Innovations – who's responsible?

If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said 'faster horses'.

Attributed to Henry Ford (1863-1947, inventor of modern car manufacturing and assembly-line production)

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While this Passport edition is being prepared, the campaign for the elections to the 20th German Bundestag is in full swing. One of the predominant issues in the election manifestos of the political parties is that of innovations. This doesn't really come as a surprise in the twilight of Angela Merkel's 16-year chancellorship, quite regardless of how one sees this era.

As an intro to this subject in our present issue, it is therefore worth casting an eye at the formal 'innovation content' of the major parties' election manifestos. Although the focus of manifestos is solely on the period occupied by the new parliamentary term, they are nonetheless summaries of thematic discussions of the preceding years too and not least 'children of their time' as well.

An admittedly simple but certainly interesting way is just to count the frequency that the terms 'innovation' and 'innovative' and each of their combinations crop up in the manifestos. An additional approach is to look at which changes there have been to the election manifestos promulgated for the 2017 general election (see Tab. 1).

The Innovation Tower of Hong Kong's Polytechnic University, one of our partner universities. A statement fashioned in steel and glass by star architect Zaha Hadid in 2013. A continuously flowing structure between building and function designed to stimulate the mind.
Photo: Felix Kolbeck

2021

	Number of pages in manifesto	Number of times 'innovation', 'innovative' mentioned		Number of times 'tourism', 'tourist' etc. mentioned
		absolute	per page	
FDP	68	84	1.24	7
CDU/CSU	140	84	0.60	9
SPD	66	27	0.41	2
The Greens	272	65	0.24	16
The Left	168	6	0.04	1
AfD	210	5	0.02	2
Total/average:	**271**		**0.42**	37

2017

	Number of pages in manifesto	Number of times 'innovation', 'innovative' mentioned		Number of times 'tourism', 'tourist' etc. mentioned
		absolute	per page	
SPD	116	57	0.49	1
FDP	158	38	0.24	1
CDU/CSU	76	16	0.21	2
The Greens	248	33	0.13	0
The Left	144	12	0.08	0
AfD	76	1	0.01	0
Total/average:	157		0.20	4

Table 1: 'innovation'/'innovative' in the election manifestos of the largest parties for the 2021 and 2017 parliamentary elections. Numbers include word combinations and those in lists.

2021	2017
CDU/CSU: The programme for stability and renewal. Together for a modern Germany..	**CDU/CSU:** For a Germany in which we live well and like living.
SPD: Respecting your future. What we stand for, what drives us, what we are striving for.	**SPD:** Time for more fairness.
The Greens: Germany. Anything's possible.	**Die Grünen:** The future is formed from courage.
FDP: Never has there been more to do.	**FDP:** Let's think anew. Let's not look on any longer.
The Left: Time for action! For social security, peace and climate justice.	**Die Linke:** Social. Fair. Peace. For all. The future we are fighting for.
AfD: Germany. But normal.	**AfD:** Programme for Germany.

Table 2: the election manifestos of the major parties.
All manifestos can be downloaded at: https://www.bundestagswahl-2021.de/wahlprogramme (04.09.2021)

The additional information interesting for us includes how prominently the subject of tourism features in the election manifestos. After all, tourism intensity has increased significantly in most of the parties' manifestos. It is to be hoped that this surge also manifests itself in action taken by the government and the opposition in the next four years to promote tourism.

Upon closer examination of the manifesto texts, one cannot help noticing that for one thing, innovations are called independent, original elements and in general should be supported, as becomes clear in the following terms, for example:

• innovation strength
• promoting innovation
• Germany as an innovation nation (FDP)

The other thing is that the notion of innovation in the manifestos is very frequently associated and connoted with certain topics, such as

• climate change,
• digitalisation,
• New Work,
• transport,
• science and education,
• medicine,
• packaging/waste,
• in the case of the FDP as the only party in the context, with tourism (digital travel sales and forms of travel).

What is noticeable or, rather, slightly alarming is the extent to which many of these direction-setting statements almost coincide in the various election manifestos as soon as the term 'innovation' pops up in them. Is this self-imposed coercion into adopting innovation for media attention ultimately going to lead to the opposite – to uniform patterns of thought and unvarying political models? When you read this text, the 2021 general election will have been decided but this question will remain.

A key to answering the question may lie in identifying which of society's institutions can actually spawn innovations, support them and steer them in the right directions over the long term. So let's go back one step and first look at the value and point of innovations.

Innovation means responsibility

It's not just in election manifestos: everyone is talking about innovations – as a notion, as a requirement, as the great white hope, buzzword to name but a few. Be it short and medium term with regard to overcoming the damaging economic and societal aftermath of the corona pandemic for instance, or medium- and long-term with regard to solutions for adaptation and mitigation of climate change. The at times excessive use of the adjectival form 'innovative' should make us sceptical, for not infrequently does it also seem to serve as an appended self-commendation.

There is broad agreement seen from the business and economic angle on the concept of innovation. But at the same time there are also other strands of how to understand innovation which are of great importance for the multidisciplinary system of tourism, be they those of ethnology, sociology, psychology, political science and, in the academic context, the understanding the educational sciences have of innovation.[1]

From the economic point of view, innovations result from ideas if these are translated into new products, services or processes (invention) which are actually successfully used and penetrate the market (diffusion).[2] While science gives us new findings, in other words new knowledge, innovations can be seen as the counterpart, as it were, or complement generating new applications from knowledge.

Crucially important is the question as to WHO is 'responsible' for innovations, for it is undoubtedly the case that even the mere attempt at developing an innovation requires selecting and considering the new or existing knowledge to be brought to bear. Innovation is concomitant with responsibility: for what is developed from it, for the ensuing consequences, for the people who will be involved with it – not just as customers of an associated product.

Who is responsible for innovations?

For a long time it seemed that companies by virtue of their function as institutions for covering others' needs automatically had to and were able to come up with innovations almost single-handedly because they are at the mercy of the driving forces of competition in market-economy systems: suppliers, customers, existing rivals, potential new competitors and substitu-

Large electric SUV – a dead end in the private transport of the future?
Photo: Felix Kolbeck

Hanging Gardens – in Babylon once one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Today, reality in the luxury hotel ICON, which also serves in Hong Kong as a training hotel for our partner university Hong Kong Polytechnic.

Photo: Felix Kolbeck

Innovative universities – an important link between the scientific community and society at large. Entrance to the Departments of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology, Computer Science and Mathematics, and Business Engineering.
Photo: Nicolai Schneider

tional goods.3 If we take a simplified view of the effective direction of these driving forces of competition, seeing it as a sort of centrifuge[3] which can drive out slow, persisting companies from the markets, we would attest innovations a centripetal action which holds firms by virtue of their competitive advantages more securely on the rotating disc for a certain period of time.

Throughout the time of growth being the only or at least the mostly dominant paradigm of economic activity in the 'Western-oriented' industrial and service nations, this view of innovations was never really called into question either. The breakdown of classical value structures, digitalisation and the necessary orientation towards sustainability have brought about a huge change in perception and positioning here. Policymakers, regions, media, churches, associations, administrative bodies … all want to or should be innovative, or at least talk about it from time to time.

If the firms were responsible for growth-promoting innovations, who is it now for the necessary innovations promoting society and sustainability? Like an initial flash, the corona pandemic has sparked off the need for answers to this sore point.

As if in a sort of reflex action, politicians are endeavouring to consign the quest for innovations to as many sectors of society as possible and ultimately to delegate it to them as well. The universities are among the main addressees.

The universities are being asked to deliver – is it asking too much?

Directly linked with the notion of innovation putting research into practice is the development observed in academia for nearly 10 years now which sees the field of transfer as the third central task, the so-called 'Third Mission', at the universities, along with research and teaching. Article 5 (^{3}) of the German Constitution regulates the arts and sciences, research and teaching – will this freedom also apply to the transfer tasks of the universities and their members? This is a fundamental question, for it touches the self-concept of the universities and strictly speaking requires a down-to-earth debate on the possibilities, goals, manifestations and limits of universities cooperating with the environments and political systems within their orbits. Yet this debate is hardly taking place or is drowned in the general chorus of all the participants giving each other assurances of their readiness and eagerness to innovate.

The Hochschule München (HM) has addressed the increasing significance of the transfer task by such things as establishing a separate section for cooperations and transfer in the Executive Committee. The

great expansion in cross-departmental activities covering entrepreneurship and innovation is likewise having an appreciable impact in this direction. Huge successes in this respect are the title 'Founder University', which the Hochschule München first bore a full 10 years ago, and the fact that the HM continues to enjoy to this day nationwide top positions in the respective rankings.[4]

Business start-ups are a motor for innovations – the processes of coming up with ideas, devising business models, establishing a business etc. does after all manifestly mean a venture into uncharted waters. But by no means does it constitute the only momentum, with established and large-scale undertakings constantly also being faced with the challenge of keeping pace with the repositories of innovation and sustainable business success by promoting start-up culture and entrepreneurship.

The 'Hightech Agenda Bayern' has seen research propelled forward since 2019.[5] This has created unique chances for Bavaria's universities of applied sciences: through what is in any case the high relevance their research work has in terms of practical application, it is not only the innovative strength that is fostered in the Free State but also the students can benefit from fresh ideas, skills encouraging innovation and hands-on contacts in their studies.

And what should not go without mentioning is that university reforms are being taken in hand in Bavaria and other federal states, the outcomes of which will, inter alia, see an increase in the university's degrees of freedom, and the universities' cooperations with civil society and the business community put on a firmer footing. Implementation in Bavaria will be by way of a 'University Innovation Act' in the course of 2021.[6]

Worth mentioning too in a Germany-wide context are the calls of the FDP party for a German Transfer Association, in analogy and addition to the German Research Foundation.

But: is it in any way permissible or even prudent in pluralistically organised polities to assign via the 'innovation lever' such a large proportion of the responsibility for society's further development[7] to the universities and their cooperation and network partners often selected for a specific project? How will this pan out in the international context? Who will the intellectual property belong to which results from cooperations between (state) universities and the business community?

And not least of all: how are universities supposed to accomplish these multifaceted tasks and, if you please, to include the students as the innovation drivers of the future in the process when extensive and media-grabbing resources may be poured into cutting-edge research and institutes but in no way does the necessary increase in resources for administration and non-professorial teaching staff keep pace?

Alternative programmes to innovation as the general doctrine of salvation

By now we have clearly reached the point where we can ask ourselves whether innovations alone are at all suitable for advancing the further development of our societies and for steering them in socially acceptable, sustainable and desirable directions for the common good. In the immediate intellectual orbit of innovations there are other constructive possibilities as well, such as:

1. Evolution:

Much might well be achieved in many fields by simply making things better in the first place, or at least making them properly, instead of making them new. We already know so much, have gained so much experience and there are products and consumers for so many things.

Optimising what already exists can also involve a highly innovative component without necessarily specifically 'new' ideas being needed. This is especially true for the political apparatus and implementing administrative bodies.

2. Exnovation:

Exnovation describes – as the antonym of innovation – processes directed at phasing out practices, products, services or methods which are no longer effective or desired.

Why are cars built for personal use which weigh over two tons and mostly just transport somebody along with their briefcase and/or handbag from A to B? Cars often seen at the electric filling stations in Munich are SUVs weighing 2.5 tons and more. Designs which are utterly absurd but supported! And, what's more, we will be happy to import in the future, depending on the load on the network, nuclear- and coal-generated electricity for this as well because increasing sustainable energy capacities won't be able to keep up with the goals set for increasing e-mobility.

This and similar examples show that it is often hurdles in global action policies and the political will to act which put the brakes on desperately needed developments and not the lack of innovations as such. On the contrary: the pseudo-innovation 'e-mobility' inhibits necessary exnovations and delays real innovations in the field of mobility.

Evolutions and exnovations also have a tough time of it because the thinking goes that it won't be possible to win media presence or any votes with them to any appreciable extent. But is that still really the case? What can rather be presumed is that the will of the electorate will soon be shown to be otherwise.

Innovations without value(s)?

Coming up with new ideas and pursuing their practical application through innovations is conditional on having great tenacity and it also entails lengthy economically lean periods. These images describe well that when all is said and done, it primarily calls for virtues such as persistence, hard work, communication, being open to other opinions, courage, discipline and assertiveness for this path to be successful. The values behind these virtues, however, do not exactly occupy the top positions of the political agendas.

Innovations need rivalry! At a European level though, the countless rescue packages, bailouts and the like have been ensuring the survival of mainly failing structures since 2007. That a de facto EU debt union of all things has been established to tackle the consequences of corona will likewise not lead to promoting a culture geared towards progress and innovation. The principle of a state raising loans which are not repaid by the beneficiaries but via the EU budget is toxic for the opportunity-oriented mentality of entrepreneurship and will precipitate quite the reverse: increasing greed and risk aversion, and a more pronounced dependency mentality.

And even if ideas and innovation are very good, many of them run the risk of silting up in the wheels of an officially practised hedging mentality and a proclivity for avoidance. Isn't it precisely here that innovations above all need to start? Where do we still need urgent policy and administrative innovations?

Service sector and tourism as a field of innovation

As already intimated in the editorial of this Passport edition, the tourist industry is generally not credited with any particular innovativeness. There are basically two reasons for this:
• one thing is that as a multidisciplinary system, tourism is reliant on innovations from the dominant sub-disciplines and
• the other thing is that core functions and the overall physical environment in tourism can hardly be digitalised because they require not only the presence of guests but these guests also explicitly wish to have them and to live and to experience them in the flesh.

Many experiences can of course be created in, say, virtual spaces but these are more 'add-ons' than substitutive products. Travelling, watching the world go by in another place, enjoying an experience and returning do seem to be virtually predestined, though, for serving as reference points lighting the way to successful innovations in the business, social, technical and – hopefully – policy sectors. For tourism is not exactly an election manifesto but is part of the life programme of people and societies thinking and acting freely.

The question raised at the beginning as to WHO is 'responsible' for innovations may thus also be answered as follows: each and every one shares in the responsibility for whether innovations will become widely accepted and whether the obsolete will be retired by means of exnovations. This may be facilitated not only by making concrete decisions on consumption, investments and who to vote for but also in particular through involvement in and commitment to society within the setting of frank and fair discussions and – of course – through appropriate EDUCATION at all levels. ▥

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[3] Cf. Porter, Michael E. (2013): Wettbewerbsstrategie. Methoden zur Analyse von Branchen und Konkurrenten. 12th edition, Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus, pp. 37-41.

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[5] Cf. Bavarian State Government (2019): Auf was wartet unser Land?, https://www.bayern.de/politik/hightech-agenda/

[6] Cf. for the state of the debate on the bill Buchwald, Sabine; Glas, Andreas; Weinmann, Lea: Der Jubel für den Entwurf des neuen Hochschulgesetzes bleibt aus, Süddeutsche Zeitung of 20 May 2021, https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/bayern-hochschulgesetz-reform-entwurf-1.5298370

[7] Cf. Maurer, Rainer (2016): Staatliche Hochschulen im Dienste gesellschaftlicher Veränderungsprozesse? In: Die Neue Hochschule; No. 5 (2016), pp. 134-137

Innovating successfully in tourism

What are innovations and what function do they have? This piece sets out to examine these elemental questions. There then follows discussion of strategic measures for effective implementation of innovations and a number of selected best-practice exemplars. But first, let us take a look at some innovation projects in tourism.

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Peter Greischel

Since Schumpeter, 'innovation' has been understood as devising new solutions and these solutions prevailing on the market. According to Bleicher, innovation management comprises 'the ongoing improvement of all processes and the focussed imaginative creation and pushing-through of changes by shaping and guiding corporate development' (Bleicher 1991, p. 426).

So what this encompasses is both existing business models, products and services as well as new developments (cf. Osterwalder 2020, p. 30). This manifests itself in the seven dimensions of the global standard ISO 56002 (cf. ISO.org 2019).

Much of our everyday life is conditioned by innovations: smartphones are becoming more powerful and more durable or have new features which their predecessors were unable to boast. We find this again in tourism too. Bookings are increasingly being made on smartphones, travel reports are written and read online and having a virtual holiday does meanwhile seem conceivable.

Digitalisation is seen as one of the main drivers for innovations in tourism. The traffic routing system 'Smart Crowd Control' of Lübeck Bay to prevent hotspots on the Schleswig-Holstein coast (cf. Kompetenzzentrum 2020) and sponsored within the scope of the LIFT scheme, for instance, is based on digitalisation. Successful former start-ups such as Airbnb and Booking.com would never have seen the light of day without digitalisation.

The transport sector has played a key role in tourism innovations for decades, going from the first railways to the 'global village' opened up by air services. In aeronautics we have observed the development and the presumable demise of the A380. This innovation engineered by Airbus was originally meant to make hub traffic inexpensive The success increasingly failed to materialise when it was realised that it was not possible to fill the planes to capacity on too many routes and alternatives like the A350 with the same price tags but lower seating capacities came on to the market.

The innovative approach of AIDA Cruises went beyond the newly designed ships for the target group of families and also included aggressive pricing and boosting sales by offering short trips for travel agency staff. This saw the market volume in Germany of people going on ocean cruises up from 360,000 in the year 2000 to 1.22m passengers in 2010, representing an average annual increase of 13% (cf. DRV 2001-2011). The environmentally damaging impact of the ships and with it the growing political pressure led to the shipyards and their suppliers intensifying their endeavours to come up with new technologies to reduce the harmful emissions from the ships' engines.

With the neat ideas it keeps coming up with, the mobility provider Sixt is also regarded as a trailblazer in its sector. Their 'fast lane' option, for example, shows how in corona times you can use their app to rent a vehicle without any interaction with their staff (cf. https:// www. sixt .de/digital - anmieten/#/).

The business model of the amusement park 'Europapark Rust' is based on a high proportion of regular customers. They go to the park for the thrills of the well-established and popular rides but also to try out the new ones, without which the growth potential of the park would be severely limited.

Among others, the hotel chain MotelOne, the Ayurveda tour operator Aytours, e-busses in tourist destinations, climate-neutral resorts, space tourism, certification for sustainable travel and 'leaping from one natural pool to the next' in the hills surrounding Lake Attersee (Sanktjohannser 2021), winner of the 2014 Upper Austria Tourism Innovation Award, testify to more innovations in tourism. The largest-scale and most extravagant tourism innovation project anywhere in the world must surely have been the remodelling of the Emirates and especially the city of Dubai to create a tourist destination.

Key functions of innovations

Innovations in the market

Our Western system of values tends to view the 'new' as more appealing than the 'old' or the 'existing'. 'New' products are thus generally held in higher esteem than 'old' ones and the conclusion may therefore be permitted that innovations and hence new products are imbued with high quality. Consequently, and speaking very generally again, they are more in demand than 'old' products. The 'New Persil' will thus be credited with superior cleaning properties to the traditional 'Persil' and the price will almost certainly be higher.

Innovations in companies

Innovations are meant to secure future sales, thereby constituting a strategic core concern. In addition, reaping price premiums at the beginning of product life cycles is regarded as another prime motivating force.

Economies of scale can enhance revenues too. The A380 with up to 853 seats or the Oasis of the Seas of the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line with 5400 lower berths was/is more economical to operate than their smaller counterparts.

There are also many entrepreneurs who have a passion for innovating or who also tailor their innovations to the common good.

No sure-fire successes

Innovations are not going to be sure-fire successes, of course, nor will they guarantee financial success. According to GfK, the largest domestic market research institute, the flop rate the manufacturers of consumer goods in Germany report for innovative new products is 70% (cf. Klein 2019).

With the entrepreneurial 'pure form' of innovation and in the case of start-ups, only 4 of 1,000 companies across the sector became so successful that they saw a 50-fold increase in the capital employed (cf. Osterwalder 2020, p. 32).

The challenge lies in not knowing for quite some time whether an innovation will be accepted by the market. Costs arise without any sales being generated. This has a major impact on the innovation process (see Fig. 1).

The impetus triggering ideas can be manifested in many forms: from the brainwave of an employee to structured, creative brainstorming in teams, from the suggestion of a customer or somebody in a partner company, or the results of an open innovation initiative to using the results of market research (cf. Pricken 2001, pp. 206 ff.). Peters even stresses the destruction necessary in order that one can become innovative (cf. Peters 1998, pp. 2 ff.). Design thinking has established itself as a common method. It describes a process which helps to overcome barriers in an organi-
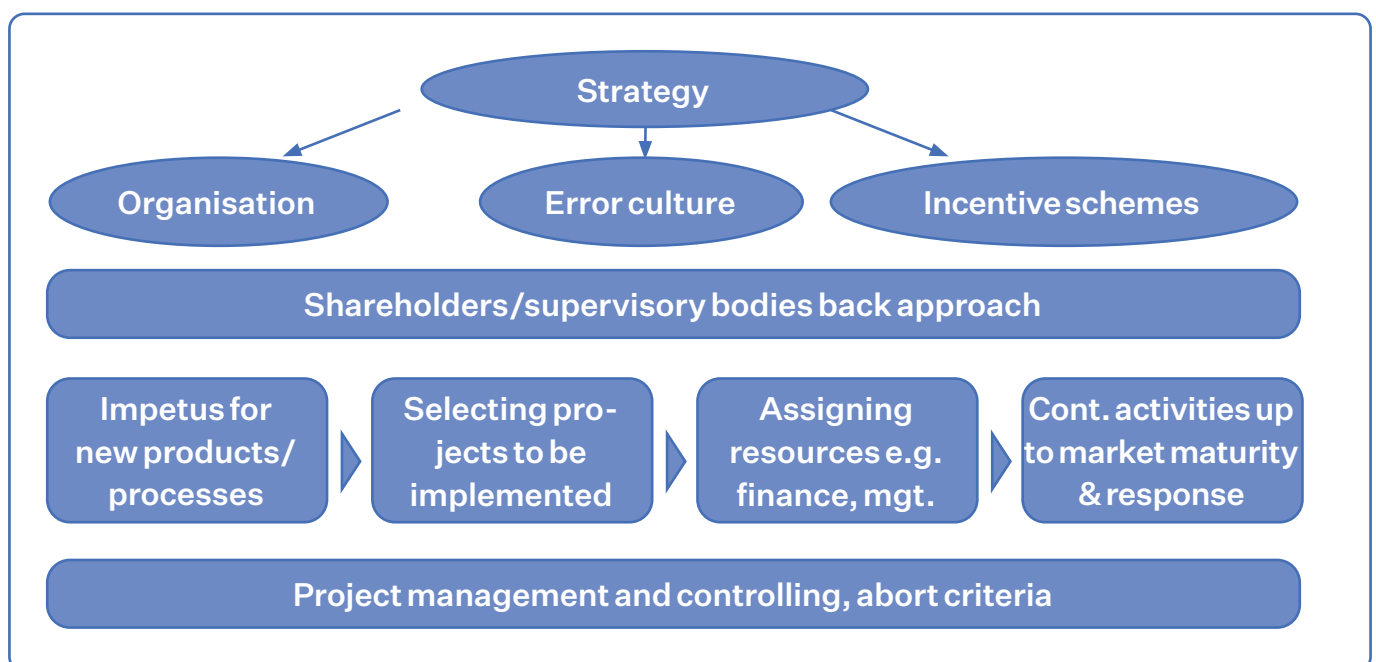

Fig. 1: effectively generating and implementing innovations through strategic integration of innovation processes
Source: own illustration

Innovation: 'The idea is not everything, but without an idea, all else will come to nought.'
Photo: vectorfusionart/stock.adobe.com

sation, to prioritise the customer's perspective and to swiftly produce initial tangible results (cf. Schmieden et al. 2021).

A **selection** from various project ideas needs to be made: Which will be implemented? Who will get his way in the organisation? The controllers, who don't know the return on investment, or those who came up with the ideas and who believe in great successes in the future? What criteria is the selection based on?

Resources have to be allocated: for the design, production and marketing, financial, infrastructure, human and also management resources are then needed, as well as an appropriate organisational structure, as a rule competing with the existing business. As a result, a balance needs to be found to control the internal rivalry for resources and power.

Controlling tools are then meant to support the ongoing, goal-directed control activities. The future operating costs are largely determined in the development phase (cf. Bea et al. 2020, pp. 361 ff.).

The job of the **supervisory body** is to anticipate at an overarching process level any untoward developments as well and to stick to a project in the event of any setbacks or decide on exiting in consultation with the management.

Organisational requirements

'It is precisely the creative person who tends to see the world already changed by his idea and easily overlooks the forces of inertia exerted by what already exists and is successful.' (Bleicher 1991, p. 424)

In addition to the specialist promoter, Bleicher therefore sees the necessity for a power promoter who 'is at home in the complex facets of the organisation and its management' (Bleicher 1991, p. 425). 'The important thing is that innovation must be given its own centre of power within the organisation.' (Osterwalder 2020, p. 31)

If innovation is deemed to be strategically important, it can be achieved either through a CEO with a strong focus on innovating or a Chief Innovation Officer can be appointed with the commensurate powers to push it through.

If this takes place several tiers below management, it may be presumed that the innovations will hardly be promoted and implemented adequately by the executive officers and will thus fizzle out (cf. Osterwalder 2020, p. 31).

Impeding effective innovation management is the 'softly-softly' approach regularly found in middle management. In order not to harm their own career, risks are taken to only a limited extent.

Mintzberg pointed out that project teams are formed ad hoc and must be put together from many different disciplines. He calls them 'adhocracies' (Mintzberg 1988, pp. 608 f.).

The radical tack of Ridderstrale and Nordström: 'With innovation ... we mean ... a mindset which ap-

The innovations of the stakeholders
in tourism intermesh like a network
Photo: WavebreakmediaMicro/adobe.stock.com

plies to everyone and everything in a company and dominates non-stop.' (Ridderstrale/Nordström 2000, p. 149) initially seems to be over the top but it does point in the right direction. Agility is required, mistakes should be permitted in the generally non-linear processes.

Strategic framework

The corporate strategy provides the genesis for successful innovations. Here it is set forth

• how important innovations are for a company,
• in which thematic direction they are driven,
• to what extent they should take place,
• which resources will be provided for them and
• which incentive systems there are for the employees.

The innovation process should be defined as a core process (cf. Kaplan et al. 1996, pp. 97 ff.) and management has the task of constantly progressing this process.

'Businesses have to realise that successful innovations take a long time, that they have to develop key performance indicators in order to evaluate advances, and that they can only be created within a corporate culture in which experimenting is part of the daily work.' (Osterwalder 2020, p. 32)

This may see huge variations in the degree of innovation. Many but small-scale are the innovation projects which firms often see through: 'Don't just bank on blockbusters' (Khosla 2019, p. 11). In this way, the perils of large losses can be avoided but equally there is then no chance of 'striking gold'.

Then again, we see efforts aspiring to fundamentally new innovations. Great opportunities for sales, profits and image enhancement are also concomitant, however, with a corresponding risk of losses (cf. Bleicher 1991, pp. 425 f; Furr 2019, pp. 60 ff.).

Best-practice approaches

Looking in from the outside enables a number of successful innovative companies and their approaches to be identified.

Booking.com's website reveals a consistent strategic focus on simplicity and 'angularity', on the many ongoing little innovations and optimisations, and on the field of the hotel bookings. Diversification into other such service providers is cautious (cf. Machatschke 2017, 2021).

Without prioritising the strategy and organisation of the Airbus Industries, it would not have been possible to develop and build the A380.

The example of AIDA shows that sticking to their innovative guns, even after initial failures in market cultivation posed an existential threat, ultimately contributed to the strong growth of AIDA Cruises.

The entrepreneurial flair of Erich Sixt coupled with constantly searching for new products and services for the car-hire company and high-speed internal implementation was a major factor in the firm achieving market pre-eminence.

Aytours, which organises special Ayurveda holidays, started off in the nineties with what at that time was a virtually unknown product. Scientific research had been the kick-start while the uncompromising strategic focus on the quality of the service providers and meticulous customer care contributed to their successful business development.

Airbnb had exploited the nascent digital potentials and served the needs of the private property sub-

letting market, the upshot being that it was able to establish itself as a major innovator in the tourist industry.

The structure of the tourist industry in Germany with its largely medium-sized businesses accounts for innovations mainly being driven by the proprietors. The low margins of many businesses in the tourist sector can also be blamed in an industry comparison for innovations being more geared to internal modifications and product variations than to new projects, and on the whole lagging behind compared with other companies (cf. Kamerar 2019).

Support measures such as 'innovation dating' with the scientific community and funding agencies for further developing and realising projects which clearly embrace sustainability thus prove to be exceedingly helpful (cf. STV 2020). ᵐ

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Innovations in HR management

Analysis of the winners of the Hospitality HR Award

Employee-centric personnel work and appreciative leadership is already a reality in many firms.
Photo: PantherMedia/ HayDmitriy

Celine Chang, Simon Werther

Human resources (HR) management in the hospitality sector is commonly regarded as not very professionalised and certainly not as innovative. In point of fact there is even said to be a considerable need for the industry to catch up in HR management (Gardini 2014). There are also many positive examples of employers, however, as can be seen from the winners of the Hospitality HR Award. This article presents the results of a study by Chang and Werther (2021) which analyses innovative strategies, concepts and measures as illustrated by the winners of the award.

HR management in the hospitality sector: status quo

The hospitality industry finds itself contending with the poor image it generally has among many staff and potential trainees. Having to work at all sorts of hours, no real work-life balance, few chances of career advancement and authoritarian leadership are just some of the criticisms levelled time and time again (e.g. Baum 2007, 2015; Gardini 2014; Kusluvan et al. 2010). At the same time the sector sees itself facing a chronic shortage of skilled personnel, a shortage which cannot be accounted for just by the demographic change. The relevancy of strategically aligned HR management for a competitive edge is still under-

estimated even though the correlation between employee skills, service quality and customer satisfaction is empirically well proven (see e.g. Gardini 2014; Kusluvan et al. 2010). Due to the vast majority being small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), many hotels do not have an HR manager. As a result, they often don't have the expertise and the resources to strategically and operatively establish and maintain a professional and up-to-date HR management system.

There are many employers in the industry too, however, who do not fit into this category, a number of them having long since realised the importance of employee-centric personnel work and appreciative leadership. These positive examples take centre stage in this study because the employers take highly innovative paths in many instances. 'Innovative' in this case is seen as meaning something that is new and differential for a particular field, such as the hospitality industry here, and results in a long-term benefit or competitive edge for the organisation (cf. Chang/Werther 2021). Innovative HR management is thus understood to be the development and implementation of strategies, concepts and measures designed to attract and retain the right employees and talents, to offer opportunities for releasing employees' potentials and enhancing their skills, and by doing so, strengthening the individual, team and company performance. The central question the study poses is what companies with innovative HR management do differently and what innovative HR strategies, concepts and measures these firms have devised.

Methodical approach

The study of Chang and Werther (2021) systematically analysed the applications of all the previous winners of the Hospitality HR Award (see infobox). There were two reasons for focussing on the prizewinners: firstly, the winners have presumably set up a professional HR management system and based on this are able to devise strategies, concepts and measures which are innovative. Secondly, 'innovation' is a key requirement for being presented with the award. The winners therefore represent a positive selection of innovative employers in the hospitality industry whose HR management can generate impetus for other businesses in the sector.

The application papers were analysed with the help of a qualitative content analysis using the software program MAXQDA (Kuckartz/Rädiker 2019). The objective of the analysis was to identify HR strategies, concepts and measures which (a) are innovative in the sense that they are new or at least scarcely widespread in the industry, and which (b) are differential for the positioning of the prizewinners as innovative employers or in the employer network. The HR overall concept was likewise analysed as were the main activities of recruiting, personnel development and employee retention.

The Hospitality HR Award (www.hospitality-award) is the first and only award that honours innovative HR management in the hotel and restaurant trade. It has been presented by the Deutsche Hotelakademie (German Hotel Academy) with the support of noted sponsors since 2013. A jury of HR and industry experts screens the applications and selects the winners according to a standardised criteria and points system. The 2021 award will be presented for the sixth time in various categories (e.g. recruiting, employee development and retention). All employers in the industry can apply.
The award has been received very favourably by the sector, the first five times it was held seeing some 350 employers in all submitting their applications. The majority of the applications came from the hotel trade. A total of 60 awards have so far been presented to 42 organisations all told. These comprised 38 hotels or hotel chains, a hotel cooperation, two hotel networks and two restaurants. Some of the winners have already received multiple awards.

Results

All in all, the study showed that the majority of the prizewinners had gone through a change process and had professionalised and strategically aligned their HR management. One of the main reasons for this is the increasing pressure of the job market and, for instance, its distinct shortage of skilled personnel and the changing values of employees. Most of the winners have therefore devised and implemented an all-embracing HR strategy and taken action in all the key areas of HR management. Going hand in hand with this, numerous businesses have created an Employer Brand, which they communicate via various channels, in particular via their own career pages. What is striking too is that corporate culture is making strides towards more employee empowerment, individualised personnel development, resources orientation, appreciative leadership, meaningfulness and cooperation activities (see Tab. 1). At the corporate level, investing in HR management, as shown in table 1, results in the positive development of all-important KPIs (key performance indicators), such as a reduction in the time off work due to illness, lower staff turnover and higher customer satisfaction. An early example of best practice is the hotel chain Upstalsboom, whose staff are given the space and freedom to further their personal development (e.g. going to seminars in a monastery), to play an active part in

shaping the corporate culture, and to implement social projects (e.g. building schools in Rwanda).

Typical features of the prizewinners' HR management	Results
• strategically aligned HR concept including sweeping HR measures in every sphere of HRM	• days off ill reduced
• value-based employer branding	• staff turnover rate reduced
• value-based corporate culture and appreciative leadership culture	• more applications
• active integration of employees (involvement, empowerment)	• greater customer satisfaction
• individual personnel development, strong focus too on furthering personal development	• greater staff satisfaction
• digitalisation of HR management (e.g. applicant management system, e-learning platforms)	• positive reputation of the employer
• cooperation initiatives on HR issues with other hotels in a destination or within a hotel cooperation	

Table 1: overview of innovative HR management strategies, concepts and results

When it comes to **recruiting**, the prizewinners see digitalisation and simplifying the application process as the key factors. Motel One, for instance, has developed a recruiting tool which is easy to use for both managerial staff and applicants. A number of companies also offer low-threshold contact systems, e.g. by merely entering their contact details in a contact form, applicants will automatically reach the company and be invited for an interview (e.g. Atlantic Hotels). This then obviates the headaches of writing an application. Furthermore, there are prizewinners who make the application and selection process more attractive for certain target groups. SEETELHOTELS, for example, are known for their Trainee Casting, based on the German counterpart of 'Pop Idol'. Employer branding sees recruitment drives working with high-quality and emotionally appealing recruiting films (e.g. Hotel Jungbrunn). As to the results of the recruitment drives, the winners report an increase in the number of applicants and a better fit, a shorter time to hire and them being perceived as a more attractive employer.

Where **HR development** is concerned, the prizewinners had wide-ranging opportunities and development programmes for specialists and executives, and for trainees as well in some cases. Some private hotels even employed their own dedicated personnel developer. Here as well, the trend towards digitalisation comes very much to the fore in progressing the introduction of learning management systems and blended-learning approaches. What is also striking is the willingness to cooperate with external consultants, trainers and universities, and their receptiveness to

looking beyond the confines of their own sector. Personnel development is becoming more individualised, i.e. tailored to the development needs of each employee, and has a keener focus on personal development. Only a few harness their further training programmes into their own academy, however. A beacon in this respect is Motel One, who stride innovative paths with their Motel One Campus and were honoured with the German Education Award in 2016. The effectiveness of the prizewinners' personnel development measures is manifested in job satisfaction, staff staying longer with the company, dwindling numbers not completing their traineeships and an improved work climate.

Two developments can be identified with regard to **employee retention:** a change in the corporate culture and the working conditions. The culture already mentioned of involving employees and of encouraging empowerment coupled with staff-centric and appreciative leadership are seen as just as important as improving the working conditions as regards predictability, working hours and work-life balance. The coffee-roasting establishment Dinzler Kaffeerösterei, for example, announces its duty roster four weeks in advance and arrangements can be made for couples to be off work at the same time. Dinzler also has its own day nursery with flexible care times. The basic observations which can be made are that the winners in this category offer their staff working conditions and benefits which cannot be taken for granted in the industry, such as paid overtime, staff housing, paying fitness centre fees, company pension schemes and discount cards. The effectiveness of these measures is evidenced by fewer days lost due to illness, lower staff turnover and higher employee and customer satisfaction.

Success factors for innovative HR management
Taking all prizewinners into consideration, ten success factors for implementing innovative HR management were identified (see Fig. 1).

Depending on the situation of the particular business, all success factors essentially play a key role. Yet it is precisely the strategic alignment as well as supporting change, coupled with the owner and/or personnel decision-maker setting an example that are of paramount importance.

Discussion
Looking at the big picture, it transpires that it is precisely what the industry is criticised for that the prizewinners don't do in their HR management. Instead, a different attitude towards the employees can be ob-
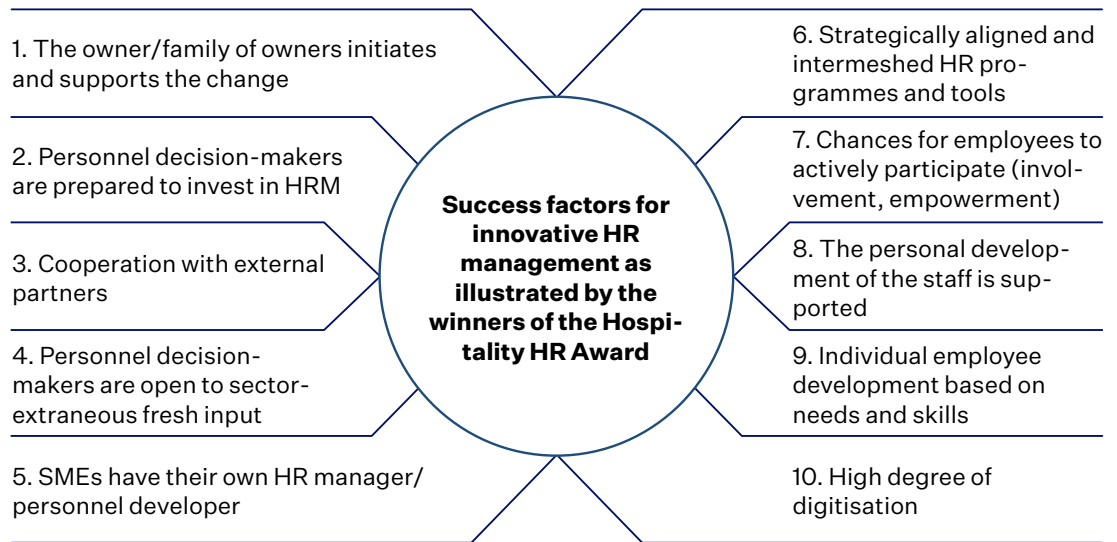
Figure 1: success factors for innovative HR management

Success factors for innovative HR management as illustrated by the winners of the Hospitality HR Award

1. The owner/family of owners initiates and supports the change

2. Personnel decision-makers are prepared to invest in HRM

3. Cooperation with external partners

4. Personnel decision-makers are open to sector-extraneous fresh input

5. SMEs have their own HR manager/personnel developer

6. Strategically aligned and intermeshed HR programmes and tools

7. Chances for employees to actively participate (involvement, empowerment)

8. The personal development of the staff is supported

9. Individual employee development based on needs and skills

10. High degree of digitisation

served and it is into these primary resources for business success that investment flows. The structures regarded as necessary by the changing realms of work and which have been discussed in other sectors in great detail for many years now are also reflected in the guiding principles the prizewinners live out. In an insecure and ever more complex world with dynamic and disruptive markets, changing values and expectations in respect of employers and changing requirements in respect of employees (von Ameln/Wimmer 2016), different and new methods are needed in HR management.

Of pivotal importance to the prizewinners in this respect is both personnel and executive development as well as being actively involved in shaping the corporate culture. The correlation with all-important KPIs which directly or indirectly impact business success strengthens the companies in their decisions. So in spite of all the challenging fundamentals, innovative HR management is also possible in the hospitality industry – with a little thinking outside of the box, with the courage to tread new paths and with the creativity to come up with unconventional solutions.

Seen in this context, the Hospitality HR Award is an important platform for making the winners known in the industry. It is to be hoped that this will incentivise other employers to invest in their HR management and that in order to ensure their continued future success, the sector as a whole will become more innovative in this field. ▥

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Foto: Erwin Hymer Group SE (EHG)

Camping – a sector seeing fundamental change

Innovations, cultural change & a pandemic as accelerators for growth? Camping, whether in a tent, in your own or a rented camper, in a caravan or DIY-converted van, has seen the demand rising continually for quite a few years now. Especially in these times of corona, this type of holiday is attracting ever more people, primarily because individual travel in a self-contained vehicle replete with its own living, sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities is particularly safe. It is above all the tourist industry in Germany that has been the beneficiary of this, for many German caravanning enthusiasts spend such a holiday in their own country.

Deutsche Fassung
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Axel Gruner

In a new study commissioned by the Caravanning Industry Association (CIVD), the firm dwif- Consulting GmbH determined the economic effects of caravanners. Result: 14.8 billion euros in turnover in 2019 – a marked increase of 17.6 per cent since 2016 (Harrer/ Sporer 2020, pp. 1 f.).

Significant growth has been achieved in the camper van sector: 78,055 new registrations in 2020, representing a plus of 44.8 per cent on the previous year, are the figures reported by the CIVD, which draws up a detailed evaluation of the data provided by the Federal Motor Vehicle Office. For the first time, over 100,000 recreational vehicles (i.e. motor homes, campers and caravans) were newly registered in Germany within a calendar year: 107,203 (+ 32.6 per cent). Growth in the caravan sector was lower: 29,148 new registrations (+ 8.2 per cent). Not included in these calculations are the many vans self-converted to campers.

The association expects continued high demand in 2021 as well. Individual travel in a camper or caravan in corona times 'is simply a particularly safe form of holidaying', observes CIVD President Hermann Pfaff on the sustained boom, which is apparently continuing to gather pace in the pandemic.
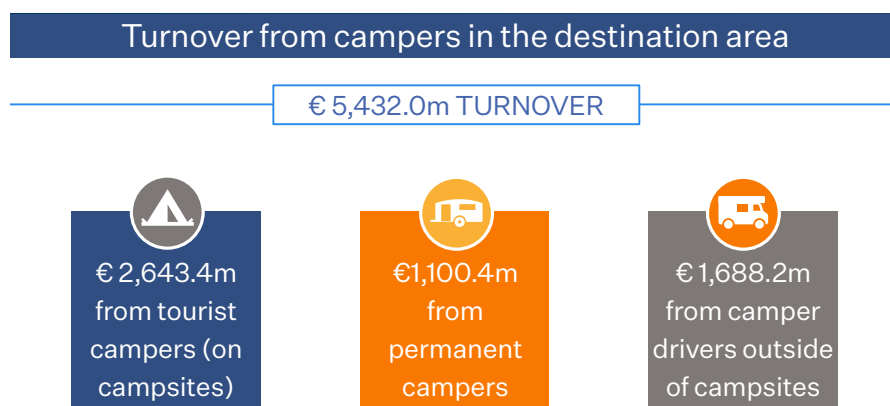
Positive trend

Pfaff feels that given the corona situation, forecasts for 2021 are difficult but says the association expects the positive trend to certainly continue. 'With the proviso that there are no major setbacks in fighting the pandemic', which prevent travel, for instance, or affect the production of vehicles, 'we assume sales of recreational vehicles will grow by 10 per cent altogether', says Pfaff. The association anticipates a plus of around 12 per cent for campers.

The segment of the younger lifestyle groups is generating above-average growth, as surveys conducted by experts of the industry association and the ADAC motoring organisation have unanimously found. It is especially the 'millennials' (group aged between their mid-20s to around 40) that are showing great interest. According to the CIVD, most of the customers in 2020 were completely new and were taking an interest in camping for the very first time in their lives (www. adac.de/reise-frei-zeit/camping-trends 24.06.2021).

Ever younger target groups

What really captures the interest of younger potential customers are the likes of innovative web portals such as vansofgermany.de, camperstyle.de and beyond-camping.net, which provide information and inspiration on self-sufficient travel. Influencers don't only report their experiences, vehicle conversions and the feel it gives them under #Vanlife – some of them are on the road in their (self-converted) campers the whole year round and regularly share their experiences in blogs, on Instagram and YouTube, give talks and organise meetings. On closer examination, it becomes evident that the new nomads with their mobile residence as their base earn their keep with blogs, YouTube, their own online shop, programming services or also temporary work in the destinations – a subculture of travelling and life.
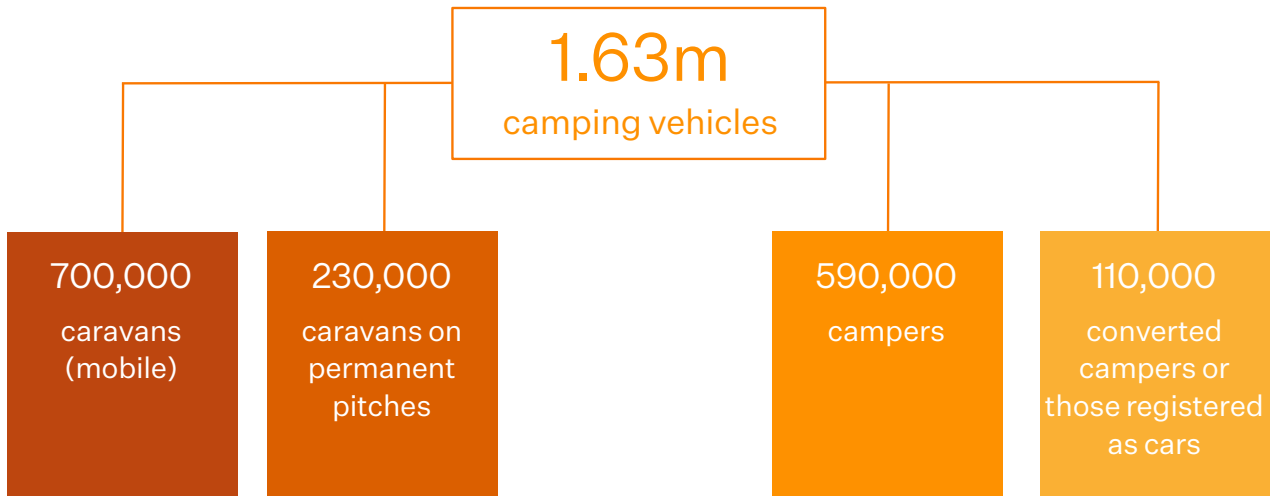

Turnover from campers in the destination area

€ 5,432.0m TURNOVER

€ 2,643.4m from tourist campers (on campsites)

€1,100.4m from permanent campers

€ 1,688.2m from camper drivers outside of campsites

dwif

Source: Federal Motor Vehicle Office Flensburg, CIVD and Harrer/Sporer 2020, p. 4

Innovative sustainability programmes

At the same time the camping sector is developing innovative sustainability programmes covering climate protection, waste avoidance, self-generated electric power and climate-friendly on-site mobility. There is, namely, the wish for a largely 'unspoilt' corner of the earth where a holiday can be enjoyed in close touch with nature. ECOCAMPING, for example, is an action organisation promoting ecological camping in Europe which helps and supports campsites in their quest for

Camping offerings and their segments

1.63m
camping vehicles

| **700,000** caravans (mobile) | **230,000** caravans on permanent pitches | | **590,000** campers | **110,000** converted campers or those registered as cars |

dwif
WEGWEISEND IM TOURISMUS

Quelle: Kraftfahrt-Bundesamt Flensburg, CIVD sowie Harrer/Sporer 2020, S. 2

greater environmental protection and nature conservation (https://ecocamping.de 25.06.2021).

Platform for innovation exchange

As the market leader, the Erwin Hymer Group is continually breaking new ground. July 2018 saw the Innovation Camp established, an institution whose task is to be a platform for innovation exchange between all the group's brands. All the participants consciously think beyond the established structures. To address a particular issue, specialists from various corporate divisions get together and devise solutions in creativity workshops outside of their ordinary day-to-day work. Participants can swiftly and easily set up design models in the 'garage' and then immediately check whether the ideas will work in practice. A key feature of the Innovation Camp is the design thinking method – a playful, strictly user-centric approach which is meant to produce new solutions for complex problems. By putting a lot of thought into the initial question, the team members discover and gain new perceptions. They delve deep down into the matter at hand, with the result that they understand customers' needs better, for example. A basis for new product ideas and innovation then starts to emerge. Instead of a logical and analytical stance, intuition is a major determinant.

Even before the inauguration of the Innovation Camp, the Erwin Hymer Group had been working with the design thinking system. One result was the so-called 'push-out' – a new technique for increasing the space with inflatable, insulating walls. The Innovation Camp can also be credited with a 48/230V power system with a quick-charge function for significantly improved self-sufficiency, as it likewise can for using vacuum panels for better insulating properties. (www.erwinhymergroup.com/de/innovationen/innovation-camp 25.06.2021).

Conclusion: the sector is intentionally or unintentionally following Charles Darwin's law, which to paraphrase basically says that it is not the biggest and the strongest that will survive but those who best adapt to the continually changing environment. 🧳

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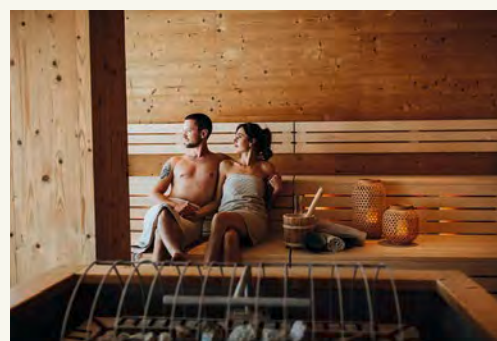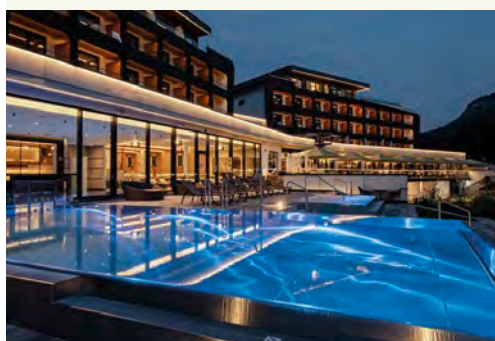
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Carbon-neutral air traffic by 2050?

New scenarios for aviation

Aeroplane vapour trails in the sky. Their impact on global warming and air pollution is significant.
Photo: Furian/panthermedia

Andreas Humpe, Ralf Kastner, Kerstin Mesch

Air traffic contributes to air pollution. It is responsible for three per cent of the global greenhouse gas emissions and that figure is rising. How might the emissions be minimised by using alternative fuels and what costs would this involve? A research team from Sweden and Germany looked into this question as part of a study. Using computer simulations, the scientists examined how passenger air traffic could become carbon neutral by 2050.

In the study, the scientists formulated a scenario which could show how this could be achieved. Department of Tourism's Prof. Dr. Andreas Humpe, who was very much involved in the study, explains:

'The game-changer is [however] switching to synthetic fuels produced by electric power from renewable energies. These technologies already exist but they are still far more expensive than conventional fuels.'

CO$_2$ savings of 27 gigatonnes possible

In their calculations, the scientists work on the assumption of a linear increase in the usage rate of the alternative fuels and an 8-fold hike in CO$_2$ pricing by 2050. In this scenario, the cost of flying would be 40 per cent higher than it is now and air traffic would have doubled. In spite of this, 27 gigatonnes of CO$_2$ could be saved thanks to new technologies.

Solar power stations: inexpensive and space-saving

Sufficient space is also needed to produce the quantities of regenerative energy required, considering that the 16 trillion passenger kilometres assumed in the study would burn up some 320 million tonnes of synthetic fuels. Solar power stations would currently be the most cost-effective and most space-saving option to generate the power needed carbon free. The current state of the art means these solar power stations would cover an area of approximately 140,000 square kilometres, which equates to around 40 per cent of the area of Germany or more or less the whole of Nepal. A major challenge but one which must be tackled if the aspirations of carbon-free air traffic by 2050 are to be realised, as the scientists conclude.

Discover more about the results of the study!
You will find the full article 'COVID-19 and pathways to low-carbon air transport until 2050', published on the home page of IOPscience, at https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/abe90b