIn or Xing, which is ultimately no more than cold calling translated into the setting of the internet. This is where field sales is transposed to a virtual space, or at least every now and again. Networking happens in online groups and cold calling takes the form of personal messages sent to prospective customers. This does, however, offer advantages versus the real world of analog business: It's easier to research interesting contacts, and getting in touch with people of interest is easier. Also, ultimately a deleted message is much less likely to cause frustration than the disappointment of countless rejected phone calls.

### THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN INBOUND AND OUTBOUND COMMUNICATION

The inbound model of digital communication, which involves disseminating virtual stimuli and teasers to attract prospective sales leads, is certainly more refined and contemporary, but it requires a great deal of patience as well as a certain lead time to produce mar-

keting collateral and optimize online offers.

Under certain circumstances, this lead time can cause financial bottlenecks, so preparations should be made and driven forward in parallel to ongoing activities.

This contrasts to the outbound model of social selling, which will probably result more quickly in face-to-face meetings. There is, however, a risk that there's a gap in supply and demand, wasting unnecessary time and energy. Moreover, this active and forceful approach to selling does not always match the mentality of consultants.

As is often the case, the most effective option is to make good use of a whole host of individual measures. When selling consulting services, these are a mixture of proven offline methods, such as speeches at public events and personal networking, in combination with new digital methods.

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# “TECHNICAL SALES MANAGERS ARE THE INTERFACE OF THE COMPANY TO THE CUSTOMER”

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHAN HERRMANN, STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEUR AT THE STEINBEIS CONSULTING CENTER FOR SALES ENGINEERING AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.

**Combined with current political and economic developments, the trend toward digitalization, which was accelerated by the pandemic, poses new challenges for sales. This also affects technical sales and the selling of transfer and consulting services. TRANSFER magazine spoke to Steinbeis expert Stephan Herrmann about the responses managers can make to current developments.**

**Hello Mr. Herrmann. Among other topics, you deal with technical sales. What exactly is that?**

In simple terms, it's the selling of products, goods, or services that require technical explanation. This mostly happens in B2B markets and involves capital goods, for example machinery, equipment, vendor parts such as specialized assemblies or components, but also high-tech solutions such as software. That could be a large contract relating to a project, or comparatively inexpensive vendor parts, which customers buy in large volumes to work on their own customer contracts. Sales in the narrower sense, i.e. purely securing sales and processing orders, is only a subdomain of technical sales. Among other things, technical sales also includes strategic focus, troubleshooting capabilities, and your ability as a supplier to acquire customers, but also professional customer support, and thus medium- and long-term customer loyalty.

Human, financial, and time resources are often limited in medium-sized companies, so as a result it's imperative to maintain a clear focus, to offer guidance based on goals, and to have corresponding penetration and impact in technical sales. When it comes to clearly distributing resources, the first thing I recommend is to define key thrusts: Do you want to penetrate more deeply into existing markets, with products that are already available? Do you want to reach out more effectively to existing customers with new products, i.e. do you want to invest in product development? Should existing products be extended into targeted areas within new markets, or do you perhaps even need to diversify? The success models of medium-sized tech firms prove that often, it's precisely 'market development' thrusts that have had such a positive impact on company growth in recent decades.

Specializing and acquiring core competencies over many years has enabled





companies to open up additional areas for products or services to be used in, or even enter international markets. So for me, international market development is inextricably linked to technical sales because it's precisely in this environment that there have been and still are good opportunities for our manufacturers to safeguard their existence and focus on growth, even when things are difficult. So basically, for me technical sales is much more than just selling products and services that require technical explanation. It has to be backdropped by a well-defined strategy and marketing focus, and quite often, especially for a company with a sales focus, it affects the actual nature of the business model.

#### **What are the particular tasks and requirements of technical sales?**

Technical sales managers are the interface of the company with the customer. On the customer side, you often work with development and the production department. You need a good understanding of problem-solving and the right know-how. Likewise, the wishes of the customer have to be integrated properly into your own company operations. In other words, the general task in technical sales is to apply consulting skills, good technical knowledge, and carefully adjusted interpersonal skills to gain access to customers using appropriate tools of project and product acquisition – and to succeed through tangible sales.

But what are the "real" challenges for companies with a leaning to technology? Well on the one hand, one thing that's often underestimated is the time things take. For example, it's quite common for customer and order acquisition – and ultimately, actually generating sales from new B2B customers – to take several years, so it takes a lot of careful planning. When you're working on a foreign market, it can take as long

as five or even ten years after entering the market to derive profit from the market. Also, it's rare to have enough sales and project capacity to deal with all the customer projects that come up, and give them sufficient attention. One way to deal with this dilemma is to divide current and future business into sensible combinations of products and markets, and for example assess them according to the criteria of market attractiveness and competitive strength. The approach you adopt is to distinguish between strategically unprofitable and profitable areas, and then maintain a clear focus by allocating the required selling capacities to the latter. It's a similar approach with international business development. The process model that's proven its worth in technical sales is clearly structured around different stages, starting with market analysis, market evaluation, market entry and development, and then the final step of cultivating the foreign market profitably.

#### **Let's switch from selling highly complex technology and services to selling transfer and consulting services: What do you see as the greatest challenges in this area?**

Since my professional experience is mainly in technical sales, I'd first like to answer that by drawing parallels to selling transfer and consulting services. Both involve services that need careful explanation in the B2B sector – based on similar circumstances and the pronounced focus on consulting. Successful technical sales usually hinges on a spotless selling concept. That first involves analyzing skills and your own capabilities, you then turn the spotlight on the market and the competitive situation, and then you move on to the customer segments you want to aim for, or the target customers, and finally you start working out suitable sales channels, selling processes, and ultimately the required marketing measures. For me, this approach also feels

fundamentally right for the consulting business.

According to recent studies, the consulting market in Germany can be roughly divided into the following areas: operational areas (approx. 35%), IT (approx. 20%), transformation processes (approx. 20%), strategic planning (approx. 15%), and HR development (approx. 10%). In terms of target groups, traditionally industry has been the most important sector, with the financial and public sectors of secondary importance, and a large proportion is also accounted for by a variety of customer groups, such as the healthcare sector, media, or the tourism industry. As far as the customer's concerned, apparently the sector's broken down on different levels, with larger, international consulting firms at the top of the pyramid in acceptance terms. So on the one hand, one challenge is to clearly divide your consulting services into the aforementioned areas of expertise and the defined customer groups, and on the other hand, you have to build the required reputation in the market when it comes to costs and benefits. On top of that, there was a significant downturn in consulting projects in recent times, in what used to be the strongest customer segments in industry such as mechanical engineering and machine construction, the automotive manufacturers, the supply industry, but also SMEs overall, and this is difficult to fathom given that there's demand out there for consulting.

But even in the day-to-day work of a consultant, you often discover that there are relevant issues and projects lining up, but the decision-makers haven't got the time to put aside enough management capacity for projects or ask for projects to be dealt with by people outside the company. As such, another challenge when you're taking on new customers is first of all getting your range of services across to poten-

tial contacts and explaining them professionally.

**The situation in the economy, but also in society in general, is tinged with so many uncertainties and challenges at the moment. What consequences will these developments have on both technical sales and the selling of transfer and consulting services?**

Unfortunately, we've been a bit preoccupied with international upheavals recently, be they political conflicts, increasing trade barriers, strains on supply chains, or even slumps in sales or revenues – in foreign markets that used to be quite profitable. If you think about international business, one way to spread risk will be to restructure supply chains and how you operate within markets. This is where technical sales are called upon to be systematic and look in a forward direction at markets in new, previously unfamiliar countries. It'll be increasingly important to evaluate information digitally, based on the methods of market or competitive intelligence.

But the thing that really hit us in sales in recent years was the coronavirus pandemic.

When everything went into lockdown, not only did people have to cope with restrictions, short-time working arrangements, or even the fear of losing their livelihoods; society also witnessed a completely new dimension of social interaction – in industry and business, but also on a personal level. Of course people were already talking about "sales digitalization" before the crisis, but for the digital tools that now became established – and people's attitudes towards those tools – there was no going back now. In sales, especially customer acquisition, there's increasingly a reversal from what used to be push selling to what's now pull selling. This is

redefining the nature of sales, and in some cases it's redefining business models. Previously, you could still actively get through to potential customers by using the consulting approach, by visiting the company, going to trade shows, or meeting people personally, but now it's reversing the way you make contacts. Contacts at potential customers are sometimes completely dismissive about requests to set up an appointment – if they need something, they first research products or services on the market online. So suppliers are designing their websites and the way they provide information in the best possible way to pick up potential clients virtually – during the customer journey – to help them with their digital research, and ultimately to receive queries as "qualified leads" that can then go into sales processing. As a result, sales force capacities are, for example, being consciously put aside for existing customers, potential A and B customers, or C customers, who are predominantly supported online.

What's then crucial is no longer the number of customer contacts, but their quality, expertise, or the viability of contacts. But also, shifting roles around in sales goes hand in hand with the increasingly important role played by central marketing, which needs more pow-

erful IT systems and, for the supplier, becomes a kind of digital control center for new customers.

**What trends do you think will determine the future of sales, especially when it comes to selling services?**

As I said, I think the developments I mentioned are irreversible, so the trend toward digitalization and "depersonalization" of the first touchpoint with new customers will continue through internet presence, being visible online, or the social media. I also think this applies to the selling of transfer and consulting services – to gain initial access to the client, individual consultants also need this kind of "central back-up" from technical marketing. So on the other hand it's important to pay even closer attention to existing customers, the ones you already know personally. The term you hear in industry when you extend additional or further offers to existing customers is cross-selling. Of course, it's also possible to do something like that in consulting, but this requires a clear understanding of different service packages, what makes each one different, and the willingness to move around within your own company or overall organization, as part of a powerful and internally coordinated network.

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## “DIGITECH IS NOT A MEANS TO AN END”

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEUR PROFESSOR DR. STEFFEN JÄCKLE

**Selling is not everything, but nothing works without sales! There are a number of hurdles to overcome when moving to digital selling, as Professor Dr. Steffen Jäckle, Steinbeis Entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Transfer Center Business Development Excellence BDx, can explain. TRANSFER magazine met up with Jäckle for an interview.**

**Hello Professor Jäckle. What challenges do you face in selling transfer and consulting services?**

There are three big challenges: gaining trust, perseverance during acquisition, and attracting attention.

Gaining trust is about the fact that consulting is a commodity of trust. Potential clients are only in a limited position to judge the quality of a service if they've not used it yet. That often makes it difficult for new suppliers, especially if they can't point to reference projects.

Perseverance during the acquisition phase is of huge importance because it can take a very long time, sometimes years after the initial contact, for potential customers to actually have a concrete need for consulting – and for this to result in the chance of a contract. So it's important to keep talking to lots of potential clients and ensure there's a healthy balance in the sales funnel.

The third challenge is about attracting the attention of the potential target group. The technological barriers to entry are much lower than they were in the past, but of course that applies to any potential provider, so the big challenge is perception among the target group.

### **So what's the key to success?**

The success factors are easy to categorize according to those three challenges. The best way to gain someone's trust is to point to a successful reference project. That's also why the absolute priority has to be your first project, even if that eats into margins. It also helps to have an established brand behind you, like Steinbeis, to engender trust in the target group.

Then there's the next challenge – persistence during the acquisition phase. This involves consultants targeting a larger number of potential customers, though what you must never do is go in too hard at the beginning.

And finally, to attract attention you need to use the right blend of communication channels and say the right things. That means not only using "owned media," i.e. the channels you already have access to, like the company website, but finding a good mix of shared channels, such as social media, partnerships, and if necessary, paid channels. Many firms fail to understand what's really relevant to their target audience, so you need to find that out.

**Your Steinbeis Enterprise ensures the latest findings from research are transferred to companies. What sales issues are currently being looked at in research, and how are they reflected in business?**

One of the biggest challenges at the moment in B2B sales is acquiring new customers. In the past, clients would

often be acquired through events, face to face – mainly trade fairs, congresses and the like. That approach has now become obsolete because of the pandemic, and if there's one thing we do know, it's that things won't go back to the way they were before Covid. But companies still need to find new customers, which is a fascinating challenge we're researching at the moment. What we're finding is that digital tools can be used to attract new customers. But the big challenge is that the new tools require staff to learn new skills, and some organizations – especially with the kind of employees who tend to be averse to change – are still hoping things will go back to the "good old days" – but that's false hope! Times have changed now.

**What value do sales concepts and methods derived from scientific knowledge offer in concrete terms to business practice?**

As Immanuel Kant already worked out, "There is nothing as practical as a good theory." Although to be honest, there's no other function of corporate life where scientific concepts are subjected to so much ridicule by "business practitioners" – this only happens in sales. The thing you hear time and again is that the key bit about sales is gut feeling. That's mistaken! Better decision-making is based on well-founded, robust knowledge, and that includes – or is especially the case – in sales. Successful selling is no longer possible these days if the approach isn't underpinned by a good concept.

**One of the key areas you work in is digital transformation excellence. What exactly is that?**

No company can afford to ignore the possibilities offered by digitech. Not only can it add value for the customer, it also allows you to enhance the efficiency of service delivery. It creates so

many new opportunities – especially in sales. Here's an example: Small and medium-sized companies are now able to enter new export markets, completely online. The barriers to entry have gone down to an absolute minimum, and that's been driven by technology. Here's another example: A producer of stair lifts succeeded in cutting the amount of time and effort invested in field sales – to measure customers' staircases and banisters – by more than 50%. How? By using augmented reality glasses. The time it then took to install lifts after order placement went down from seven weeks to ten days, because the data's now available in a digital format, right from the beginning.

The value that adds is clear and sales staff know that too. So the goal must be to use digitech to generate more business. Although of course things also work the other way around: If tech doesn't add value, staff are usually pretty quick at noticing what's happening – and worst case scenario, they'll refuse to use it. If that's the case, I'd say rightly so! Digitech is not just a means to an end, it has to enhance customer benefit and make service delivery more efficient.

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# PRICING DECISIONS IN THE HIVE

## STEINBEIS EXPERTS DEVELOP PRICING SOFTWARE FOR B2B SALES

**Anyone who has ever worked in sales is familiar with two problems. The first is that of passing on rising costs to customers. The second is about having to deal with customers who require intensive support, but don't compensate for time investments with high prices. The experts at the Sales and Marketing Institute (VMI), a Steinbeis Consulting Center, have explored these issues with their own customers, resulting in the development of software that can be used to automate pricing decisions.**

Even before the recent phase of price inflation, sales managers were experiencing difficulty finding suitable ways to pass on cost increases. But now, with almost meteoric rises in costs, previous failings when it came to systematically analyzing pricing or implementing price rises are surfacing. Other factors are becoming important, over and beyond rising costs: Are customers paying what they should be, especially compared to other customers? How many customers actually fuel costs, but fail to compensate for this in pricing terms? And then of course there are those customers who, to use sales jargon, pay "historical" prices – i.e. at the beginning of the customer relationship they promised big order volumes or a large project, but somehow never managed to deliver on those promises.

It's quite common for such customers, who can be particularly demanding, to take up more time and effort than large, existing customers. Dealing with the latter is often so well aligned that this effort is relatively manageable.

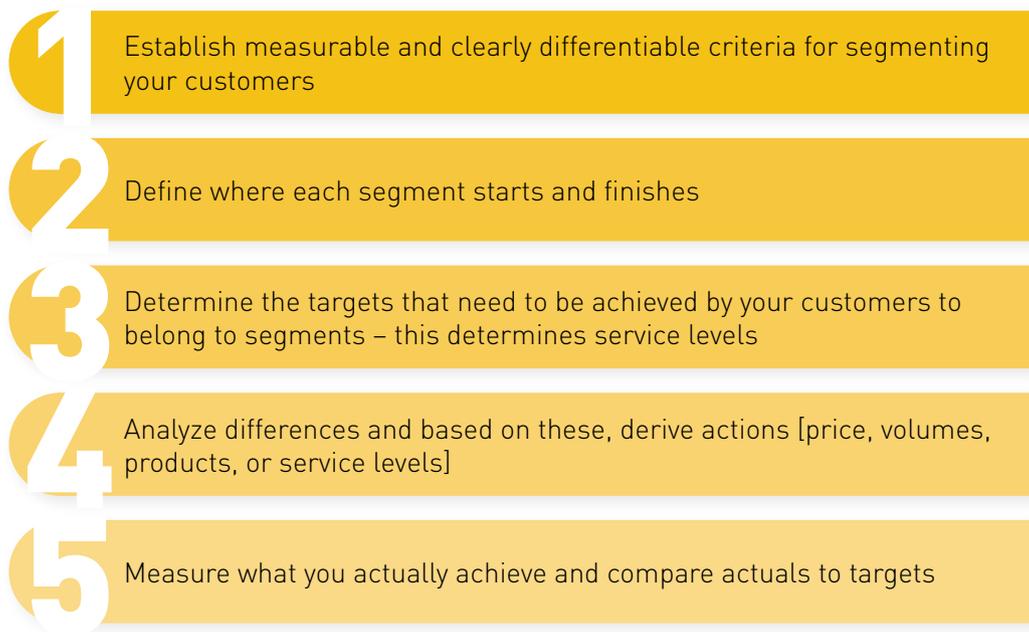
### HOW MUCH EFFORT IS INVOLVED IN MANAGING CUSTOMERS?

On the one hand, and depending on how many office processes have been digitalized, dealing with a large number of small orders requires a disproportionately high degree of effort in processing. Add to this special requests regarding production, transportation, storage, returns, complaints, or payment terms, and things become even more expensive, especially if those are things customers are not billed for. If customers are no longer rewarding – due to low or only sporadic sales, coupled with high expenditures – at some point it may no longer be worthwhile investing time in managing them personally. It might then make sense to hand them on to an online store or wholesaler. Alternatively, customers might just have to pay for any special favors you do them in the future. But is the sales department even in a position to keep adapting – in terms of pricing, or time invested in helping clients?

To answer this question, the Sales and Marketing Institute (VMI), the Steinbeis Consulting Center headed by Steinbeis entrepreneur Professor Dr. Rainer Elste, has been working with one of its own clients on the development of a systematic process, culminating in a software solution.

### THE STARTING POINT: A LACK OF SYSTEMATIC STRUCTURES

The customer of the Steinbeis Consulting Center operates across three con-



 Recommended approach for managing prices by customer

tinents, offering services in the field of plastic processing and distribution. In the fall of 2020, two key factors motivated management to start actively addressing the issue of automating pricing decisions. The first factor was rising costs, which even at that point had already risen beyond the normal volatile levels experienced in the raw material market. The second was to do with customers, who were receiving highly individual support from the sales department, but processes were not well organized, with no discernible or measurable degree of segmentation. Similarly, there was nothing in the way of a structured approach to price differentiation.

#### FROM DATA ANALYSIS TO CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION

The first step for the experts at the VMI Steinbeis Consulting Center was to

analyze every single invoiced price, by customer and product, based on transaction data for an entire fiscal year (approx. 250,000 records). This involved almost two weeks of work inside the system cleaning up inaccurate or missing data. One finding after data analysis was that a significant proportion of small customers were paying prices that were too low. The team was also able to ascertain that transportation costs itemized in product prices did not even cover outlays in some areas in Europe.

The next step was to systematically define customer segments with the support of the sales department and management accounting. These categories were used to define criteria to be met by customers to fall into each segment.

This involved looking at both the volume of sales by customer and their

profitability. At the same time, consideration was given to the fact that new customers often say they will grow and as a result, there is a transitional phase when they are treated like leading customers.

Finally, it was determined what level of service should be offered if a customer is assigned to a certain segment. In keeping with this, the support model was realigned and rules relating to goodwill or payment terms were laid down for each segment.

#### THE OUTCOME: A SYSTEMATIC, TOOL-BASED SOLUTION

The company decided that it was important during deployment of the new system to make no additional profit from handing on cost increases to customers – but it should definitely also not lose out.



## THE SOFTWARE DEVELOPED BY THE STEINBEIS CONSULTING CENTER ALLOWED US TO BECOME THE ONLY COMPANY IN THE INDUSTRY TO HAND ON COST INCREASES IN FULL

CEO of a company supported by Steinbeis VMI

Even during the first round of price increases, the company succeeded in achieving significant improvements, particularly with its small, less profitable customers. Despite double-digit price increases, customers neither went elsewhere nor reduced their already low order volumes. There was also a shift in understanding in the sales department. Although there had been a number of reservations at first, these gave way to the desire for a systematic solution with the support of a tool. It was recognized that this offered greater transparency and made it easier to manage customer pricing.

For the second stage of the project, the Steinbeis experts developed software that can be accessed from anywhere via the internet. The system is automatically fed with data from the company's ERP system, which can be fed back into the system again. For security reasons, data is "stored" in-house at the company.

The clearest indication that the project was a success came from the CEO:

"The software developed by the Steinbeis Consulting Center allowed us to become the only company in the industry to hand on cost increases in full."

### MUTUAL BENEFITS FOR BUSINESS AND RESEARCH

To implement the project, Rainer Elste built on the findings of a so-called Marketing & Sales Digitalization Index and insights offered by the index during his research at Esslingen University of Applied Sciences. One finding was that companies in B2B markets are comparatively reluctant to use digital systems for pricing and price control purposes. A market analysis of other providers of pricing software also revealed that matching customer segments to price controls is often a manual process only carried out on an ad-hoc basis by business consultants.

Based on these insights, the experts at the Sales and Marketing Institute (VMI) have developed a pricing tool called Price-Hive. Similar to a perfectly organized beehive, data held by the tool is

systematically structured and evaluated, offering clear targets for pricing purposes. Based on the right premises, the software can even take into account possible downward price pressures. Sales staff are supported by corresponding algorithms, which, among other things, help with customer segmentation and cost adjustment considerations. Coming the other way, implemented changes can also be fed back into the tool. This automates a variety of steps, making processes more cost-efficient and, above all, repeatable. This is of particular benefit to SMEs that have to deal with a large number of customers.

Vice versa, the project has also made it possible to feed important insights back into research, because automating pricing decisions – with the support of systems that learn as they go along – is still a broad field of research.

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# CROSS-SECTION

CURRENT PROJECTS FROM THE STEINBEIS NETWORK

# A HEALTHY CLIMATE THANKS TO INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

## STEINBEIS EXPERTS HELP WITH THE EXPANSION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY IN TUNISIA

In 2012, Germany entered into an energy partnership with Tunisia – even before the media were praising the global climate treaty, which made history when it was signed off in 2015. The focus of the 2012 collaboration agreement: renewable energy. With their scientific knowledge and experience, three Steinbeisers – Frank Graage, Peter Stein and Marcello Ambrosio – are also supporting know-how and technology transfer between the two countries, already successfully implementing projects.

Tunisia has little to offer in terms of raw materials, but it has every potential to become completely self-sufficient in terms of energy supplies thanks to solar power, wind energy, and geothermal energy. The country can produce enough energy to cover its own needs and even export energy in the form of green hydrogen, methanol, ammonia, but also end products produced by the chemicals industry. Tunisia also has significant opportunities to offer sustainable holidays. The country's greatest area of potential, however, is its young population. The high proportion of young women working in technical areas and participating in degree programs offer the country a variety of new possibilities. Germany is supporting Tunisia in realizing this potential as part of a so-called energy partnership.

Germany also stands to benefit from the partnership, which not only helps reduce its dependence on a small number of supply countries, but also allows it to develop sustainable logistical networks. This is something that has been recognized by Steinbeis expert Peter Stein, who is supporting and promoting the interests of a variety of partnerships and projects.

### TACKLING THE ENERGY CRISIS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The Wind4Grid project is also contributing to successful renewable energy

development in Tunisia. The focus of the project lies in collaboration between two Tunisian and two German partner companies in the field of storage technology and grid feed-in systems. Wind4Grid falls under a bilateral science and technology collaboration program funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Other parties involved in the project are the Laboratoire d'Etudes des Systèmes Thermiques et Energétiques in Monastir, the Chair of Wind Energy Technology (LWE) at the University of Rostock, Freqcon from Germany, and Qair from Tunisia.

Frank Graage, Steinbeis entrepreneur at Technology Management North East, a Steinbeis Research Center, has been involved in the project on behalf of the University of Rostock. His aim was to organize an innovation forum to allow stakeholders from the two countries to exchange ideas and embark on future initiatives. The forum, which was held in Tunis on May 11, 2022, was attended by 40 people and was organized to coincide with a visit from a business and science delegation. There were a number of opportunities for delegates to enter into scientific and industrial partnerships at the innovation forum, the aim of which was to integrate and advance the technologies presented in Tunisia, partly in order to expand the networks of existing contacts, but also

to find new partner organizations or embark on the first pilot projects.

"All participants wanted to see more coordinated exchange and collaboration in order to tackle the current energy crisis," says Steinbeis expert Frank Graage. To this end, a memorandum of understanding was signed, which will be presented in October to mark the tenth anniversary of the German-Tunisian energy partnership. A request will also be submitted to involve more innovation stakeholders in this area – from both countries.

### INNOVATIVE LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION FOR RESOURCE-EFFICIENT ENERGY GENERATION

Also participating in the innovation forum in Tunis was Marcello Ambrosio from the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Polymer and Metal-Based Lightweight Design. He had specific reasons to be interested in partnerships. For his work at Brandenburg University of Technology (Department of Polymer-Based Lightweight Construction) and the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Polymer Research (IAP), Ambrosio develops innovative lightweight technology for renewable and resource-efficient energy generation. "Our focus lies in a new type of rotor blade for small wind turbines using ultra-lightweight technology. Combining it with photovoltaic systems offers the ideal basis for decentralized energy



Delegates at the Innovation Forum on May 11, 2022 in Tunis © juni Media GmbH & Co. KG.

supplies in the off-grid sector. The rotor blade is designed for low-wind regions, such as the Tunisian hinterland, and it can be used almost anywhere," explains Steinbeis entrepreneur Marcello Ambrosio.

Brandenburg University of Technology and the Fraunhofer IAP are also developing fiber composite-based pressurized containers for storing hydrogen used in power-to-gas (PtG) systems. The containers are equipped with integrated monitoring systems, which ensure safety and worry-free maintenance, especially in residential use.

#### More on the tour to Tunisia of the business and science delegation (German video):



<https://youtu.be/8e2MYBk2Wc4>

#### Topics discussed at the innovation forum included:

- Energy grid stabilization through wind turbines with integrated battery storage
- Linking of planned solar parks and wind farms with hydrogen, methanol, and ethanol production
- Seawater desalination using renewable energy for hydrogen electrolysis
- The potential of offshore wind energy off the Tunisian coast
- Lightweight small wind turbines for decentralized energy supplies

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# TIMES OF CRISIS ARE TIMES OF COUNSELING

STEINBEIS CONSULTANT DORIS DEICHELBERGER PROVIDES SUPPORT WITH THE FOUNDING OF A COUNSELING CENTER FOR PEOPLE GOING THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

First came the coronavirus pandemic, then came the impacts of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine: Many people are currently struggling with situations that cause psychological stress, or with difficult phases of life, or with the challenges of social upheaval and the fears associated with such situations. Not only can this have a serious impact on the circumstances of families, children, young adults, and other individuals; psychological well-being and mental health also have a direct influence on people's working lives and, ultimately, overall social development. This is a fitting time to set up a counseling center dedicated to supporting and caring for people currently in need of urgent help in coping with everyday life. And this is exactly what the Enz Counseling Center in Mühlacker, Baden-Wuerttemberg, does. Steinbeis startup coach Doris Deichselberger, an expert in the field of business startups, drew on her expertise to provide support with setting up the center – from the initial idea to the actual launch of the company. "It was a project relating to key infrastructure, especially in current times, so I was very happy to help it become a success," she explains.

Some of the services offered at the center include so-called outpatient parenting support, such as socio-pedagogical family assistance and outreach family therapy. Thanks to their training, many years of experience heading up public and independent youth welfare organizations, and the support of private providers of youth services, managing directors Lena Bullinger and Philipp Ziegler are not only in a position to appreciate such welfare services, they also know how they should be run, in cooperation with the youth welfare departments through which funding is provided. Experience shows that more socially disadvantaged families are in particular need of support. "We founded the Enz Counseling Center to provide individual support to children, teenagers, families, couples, but also individuals going through difficult times or crises, or when they want to make changes to their personal circumstances or workplace. The support from Doris Deichselberger, as a long-standing Steinbeis business consultant, was extremely valuable to us during this process," say the two founders.

## FROM THE INITIAL CONCEPT TO IMPLEMENTATION

Once the two founders had decided to embark on the journey to self-employment, they found themselves confronted by a whole host of questions: What type of business would be right for them, what should they write in the business plan, how should they acquire customers, who else would they need help from to successfully get the company off the ground? Bullinger and Ziegler went with their list of questions to Doris Deichselberger. "During the startup consultation session, we systematically worked out the answers to all our questions and got some really important information and advice," say the business founders.

The services offered by the Enz Consulting Center are now based on four pillars:

- 1. Outpatient parenting support in cooperation with the local youth welfare department**
- 2. Counseling for families, couples, and individuals going through**

**difficult phases in life, with a desire to make a change**

- 3. Occupational social welfare advice, coaching, and team development for companies**

- 4. Taking time out, recreation, and events in the countryside ("Forest & Meadow")**

The Enz Counseling Center supports, advises, and accompanies people and groups both in private settings and at the workplace. To find suitable answers to different and often complex needs, Bullinger and Ziegler do their utmost to consider multidisciplinary requirements by offering a team of experts from different professional backgrounds, spanning a variety of areas of expertise.

"Aside from the practical and highly constructive ideas and inspiration we received, and access to different contacts from Ms. Deichselberger's network, her coaching sessions laid a foundation for us to take all issues into account that would be relevant to setting up a com-



## A NUMBER OF STEPS NEED TO BE FOLLOWED TO SUCCEED WITH CLIENT ACQUISITION.

pany. At the same time, we received numerous ideas that proved helpful with important negotiations and customer acquisition,” conclude Bullinger and Ziegler.

### TIPS ON SUCCESSFUL CLIENT ACQUISITION

With the support of Deichselberger, the business founders worked up a comprehensive acquisition concept and an effective implementation strategy. “A number of steps need to be followed to succeed with client acquisition. One thing I recommend is planning specific approaches in detail rather than just going out there without properly thinking things through – so, for example, in what order and with which ideas should customers be approached? What do customers actually need? What’s the benefit to them? Where do you already have contacts? What’s the goal for each meeting? From experience, this is a successful way to build on contacts to new customers,” suggests Deichselberger.

### FOCUS ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

In addition to services offered in the field of outpatient child and youth welfare, and counseling for private individ-

uals, another important service offered by the founders is aimed at companies and organizations with a focus on the psycho-social health and well-being of employees, especially as part of occupational health management programs.

By offering active support on issues relating to work, healthcare, the family, and people’s personal situations, Bullinger and Ziegler work with clients on the development of a made-to-measure roadmap for maintaining good health and staff performance. This is achieved in close cooperation with the firms that hire them to actively help achieve significant reductions in the psychological and mental stress of employees.

Companies and other organizations can also take advantage of service bundles related to team development. This is where, if interested, services can be linked to events organized under the Forest & Meadow pillar, to allow teams to stand well back from the workplace and get to know each other – and grow together – in completely different ways.

The support provided by Deichselberger as a management consultant played a pivotal role in the success of the new company set up by co-managing directors Bullinger and Ziegler, who also

succeeded in positioning the Enz Counseling Center among key stakeholders. “In addition, the impartial views of a third party allow you to look at your startup from a different angle and this offers you an opportunity to get off to a safe start by receiving professional advice – especially in times of crisis,” highlights Deichselberger.

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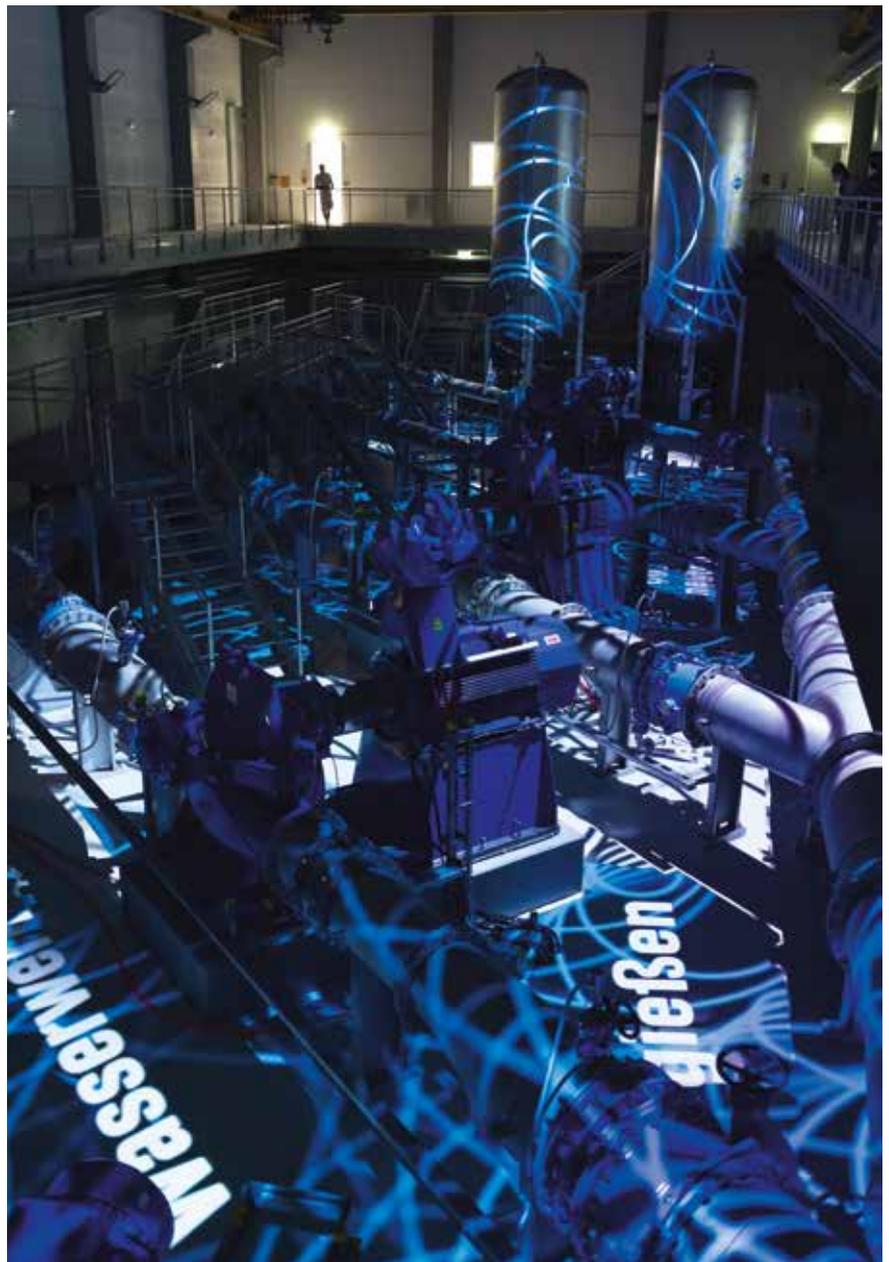
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# A CREATIVE APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IN THE FIELD OF DRINKING WATER

STEINBEIS EXPERTS ORGANIZE EXHIBITION AT THE NEW MÖRSCHER WALD WATERWORKS IN KARLSRUHE

Information is a core resource of continually growing socio-political and economic significance. Current topics such as digitalization, artificial intelligence, mobility, sustainability, and emerging technologies with their global consequences require education of a broad public audience, not only to involve the members of our democratic society in such sources of knowledge, but also to put them in a position to make decisions and take action. As part of its corporate communications, the municipal utility company Stadtwerke Karlsruhe therefore decided to launch an information campaign aimed at members of the general public on the many issues affecting the production and supply of drinking water. To this end, it commissioned the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Visual Information and Knowledge Transfer to organize an exhibition.

To safeguard the vital long-term supply of drinking water in Karlsruhe and its surrounding communities, including for future generations, public utility company Stadtwerke Karlsruhe has constructed a new water processing plant in a water protection zone called Mörscher Wald. Its waterworks adhere to the latest technical standards. In parallel to the construction project of the century, the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Visual Information and Knowledge Transfer was invited to use three rooms at the complex to provide detailed scientific information on the project, including artistic installations.



↑ Projection mapping in the pump hall (© Anne-Sophie Stolz)



↑ Foyer with sound sculpture and drinking water dispenser  
(© Anne-Sophie Stolz)



↑ Interactive model of the drinking water supply infrastructure  
in Karlsruhe (© Anne-Sophie Stolz)



“The main challenge of this complex task was to create spaces and content for an extremely heterogeneous target audience,” explains Steinbeis entrepreneur Professor Anja Grunwald. The aim of the utility company was to use the creative project to appeal to a wide audience, ranging from schoolchildren and students to adults with an interest in such topics and even experts in the supply of drinking water, who are expected to use the new building for conferences and lectures. The result was a concept that adapts to different visitor scenarios by allowing for adaptable furniture elements, which impart information and educational content in such a way that visitors can delve into the issues of drinking water production on different levels, depending on their previous knowledge.

On the one hand, it would be important for the utility company to provide information on the responsible use of drinking water. On the other hand, from a corporate communication perspective, three core messages needed to be conveyed to the visitors:

- The drinking water of Karlsruhe is a carefully monitored, high-quality

product of consumption, which is always available.

- The waterworks of Karlsruhe bank on the very latest technologies and ensure a sustainable supply of drinking water.
- The waterpipe network in Karlsruhe is a sophisticated system that guarantees adequate supplies of drinking water for the region, even during peaks in consumption.

The exhibition spans three rooms, each with a different focus to form a tour.

### ATMOSPHERE: IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE WORLD OF WATER

In the foyer, visitors to the waterworks are met by a huge blue-and-green screen of rectangular elements, symbolizing the union of technology and nature on the one hand, and the process of drinking water production on the other. At the same time, the natural sounds of water can be heard coming from speakers on the ceiling and large pipe sculptures – dripping, swishing and swashing, splashing, or even the sounds of technology such as pumps, water wheels, or filters flushing. “The sound composition immerses visitors

in the atmosphere of the world of water,” says Anja Grunwald, describing the experience. There are also ways to interact with the exhibits, with one of the tubular sculptures equipped with sensors to allow the sounds to be shaped by hand movements, like an instrument. If visitors start feeling thirsty during the tour, they can help themselves to drinking water from a dispenser in the foyer, which looks like an abstract pebble from the River Rhine.

### INFORMATION: UNDERSTAND THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

The second room houses the drinking water exhibition itself, comprising 14 exhibition units. These range from graphical displays to animations, films, and interactive media, the aim of which is to convey information on the physical phenomena of water, personal and regional consumption via groundwater resources in the Upper Rhine river basin, drinking water extraction using deep wells, and even global issues such as climate change or the human right to unhindered access to drinking water. A ceiling-high model along one wall shows the topography of the Upper Rhine riv-



↑ 14 exhibition units with films, animations and interactive applications around the topic drinking water (© Anne-Sophie Stolz)



↑ Flexible furniture elements with flight cases (© Anne-Sophie Stolz)

er basin around Karlsruhe. LEDs on the wall depict the entire network of pipelines in the supply area, also showing related technical infrastructure such as waterwork plants, pressure booster stations, elevated water tanks, and sampling points. Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences also played a central role in creating the exhibition room. To kick off the project, a joint curatorial workshop was organized to define topics with members of the drinking water department at Stadtwerke Karlsruhe. Based on their input, Anja Grunwald ran two seminars with students at the Faculty of Information Management and Media to develop initial concepts for the themed exhibits. Drawing on scientific advice provided by the experts from the

drinking water department, the Steinbeis team then embarked on a two-year process to define specific content for the concepts and how this should be conveyed in media terms. Particular attention was given to ensuring information offered to visitors would be as comprehensive as possible, also focusing educational content on core aspects and ensuring it was readily comprehensible. Depending on the level of interest and their familiarity with different forms of media, visitors can absorb essential content on the large displays featured in the room, or become more active and actually engage with digital and interactive media. The themed exhibits are also housed in mobile units, so-called flight cases, allowing the room to be

used flexibly for presentations and meetings.

### EXPERIENCE: FEEL THE POWER OF WATER AND EXPERIENCE TECHNOLOGY

The final section of the exhibition takes visitors to the heart of the waterworks – the pump hall. This area helps to understand the technical elements of the waterworks on a one-to-one basis. A technique called projection mapping is used to portray powerful moving images onto the objects in the hall, showcasing water as a chemical element in its various phases and thus making its power as a life force more tangible. In addition, information is displayed on technical equipment and pumping capacities, underscored acoustically by a sound installation to turn the technology into a tangible experience.

The exhibition was opened on July 11, 2022 in cooperation with Mörscher Wald Waterworks. Guided tours can be booked by contacting Karlsruher Stadtwerke: +49 (0) 721 599-3202.

For further information, go to



[www.swka.de/ausstellung](http://www.swka.de/ausstellung)

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1 Variante und Dimension



2 Lochbilder



3 Material und Farbe



4 Bestellung aufgeben

# ARMARIO: A SUCCESS STORY WRITTEN BY AN ELECTRICAL SWITCHBOX

HOW A DEGREE PROJECT CONDUCTED BY A STEINBEIS STUDENT WAS TRANSLATED INTO AN INGENIOUS PRODUCT

**Markus Fiedler, Managing Director of FiMAB, had an idea. He wanted to develop a configurator for electrical switchboxes as part of his studies at SBA – Management School, which belongs to Steinbeis University. He realized his ambition while conducting a degree project. Fiedler explained to TRANSFER what makes the tool so unique, the challenges he had to overcome, and why he would always recommend a degree program that is integrated into a working career.**

Markus Fiedler first encountered sheet metal processing at FiMAB, the company of his father, which he would later take over himself. He embarked on his career as an apprentice energy appliance electronics technician. He then trained as a commercial specialist before deciding to study for a bachelor's degree at the age of 45. Although he was able to expand his understanding of technology at his parents' company, Fiedler also wanted to learn more about business itself: "At the time, doing further training as a business coach was the first step away from technology, more

toward people and communication – but also to come into contact with other sectors of industry and different ways of looking at things," he reminisces. He then decided to do a master's degree in parallel to his work at SBA – Management School at Steinbeis University.

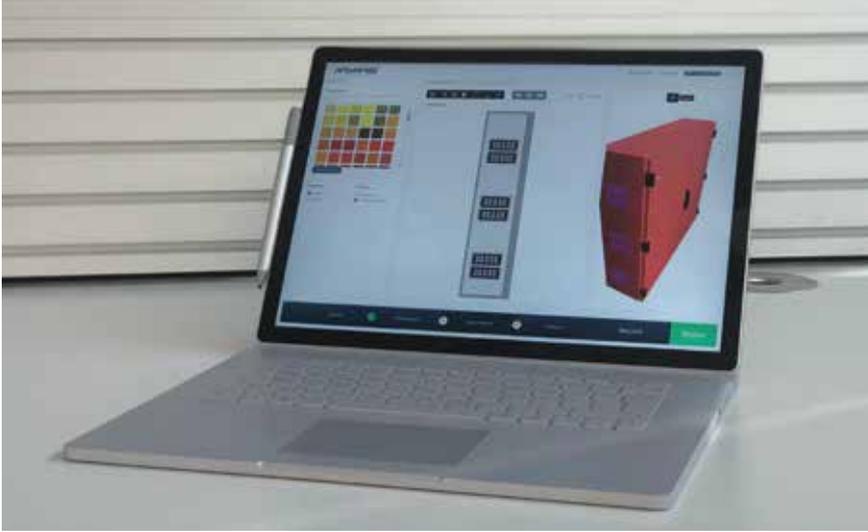
## SCIENTIFIC INPUT – ENTREPRENEURIAL OUTPUT

A defining feature of project competence degrees (PCDs) at Steinbeis University is the way careers are interwoven with periods of study, a unique feature that afforded Fiedler the opportunity to translate an idea he had been thinking about for some time into practice. His idea: ARMARIO, an online configurator for electrical switchboxes. Among other things, the PCD allowed the Steinbeis student to network with others, to tap into existing know-how and skills, and to gain support securing funding. A further important aspect of Fiedler's degree was that he could exchange ideas with students from very different industries, and that

he could get to know others and approach topics from a variety of angles.

## ARMARIO – IMPROVING QUALITY AND SAVING TIME

Until now, it was common for companies to order switchboxes – usually in large volumes – and then adapt them manually once on site. The idea of ARMARIO was to offer an online configurator that would improve product quality and save time by delivering made-to-measure switchboxes, even in a batch size of one. The process would work like the conventional online shopping experience, with an additional overview of current prices and delivery times. Production could be standardized, offering the quality advantages of serially produced units with enough flexibility to offer customization options – without the high price normally associated with "manual finishing." Because switchboxes fit precisely, remaining space can be used down to the last millimeter, freeing up addi-



tional areas for control units, the most important part of switchboxes.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The main challenge when launching the new concept was educating other industry stakeholders. The product is particularly suited to modern plants or more compact machinery. Newer companies and startups are often open to the configurator, but Fiedler noticed a certain degree of resistance among traditional companies who tend to feel “we’ve always done things that way.”

FiMAB did, however, derive benefit from the pandemic: German digitalization developed rapidly, and lockdowns and working from home have fueled demand for the online configurator. There are also plans to make the website multilingual so that soon, users from around the world will be able to configure and order individualized products. In addition, a team of sales consultants is looking into ways to offer the configurator to other companies to allow production to be organized regionally in other parts of the world. Another goal,

which has already been met, was to achieve a delivery time of ten working days. Normally, special orders take eight to twelve weeks! “We’re even aiming to meet delivery times of three days in the future by introducing lean production methods,” explains Fiedler.

### PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH DURING STUDIES

Asked who he would recommend to study at SBA – Management School, Fiedler offers an unequivocal answer: “Everyone, but especially entrepreneurs who want to develop personally and grow in professional terms.” The big advantage with studying in parallel to work is that projects can be applied directly to the business. Exchanging views with others and different companies allows the project to be looked at from a variety of angles. The Steinbeis alumnus advises anyone who wants to turn their ideas into reality to talk to others about their project, to forge networks, and to learn from others – as he has experienced himself, “Every experience takes you a step forward, and any insight is a good experience.”

## MORE ON ARMARIO [WWW.ARMARIO.DE](http://WWW.ARMARIO.DE)

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# “AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERING WAS, STILL IS, AND ALWAYS WILL BE AN ABSOLUTELY FASCINATING TOPIC FOR ME”

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR GERHARD WALLISER, STEINBEISER  
OF THE FIRST GENERATION



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**For Professor Gerhard Walliser, automotive engineering has not only been an essential part of his profession, it's a calling. For the past three decades, not only has he witnessed major developments in the field at first hand, but he has also actively helped shape them, among other things through numerous Steinbeis projects. TRANSFER magazine talked to Professor Walliser about his passion, as well as his career at Steinbeis.**

**Hello Professor Walliser. You were involved in the Technical Consulting Service at Steinbeis back in the early 1970s – how did that come about?**

Even then, I already had the idea of founding a transfer center for automation technology – with two of my colleagues, at what was then the Esslingen School of Engineering, and now the University of Applied Sciences. For a number of reasons, the idea didn't really come to fruition, so I started offering my expertise to the Technical Consulting Service at Steinbeis. The staff training courses I organized, such as at Daimler, but also especially at Bosch, also formed part of my work for Steinbeis.

**You founded the Steinbeis Transfer Center Automotive Engineering Esslingen in 1995 and you successfully headed up the center for more than a quarter of a century. How did the focus of your Steinbeis Enterprise change over the years?**

The idea of founding the Steinbeis Transfer Center Automotive Engineering Esslingen came from industry. I myself al-

so wanted to implement the idea by engaging in collegial collaboration with project managers. There was no plan originally for a larger institution with lots of people working for it. Then came the economic crisis and companies introduced hiring freezes, during which time we employed graduates based on industrial contracts. It was then that we recognized the importance of being an integral part of the Steinbeis Network. We've been involved in a variety of fascinating projects over the past 27 years, most of which were brought on board and completed by the project managers. In that regard, little has changed over the years.

**Even though you retired as a Steinbeis Entrepreneur in March of this year, you're still actively involved in your Steinbeis Enterprise on a freelance basis, as a project manager. What is it that continues to fascinate you so much about automotive engineering?**

In the more than nine years I spent in industry after graduation, I was employed by Daimler in the area of turbomachinery, where I worked on controlling stationary and vehicle gas turbines. Automotive engineering was, still is, and always will be a absolutely fascinating topic for me. The things that interested me, and still do, are automotive electronics and automotive IT.

**The topic of know-how and technology transfer in the field of automotive engineering is really important to you, as is reflected, among other things, in the symposium you organ-**

**ized on "electronics in the automotive industry". Why exactly is that?**

The first Electronics in the Automotive Industry event took place in 1988. In those days, there wasn't much research being done on the topic of navigation; it was more of an issue in the background – at Bosch for example. A few years later, things were quite different, and the topic gained significantly in importance. And it was precisely those symposia that allowed me to experience the rapid developments happening in the field of automotive electronics and computer systems – at first hand. It was practically knowledge-sharing and technology transfer at your fingertips.

**You completed a large number of successful projects during your time with Steinbeis. Looking back, which ones do you cherish the most?**

It's difficult to single out any particular ones from all those projects over the last decades. Maybe the Finland project would be one of them. The plan was to find a way to carry out winter testing on vehicles in Finland – but also in the summer. To do that, a tunnel system would have to be set up. One of the tasks we were assigned with as the team at Steinbeis was to provide the European automotive industry with detailed information on the project. Unfortunately, it never came to fruition due to the looming financial crisis, although almost all of the companies we visited in Europe felt enthusiastic about the project.

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# STUDY ON SUCCESSFUL NAVIGATION THROUGH THE EARLY STAGES OF STARTUPS

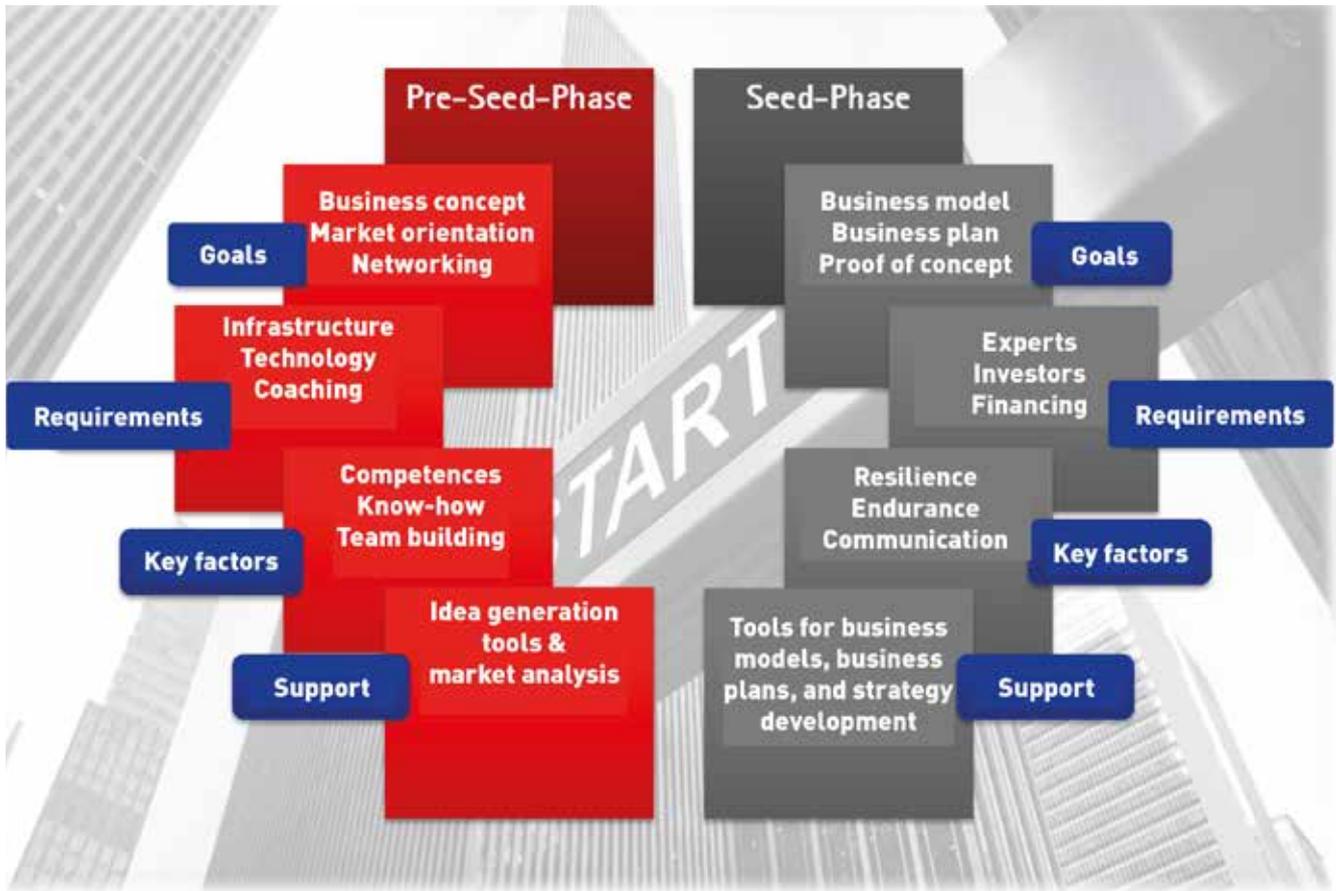
STEINBEIS EXPERTS OFFER GUIDANCE ON THE PROCESSES OF SETTING UP A BUSINESS

The School of International Business and Entrepreneurship (SIBE) – a business school belonging to the Graduate School at the Faculty of Leadership and Management at Steinbeis University – counts more than 400 successful business founders among its graduates. But not every startup is successful. 90% of startups fold within a couple of years, although an unknown (likely much higher) number of ideas are abandoned, with teams being wound up prematurely and business models failing even before firms officially complete the foundation process. SIBE has been putting the perilous early stages of startups under the microscope as part of a study aimed not only at determining the type of support that is required, but also providing aspiring business founders with a checklist of the most important milestones.

The initial years of a startup or spin-off are often fraught with challenges, although that is not to say that the time before actually setting up a company, also known as the pre-seed or seed stage, is any less critical. Entrepreneurs will only be able to enter the market if they succeed in developing and substantiating an innovative business concept and present it to the right investors. Although there are currently over 1,000 different support programs, it is rare to find support targeted at the early stages of startups. Existing programs tend to assume important topics such as idea generation, business model development, and market orientation have already been

addressed, and as a result such issues are only given rudimentary consideration.

As part of a startup study, the School of International Business and Entrepreneurship (SIBE) has investigated which success criteria are essential in order for prospective business founders to overcome the challenges faced during the pre-startup stages. Around 500 startup experts were contacted, with roughly 15% (n = 70) agreeing to participate in the study. The majority of respondents (59%) work at startup and transfer centers, or function as startup mentors and coaches. At 10%, only a



Overview of the key findings of the startup study

relatively low number of respondents were business founders. The remaining 31% of respondents comprised business incubators, accelerators, company builders, investors, and other types of experts.

**THE FIRST MILESTONES ON THE JOURNEY TO SETTING UP A BUSINESS**

The early stages of a startup essentially comprise two pre-foundation phases. There is the pre-seed stage (referred to as the orientation phase in German-speaking countries), which is the very first stage entered into by a startup. This is followed by the seed stage (planning phase). For the study, the startup experts were asked which important

tasks, key steps, and milestones have to be managed during each stage. According to the survey, the focus during the pre-seed stage should lie strongly in the business concept (92.9%), market orientation (85.5%), and networking (84.3%). Six out of ten respondents also felt that team building and the innovative idea underlying the business concept are very important. This contrasted with the subsequent seed stage, when emphasis is given to the business model (91.3%), market validation and the proof of concept (86.9%), and the financing plan (81.1%).

Early support is of great importance. Despite this, it is not always easy for new firms to find the right support during the early stages. For this reason, the

experts were asked to what extent different types of services and offerings are important. With agreement scores exceeding 75%, access to the required technology and infrastructure, the availability of business coaches and mentors, and the provision of (expert) networks were all cited as very important for both pre-startup phases.

**WHY BUSINESS FOUNDERS FAIL – AND WHAT MAKES THEM SUCCESSFUL**

The study also explored which problems, obstacles, and impediments result in early failure. With a score of more than 80%, according to the experts working with the wrong people is a recipe for failure. 60% of respondents also cited



## THE INTENTION OF THE STUDY IN LOOKING AT THE EARLY STAGES OF THE STARTUP PROCESS WAS TO EXAMINE IMPORTANT GOALS, KEY FACTORS, REQUIREMENTS, AND SUPPORT OPTIONS DURING THE PRE-SEED AND SEED STAGES OF STARTUPS.

a lack of skills and expertise, a lack of or inadequate funding, and a poor business concept as common causes of failure. At under 40%, the less likely causes of failure include lack of experience or support, work overload, and a lack of networks.

But what support can be given for aspiring business founders to succeed? To find out, the startup experts were invited to suggest useful tools and models, so that sub-goals can be defined and milestones achieved independently. The top answers were the Business Model Canvas for developing and setting up

your own business model, design thinking for coming up with ideas, lean start-up methods as a business strategy and mindset, and the Value Proposition Canvas for defining benefits.

### COMPETENCES AND NETWORKS RATHER THAN FUNDING

The intention of the study in looking at the early stages of the startup process was to examine important goals, key factors, requirements, and support options during the pre-seed and seed stages of startups. Thanks to the diverse backgrounds of respondents, it was possible

to elicit which factors are important both for prospective business founders themselves, and for stakeholders and organizations providing them with support, so that obstacles and hindrances can be identified and overcome early. It should be noted that for almost all questions and responses, funding was considered of secondary importance; more focus should be given to the ongoing development of social competence and interpersonal skills, forging and expanding networks, and finding appropriate team members, coaches, and mentors.

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[www.steinbeis-sibe.de](http://www.steinbeis-sibe.de)

The whole study (in German)  
can be accessed here:



<https://bit.ly/3acWtwo>



ANYTIME ANYPLACE DIGITALLY:  
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**TRANSFERMAGAZIN.STEINBEIS.DE**

# NEW STEINBEIS BUILDING IN THE ADLERSHOF DISTRICT OF BERLIN – SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UP CLOSE

A NEW STEINBEIS HOUSE IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN GERMANY'S LARGEST SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK



On March 1, under blue skies in Adlershof, Berlin, a ceremonial topping-out wreath was mounted on the raw, five-story shell of a building, thus marking an important milestone in the construction of the new Steinbeis House. In the meantime, interior work has started and the facade is also now taking shape. The building, which will offer a new location for members of the Steinbeis Network to gather and meet up in Berlin, is scheduled for completion in late 2023.

The location, just a stone's throw from a variety of renowned research and technology institutions, offers the Steinbeis Network a number of new opportunities to share its expertise in know-how sharing, adding value, and leveraging synergies. The first plans for the site were drafted in 2015 and the efficiency with which the development is being completed is primarily due to close partnerships between WISTA Management, WISTA.Plan Site Development, the general planning experts at DREI ARCHITEKTEN, a slew of spe-

cialist architects, general contractor Züblin, the senate administration for urban development, Wohnen und Bauen, and Treptow-Kopenick district office.

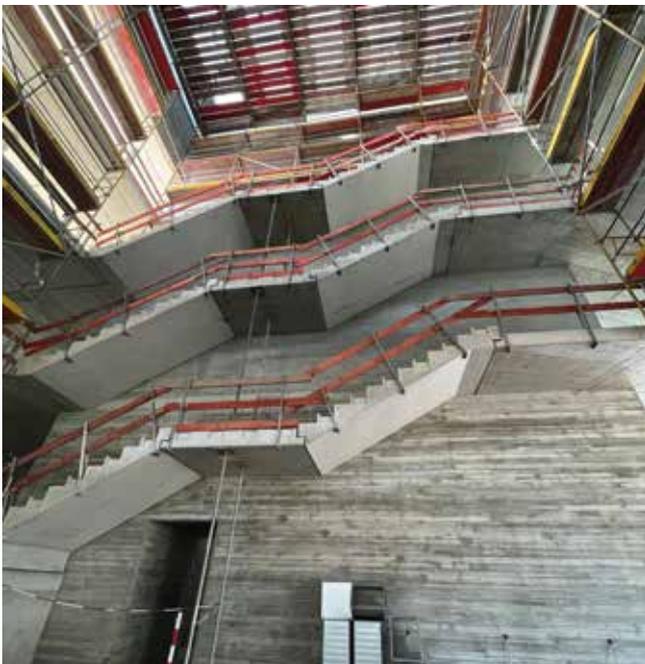
## SUITABLE FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES

In addition to representing Steinbeis in the German capital, the office and administration building will offer rooms for lease in different formats, primarily to enterprises belonging to the Steinbeis Network and their business partners. Among other things, the aim is for Adlershof to provide Steinbeis University with a location for its broad spectrum of degree programs in cooperation with other business schools. Accordingly, the plan is to offer modern and adaptable seminar rooms and office space for people at the university. Other sections of the building have been earmarked for Steinbeis Enterprises and their business partners, and tech and science startups will also be welcome to work on developments at the site.

People using Steinbeis House will also enjoy access to a wide range of communication and meeting facilities with the aim of fostering knowledge sharing and technology transfer. There are also plans to put aside rooms on the fifth floor to offer short-term accommodation to members of the Steinbeis Network.

## STEINBEIS DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION

An experienced Steinbeiser, Frank Graage will drive business development in the region through a new enterprise called SWITT (short for Steinbeis Wissens- und Technologietransfer): "We'll have a whole host of opportunities to shape and fashion the science and technology space, which is continuing to expand. Also, being in the capital of Germany will allow us to encourage the exchange of ideas with industry and engagement in knowledge transfer, which will promote further development of the Steinbeis Network," says Graage.



**Interested in finding out more, or have questions about the new site in Berlin-Adlershof? Please contact:**

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# EXPERTS.KNOWLEDGE.SHARING.

## NEW RELEASES FROM STEINBEIS-EDITION

Sharing our know-how with you. Steinbeis-Edition, the publishing arm of the Steinbeis Foundation, regularly publishes works reflecting the scope of the Steinbeis Network's expertise. Spanning a broad of spectrum of topics, these publications include individual papers, series, magazines, conference proceedings, and works linked to specialist events. All titles can be easily ordered by going to our online shop at: [www.steinbeis-edition.de](http://www.steinbeis-edition.de).

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2022 | E-Book (PDF)  
Free  
ISSN 2748-1484

### DF&C - ISSUE 1/2022

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CORPORATE MANAGEMENT  
STEINBEIS TRANSFER INSTITUTE: BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE (ED.)

Published by the Steinbeis Transfer Institute for Business Intelligence in cooperation with the Business Innovation Lab at Ludwigshafen University of Business and Society, the digital DF&C – Magazine for #Digital #Finance & #Controlling – is issued twice a year. An official publication for members of the XING CONTROLLING & ANALYTICS community, which currently boasts around 45,000 members, the magazine aims to offer an active network of know-how, with access to interesting contacts, innovative topics, and exciting events in combination with a program of events and training organized by the DF&C.

The focal topic of the third issue is artificial intelligence in corporate management. To examine this topic, the magazine discusses the possibilities and potential of artificial intelligence and machine learning for use in corporate management. A variety of authors highlight different issues, including the development of skills to deal with AI, modern data warehousing, and smart data strategies for AI. Issue 1/2022 concludes with a practical section offering fascinating insights and information on advanced intelligence in management accounting/controlling, predictive analytics, the latest digital trends, and effects on employee skills.

→ [WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/SU/2150](http://WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/SU/2150)



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(in German)

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978-3-95663-278-5  
(in German)

JOURNEYS TO AUTONOMOUS PRODUCTION  
A COMPASS PROVIDED BY INNOVATORS FOR INNOVATORS  
GUIDO SAND (ED.)

What are the actual forms of technology behind Industry 4.0 (connected manufacturing)? How well developed are they? How useful are they for making your own products, or production? Do they solve operational problems?

Digital transformation – jump on the digitalization bandwagon or avoid it? This is a question faced by many companies. Ignoring digitalization allows opportunities to go unexploited, but conducting a thorough assessment of new realms of technology is often simply not possible due to a lack of human resources.

There are as many ways to sidestep this dilemma as there are companies affected by the issue. Companies from the manufacturing sector describe possible ways forward, offering accounts of the journey they are currently undertaking toward autonomous production as well as the journey behind them. This book is not a guidebook and offers no simple checklists or standard recipes. But it does provide inspiration and can serve as a compass. And above all, it fuels one thing: courage!



## THE MEDIATION – QUARTER III EDITION, 2022 HAPPINESS GERNOT BARTH (ED.)

→ [WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/SU/941](http://WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/SU/941)

According to a common saying, every person is the architect of their own fortune. After all, taking the initiative and continuously undertaking something takes you that little bit closer to achieving a point of happiness in life. By consciously thinking about and doing something about your life, about the things around you, and about your personal aspirations, needs and expectations, you pave the way for an existence of happiness and contentment.

The latest issue of The Mediation focuses on the topic of Happiness, providing insights into how to lead a truly fulfilling life, why money does not automatically make you happy, and why complete happiness is never enduring. This issue also contains a variety of other interesting articles on the topic, including: Of Short-Term Hedonists and Long-Term Epicures – or how to master the art of living a truly fulfilling life.

Beyond the focal topic articles, readers are also offered some fascinating insights into other topics. For example, in an interview with Dr. Gernot Barth, the editor of The Mediation, Thilo Schröter, the divisional director for digitalization and corporate development at the energy group enviaM, explains why digital transformation most immediately impacts corporate culture. He also discusses why forgiveness lightens emotional burden, what digital habits say about a person, and how mediators can improve standards when engaging in public participation.

2022 | stapled  
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ISSN 2629-0162  
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## THE MEDIATION – QUARTER IV EDITION, 2022 THE FUTURE OF (OR WITH) MEDIATION GERNOT BARTH (ED.)

→ [WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/SU/941](http://WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/SU/941)

Mediation has become more and more popular in recent times, both in private disputes and those of a professional nature. As a process, it is not necessarily ideal for out-of-court conflict resolution, but as such, adopting a mediatorial stance can help to clarify current and future social and political issues by focusing on consensus and long-term outcomes.

The current issue of The Mediation therefore turns the spotlight on the topic of the future of mediation – or mediation in the future. Among other topics, readers discover how anyone can make the transition to a culture of appreciative feedback, why saying “no” lowers costs for companies and improves organizational structures, and what to look out for when dealing with online conflict. A variety of other interesting articles are also offered on the topic, including:

- Collapse or collaborate? – new ways to cooperate constructively
- Much Ado About an Orange – conflict management and conflict culture
- Dreaming Allowed – a fictional example of peace mediation in the Ukraine conflict
- Team Building – looking back to the future: Covid-19 is over, Covid-19 isn't over
- The Science Column: predicting the future

Beyond our focal topic articles, readers are also offered numerous fascinating insights into other topics. In an interview with editor Dr. Gernot Barth, psychologist Prof. Dr. Gerd Gigerenzer explains why intuitive decisions are often the best ones. It is also explained when the time has come for leaders to reinvent their businesses, why group dynamics impede citizen participation, and how consultants can score points with meaningful print and online marketing.

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# PREVIEW

## EDITION 03|2022

Feature topic

### Managing Risk – Shaping the Future

Planned publication date: December 2022

A world without risk – the ideal of a brave new world, or an illusion brimming with danger? The history of humankind clearly shows that without risk, progress is not possible. This makes it all the more important to learn to cope with risks – because only if you're familiar with risk, and correctly interpret and counteract it, can you actively mitigate risk and even become more efficient and enhance your chances of success. In the next issue of TRANSFER magazine, Steinbeisers reflect on key factors that should be taken into account and competencies that play an important role in risk, also highlighting how to make a success out of risk management.



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# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Our Steinbeis events for specialists are an opportunity for experts from the fields of science, academia, and business to discuss current issues relating to business competence, engineering, and consulting. Want to make sure you don't miss a future event? Simply add your details to our online distribution list:

→ [STEINBEIS.DE/ONLINEVERTEILER](https://www.steinbeis.de/onlineverteiler)

## THE STEINBEIS LUNCHBREAK. A QUICK MORSEL WITH...

For details of lunchbreak dates, go to [www.steinbeis.de/lunchbreak](https://www.steinbeis.de/lunchbreak)

## STEINBEIS DAY 2022

September 30, 2022 | Steinbeis Campus in Stuttgart-Hohenheim  
[www.steinbeis-tag.de](https://www.steinbeis-tag.de)

For further information, go to [WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/VERANSTALTUNGEN](https://www.steinbeis.de/veranstaltungen).

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## **PUBLICATION DETAILS – TRANSFER. THE STEINBEIS MAGAZINE**

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### **CANCELLATION**

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Julia Schumacher

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### **PHOTOS AND IMAGES**

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The platform provided by Steinbeis makes us a reliable partner for company startups and projects. We provide support to people and organizations, not only in science and academia, but also in business. Our aim is to leverage the know-how derived from research, development, consulting, and training projects and to transfer this knowledge into application – with a clear focus on entrepreneurial practice. Over 2,000 business enterprises have already been founded on the back of the Steinbeis platform. The outcome? A network spanning over 5,500 experts in approximately 1,100 business enterprises – working on projects with more than 10,000 clients every year. Our network provides professional support to enterprises and employees in acquiring competence, thus securing success in the face of competition.

**217078-2022-02**

