

TRANSFER

THE STEINBEIS MAGAZINE 01|22

STANDING STRONG TOGETHER – NETWORK PARTNERSHIPS THAT ADD VALUE



Steinbeis

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DEAR READERS,

The world is in a state of upheaval and digitalization marks the start of a transformation process that has only been made possible by the interaction of multiple digital technologies. From a technical standpoint, transformation is tantamount to conversion; from an economic sense, it is more of an alteration. It symbolizes a world in which paradigms are shifting and guidelines – which until now we used very successfully to navigate – are changing.

As a result, the tried-and-tested navigation tools we have used to date are no longer a match with the current lie of the land: Baden-Wuerttemberg once defined itself as the land of busy inventors and tinkerers. Vast swathes of the economy have seen the onset of a spirit that “we can – and will – do everything ourselves.” This attitude has served to safeguard economic prosperity in recent decades and, coupled with a certain air of tenacity and industriousness, it has produced numerous global market leaders in south-west Germany, as well as a highly successful economy dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises.

Technology convergence, faster innovation cycles, and dynamic shifts in boundaries – but also having to find solutions to climate change – are fueling increasing levels of complexity in the processes that shape innovation and development within companies. Individuals and certain organizations – with a proven understanding of organizational issues and established structures – are increasingly struggling to provide quick (and, above all, suitable) answers to these new and complex questions. Whereas in many areas of politics, such complex issues can be dealt with by trivializing them, this is generally not a viable option for medium-sized companies. The impact of being gravely mistaken with a decision cannot be made palatable to those around us, at least not in medium-sized and smaller companies.

One way to deal with complexity in this fast-moving environment of upheaval is to adopt a culture of cooperation, combined with the (self-)acknowledgement that under constantly changing circumstances, it is still possible to create new things if you work together. Continuously pooling new and different skills, and being willing to do away with established ways of doing things and tried-and-tested answers to problems – in order to create something new, with other parties in a network – allows a “we can do everything ourselves” culture to develop. Such transformation processes may instill fear, and they will meet with resistance, but they also spawn new opportunities and possibilities. In addition to drawing on the expertise of individual employees at companies, it will become even more important to turn to a variety of individuals who are able to focus their skills on different challenges – and create teams capable of forming and introducing new value creation networks, quickly and agilely beyond the individual boundaries of companies. For our economy – so strongly shaped by small and medium-sized enterprises – this highlights an important need to make a change, requiring a holistic transformation process so that we can become more open in our actions, working within value creation networks.

This latest edition of TRANSFER magazine focuses on the topic of being “Strong Together: Network Partnerships that Add Value,” offering a number of suggestions and ideas. There’s a lot to do, so let’s get on with it – but please, let’s not forget: There’s no change without changing yourself!

Let’s work on this together!

With kind regards,



Jürgen Jähnert

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Dr.-Ing. Jürgen Jähnert is the managing director of bwcon GmbH and bwcon research GmbH, which both belong to the Steinbeis Network. The two companies see themselves as service providers that support business enterprises with the digital transformation process by managing ideas, designing new business models, and making the process of coming up with innovations more flexible.



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STANDING STRONG TOGETHER – NETWORK PARTNERSHIPS THAT ADD VALUE





NETWORKS are as essential now as they have ever been, not just in our **PRIVATE** lives but also **AT WORK**. The **GLOBAL DELUGE** of information is making validated knowledge even more valuable. Networks provide such **KNOWLEDGE**, based on a forum of trust that lays a foundation for **COOPERATION** between their members. In this issue of Steinbeis **TRANSFER** magazine, we discuss the **CONDITIONS** that need to be met for networks to **SUCCEED**, also examining how stakeholders who engage in partnerships stand to benefit from networks. Steinbeis experts share their **EXPERIENCES** with a variety of different networks – whether those networks are about innovation, founding new companies or going international, the aerospace industry, or the social sector.



A NETWORK FOR MORE INNOVATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION

STEINBEIS EUROPA ZENTRUM SUPPORTS SMES IN ITS ROLE AS A MEMBER
OF THE ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK

Its network of international partners allows Steinbeis Europa Zentrum to offer advice on innovation, internationalisation, EU proposal writing, financing, and access to new markets. As a long-standing member of the Enterprise Europe Network – the world's largest network for internationalisation and technology transfer – Steinbeis experts work with more than 600 partners from 60 countries. Their aim is to help SMEs strengthen their competitiveness and boost innovative capabilities in Europe.



In 2021, the network's annual conference was held both live in Stuttgart and online.



Steinbeis Europa Zentrum has been helping Industrial Solar with a project called SolarSteam-CL.

The Enterprise Europe Network is supporting the goals of the EU Single Market Programme (SMP) by boosting the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs in Europe, and by promoting entrepreneurship. The idea is to support this aim through the following measures:

- **Improvement of the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of SMEs**
- **Measures that promote digital transformation and boost resilience to "shocks"**

- **Strengthening of innovation and innovation processes**
- **Facilitating access to EU markets and markets in third countries**
- **Closer collaboration with (and, if necessary, integration into) local, regional, national, and European clusters, as well as industrial eco-systems and global value chains**

The European Commission considers this network an indispensable and unique "European arm" for SMEs and stakeholders in Europe. As one of the most important regional and national busi-

ness support systems, it drives funding opportunities and comprehensive national and regional policy. It also offers clear added value within Europe, making services available that help customers expand and become more competitive.

SUSTAINABILITY SERVICES FOR SMES

In the future, the network will play a crucial role in supporting all kinds of SMEs as they transition to more sustainable business models with the support of dedicated sustainability consul-

tants. The network also drives digital transformation at companies by helping them to adapt business processes, make use of digital technology, and develop new products and services based on digital solutions – especially in collaboration with other key European networks. Importantly, the new focus adopted by the network will help SMEs become more resilient, enabling them to recover fully and emerge stronger from the coronavirus crisis.

ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2021 STUTTGART

In the fall of 2021, we were delighted to meet our network colleagues again at the Enterprise Europe Network Annual Conference in Stuttgart. In addition to representatives of European institutions and organizations, around 70 network members attended the event. The conference was also streamed live to several hundred further participants.

STEINBEIS EUROPA ZENTRUM SUPPORTS SUCCESSFUL PROJECT IN FREIBURG

During the event, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum presented a success story about Industrial Solar from Freiburg. The company received a €60,000 grant from the EU for a concept called SolarSteam-CL. It is now using this funding to conduct a feasibility study into the implementation of solar steam projects in Chile as part of a heat contracting model. The SolarSteam-CL project runs for six months and involves collaboration with Ingenieria InPower with the aim of evaluating a variety of factors, including market potential, technology adaptation, regulatory compliance, and cost reduction through local sourcing. Before the project, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum conducted an Enterprise CompetenceCheck to identify the competences, strengths, and weaknesses of the company. Based on this assessment, potential areas of action were identified and

To find out more about this project,
watch the video:



<https://youtu.be/znt5jo2q8qQ>

tailored to the company, looking at funding options and international partnerships. In addition, profiles of the technology offered by Industrial Solar were shared several times within the Enterprise Europe Network, resulting in a large number of inquiries from interested parties.

EU FUNDING FOR ANOTHER 3.5 YEARS

Steinbeis Europa Zentrum has been a partner in the Enterprise Europe Network since 2008. This partnership enters a new round in 2022, this time lasting until mid-2025. The proposal has been approved by the European Commission and the experts at Steinbeis once again work with a Baden-Wuerttemberg consortium spearheaded by the manual trades association Handwerk International.

For more information on the network services:



<https://youtu.be/JTlT4Ev5Qpg>

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THE BALANCING ACT BETWEEN GIVING AND TAKING – SUCCESS WITHIN NETWORKS

STEINBEIS EXPERTS OFFER IDEAS AND INSPIRATION ON LEVERAGING AND MAKING THE BEST OF THE POTENTIAL OFFERED BY NETWORKS

The working world and the society we are operating in are characterised by great complexity. More and more often, sustainable and sound decision-making is not an individual activity but instead, together in a network. Digital transformation and the ever-increasing volume and speed of data streams are intensifying the pressure to perform and compete. But what can we do to meet these challenges without losing touch with our values in the process – or better: to turn them into opportunities? Steinbeis experts Hanna Schaefer and Beate Wittkopp bank on a strong network. Why? Because its interwoven relationships not only help with complexity, but also offer an effective way to deal with particularly challenging and confounding projects. One question that arises sooner or later is how exactly to interact with others in your own network. Based on the experience made within their projects, Schaefer and Wittkopp have pulled together four impulses for TRANSFER magazine, all of which help determine the right role to play, how to make better use of networks, and how to exploit the potential offered by relationships.



The good news is, we all have them – networks consisting of friends, colleagues, acquaintances, or family members, each possessing unique and diverse skills and expertise. Every day, we interact with them, expanding them continuously. Although interwoven relationships offer enormous potential for us to draw on support, we often fail to nurture those networks properly or keep them going in the long term. This is because in addition to staying in touch with our networks, it's particularly important to gain a good overview of the know-how offered by our contacts, the specific resources they have at their disposal, and their skills. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu refers to this as “social capital,” i.e. accrued resources, acquired by belonging to a network of relationships of “mutual acquaintance and recognition.”

Good networks are spawned in very different ways, but at their core always lies the ability to forge relationships based on empathy and being open-minded. This implies interaction based on mutual respect and appreciation – an ability to relate to others, a willingness to share knowledge, and genuine interest in building trust. And in turn, trust is the very lifeblood of sustainable relationships. Functioning networks of relationships form tightly knit webs in which exciting ideas, surprising solutions, inspiration and – above all – plenty of support and experience come together and grow.

IMPULSE 1: MINDSET

All successful networks start with the right mental attitude – being open to new things, unfamiliar situations, new topics, and unknown people who are willing to learn and show who they are. Unlike face-to-face events, where attendees automatically go through a process of “tuning in” to others, with online events it's very easy for participants to stay in

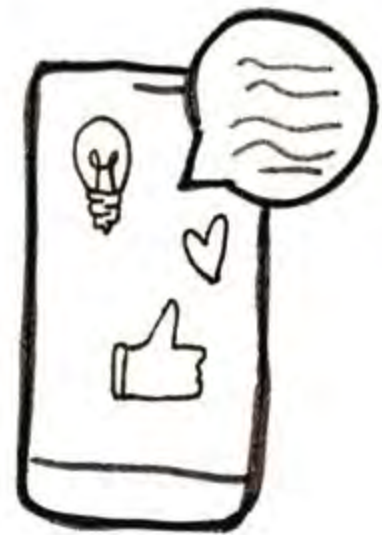
their comfort zones and not make use of opportunities to network.



This is where event organisers have to step in: With good preparation and well thought out communication process, you can initiate the “tuning in” process and this makes it possible to establish the right mindset. For example, small stimuli can be offered such as two or three icebreaker questions that say something about the context of the group, foster emotion and a sense of belonging, and help participants to come on board. Alternatively, a short welcome video can be played to immediately involve online participants, offer practical information, and highlight different ways to interact and network with others. Coming the other way, participants must make a conscious decision to participate and engage with offerings in advance – and make use of opportunities to get in touch. Once on board, everybody is then equally prepared to make good use of the potential offered by (digital) events to forge networks.

IMPULSE 2: THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

The pandemic has clearly shown the potential digitisation holds for our network activities. Technology offers different ways to keep in touch, making it easier to form networks – especially in a world of globalisation. This also opens a door of opportunities when it comes to participation and inclusion, because people can participate in events independently of their ability to travel. Taking part in virtual meetings no longer requires real journeys, making it easier to take up offers and significantly expanding the outreach of events. In addition, there are a variety of channels and tools that now promote and proliferate the possibilities to communicate.

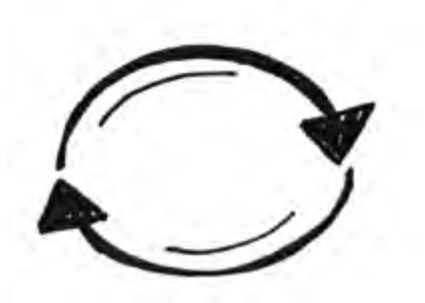


Digitisation has a noticeable ability to expand the scope of opportunities to quickly form networks, embedding our activities in a world of virtual possibilities. It does not make much effort for people to get and stay in touch, spanning long distances in temporal and physical terms, and increasingly even spanning professional and cultural boundaries. Accordingly, the process of transferring or sharing know-how can be signifi-

cantly accelerated and intensified within personal networks – between sectors of industry, departments, companies, science and academia, but also private contacts.

IMPULSE 3: BARTERING

Quid pro quo – a Latin phrase used to describe the principle of one person giving something and receiving something appropriate in return. Another way to describe this process of give and take is “a favor for a favor.” Admittedly, it sounds quite calculating if you only do something if you expect something in return. Nonetheless, it does reflect the huge potential offered by forming networks. After all, if you can sustain the process of bartering in the long term, you build an expansive network of people who provide support – people who are happy to help one another, talk about their experiences, do each other favors, and give and take in equal measure. No, that’s not calculating or selfish, it’s effective and it motivates people, because being generous and the granting of benefits builds trust – and that’s good for sustainable networks.



In doing so, we should start by thinking about ourselves and asking, “What can I give to others?” or “How can I offer something of benefit to others?” The starting point is therefore giving to others. If you then do reach the point where you need help from others, it’s all right to ask for help from your own network – without feeling guilty about it.

This is because there will be many others who are willing and prepared to help you, and perhaps they will already return a favor that you once did for others. The art is to strike the right balance between giving and taking. A good example of a highly systematic approach to this concept in practice is so-called reverse mentoring, in which two people seek dialogue based on the principle of diversity (in the traditional sense, between old and young). Even virtual networking events have the ability to promote exchange – of an intangible nature but of value to others – and this can have a sustained impact on networking.

IMPULSE 4: POOLING RESOURCES

Growth needs discourse. This is valid for both personal and professional development. The more diverse a group or network engaging in discourse is, the more diverse are the perspectives, experiences, competences and impulses for orientation and further development. Even only exchanging views with others is invaluable. It fuels ambition and motivates you beyond personal perception. Ideas in the form of new information and lessons learned – but also feedback from the network – have a powerful ability to animate you to recognize and comprehend your own weaknesses and strengths, personal values, and priorities. It’s only when you become aware of your personal position and effectiveness that it becomes possible to develop as an individual and engage in ways

that are fulfilling. When groups learn together in this way, they build more and more strengths, boosting the perseverance of all involved and achieving a greater impact than the “sum of all individuals.” Not only can recommendations and experiences be shared, they can also be disseminated and multiplied. This creates a space of sustainable learning and development.



So-called working out loud (WOL) circles are a good example of this. According to the WOL principle, which was developed by John Stepper, groups of people are formed – diverse in nature, both real and virtual – and over the course of several months these groups learn together, systematically going through an agenda at regular meetings. With the right feedback, participants support each other in forging long-term relationships, sharing knowledge constructively, making themselves and their work visible, basing action on targets, and entering into new undertakings. This approach has become an established ingredient of transformation in our working world, at a variety of companies.

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FOSTERING A CULTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION WITH START (K)UP. RAVENSBURG

A NETWORKING AND SUPPORT PLATFORM FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS, STARTUPS, AND SPIN-OFFS

New technology combined with the entrepreneurial zest it takes to make things happen have always been drivers of innovation. What's new, however, is the pace at which things are moving forward thanks to extremely rapid advancements in information and communication technology (ICT). This provides a base for the further digitalization of processes, systems, and products in many areas of the economy and society. It also boosts the potential of many industries and sectors, giving rise to entirely new industries, business models, and products. A number of services offered by established and regional companies – as well as universities, economic development agencies, and technology networks – are helping startups with their first steps into self-employment. One provider of such support is Start (k)up. Ravensburg, an initiative co-sponsored by Steinbeis with the aim of establishing an environment conducive to innovation and startups, especially on a local level within the business community.

Start (k)up. is a joint initiative between Prisma Group, the Liebenau Foundation, Steinbeis, the Ravensburg District Economic Development Agency, Ravensburg-Weingarten University of Applied Sciences, the City of Ravensburg, and bwcon. It sees itself as a subject-based networking and support platform for young entrepreneurs, startups, and spin-offs, although it also sup-





ports students, SMEs, corporations, and leading enterprises in the economic region of Lake Constance, Upper Swabia, and the Allgäu. It also strives to appeal to members of the general public.

The aim of the initiative is to create a startup-friendly environment on a regional level by offering themed events, special activities, and support initiatives. It also offers the opportunity for new and established companies to forge networks thanks to a selection of targeted support instruments. The measures being organized by the network initiative include workshops, coaching services, public relations, and networking events on a variety of topics relating to technology and innovation, as well as the health care and social sectors, including corresponding training programs.

MAKING PEOPLE THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

A key factor in all this is people, their potential, and actively fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation. It

is the skilled workers of today and tomorrow that enable companies to deal with the new realities of the economy and society, thanks to creativity and innovative capabilities that empower them to become active drivers of the digital age.

The multi-purpose facilities offered at the networking building at kup. Ravensburg not only provides the Start (k)up. initiative with an inspiring location for working on ideas; with its integrated co-working spaces it can also be used by other innovative, technology-centered, and creative enterprises. The building also houses a support area for people with disabilities.

One area of focus at the site is the topic of digital transformation. The increasing prevalence of digitalization is giving rise to a number of new working models, particularly when it comes to helping people who depend on support from others. It is important to consider innovations with a bearing on such groups of the population and to shed light on aspects affecting society as a whole.

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“AEROSPACE CONNECTS PEOPLE”

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEUR AND AEROSPACE EXPERT
PROFESSOR DR.-ING. FELIX HUBER



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Space travel is a topic of global interest, which is precisely why it relies on networks. TRANSFER magazine talked to Professor Dr.-Ing. Felix Huber, Steinbeis Entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Aerospace, about how collaboration works within networks, how networks have changed over the years, and the benefits they offer.

Hello Professor Huber. Your Steinbeis company deals with the application of insights gathered from space flight for small and medium-sized enterprises. You also work on research and development projects in this area. How important to your day-to-day business are knowledge-sharing networks in the field of aerospace?

Since "direct" space travel is a relatively small sector of industry, and it's shaped by very particular requirements involving interdisciplinary tasks, in this field knowledge networks are crucial. Space travel always operates at the extreme of what's technically feasible, because energy and payload mass are extremely limited in space. So when contracts are awarded, from the very outset it's important who possesses or is in a position to develop the best technology. This is often the point where collaboration kicks off, not least because the European Space Agency (ESA) follows the principle of geo-return: Every country that's an ESA member is awarded contacts proportional to the financial contributions it pays. This can be useful, but sometimes it's also an obstacle – for example, if the geo-return principle requires a country has to take on a task but it lacks expertise within the domestic industry.

Lots of technologies were spawned by space travel – LEDs, sunglasses, cordless screwdrivers. Where would you place the concept of innovation networks within the sometimes conflicting area between aerospace research and industry?

Once upon a time, aerospace was the innovation network par excellence, for

the simple reason that the technology that was needed didn't exist yet and it had to be developed. It meant there was a huge spin-off from aerospace into other areas. In the meantime, many technologies have become an established part of aerospace and people have become cautious, not to say conservative – new technologies are a technical and financial risk, and especially if large corporations have paying customers they're unwilling to take that risk. That also has something to do with the secondary and tertiary links in the chain of the economy, for example TV satellites. Manufacturers sell their hardware just one time, whereas the operators provide a service in the long term, yet most of the added value comes from selling TVs and set-top boxes. And you don't want to jeopardize the chain. So these days, there tends to be a spin-on into aerospace: Startups are taking commercial, off-the-shelf hardware into space and demonstrating that that's also possible. The reliability then comes along in the second step.

You're the full-time director of Space Operations and Astronaut Training at the German Aerospace Center (DLR). What form does the networking concept have in your work there?

Networks are crucial when you're working with satellites – for technical, scientific, and financial reasons. The very nature of satellites is that they're global – you don't get far if you're a lone wolf; you have to work in networks with other experts. This creates an opportunity to offer the expensive ground stations with others and share your knowledge, for example, about on-board technologies. There's a reason why they say aerospace connects people.

What form of collaboration is there between the Steinbeis Network and the German Aerospace Center?

There are three ways to collaborate. On the one hand, there's the German Space Agency, which used to be called Space Administration and is part of the German Aerospace Center. It's an important partner when it comes to funding projects. Steinbeis provides advice on funding and facilitates knowledge and technology transfer to allow technology developed at universities to become products, such as flight hardware. Then there are direct forms of cooperation between the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Aerospace and institutes of the German Aerospace Center, for example in the field of navigation or communication. And the third option is for the spacecraft operations area of the German Aerospace Center to work together with Steinbeis Enterprises. Space travel also has an ongoing need for state-of-the-art technology on the ground, and working together makes it possible to develop solutions that are cost-effective and efficient.

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BECOMING EUROPE'S BIGGEST SME LENDING PLATFORM – THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF STEINBEIS

TEYLOR AND STEINBEIS – WORKING TOGETHER FOR SUCCESS

The Swiss company Teylor has set itself the mission of bringing lending to small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) into the digital era by automating lending processes. To support this mission, Steinbeis became one of Teylor's first investors. Looking back at the partnership, Teylor says, "Our success comes down to modern technology – and our collaboration with Steinbeis."

"Steinbeis was one of Teylor's first investors. It's been a strategic partnership between us from the very beginning," explains Patrick Stäuble, the founder and CEO of Teylor. The experts at Steinbeis encouraged the startup to test a number of different ways to market its products and provided access to a large pool of specialists at the Steinbeis Network.

CONQUERING A COMPETITIVE MARKET

One of the challenges of a digital financing platform is building and scaling up a sales organization. Many SMEs develop close relationships with their house banks, sometimes over the course of decades, making it difficult for newcomers to conquer market share. Additionally, some SME decision makers still have reservations regarding digital platforms, especially when it comes to financing issues. "As a result, success revolved around our ability to crack the SME sales code," recounts Stäuble. Steinbeis expert Uwe Haug decided to put the company in touch with Winfried Küppers, Steinbeis Entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Consulting Center for Sales





Successful thanks to networks:
Winfried Küppers, Patrick Stäuble and
Jens Freiter (left to right).



Analytics. Having recognized the potential of Teylor's technology, Haug and his colleagues started identifying its customer groups and the key benefits of its offering:

- **Quick and unbureaucratic loan applications, completely online**
- **No waiting time: Quotes are provided immediately**
- **A wide range of financing options, from unsecured corporate loans to real estate financing, machine financing, factoring, and more**
- **A broad network of financing partners**
- **Additional flexibility by financing through the Teylor Debt Fund**

The findings of the Steinbeis Enterprise from Hilzingen resulted in the development of a variety of sales strategies, which were then tested in Steinbeis' sales laboratory. Within months, Teylor was provided with information on which cold-calling strategies work best, which email texts are well received by which target group, how to use cold calls to quickly acquire new customers, and how to scale up using social media. "All of this proved successful in the long run," says Stäuble. Jens Freiter, Steinbeis entrepreneur at the Steinbeis Consulting Center for Sales Analytics and an experienced expert for startups, is also impressed by the success of the company: "Selling loans to SMEs is never simple, because the market is extremely competitive. It's remarkable how quickly Teylor managed to establish itself."

COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS FOR SME FINANCE

Aside from supplying loans to SME customers, the Swiss fintech also offers its technology to banks as a software-as-a-service solution, thus enabling banks to digitalize and automate in-house lending processes. The Teylor product portfolio also includes specialized text recognition software that can be used, for

example, by tax consultants or franchisors to automatically extract financial data. In addition, the partnership with Steinbeis not only unveiled an opportunity for the company to market its products through the Steinbeis network, it also supported the enterprise sales to banks. Steinbeis helped with establishing contacts to top decision-makers, which resulted in long-term customer relationships.

THE FUTURE IS LOOKING GOOD

It has been almost three years since Teylor launched. During this time, the team has succeeded in expanding sales in the lending business by a factor of 15, and onboarded several banks as software users. Steinbeis expert Winfried Küppers attributes the company's success also to its founder: "Patrick Stäuble listens, he delivers, and he keeps his word. It's why Teylor has become one of Europe's leading fintechs in such a short time. It will also conquer the European market in the area of software development." The firm's initial processes and structures have further developed as the company kept growing fast, but Teylor still makes use of the foundation laid with Steinbeis. As this example confirms once again: Network partnerships work, offering added value in the long term.

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“IT’S ABOUT INNOVATION THROUGH PARTICIPATION”

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR DR. DANIEL BUHR
AND PROFESSOR DR. UDO WEIMAR,
STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEURS AT THE STEINBEIS
TRANSFER CENTER FOR SOCIAL AND
TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

When we hear the word “innovation,” most of us immediately think of technical innovation and forget that there’s always a social aspect to innovations, because they shape the way we interact with one another – on a private level or professionally. *TRANSFER* magazine spoke to Professor Dr. Daniel Buhr and Professor Dr. Udo Weimar, both Steinbeis Entrepreneurs at the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Social and Technological Innovation, about social innovation and networks, also discussing how to make a success out of networks.

Hello, Professor Buhr. You deal with social innovation. What exactly does that mean?

Daniel Buhr:

According to the original definition offered by Wolfgang Zapf, social innovations are “new material and social technologies that help us meet our needs and better solve our social problems.” So social innovations are social practices and procedures we use, which have been institutionalized based on the broad acceptance of society. Their aim is to find a better way to solve existing problems compared to previous approaches. Often, social innovations thus dovetail tightly with technical innovations. So new technical developments offer new ways to engage in things like teleworking or they offer more flexible approaches to working hours based on different life stages, but for that, they also require further development in social security systems and work organization, not least as compensation. They also act as a catalyst for new social services,

such as childcare, nursing, or new training and staff education options.

Turning to you, Professor Weimar: Hello. What role do networks play in the emergence, development, and dissemination of social innovations?

Udo Weimar:

Ideally, the starting point for a social innovation is a tangible need. I believe that networks or collaboration within diverse ecosystems are a rudimentary requirement for the entire innovation process. This applies just as much to looking for ideas during the invention phase – stepping back from the benefit – as it does to disseminating good ideas later down the line – as a product, service, or process. I say this because ultimately, innovation is the realization of an idea that hasn’t yet been tested – i.e. demonstrating that an idea could actually work – and finally comes dissemination within the economy and society. A really crucial role in all this is played by different forms of learning and dis-

semination, across different groups of stakeholders.

Are there differences between networks in the field of social innovation and networks in other fields – and if so, what kinds of differences?

Udo Weimar:

From an economic standpoint, yes, there certainly are, because with social innovation, often you’re also dealing with volunteering and discretionary support, or intrinsic motivations to join an ecosystem. This isn’t necessarily based on economic logic. In other words, coordination doesn’t so much function through a market, or through supply and demand, or through prices, but through trust and intensive networking. As a rule, social innovations tend to be the consequence of an open innovation process that, if possible, involves all four strands of the helix from the beginning – the (social) economy, science, politics (or public administration), and civil society. It’s complex and time-consuming, and it may not





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always make sense from a business perspective – for example, because as a company in a market economy, there's sometimes a tendency to use closed innovation processes, and first you want to get your intellectual property protected. But there's a tendency for innovation processes to open up in lots of areas, because often the problems you face are too complex to solve on your own.

What are the key success factors of social innovations and networks in this area?

Daniel Buhr:

Trust – and institutions that engender trust such as platforms and formats based on institutionalized participation and co-designed formats. This is about innovation through participation. The network model reflects the fact that innovations aren't just down to the effort of individual stakeholders, but the way all the stakeholders work together can have a decisive influence on the ab-

ility of an organization to innovate, or the competitiveness of a state as a whole. The emergence of innovations is understood to mean the result of an interactive and cumulative learning process between individuals and organizations – a process that's also strongly shaped by the institutional environment the organizations are integrated into.

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Are you interested in knowing how to make a success of social innovation in a network?

Take a look at the LebensPhasen-Haus by going to the website www.lebensphasenhaus.de/en – a project involving experts from the Steinbeis Transfer Center for Social and Technological Innovation.



www.lebensphasenhaus.de

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“NETWORKS ARE ABOUT TRUST”

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEUR WOLFGANG MÜLLER

Wolfgang Müller has been an active member of the Steinbeis Network for over 30 years and is passionate about networking. Working through his three Steinbeis Enterprises, he helps SMEs become members of networks and form networks themselves. In an interview for TRANSFER magazine, Müller describes how networking can be made to succeed and the benefit companies stand to gain from networks – especially SMEs.

Hello Mr. Müller. How are networks formed, and when in your view can a network be described as successful?

In principle, there are two ways to become part of a network: Either there's a network out there already for you to

join, or you set up a new one. If you want to become an integral part of a network that already exists, you have to do your homework and find out if it offers what you're looking for. If you set up a network yourself, you have to ascertain which topics it should cover, who you'll be joining forces with, and whether you can trust them. This is because networks are about trust.

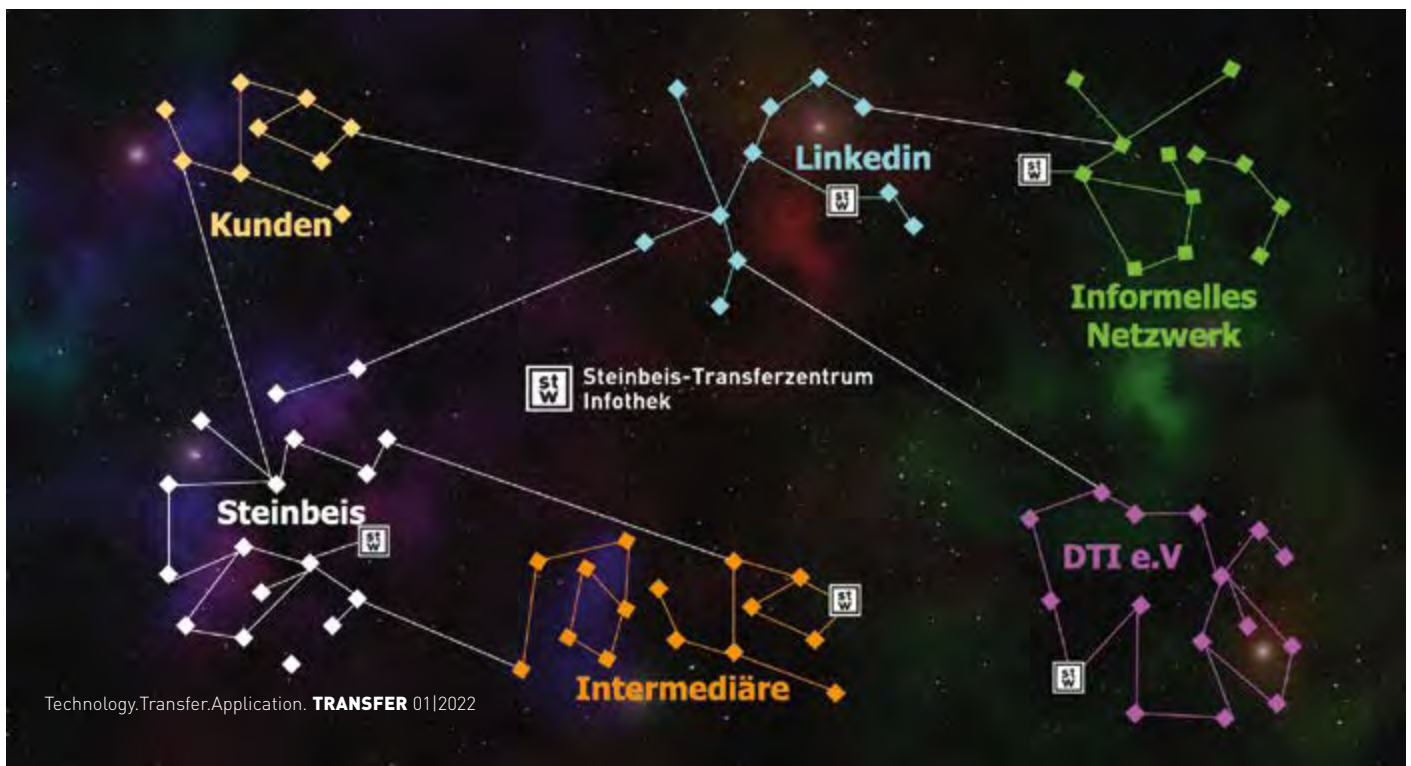
If you organize a network and put in more money than you get out of it, it's a bad deal. With a successful network, all members participate more than they pay in. You usually spot this, because people enjoy it and are successful. Among other things, success is reflected in the fact that you achieve a defined goal at a certain point in time.

This contrasts with networks that are purely about information, which are a success if information flows properly. Another sign of an effective network is that individual members are successful. Although in my view, the most important outcome of networking is that information of value is exchanged. This immediately translates into know-how that's essential for business decisions.

The scale of a network is also of central importance to its success. If there are only two of you, it's like you're married or it's collaboration, but it's not a network. On the other hand, if a network has 500 members it's impossible to know everyone. In such situations, there's no basis of trust for business processes to keep going. If you have 30



The networks Steinbeis expert Wolfgang Müller is actively involved in



members, some of whom you might have known for years, you can gain a feel for people and work out how to assess information. In turn, the value this offers is an indication of the success of a network. So I tend to advocate working in smaller networks.

How does forming and working in networks fit in with your Steinbeis Enterprise work?

We set up a lot of networks on a project basis, by which I mean we have a specific task at hand and try to bring people together so we can work together on a project. The advantage with temporary networks is that there's a defined finishing point, and this is a good basis for judging if you've achieved your objectives. When we initiate networks, we usually also manage them. It's like a fishing net: There are knots, joins, and sometimes things get a bit dilapidated. When they do, you need someone to repair them and provide help. Or we set up networks with customers we've known for a long time and enjoy a relationship of trust with. And in networks like the Steinbeis Network or the DTI – the German Association for Technology Transfer and Innovation – we're partners, so we give and take.

Quite a lot of your customers are SMEs. What do they stand to benefit from the networking philosophy, and what influence does digital transformation have on this?

One of the features of an SME is that management's basically responsible for

everything – sales, material procurement, and so on. So they neither have the people nor the time to run a network, let alone several networks. It's a shame, because networks provide information. The way to solve this is to find a network that's able to provide the company with exactly the information it needs – but also the other way around: a network the company can provide input to, within a very short time, that's of benefit to the others. Clearly, digital transformation is of benefit in this regard, because it allows people to communicate quickly and store knowledge.

Most networks offer benefit, but they also entail risk. What sort of things do companies need to be particularly careful about?

As with any business process, there's a risk that information might be disseminated. For example, if there's a rumor that a company's not doing well at the moment and it disseminates through the network – a point comes when it harms the business. If there's no basis of trust, there'll be problems.

When you start a network, it's crucial that there's harmony within the team that sets it up. If it's like a never-ending battlefield, nobody will enjoy it. Networks have to be designed in such a way that they can actually be run properly from a project management point of view. If they get too demanding for the project managers, they won't work. To overcome these issues, it has to be clear from the outset who's going to do what, invest which resources, and at what cost.

Networks aren't organized along hierarchical lines. What does that mean for decision-making and governance?

That brings us on to the topic of democracy. Democratic structures are important for networks – you're allowed to make suggestions or vote, and you don't have to agree with everyone on everything. Imagine you have a network consisting of nothing but dominant people – it would be difficult to work out a structure that will keep everyone happy. If there's no democracy, you get one or two leaders and the rest just join them. That's not what I'd call a successful network.

What does it mean to you to be a member of the Steinbeis Network, and what benefit do you gain from it?

The Steinbeis Network is very special. I've not seen anything like it over the last 33 years. It comprises small, self-sufficient units that are specialized in different fields. Of course, I don't know every individual Steinbeis Enterprise, but that doesn't matter – ultimately, what matters is that there are ways for me to get to know them, and that I can do that in the shortest possible time. So over the years, I've succeeded in establishing close and lasting relationships with many Steinbeisers, but also with temporary contacts just for one project.

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MORE SUSTAINABLE HOUSING THANKS TO THE SMART TENANT CHALLENGE

FERDINAND STEINBEIS INSTITUTE IN HEILBRONN INITIATES NETWORK TO WORK ON ENERGY-CONSCIOUS LIVING

As part of the Green Deal, the EU wants to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and become a pioneer in climate protection. It's a challenging undertaking, which is only manageable by working with others in networks and involving all stakeholders. One area that's proving a major headache is the housing sector. Having recognized this, the Ferdinand Steinbeis Institute in Heilbronn has launched an initiative called the Smart Tenant Challenge, the idea of which is to identify digital solutions that will promote energy efficiency and decarbonization in the housing industry.

Thirty percent of carbon emissions in Germany are currently attributable to buildings, of which approximately 60% are in turn accounted for by indoor heating systems used in housing.[1] Given current international issues, significant increases in heating costs can be expected. For the average rented apartment, a 10 to 15% increase in heating costs would be enough to result in an increase in rental prices of roughly 1 to 2%.[2] In years gone by, the main motivation for private households to heat and live sustainably was to save money. This contrasts with the "smart tenants" of more modern times, who are more likely to reduce their energy consumption to help the community. In the future, it will be mandatory to fit meters such that they can be read remotely, and tenants will be provided with online access to their consumption data to encourage them to live more energy-efficiently. But will the planned systems be enough to bring about long-term changes in behavior and make people more climate-aware? And what actually does it mean to be

energy-conscious? The Ferdinand Steinbeis Institute in Heilbronn has been exploring these and further questions with the other project stakeholders.

A COMPETITION TO FIND SOLUTIONS

The Ferdinand Steinbeis Institute in Heilbronn, which spearheaded the project, organized a Smart Tenant Challenge with Gawlitza, a specialist in digital business models for real estate and construction companies. The challenge took the form of an open competition and was backed by sponsors from the real estate industry. The initiative brought a number of leading companies around the same table, alongside innovative startups and scientists: LEG, Deutsche Wohnen, four housing cooperatives (GEWOBA Nord, BVE, Wankendorfer, and Neue Lünecker), and technology partners Vodafone and Bosch. The focus lay in developing digital solutions together to make it possible to enhance energy efficiency and "decarbonize" the hous-



ing industry, with an emphasis on behavioral design and incentivizing tenants. The project received scientific support from Dr. phil. Matthias Laschke, Senior Researcher at the Chair of Information Systems/Ubiquitous Design at the University of Siegen.

ADDING VALUE FOR TENANTS, THE HOUSING INDUSTRY, AND THE CLIMATE

The overarching goal of the Smart Tenant Challenge was to do genuine good to the benefit of tenants, the housing industry, and the climate by coming up with



Ferdinand-
Steinbeis
-Institut

ideas based on field trials and user feedback. In specific terms, the project team examined which incentive systems are likely to motivate tenants to behave in an environmentally sustainable manner, which channels offer the best opportunity to contact tenants, and how innovative technology can be used not only to encourage people to adopt the right behavior, but also to evaluate their behavior. "This requires a complete rethink of the relationship between building owners and their tenants. Human behavior and changing mindsets are the key to a sustainable future," believes Matthias Laschke. By adopting an approach based

CHALLENGE PROJECTS

The term Challenge Project refers to an initiative involving between five and ten parties, working together on a given problem. By pooling different expertise, the goal is to develop a marketable solution, pre-tested in pilot projects, in order to enhance the benefits and value-added delivered to individuals and groups.

MISSION GREEN MEETS SMART TENANT

A tool for greater transparency and tenant involvement in CO₂ consumption



THE APP

- Developed with the input of IT experts, behavioral design specialists, and CO₂/climate researchers
- Transparency regarding CO₂ consumption in apartments, as well as CO₂ baggage in general
- Incentive systems for more conscious behavior – missions/rankings/incentive system(s)
- Standalone app including options to integrate functions into existing tenant apps
- Funded neutrally or supported by partners
- Cooperative data use (e.g. cross-comparisons)

FEATURES

- Calculation of individual CO₂ baggage
- Integration of incentive system(s) for direct benefit
- Gamification, rankings, awards, battles
- Regular interaction involving missions and personal recommendations for optimizing heating behavior
- Nudge notifications offering small incentives and suggestions for more sustainable behavior – focusing on housing, but also other areas
- Interfaces with related platforms and service providers to provide information on energy efficiency and consumption
- Integration of further data and technology (e.g. incentives for smart home tests)

on co-innovation, the aim was to establish an ecosystem that would result in new, shared solutions coming onto the market. These and similar experiences could also be of benefit to the housing industry. Introducing incentive systems, using different communication channels, and rethinking ecosystems and data sharing provides a basis for smart tenants to achieve the green energy transition in this area of society.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

The first phase of the Challenge project took place in 2021, resulting in a tool called Mission Green, just one potential solution initiated by Sebastian Gross, a digitalization expert at project partner Vodafone. The app, which is currently only available to Vodafone staff, is part of a green digital initiative, the aim of which is to make it easier for users to reduce their daily CO₂ emissions and mo-

tivate them to use climate-friendly modes of transportation. "Vodafone has been a partner to the housing industry for many years, and as such we don't just focus on technical solutions – we adopt a holistic view of the task at hand, right down to involving residents," says Sebastian Gross.

To keep up the momentum of the project, the Smart Tenant alliance will now move on to translating concepts into products and upscaling. The goal is to embark on a pilot project in the upcoming 2022/23 heating period before automating systems. The ideas generated for the Smart Tenant Challenge are a building block for the transformation toward sustainable, climate-conscious living. Getting people to think again about all situations in life will be an important step in making society more energy-conscious, and this will be translated subconsciously into everyday actions.

BEHAVIOURAL DESIGN

Motivating people to donate regularly to charitable activities, encouraging people to be more aware of environmental issues, but also inspiring companies to do more to focus on actual users: The aim of behavioral design is to gain a better understanding of human behavior by using psychology, technology, and design methods to experiment with and develop solutions that will help people make better decisions – for themselves and the environment.

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“KEEP LISTENING TO THE NETWORK, KEEP EVOLVING”

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDRA RUDL, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BWCON

Working in networks offers many advantages to companies, not least the chance to exchange views and discuss experiences with like-minded people, plus the opportunity to learn from others. But how do you set up and maintain a successful network? That's probably best answered by Alexandra Rudl, Managing Director of bwcon and initiator of the Blue Ocean Group, one of 17 working groups belonging to the bwcon network. Rudl spoke to TRANSFER magazine about the working group, which consists of roughly 50 specialists responsible for innovation. She also talks about its goals, how it's developing, and offered tips on setting up a successful network.

Hello Ms. Rudl. You're the initiator of the Blue Ocean Group. Where did the idea come from and what's the goal of the group?

It all started in 2015 after a conversation with an innovation manager at Festool, which is a member of bwcon. We were talking about introducing business models beyond the core business, how to find like-minded people who are also interested in certain topics, and how to regularly exchange ideas with them. We then approached people in our respective networks and invited them to a meeting at the Festool innovation lab in Esslingen.

At the beginning, we had a group of about ten people. This kind of spirit started to arise at the first meeting, and

it still characterizes the group to this day – a spirit of complete openness and authentic discussion on exploring new fields of business. This includes methodologies just as much as questions regarding corporate culture or innovation management. Everyone's aware of the fact that the tasks they work on often involve entering new territory or transformation, and no one has a standard recipe. The way I see it, that's exactly what the DNA of the Blue Ocean Group is about.

Our group has evolved over the years and today it's a network comprising around 50 people, all working on innovation and transformation at their own companies. It's a mixed bunch. Lots are in special

roles at their companies, for instance as innovation managers, so part of their job profile is to tackle new areas and introduce new thinking to the company. One thing the participants really appreciate is that they can exchange ideas with others as part of a group and talk to people in the same role at their company. Another important feature of our group is that it transcends different sectors of industry: among others, the members of the group come from the healthcare industry, manufacturing, and software development. One thing all the companies have in common is that they face similar challenges, but they're not competing against one another, so they can be particularly effective and open when it comes to advising each other.

THE BLUE OCEAN GROUP

The Blue Ocean Group is a circle of around 50 innovation managers who meet regularly in small groups to learn from one another as equals. Are you responsible for innovation and transformation at your company? Are you also interested in joining the bwcon Blue Ocean Group?

If you are, simply drop Alexandra Rudl an email by writing to:



alexandra.rudl@steinbeis.de

Another topic people often try to skirt around is addressed quite openly when we're together: failure. We're interested in talking about our experiences; this quite often covers failure and how to learn from those experiences. It's important that the Blue Ocean Group offers a "place of trust" – what's discussed with the Blue Ocean Group stays with the Blue Ocean Group. That allows our members to be safe in the knowledge that they can be honest and be open about things.

What would you say have been the most important milestones in the development of the Blue Ocean Group?

The next step after the first meet-up was that we see ourselves as a group, find a name for ourselves, and meet regularly. We always kicked off with one person from the group inviting us to his or her company, and that provided a stepping stone for seeing how innovation is dealt with there. We've kept using the same format to this day. The group members then take part in a discussion and share their personal experiences, so that by the end a kind of consulting session takes place for the host company – it's very intensive consulting, peer to peer.

During the initial period, I coordinated the Blue Ocean Group by myself, acting on behalf of bwcon. So the second step in moving things forward was for me to invite other people to take on the coordination role. That resulted in Dr. Claudia Roth from Vetter Pharma and Christian Bell from iteratec joining the leadership group; both of their companies are members of bwcon.

The three of us are now working on ways to move the Blue Ocean Group forward. We've come up with a three-stage plan. The focus since the beginning has been to exchange ideas and consult one another. Since the middle of last year, we've



successfully completed the second stage, which was to encourage people to share their knowledge of different methods and approaches with the other members of the group, for example by offering mutual training. For the third stage, we want to set up value-adding partnerships between group members. We're currently about to embark on the third stage, so for example we're putting a series of seminars on the market to offer training to become an innovation manager. The program was developed together by a number of members.

Networks are also about working together – what criteria have to be

met for this to work, and how important is the working culture to this?

It's important to have or establish a basis of trust. There are certain principles for doing this in every network, and networks also have a certain working culture. We put time aside at every meeting to remind ourselves of our guiding principles – openness, a place of trust, and authenticity. That's also important for anyone new joining the group; it gives them a context for taking part.

We also spend a lot of time working in small groups. For example, we have our Blue Ocean "Predicament Workshop,"



IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE OR ESTABLISH A BASIS OF TRUST



Findings being presented by a Blue Ocean subgroup working on "the measurability of innovation" (left to right): Christian Bell (iteratec), Fatma Karatay (TransnetBW), Peter Neske (Pfizer Pharma)

which is a format we use for small groups to work together intensively on a particular predicament – separate from our meetings. That also offers a place with a basis of trust.

What do you need to think about when you're setting up and coordinating a network?

Based on my experience with the Blue Ocean Group, I'd say it's particularly important to find out what the participants need and what they want. At the beginning, I used to draft a detailed agenda for our meetings, but I soon worked out you don't really need one. Our members

want to meet up, share their thoughts, and seek advice.

That could be because innovation people are more likely to work together and get creative rather than just stick to the agenda. But the underlying idea that networks should revolve around people and what they're looking for applies to every network. So my advice would be: Listen to the people.

There was no big plan when we started out, and then we developed a strategy based on the wishes and ideas of our members, and we come back to that again and again as a group, and if nec-

essary, we adapt it. I think this step-by-step approach is an important prerequisite for a network to succeed – keep listening to the network, keep evolving, and don't just blindly pursue a predetermined goal.

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In modern times of disruption and digital transformation, innovation networks will need to change fundamentally to meet new challenges. Professor Dr.-Ing. Aleksandar Jovanovic, CEO of Steinbeis EU-VRi, has been looking into the required structural changes for the Steinbeis Network to survive disruptive change.

DISRUPTIVE NETWORKS AS A DRIVER OF INNOVATION

HOW THE STEINBEIS NETWORK CAN BENEFIT FROM DISRUPTION

When Clayton M. Christensen at the Harvard Business School introduced the theory of disruptive innovation in his book *The Innovator's Dilemma*, he primarily used the term to describe innovations and innovators that unveil new, previously unknown categories of customers. Exactly how the term is interpreted has changed over time, however, and these days it is also used to describe disruptive new technology, the disruptive use of established technology, or disruptive business models. All descriptions reflect alternatives to conventional innovation, technology, or business models. "Disruptive" thus now encompasses virtually anything in business and society that can undergo sudden or unexpected change, including fundamental shifts in paradigms that have been in place and followed for years.

Disruption can also include the issues that arise when systems have come to the end of their lifetime – or when they're going to be discontinued. This is also an option that should be considered when striving to achieve agility or resilience. It's in this context that *The Economist* suggests investigating what would happen if the financial markets were to collapse.[1] Clearly, complex and sophisticated systems – such as the economic, political, and social structures found in western nations (including innovation networks) – are inherently more vulnerable to unanticipated developments. On the other hand, such systems are also

generally less ready to even consider "major disruption." They are primarily concerned with optimizing their own approaches to lean management or just-in-time deliveries, and overlook aspects such as the global financial crisis, pandemics, or the global collapse of supply chains.

Even if little is said about this at the moment, it is possible to radically change how innovation is financed and supported, and there are first indications that this is starting to happen. The "digital transformation of everything" (also referred to as DX) is an amazing opportunity, but it doesn't make it any easier to cope with disruption. It can blur the big picture, lead to a false sense of security, and even cause key relationships to be misperceived.

THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE DARPA MODEL AS A DISRUPTION ENABLER

When President Eisenhower set up the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) in 1957 and funded it with a budget of \$500 million, no one called that disruptive – but it was. When it started out, ARPA had no offices, no laboratories, and no staff on permanent contracts. Its goal was to foresee the unimaginable weapons of the future. Even though it was not entirely clear how that should be done, ARPA and its successor DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) did

just that: They paved the way for groundbreaking technologies such as weather satellites, GPS, drones, PCs, and the internet.

The model has been widely adopted in other countries. The EU, for example, is investing nearly €100 billion in its Horizon Europe program, and the United Kingdom has not only provided funding for this area, it has also made the issue a top priority. In applying the DARPA model, many overlook two important factors, however. First, there is no clearly defined mission, or no planned, tangible outcome. Second, it's about investment. In 2013, for example, DARPA invested \$25 million in a small startup called Moderna with the aim of developing mRNA vaccines – the fruits of which we are benefiting from today. Despite the funding that has been made available, the EU would struggle to point to achievements comparable to those in the US. In Europe, there are no significant differences between domestically funded research and EU research. There is certainly no shortage of output, but little can be pointed to in the way of the desired disruptive innovation, or meeting the "challenges of lunar flights."

A NEW KIND OF DISRUPTIVE NETWORKING

The example of developing and delivering mRNA vaccines in less than a year illustrates the power of new disruptive



DESPITE THE FUNDING THAT HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE, THE EU WOULD STRUGGLE TO POINT TO ACHIEVEMENTS COMPARABLE TO THOSE IN THE US.

networking models, which the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) calls “strategic alliances.” Partnerships bringing together pharmaceutical giants, the technical infrastructure required for clinical trials and regulatory approvals, and public support for mass production and distribution, are just some of the many alliance options. There are currently nearly 10,000 registered partnerships, and this number increased dramatically in 2020 and 2021. According to the BCG, the number of partnerships has increased eightfold.

A variety of sectors – such as healthcare, transportation, consumer goods, or the service industry – have identified the clear competitive advantages of such disruptive partnerships, on a number of fronts, seeing them as one of the best ways to address the urgent need for innovation, economies of scale, and rapid time-to-market. That said, setting up these new kinds of partnerships is no mean feat and many fail. There’s a risk faced by companies participating in such partnerships: Months of investing in the unsuccessful joint development of a leading-edge product can cause major losses. At the same time, this risk can be an opportunity for those who consider it crucial to support “red-hot” industries revolving around disruptive networks.

Successful networks are based on clear agreements on medium- to long-term partnerships, with each partner making their contribution to a common goal based on a commitment to collaborate more closely and become more flexible, even if it’s often uncertain what the ultimate outcome will be. Such partnerships are much easier to set up or dissolve than joint ventures or mergers.

They can revolve around shared work on a single product line or tackle projects of an experimental nature. Steinbeis EU-VRI, the European Risk & Resilience Institute, has many years of experience with new forms of partnership, both within the EU and in the rest of the world.

DISRUPTION – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR STEINBEIS ENTERPRISES

The organization behind Steinbeis is based on a network comprising a large number of Steinbeis Enterprises, although it’s not necessarily about forming networks in itself or disruptive networking. Nonetheless, as the very cornerstones of the Steinbeis Network, networking, innovation, and technology transfer will be even more strongly affected by the aforementioned forms of disruption, now and in the future. Currently, the networks formed with external partners are generally stronger than the internal networks (which are more about pooling resources), and this is the result of current innovation funding. It Steinbeis Enterprises want to galvanize their position and secure a permanent place in disruptive networks, they should therefore define their offering and problem-solving capabilities as part of a “portfolio game.”

Since partnerships are more flexible than other forms of collaboration, they should be used more often in the Steinbeis Network. In doing so, care should be taken to ensure that partners are an ideal match and a perfect fit with the topic. It’s also important that their interests and strategies match – there’s no room for “overhead partners.” The contribution each partner makes to the portfolio must be defined in precise

terms. For example, in the area of electric vehicles, Daimler has direct partnerships with China’s BAIC Group and the American electric bus manufacturer Proterra; in autonomous driving it has partnerships with BMW, Bosch, and Torc Robotics; in electric infrastructure it has partnerships with ChargePoint. All partnerships, however, are direct and lean. If Steinbeis wants to be part of all this, the value it adds should be clearly defined and apparent to all, as it should be for all other partners.

Among other things, a good starting point for companies and Steinbeis Enterprises would be to increasingly bank on experience gathered with approaches such as the DX model, for example Micro Testbeds, the Industrial Internet Consortium (IIC), virtual institute mechanisms, or the major international industrial DX projects of Steinbeis EU-VRI. Nonetheless, success will ultimately be dictated by two things: the required scaling/upscaling, and determining a clear business strategy for dealing with the change brought about by DX models – change that is highly disruptive today and will be particularly disruptive in the future!

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THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH TEAM AT STEINBEIS UNIVERSITY EXAMINES A TOOL DESIGNED FOR ANALYZING THE POTENTIAL OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

In which areas does my company display weaknesses and what are its strengths? With the help of a free tool for self-assessment, small and medium-sized enterprises can systematically improve key areas of their business, such as organizational processes and personnel management. Insights gained with the tool present the basis of a current research project at 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.

Digitization and new approaches to value creation are changing processes and organizational systems in companies. Particularly in these times of volatility, a key challenge faced by medium-sized enterprises is finding and retaining suitable skilled workers. An integral element of attracting skilled workers to a company is its attractiveness as an em-

ployer. To make themselves more attractive, companies need to understand their own potential and manage capabilities systematically.

The INQA self-assessment "good SMEs" offers business leaders the opportunity to systematically analyze their business potential at every stage of the value chain, looking at everything from strategy to organizational processes and personnel management. For those interested in conducting a critical assessment of their own organizational setup, the tool not only offers an opportunity to reflect on the current situation, it also provides firms with ideas and potential improvements based on experiences of other SMEs.

SIBE INVESTIGATES USABILITY AND IMPACT

The INQA self-assessment is currently subject of a scientific research project

being conducted by Steinbeis. Its focus – among other things – is on how business leaders use the tool and areas in which they find it particularly helpful. The research team at the School of International Business and Entrepreneurship (SIBE) is keen to explore how well companies use the self-assessment, which issues businesses encounter, and what particular measures arise from the process of conducting the assessment.

Insights gained from this project will help make improvements to the INQA self-assessment, with special regard to current needs of small and medium-sized enterprises. At the same time, the project aims at helping firms unfold their full potential. "We are delighted to invite all SMEs belonging to the Steinbeis Network to participate in our research project" emphasizes Professor Dr. David Rygl, project lead at SIBE.

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Anyone interested in conducting a self-assessment of various facets of their company and supporting the Steinbeis research team with their experience can find out more about the project:

<https://www.steinbeis-sibe.de/Forschungsprojekt-F2481>



© istockphoto.com/kontekbrothers

The experts at SQB certainly know a thing or two about industrial image processing, having developed a new image processing system that opens up new options for using images in mechanical engineering and machine construction, as well as biological and medical applications.

MINIMIZE – TAKING TECHNICAL EYES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

HOW IMAGE PROCESSING KNOW-HOW CAN DELIVER VALUE-ADDED FOR INDUSTRY AND BIOMEDICINE

For their research and development project – MINIMIZE (an acronym in German for “miniaturized, , multispectral, real-time image processing system”) – the Steinbeis experts in Ilmenau have developed a number of new concepts for systems capable of capturing spatially and multispectrally resolved image data at video frequencies. This data includes selected spectral bands for use in industrial and biomedical applications. For their project, it was also important to consider and include broadband illumination, adapted optics, a spatially and multispectrally resolving sensor module, electronic components, modeling features, and algorithms.

LOOKING AT IMAGE SCENES THROUGH TECHNICAL EYES

Capturing, processing, and evaluating images with both spatial resolution and multispectral properties is the logical, methodical, and technical next step for “technical eyes”. These days, almost all cameras have three spectrally selective

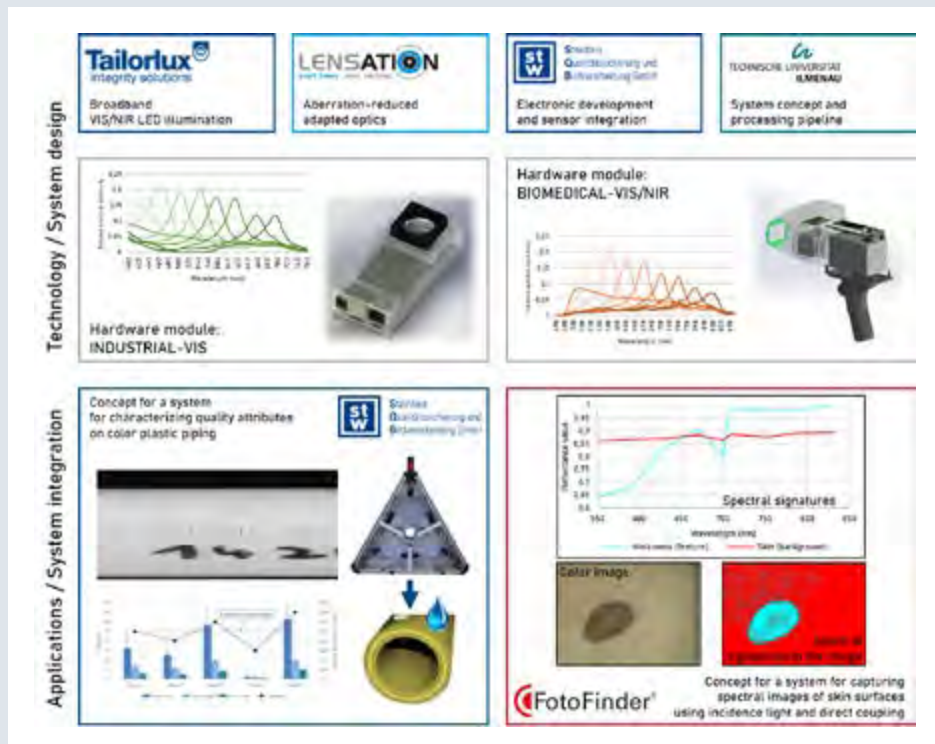
filters for capturing spatially resolved color images. Within the foreseeable future, numerous spectrally selective filters will be applied for spatially resolved spectral imaging. Development work carried out under the MINIMIZE project has allowed the team headed by Steinbeis entrepreneur Steffen Lübbecke to gain key scientific insights into applications and facilitate a breakthrough in how the technology is put to use. “It’s important that German industry and certain small and medium-sized enterprises and research institutions are given further support as flagships of photonic metrology and quality assurance,” says Steffen Lübbecke.

A HOLISTIC VIEW OF THE UNDERLYING CONCEPT

To illuminate an area selected for imaging, a special broadband LED illumination unit was developed using near-infrared fluorophores. This unit helps compensate for the missing emission wavelengths of commercially available

standard LED illumination. Due to its low energy requirements, the illumination unit can be embedded directly into the system designed to capture spatially and spectrally resolved images of skin surfaces. To capture imaging information on the sensor module that is spatially and multispectrally resolving, the partners in the project developed a special miniature, interchangeable optics system. Based on an apochromatic design and telecentric image capturing, the system makes it possible to minimize wavelength and amplitude deviations at different angles during the image acquisition of the subject of interest. An efficient hardware module was also developed in the process, including an additional, highly parallel integrated circuit that makes it possible to perform complex preprocessing directly within the unit. To make that possible, it was also necessary to develop a model-based data processing set, not only to minimize random deviations in measurements caused by physical factors, but also to compensate for

The MINIMIZE research and development project was supported through funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), also featuring in the Digital Optics announcement as part of an initiative called Photonics Research Germany. The partners in the project were Steinbeis Qualitätssicherung und Bildverarbeitung (SQB, which acted as the project coordinator), Technische Universität Ilmenau (represented by its Group for Quality Assurance and Industrial Image Processing), Tailorlux (Münster), FotoFinder Systems (Bad Birnbach), and Lensation (Karlsruhe).



An overview of the MINIMIZE research and development project. Source: Technische Universität Ilmenau

fluctuations in measurements within the system. These are caused by the illumination process, optical factors, and the spatially and multispectrally resolving sensor module. This also allows the system to reduce additional image noise and, within system capabilities, use algorithms to correct spatial and spectral undersampling.

ADDING VALUE FOR INDUSTRY AND BIOMEDICINE

The work carried out by SQB has also offered benefits of a practical nature. In parallel to conducting the research, two verification and validation systems have been developed for use in industrial and biomedical applications. The industrial application integrates the sensor system under development into a process used to carry out visual inspections on pipes with the aim of detecting water droplets. With the biomedical concept, the focus lay in integrating the technology into a hand-held opto-digital dermatoscope.



CAPTURING, PROCESSING, AND EVALUATING IMAGES WITH BOTH SPATIAL RESOLUTION AND MULTISPECTRAL PROPERTIES IS THE LOGICAL, METHODOICAL, AND TECHNICAL NEXT STEP FOR “TECHNICAL EYES”.

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THE FINE BALANCING ACT BETWEEN VISIONS AND ACTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEINBEIS CONSULTANT RITA STRASSBURG



To take the plunge or not – and become self-employed: What does it take to launch a successful company? And what kind of personality makes a good business founder? Steinbeis consultant Rita Strassburg offers advice to entrepreneurs grappling with these issues in the region around Constance. **TRANSFER** magazine caught up with her to talk about startups in times of the pandemic and the importance of business ecosystems to the success of a startup.

Hello Ms. Strassburg. One of the services you offer is startup consulting. What impact has the coronavirus pandemic had on the startup landscape in Germany, including in the county of Constance?

Looking at the picture as a whole across Germany, the number of new startups fell in the first year of coronavirus in 2020. According to the startup monitor, those startups were of a particularly high standard, however. The reason for

this is that the people who set up companies were more likely to have a specific idea of their startups and then went about implementing their ideas as intended. Although there are no reliable figures for 2021 yet, it does appear that

the number of small startups has continued to decline, while the number of larger firms or firms set up as a side-line has risen.

In the county of Constance, generally the number of startups appears to have remained stable. This also matches the overall statistics for Baden-Wuerttemberg, which show that the state seems to be particularly strong and active when it comes to startups.

How important is it to become an integral part of the local ecosystem in the Constance region for startups or business owners to succeed?

When founders start setting up a business – so they have an idea, and they're looking into ways to set up a company – they have a prodigious thirst for advice and information. Business ecosystems are most useful to founders if the supporting stakeholders and organizations

work well together – educational establishments, funding bodies, companies, investors, and political institutions. The ecosystem in and around Constance is in a good position to help startups. For example, the TZK – the technology center in Constance – has been helping business founders and new companies for over 35 years, also under its new umbrella brand for startups: Farm. Farm is a center for startups and among other things it provides them with their first roof over their heads by offering reduced rent. It's also a place for the network of startups to meet up, which includes all associations and institutions relevant to startups, such as the economic development agency, Steinbeis, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Chamber of Crafts, Km1, etc. The network meets up regularly, approximately every four to six weeks, and shares information and ideas on current issues. What's important right now? What are the next steps? And of course Constance

is home to a whole host of consulting services, or events such as the Impulse series and hackathons, which – among others – are staged by Bio-LAGO and cyberLAGO. This all provides business founders with an opportunity to move forward with their business models and ideas. The startup ecosystem functions really well in Constance, although of course we're all doing our best to create more synergies by building and expanding on our support for startups.

What services do you offer as a Steinbeis consultant to help people on their journey into entrepreneurship?

I always start on a personal level. The first thing is to get to know each other. I care very much about business founders, so it makes me really happy to lay a certain foundation for their projects, to support them on a professional and emotional level, and that I, too, can keep

WHAT THE BUSINESS FOUNDERS SAY:

"When you start up a business, you stand there with tons of questions. So it's a tremendous help to get advice that's tailored to you as an individual, for example through the EXI Startup Vouchers. It was particularly useful to get support on a robust business plan, but also get help from the Steinbeis consultant's network in Constance. This has already led to a lot of contacts and opportunities for future partnerships. As a new company, of course funding will remain important to me."



Giovanna Ratini | Proximo-WSD UG | www.elena-app.de

ELENA is an accessible app aimed at combating loneliness among senior citizens, who are often less familiar with digital media. The app offers elderly people an opportunity to communicate directly with their loved ones and caregivers.

"As a new startup, we're extremely satisfied with our collaboration with Steinbeis. We received highly professional support during the different phases of the company – from two consultants, who not only approached things from a different angle, but were also a good complement to one another and worked together well. That had a significant impact on accelerating the startup process for us and it enabled us to avoid quite a number of mistakes. What else would we wish for? It would be nice to have funding options for startups – so we can pick up even more momentum on the highway."



Marco and Isabel Bertiller | Spinnax GmbH & Co. KG | www.spinnax.com

Spinnax produces sensors for skateboarders that detect the movements of skateboards. These also come with an app for skaters to watch and share recordings.

my finger on the pulse when it comes to the development of a business.



BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SEEMS TO BE PARTICULARLY STRONG AND ACTIVE WHEN IT COMES TO STARTUPS

Once we've gotten to know each other, the aim is to find out more about the startup concept and determine which startup phase the business founder is currently at. It's only once I've done that, that I can support the business founder with actual services and information. If they're right at the beginning of the process, we start by reviewing the business concept and making it more concrete. If they're further down the line, I help them work up the business model. In addition to that, I offer them ways to develop marketing and sales concepts, or draft business plans and prepare a financial plan for the first years – including an investment plan, a revenue plan, and a liquidity plan.

Of course financial issues are really important. I help to clear up any initial funding questions, I help with discussions with the bank, and I point out the funding options. Depending on how much detailed advice they need in individual areas, other consultants come into play, specialized in topics such as funding or acquisitions. In such circumstances I like to turn to the Steinbeis Network, because it offers access to a whole host of experts across different types of areas. The topics I can offer in-depth advice on are business model development and marketing.

Are there any startup ideas you've been particularly impressed by?

There are so many interesting projects, it's difficult to say. Off the top of my head, the first one would be the ELENA app, because it might help solve a major social problem. It's an app that combats loneliness among the elderly. Its goal is to use totally simple digital technology to create a fully accessible solution for senior citizens to communicate with relatives. Basically, it's like a little virtual visit. And I think it's really great.

Another project is a sensor made by Spinnax for skateboarding. It allows skateboarders to record their movements and then use the recordings for training and making improvements. Or the Paopao project, which is all about natural products for women, at all stages of life. But that's just three ideas that come to mind spontaneously, out of many other great projects.

Based on your experience, what qualities and skills does a business founder need to make a success of their undertaking?

I think it definitely takes entrepreneurial spirit. And as a startup, you should definitely be strong-willed and believe in your idea. But that has to be combined with a willingness to consider the overall business environment consciously and objectively. And another thing I find important is that you're open to advice – after all, you can't know everything about everything. But on the other hand, it's also important to be able to make distinctions between the advice you're given. With a startup, it's a fine balancing act between "having a vision" and "understanding and exploiting the options you have and the overall setup." Admittedly, it's not an easy balancing act, but it's crucial if a startup's going to succeed.

I also think the qualities of a business founder include a certain degree of tenaciousness, commitment, a willing-

ness to take risks, the ability to work under pressure, and resilience. They should be knowledgeable in the field they're setting up the company in and have the right professional qualifications – but they should also be creative. And one thing you mustn't forget is a sense of responsibility – toward yourself and others.

I think it's important to adopt a positive attitude toward your startup, to have an open mind, and to be permanently open to change. All the things that you expect will probably happen at the beginning – they don't always happen. So often you have to change your model. And there's one thing that's particularly important: It also takes courage – you can't afford to be too scared about things.

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THE INNO-CHECK-BW INITIATIVE – WHICH EU FUNDING OPTIONS ARE BEST FOR MY PROJECT?

WEBSITE SET UP BY STEIN-BEIS EUROPA ZENTRUM OFFERS FUNDING ADVICE FOR SMES

Click here to go to the portal:



www.innocheck-bw.de

Horizon Europe, the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development relaunched by the European Union in 2021, provides a variety of funding opportunities for research and innovation initiatives. Something companies are less likely to realize is that small and medium-sized enterprises may also apply for funding for their innovation projects. By offering the innocheck-bw portal, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum supports companies in their searches for suitable funding.

Horizon Europe is now the ninth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development funded by the European Union. Its aim is to support cutting-edge research and innovations "Made in Europe." With a total budget of €95.5 billion for the period 2021 to 2027, it is the most extensive European funding program to date.

HOW SMES CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM

Horizon Europe is organized into three "pillars." Pillar I revolves around Excellent Science. Primarily offering funding opportunities for cutting-edge research, it focuses strongly on universities and other research institutions. Pillar II, Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, focuses on concrete calls for funding. Under a variety of topics and challenges, international consortia can apply for support with potential solutions to specific problems. As members of such consortia, not only are SMEs eligible to receive funding, at the same time they can become more international in outlook and establish transnational networks with other enterprises, research institutions, and organizations. Pillar III, Innovative Europe, is of particular interest to companies with the funding instrument European Innovation Council (EIC). It is particularly targeted at SMEs, offering financial support for the development of highly innovative ideas, from the stag-



„HORIZONT EUROPA“ IS THE MOST EXTENSIVE EUROPEAN FUNDING PROGRAM TO DATE.

es of fundamental research to market entry. The EU is offering up to €4 million in grants to innovation projects involving SMEs, as well as up to €15 million in investments. There will be new calls for such funding in 2022.

FUNDING ADVICE PRECISELY TAILORED TO SMES: INNOCHECK-BW

To help SMEs, startups, and scaleups gain access to EU funding, the Baden-Wuerttemberg Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labor, and Tourism has joined forces with Steinbeis Europa Zentrum and set up an online portal called innocheck-bw. The idea is to allow SMEs to assess their innovation projects by answering a questionnaire. In addition to receiving made-to-measure recommendations on suitable na-

tional and European funding instruments, they are also provided with relevant links to further information and connected to experts at Steinbeis Europa Zentrum for further advice on funding opportunities. The support offered by the Baden-Wuerttemberg Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labor, and Tourism not only makes it possible to offer Baden-Wuerttemberg companies advisory services through innocheck-bw, they can also receive feedback on draft project proposals. Also free of charge, this service is available at various stages of the application process. In addition to funding advice and support with applications, Steinbeis Europa Zentrum also organizes regular webinars and training on EU funding – for all target groups, covering a variety of topics.

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ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR BOARD MEMBERS AT BIG COMPANIES

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOARD CONSULTANT AND
STEINBEIS ENTREPRENEUR WINFRIED KÜPPERS

For Winfried Küppers, working as an advisor to board members and politicians offers one fascinating insight after another into the goings-on in the executive corridors of German business. The Steinbeis expert spoke to TRANSFER magazine about things that make up the daily business of board members. He also shares a success story that has remained a particularly sweet memory for him.



Winfried Küppers and Jens Freiter from Sales Analytics, the Steinbeis Consulting Center, taking the opportunity to try out Cacao Vida, which is made from the honey produced by processing cocoa beans.



Hello Mr. Küppers. You have advised a number of board members at large German companies. What occupies the thoughts of that particular group of customers?

Basically they're all occupied by three fundamental topics: the challenges of day-to-day business, strategic decisions affecting the next couple of years, and their personal situation.

What are the daily tasks of a board member?

It's important to understand that the everyday business of a board member has nothing to do with routine tasks at the company. The upper echelon and middle levels of management are responsible for this day-to-day decision-making. Instead, board members make long-term, strategic decisions. That includes negotiating collective agreements for the company, but also investment decisions surrounding digitalization projects or sustainability initiatives. The tasks of those heading up companies also depend on the sector of industry and the current situation. For example that can be questions relating to the way a global company portrays itself in each individual market, taking different cultures into account, forms of government or, as is currently the case: pandemic legislation. Or questions regarding how to assess previous decisions, which could now be improved on or implemented more efficiently – for something like the supply chain, for example. Board members also deal with HR issues, for example whether the focus should lie in a small number of research and development sites, or whether to expand into international development teams and work in networks.

What strategic options do companies have to develop as a business?

I'll pick three. First let's look at the manufacturing industry: Machines generate data and this can be used to sell digital



Winfried Küppers pictured alongside
Andreas Ronken, CEO of Alfred Ritter GmbH & Co. KG

services to customers, and not just hardware. This leads to new fields of business, within which and thanks to which the company can move forward. The second opportunity lies in innovation management and launching corporate startups. This is where new concepts are developed and tested within a protected environment, and later they're either spun off or they're integrated into the group of companies as independent business units. And the third one I'd like to mention is new areas or fields of business. This is where you closely monitor trends and any opportunities open to individual market stakeholders to enter markets.

**In your podcast, SYSTEMKOMPE-
TENZ, you often provide anecdotes
from your everyday work. Are there
any success stories that stand out
for you in particular?**

The one that comes to mind is the corporate startup established by Alfred Ritter, the manufacturer of Ritter Sport chocolate. The company runs one of the world's largest cocoa plantations, and it attaches a great deal of importance to sustainability. But when you make chocolate, you run into an environmental is-

sue: Processing cocoa beans produces a waste product in the form of cocoa honey, and large quantities of this juice get back into the soil, which changes the pH value, and ultimately this has a negative impact on the next harvest. The crucial point with this is that you can actually drink cocoa juice! So Andreas Ronken, the CEO at Alfred Ritter, launched his own startup, which conducted intensive research into the topic and ultimately developed a soft drink similar to a soda, as well as a prosciutto. In the end, not only is the concept good for the environment, it also benefits cocoa farmers, who as well as selling beans can also sell the juice. It was the perfect blend of business success, sustainability, and social engagement.

**You mentioned at the beginning that
personal situations are also an issue
when you're advising board mem-
bers. To what extent can you help
with such things?**

People who make it into senior management on a corporate level are generally some of the best managers in Europe, or often in the world. The question then is what can be done to keep developing on a personal level, but also what other

career opportunities might be possible, for example on supervisory or advisory boards.

And to what extent does the Steinbeis brand shape your work?

Because we operate under the umbrella of the Steinbeis Foundation, it's in our interest to pursue the mission of the foundation and act "to the benefit of the state economy." Also, the Steinbeis Network offers us access to – and networking opportunities with – experts in science, business, and politics.

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FOR USER-CENTERED DESIGN

NICOLA DOPPIO, KADI VILLERS, CHRISTINA MELANDER, MIRIAM MOHR

→ WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/EN/SU/2016

User experience design (or UX design) is particularly important for digital products and services. It deals with the analysis, creation, and optimization of the user experience with the aim of making applications as user-friendly as possible for end users. The UX Challenge Playbook provides business organizations, research and education institutions, companies, and public administration with an easy-to-follow handbook, broken down into five sections to offer a detailed outline of how to organize and run successful open innovation contests with the aim of promoting the user-centered design of products and services.

Designed along the lines of a hackathon, the UX Challenge is an innovation contest that allows companies not only to collaborate with designers and experts, but also to engage and interact with end users, who take part in the process as testers and co-creators. By the end of the contest, companies create new wireframes and prototypes that have been tested and validated with the involvement of users and potential customers. The concept behind the UX Challenge has been successfully tested in seven countries as part of an EU project called 200SMEchallenge.

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Claus-Christian Carbon, Werner G. Faix, Stefanie Kisgen, Jens Mergenthaler, Fabian Muralter, Alisa Schwinn, Liane Windisch
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MARKET BEHAVIOR AND THE PERFORMANCE OF REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

AN EMPIRICAL COMPARISON OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES

ANDREAS FILSER, HEINZ REHKUGLER

→ WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/EN/SU/1477

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The business environment of commercial providers in the German residential real estate market is divided into two parts. For cooperative, public, and municipal housing companies, the business focus lies primarily in providing affordable housing to broad swathes of the population, while larger, private-sector portfolio holders have also succeeded in becoming established during the past two decades. In parallel to this, public debate has started on the costs and revenues associated with providing housing, with particular focus on different management strategies.

This study on market behavior and the performance of real estate management companies is intended to support an objective assessment of the economic contribution made by different groups of providers. The focus lies in comparative assessments of the profit and value generated by companies and shareholders between 2008 and 2019, also spotlighting causalities on an operational level and impacts on corporate development.



BEST-OF STEINBEIS TRANSFER MAGAZINE 2021

STEINBEIS GMBH & CO. KG FÜR TECHNOLOGIETRANSFER (HRSG.)

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Best-of Steinbeis Transfer Magazine 2021 contains the twelve most frequently read articles released by Steinbeis-Edition, the publishing arm of the Steinbeis Foundation, in the last twelve months, as well as the very best of 2021.

Aimed at the general public, Transfer Magazine offers extensive insights into the fascinating projects conducted within the Steinbeis Network. As in the past, our Steinbeis Enterprises implemented a variety of successful projects in 2021, a selection of which we have presented to our readers. We also use the Steinbeis Network and Transfer Magazine to consider and discuss a selection of current issues, and in 2021 we launched a campaign called "Provide benefit! Our Solutions for Current Challenges." The three Transfer Magazines published in 2021 focused on the economy and the environment.



THE MEDIATION – EDITION I CHANGE. THE GREAT CONSTANT

GERNOT BARTH (ED.)

→ WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/EN/SU/941

2021 | E-Paper (PDF)
free
ISSN 2750-2570

Change has always been omnipresent and unstoppable. Or as Friedrich Nietzsche once said, "the past bites the tail of everything that is to come". In other words, having a clear understanding of the past not only enables you to be aware of what has changed, it also helps you to tell the difference between good and bad change. But what can individuals or organizations do in specific terms to "future-proof" themselves to the processes of transformation in society, as well as the processes of change within organizations?

Motivated by this idea, in 2021 The Mediation was launched, an English publication based on the German magazine Die Mediation, which has been published since 2012. The idea is to provide a forum for change and initiate new international relationships and worldwide collaboration.



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MEDIATION – QUARTER I EDITION, 2022

DIALOG

GERNOT BARTH (HRSG.)

→ WWW.STEINBEIS.DE/EN/SU/941

When dialog takes place against a backdrop of conflict, it is never an easy undertaking. Many reactions are fueled by the unconscious, and there is very little time to reflect in the heat of battle. Yet showing understanding and empathy, or offering constructive criticism, are crucial if we want to eradicate problems from this world.

The focal topic of the Quarter I / 2022 issue of Mediation is dialog, what constitutes productive conversation, and which “tools” are required. The “Leipzig Impulse Talk” highlights why mediation at schools plays such an important role in resolving conflicts in education. A further article explains how to impede visceral criticism of cognitive dialog and instead, express self-empathy. Readers are also offered a variety of other interesting articles, including: Of Beaks and Ears: Successfully Shaping Dialog Sessions; Personality and Leadership: Responsibility – Turning Duty into Pleasure; Keeping Conversation Going – For a Stable and Rewarding Partnership; Deal Mediation – Third Party-Assisted Negotiation and Implementing Complex Contracts Between Companies.

Beyond the focal topic articles, readers are also given fascinating insights into further topics. For example, the scholar and author John Erpenbeck discusses the contribution mediation can make to resolving conflict that has escalated in a polarized society. Readers also learn how mediators succeed in fueling positive emotion among those on the receiving end of mediation, and why clear and comprehensible information is better in marketing than jargon from experts.



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MEDIATION – QUARTER II EDITION, 2022

FEAR

GERNOT BARTH (HRSG.)

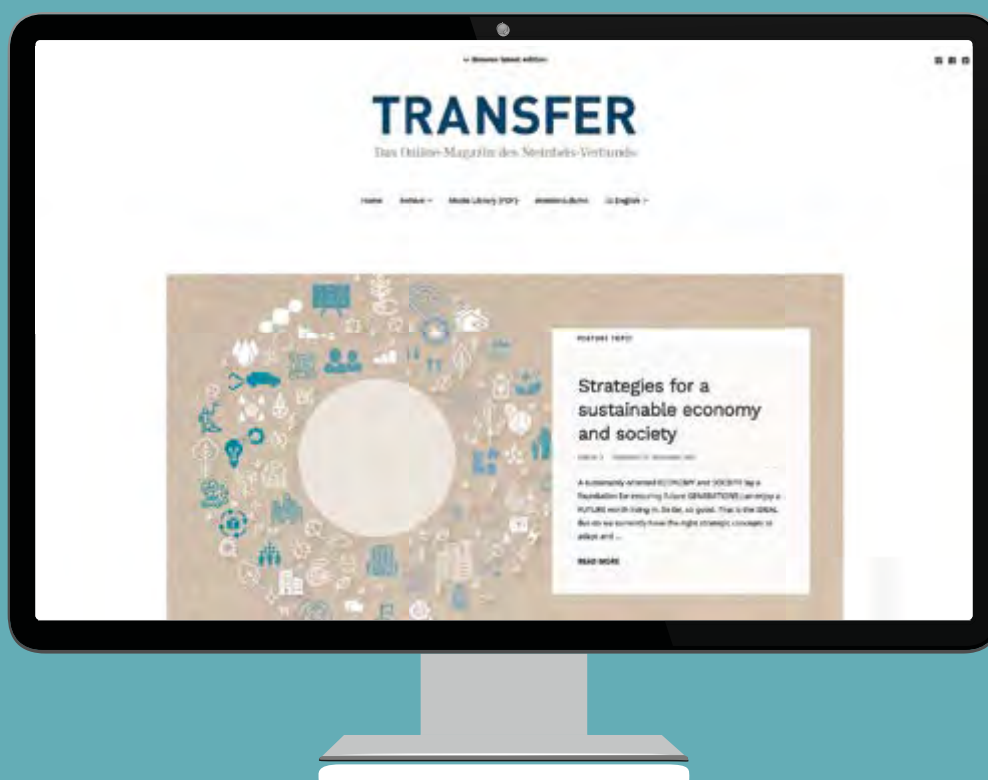
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Almost everyone experiences fear sometimes. People fear making the wrong decisions, they worry about their health or the health of partners, family, and friends, or people worry about their relationships with those who mean something to them – at work or in private settings. And then there are (seemingly) irrational fears such as a fear of spiders, heights, or confined spaces.

The good news is, anxiety does not necessarily have to be permanent, and there are multiple ways to deal with fears, including constructive options for allaying fear. The focal topic of the Quarter II / 2022 edition of Mediation is fear, looking at successful ways to manage misunderstood emotions, what is required to improve self-esteem and rid yourself of fear, and why fears experienced during negotiations can sometimes even be beneficial.

Beyond the focal topic articles, readers are also offered some fascinating insights into other topics. For example, in an interview with the magazine editor, Gernot Barth, Chairman of the German Environment Foundation Jörg Sommer explains why, in his view, measures introduced for the transition to alternative energy should not divide society, but unite it. Attorney and management consultant Volker Knoop also provides comprehensive insights into the world of litigation funding companies – firms that cover the costs of legal disputes on behalf of clients and share in the rewards in the event of success.

ANYTIME
ANYPLACE
DIGITALLY:
THE **ONLINE EDITION**
OF TRANSFER



TRANSFERMAGAZIN.STEINBEIS.DE

PREVIEW

EDITION 02|2022

Feature topic

Ways Forward for Education and the Working World of the Future

Planned publication date: September 2022

The situation currently faced in politics, the world of business, and society in general is demanding for all of us. In addition to causing many companies to feel threatened in their existence, schools also face major challenges in terms of educational policy. Once again, this situation underscores the fundamental importance of investing in a good education. It lays a cornerstone for ongoing development in society and the future of the economy. Based on experiences during this current "historical turning point," it's all the more important, however, to ask how education should be managed to meet future developments in the world of work. And what will this future working environment actually look like? In the next edition of TRANSFER magazine, Steinbeis experts reflect on potential ways forward, not just for education but also for our future working environment.



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

THE STEINBEIS LUNCHBREAK. A QUICK MORSEL WITH...

April and May 2022 | Online Event
www.steinbeis.de/lunchbreak

STEINBEIS DAYS IN 2022

May 20, 2022 | September 30, 2022 | Steinbeis Campus in Stuttgart-Hohenheim
www.steinbeis-tag.de

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

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Julia Schumacher

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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 6,000 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.

