HOTSPOT FOR SUCCESS STORIES
How trade fairs help start-up founders mature into entrepreneurs

TURBO-CHARGER FOR START-UPS
Government subsidised pavilions at trade fairs for young companies
Dear Readers,

In Nuremberg, at the world’s leading IT security fair according to exhibitor numbers, start-ups recently had a chance to network with investors and established companies as part of the event’s new UP18@it-sa format. The new competition provided founders with a unique opportunity to move directly into the spotlight along with their ideas and products.

For start-ups in particular, it’s important to exhibit at trade fairs, which can turbo-charge their businesses. In this issue of Messe+Co, the founders of three start-ups will speak for many others by discussing how they benefited from their participation in and the offerings provided by a subsidised pavilion in Nuremberg: financial and logistical support, industry-specific insider knowledge, and very specific contacts (starting on page 12). Every fourth start-up that’s invited to use the government-subsidised pavilions for young innovative companies takes part in an event in Nuremberg. Entrepreneurs whose start-ups have become successful provide insights into their start-up phases and valuable tips for new founders (starting on page 6).

And a pump manufacturer operating on the international stage explains why he relied on trade fairs as a marketing tool even at the height of the financial crisis (page 11). From page 16 you can learn about other support systems in Nuremberg that help start-ups get on their feet.

We hope you enjoy this issue of our magazine.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Roland Fleck       Peter Ottmann
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Founder gene

Founders want their start-ups to fill a niche or change the world for the better. Whether these young entrepreneurs manage to conquer their markets depends to a great extent on their marketing strategy, and that includes trade fair appearances.

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Trade fair potential

Pump manufacturer Tobias Jessberger was quick to recognise the potential of trade fairs, and for him Nürnberg-Messe has a “special appeal.”

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Modern design needs to offer customers added value. New business founders present their innovative design concepts in a competition for start-ups.
The electromobility of the future: The largest platform on this topic in Latin America was organised for the first time this year by NürnbergMesse Brasil.

**packaging-360.com is online**

The platform packaging-360.com went online just in time for the opening of FachPack. The web portal offers a panoramic overview of packaging in all areas of the supply chain. It’s designed for manufacturers of consumer goods, retailers with their own brands and the packaging industry in general. packaging-360.com is a joint venture of the dfv media group and NürnbergMesse’s FachPack, the trade fair for packaging, processes and technology.

**E-mobility for South America and China**

In September, one of the developments that will have a crucial impact on the future took centre stage at the Veículo Elétrico Latino-Americano in São Paulo. The largest platform for electromobility in Latin America was organised for the first time this year by NürnbergMesse Brasil. International manufacturers of hybrid and electric vehicles, components and infrastructure, including German companies like Mercedes and Siemens, took part as exhibitors. Representatives of official agencies, private initiatives and the public discussed the future of electromobility in Brazil at the exhibition itself and during the concurrent Mobility and Electric Vehicle Congress (C-MOVE).

The event, which welcomed some 3,000 participants and was held for the first time at the Transamerica Expo Centre, underscored the significant interest in Brazil in the field of electromobility. A survey by McKinsey confirms the growth prospects for this sector: By 2030, between 15 and 30 percent of all vehicles in Brazil will be powered partially or completely by electricity.

Roughly 18,500 kilometres away, NürnbergMesse China organised another event in October in the area of e-mobility. About 500 leading engineers from renowned car manufacturers and leading automotive suppliers from China and abroad – as well as government representatives, scientists and specialists from various sectors – attended the two-day conference EVTec 2018 (Electric Vehicle Technologies Conference) to discuss the future development of electric vehicles.

**All about wood in India**

In the last 15 years DELHIWOOD, along with INDIAWOOD and MUMBAIWOOD, has become the key event for woodworking firms in India and South Asia. The sixth round of DELHIWOOD, which will take place from March 13-16, 2019, at the India Expo Centre and Mart in Greater Noida, Delhi/NCR, is being organised by NürnbergMesse India for the first time. Approximately 600 exhibitors and more than 30,000 visitors are expected at a display area measuring some 40,000 square metres. In 2017, representatives from more than 50 countries visited the event to find out about new technologies and raw materials from all over the world. NürnbergMesse Group acquired the three key fairs for the woodworking industry in India last spring, making NürnbergMesse India one of the top three foreign exhibition companies on the subcontinent.
INFO

Silk Road congress to continue

As a result of the successful premiere of the congress “Silk Road 2018 – Trading on New Routes”, the event will have its second round on 2 October 2019 at Exhibition Centre Nuremberg. In partnership with the Bavarian Ministry for Economic Affairs, Energy and Technology and the Bavarian Chambers of Industry and Commerce, NürnbergMesse is organising another congress with an accompanying exhibition in the foyer. With the title Silk Road – Trading in New Markets, the event will focus on selected regions and projects along the various trade routes. Keynotes, panel discussions and workshops will feature progress reports, answer questions on financing and subsidies and present individual projects in detail.

BIOFACH and VIVANESS 2019: The heart of the sector will beat in Nuremberg once again

When the international organic sector gathers for BIOFACH, the world’s leading trade fair for organic food, from February 13-16, 2019, Nuremberg will once again be the pulse of the industry over the four days of the event. More than 2,900 exhibitors and over 50,000 trade visitors from around the world are expected at this 30th round of the event. They can look forward to an unrivalled product display, inspiring innovations, numerous trends in food and other product ranges and a wide array of networking opportunities.

The BIOFACH Congress 2019 promises to be a high-calibre event. This time around, its theme will be “The organic system: healthy in a holistic approach.”

With its unique blend of trendsetting pioneers and newcomers, the parallel VIVANESS event showcases the diversity and innovation of the natural cosmetics sector. The VIVANESS Congress and the “Let’s talk VIVANESS” networking zone deliver solid content and inspiring ideas for exhibitors and trade visitors alike. One of the highlights of the fair is “Breeze”, a special display area specifically created for international newcomers.

Newcomers and start-ups will once again showcase their companies at the government subsidised pavilion for young companies at BIOFACH and VIVANESS in 2019.
Ready, steady — go!

Start-ups revitalise the market with new ideas.

The early days of a business are particularly difficult, and even later there are always pitfalls. Let’s talk about what founders need to watch for, who can help and where to find the right springboard to success.

Silicon Valley coined the term *start-up* in the early 1990s to describe commercial enterprises with an innovative business idea and strong growth potential. At the turn of the millennium, this new founder culture also arrived in Germany. Here too, there are plenty of stories about people with innovative ideas, keen business acumen and a lot of staying power. One such tale is about the winner in the start-up category of the German Entrepreneur Award 2018, presented at a major gala at ZDF’s Berlin studio at the beginning of September this year.

Once upon a time there were three young engineers from Karlsruhe who knew each other from their university days. The idea they had was to produce fuel from CO₂, water and electricity as an alternative to diesel and petrol – and their vision is to drive the clean energy revolution. “We want to reduce greenhouse gases and make use of climate-killer CO₂ as a material,” says co-founder Tim Böltgen from start-up Ineratec. “That’s our mission.” The jury’s unanimous verdict was that this business idea deserved an award. The company has already landed two big fish in the form of German automobile manufacturer Audi and Swiss company Energiedienst Holding AG, which has dedicated itself to the production of green electricity from hydropower.

**Brave appearance in the “Lions’ Den”**

Three success stories about entrepreneurs who became exhibitors in Nuremberg show how trade fair appearances can create a kind of initial spark for subsequent growth. Like BABO Beverages, the inventors of blue beer who became...
known through their appearance on the “Lions’ Den” broadcast by free-to-air TV channel VOX. On the show, young entrepreneurs try to convince a jury of investors to fund their idea. Some of those who managed to pull this off include Robin Stein, Ludwig Gerlinger and Nuremberg native Patrick Loy. About two million people followed the trio on their TV screens in August 2015, when they convinced two members of the jury to invest in their product “BABO blue,” Europe’s first blue beer and lemonade mix. “Due to the very high level of interest and inquiries we received afterwards, we really had a lot to do,” Gerlinger recalls. “Because we were still studying as well, we didn’t have a lot of time to think about failure.” And at the beginning of their journey, new business founders really do have a lot to think about: Will the idea work? Can I get employees and investors on board? Will I be able to grow my company?

**Business-savvy teenagers with a big interest in the smallest of creatures**

At an age when most people aren’t even thinking of such things, Michael Volk from Obersulm, a small city in Baden-Württemberg, was already considering starting a business. At the tender age of 11, the current managing director of WachtelGold, manufacturer of premium quail and chicken feed, was already demonstrating his business acumen. He began by selling on his own website quail that he had bred himself. Later he started selling feed, because he realised that “you could earn more money that way.” His mother gave him the backing he needed and officially registered the business. A few years and a number of setbacks later, he founded the start-up with his business partner Nico da Silva. Today they operate Germany’s largest online quail shop. “We were fortunate to have created the right start-up at the right time,” Volk says modestly. Postscript: “Of course, you’re always thinking about what can go wrong, but ultimately, you can still learn from your failures.”

**Pitfalls for new entrepreneurs often lurk in the everyday details**

These two operators of niche business models have what it takes to start a business: passion and enthusiasm. But even if you’re passionate about an idea, that doesn’t automatically guarantee success. “The pitfalls lurk in your day-to-day operations,” says BABO Beverages founder Ludwig Gerlinger. Wrong timing, structures that are too loose, disagreements about goals and lack of communication are very often responsible for the reality that even start-ups with good ideas ultimately don’t hit the ground running after all.

And that’s precisely what the 500,000 founders in Germany (2017) all want to do. In the German Start-ups
Tips from the founder for founders

Ludwig Gerlinger, BABO Beverages

- **Include a time buffer for all projects:** There are always delays, especially when you’re introducing new products. Usually you need much more time than planned.

- **Well-coordinated and stable structures:** It’s extremely important for all elements to run like clockwork.

- **Consensus within the team about the strategic focus:** If disagreements arise among the founders, it can very quickly block everything afterwards, and during decisive phases this can destroy some of the things that you’d built in the past.

- **Internal communication:** Always make sure to approach problems and seek solutions as a team. Honesty is important: Without solidarity among the founders, a start-up can’t function.

Successful with customised organic muesli mix:
(left to right) Hubertus Bessau, Max Wittrock and Philipp Krais, the founders of mymuesli.

Association’s annual survey “Start-up Monitor” developments are shown.

As Berlin – where 15.8 percent of all start-ups are located – continues as the lighthouse in the German start-up scene, there’s a burgeoning trend towards more regional start-up ecosystems. Like the Metropolitan Region of Nuremberg, for example (read more on page 16), which is driving this development through a network of more than 20 start-up accelerators, incubators and competence initiatives that support start-ups by providing advice on funding, alternative sources of finance, and tips on how to set up your own office without a lot of starting capital. Start-ups in the region benefit from the expertise of established firms in business development hubs covering all seven segments: transport and logistics, energy and environment, automotive, new materials, information and communication, automation and production technology, and health and medicine.

Having a knowledge edge is important, but for start-ups visibility is also especially critical. “Taking part in start-up competitions gets you the most attention,” says Max Wittrock, co-founder of mymuesli, which is headquartered in Passau. In 2017 there were 176 such events in Germany, including at NürnbergMesse. For Wittrock, the benefits are obvious: “Regardless of whether you win or lose, you always get extra PR. And in addition to praise and
FOCUS

“It's simply fantastic to be able to plan and realise something and then get to talk to customers at your own stand about your own products.”

Michael Volk, founder of WachtelGold and exhibitor at Interzoo 2018

recognition, there’s prize money and free marketing support on offer.”

Everyone gets feedback about where their weaknesses lie and where they could do better: and mymuesli did better. After a dream beginning – for example, by being voted German Start-up of the Year 2007 – the company now sells its various muesli mixes with organically-grown ingredients on its own online shop, in supermarkets and in cafés. mymuesli has more than 50 of its own stores located throughout Germany and several other European countries. It’s also been in Nuremberg since 2015.

Competitions and trade fairs: a lot of visibility for start-ups

As far back as 2011, the founders of mymuesli were drawing a lot of attention to themselves in Nuremberg as young entrepreneurs at BIOFACH, the world’s leading trade fair for organic food. “Because we were a purely online business at the time, spending a few days offline was exciting,” says Wittrock. “We were able to talk to existing suppliers, find new ones and see what the organic market had to offer.” Ludwig Gerlinger from BABO Beverages also looks back fondly at his first trade fair experiences as an exhibitor at BrauBeviale in Nuremberg: “2015 was a turbulent year. In February we launched our first product on the market, and in August we appeared on the “Lions’ Den,” so we wanted to take this momentum with us to the trade fair in the autumn.” And it worked: “We made important new contacts in the fields of raw materials, empties procurement and shipping services, and we’re still working with them today.” A year later, the trio of founders introduced new green and pink flavours at Nuremberg. “I can still remember this trade fair appearance very well,” says Gerlinger. “We suddenly had to deal with a technical failure of our beer taps at the venue, but thanks to a lot of help from exhibition staff, we were able to fix it quickly.”

Michael Volk from WachtelGold also looks back with satisfaction at his trade fair appearance at Interzoo 2018, when he was part of the premiere of the government subsidised pavilion for young companies: “It’s simply fantastic to be able to plan and realise something and then get to talk to customers at your own stand about your own products. We got a lot of praise from experienced business insiders for the products and packaging. This does you a lot of good and is great motivation.” And it gives momentum to the business. Volk: “We’re currently in negotiations with a major client. If we reach an agreement, this will probably be one of the most important milestones in our company’s history.”
It was the start of the financial crisis, of all things, that was the initial trigger for the expansion of family-run company Jessberger – a prime example of bold entrepreneurship paired with resolve and vision. In the autumn of 2008, when the media was reporting daily on the impending crisis, managing director Tobias Jessberger approached his father with a request: “I need a substantial six-figure sum of money for next year.”

Instead of exhibiting at three to four trade fairs a year, he wanted to take part in 10 in future. After some initial scepticism, his father agreed to this suggestion, because they only make important decisions together. That would pay dividends. “In 2010 we grew by 40 percent worldwide,” says Jessberger, “because in 2009 and 2010, counter to the general trend, we were very active in terms of advertising and trade fair appearances.”

The company, whose head office is located in Ottobrunn, Bavaria, manufactures pumps. Its products range from small hand pumps and drum pumps for chemicals, oils and combustible media to large eccentric screw pumps for tomato paste or fruit juice concentrate. “If you want to be successful in the market in the long term, then you need to look for a niche,” Jessberger explains.

The company – which has tripled its global revenue in the last 10 years and employs more than 30 people – now also manufactures complete filling/bottling systems enabling small canisters or bottles to be filled from 200-litre drums and cubic IBC containers. “These systems attracted a lot of interest at this year’s FachPack in Nuremberg,” says the delighted entrepreneur. “And this segment will also be a focus area for us at BrauBeviale.” Jessberger offers products for a wide range of industries.

Especially in those difficult early years, start-ups shouldn’t do without trade fair appearances, he advises: “To successfully market your product, it’s best to have a healthy mix of website and SEO, trade fairs – also with the help of funded programmes – and collaborations with trade journals.”

This was an approach that worked for him. Nevertheless, or just because of that, the fully-trained lawyer, whose company produces its pumps exclusively in Bavaria, is always adding new goals: “Currently more than half of our sales come from outside Germany, and we deliver to over 80 countries worldwide,” he says proudly. “At some point, we want to establish a sales network with a representative office in almost every country in the world. You should never be dependent on any one client, supplier or sector.”

For Jessberger, who likes to spend what little free time he has in the great outdoors or watching football, Nuremberg as an exhibition venue has a very special appeal: “It lies almost at the heart of Europe and has already brought us inquiries from the most far-flung islands in the Pacific Ocean – New Caledonia, for example, which subsequently led to orders in various other business segments.”

As well as stress-free travel to and from the venue, he also appreciates “the very personal support from the exhibition centre staff, and the fact that in terms of visitor traffic you barely notice any difference between days one and three or between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.” That’s why he’s already looking forward to the four trade fairs in Nuremberg where the company will be exhibiting in 2019.
Hermetia illucens, the black soldier fly, is the most important ingredient in a pet food that a young Berlin start-up launched on the market this year. Since March, it’s been finding its way through various sales channels into more and more households with dogs in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. “It contains more protein, iron and calcium than meat, and equally as much vitamin B12 and minerals,” Véronique Glorieux explains. “Insect protein is one of the most sustainable animal proteins in existence today – and it tastes good as well.”

Eat Small: insect protein as a sustainable dog food alternative
Véronique Glorieux and Gema Aparicio are the founders of the start-up Eat Small. The Canadian vet and Spanish graphic designer met at a Kung Fu school in the Schöneberg district of Berlin. What they have in common is their love of animals and a desire to reduce their ecological footprint. The idea for the product came to them after reading an article in a Canadian newspaper about edible insects that are highly nutritious and environmentally sustainable. That was at the beginning of 2017. From then on, it all happened very quickly: negotiations with a premium Hermetia illucens breeder, discussions with manufacturers of ingredients, professional development and commercial training in the spring, company founding in July, development of recipes, corporate identity and website in autumn, purchase of the first ton of Hermetia illucens – and first production in December.

And in the midst of all that activity, they managed to land themselves an award in the “sustainability” category at a start-up competition in Berlin/Brandenburg. Following test phases with 50 dogs of all sizes and breeds, Eat Small was ready for the market early in 2018 with four product lines and three different training snacks. “Interzoo 2018 in Nuremberg was the ideal place to introduce the product,” says Véronique Glorieux. At the world’s largest trade fair for the pet supplies industry, the company was one of 21 start-ups at the Pavilion for Young Companies subsidised by the BMWi, Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. “Even before the trade fair started, we were well coached and had everything we needed at the stand over the four days – including coffee and biscuits.”

The response to the trade fair appearance was huge, says a jubilant Glorieux: “We had such great feedback; many visitors just couldn’t believe that we had only recently started up.” Eat Small ultimately forged a large number of contacts with wholesalers and retailers, packaging manufacturers and suppliers of secondary ingredients. “By talking to other recent start-ups, we also got valuable tips for dealing with distributors.”

Winter 2018: success is within reach. There are already a few signed contracts with wholesalers in the safe, and there’s a finished draft of a new product line on the table: this time it’s cats that will have something new to look forward to.

IT-Seal: humans, the weakest link, can become a company’s strength
David Kelm wants to do good for people, or to be more precise, for company employees. David is the founder of IT-Seal. In 2015 he won the “Best Student Award” from the German Federal Office for Information Security for his bachelor’s thesis. Together with two fellow students from Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences (TU Darmstadt), he jumped in at the deep end. “At the beginning we were
lucky enough to have funding through the EXIST start-up grant,” Kelm recalls. “This allowed us to take our first steps without a lot of worry and risk.” Co-founder Alex Wyllie provides his organisational skills, and the third member of the team, Yannic Ambach, is responsible for technical development. Kelm, who came up with the idea, knows the secret to success: “Starting a business demands a lot of dedication and enthusiasm, otherwise you might as well just forget about it. There’s no ‘overnight success’: you have to learn to find the right balance between working flat-out and finding time for yourself and your loved ones.”

The start-up, which has already won several awards, steps in where company firewalls fail: with the weakest link, the human being. Whether it’s a well-camouflaged advertising email or a perfectly faked email from the boss, 19 percent of digital attacks in Germany over the last two years fell under the category “social engineering”, the targeted manipulation of employees. “We’re giving them a tool they can use to prevent that,” explains Kelm, “and in the long term honing their ability to sniff out phishing emails.” IT-Seal does this through security analyses like

**Eat Small**

**Idea** Pet food made from innovative insect proteins – with the same nutritional value as meat but much more sustainable for animals and the natural environment

**Founder team** Véronique Glorieux (Canadian vet) and Gema Aparicio (Spanish graphic designer) founded the start-up Eat Small – Insect Power for Pets in Berlin in summer 2017

**Founder tips**
- Keep going! Projects don’t have to be perfect right away.
- Never give up! Problems can make you even stronger and more creative.
- Get used to the idea that for a long time you’ll be devoting a major part of your life to your start-up.
- Establish networks! Participate in competitions and workshops, and take advantage of regional, state and EU subsidies.

**Trade fair** Interzoo 2018 in Nuremberg: premiere at the subsidised pavilion for young companies
**IT-Seal**

**Idea** Improve IT security behaviour of employees through Security Awareness Assessment, Phishing Academy, Security Culture Audit

**Founder team** David Kelm, Alex Wyllie and Yannic Ambach founded their start-up IT-Seal in 2015. First place in Start-up Weekend in Darmstadt, EXIST start-up grant

**Founder tips**
- Begin contacting customers and signing your first contracts at an early stage.
- Make sure that there’s good morale within your team and that you’re working well together.
- Take time regularly to provide feedback and discuss problems, even if there’s always far too much to do.
- Learn to say “No”: there needs to be more than 24 hours in the day for all the interesting meetings, events and product ideas on offer.

**Trade fair** it-sa in Nuremberg, official market launch 2016, winner of the newly-introduced UP18@it-sa Award in 2018

the “Phishing Academy”, a “Security Awareness Stock-Take” or “Security Culture Audit”. It’s been a resounding success for the start-up: winner of the Europe-wide “Social Engineering Award”, a top 10 place among the Cyber Security Start-ups Europe 2016 and second place in the “Awareness Security Initiative of the Year” at the Information Security Days event in Luxembourg. In addition, this year the company applied for a patent for its “Employee Security Index”, which summarises the results of the phishing simulation as a meaningful figure.

The official market launch took place at it-sa 2016 in Nuremberg. Kelm says: “This trade fair in particular offers the best potential for talking to IT security managers from all over the world.” The event is a recurring fixture in IT-Seal’s calendar, as the contacts the young company made here resulted in a large number of orders. And the founders garnered yet another accolade at this year’s trade fair: the UP18@it-sa Award at its premiere.

**Emils Bio-Manufaktur: 100% additive-free**

Emils has established itself as Germany’s first “zero-additive brand” in the organic segment. The Freiburg-based start-up, named after the son of one of its founders, actually has a lot to do with mothers. Jens Wages can’t help grinning when he tells the story that resulted in becoming business founders with Michael Wiese: “At a barbecue
party, we found out that the tasty salad dressing served by the mother of a fellow student’s girlfriend was actually his recipe that she’d passed on to other housewives in her local area. We realised that if mums were copying your recipe, it must be good.” For Wages, it was clear-cut: “Without our knowledge, our product had passed a market test that we’d never even commissioned.”

The advertising specialist and management consultant left their jobs in 2009, although their idea of “purist convenience” – absolutely no additives – was condemned to failure from the very outset. A leading professor for food hygiene told them that it definitely couldn’t work. “I think that’s the only reason Michael and I took the chance,” Wages recalls, “almost as an act of defiance.”

The fact that in the beginning they even encountered resistance from the organic sector turned out to be an incentive for the two young entrepreneurs to pursue their business idea. The initial spark for Emils was Nürnberg-Messe’s BIOFACH, the world’s leading fair for organic food. “We were only able to exhibit there thanks to the pavilion subsidised by the German Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control,” says Wages. At their first appearance there in 2011, their stand with their two products was overrun by prospective customers, and in 2012 Emils won the Best New Product Award, which is decided by the trade fair audience. “Long before the current discussions about additives and sugar content, BIOFACH and its visitors had a good nose for groundbreaking products,” Wages concludes. “Without this experience at this particular trade fair, we might never have persevered in developing our company into what it is today without altering the basic concept.”

**Emils Bio-Manufaktur**

**Idea** Emils “purity law” for creating salad dressings, vegan mayonnaise and ketchup with no additives: no thickeners, citric acid or yeast extract

**Founder team** With no previous knowledge, Michael Wiese (management consultant) and Jens Wages (advertising specialist) founded the start-up Emils in 2009

**Founder tips**
- Be persistent and never make any compromises whatsoever in terms of quality.
- The desire to make it has to be greater than any worries you have and stronger than the voices of those who don’t believe in you.

**Trade fair** BIOFACH 2011 in Nuremberg: first appearance and at the same time the start of the success story “no additives whatsoever”
Where start-up founders grow

From “Parking Pilot” to “smart grocery shopping”, Nuremberg Tech Incubator Zollhof lends a helping hand to digital start-ups in particular.

It’s a fairy-tale success story. The three founders of Flixbus have turned their innovative business model into an international platform for intercity bus travel. They came up with the idea when the German interurban bus market was deregulated in 2012. The former start-up, which has its roots in Nuremberg, is today the European market leader in long-distance bus trips and is currently trying to gain a successful foothold in the USA.

In the early phase of the start-up, Flixbus – which initially went by the name GoBus – entered the North Bavarian Business Plan Competition and won an award for its concept. In this phase, the trio was coached and put in contact with potential investors. This also resulted in contact with Nuremberg “Business Angel” and new economy founder of Hotel.de, Heinz Raufer. He was so convinced of the concept that he provided the capital for the first round of financing.

Raufer himself began his own success story with Hotel.de during the new economy transition at the end of the 1990s at the Centre for Innovation and New Companies (IGZ). It was created as a unique collaboration between the cities of Nuremberg, Fürth and Erlangen to systematically support technology-based start-ups and spin-offs coming out of universities.

Targeted networking in Nuremberg’s start-up support

Also part of the Nuremberg start-up support landscape is the Energy Technology Centre (etz 2.0), which offers great assistance to companies in the energy sector through targeted networking. In Nuremberg’s Klee-Centre, aspiring service providers, tradespeople and low-tech firms can grow their business for a maximum period of five years. The attic of the building houses Startup.Digital.Nürnberg, a support network for new IT start-ups. Even the European Space Agency (ESA) operates a branch of its ESA Business Incubation Centre (BIC) Bavaria in Nuremberg’s Nordost business park.

The latest component of the support network is Zollhoff, a tech incubator for digital start-ups that was opened last year. Zollhof CEO Benjamin Bauer wants to give digital start-ups a special helping hand. “We’re all about fast and investor-driven growth.”

At the latest count, 30 tech start-ups are receiving support from the 21-strong Zollhof team that includes developers, IT specialists, designers and marketing...
and finance specialists who provide their services to the start-ups. In addition, the participating fledgling companies and six cooperation partners – including NürnbergMesse – ensure that there’s a close match between the business ideas and the needs of established companies. Bauer thinks that there’s “still a huge amount of potential” for a fast technology transfer. Although according to the survey “Mittelstand meets Start-ups 2018” conducted by the RKW SME Support and Development Organisation, 70 percent of typical German SMEs can imagine working with a start-up in future, in reality only just over one-third of all SMEs have experience collaborating with them.

Bauer aims to provide support for knowledge transfers through tight networking. For example, the new start-up Smart City System was linked up with an appropriate mid-sized company. The five-strong team of new entrepreneurs has developed a solution, the “Parking Pilot”, for the digitalisation of parking space, explains co-founder Stefan Eckart. A sensor on a parking spot can detect whether the space is free or occupied and how long a car has already been parked there. It’s worth recalling that about 30 percent of all inner-city traffic is caused by people looking for a parking space.

Find a free parking spot with magnetic field sensors
Smart City System developed and tested these magnetic field sensors with the help of the company it was matched with. Supermarkets and discount stores are currently inquiring about the solution in order to better manage their limited parking space. And energy utilities are also interested in the product for monitoring the use of their EV charging stations. Eckart also envisions future use of the system in Cloud solutions: for example, to enable free parking spots to be displayed on navigation systems and city apps. Municipal services could use the data from the Parking Pilot in winter to find out the near-ground temperature to support a more efficient deployment of snow ploughs, for example. Unlike solutions that are embedded in the asphalt, these sensors are simply stuck to the ground and require no maintenance for years. Smart City System is also partnering with NürnbergMesse. As part of a project with the Fraunhofer IIS Institute for Integrated Circuits, initial ideas are being developed for networked logistics solutions.

Another interesting Zollhof start-up is onsuma. Its founder, Dr Angelo Canzaniello, wants to be a strong contender in the rapidly-expanding market for online food purchases. From his newly-launched platform, customers can choose from more than 30,000 products to fill their baskets. After the delivery address has been entered, the system then looks for the most suitable delivery service to save the customer time and money. The “smart grocery shopping” concept seems to be very promising. Start-up onsuma is also located at Starbuzz in Mülheim an der Ruhr. This digital commerce accelerator is receiving support from leading commercial enterprises and logistics companies as its investors and mentors.

As a supply chain expert, Canzaniello not only brings an exciting idea, he also has the necessary attitude. Even in his school days, he wanted to “build something up himself,” and he appreciates the freedom that having your own company offers. “If it’s a flop, it’s a flop – but you have to try” is his realistic take on his idea. However, it doesn’t look like his start-up is going to fail. On the contrary, he’s about to finalise a round of financing.

Dr Angelo Canzaniello (left) is the founder of onsuma.

At Tech Incubator Zollhof (far left), business founders get a helping hand.

Benjamin Bauer (right) manages digital start-ups at Tech Incubator Zollhof.
A wheelchair that improves patient mobility, a “careturner” that helps nursing staff and caregivers turn patients in bed, and a “fall app” that links up elderly people, their relatives, caregivers and doctors and calculates individualised measures to prevent falls depending on the environment: these were all winners of the last Start-up Challenge at the ALTENPFLEGE, the leading exhibition for the caregiving sector. Next year, new entrepreneurs and their start-up concepts will once again be in demand at the event in Nuremberg from 2 to 4 April.

This challenge was conceived to build bridges between industry and the start-up scene through a sustainable design strategy. This was demonstrated in exemplary fashion by start-up Desino, whose developer team combines design with a focus on product design, sports science and medical technology. The result: wheelchairs with dynamic seating as a therapeutic added value. Wheelchair users can now stay seated in their chairs for their therapy, instead of having to be transferred to therapy equipment to allow mobility.

Increasingly, design is what tips the scale on a company’s economic success. Formative design is already involved at an early stage of product development to ensure that the benefits and unique features of the product are implemented consistently. This allows “spaces, products and services to be developed that offer added value to customers,” says Dr Silke Claus, Managing Director of Nuremberg-based bayern design GmbH.

**Start-up platform for companies and designers**

This context, design expertise and creativity techniques are major drivers of innovation that give new business ideas meaning, form and function. bayern design has even initiated its own start-up platform for companies and designers. Sometimes an interdisciplinary development approach – as was the case for the Desino wheelchair – is the route to success. And sometimes it’s the materials and technologies used that primarily determine how the product will be produced. This means that as early as the beginning stages, the company’s material or ecological footprint can be influenced in a sustainable way, and purchasing, special storage or even costly disposal afterwards can be avoided.

This has also been the experience of Hamm, a manufacturer of road rollers and compactors based in Tirschenreuth in the Upper Palatinate region of Bavaria. For more than 25 years, the global market leader has been systematically using design to impress its customers with ergonomically-optimised construction machinery. Initially there was resistance, because, after all, a road roller doesn’t need to play a role.

However, it’s become very clear that “design does make another difference,” Hamm Marketing Manager Gottfried Beer concludes. It’s not about design as an end in itself, but rather about visibility from the machine, its ergonomic features, the driver’s cab and even the look of the machine. “With good design, you’re signalling to your customers that they’re getting a mature finished product.”

Design is also appreciated by corporate customers. Hamm has determined that well-designed machines also have a subjective impact on the purchase. “In a price-sensitive market...”
and developers. They may consist of sound-absorbing materials for interior design made of waste plastic, or algae as a production material for shoes and products for the medical sector. Other developers are working on composite materials like self-illuminating aluminium and fibre-optic light-transmitting concrete.

“Premium packaging” at FachPack in Nuremberg

In association with bayern design, NürnbergMesse recently showcased a selection of the many possibilities available at the special “Premium packaging” show at the FachPack 2018 exhibition. Some 40 products were displayed in the three categories Empower, Sustain and Connect. They included, for example, the innovative food packaging “Tast(e) Food” by designer Anne Bansen. A special sealing foil shows customers when the product has expired, because it changes its structure when biochemical changes occur in the protected environment of the packed food.

Nirlat has developed the „iPaint“ design solution to revolutionise the work of painters and decorators. A bag with wall paint is inserted into a backpack and the paint is pumped from the bag into a hose directly connected to a roller. Other exhibits included reusable transport boxes made from truck tarps, a wooden bike whose packaging also serves as a play garage and kids’ workshop, and cushion packaging made of straw instead of polystyrene.

With this background, the pencil manufacturer took a simple writing implement and developed it into various upmarket products and a premium range. For example, the company’s “Pen of the Year” goes under the name Imperium Romanum. What might seem anachronism in this digital age is actually a successful plea for design-conscious handwriting.

CEO Klaus of bayern design has also noticed that new materials are a major driving force for designers in particular, design plays an even greater role.” Faber-Castell – one of the longest-established manufacturers of pens and pencils based in Stein near Nuremberg – has had a similar experience. Brand pioneer Anton Wolfgang Graf von Faber-Castell was largely responsible for establishing the former design association Verein Designforum Nürnberg. He was absolutely convinced that a consistent design strategy is a major factor in a company’s long-term market success.
BUSINESS GROWS WHEN THE WORLD COMES TOGETHER

International exhibition year 2019

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Extract from the programme of events (subject to change)
° For trade buyers with legitimation only ° by external organizer

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