

CORSO®

THE MAGAZINE FOR ROLLER COVERINGS



MID-SIZE 4.0

**DIGITAL BREAKTHROUGH
OR UPHEAVAL**

ITMA 2019

**BARCELONA
INVITES YOU**

DEAR READERS,

BOBOTEX® is celebrating its 40th birthday since the company founded; we are especially proud of the extensive feedback on our magazine, CORSO®. We will strive to keep you continuously informed about exciting topics. In the third issue, we have purposely focused on medium-sized businesses, which collectively stabilise the German economy. We have always sought expert opinions in this respect. When it comes to medium-sized businesses, it was obvious to enquire with the BVMW, the German federal association for small and medium-sized businesses, with President Mario Ohoven. Mid-size 4.0 was quickly adopted as the cover story in our editorial meeting. It is, after all, the heart of the German economy in the digital world of tomorrow. The pulse of such an important impetus reveals many topics and aspects that can provide new inspiration and open up new horizons.

The selected current facts, figures and background research for the topic of medium-sized business have proven to be evergreen. They are the result of new visions of the future and perspectives, when we are willing to look beyond the horizon.

Nevertheless, self-reflection remains a matter that is close to our hearts. Therefore, we would also like to present the people behind BOBOTEX® who give our company a face. Top quality and success are only possible with teamwork, dedication and an international approach.

We hope you enjoy reading the new edition of CORSO®. Again we would like to encourage you to support us with your criticism and suggestions, but also with your own suggestions for topics or creative contributions. It remains our goal to produce more than just a good company magazine. We want to be a medium for the entire industry. We can do it together.

All the best,



OLIVER JUNG
MANAGING PARTNER



MICHAEL ECH
MANAGING PARTNER



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ECONOMIC CLIMATE REMAINS POSITIVE

THE REFORM AGENDA REMAINS FULL

According to ifo, the institute for economic research, the economic climate in Germany in February and March 2018 has weakened slightly, but basically remains very positive. The slight setback is the result of several factors. This included a long down period after the parliamentary election in September 2017 until the Grand Coalition's agreement. It was also due, in part, to the effects of the isolationist policies of Donald Trump. Not lastly, the outcome of the election in Italy, which took months, resulted in a new government.

Economic development also depends heavily on how the Franco-German axis functions. President Macron has already submitted the first ambitious reform plans for the EURO zone and thus placed collective EU economic and fiscal policy and security policy topics on the EU agenda. The Chancellor also contributed with a six-month delay and must work to ensure that the "German economic engine" continues to set the pace in the Euro zone.



VALUE CREATION GROWTH

DIGITALISATION BRINGS IN BILLIONS

A report of the German Federal Ministry of Economics summarises the diverse possibilities of digitalisation, including those for medium-sized businesses: New products can be produced more quickly, customer requests can be better addressed and new business fields and services can be offered. Entirely new possibilities open up for smaller companies, in particular. The relationships with employees, customers and suppliers will change fundamentally. In order to summarise the opportunity in figures: According to a study by McKinsey, Euro

126

Billion will also be earned in medium-sized businesses by 2025, for example, through digitalisation.

In a comparison of industries, the greatest potential is in information and communications technology (Euro 17.2 billion), in the metal and electrical/electronics industry (Euro 15.1 billion) and in wholesale and export trade (Euro 14.4 billion).

TURBO FOR JOBS

MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESS NEARLY CRACK THE TRILLION EURO THRESHOLD

The results give exciting insight into the structure, distribution and importance of the key medium-sized businesses. The turnover of the top 10,000 of around 10 million reached the threshold of Euro 1 trillion. The average turnover was Euro 96 million. In total, the top 10,000 represented around Euro 960 billion in turnover and created 5.2 million jobs.



DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

500,000 TO 600,000 SUCCESSORS SOUGHT

The general demographic development is taking place rapidly in medium-sized businesses: In 2016, 39% of all company owners and self-employed persons were already 55 years or older. At the same time, increasing numbers of young owners are taking over medium-sized businesses. The average age of a company owner in a medium-sized business is currently 51 years (2002: 45 years).

Increasingly fewer young entrepreneurs are stepping in. The total number of founders since the turn of the millennium has decreased significantly from more than 1.5 million in 2001 to only 672,000. By contrast, there are 500,000 to 600,000 medium-sized businesses planning a transfer of ownership or sale of the business to a successor in the coming years. Source: KfW Bank

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT

EUROPE SETS THE TONE

Enterprises heavily focussed on research and development have the greatest degree of internationalization (65%). Internationally operative companies achieve 27% of the total turnover abroad. In the process, European markets are more important for most small and medium-sized businesses than outside of Europe.

„GOOD THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES!“

ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE

Less than 0.3% of medium-sized businesses have an annual turnover greater than Euro 50 million and 81% of small and medium-sized businesses have less than five employees. The majority of small and medium-sized businesses, therefore, is predominantly small. Three-fourths of businesses are part of the service industries. The greatest share, with nearly 32% offer business services. Only around 7% of small and medium-sized businesses are in the processing business.

FIGURES / DATA / FACTS

MILLIONS, BILLIONS AND FORECASTS

99%

of all companies are included in "German small and medium-sized businesses". They provide around 60% of all jobs in Germany.

39

per cent of taxable turnover is realized in small and medium-sized businesses.

83.2

per cent of all trainees are trained in small and medium-sized businesses.

82

per cent of smaller and mid-sized enterprises of small and medium-sized businesses are located in western Germany.

3.7

million small and medium-sized businesses and more than four million self-employee persons in professional trades, industrial enterprises, retail, tourism, services and freelancers characterise the diversity and success of German small and medium-sized businesses.

700

internationally operative businesses realise a total of Euro 547 billion in international markets. This corresponds to around 45% of all German exports.

GERMAN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESS ARE FACING A MASSIVE DIGITAL BREAKTHROUGH. MANY COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY INITIATED THE ENTRY INTO THE DIGITAL AGE. SOME ARE STILL SEEKING THE CORRECT FORMULAT FOR DATA-DRIVEN BUSINESS OF THE FUTURE. WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE WORLD OF TOMORROW AND CRUCIAL FACTORS LEADING THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE.

MID-SIZE 4.0

Data is the gold of the new century. Digitalisation is a turning point in the history of human economics. "In 2020 there should already be around 50 billion items and products in the world which can interact with each other digitally and a rapidly proliferating Internet of Things," explained a report of HypoVereinsbank. There is enormous commercial potential.

For small and medium-sized business, everything will revolve around the efficient use of the most valuable raw material of the 21st century: digital data. Like large companies, smaller companies will also network with their customers through their products. There are a host of reasons for this. On the one hand, in order to learn their usage patterns and in order to be able to provided anticipatory maintenance of machines and offer their purchasers intelligent digital services. On the other hand, in order to integrate development and production partners and establish collaborations with digital start-ups for maximum innovative capability.

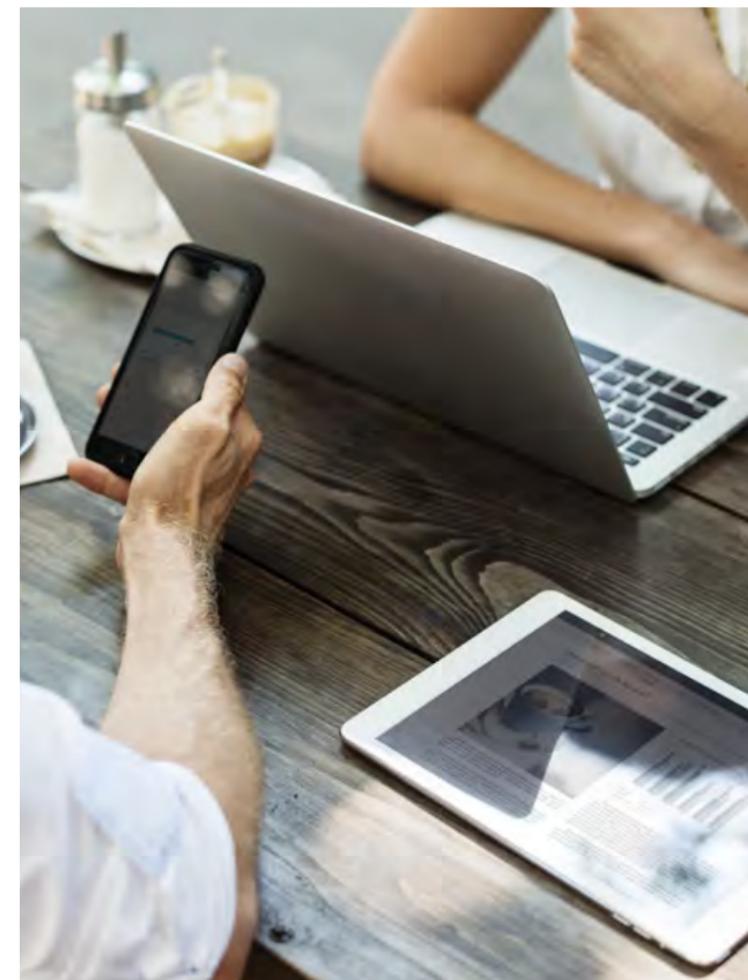
IS THERE A GOLDEN FORMULA FOR THE DIGITAL SUCCESS OF THE FUTURE?

There is no golden formula for success in the future. Manoeuvrability in entrepreneurial thinking and action is essential for maintaining a clear view for new innovations and investments. There is a new term floating around in this connection: disruptive innovation, which means being open to something entirely new that no one has previously considered. Anyone looking to survive the disruptive renewal of this age must do more than simply maintain their customer base. It is essential to find new buyers for new digital products and services. Another thing is also clear: Competition will increase dramatically in the digital age.

This means that traditional small and medium-sized business, in particular, have some work to do. In order to become creative and nimble in thinking, action and development, old ways of thinking and established must be flattened. A large measure of courage and a vision of the future are also necessary. The staff is also an important element. They must be included without exception. Advanced digital training and design thinking workshops, therefore, indispensable instruments for keeping in step with the digitalisation and utilising its potential.

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES AS A PERMANENT COMPONENT

There are often economically risky steps that small and medium-sized enterprisers must take in the digitalisation process. This is because rapid technological advancements in the "second machine age" often necessitate trial and error. Therefore, "Fail forward", meaning learning from mistakes, must be a permanent component of



To our experts, it is undisputed that the IoT will revolutionise our type of economic activity, as well as our day-to-day lives.

the digital strategy of small and medium-sized businesses. It is all the better to invest in the fourth industrial revolution than to be dependent on its breakneck pace. However, there are already tendencies that encourage us: digital technologies will quickly become financially affordable for a large group of companies. We are experiencing quantum leaps in robotics, data analysis, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, materials and new production methods, such as 3D printing, on an almost daily basis. The speed is breathtaking and the tendency is on the rise.

As you can see, the future is already here and small and medium-sized businesses will also successfully master it with vision and a readiness for risk. Nothing will change quickly at the core of the German prosperity: small and medium-sized business remain the heart and impetus of the German economy.

MARIO OHOVEN, PRESIDENT OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL ASSOCIATION FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES (BVMW)

Photo: bmvw.de



QUESTIONS

THE BVMW IS THE VOICE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES. IT REPRESENTS THE INTERESTS OF 600,000 MEMBERS IN THE SCOPE OF THE MID-TIER ALLIANCE. 99% OF ALL COMPANIES IN GERMANY BELONG TO THIS GROUP, WHICH IS A GUARANTEE OF OUR PROSPERITY. IT IS THE SPIRIT OF THE TIME, PROVIDES JOBS AND IS AN ENGINE FOR THE ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT. WE INTERVIEWED MARIO OHOVEN, PRESIDENT OF THE BVMW, WITH 15 QUESTIONS ABOUT MEMBERS, EVENTS OF THE DAY AND THE ORGANISATION.

Mr Ohoven, with over 600,000 members, your organisation is the voice of small and medium-sized businesses. You must be proud of this figure, right?

Of course, we are proud, but it is also important, because we also have an entirely different political presence. Moreover, the figure 600,000 is no longer valid. In the meantime, we have welcomed additional, strong partners into the fold, such as the Eigenheimerverband (home-owners' association) of the mid-tier alliance. This puts us over the 700,000 mark. And I am certain that the BVMW will continue to grow in the future, unlike the general trend of associations.

Can the number of members be expanded even further and why join the BVMW? Membership with us is voluntary, which means we must perform to succeed. The members value the networking and local personal

assistance from our over 300 representatives. This includes successful political lobbying, with representation of interests and agenda setting. When Brigitte Zypries, the former Federal Minister of Economics, praises us, saying "Your association does excellent work for German small and medium-sized businesses!", it speaks for itself. I'll give you an example: Doubling of the threshold value for write-offs of low-value assets would not have taken place without us. So, we also strengthen the social market economy, which is our guiding principle.

What benefits do members enjoy and what are the strengths of your association? The BVMW incorporates enterprisers in a large network – regionally, nationally and internationally. Each member has a contact person in their region. This closeness between the association and the enterprisers is unique among

German associations. We also offer a large portfolio of services for economic success. This begins with technical consulting for concrete business problems, such as modern marketing or innovative sales strategies and extends all the way to assistance in worldwide growth markets with our own international offices. We make our members fit for digitalisation when it comes to IT security, the General Data Protection Regulation or Industry 4.0. Members also enjoy exclusive access to our specialist commissions for these topics, where enterprisers can offer their expertise. We also have a large network in politics, finance, research, culture and media. Not lastly, there is a wide variety of non-cash benefits, such as major discounts when purchasing company cars. I can only encourage all small and medium-sized business: get in touch with us. We will help you secure your business future.



The mood was cordial when Mario Ohoven met with Member of Parliament Gregor Gysi and Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.
Photo: bvmw.de

You discuss topics on your website. Which of these topics are especially important to you right now?

Future topics, about which I unfortunately find little information in the coalition agreement. For example, questions like these: How can Germany, as a production location, continue to exist and thrive in international competition? Where must we invest in order to secure the innovation potential of our businesses? What is the current status of digitalisation in small and medium-sized businesses? Why does Germany have a Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, but not a Digital Ministry? Not to mention the fact that countries like the USA and South Korea have ministries dedicated to small and medium-sized businesses.

What are your main tasks as President of the BVMW?

Our collective goal must be to strengthen the competitiveness of business and to ensure the sustainability of German small and medium-sized businesses. I consider my most important task to strengthen the platform of small and medium-sized businesses. The 3.7 million small and medium-sized businesses in our country must

ultimately receive better economic policy conditions, particularly in terms of the esteem that they deserve in politics and society. Ultimately, small and medium-sized businesses provide more than 60 per cent of jobs, train and educate 80 per cent of trainees and are responsible for 70 per cent of patents. After all, half of the world's 2700 hidden champions come from German small and medium-sized businesses. It is crucial that the enterprisers themselves become much more political. If small and medium-sized businesses do not defend themselves, they will disappear.

Mr Ohoven, let's discuss the shortage of skilled labour in small and medium-sized businesses. What can you do to help reduce this deficit and where do you see the greatest problems?

The shortage of skilled labour is the Achilles heel of small and medium-sized businesses. Nearly 90 per cent of these companies have problems filling job openings. As I indicated earlier, small and medium-sized businesses are the biggest educator. We support our members actively in the search for skilled labour and network job-seekers and employ-

ers within our regional structures, among other places. However, significantly greater investments must be made, for example, in vocational skills and qualification of refugees for the job market, particularly by the state. Ideally, this will be the skilled labour of tomorrow – after all, we must do something to remedy the situation.

Everyone is talking about digitalisation and the election in Germany. Do you think that German small and medium-sized businesses are well-situated in this respect in order to overcome the challenges we will face in the coming years?

Small and medium-sized businesses are further along than politics in terms of digitalisation. Four out of every five small and medium-sized businesses have already successfully implemented digitalisation projects. Of course, there is also room to grow, particularly in comparison with large corporations. We provide help here with road shows, particularly with the Mid-Size 4.0 Centre of Competence, which the BVMW runs on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economics. We show enterprisers how they can generate more turnover through digitalisation. Now, we have reached more than 25,000 businesses directly through events, which I think is an impressive number.

Are there concrete strategies for this purpose, or, to put it differently, can member companies also turn to your association in matters relating to the topic of digitalisation?

Absolutely! In the Mid-Size 4.0 Centre of Competence, for example, small and medium-sized business from throughout Germany receive answers to their questions about digitalisation in a practical and user-oriented approach. Our association also remains at their side in matters of laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation, which entails the threat of very high penalties of up to Euro 20 million or four per cent of annual turnover. Together with member companies, we have created an online checklist. Therefore, any enterpriser can check with us quickly and without complication to determine whether they are well-prepared.

Which measures do you hope that the federal government, particularly the minister for digitalisation, Ms Bär, will take to support German small and medium-sized companies, in particular, in an international comparison?

The federal government has wasted a great opportunity. As much as we value Dorothee Bär as a profiled politician, her leeway is limited. The head of the chancellery has made it clear that he will be the country's digital decision-maker. The ministers of the individual departments each appoint their own state secretaries and department managers for digitalisation and, "Digital Agenda", the responsible parliamentary committee, retains only an advisory role. Future politics look different for me.

Another problem that is often mentioned is patent protection. What recommendations do you have for your members to effectively counteract theft of ideas?

I recommend a precautionary defence strategy. A cornerstone is cooperation with self-help organisations of small and medium-sized businesses, such as Patentverein, which is also a member of our mid-tier alliance. If necessary, this also includes nullity suits with patent courts when large corporations suddenly make patent applications in large quantities. For businesses with international partners – specifically from countries which do not necessarily respect the protection of intellectual property – the old rule applies: take care in whom you trust.

There is no avoiding the topic of Donald Trump. How great will the damage be for Germany as a world-leading exporter if the planned tariff policy of the American president is implemented?

President Trump has requested import tariffs of 25 and 10 per cent on steel and aluminium products. German only exports five per cent of its steel products to the USA and,

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President Mario Ohoven at a meeting of the BVMW.
Photo: bvmw.de

therefore, is not affected as much as other countries. The consequences of harsh reactions by China, Japan and the EU could be far more serious and ultimately result in a worldwide trade war. It reminds me of the 1980s. At the time, Ronald Reagan imposed import limitations on Japan. Ultimately, the USA had to overhaul the measures.

Germany is in an outstanding position among the world's export countries. What can "German small and medium-sized businesses" do to expand this position further? Policy is required here first and foremost. Half of the world's 2700 hidden champions, i.e. secret world market leaders, comes from German small and medium-sized businesses, which also account for one-sixth of our export turnover and 70 per cent of patents. However, success is not automatic. Germany must not draw the shortest straw in the international tax competition. There should be a soft Brexit and the German Federal Government must protect free trade from growing protectionism, just to name a few current tasks.

The demographic shift is also leaving its mark. How do you support your members in company succession? Company succession is one of the greatest challenges. We know that one million small and medium-sized businesses have to find a successor in the next ten years. As a side note, two million jobs and nearly 90,000 internships are dependent on this. The BVMW supports its members with an expert group called Succession, offering the possibility of establishing an initial contact or even accompanying the entire succession process. We also organise various regional events related to this topic.

If I decided to establish a start-up company, could I count on the support of your association, or would I be too "small" for you? No. Most of the 3.7 million businesses in our country have well below 20 employees. For this reason, there can be no "too small" for us. On the contrary, start-ups are in just the right place with BVMW. We also have a dedicated expert group and we are oriented towards the needs of this business segment with respect to the political requirements, such as with

the introduction of fiscal research funding or elimination of bureaucratic obligations in the initial years after a company is established in order to facilitate our members. In other words, if you want to establish a company, you will be welcomed cordially.

Mr Ohoven, let's say that you are not the president of the BVMW, rather the president of the German Football Association. Who is your pick for the World Cup champion this summer in Russia? I'm no clairvoyant, but I have a prediction: Germany defends its title. With Sweden, Mexico and South Korea, our team is in a group that must not be underestimated, but it should be manageable.



BVMW

THE GERMAN FEDERAL ASSOCIATION FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES BY THE NUMBERS

FOUNDED	1975 in Bonn
MEMBERS	700.000
PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY MEMBERS	12 million
EMPLOYER AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	32
LOCAL CHAPTERS	300
EXPANSION OF REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ABROAD	since 2004
EVENTS	more than 2000/year, including road shows, workshops and seminars

BVMW.DE

BARCELONA

THE COSMOPOLITAN CATALAN CAPITAL INVITES YOU



THE ITMA, THE INTERNATIONAL TEXTILE & GARMENT TECHNOLOGY EXHIBITION, LAST TOOK PLACE IN BARCELONA IN 2011 AND ATTRACTED MORE THAN 100,000 VISITORS FROM 138 COUNTRIES. MORE THAN 90 % OF ALL VISITORS ARRIVED FROM ABROAD. EVEN MORE VISITORS ARE EXPECTED FROM 20 – 26 JUNE 2019, WHEN ITMA 2019 RETURNS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST.

Back to Barcelona

Charles Beauduin, President of CEMATEX: "We look forward to returning to Barcelona with the ITMA. Our selection process took two years and our review of all nine potential locations and their services was very detailed. The 2011 fair in Barcelona was very successful. So we are looking forward to another great event in 2019." Since ITMA 2019 will take place during the high season for tourism in Barcelona, CEMATEX commissioned an agency to arrange for hotel accommodations at an early stage.

Experience from ITMS in Milan in 2015, with more than 1600 exhibitors from more than 40 countries were incorporated into the planning for Barcelona.



INNOVATIVE AND TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS FOR TEXTILE VALUE CREATION FOR AN EXCHANGE OF EXPERTISE

ITMA, the International Textile & Garment Technology Exhibition, has become an absolute leading trade fair over the years. Every four years, exhibitors present the latest trends and technologies from the industry. Decision-makers and companies in the textile-processing industry can learn exhaustively and comprehensively about these trends and technologies. Universities and other educational facilities offer training options and present the latest research findings and projects from the industry. According to the VDMA, more than 200 companies from Germany and Austria (out of a total of more than 1500) have applied for a permit for the lead-

ing trade fair. In the process, the German companies have increased their stand sizes by an average of more than ten per cent in comparison with ITMA 2015.

"The ITMS has become a big class reunion in which the entire textile industry participates as exhibitors or visitors and to where we always look forward to meeting old friends or establishing new contacts," said Michael Ech of BOBOTEX® and added, "We will participate again in 2019 with two stands and our entire product range, such as web beam strips and roller coverings in rubber, PVC and silicone."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT ITMA.COM

Sachsenröder



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Durch die außergewöhnlichen und sehr vielseitigen Produkteigenschaften werden die Werkstoffe bereits in zahlreichen Branchen eingesetzt. Aber viele weitere Einsatzmöglichkeiten sind denkbar.



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IMPORT EXPORT

TWO GIANT MARKETS FOR THE GERMAN ECONOMY ARE AT ODDS. HOW DO GERMANY AND EUROPE BEHAVE AS TRADE PARTNERS AND WHICH MARKET IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR US?

ON A COLLISION COURSE

TRUMP'S PROTECTIONIST POLICY

The world's two largest national economies, China and the USA, are on a collision course. Beijing has taken a two-tiered approach in reaction to the threats from the United States.

On the one hand, the communist leadership always underscores its willingness to negotiate and on the other hand, it threatens Washington with recompense. There is a danger that a chain reaction will be triggered, which will spread the virus of trade protectionism throughout the world. China is preparing tariffs valued as high as three trillion dollars on American imports. According to the state newspaper, "China Daily, additional steps could follow for agricultural products, aircraft, cars, semiconductors and even services from America.



POTENTIAL

CHINA AS THE MOST IMPORTANT TRADE PARTNER

Exports to the Middle Kingdom have increased rapidly and totalled Euro 86.2 billion in the past year. A calculation of combined imports and exports makes China Germany's most important trade partner. According to Ifo researcher Felbermayr, with a network of free trade agreements in east Asia, China is becoming increasingly important and relevant as a hub for German companies.



BETWEEN THE FRONTS

THE PREDICAMENT OF THE GERMAN ECONOMY

The dilemma for the German economy is that it does important business with both countries. In the complicated dispute between the two superpowers, the question becomes increasingly how Germany and Europe as a whole should behave. Germany and Europe are finding themselves in an increasingly uncomfortable situation of having to fight on one of the two sides in the trade conflict between China and the United States.



WHICH MARKET IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR GERMANY?

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS PLAY AN ENORMOUS ROLE FOR THE STRATEGY. THERE IS ALSO THE QUESTION OF WHICH OF THE TWO GIANT MARKETS IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE GERMAN NATIONAL ECONOMY. ACCORDING TO THE FIGURES, THE USA IS IN THE LEAD. IT WAS GERMANY'S MOST IMPORTANT EXPORT MARKET IN 2017 AND, ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTE FOR THE WORLD ECONOMY, PURCHASED MORE THAN EURO 111.5 BILLION.

Roughly ten per cent of German exports for the year go to the USA. Donald Trump has concluded correctly from the many fine German cars on the American roads that Americans love German products. Exports to the United States over the past decade have increased by more than 64%. Traditional German strengths are in demand: cars, chemicals, machinery – in other words, the sectors which have guaranteed work and prosperity for decades. The automotive sector alone provides two

million jobs and eight per cent of all German value creation. In no other country is the industry's dominance so pronounced. Three-fourths of production go to export, particularly to America. "The export of cars to America only accounts for 200,000 jobs," calculated the Institute for the World Economy in Kiel. If the export industry suffers, the employees will also suffer. If they earn less money, they spend less money, domestic demand decreases and the downward spiral continues.



THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY HAS RECEIVED AN INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC MID-SIZE 4.0 CENTRE OF COMPETENCE. THE MAIN IDEA IS TO PROMOTE THE DIGITAL EXPERTISE OF COMPANIES AND TO MAKE THEM COMPETITIVE FOR THE MARKET.

NEW CENTRES OF COMPETENCE FOR THE DIGITALISATION OF TOMORROW

Work began in the At the end of 2017 offices of the Confederation of the German Textile and Fashion Industry in Berlin. Questions related to digitalisation should be answered in a practice-oriented approach. The Textile Centre of Competence is operated by the Confederation of the German Textile and Fashion Industry.

“The goal of “Textile Centre of Competence Networked” is to inform and sensitise small and medium-sized businesses with respect to the opportunities of digitalisation and to offer tools for implementation,” explained Uwe Mazura, Managing Director of the Confederation. It is an excellent example that demonstrates how important the “digital fitness” of small and medium-sized companies is in consideration of the future demands of tomorrow. The centre of competence is assisted by the German Ministry of Economics and has a project term of three years.

EXPLOITING DIGITAL POTENTIAL

In addition to clarification of new technologies, “Small and Medium-Sized Companies 4.0 Centre of Competence”

works on the topical areas of technical textiles and textile materials. The high-quality raw materials can be found in the widest range of industrial sectors. With respect to the strong networking, textile is an illustrative example and explanation of the performance potential of digitalisation and networking across sectors.

There are four regional locations in addition to the offices in Berlin. The organisation and communication and press work are carried out in the capital city. With project partners RWTH in Aachen, the German Institute for Textile and Fibre Research in Denkendorf, the Saxon Textile Research Institute in Chemnitz, and Hahn Schickard Association for Applied Research, the various institutions serve as a looking glass and showcase within the organisation. Companies are supported here in purposeful implementation of practice-oriented solutions.

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Those looking to succeed in the future must plan for the long-term.

Those looking to succeed in the future have us.

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Fairy-tale or REALITY?



MAKING GOLD OUT OF WATER

RECOVERING VALUABLE RAW MATERIALS FROM INDUSTRIAL WASTE WATER

Many innovations and research efforts bear fruit in the form of revolutionary developments. An example is how you make gold out of water! At first, this sounds like a fairy-tale, but it is true. Some researchers have almost literally succeeded in making gold out of water. The 2014 Raw Material Efficiency Prize went to Krefeld and Duisburg, to the German Northwest Textile Research Centre and the Institute for Energy and Environmental

Technology. The researchers coated a textile with a certain amount of polyester so that valuable raw material can be recovered from industrial waste water. In the process, 20 grams of palladium per kilogram of textile could be recovered from waste water from the printed circuit board industry. Such techniques are especially valuable for industry as a whole in a country with few raw materials, like Germany.



THE SUCCESS OF GERMAN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES IS ALSO BASED ON NUMEROUS INVENTIONS. THE UNIQUE RESEARCH NETWORK IS LESS WELL-KNOWN: THE AIF, THE GERMAN FEDERATION OF INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS IS A FASINATING NETWORK THAT IS THE ENVY OF THE WORLD.

COMBINING FORCES

RESEARCH COMMUNITIES
INCREASE CLOUT

An almost mystic aura surrounds the small and medium-sized businesses in Germany. A contributing factor to the continuous flow of innovation is that nearly all industrial sectors in Germany have joined research communities. The goal: To collectively combine resources and knowledge to develop new products despite competition. Exactly 100 of these networks have joined to form a giant network, the AiF – the German Federation of Industrial Research Associations.

More than 50,000 companies participate via the respective industrial organisations and work together with hundreds of research centres. One can only guess at their potential clout.



REINVENTING THE WIND TURBINE

COULD PROVIDE THE BREAKTHROUGH



The approach to the construction of wind turbines could soon undergo a similar spectacular change. A composite material of glass or carbon, which is woven and then dipped in plastic is almost always used as a foundation for the rotor blades. Textile researchers of TU Dresden have developed sensory fibres which are integrated into the windmill vanes and interconnected electronically. Stress, wear and fractures can be detected quickly and without elaborate inspections from outside.

The sensor threads for wind turbines could become big sellers, because the information that is gathered can save money on maintenance and makes it possible to design vanes to be smaller and less expensive.

PEOPLE

„PROCESS MECHANIC FOR PLASTIC, NATURAL RUBBER / SEMI-FINISHED PRODUCTS“ AT BOBOTEX®

IN THE CASE OF BEN KALUME, IT'S THE STUFF THAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF. TO PRACTICE A PROFESSION THAT INSPIRES AND FULFILLS. AT 28 YEARS OLD, HE IS A PERMANENT FIXTURE AT BOBOTEX® AS A NOZZLE EXPERT.

To the question of how he copes with the rainy Wuppertal weather, Ben Kalume answered with a sympathetic smile: "I have gotten used to it". He fled from the Congo with his parents when he was eight years old. He lived with his three siblings in Solingen during the first years. Ben remembers his integration into Germany positively. "I have integrated into Germany well," he said with a hint of African composure. It is an important trait that is necessary to move forward. In time, he obtained a German passport and completed secondary school on his paths towards a career at BOBOTEX®.

AN EDGE, ENDURANCE AND HARD WORK – THE INGREDIENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER START

After a few unanswered or rejected job applications led to an open meeting between Ben and the man-



agement of BOBOTEX®, they saw his potential and offered him an internship to become a process mechanic. Ben Kalume took the opportunity and was forced to overcome a steep learning curve which required a great deal of effort on his part, but ultimately resulted in success. "My training period was no walk in the park. I learned a great deal, particularly about myself," said Ben with no small measure of pride, after being strengthened professionally and as a person after his training period.

Today is a welcome team player who gets on very well with colleagues and superiors and provides a measure of expertise. This appreciation motivates him.



WIN-WIN SITUATION: INVESTMENT IN TRAINING TIME WITH MOTIVATION AND COMMITMENT PAYS OFF

After successful completion of his training, Ben Kalume received a one-year contract at BOBOTEX®. With his effort and capability during this period, he was ultimately recommended for a permanent employment



contract. In the meantime, he had become a true expert with the complex machine nozzles on whom his superiors could rely completely. Ben Kalume has long-term plans and hopes to be able to continue his career at BOBOTEX®.

PROFESSIONAL AND PRIVATE LIFE IN HARMONY – THE PERFECT BALANCE

After a good start to his professional career, private happiness followed. He finds security in his fiancée Anna and wedding plans are under way. Ben is also dedicated to football, his hobby. "I enjoy playing sweeper and am a feisty defender," he explained. His well-trained body undoubtedly sends notice to the opposition's offence.

Ben Kalume is a good example of successful integration, of which we would like to see a great deal more in our country.

PROFILE

OF THE PERSON BEN KALUME

YEAR OF BIRTH	1990
HOMETOWN	Kinshasa (Kongo)
PROFESSION	Process mechanic for plastic, natural rubber / semi-finished products
HOBBIES	Football, friends
SPECIAL CAPABILITIES	Commanding the complexity of orifice
FAVORITE ACTIVITY AT BOBOTEX®	Changing of orifice and maintenance
FAVORITE ROLLER COVERING	PU – Polyurethan
FAVORITE TRADE FAIR	Techtextil

LIFE & STYLE

IF YOU ARE LOOKING TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS WITH PROMOTIONAL ITEMS, YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT MATERIALS FOR THE COMPANY. 58 PER CENT OF ALL GERMAN BUSINESSES USE PROMOTIONAL ITEMS. PROMOTIONAL ITEMS ARE IN GREATER DEMAND THAN EVER BEFORE AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIRS, IN PARTICULAR. NOW WE OFFER THE RIGHT MATERIALS FOR EVERY COMPANY AND HAVE EXPANDED OUR SELECTION. ON ENQUIRY, NUMEROUS PROVIDERS OF EARLIER EDITIONS HAVE CONFIRMED THIS.



PROTECTION & GRIP

NO MORE FRUSTRATION

All-round protection from scratches, dust and dirt with the durable silicone case. The tear-resistant material fits your mobile phone like a second skin. The case gives your smartphone grip, even on smooth surfaces.

PEARL.DE



NATURAL & ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY

THE ULTIMATE HEAD COVERING

The cork cap made from cork as a base material with its natural grain is available in various sizes. On the golf course or at the beach, this cork cap is an absolute eye-catcher in the summer.

KORKSTYLE.DE



CARRY & PULL

YOU COULDN'T TRAVEL ANY LIGHTER

This trolley rucksack made of polyester makes travelling endlessly relaxing. It is light and efficient, making it the ideal companion on business trips. On your back while you are on the go or in your hand at the airport, this trolley with metal wheels weighs just 1.7 kg.

TLN-WERBEMITTEL.DE

INTELLIGENT & LONG-LASTING

NO MORE EXCUSES

The silicone fitness wristband. With step counter, distance measurement, calorie counter, sleep analysis and alarm via app with vibration alarm when receiving phone calls or SMSs and alarm clock. Data is synchronised with the app via Bluetooth. The tracker is removable, with integrated lithium-ion battery and spray-water-protected.

2U-WERBEARTIKEL.DE



FAIR & PLAY

THE WORLD CUP CAN BEGIN

The football from fair trade ensures social equity and spares the environment. The natural rubber used for the bladder and lamination is FSC-certified and manufactured according to fair conditions.

MEMO-WERBEARTIKEL.DE



Tradition becomes future

amb-wuppertal.de

Powerful mechanical and plant engineering with competence and know-how. We assure you technically sophisticated problem solutions in high-quality execution.

