Service Innovation
“The future strength of the German economy will be determined in an important way by the power of innovation within the services sector.”

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Wolfgang A. Herrmann
The word ‘innovation’ is currently on everyone’s lips. Large and small companies, including those with a local orientation as well as those taking an international perspective, agree that innovation is decisive for competitiveness. They are looking for product, process, and service innovations to help them cope with increasing complexity in environments of constantly shifting parameters.

Germany has always been known for product innovations, but has recently played a pioneering role in the area of service innovations. For over twelve years, the government and private organizations have funded research focused on the question of how companies can become even more innovative in their service offerings. This chapter provides insight into the world of service innovation, displays the latest trends within the sector, and presents new methods for developing service innovations in Germany.

Important for Business Readers

- Services now account for over 80% of all transactions in developed economies, but typically receive much less R&D attention than products.

Developing service innovations demands a clear strategy from businesses with four interlocking core elements: search, selection, implementation, and evaluation of innovative concepts. If even one of these phases has not been clearly thought through, the entire innovation process is likely to collapse.

- Continuous service innovations improve existing services. They require effective routines to learn from experience. This is the backbone of continuing competitiveness and cannot be neglected.

- Discontinuous service innovations radically transform familiar processes. They have special potential, but also demand unconventional methods. The prototyping of ideas in the innovation processes of selection and implementation enables instant feedback during the practical testing period, which can thereby radically reduce development costs and market flops.

- An important challenge of today’s demanding environments is ambidexterity: the ability to recognize and develop both continuous and discontinuous innovations.

- The recent trend towards hybrid innovation strategy focuses on the integration of service and product innovation. At this point service innovation creeps from the shadows of its subordinate role alongside product innovation and becomes a central element of an innovative combination of product-service-experience.

This chapter focuses on successful efforts to develop discontinuous, often hybrid innovations. Twenty different projects, many benefiting from government sponsored research, are briefly described in the hope that both business leaders and service researchers will find them inspiring.

Service Innovation

Service innovation directly facilitates customers meeting their needs and desires. It can be understood both as a process of development within an organization and as the resulting configuration of new activities (both by the company and by customers, suppliers, and other actors) within a specific context.
The exchange of goods and services was one of the primary purposes of early social contacts. Today, economists estimate that at least 60% of all economies involve the exchange of services, while in more developed economies services account for approximately 80% of all transactions.1

Despite the clear lean toward service-dominated societies, many companies distinguish tangible ‘product’ offerings from the ‘services’ that facilitate their selection and use, and spend research and development efforts primarily on products. Even in the many cases (from entertainment to banking) where services meet customer wants and needs without the exchange of tangible goods, attention to innovation is relatively rare.

I. The ambidexterity challenge

Successful German companies in the services sector recognized long ago that in order to cope with the challenges of global competition, they must not only implement a wide range of continuous innovations, but also be on the lookout for discontinuous concepts. They also recognized that these ideas had to be implemented and evaluated in the context where they would be realized.

Implementing discontinuous innovation within the services sector is an ambitious aim. How do businesses go about discovering real discontinuous service concepts? How can they decide which single concept from the great variety of possibilities show the most promise? How can businesses be sure that their seemingly innovative concept will also be seen as a needed innovation by the customer?

These questions become even more challenging when the company aims to be ambidextrous - or capable of both continuous service innovations as well as the occasional discontinuous leap that moves the organization into new territory. In order to stay in business, companies must monitor customer responses to their current product and service offerings. But as society becomes more complex, economies more inter-connected, and competition increases in many different sectors, companies are required to come up with new offerings that respond to changing needs and desires, and meet the challenges of attractive innovations from competitors.

II. The elements of service innovation management: search, selection, implementation, and evaluation

Innovations are frequently equated with creative chaos. Who has not conjured up the scene of a wild-eyed genius imagining a new idea and then assembling it from odd bits and pieces of material? For this reason, it may initially seem paradoxical that research on innovation recommends a structured process to help companies succeed in meeting the challenges of an increasingly competitive environment.2 This innovation process has four central pillars: search and selection of innovative concepts, and their implementation and evaluation. The elements of this process are closely interlocked as described on the next pages.

1 Percent of different economies dominated by services 2 Research support for a structured approach to innovation
1. Search phase

Any organization might stumble upon a groundbreaking innovation that transforms it into the market leader, or perhaps benefit from a genius in their midst, but it is not a good idea to depend on lady luck. It is far better to undertake a structured search for both continuous and discontinuous concepts that provide a comprehensive idea pool of service innovations independent of chance. This sounds pretty simple and is simple in principle, yet relatively few companies develop a rich pool of alternatives. The decisive question is: How to search systematically for concepts that have the potential for value-added service innovations?

Initial results from the Discontinuous Innovation Lab provide answers to this crucial question. As organizations do not possess the resources to undertake an unlimited search for concepts, search strategies are needed. Through the systematic utilization and combination of a variety of approaches, businesses can transform themselves into successful “treasure hunters” within the area of service innovation. Figure 2 provides a summary of twelve search strategies from the Discontinuous Innovation Lab that offer assistance in tracking down promising concepts. On this page is a brief description of the lab itself.

2. Selection phase

A successful search will normally produce more interesting concepts with value-added potential than can be reasonably implemented, so the next logical step in a service innovation strategy is selecting the best concepts for further development. It is not sufficient to examine the potential opportunities of individual ideas, it is also necessary to compare different possibilities to one another with respect to company priorities.

In addition, research has shown that though companies frequently express the wish to be innovative, discontinuous ideas often do not survive established budget processes. In the worst cases, this can mean that good concepts are doomed to failure in the early stages of the innovation process, before their potential can be adequately assessed. It is not just that opportunities are missed, early rejections demotivate employees involved in the innovation process. The selection process is therefore a major step in innovation strategy that must be handled with analytic expertise, sensitivity, and farsightedness.

To guarantee a fair, comprehensible, and also potentially successful selection, it is necessary to develop suitable evaluation methods. Whether a selection strategy (and associated methods of evaluation) are suitable and appropriate depends to a great extent on the objectives pursued. The decisive factor is whether continuous or discontinuous concepts are to be evaluated. Should this difference not be recognized, concepts with a potential for innovation leaps can be easily rejected without recognizing their potential.

Often ideas for continuous innovations arise as a learning outcome from current activities. Simple and well-tested classical evaluation methods can be of great help as selection tools when assessing these ideas for continuous innovation (which might also come from the observation of competitors, or suggestions from customers). For example, checklists, discounted cash flow methods, or portfolio approaches can result in the improvement of existing processes or services.

More advanced methods are necessary when concepts that have a potential for discontinuous innovation are evaluated. As a rule, fundamentally new concepts cannot be fitted into old patterns. Recommendations that radically question well-established concepts and demand entirely new behavioral and utilization patterns from (often new) customers are more likely to receive support with selection strategies such as idea markets, forecast stock exchanges, service cases, or service prototyping approaches.

- Idea markets permit the distributed evaluation of alternative concepts and project ideas. Typically, a wide range of individuals are invited to rank the offered selections on company-internal, cross-company, or even more public electronic evaluation platforms.
- Forecast stock exchanges rely on the so-called swarming intelligence of the masses rather than expert opinions. This is most suitable when specialized expert advice is scarce. In this method the problem is posted, rather than the desired solution, and a wide range of individuals are invited to offer solutions that meet specified criteria.

The Discontinuous Innovation Lab

is an international network of interdisciplinary researchers and innovation managers. The objective of the regular workshops and network meetings the Discontinuous Innovation Lab holds on national and international levels is to master handling discontinuous innovation. Research has shown that radical changes in markets and technology cannot normally be approached through the customary routines of innovation management. At the same time, established processes inhibit the perception of unorthodox opportunities. As a result, the risk of missing an innovation leap is often not recognized.

The Lab was established in 2006 as a cooperative effort between German, British, and Danish academics and practitioners on the initiative of Professor John Bessant from Imperial College in London, with support from the Advanced Institute of Management Research (AIM). Initiatives in France, Australia, and the Benelux countries have now become affiliated, and related workshops have been held in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Italy and Switzerland.

In addition to the meetings convened several times a year, the participating universities carry out research projects with partner companies. In the first two years the network has grown to approximately 250 individuals, including academics from over 20 institutes and managers from the executive levels of over 100 companies – from conglomerates to successful start-ups. More detailed information is available at www.innovation-lab.org.

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1 Radical changes cannot be handled with methods established for continuous innovation. 2 "swarms"
Service cases concentrate innovatory ideas into highly concrete concept descriptions that cover content, processes, and financial aspects of one or more recommended service innovations. The evaluating group can vary, but this method of selection offers them a more robust view of options than is typically available at an early stage in the innovation process.

Service prototyping goes a step further than a case, and attempts to produce a visible and tangible version of the recommended service innovation. The goal is to create a common comprehension of the service concept for all participants. Ideas from two different sources are described in more detail below. The prototype functions as an instant demonstration of service ideas that are primarily immaterial by definition. This tangible model aids common understanding of the new idea, which contributes to more effective collective evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses.

3. Implementation phase

Once the early phases of search and selection have been mastered, the next stage in the innovation process is implementation. During this phase, the relatively ‘raw’ concept selected in phase 2 is systematically developed to produce a marketable service. A variety of obstacles must be overcome at this point.

The cooperative interaction of all participants in the development process is vital; in many cases it is precisely the human factor that causes the implementation of good ideas into finished services or products to be unsuccessful. Companies aiming to develop discontinuous service innovations are faced with particularly fascinating challenges. In the immaterial world of services, radical new concepts challenge the imagination. Often different participants have very different ideas of what will be required for successful implementation. For example, the situation can easily arise in which engineers have a totally different perception of concept implementation than their colleagues in the marketing department. Company-internal communication processes, and those involving the customer, also can break down due to diverging visual concepts of a service.

As is the case with product innovation, this phase of developing a service innovation must have the overriding objective of winning the battle against tight time-lines and limited financial resources. A lesson learned long ago from software development is: There is substantially greater difficulty in the planning, supervision, and control of implementation when the results are not sufficiently visible, tangible, or comprehensible. Accordingly, specific techniques and action strategies are necessary to provide targeted support for the implementation process of service innovations. These include:

- Further development of early prototypes
- Regular exchange of information in all transitional stages
- Well-documented project management that integrates information from all parties involved

Further ideas to support this frequently neglected phase of implementation depend upon the concept, and the situation. The key idea is that this step is of great significance for service innovation success.

Fig. 1: Core content of the innovation process and relevant questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE CONTENT</th>
<th>1. SEARCH</th>
<th>2. SELECTION</th>
<th>3. IMPLEMENTATION</th>
<th>4. EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using search strategies for the identification of potential innovative services</td>
<td>Selection and financing of innovative services</td>
<td>Design and introduction of innovative services</td>
<td>Evaluation of innovative services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we generating good concepts? Are we searching in the right places?</td>
<td>Are we good at evaluating and financing new concepts?</td>
<td>Are we good at the implementation of concepts?</td>
<td>Do the implemented concepts bring long-term benefits for business success?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of high-quality concepts</td>
<td>Percentage of all generated concepts that are selected and financed</td>
<td>Percentage of financed concepts that lead to profits. Time-line to introduction</td>
<td>Percentage of implemented concepts that still exist following a time period X. Contribution to business objectives</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: based on M. T. Hansen/J. Birkinshaw, 2007

The illustration is a summary of the four phases of the service innovation process. The central questions identified by Hansen and Birkinshaw offer companies the opportunity to undertake a critical examination of their innovation process in order to establish strengths and weaknesses and be able to undertake relevant counter-measures.
4. Evaluation phase

The evaluation phase is the final part of the innovation process, one that offers central starting points for systematic learning about innovation. Evaluation of both the service innovation itself, and the process of its development, are important.

The achievement potential of service innovations on the market are tested in an initial evaluative step. While specific criteria for the evaluation of realized innovations depend on the individual company and its objectives, as well as the nature of the service innovation and the market, the following general benchmarks can be listed (Bessant/Tidd, 2007):

- Operative output benchmarks, such as customer satisfaction, in relation to quality improvements and flexibility
- Non-sector-specific output benchmarks, such as product costs, market share, and quality
- Strategic output benchmarks in comparison to expected efficiency increases for the company as a whole, such as larger market share and profitability.

In a second step, the internal innovation process itself is evaluated to optimize the processing of future innovations. Here the following criteria can be utilized (Bessant/Tidd, 2007):

- The number of new concepts in relation to service, product, and process that could be discovered in the initial phase of the innovation process. Here discontinuous and continuous concepts must be distinguished from one another;
- Error rate – during the development process and on the market
- Percental proportion of budget and time overrun during the development process, answering the question of whether differences depend on the type of innovation (continuous or discontinuous)
- Development period/manhours per completed innovation, answering the question of whether differences depend on the type of innovation (continuous or discontinuous).

At this point, many of the approaches and techniques that have already proved to be reliable within the area of product and process innovation can be implemented – independently of the nature of the specific service innovation and the context of its utilization.

Although we can still learn a great deal from the areas of product and process innovation for application in service innovation, it is important to examine their transferability carefully, and developing new methods is important. In addition, a completely new field of action is being developed: the interactive design of hybrid product-service bundles.

III. The latest trend: hybrid value creation as innovation strategy

The successful launch of the Apple iPod and the iTunes store universally demonstrated the strategic role services could play even in the context of tangible products. The iTunes' store became a market leader soon after its launch and in just over a year had a catalogue of over a million songs. It
clearly demonstrated that services offered in combination with products were no longer just an add-on, but could actually be the core of the offering.

Customers value and demand such problem solving solutions. They also pay closer attention to life cycle costs than in the past, and therefore demand complete solutions leading to product-service combinations. Increased interaction between customers and suppliers leads to customized solutions that even better fit customers needs, which in turn pushes the demand for further solutions from customers. This desire for hybrid services is coming from various sectors, from automotive and chemicals to white goods and foods. It is also relevant in both B2C and B2B markets. In short, hybrids have immense economic potential for companies, if they use this trend to successfully implement innovative combinations of goods and services that go beyond incremental innovation into the fray of discontinuous innovation.

Service bundling, which is not a new concept, is often limited to adding services to existing products so that the products can be better marketed. Hybrid value creation goes a step further as the borders between the product and service are blurred. Here the company is offering an integrated solution (G. Ernst, 2005).

To successfully make the transition from selling standalone products or services to hybrid solutions, companies need to challenge and rethink conventional service development, implementation, and marketing processes. Classical sector-specific routines, basic assumptions, and value generating concepts must be submitted to a radical scrutiny process. The solution-oriented new combination of services and products typically breaks up antiquated organizational thought patterns and challenges previously separate organizational and individual competences.

### HYBRID VALUE CREATION

Hybrid value creation is the process of generating additional value by innovatively combining products (tangible component) and services (intangible component).

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**Fig. 2: Strategies for Discovering Continuous and Discontinuous Innovation Concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEARCH STRATEGIES</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sending out scouts</td>
<td>Assigns the task of detecting signs of competitive, technological, social, and other changes, that might generate new concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploring multiple futures</td>
<td>Examines possible future scenarios in order to discover the potential opportunities and risks of extreme developments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using the web</td>
<td>Utilizes the world wide web as a source of information on trends and as a communication platform for the exchange of experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with active users</td>
<td>Integrates so-called lead users into the innovation process with the objective of profiting from their know-how in the development and evaluation of potential innovators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deep diving</td>
<td>Extensively surveys customers through explorative methods, and if necessary, observation and in-depth interviews for a deeper understanding of hidden needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Probe and learn</td>
<td>Tests potential innovations under real conditions with the objective of learning by experience even if the risk of failure is high</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobilize the mainstream</td>
<td>Involves non-expert employees in the generation of ideas for the extension or compensation of existing resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate venturing</td>
<td>Establishes specific corporate units with budget for special projects and any spin-offs independent of main business</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Corporate entrepreneuring/intrapreneuring”</td>
<td>Creates a corporate culture that encourages innovation through incentives and the authorization of so-called submarine projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using networks</td>
<td>Developes tools to enable the exchange of experience and information between different areas of expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouragement of diversity</td>
<td>Accept a lateral thinking and encourages interdisciplinary cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea generator</td>
<td>Uses of creative techniques to increase discontinuous innovation concepts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: based on J. Bessant/B. von Stamm, 2007
Which central challenges must be mastered in service innovation according to your experience? At this point, many companies have not employed a high degree of strategy in the development of their services. To move on, support through professional technology and innovation management is of vital importance. The Fraunhofer ServLab additionally offers interested businesses the opportunity to extensively visualize and test their services prior to their concrete implementation and market launch. This is almost always the first time they have been able to take this perspective, and it is critical to strategic assessment.

The ServLab is a comprehensive platform for the development, design, and testing of new service concepts. Its specialty is utilizing virtual reality to make service innovations more tangible. Virtual space is created in the ServLab with the aid of state-of-the-art computer and projection technology in which service processes can be simulated in many possible situations and environments. For example, it is possible to develop new types of interaction processes using this platform.

The important factor for optimally designed services is the interface with the customer. The Fraunhofer IAO has already developed its first future-oriented project in cooperation with the hotel chain Accor: a complete hotel has been digitalized and placed in virtual reality in order to develop and test innovative check-in processes.

Which approach does the ServLab employ, and what is the relevant innovative factor? The ServLab provides a solution to the problem of how to test services. It is possible to test products with the aid of processes such as prototyping, rapid prototyping, test reports, or – for example in the development of cars - test drives. Prior to ServLab’s existence, no suitable equivalent approach existed to test successful services on a systematic basis. ServLab has provided this missing possibility. Here it is possible to examine factors such as efficiency, process design, or also the interaction between customers and employees. Innovative concepts can be displayed and tested with the aid of virtual reality. This helps to avoid expensive post-market launch optimization measures.

What are the advantages from utilizing ServLab for the development of innovative services? Companies that test their new innovation concepts in ServLab have the opportunity of thinking in extremes. This means that they are able to develop completely new concepts for their services. The example from the Accor hotel chain is a good example. In the development of new check-in processes, it was not necessary to undertake any rebuilding in a real hotel in order to test new concepts. ServLab also offers the opportunity of visualizing service concepts which are otherwise difficult to communicate. Additionally, the risk involved in the introduction of new services is minimized, as it is possible to test services prior to their introduction on the market. The simulation of these services takes place in a protected environment. With the aid of the aspects described, development processes for new services can be accelerated, and the success probability on the market increased.

Service Piloting as the Basis for Innovations with Service Concepts for Utilization

Interview with Prof. Dr.-Ing. Dr.-Ing. E.h. Dieter Spath, Head of Institute, Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering and Organization by Prof. Dr. Prof. h.c. Dr. h.c. Ralf Reichwald, TU München and CLIC, HHL
“Parents want their children to play with LEGO because it is fun, encourages creativity, and permits the creation of daring ideas. Lego is successful in the playroom as a method for brainstorming and experimenting with ideas – why shouldn’t Lego also be used to enrich innovation processes in the adult world?”

Dr. Anne-Katrin Neyer
Service Prototyping at UnternehmerTUM

One of the major challenges in the area of innovation for large companies and start-up teams alike is to find a solution to the question: How can I communicate my innovative idea? At UnternehmerTUM, an organization founded to facilitate entrepreneurs in Germany, the same question is asked at a broader level: How can we help entrepreneurs illustrate innovative ideas for products/services and experiences so that they can be discussed and further developed - initially within an entrepreneurial team and organization and subsequently with potential customers and sources of finance?

UnternehmerTUM, the Center for Innovation and Start-ups at the Technische Universität München, is intensively addressing the problem of how ideas can be modeled. Bernhard Doll, head of the “Innovations and Prototypes” department, and his team, support 40 innovation teams annually in the testing and further development of ideas to produce successful business concepts. They have observed that prototypes help teams communicate their ideas within the team and with outsiders, which means they can better evaluate the relevance of business and product/service concepts.

The term ‘prototype’ defines the visualization of product and service concepts. This definition therefore goes beyond the customary meaning of the term prototype as an industrial pilot production model that is particularly prevalent within the field of engineering. Prototype development at UnternehmerTUM begins at a very early stage. The processes suggested include examination of customer benefits and customer acceptance as concepts are first being developed, which means benefits and acceptance can be weighed along with the technical feasibility of solutions.

“Depending on the phase of conceptual development, a prototype can range from a simple model constructed from paper, cardboard, and LEGO® bricks to a structural component manufactured with the aid of state-of-the-art technology,” explains Bernhard Doll. Doll showed us models depicting service ideas developed with the aid of LEGO® bricks, and pointed out that Lego is often particularly suitable for visualizing hidden aspects of service concepts. These can then be discussed in interdisciplinary teams, and altered “in real time” during joint meetings, before a concept is developed further.

In response to our critical question as to whether this technique can be utilized for service innovations, we are allotted an assignment: “Imagine that you have a brilliant idea of how you could optimize the check-in procedure at the airport for single parents and their children. How would you approach a solution?” In our minds’ eye, we have visions of business plans and PowerPoint presentations, but suddenly Mr. Doll spreads out a huge pile of Lego bricks in front of us and tells us: “You have 30 minutes to produce a model of this service innovation: have fun!” Our team eyes the LEGO® bricks: “OK, we will go along with his humor” – and starts building. Ten minutes later, we can understand why simple tools such as LEGO® bricks encourage the development of innovative ideas. Our team discusses ideas, starts building, alters the plan, steadily builds up the bricks, and - seemingly involuntarily - develops initial concepts for the solution of this problem. We realize, for example, that the supervision currently available, which only commences at the check-in counter, is not customer-oriented. This spurs us on to further construction and discussion, and after 30 minutes we have a concept for a service innovation that is so convincing that we are ready to go straight to an airport to sell them our idea the very next day. Mr. Doll, however, puts on the brakes. The concept has been formulated and Lego prototyping was a great help, but before this develops into a market-ready solution, further steps are necessary. That's a good lesson.

Prototyping is a somewhat unorthodox approach in the development of service innovations. The method encourages companies and their employees to rid themselves of their habitual thinking and working methods to become innovative. Further details on the topic of service prototyping are provided by Bernhard Doll (doll@unternehmertum.de) and at www.unternehmertum.de.
“The ServLab makes service innovations visible, tangible, and experienceable at the touch of a button.”

Walter Ganz
ServLab – Service Innovation in the Laboratory

ServLab bundles the service excellence of the Fraunhofer IAO into a worldwide unique laboratory in which service innovations can be made visible, tangible, and experienced at the touch of a button. Computer and projection technology is the core of the lab and enables the generation of service arenas as virtual spaces. New service solutions can be developed, tested, and optimized jointly with employees, customers, and partner businesses in this environment. It is particularly important that situations and environments for innovative service processes can be simulated to allow ‘service crash tests’ within a controlled laboratory environment.

In order to develop and test innovative check-in procedures in the hotel business, for example, a complete hotel was digitalized and transformed into virtual reality. Against this background, professional actors from the Munich business theater, Vitamin T, provided an impressive demonstration of a variety of service situations in the virtual hotel lobby.

Agostino Cisco, Director HR Development at Accor Hotellerie Deutschland GmbH, is enthusiastic about the opportunities provided by the ServLab and sees a variety of further utilization possibilities going far beyond service development to encompass the networking of service development and employee training within the sector. He explains: “Together with the IAO, we have gone down a completely new path within the hotel sector. Accor Hotellerie sees great potential for future employee training; learning efficiency will increase as hotel staff are training in quasi-real situations. This corresponds to our philosophy that an innovation can only be successful if it remains open. Success is only guaranteed for innovations that are subsequently developed by staff and customers in day-to-day business.”

Innovative consultancy and design concepts within the area of in-patient care for the elderly are also being visualized and tested with the aid of the ServLab. Here a virtual home for the elderly provided the basis for the testing and design of innovative services.

Erhard Weiß, Managing Director of the Institution for Statutory Accident Insurance and Prevention in the Health and Welfare Services (BGW) Karlsruhe, sees a vital role for ServLab in the improvement of healthcare services: “The ServLab plays a prominent role in hazard evaluation assessment, construction consulting, and the analysis of care processes for the optimization of work organization. The lab also provides us with valuable opportunities to qualify actors involved in occupational health and safety, and health promotion. This is why we have involved the ServLab in our product line ‘Aufbruch Pflege’ (“Care Offensive”). We are searching for solutions to the pressures of the modern world as a basis for healthy employment.”

With the conceptual design and development of the ServLab, the Fraunhofer IAO and its partners have made a major contribution to the encouragement of innovation within the service sector for both the business world and for research. This is displayed by the intense international interest in creating ServLabs as locations for service innovation in other countries. The scientists in Stuttgart are also progressing a step further; behind the scenes at the Fraunhofer IAO, the next generation of ServLabs is already in preparation.

Mr. Neumann, hotel employee at the Stuttgart Ibis Hotel am Löwentor, greets Ms. Wagner in the hotel lobby. The reception desk has been removed now that the reception formalities have been transformed—customers have the option of Comfort Check-in at the bar or Quick Check-in with the aid of a machine in the lobby. Ms. Wagner is a frequent business traveler in a hurry, and therefore selects the new service at the computer. A hotel employee accompanies the business traveler to the service point in a quiet corner of the lobby. Ms. Wagner begins the checking-in procedure, but soon encounters a problem. She looks around to find Mr. Neumann to ask for help. He is however, already occupied at the Comfort Check-in at the bar, where the opera fans Mr. and Mrs. Meyer are collecting detailed information. Ms. Wagner is irritated: instead of being able to go straight to her hotel room as she had anticipated, she will now have to wait even longer than on previous occasions at the reception desk.

It is good that this scene is not occurring in real life, but is the result of a simulated laboratory test. The Accor hotel chain was one of the first partners to cooperate with the ServLab. In a first step, the work scientists digitalized a complete hotel and recreated it in virtual reality. This virtual hotel now permits any hotel process, including the check-in options outlined above, to be recreated in a protected environment in the IAO laboratory.

Many businesses are finding help at the IAO ServLab for a variety of service solutions. For example, service engineers can investigate decisive factors such as performance, process design, and customer-employee interaction in the automobile industry and other businesses. The laboratory’s guiding concept in all its operations is to help companies develop services according to the systematic methods seen in product development.

Conclusion

A clear innovation strategy is vital for the successful development of service innovations. Successful businesses have long recognized that it is not enough to rely on luck and random innovation processes; successful innovations are best created by following an initial systematic search, then selecting promising ideas from a wide set for further development. These steps need both time and energy.

However, following a systematic process demands rethinking ideas about innovation on the part of most managers: How can a company motivate its employees to look beyond the end of their own noses and participate actively in the innovation process? How should a business be organizationally structured to encourage its employees to participate in innovation activity on a broad basis? How can incentive schemes be created to encourage inter-departmental innovative ability? How can management systems be adapted to permit the development of innovative talent among employees and managerial staff? What opportunities are provided by new technologies, such as Web 2.0 and Social Software, to better utilize the cross-departmental interaction of customers and employees as a creative platform? This is only a small selection of questions that businesses will have to address if they wish to integrate their entire creative potential into the innovation process.

Results from innovation research show that the era is now finally over in which search, selection, implementation, and evaluation processes successfully take place behind closed doors in company R&D departments. The trend towards hybrid innovation strategy also underlines the increasing significance of cooperation between service and product manufacturers. It is encouraging that discontinuous service innovation is becoming more familiar to businesses and their employees to speed the development of new business models that utilize these developments.

Numerous successful pioneers, such as Munich Airport, BMW, and UnternehmerTUM, demonstrate that the systematic development of innovative ability within the service sector is possible. These and other German service innovators have something in common, irrespective of their operational sector, size or market environment: they are all creating a corporate environment that looks for discontinuous innovations far beyond current knowledge. UnternehmerTUM, for example, places great emphasis on the method of prototyping as an approach to understanding the complexities of the four-step innovation process. How this looks in detail is presented by our practical example “Service Prototyping at UnternehmerTUM.”

The overall point is that service innovation is simultaneously a challenge and an opportunity. The methods that can support the service innovation process of search, selection, implementation, and evaluation can be used for both the improvement of existing services, continuous service innovation, and radical innovation leaps, discontinuous service innovation. They can help companies avoid “innovation blindness” and “one-sided” innovation processes.
Hot Spots of Service Innovation
Karl-Werner Schmitz designs new business models using bricks and other tangible tools. Sales personnel find they are able to convince customers with these haptic sales aids. His motto: “grasp instead of seeing and hearing.”

If the building brick with the label “manpower” is pulled out from under a wooden house, it collapses. Other wooden elements with labels such as “mortgage” and “savings” can no longer provide support. Sales trainer Karl-Werner Schmitz has a solution: he puts the house inside a frame with the caption “life insurance” – suddenly the house is able to stand with no problems. “Customers assemble the wooden elements themselves during a consultation and perceive with the aid of this simple tool what forms of security are necessary for building a house,” says Schmitz.

“The current flood of information is so great that both aural and visual channels are totally overloaded; people have developed an automatic resistance,” comments Schmitz. “A classical brochure will make little impression.” Instead of hearing and seeing, he primarily depends on the sense of touch – the proverbial grasping of facts. “We have completely lost sight of the senses of feeling and touching,” he says: “Everything is printed or reported and the sense of touch is neglected, although this is a far more effective approach for the learning process, and a far better method of getting through to customers.” In an era of over-stimulation, haptic selling therefore holds great promise for the future.

To demonstrate the importance of a private pension fund to his customers, Schmitz developed a model with play money: the heavy coins represent the percentage of income. The board has individual sections labeled with captions such as “rent” and “household expenses.” Customers place the coins on the board to represent the distribution of their income. Then Schmitz removes half of these coins and states: “This is what is left if you are no longer able to work.” The simple method with the ultimate shock factor has already prompted many of his clients to give thought to the need for better insurance.

“It makes a tremendous difference whether I provide the client with abstract percentage figures, or offer a tangible concept,” according to Schmitz. He now sells his models to banks and insurance companies and also gives lectures on haptic selling. “The strategies are universally applicable. I explain the fundamentals, but my buyers must develop appropriate models for their particular business.”

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Menippos GmbH

Digital trading cards make millions of children happy

Digital trading cards connect the world of classical trading cards with the world of computer and video games. A highly innovative technology is utilized to bring normal paper to life. The cards can either be used as a classical card game, or as an online game.

Interlinking classical and multimedia games creates a totally new playing experience in which the trading card collector receives the currently unique opportunity to play in the virtual (online) world with his real set of cards. The play table is transferred from the school yard to the internet, enabling play at any time, without the necessity of the physical presence of an opponent.

Menippos GmbH develops its own games around this idea. A consistent technology transfer is utilized to integrate the best innovations for market-ready applications. This guarantees that customers have the continuous availability of new innovative game systems.
DATEV eG

Accounting for the future

The demands of companies on tax and accounting offices are steadily increasing. In addition to documents required for the tax authorities, companies need corporate tax evaluations, and business consulting for presentation to banks. This can now be delivered in greater detail by tax accountants – with the aid of DATEV.

Up until now, companies have compiled their documents in file folders, which were delivered to their accountants at regular intervals. Company accounts and evaluations were subsequently compiled on the basis of these documents. This process demanded substantial time for sorting and delivery. More pertinent, these evaluations were only of limited use to the company as they were soon out of date due to the long processing time. Now digital documentation can substantially improve the processes, and above all the quality, of accounting.

Daily accounting provides the basis for better information and advisory performance - from accounts receivable management to controlling. Businesses no longer need to collect and sort their documents and deliver them to and collect them from their accountants – instead everything that goes to DATEV is scanned. Through this form of transfer, the “document photos” are automatically sent to a data processing center. It is also possible to transfer the documents digitally via fax. The digital documents arrive immediately at the accounting office and can be entered into the software system. This acceleration process means higher informative value and quality in the area of financial accounting and brings advantages for both tax accountants and businesses.

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The ver.di Department Innovation and Excellent Work

Information and knowledge carriers are networked

The ver.di department Innovation and Excellent Work addresses the new topics and challenges of a constantly changing employment world with the aim of developing and implementing solutions, which are socially acceptable and advantageous for employees in a collective discussion on the structure of the employment world. This ver.di department supports the issues protection, participation, humane work, social integration, sustainability, increase in opportunities, and the strengthening of gender democracy.

Innovation and Excellent Work is open to the pursuit of new paths and the utilization of new forms of communication. One relevant example is the online campaign “Online rights for employees” which is exclusively implemented on the internet with the primary aim of campaigning for employee data protection laws.

The ver.di department homes in on suitable topics and projects in communication with voluntary and full-time ver.di representatives, academics, and consultants oriented toward employee needs. An example is the project which was set up to develop the DGB Index “Quality of Work”, jointly developed by the DGB and individual trade unions, in which a differentiated description of the quality of work in Germany and in businesses from the employee aspect was compiled with a view to further action.

A further example is the research project “E-Union”. This project makes a contribution to the enhancement of the negotiating ability of trade unions and works and staff councils in the “information and knowledge society”. It also develops utilization possibilities via electronic media for trade union purposes (E-Union), e.g. “Wiki Excellent Work” or the online survey tool for the monitoring of innovation cultures in companies from the aspect of in-house representation of interests. The latter is a subsequent development following on from the ver.di-Innovation barometer that was developed in cooperation with the TU-Munich.

The department of Innovation and Excellent Work is involved in numerous further projects and cooperations with works and staff councils and also with consultants and experts closely involved with employee-oriented issues. This department has an open-minded approach to new innovative paths and for this reason also tests new working and structuring methods.
Lufthansa Global Tele Sales

Baggage tracing and more ...

Whenever a Lufthansa passenger reaches his destination minus his case, the colleagues from “Lufthansa Global Tele Sales” will always succeed in tracking down his baggage regardless of where it has been lost.

In the neon-illuminated office in the Adlershof “Kaufland” building, members of staff with headsets are sitting at their computers. Some of them are smiling and others are scrutinizing their monitors: the atmosphere is calm and noticeably peaceful. It is hard to believe that the “Baggage Call Center” (BCC) is the crisis zone at “Lufthansa Global Tele Sales” where irritated passengers ring up when they are unable to locate their case or back-pack. After only a few mouse clicks on the computer in the so-called World Tracer, Lead Agent Sören Holm is able to pacify the woman who has rung him from Singapore and inform her that he has tracked down her trolley bag in the airport of a large Australian city. It has taken only two minutes to sort out a problem on the other side of the world.

The approximately 40 agents in the BCC field these sorts of enquiries every day from all round the world from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.. Nearly all colleagues here are career changers with previous occupations ranging from gardener to qualified business administrator: all must have an excellent command of spoken English and have the ability to work under pressure. Although the percentage of lost baggage remains within the one-in-a-thousand range, the staff at the Adlershof receive around 500 calls daily, as the total number of air travelers is still on the increase. In the case of snow chaos, there have occasionally been double as many calls.

Sören Holm was originally a qualified carpenter and has during his five years of service at the BCC developed a high degree of sympathy for disgruntled customers with medicine, important business documents or Christmas gifts in their missing baggage who have demanded swift help or compensation. Although he has been successful in helping the majority of callers, he has now become reluctant to hand in his own baggage. “Maybe this is a sort of occupational disease”.

The “baggage tracers”, the “General Information and Reservation Call Center” (GenRes) of “Lufthansa Global Tele Sales” (GTS) is also located in the Adlershof. Here it is possible to book flights, reserve seats, or order vegetarian in-flight meals.

BMW World

The total experience of BMW world: “The art of being BMW”

The multifunctional BMW World building offers a comprehensive experience for visitors, neighbors, and customers. Guests from round the world are provided with an intensive experience of the world of BMW, ranging from the latest trends and technology and design exhibitions, to the emotions of owners receiving their new BMWs.

The BMW World is a significant interface linking the car makers, the brand, the products, and their environment. Together with the BMW Works and the BMW Museum, the BMW World provides a logical unit: an all-round BMW experience.

The core of BMW World houses an individual and personally designed automobile delivery area. Around 45,000 vehicles are delivered here annually to customers from all over the world and around 850,000 visitors are expected every year. After only the first five months this year, the one millionth visitor was counted at BMW World. In addition to the exclusive presentation of all automobile series and motorbikes, multimedia shows and exhibits provide an insight into research, development, design and production, and permit a comprehensive experience of both the BMW company and its brand. BMW World also contains an event forum equipped with the latest technology for all types of events: exhibitions, conferences and live broadcasts, take place here and additionally receptions and seminars. The Junior Campus provides a separate experience area with new scientific findings from children’s and youth research for 7 to 13-year-olds and pupils from 2nd to 7th grade in which “mobility with all the senses” is waiting to be discovered.
Gryphos – mobile detection service

Gryphos offers mobile internet services and special detection services and therefore, provides two separate solutions for the market, which are utilized on the one hand within the area of security supporting detection services (concerning market and consumer protection) and, on the other hand, within the area of mobile skin detection. Users and interested persons can find information on particularly striking examples of recognition statistics on the internet portal.

This includes concrete new statistics on skin recognition and current product counterfeiting favorites. Users can log on and download mobile solutions, which enable them to verify original products of certain manufacturers, report imitation products, and submit enquiries on particular skin characteristics while on the move; these enquiries are subsequently addressed with the aid of partially automated processes. This model provides manufacturers with protection against counterfeit products and simultaneously offers a quality confirmation service for customers and users. Within the world of medicine, the model can help to reduce the number of high risk patients with diseases in advanced stages, which are difficult to cure, thanks to its high quality identification and sensitization processes.

Via transaction-linked extra services, which are subject to charge and provide specific diagnoses and concrete support services, a direct dialogue is set up with manufacturers or with dermatologists and the telemedical center and also documented. The portal provides concrete support in the coordination of further steps. Normally as a first step, a couple of simply produced mobile pictures are sufficient as a basis for documentation that is sent to the appropriate service; the ensuing results of the analysis determine the next steps. Premium services provide a highly efficient augmentation to the actual utilization case and the direct local treatment. In the case of skin recognition, this takes the form of repeated documentation of specific skin areas during the course of treatment. The photos are automatically transferred, allocated, and evaluated and appointments are arranged online.

Odersun AG

Photovoltaics to go – pack the sun in your bag!

The sun doesn't shine every day. It is however possible always to have the sun in hand: new lifestyle products provide electricity originating from solar energy for people on the move. The solar technology company Odersun AG in Frankfurt/Oder is one of the companies addressing this trend and not only provides cost-efficient solar modules for roofs and solar parks, but also manufactures Solar4you products aimed at pioneers who wish to have access to mobile solar energy during the course of their active day.

The unique feature of this series is less environmental functionality, but more prominently attractive design! For this reason, Odersun works with specialized producers to develop flexible solar modules, which blend harmoniously within the form language of the product design.

A relevant successful example is a solar bag known as “POGO Solar”, which was the first product in the Solar4you series. For this bag, manufactured by the Berlin firm Bagjack - which has gained a reputation for its urban functional bags - a solar module laminated in foil, was specially developed and integrated in the pocket flap. “The important factor”, according to Stefan Schwarzer “was to ensure that the bag did not have the appearance of a technical toy, but that the designer module should be perceived as an integral part of the bag.” These products do not only look good, but are also veritable energy packs: the generated electricity is sufficient to power USB-compatible end devices such as mobile phones, MP3 players or GPS gadgets. The prime factor: even when the sun is not shining, the equipment still has plenty of juice: an intermediate charger stores solar energy and transforms the bag into a mobile power socket, which can function miles from any electric power supply.

It is perfectly feasible for a whole palette of consumer products to be operated with the aid of this technology: for example cool boxes, garments or even trailers and automobiles. Odersun is currently working on camera and laptop bags that are designed to supply the corresponding end devices with electricity. A certain amount of pioneer work is still required before these products are marketable, but the solar bag “POGO Solar” is all ready to go.
Buy yourself a better world!

Utopia.de was launched on November 8, 2007 with the motto “Buy yourself a better world” as the first independent consumer platform for strategic consumption and a sustainable lifestyle. The aim is to provide consumers with orientation in the purchase of sustainable goods, and also to provide impulses in response to trade and industry. Utopia.de has also set up an active community, which holds joint discussions and evaluates practical tips presented by experts. Only three months following its launch, Utopia.de was voted as the Yahoo Discovery of the Year 2007 in the category “The Good Deed”. An accolade from the media followed shortly afterwards: the Lead Award as the best web community of the year. The target group potential for persons interested in ecological and socially manufactured products and a sustainable lifestyle, has been estimated by several studies at a current figure of 15 million within Germany.

The portal was founded by Claudia Langer. Her motivation: “I acted according to my convictions. With the brand Utopia we will ensure that an increasing number of consumers and companies alter their behavior in order to provide a livable future for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren in an ecologically intact and socially just world.”
Munich Airport

Europe’s most innovative airport

Munich Airport is a high-capacity infrastructure facility, adventure park, and economic hub all rolled into one. In 2007, Bavaria’s gateway to the world was for the third time running, voted the best airport in Europe in the World Airport Awards following a global survey of 7.8 million passengers; among other aspects, it was the excellent range of services available, which earned it the award.

Munich Airport possesses the best and most efficient transfer terminal in Europe with an ultra-modern check-in system and premium comfort and service standards. The airport, that was opened in 1992, is increasingly gaining significance as a dynamically growing international air traffic hub. Munich airport already ranks seventh in passenger volume among the ten largest airports in Europe.

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www.munich-airport.de
The bank with the comfort factor

The scene has a hint of comfort: two young women sit on a leather sofa drinking lattes. A middle-aged man reading at the bar, is joined by another man in a dark suit. Are we in a café or a pub? No, this is a bank on Friedrichstraße in Berlin. One of the young women has just concluded a meeting with her customer advisor on the topics of house mortgages and investment plans, and is now discussing the conditions offered with her girlfriend over a cup of coffee, while the children are occupied in the play area. The man is enquiring about details concerning a retirement provision – a bank employee is offering him advisory services.

“Q110 – the Deutsche Bank of the future” in Berlin, is only one example of how bank branches could look in the future. Credit business and investment consulting take place in trendy consulting rooms and if the customer prefers, also in comfortable armchairs in the café lounge at Q110 – naturally always accompanied by the necessary degree of confidentiality and professionalism. During the consultation, parents are able to leave their children in the Kids’ Corner and subsequently go shopping in the trend shop. “Up until now, a bank appointment was viewed by many as an obligation comparative to a visit to a public office. This is what we aim to change with Q110, which stands for excellent service and personal consultation, and is simultaneously about feeling comfortable, relaxed, and positive,” says Thomas Große Darrelmann, who is responsible for the management of Q110 at the Head Office of Deutsche Bank.

It is not only the new comfortable atmosphere and pleasant surroundings in Q110 at Deutsche Bank, which are decisive for success, but also the new direction of customer advisory services. “During the development of our concept, we examined precisely what the retail trade is doing so well according to market research and searched for methods, which would better satisfy customer wishes,” comments Große Darrelmann.

For example, initial consultations are not held directly in consultancy offices, but in an inviting open forum with bar tables at the centre of the branch – this is uncomplicated and barrier-free. “Consultation in our forum is a new format which combines the strengths of the conventional cashier’s desk with those of a consulting office,” explains Ira Holl, Branch Manager of the Q110 branch. The bank products are also displayed in a different manner at Q110. These are presented in “advantage boxes”: metal boxes with the dimensions of a paperback book containing printed product information, the relevant contract, an archive function for documents, and also a small gift for the customer. Interested persons can also utilize the boxes to view a film with further product and/or financial information with the aid of a special reader.

Deutsche Bank is gradually introducing the most successful elements of Q110 in other locations in Germany within the framework of branch modernization. An exact copy of Q110 will not be reproduced as individual local conditions are taken into account during the refurbishment process. “Vital impulses from Q110 – our branch of the future – are already spreading through our entire private customer business,” comments Große Darrelmann. The concept appears to be bearing fruit: the objective targeted on the opening of the new Berlin branch in September 2005 of gaining around 50 percent more customers than in an investment and financial center of equivalent dimensions, has been achieved by Q110 month after month.
Porsche Werk Leipzig

The Porsche experience – the Porsche plant in Leipzig

A Porsche is not a normal vehicle: a Porsche is an experience. And this experience does not begin on the road, but at the point of its creation. This can be personally experienced in a visit to the Porsche plant in Leipzig. This is much more than a production site; it is a world in which the manufacture of the Cayenne, the exclusive customer center, a special in-house racing track certified by the FIA and an off-road track can all be experienced at close quarters. In short: a world which communicates the fascination for the Porsche brand. Additionally, a tour of the site is offered, which includes a look behind the scenes to accompany the Cayenne on its progress through the entire manufacturing process. The tour also includes a visit to the customer center with its exhibition of historic vehicles and a spectacular 360° panoramic view of the entire Porsche site. The experience is rounded off by a brief visit to the exhibition of the current product range and a supplementary spectacular highlight is a culinary experience in the in-house restaurant or alternatively a ride or self-drive in a Porsche. Accompanied by an experienced instructor, you can become acquainted with the driving quality of a Porsche on the internal on-road and off-road track.

With its combination of conference facilities and attractive accompanying programs, Porsche Leipzig offers diverse opportunities for small-scale meetings, strategy conferences, a gala event for several hundred participants, or an incentive event for customers or employees. Each event is planned individually, and is specially tailored to customer requirements. Venue halls, catering services, technical equipment and competent and friendly personnel are available to ensure great success for every event.

The Autostadt

The collection deluxe experience

The great variety of the Autostadt reflects the broad orientation spectrum of the global corporation Volkswagen and its corporate responsibility for people, culture, and society. For this reason, art lovers will find as much inspiration here as those interested in the technical world and multimedia fans, and those searching for peace and quiet will also be rewarded. The Autostadt is based on the Volkswagen corporate values: it demonstrates why quality brings safety, how performance and sustainability go hand in hand and, how much customer proximity means to the company. It also gives an impression of the wealth of knowledge generated by its employees in all parts of the world and the philosophies of its individual markets.

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**Sixt AG**

**Europe’s innovation leader in car rental**

The Sixt AG based in Pullach near Munich, is an internationally operating provider of high-quality mobility services. Sixt is the market leader in car rental in Germany and Austria and one of the largest manufacture-independent full service leasing companies.

Sixt offers its private and corporate customers throughout Germany innovative solutions for individual mobility requirements in over 500 locations. The company is represented worldwide at 3,500 service points in over 85 countries. Sixt stands out with its premium products, comprehensive service, customer proximity, and continuous innovation. Via internet, customers are able to book rented vehicles at special online prices, and also take advantage of numerous additional services such as flight, hotel, and travel offers.

Sixt is permanently working on the quality enhancement of its products and processes. A separate department is specialized in the transformation of new technologies into concrete improvements for the benefit of its customers. Here innovations are analyzed and tested in pilot projects and, if found suitable, ultimately launched throughout the company.

To ensure the smooth running of the rental process, increase the speed of processes and also work towards the better preservation of resources, the RFID Technology is for example, employed in the vehicle, deployment process. At the Sixt counter, display and other visualization technologies are utilized to provide rental offers and additional information for the customer. Additionally, innovative IT solutions in customer service and automation systems for vehicle collection help to improve the service quality at Sixt.

At the beginning of 2008, Sixt received the renowned “Business Traveler Award” as the best car rental company in Europe for the second time in succession. This award proves that Sixt was also the top performing rental company in Europe in 2007. According to the business travelers surveyed on central competition evaluation criteria which included a good price/performance ratio, efficient rental processes, comfortable and transparent handling for the customer, the high quality of the vehicles and service orientation, and know-how of the company’s employees, Sixt performed significantly better than its competitors.

Following the deployment of vehicles with innovative gas and hybrid powertrains from the second half of 2007, Sixt’s latest innovation is the web-based booking system via cell phone, which permits Sixt customers to book rental cars on all internet-compatible cell phones. At www.mobil.sixt.de, customers are directed to a simple booking interface which adapts automatically to the display of all customary cell phones. Thanks to the selection possibilities in the new application which is user-friendly, Sixt rental cars can be conveniently reserved at any time worldwide. This is further proof of Sixt’s position as innovation leader in the car rental sector.

**Management Angels GmbH**

**Interim management as management innovation**

Interim management is an innovative management instrument for businesses: a new occupational concept and a flexible, entrepreneurial, and project-oriented work method. Management Angels have access to a pool of 1,500 interim managers throughout Germany, 600 of whom are personally familiar through joint projects and numerous meetings. Suitable candidates can be presented in as little as 48 hours after initial contact. These interim managers have an average age of 46 and are therefore, around 15 years younger than the sector average. They possess experience in a wide range of areas and sectors (managerial board, business management, and leading functions in the areas of business development, key account management, sales, finance, controlling, turn-around management, marketing, PR, IT, and human resources).

The Management Angels GmbH, is a personnel advisory service specializing in interim management. With its pool of 1,500 managers, the Hamburg company is one of the market leaders in Germany. Management Angels undertake the placement of competent temporary managers particularly in the areas of telecommunication, IT, the media, entertainment, and security technology. As a specialist in the professional application of interim management, the Management Angels match managers and suitable companies.
PC-Ware Information Technologies AG

The European market leader in the area of IT services

The PC-Ware Information Technologies AG is one of the leading manufacture-independent IT service companies in Europe. The company provides comprehensive services for all aspects of IT infrastructure ranging from the purchase of software and hardware, the design and implementation of complex solutions, to support for operational systems. The company’s core business consists of software licensing and software asset management. PC-Ware possesses excellent know-how within this area and is one of the European market leaders. On the basis of core competence in software licensing, an individual solution was developed for software asset management that guarantees transparency in the internal IT landscape, legal security, increased efficiency, and cost reduction. The IT service company also offers its own software solutions within the areas of e-government and e-business.

Through its intensive cooperative partnership with its customers, PC-Ware displays competence in projects involving large-scale companies, public authorities, and medium-sized businesses. A specially tailored range of services is available for these customer groups. PC-Ware employs highly qualified staff who provide support and advice in the supply, design, implementation, and operation of IT infrastructures. Complex IT processes and services are created in both international and local regional projects. Complete system house services are offered for hardware and IT infrastructure in the German-speaking countries Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The PC-Ware MultiVendor Software Support offers telephone assistance 24/7 in several languages, which is handled in all cases by a single expert throughout.

Dr. Knut Löschke – Founder and Board Chairman of the PC-Ware Information Technologies

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www.pc-ware.com
UnternehmerTUM GmbH, Center for Innovation and Start-ups

This is where business careers start

Entrepreneurial thinking and activity are indispensable for economic success in global competition. The non-profit UnternehmerTUM GmbH is a Center for Innovation and Start-ups at the Technische Universität München (TUM). UnternehmerTUM, founded in 2002, currently employs 40 staff and is one of the leading centers for innovation and start-ups in Europe. The encouragement of entrepreneurial talents and opportunities within the areas of start-ups, innovation, and qualification measures represent the core activities of the center. UnternehmerTUM is committed to the recognition of opportunities, the testing of concepts in a real environment, and the implementation of business concepts.

Start-up
UnternehmerTUM develops entrepreneurial opportunities in collaboration with innovators and start-up teams to produce sustainable business models. Promising start-up projects are supervised throughout the various phases of corporate development – from business planning, financing, to the organizational structure of the new company. Twenty start-ups annually are accompanied throughout this initial phase.

Innovations
Thanks to the systematic testing of a new business concept, it soon becomes clear whether a concrete business opportunity is really viable – or not. Excellent teams receive support in the testing of their concepts for new products and services through a systematic innovation process. With the aid of prototypes, the relevant aspect of the business concept is visualized, and valid feedback retrieved from potential customers.

Qualification
In lectures, seminars and special support programs, UnternehmerTUM provides students and academics with business know-how and key competences to enable them to achieve success as business founders, entrepreneurs, or company managers.

Accor Hotellerie Deutschland GmbH

Check-in in virtual reality

Guests design hotels according to their own concepts and employees test new services in virtual spaces – “virtual reality” is entering the hotel business. In cooperation with the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering and Organization (IAO) in Stuttgart, the Accor Hotellerie Deutschland GmbH, Germany’s market leader in hospitality, digitalized an entire Ibis Hotel with the aid of the so-called ServLab and transformed it into virtual reality. The virtual space in the Fraunhofer Institute offered the opportunity of simulating the entire range of service processes within an extremely short time to allow these processes to be adapted to guests’ requirements. 3D spectacles give the impression of actually being able to move around in the digital spaces.

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Accor is particularly committed to hospitality through passion in its over 4,000 hotels worldwide. In Germany, Accor Hotellerie offers its guests a portfolio of around 330 hotels ranging from the luxury to the budget class under the various brand names Sofitel, Pullman, Novotel, Mercure, Suitehotel, Ibis, all seasons, Etap Hotel and Formule 1.