

A group of consultants in a workshop setting, working with colorful plastic components on a table. The scene is brightly lit with overhead fluorescent lights. In the foreground, a man in a white shirt is focused on a task. Behind him, a woman in a black top and another man in a striped shirt are observing. The table is covered with various red, yellow, and green plastic parts. The background shows a modern office environment with a large pillar and recessed ceiling lights.

# Clicking into Place

The pioneering spirit in action—as part of their work for the German Start-Up Prize, the consultants at Porsche Consulting don't actually coach companies whose structures need to be modified and optimized. It's more a case of meeting the basic needs of young companies by transfer of knowledge and exchange of experience.

Reiner Schloz, Thomas König





At the Porsche Akademie, the assembly work was enthusiastic. HGVs were produced from tires, wheels, axles, chassis, bearings and driver's cabs on a piece-work basis. And just like in real life, the "workers" worked against the clock. Work like this doesn't seem to be a great challenge for established employers, but like so many visitors coming to Bietigheim to prepare for the change in their work procedures based on the guidelines of lean processes, this group of company founders (see box) quickly had to get used to the fact that an HGV can be assembled this way or that—or

based on an optimum procedure. The guests were actually very impressed when the Porsche consultants showed them the merciless timings on the stop watch during the workshop—the more the production procedure approached the optimum manufacturing procedure, the more quickly the HGVs were ready.

"We see part of our role," says Head of Business Unit Till Friedrich, "as being to provide the new entrepreneurs with a basic understanding of lean management." The Porsche consultants have a special mission:

## Of Start-Ups and Up-and-Coming Companies

*The German Start-Up Prize is awarded annually in four categories: students, start-up, up-and-coming companies and life's work. The prize winners and nominees in the start-up and up-and-coming companies categories are also given support over a specific period by Porsche Consulting. This year the companies are:*

### **Start-Up:**

**Prize winner:** Eoil Automotive & Technologies GmbH, Alfeld. Development of a technology for using plant oil as a fuel for vehicles. **Project:** Optimization of a product creation process and design of a process-oriented development organization

**Nominated:** Resonanz Magnetfeldtechnik GmbH, Dortmund. Development and production of a multi-phase electric motor for generators and light vehicles. **Project:** Purchase part price analysis for generators, definition of the scope of added value

**Nominated:** Robomotion GmbH, Stuttgart. Products and services for the safe, efficient use of robots. **Project:** Standards in personnel procedures, marketing strategy for a new technology

### **Up-and-coming companies:**

**Prize winner:** Teutoburger Ölmühle GmbH & Co. KG, Ibbenbüren. Production of high-quality cold-pressed edible oils. **Project:** Reduction of set-up times in production, implementation of total productive maintenance (increase of machine availability)

**Nominated:** Open Business Club AG/Xing, Hamburg. Operator of a website for professional networking on the Internet

**Nominated:** TRANSPOREON GmbH & Co. KG, Ulm. Development, manufacture and operation of a logistics platform for linking volume shippers with hauliers and carriers.

**Project:** Optimization of the customer ordering process

Together with Porsche AG, Porsche Consulting has as of this year, together with the magazine *stern*, ZDF and the Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband, become involved in the German Start-Up Prize. The initiative, which this year celebrated its tenth anniversary, aims to promote a start-up spirit and entrepreneurship in Germany. Business ideas, the business plan, growth and success are assessed every year on the basis of strict criteria and prizes are awarded in four categories: students, start-up, up-and-coming companies and life's work. The initiative is supported by a committee on

which such successful entrepreneurs as Willy Bogner, Prof. Dr. Reinhold Würth, Prof. Dr. Claus Hipp, Dr. Florian Langenscheidt and Count Anton Wolfgang von Faber-Castell work together.

“Germany as a place to do business and therefore its entrepreneurial vitality are very close to our hearts. Our commitment to the German Start-Up Prize is a contribution to its future,” says Dr. Wendelin Wiedeking, Chairman of the Board of Directors at Porsche. Suitably committed, Porsche Consulting got down to ▶



With far-sightedness: Eberhard Weiblen (top left), Klaus-Dieter Pannes (top right), Knut Krümmel and Till Friedrich (bottom far left)



It's enough to make you laugh: The new companies join in HGV production in the Porsche Consulting style

work straight away. Till Friedrich: “We have put a great deal of time and effort into the project.”

The two-day workshop in September at Consulting’s headquarters in Bietigheim marked the half-way point in a comprehensive mission by the Porsche consultants. There the winners and nominees in the start-up and up-and-coming companies categories were initiated into the rudiments of the Porsche philosophy. This is something from which Porsche Consulting will also benefit. Ultimately, it’s not every day you meet people who build up a business with completely different ideas, healthy optimism and the necessary determination. Senior consultant Klaus-Dieter Pannes: “You meet very different people, and it is very interesting to learn how they have developed and then implemented their ideas together with a courageous approach to risk.”

In fact, this is a colorful group. It includes, for example, Eoil Automotive & Technologies GmbH which has developed and successfully introduced a conversion kit for HGVs—diesel vehicles can now also run on plant oil. Or the Stuttgart company Robomotion GmbH that develops applications for industrial robots for the

packaging and food industry: The robots can sort biscuits, chocolates and other fragile spherical delicacies in next to no time, so that the packaging is in fact always evenly arranged. Or Teutoburger Ölmühle which has patented a manufacturing process that is self-sufficient in energy and is now celebrating successes with top-quality edible oil from hulled rapeseed.

The consultants appreciate the fact that, among this group of clients, process optimization is not necessarily the primary focus of their concerns in the early years. In this phase, it is more a question of growth, acquisition, building up personnel or becoming market leader. Project manager Knut Krümmel: “We therefore also see ourselves as moderators; we bring the entrepreneurs together and provide an exchange of experience.” So among other things talks with Eberhard Weiblen were on the agenda at Bietigheim together with “HGV production” at the Porsche Akademie. The Managing Director of Porsche Consulting gave encouragement to the new entrepreneurs and talked about the working procedures and the history of the company—how it all started in 1994 with four men, an office “and the desks that were already there”. And how Porsche Consulting

has now, with the help of clear goals, luck and skill over the years, developed into an international consultancy company with over 170 employees.

“We had two great days with a lot of excitement in both theory and practice,” said Frank Pommerening of Dortmund’s Resonanz Magnetfeldtechnik GmbH in summing up his positive experience. And Dr. Andreas Wolf of Robomotion gave his impressions: “At some point it all clicked.”

Entrepreneurs and consultants got to know each other very well in the early stages. As a member of the jury, Porsche Consulting was ultimately instrumental in finding the best from around 150 companies put forward (the selection of companies ranged from those sorting building rubble through to an innovative dental

practice). In the course of the selection process comprising several rounds, the Porsche consultants provided an accurate picture of the eventual three nominees in each category by means of twenty questionnaires, telephone interviews and finally on-site visits. The nominees then gave a personal presentation before the jury’s final decision. Till Friedrich: “Naturally, the type of presentation played an important role in the decision, but with many of the companies the presentation was better than what we had previously found on site. We made this clear to the other members of the jury.”

After the award ceremony which was held in June and attended by lots of VIPs from the world of business and society, the Porsche consultants then prepared the individual workshops and projects for the winners and nominees, covering everything from personnel ▶



“Two exciting days of theory and practice”—the start-up companies and their consultants in front of the Porsche Consulting headquarters





Best Start-Up 2007: ZDF moderator Klaus-Peter Sieglöcher (left) with Dirk Wenzel (middle) and Dietbert Rudolph from Eoil at the awards

procedures through set-up time optimization to definition of the customer ordering process. For Eoil, for example, Porsche Consulting developed the standard map with all the end points and quality gates for the relevant working procedures for a product creation process. That was a method the start-up companies had not previously used. “We are actually involved in introducing an enterprise resource-planning system in order to be able to plan our new developments using IT control. The map gives us the necessary transparency and helps us to take clear decisions,” says co-founder Dirk Wenzel.

At Robomotion in Stuttgart, the consultants supported the company in converting its own vision into target agreements for individual employees and at the same time linked this with working out an assessment system. A market analysis for a new product was also set up. Dr. Andreas Wolf: “The meeting with Porsche was very useful, because basically we have been given a

different view of our work. What was worked out is also feasible and is of great strategic help to us. Our problem in future is bound to be ensuring that we can actually implement it consistently ourselves.”

The consultants Till Friedrich, Klaus-Dieter Pannes and Knut Krümmel were involved in this mission until the end of November last year. The expectations the start-up companies had of the consultants were met in full. Dr. Michael Raß from Teutoburger Ölmühle viewed his company in a new light, even after the very first meeting with the Porsche consultants: “It’s really funny. We are still a young company and yet already wastefulness is creeping in everywhere. The meeting with Porsche Consulting came at the right time.” ◀



Standing up for start-up businesses (from left): Committee member Dr. Florian Langenscheidt, Markus Schächter (ZDF), Thomas Osterkorn (*stern*), Dr. Wendelin Wiedeking (Porsche) and Heinrich Haasis (Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband)

## Start-Up Stories for the Anniversary

What the public sees is for the most part just bare figures, but there's a lot more behind a company—people who believe in themselves and have the courage to tackle risk in their own way, stories about success and failure, about unexpected developments, and about luck and bad luck. At the tenth anniversary of the German Start-Up Prize, the initiative has collected some of these exciting stories in a book entitled *Gründergeschichten – vom Abenteuer, ein Unternehmen aufzubauen* (Start-Up Stories: Of the Adventure of Building a Company). It tells of the background of former prize winners, of their failure and new beginnings or of the successful struggle against crises. There are also reports by two entrepreneurs who have received an award for their life's

work, Reinhold Würth and Heinz-Horst Deichmann. The publishers and Start-Up Prize partners called upon Thomas Osterkorn (*stern*), Heinrich Haasis (Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband), Markus Schächter (ZDF) and the head of Porsche, Dr. Wendelin Wiedeking for the foreword. An entertaining read for people who can empathize—or who themselves have a lot of plans.

*Gründergeschichten – vom Abenteuer, ein Unternehmen aufzubauen*;  
Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main;  
290 pages; €€ 29.90.

