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International Recognition: The 2020 German American Business Awards



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The US Presidential election of 2020 has been front and center not only for the citizens of this country but for citizens around the world. It certainly is encouraging that we have witnessed a record participation in the voting process. As the election outcome stands, it looks like neither side of the political aisle will get its policies completely implemented. Compromise on critical issues will be required. Let's hope that will happen.

The German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) has received numerous inquiries and opinions regarding how the election will influence US-German relations. We will, as always, remain impartial in our response, while nonetheless acknowledging that the US approach to international trade policies over past years has been different and somewhat unconventional at times. Our bi-national economic and commercial ties, however, remain solidly intact and run deep.

On November 9, 2020 Pfizer announced that its vaccine against COVID-19 is effective, much more than initially anticipated. This news has led to high hopes that the worldwide pandemic is on the road to ending. One resounding reaction has been an amazing global stock market rally. The technology that went into developing the vaccine was jointly developed by Pfizer, Inc. and the German firm BioNtech, SE. A small, relatively young company, BioNtech is comprised of a diverse team of highly skilled scientists. It has received support from the German government and academia. In addition, BioNtech had already tapped US capital markets in the fall of 2019. Pfizer, on the other hand, is a big player in the industry with more than 88,000 employees. Headquartered in New York City, it was originally founded in 1849 by German Americans and currently commands a market capitalization of roughly US\$ 210 billion.

We at the GACC are thrilled about this German-American cooperation between two enterprises, large and small. It looks like they will be first to successfully cross the finish line in combatting the



Dietmar Rieg,
President & CEO, GACC New York

pandemic. Common values, an innovative spirit and skilled efficiency clearly contributed to success in developing the vaccine. We greatly commend Pfizer and BioNtech!

Similarly, earlier this year Tesla began construction of its "Giga factory" for manufacturing cars and batteries just outside of Berlin. Even before Tesla began this project, it's been reported that Elon Musk has developed a great appreciation of the German dual apprentice process. We certainly do not yet know the full extent of Tesla's investment in this facility. The company will certainly have to contend with the powerful German auto industry. Nonetheless, I am sure that any arising challenges will be met with unparalleled efforts by Tesla. And in return, we can expect the German auto industry to react with more innovation and climate-friendly mobility concepts in the years to come.

The GACC stands ready with continued support of these enterprises, and we look forward with great confidence to the growth of an even bigger and more meaningful transatlantic economy.

Sincerely yours,

Dietmar Rieg
President & CEO
German American Chamber of Commerce, Inc. New York

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International Recognition:

The 2020 German American Business Awards

By Jayne Peters, GACC

In a new virtual format, guests from across the globe came together to celebrate the achievements our member companies have made this year. With its very first online celebration, the ceremony was joined by over 100 attendees. Sharing success stories and connecting with business experts, the celebration included a pre-show networking in virtual breakout sessions with C-level executives and professionals from our network.

Although we were unable to meet in person this year, the virtual platform allowed for a global audience to commemorate excellence in German-American business, a behind-the-scenes look at the new GACC Midwest office in Chicago, and even an early visit from our beloved Christkindlmarket Christkind.

This year's awards honored companies who have made significant strides in Services, Innovation, Economic Development, and, for the first time, in Community Engagement. The German American Business Awards exemplify the highest accolade in German-American business and serves as a perfect platform to celebrate this long-standing relationship that propels both of our countries forward. The generous investment that German-American partnership brings to the US economy accounts for over 5,400 German companies who have invested \$474 billion and created over 773,000 jobs. These numbers would not be possible without the advancements made by our member companies. As Peter Riehle, Chairman of the German American Chambers of Commerce and CEO &

President of WITTENSTEIN North America noted: "Quality made in Germany is a sought-after feature around the world, and German subsidiaries in the US live up to this legacy on the daily. They develop innovative technologies, deliver high-quality services that optimize growth, and drive German investments in the US."

The GACC team celebrated the winners with the help of our sponsors Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Lowey, LLP, Gebrüder Weiss, Inc., Haribo of America, PKF Mueller, Rödl & Partner, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, and, the makers of the Awards, Hermle USA, Inc.

Historic Roots

Viewers were led through the event by GACC Midwest's very own Mark Tomkins, President & CEO, and Mario Kratsch, Vice President. Highlighting the historic roots of the event, they were joined by Simone Pohl, former GACC Midwest President & CEO and the founder of the Awards in 2000, who walked us through the history of what began as the MERLIN Awards. The event

KINEXON



was originally named after Peter Merlin, founder of GACC Midwest in 1963 and a longtime chairman at the time. Pohl, along with the leadership from individuals like Pat Besser, Dieter Schmitz, Uwe Schoberth, and more, inaugurated the Awards to recognize the far-reaching impacts that German companies make here in the US. Over the last two decades and with

the continuous contributions from our network, the German American Business Awards has expanded to the national event it is today – recognizing companies within the diverse industries in which our members serve.

Beyond Just Business

With the trials 2020 has brought in health, social justice, environmen-

tal advocacy and more, the German American Business Awards introduced the first-ever Community Engagement Award to highlight the positive impacts that German-American companies have made in their communities. The vitality of these contributions was demonstrated by Christian Treiber, Vice President of MBUSA Customer Services, who accepted the award

KINEXON



KINEXON Inc. (Chicago, IL) is the winner of the Excellence in Innovation Award. Dominating the Internet of Things (IoT) with their cutting-edge software, KINEXON Inc. developed contact tracing and motion sensor technology, which has equipped German and American manufacturers and professional sports teams in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. KINEXON Inc. holds true to their core value of providing agile service in the midst of the unprecedented virus.

The Right Place



Birgit Klohs, President & CEO at The Right Place, Inc.

The Right Place, Inc. (Grand Rapids, MI) is the winner of the Excellence in Economic Development Award for their monumental influence on economic advancement in Michigan. With a world-class reputation and a strong advanced manufacturing industry, the Greater Grand Rapids area has benefitted from The Right Place and continues to thrive in economic potential, their ability to attract millennials, and overall quality of life.

"Quality made in Germany is a sought-after feature around the world, and German subsidiaries in the US live up to this legacy on the daily. They develop innovative technologies, deliver high-quality services that optimize growth, and drive German investments in the US."

**Peter Riehle,
Chairman of the
German
American
Chambers of
Commerce**



on behalf of Mercedes-Benz USA: "When we have the opportunity to hold out our hand to individuals and families in dire need, we count ourselves very fortunate to be able to do so." Going above and beyond in supporting their local communities, Mercedes-Benz USA revitalized their cafeteria space and donated vans to prepare and deliver meals to community members in need during the

OEM Fabricators



*Christian Gausman,
Director of Strategic Initiatives at OEM
Fabricators, Inc.*

OEM Fabricators, Inc. (Woodville, WI) is the winner of the Excellence in Services Award. As a leading contract manufacturer that specializes in supporting German companies in the US, OEM has obtained European certifications, aligned processes to those of Europe, and completed cultural and language trainings. OEM's successes demonstrate their service-oriented aura towards their German business community.



COVID-19 pandemic.

The German American Chambers of Commerce congratulate all winners and are looking forward to continuing our support for the outstanding businesses in our network. We invite you to stay engaged with our business community and join our upcoming virtual events until we can meet again in person. ■

Mercedes-Benz USA



*Mike Nolte, Regional General Manager at
Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC*

Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC (Atlanta, GA) is the winner of the very first Community Engagement Award for their leadership and service to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. The company has been drivers of hope in the Atlanta metro area where they have dedicated over 10,000 volunteer hours on 130 projects and established over 50 relationships with nonprofit organizations to provide for those facing food insecurity in the local areas. MBUSA repurposed their cafeteria to provide and deliver healthy meals for community members and donated vans and supplies to local organizations.



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America in Waiting

By Clarissa Dann, Deutsche Bank Corporate Bank

Now that Election 2020 has indicated a likely change of administration from January 2021, how will this reshape the US as it recovers from Covid-19?

Clarissa Dann of Deutsche Bank's flow team looks at outcomes for fiscal policy

In a panel discussion on 12 November 2020 between European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde, US Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell and Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey, it was agreed that while positive news of a Covid-19 vaccine was welcome, the main risk to economic recovery was a further spread of the disease.¹

The economic contraction was not, commented Powell, "a typical downturn". "I would say our Congress stepped in and there hasn't been a faster or stronger response from Congress to an economic emergency since the Great Depression," he added.

Their discussion followed the protracted US Election process where the final result, as noted by Deutsche Bank's US Chief Economist Matthew Luzzetti on 6 November, "may not be finalised for some time". However, his earlier prediction of "a divided government with a Biden presidency, a Republican Senate and a Democrat-controlled House of Representatives" remains very likely unless the 5 January run-off elections in Georgia turn the level of representation at 50 seats each (the Vice President has the casting vote).²

What does this mean for the US?

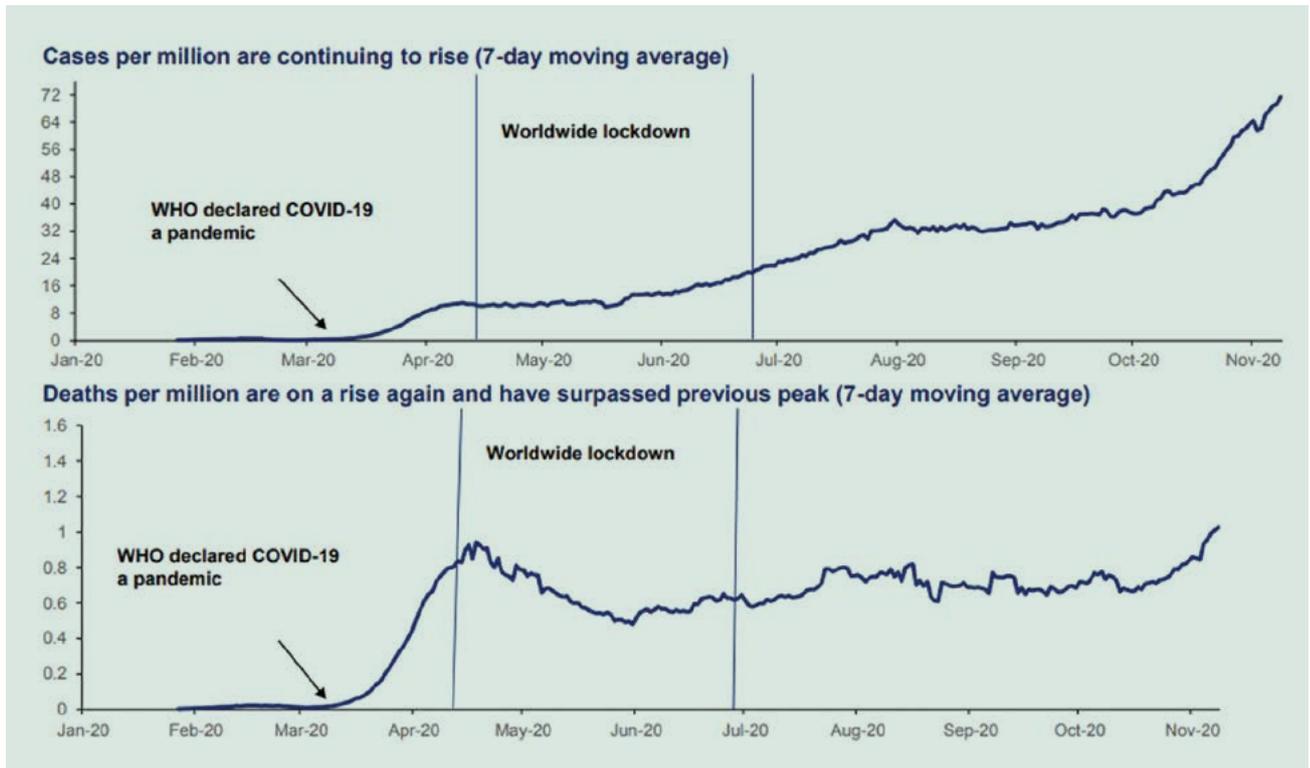


Figure 1: GLOBAL EVOLUTION: Cases started to rise globally as countries moved away from lockdowns in early June

“The Global Financial Crisis moved us from ten billion being a big number to a trillion being the new bail-out currency”

Jim Reid, Global Head of Fundamental Credit Strategy and Thematic Research, Deutsche Bank



Second Wave

Along with Western Europe, and South Korea, the US is experiencing a second coronavirus wave with a rise in new infections after having brought down the daily rates for a sustained period after the first wave (see Figure 1). On 10 November, Deutsche Bank Research reported that around the globe, “we have now passed 50.8 million reported cases and 1.26 million fatalities”. A day earlier, the Biden/Harris Build Back Better campaign website announced a Covid-19 task force to help them form a pandemic plan as part of the transition process.³

“Dealing with the coronavirus pandemic is one of the most important battles our administration will face, and I will be informed by science and by experts,” said Biden. He added, “The advisory board will help shape my approach to managing the surge in reported infections; ensuring vaccines are safe, effective, and distributed efficiently, equitably, and free; and protecting at-risk populations.”

Bail-outs and Stimuli

In April 2020, US lawmakers approved the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act –comprising around US\$2.2 trillion of spending, tax breaks, loans, and other resources over the next decade. The rising global debt burden remains a concern to economists. “The Global Financial Crisis moved us from ten billion being a big number to a trillion being the new bail-out currency. This Covid-19 crisis has moved us towards ten trillion plus being the bailout currency globally,” noted Deutsche Bank’s Global Head of Fundamental Credit Strategy and Thematic Research Jim Reid shortly afterwards.⁴

It would therefore not come as a huge surprise should Republican senators remain resistant to another large fiscal package. As Luzzetti notes, “Areas of agreement could be support for small businesses and middle class tax cuts, but key issues related to unemployment insurance, state and local government support, among others are unlikely to be areas of agreement in this scenario.”⁵

Although the US Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and a sizeable expansion of federal unemployment insurance (UI) that supplemented existing state income support mechanisms have driven much of the economic recovery so far, the next round of policy should be somewhat different, explain Deutsche Bank US Economists Brett Ryan and Justin Weidner, and move away from payroll subsidies “towards more income support measures and retraining”. In other words, they add, “as the pandemic drags on, it will be more effective to provide income support to those who may not be rehired than to try to preserve employee-employer relationships that could become obsolete because of structural changes in the economy”.

It’s going to be a very busy four years for the new Administration. ■

Clarissa Dann
Editorial Director of Marketing,
Deutsche Bank Corporate Bank

Deutsche Bank



1. This took place at the European Central Bank Forum on Central Banking, 12 November 2020
2. [cib.db.com/insights-and-initiatives/flow/macro-and-markets/changing-course-on-capitol-hill.htm](https://www.cib.db.com/insights-and-initiatives/flow/macro-and-markets/changing-course-on-capitol-hill.htm)
3. [buildbackbetter.com/press-releases/biden-harris-transition-announces-covid-19-advisory-board/](https://www.buildbackbetter.com/press-releases/biden-harris-transition-announces-covid-19-advisory-board/)
4. [cib.db.com/insights-and-initiatives/flow/macro-and-markets/covid-19-and-inflation.htm](https://www.cib.db.com/insights-and-initiatives/flow/macro-and-markets/covid-19-and-inflation.htm)
5. [cib.db.com/insights-and-initiatives/flow/macro-and-markets/all-change-on-capitol-hill.htm](https://www.cib.db.com/insights-and-initiatives/flow/macro-and-markets/all-change-on-capitol-hill.htm)

The solar driven century has just begun

Here's what that means for you personally and in business!

Our climate is changing. 2020 has been a record year for hurricanes and wildfires. Climate change is affecting all of us. State politicians are working to implement progressive legislation to phase out un-ecological sources of energy across the aisle. Against common belief, we need oil and gas to succeed in this transition. California wildfires have shown us that solar cannot stand on its own. We need other renewable energy sources to supplement the grid when smoke and ash canvas the sky. Until we reach that point, oil and gas can play an important role - not to mention that their carbon chains have usage for pharmaceuticals and engineered plastics.

Solar energy can dominate the United States for several reasons. The vast landmass and millions of roofs



Solar site at a school in Rio Rancho, NM

in the US are perfect complements to capture the free energy - and solar is becoming ever more accessible. Over the past decade, prices fell by roughly 80%. “When we started Sunstall in 2010, the Obama administration was dreaming of a \$1/W price for a utility installation. We surpassed that price in 2018, and continue to see an ongoing reduc-

tion,” says Heiko Schramm, co-founder and VP of Sales.

Today, solar energy has surpassed coal from a cost perspective and is set to do so with natural gas in the coming years. Unsurprisingly, Big Utility is retiring their coal fleets much earlier than expected.

Just the beginning:

The Lawrence Livermore National Lab publishes the Sankey diagram yearly to show the energy flow in the US. “One thing is obvious: Solar has not reached its potential - not even close. Take a look at the transportation box. All the input comes from Petroleum - that will change and will skyrocket the market potential for renewables,” says Helge Biernath, Co-founder and CEO of Sunstall.



Sunstallers finishing up a 13 MW job in Tucson, AZ

We founded Sunstall, or Sun(in)stall to show the company's focus – harvesting energy from the sun. Our Sun(in)stallers embody the idea, installing the equipment to harvest the sun's energy.



How did Sunstall get here:

Sunstall owes its place in the solar industry to a fun coincidence and a lot of hard work.

In 2009, Helge attended a GACC West Oktoberfest and met a German manager of a solar manufacturing company wanting to start a solar racking firm in the US. As often the case, this chance-meeting started the idea behind Sunstall. Shortly after Helge, Heiko and two more co-founders, Craig and Stefan, founded Sunstall in January 2010, in support of the solar-racking industry. Ten years later, Sunstall

has worked in 23 states and installed solar on all kinds of terrains and under the harshest conditions. “There is always something new, from Nenes in Hawaii to Caliche in the southern deserts, that we have to cope with, but that makes our industry so interesting,” says Craig Dinsdale, COO.

Here's where solar is headed:

Stefan Bauer, CTO, is following the trends: “The solar industry is innovating every day, from GPS and drone use, to higher efficiencies in the modules, to higher density in batteries.”



Helge Biernath, CEO





Heiko Schramm, VP of Sales



Stefan Bauer, CTO



Craig Dinsdale

The industry is innovating on every level - from business model innovations to floating solar. “Witnessing all of the novel changes makes it especially exciting to work in solar right now,” Stefan adds.

Silicon Valley is aiding these innovations. It will become a major driver in the transition of the energy industry for a multitude of reasons. The ripple effect that Silicon Valley has can be shown on a simple example: SV technologies will connect swarm batteries from electric cars with the load centers of respective cities’ to supply the needs of our future grid. Consequently cities can avoid black- and brownouts as well as public safety power shutoffs.

What you need to consider:

Every business with a sizable energy bill should consider a solar investment. Whether you own your office building or not, there are ways to connect energy off-takers with energy producers. “The tax credits in 2020 are still phenomenal at 26% but will go down to 22% in 2021, so we can only encourage business



Foundation work in California

owners to take a serious look at this now,” explains Heiko. The same is true for the residential sector, where solar installations will be paired with battery storage as a standard.

The overall outlook for the solar industry is bright. Companies have been able to adapt under the pandemic and will continue to adapt even further to master the challenges of this century. Go solar! ■

Get in touch with us:

>> www.sunstall.com



Sunstallers at work

EU Ambassador to the US Stavros Lambrinidis reflects on transatlantic relations

By James Freeman, GACC

What's left of the transatlantic relationship given the strains it has faced in the last several years? That's the opening question posed to Stavros Lambrinidis, Ambassador of the European Union to the United States by Gerry Baker, Editor-At-Large of The Wall Street Journal.

Baker interviewed Ambassador Lambrinidis for more than an hour during the a virtual forum organized through a joint initiative of the bilateral European chambers headquartered in New York, including the GACC NY, now known as LEAP Atlantic (Leaders of European & American Partnerships).

Ambassador Lambrinidis stressed that despite strains between the US and EU, the two biggest democracies in the world are on track to continue working together. It's their obligation to do so, he said, to ensure the continued well being and prosperity for all the citizens of the US and EU.

Regarding trade differences, Ambassador Lambrinidis said he sees areas of both "convergence vs. divergence." He pointed out that the US ultimately realizes how important the EU is to the American economy. "The EU will always be the biggest open market for the US," he emphasized.

There are, of course, intense areas of disagreement like the tariffs on steel and aluminum. The EU finds it quite disturbing that the US is justifying these tariffs under the guise of a national security threat. He acknowledged that there are, however, some merits to US concerns over trade issues such as the Airbus / Boeing dispute which must be impartially settled. He also said that the EU must invest more wisely in its approach to military strategy and spending.

Other areas where improved EU / US alignment is necessary according to Lambrinidis include technology (privacy and fairness in taxation of big US digital companies) and, of course, environmental protection policies.

Another problematic front, the US frustration with the WTO, should not lead to an abandonment of the organization, according to Lambrinidis. "We shouldn't be throwing out the baby with the bathwater," he maintained.

Our transatlantic partnership also is vital in putting forth a united front when dealing with China, whose power will not diminish. The EU and US must continue to jointly confront



Stavros Lambrinidis, Ambassador of the European Union to the United States

China on its unfair economic competition as well as its human rights abuses.

Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic, Lambrinidis said he hopes that all the devastation it has caused will eventually lead to positive changes in the world, especially in areas such as global inequality and healthcare. ■

German International School New York

GISNY marks 40th anniversary of serving the German-American Community

German International School New York (GISNY) is proud to be celebrating its 40th anniversary of academic excellence this year. Germany's former Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans Dietrich Genscher, led the official opening ceremony on September 23rd, 1980 in White Plains, NY

Commencing with 64 students in grades 1 to 5, the school has since grown its student body to over 400 and ranges from Pre-K to grade 12. The Deutsche Schule New York changed its name to German International School New York (GISNY) in 2014 and lives up to its new name with a wonderfully diverse school community with over 25 different nationalities.



New building



School enrollment 1980

Over the years there have been changes in the school's educational program, including the graduation with the German International Abitur after twelve school years (previously 13 years), which facilitates access to universities



worldwide, and the introduction of their bilingual Pre-K program for 3-year-old children.

In the last 40 years the school building, which is located on 20 acres of beautiful grounds, has been continuously enhanced and expanded. The latest addition to their “Campus of the Future” initiative was the completion of the new building in 2019, which included a larger cafeteria and library, a multi-purpose room, a new student lounge and faculty room, as well as classrooms for differentiated instruction. Currently, the school is working on an innovative Science Wing Project, which includes



Library 1980



remodeling the science classrooms, building a new Maker Space, and the incorporation of cutting-edge technology.

The achievement of 40 exciting years of continuous academic success would not have been possible without the support of their wonderful current and former students, parents, teachers, and employees on this continuously inspiring journey. ■



Hans-Dietrich Genscher

German International School New York (GISNY)

50 Partridge Road,
White Plains, NY 10605

>> www.gisny.org

>> admissions@gisny.org



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Patents in the Digital Age

Modern patent strategy is more than “waiting for inventions”

In most economies, it is common that products, services, or business models may, in principle, be copied as long as they are not specifically protected. Such protection may especially result from intellectual property (IP) rights like patents, trademarks, and designs. This article aims to give a short introduction in patenting and corresponding innovation management.

About 6.8 % of European Union imports, or 121 billion Euro per year, consist of fake goods.¹ It is likely that counterfeiting even increased with

soaring online business during the coronavirus pandemic.² Thus, suitable IP protection is ever more important.

Patent Basics

Patents protect technical inventions, e.g. mechanical or electrotechnical solutions, software, or specialty materials. It is a widespread error to assume that a product or solution can be patented when it turns out that it is a success on the market. Rather, a patent has to be filed before any technical details are disclosed anywhere or a product is sold. It is

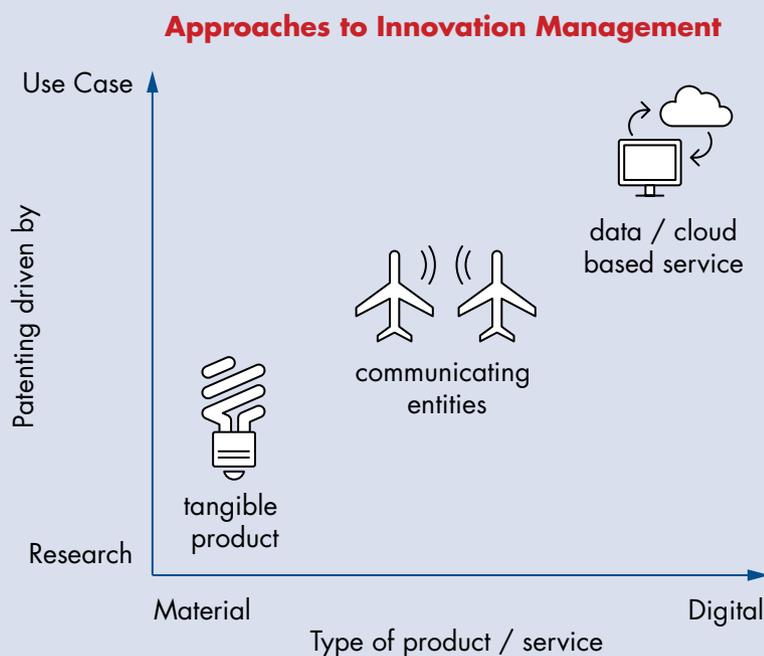
also widespread error to assume that only very sophisticated solutions may be patented. Rather, most patent applications relate to incremental improvements. Patent protection may be valid for up to 20 years, and the patent proprietor may especially demand stop of sale and monetary damages from an infringer, even if the infringement was not intentional. Furthermore, counterfeiting products may be confiscated by customs, and even financial and trade information can be obtained from infringers.

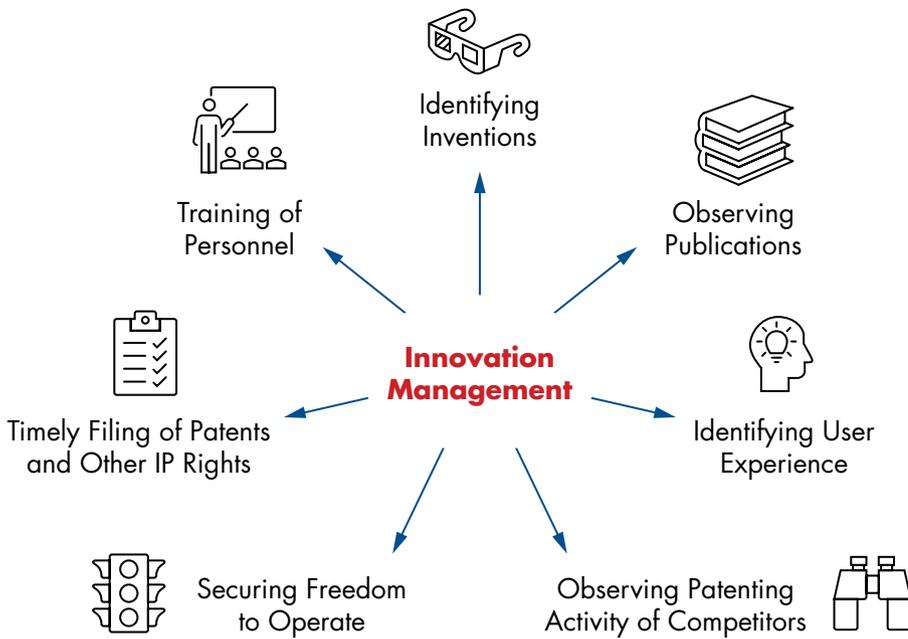
When filing a patent application, it is important to describe as many details and variations of the invention, because only such features can be used in examination proceedings to delimit the invention against prior art, i.e. to make it new and inventive so that a patent can be granted. Applications written by people not familiar with patent language usually do not result in suitable protection.

Patenting Strategy

In earlier times, it was common practice to wait until a developer came up with an invention disclo-

1. 2019 Status report on IPR Infringement, European Union Intellectual Property Office
2. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/viral-marketing-counterfeits-in-time-of-pandemic>





New trends call for a market-driven approach to patenting, meaning that inventions should be identified having customer experience in mind.

sure. However, modern innovation management comprises ensuring that developers are aware of basic patent principles, so that they can identify potentially patentable inventions and report them early enough so that a patent application can be filed before any disclosure of the invention. The importance of training developers increases in digital technology fields. New trends also call for a market-driven approach to patenting, meaning that inventions should be identified having customer experience in mind, especially in digital or data-driven products and services. Protecting inventions that define customer experience gives exclusivity for a value that makes the customer willing to pay a premium.

Implementing suitable innovation management and training of personnel can protect a company against counterfeiting and produce significant business value because of exclusivity that patent letters grant. Each company should implement a strategy to ensure that IP rights are secured in due time and are used to support its business. ■



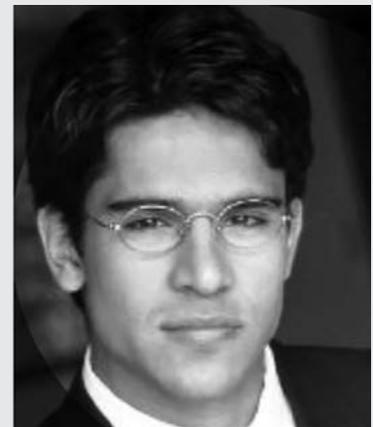
Dr. Martin Schlosser is a German and European Patent and Trademark Attorney with degrees in Physics, Electrical Engineering and General Management. His technical expertise comprises mechanical and electrical engineering, physics, material sciences, automation, and software. His client base includes SMEs, universities, research institutions, and large companies, for which he provides prosecution and litigation of IP rights, as well as individual IP consulting and implementation of IP strategies.

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Pitching in the Time of Corona: How to Succeed on Zoom

By Lisa Patti, AccentC3

Zoom fatigue and screen burnout are becoming frequent side effects of doing business in the pandemic. The challenges of online communication can be further emphasized when you take culture, personality, and age into account.



In some cultures, for example, it is much more common for interaction to occur during a presentation, but in others people might hesitate to speak up or even add a comment in the chat.

For many international entrepreneurs trying to advance in the U.S., things are getting harder: their charisma doesn't necessarily shine through the screen. According to the 7-38-55 rule, we draw only about seven percent of meaning from words. The rest comes vocally or visually – through gestures, body language, the voice, and facial expressions.

The spotlight is on you

Tara Robinson, founder of the management service TrackRacks and a native Bahamian, said that during video calls, things can get more stressful since the spotlight really feels like it's on you. Tara overcomes the feeling of disconnection by "taking the temperature of the audience" through questions.

Fabia Barbieri, a Brazilian national and a general manager at BeApp, logs in twice when giving a

presentation. On her phone, she can see herself and the audience, and on her computer she can have control over her slide deck. This has worked to help her engage more with her audience and see how they might be responding. She does admit, however, that there are days when the lines between formal presentations and casual calls blur.

"It's sometimes easy to forget when you are sitting in your living room where you have been all day and you need to switch to presentation mode for a larger group," Barbieri said.

For some tech entrepreneurs, Zoom has become the new normal. Anastasia Lykova, the program director for Starta Ventures, an accelerator for international startups in the U.S., noticed that Eastern European founders are at times more engaged on video than they were in person.

How to improve and succeed

Since it is not easy to understand how you are perceived, it is up to you to get to know your style. Recording ourselves while on video really helps us see how we are doing. However, you do need to ask the permission of the person you are speaking with.

A few key things to ask yourself are:

Does my tone of voice match the message?

If you are delivering something serious, does it sound different from something more upbeat? If you tend to be a more monotone presenter or use a volume that tends to be too soft, it will be harder to keep the audience's attention for very long. Speaking volume is personal and cultural—not everyone uses it the same way. Some Asian and European cultures speak using a much softer volume, in contrast with their American counterparts who are known to be more high-energy speakers. Keeping this in mind is key to understanding what your audience needs.

Do I have vocal presence?

Much like your physical presence, your vocal presence will speak volumes for you. It might change the audience's perception of you. You can say the same exact words in different ways, using different emphasis, pausing, pacing, and pitch variations. Your voice and your words need to work together to give you credibility. If you need to deliver a complex pitch or demo, mix your styles. Add some stories and examples along with numbers and data. Don't use too much of one thing.



Am I overtalking?

Overtalking can be caused by anxiety. If you are multilingual, you might be focusing on using the right vocabulary or organizing your thoughts. Also, you might come from a language background that has a lot more vocabulary than the language you are using for business. In English, you can be brief yet still effective, although this can feel like you are not providing enough information to establish your credibility. If overtalking is something you need to work on, set a timer and practice your responses. A minute is much faster than you think. See if you can give an answer that hits the key points. Another thing to do is to jot down bullets before the meeting and to try to hit those points without over-elaborating.

Engage your clients and investors with your voice and style so they will sit up, listen, and remember!

The world will become more and more connected as we move forward. International founders have even more options than ever to share their ideas, technology, and innovation with the world. Engage your clients and investors with your voice and style so they will sit up, listen, and remember! ■

This article was written by Lisa Patti, a communication specialist and the founder of AccentC3



Joe Biden promises economic policy thaw

Article by Ullrich Umann, Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI)
Translation from German by Sandy Jones, GACC

The US presidential election is undoubtedly an event of global importance. But no election has ever been as emotional as this one. After five days of a counting marathon covered with fears and worries, the time had come on November 7, 2020: The first news channels established an unassailable lead for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

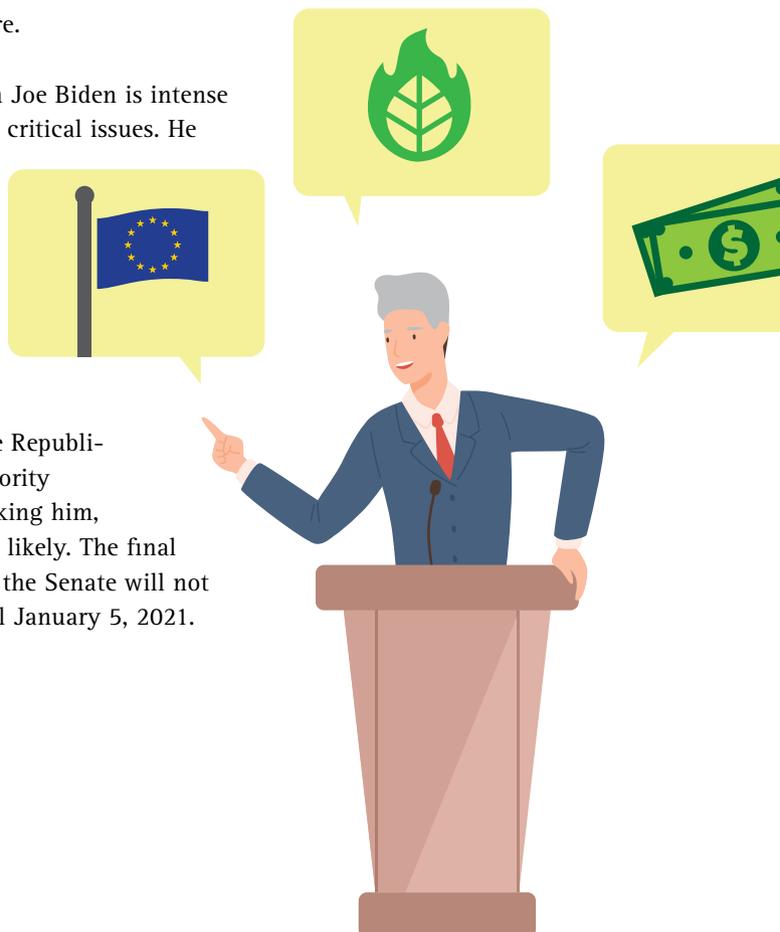
Not all election promises can be fulfilled

During his election campaign, Joe Biden spoke of a gradual decarbonization of the economy, of a ban on fracking on federally owned land, of a reduction in tax breaks for the oil and gas industry, of higher taxes for large corporations and high-income earners, but in return also of educational and health initiatives, broad technology funding and the modernization of infrastructure.

The pressure on Joe Biden is intense regarding these critical issues. He will not be able to implement everything right away. Some things may not be feasible at all, especially if the Republican Senate majority persists in blocking him, which is highly likely. The final composition of the Senate will not be decided until January 5, 2021.

Europe is being taken seriously again

Biden promised the Europeans an amicable tone in the search for compromises, also a coordinated approach in a triangular relationship with China. Whether he, for his part, will accept the first offer from the European Union and agree to negotiations on a free trade agreement for industrial products remains uncertain for the time being.



Biden promised the Europeans an amicable tone in the search for compromises, also a coordinated approach in a triangular relationship with China.

GTAI GERMANY TRADE & INVEST

At least the risk of special taxes on automobile imports from Europe should be off the table. And yet some protectionism will continue to exist under Joe Biden, at least in a light version. Because he has to deliver, not only to his voters, but also to the 70 million Americans who voted for Donald Trump. German companies can deal with barriers - if they remain consistent and calculable.

Environmental and energy technology on the rise

It can be assumed that starting in 2021 the demand for technology goods to expand alternative energy supplies will grow, as well as to keep air, water and soil clean and to improve the energy efficiency of buildings. This is in large part because the new US president wants to work at reducing CO₂ emissions.

The German economy has business opportunities, particularly in the planning and installation of offshore wind farms and in the energy-efficient renovation of the outdated real estate portfolio, especially in the planning and construction of active and passive houses.

Automation is the order of the day

On the one hand, interest in automation solutions has increased rapidly during the pandemic to increase the efficiency of companies. On the other hand, this push for automation solutions increases the minimum distance between workplaces, which in turn is a prerequisite for being able to continue working during the pandemic. Increasingly, medium-sized companies in the US are interested in automation technology. German mechanical engineering and the German electrical industry can also benefit from this development.

Biden's strategy of reindustrializing the US should be in line with German mechanical engineering. Ultimately, the capacity build-up creates a considerable demand for capital goods. Joe Biden focuses primarily on new productions and only secondarily on the return of industries that migrated decades ago. Biden would like to promote investments primarily with favorable depreciation options. He announced higher tax rates for companies that continue to relocate production abroad and import their own products from there. ■

About the Author



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Strategies for Effective Communication in a Global Environment

By Nancy Rienow

It all depends on the glasses you're wearing. Let's begin with a question: What would you say is important in your culture? Close your eyes and think about that for a moment. What were the first thoughts that popped into your head? If you're a US-American, did you think of achievement, optimism, or freedom? If you're a German, did you think of thorough planning, structure or honesty?



There are examples of these values in each culture, and their roots can be found in each country's history. Freedom to live as I choose, the optimistic view that I can accomplish anything I put my mind to, can be traced to many events in US history. Meanwhile, hundreds of years of conflict on what is now German soil formed a desire for structure, thorough planning, and direct,

honest communication.

You might argue that both the German and US-American cultures also appreciate each other's values; however, there are (though subtle) differences in the way these are defined. Germans might define achievement as a solidly planned project. US-Americans might define honesty as packaging criticism not to hurt someone's feelings.

How can you use a culture's values to your advantage in cross-cultural business?

Put on the other person's cultural glasses and try to see the situation from their perspective.

We use the cultural glasses in these three strategies in my trainings:

Strategy #1

Assume the positive!

When someone's behavior hits you as odd, abrupt or confusing, ask yourself what the positive reason might be. Possibly the person is having a bad day, or it is simply their own way of communicating; however, by reflecting on what is important in that person's culture, we can often find reasons for their behavior. This strategy helps us take a step back and, hopefully, respond constructively.



Strategy #2

Adjust your style of discussing or presenting!

When listening, discussing, and presenting, many US-Americans tend to think about possible solutions rather than debating current or potential problems. Interaction is often preferred over monologue, and facts are presented concisely (KISS-Method: Keep it short and simple). In contrast, Germans tend to show their competence on a subject by including comprehensive background or theoretical information. A detailed discussion of pros and cons show a subject has been well thought-out, a necessary step before presenting any solutions. To make sure your message really gets heard, consider what your counterpart might be accustomed to hearing.



Strategy #3

Be aware of how you're giving feedback and adjust culturally!



Giving feedback or expressing a negative opinion is one of the most challenging areas of intercultural communication! A good solution for bridging the need for honesty and directness with softening a negative statement is the LCS-Method: Like/Concern/Suggestion (originating from www.ideachampions.com). When you want to criticize, try first saying something you like about it (I really liked ...). Follow it up with your concern (However, I'm a bit concerned about ...), and finish with a suggestion (I suggest ...). This structure expresses an honest opinion, while softening the negative comment.

Finding the right approach in every situation can be challenging. Sometimes culture matters a lot, and sometimes it doesn't; however, we can make better choices of how to act and react in situations with our intercultural partners by stepping into their shoes or putting on their glasses. ■

About the Author:



Nancy Rienow is a certified intercultural trainer helping managers and employees improve their cross-cultural communication skills and translate their company's local success to global markets. She has facilitated 85+ online trainings for US-German company mergers, has prepared 100+ expatriates for their future assignments in the US/Germany and has assisted 50+ international teams with optimizing cross-cultural communication. Nancy is native to the US and calls Germany her second home. Her extensive business experience in both countries enables her to provide clients with sustainable and practical strategies tailored to company needs. For more information on how Nancy can help you perform more effectively in our global economy:

>> <https://www.cross-culture-success.de/english/>

Working with Nancy was a pleasure. Her training style is very refreshing and she has the ability to transfer relevant topics to the class. During her seminar "Working with Americans" many topics got confirmed or at least brought back to my attention since I'm working with Americans since more than a decade. But I was also able to catch up some new insights / ideas which I definitely will try to embed into my way of working. Therefore, I strongly recommend Nancy as a highly competent trainer for cross-culture education.

Chris Wesner, Head of Sales Americas, WAGNER Group GmbH

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AccountAbility

Sustainability Strategy, Accountability, and Resilience as the Centerpieces of the 2021 Corporate Agenda

Q&A with AccountAbility CEO, Sunil A. Misser

In recent years, corporate sustainability has evolved, on CEO agendas, from a “nice-to-have” business expectation to a “have-to-have” priority.



Sunil A. Misser, Chief Executive Officer of AccountAbility

To help GACC members better understand the evolving sustainability agenda and integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) perspectives into their 2021 planning, GAT spoke with Sunil (Sunny) A. Misser, the Chief Executive Officer of AccountAbility – a global consulting and standards firm that works with businesses, investors, governments, and multi-lateral organizations on ESG matters to advance responsible business practices and transform their long-term performance.

GAT: Mr. Misser, we are speaking during uniquely turbulent and uncertain times. Can you start by setting the stage for us regarding the importance of sustainability matters in the current global environment?

Sunil A. Misser (SAM):

We are in a time of unprecedented uncertainty and disruption, as the pandemic, in particular, is posing unique challenges for all businesses – unlike anything that they have faced before – around how employees work, how clients

behave, how supply chains function, and how to confront the “new metrics of performance.”

The pandemic has accelerated and intensified trends that were already underway. The result is a dramatic widening of the gap between those industries at the top and the bottom of the economic curve of profit.

The pandemic has also exposed the interconnectedness between businesses and the broader world in which they operate. With this realization comes an opportunity for organizations to move beyond the “old ways of doing things,” to rather re-think legacy business models, systems, structures, and processes.

In this sense, Sustainability (which has evolved to be recognized as “ESG”) becomes not just a responsible practice, but a competitive business advantage. Strong ESG practices protect the long-term wellbeing of a business and its operating ecosystem – including the natural environment, the economic infrastructure, and the people it affects.



AccountAbility

GAT: I am sure there are many examples of ESG issues that our readers should consider as they look to “re-think business as usual.” Where should they start?

SAM: To start this process of re-thinking business practices, an organization must ensure that it is addressing the right things. A “sustainable business” prioritizes and actively addresses ESG issues (risks and opportunities) that have the most significant impact on the organization and its stakeholders, ensuring stability, resiliency, and profitability – even, and perhaps particularly, in the face of change and uncertainty. In the sustainability context, these areas are often addressed as “material issues.”

Sustainability does not have to be a portfolio of expensive initiatives. When companies optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations – whether to increase productivity, improve quality, or reduce cost – an improved “ESG Footprint” and enhanced sustainability performance can be the resulting output.

Examples of operational improvements could include optimizing and “re-engineering” manufacturing processes, re-thinking packaging requirements through the supply chain, applying technology and advanced analytics to logistics and transportation, and incorporating ESG awareness into procurement practices.

GAT: What issues from the ESG agenda are of the most strategic importance for GACC members to embed into their corporate agenda in the near-term?

SAM: The physical and systemic risks from a changing climate – the “E” – are well established and real, present, and growing. However, most climate hazards manifest locally and therefore need to be understood in the context of a geographically defined area. The impact of climate change could be a discussion in itself, but it is fair to say that food supply chains, energy, utility and infrastructure services, financial institutions (mortgage, insurance, etc.), and physical assets will bear the brunt of this exposure.

However, it is the “Big G” of governance – the internal system of processes, controls, and procedures that an organization adopts to govern itself, make effective decisions, comply with the law, and meet the needs of external stakeholders – that will have to undergo the most radical transformation in order to survive.

The ascendancy of ESG institutional investors, asset owners, and asset managers will also increase the scrutiny and oversight on ESG portfolio screenings, proxy voting positions, risk management practices, and the management of external stakeholders.

GAT: To close, what “top three” ESG issues do you anticipate will have the biggest impact on CEOs and Boards in 2021?

SAM: We believe 2021 will be the year of “less discussion, more action,” as ESG topics that have long been in the consciousness of CEOs and Boards will be brought “front and center” as a result of calls for corporate accountability from investors, consumers, governments, regulators, and other key stakeholder groups.

As such, we anticipate seeing increased corporate ESG actions, commitments, and disclosures around the areas of:

- 1) Linking executive compensation to ESG performance
- 2) Increasing pressure from Institutional Investors to incorporate Sustainability/ ESG into the business
- 3) Expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies, programs, and commitments ■

Has your organization embedded ESG into your corporate agenda?

Contact the AccountAbility team at >> communications@accountability.org to continue the conversation and access AccountAbility's “Hot Deal” exclusively for GACC members – a one-hour ESG performance consultation with sustainability experts.

Future Scenarios Executive Summary

MJV Technology & Innovation brings four scenarios for the future of the pandemic

These are times of uncertainty. So far, society has not found an answer to the pandemic's future, and many doubts are still hanging in the air. After all, what trends and technologies have been accelerated? Is home office here to stay? How will the market recover?

Intending to lighten up this cloudy future a little bit, MJV Innovation launched their "New Normal Under Construction" research. The study was conducted by a team of 8 researchers, led by Bibiana Bosak, MJV futures strategist certified by Copenhagen Institute of Futures Studies, Ysmar Vianna, company chairman and pioneer of the Design Thinking methodology in Brazil, and Maurício Vianna, CEO and Ph.D. in Computer Science from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

The team brings four future scenarios inspired by studies developed by Sohail Inayatullah, Chair of Futures Studies at UNESCO.

"The central purpose of the research is to bring possible paths, perspectives, and choices for the construction of desirable futures through a holistic view at current events," says Bibiana Bosak.

The Four Alternative Post-pandemic Futures

The scenarios created by MJV in the last part of the study were developed using the Futures Studies methodology. Researchers were challenged to think about the future considering four types of scenarios:

Continuity: a scenario in which the status quo is maintained, and society's progress occurs predictably;

Discipline and Limit: society's behavior

adapts due to the increasing internal or environmental limits;

Decline and collapse: the entire system regresses or plunges to a dysfunctional level;

Transformation: new technologies, businesses, and game-changing social factors are emerging.

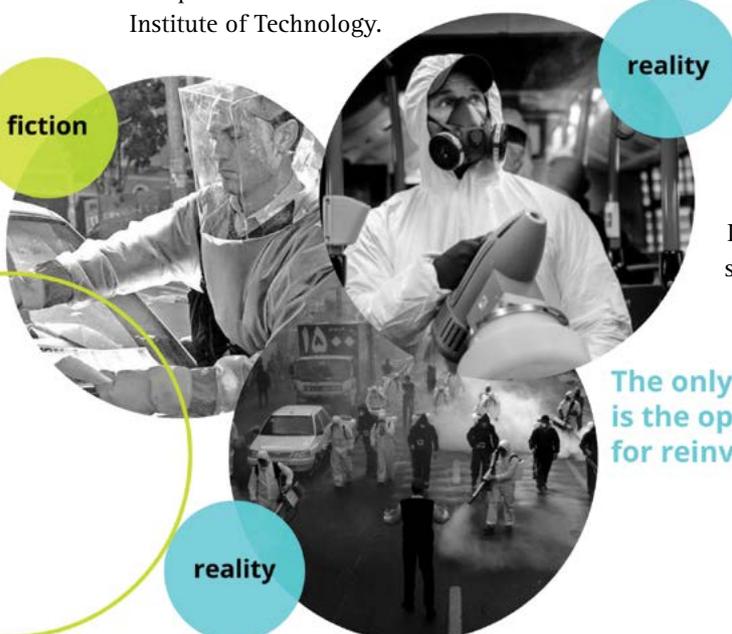
"The compilation in 4 narratives, or archetypes of futures, was created by Jim Dator, from the University of Hawaii, one of the systematizers of the methodology of Futures Studies", explains Ysmar Vianna.

Continuity Scenario: The Necessary Pause

In the first scenario, the pandemic would be resolved in 2020. By the beginning of 2021, we would have a vaccine on the market. At the same time, society's frenetic pace slows down, and we are aware of several impacts, such as lull in touristic cities and even slight climatic changes in the globe.

Experts say that some social changes would be noticed. "People would start to focus more on their personal lives. Meditation would be an increasingly common practice," says Bosak.

Besides, home office would be practiced only for a short period.



"The public service and some organizations, due to a factor of trust, would abandon the model," explains Bibiana Bosak.

Discipline and Limit Scenario: A Walled Yard

In this scenario, COVID-19 would not be an apocalypse or a depression, but it would represent a sharp drop in wealth and public health in many countries. WHO and nations would fail to contain the virus.

"It is a scenario in which airports would be constantly closed, and the isolation measures would last longer than expected. This would make the continuation of accelerated globalization almost impossible," concludes Bibiana.

As a result, there would be a significant impact on production chains. "Many countries would bring production centers inside. This would have an impact mainly on the economy of developing nations," she concludes.

Collapse Scenario: The Social Apocalypse

The company's worst scenario foresees unexpected mutations of the virus, xenophobia, and generalized panic. Uncertainty would break markets, and the whole world would enter a recession.

Most companies would not survive, there would be a fiscal crisis in governments, and many countries would migrate to a totalitarian regime focused on state surveillance. "It would be a future in which feelings of panic and fear overcome people," concludes Bibiana.

Transformation Scenario: The Awakening of Humanity

In the fourth and final scenario developed by MJV researchers, the pandemic would help us jump straight into the digital age's fourth wave. Big companies, startups, science, and government expertise in public health would get us out of this crisis better than we entered.

The new norm would be the five P's - prevention, precision, participation, partnership, and personalization in public health. Open Innovation and new technologies would open several doors for humanity.

Another impact would be a revolution in the relationship between the employee and the company, giving rise to new work forms, such as the home office. "In addition, universal basic income has become a reality in many places. We would understand





that a society's success is not based on how we glorify the strongest, but on how we support the most vulnerable," concludes Bibiana.

Methodology: What is Futures Studies?

Volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. This is how futurologists see contemporaneity. This is what they call the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world, marked by the high volatility of political, social, economic, and business relationships.

Common in the era of disruption, these uncertainties have led large companies to seek MJV for a real "immersion" in the future. They turn to Futures Studies, a science that explores possible futures, forecasting, and even creating vivid experiences (simulations, for example), to develop new insights and position themselves assertively in the market.

"It is not a forecast of the future, nor a crystal ball. The idea is to explore scenarios, whether desirable or undesirable so that organizations are more accurate when taking their next steps. The future is created now", says Maurício Vianna, CEO of MJV.

Building the scenarios

To create these scenarios, the team went through an extensive process that begins in the so-called horizon scan, where weak signals are identified. After scanning, these signals are systematized into macro-territories, which allows us to understand which fields or themes are most relevant for the current moment.

MJV

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We find uncertainties, still cloudy areas within the macro-territories, and their polarities and possible future derivations called forecasts. The final step is to use the strategic foresight methodology to find the latent narratives, the forces common to all macro-territories, which have greater power to influence future decisions; these forces are called Drivers of Change. ■

Company Summary:

We are a consulting company led by our curiosity and passion for change. Through our integrated business pillars, technology, design, culture, and strategy, we design solutions and experiences that ensure human-centered products and services. We connect multidisciplinary talents to deliver holistic and measurable end-to-end results that keep your company at the forefront of innovation. If we can imagine it, then it is possible. We are people transforming business. We have partners and clients across all sectors, including Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), Financial, and Insurance. We have projects ranging from consumer insights to user experience and interface, integrating technologies including artificial intelligence and IoT, and developing and implementing software to achieve digital and cultural transformation.





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WE SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGES

SalesViewer® offers supercharged approach to integrated digital sales and marketing

By James Freeman, GACC

Sales and marketing need to be more intertwined than ever in this face-paced, digital world. Connecting with customers who visit your website and clearly identifying their business needs should be simple, but there are few services and tools out there that can easily and effectively accomplish that goal. Enter SalesViewer®. A prototype for the company was created in 2011. It finally resulted in a spinoff version launched in 2017 by Benjamin Zaczek as Salesviewer GmbH, selected in 2019 as one of the GACC NY Newcomers of the Year, which is presented to innovative German startups.

GAT: What prompted you to create SalesViewer®?

Benjamin Zaczek (BZ):

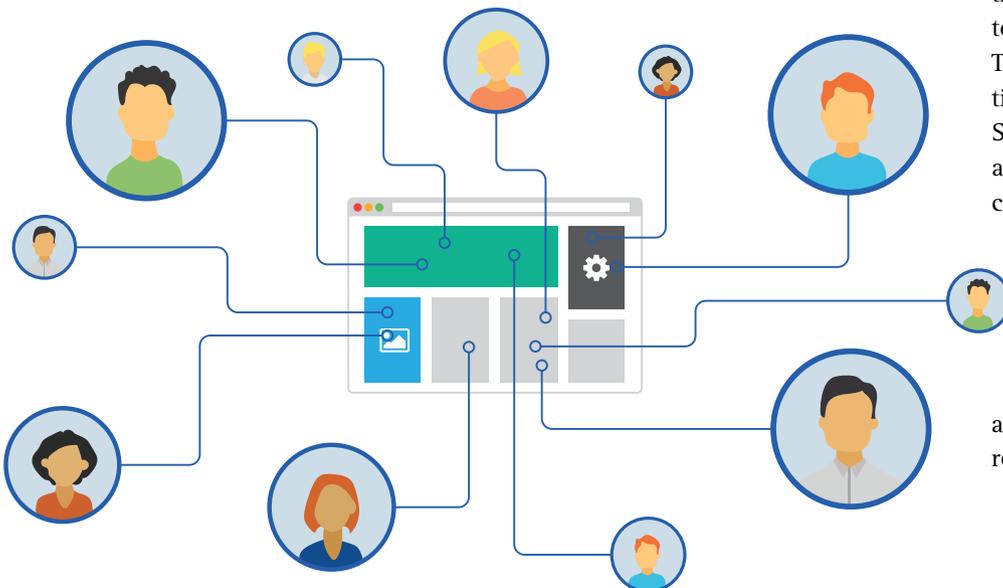
We came up with the idea in 2010, when we noticed that we were receiving substantial advertising budgets from customers looking to attract more visitors to their websites. However, only a small percentage of these visitors actively contacted or engaged with our customers. This conversion rate was due to many factors, including viewers conducting research comparisons before committing to a specific company. We asked

ourselves whether we could somehow better bring in visitors who show interest in the website and quickly foster that connection. That's how the concept for SalesViewer® was born!

GAT: What are the customer pain points that SalesViewer® addresses and solves?

BZ: SalesViewer® breaks down sales and marketing activities to their absolute essentials and concentrates on the most important factors of day-to-day business activities. People and the companies they work at are overwhelmed in today's complex marketing world. They're looking for simple applications that produce fast results. SalesViewer® provides easy and accurate sales leads without a complicated marketing strategy.

The process is simple: we allow you to identify visitors on your website; you'll see what products or services these visitors/company are interested in, and you ultimately engage and retain that sales lead. That's it!





SalesViewer® provides easy and accurate sales leads without a complicated marketing strategy.

GAT: What is the main difference or usp (unique selling proposition) of SalesViewer® compared to some you bigger competitors like Salesforce or HubSpot?

BZ: Our digital approach yields higher recognition rates and, in turn, more sales results. We accomplish these goals with superior data, which makes for more usable, practical and efficient sales-oriented features.

GAT: When did you begin focusing on the US market?

BZ: We began acquiring US customers between 2016 and 2018, and we're proud to say we did so without any advertising on our part! Many of these customers had been actively searching the internet for alternative sales and marketing services because they were dissatisfied with the ones they had. From the start, our website content has been in English and German, so that certainly made it easier for potential customers to find us. We also already had many German companies with subsidiaries in the US as customers. These companies and their employees spread the word about our services, giving us great testimonials. Since the start of 2018

we've been exponentially adding new US customers. The market potential for us here is quite good given the unique approach and quality we offer.

GAT: Who are some of your partners in the US?

BZ: Most are advertising agencies whose clients then use our services. We also count various organizations, like Techstars, a world- renowned startup accelerator, among our partners.

GAT: Do have a different approach to US versus European customers?

BZ: Fundamentally, we don't have different approaches. That's because internet-based and digital products and the markets that use them are all pretty much the same worldwide. Furthermore, most web trends come from the US.

GAT: What are your next steps for expansion in the US?

BZ: We recently hired a Sales Director USA to build a sales team in

the US, and we plan on opening an office in New York in 2021. We're also working on two to three significant partnerships, but we can't reveal them yet! ■

About Benjamin Zaczek:



Founded his first ad agency, CONCEPT-PARTNER, in 2004, when he was just 19 years old. His budding new agency combined marketing and sales into one large, efficient unit laying the foundation for SalesViewer®. Benjamin left this company in 2015 to immerse himself in SalesViewer®

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Change – it's an opportunity, not a threat!

By Andrea Diewald, GACC

STEP USA Ambassadors Claas Blume and Thomas Vorsatz, both co-founders of Berlin-based Clous GmbH, join us for this interview on their current business situation. Being a Fraunhofer spin-off, Clous GmbH was founded in November 2019 and currently employs 6 people. In December 2019, Claas and Thomas joined us for our STEP USA program in New York. They spoke with us about their US market plans and their most valuable take-a-ways from the STEP USA Program.

GACC NY: Claas and Thomas – it's great talking to you! How are things working out for Clous in the current economic crisis?

Claas Blume (CB): Nice being in touch again! It's hard to believe that it has been almost a year since we joined the STEP USA program in New York. So much has changed in the mean-time. The mechanical engineering industry around the globe is suffering enormously from the COVID crisis. For us, as a newly founded company, it is already difficult as such to win new clients. But the fact that many of our potential customers have empty order books themselves makes our situation even more challenging. However, to end on a positive note, we expected raising venture capital

for our growth phase to be more difficult at this time, but our investor relations work very well – even during this lockdown. This is definitively a good sign.

GACC NY: Thomas, what does Clous exactly do?

Thomas Vorsatz (TZ): The core of Clous is our technology, which automatically fragments complex CAD designs into smaller and independently solvable tasks and reassembles them after successful processing. This way, we open up completely new perspectives, especially for medium-sized companies in mechanical and plant engineering. A new type of collaboration makes it possible to optimize internal processes, to seamlessly integrate service providers from all over the world, and also to meet the new requirements for remote work.

GACC NY: What do you consider the greatest success in your company's history?

CB: The sum of the many small successes is certainly our greatest success. We were able to create a great product and convince investors of our idea despite tough circumstances. We are particularly pleased that we were able to win APX, one

of the leading accelerators, for our company.

GACC NY: Looking back, is there 'a lesson learned' that you can share with us?

CB: Absolutely! At the beginning of Clous, we trusted every spoken commitment given by investors or clients. Meanwhile, we have learned it the hard way that a commitment is only a commitment when the ink on the contract is dry.

GACC NY: Thanks for sharing this! Can you please tell us why the US market is important for you?

TZ: There are several reasons for that. First of all, the mechanical engineering industry in the U.S. is very strong and the market size is immense. And the industry is facing the need to digitize business as well. It is not a secret that the mechanical engineering industry is quite conservative, especially here in Germany. Even though the industry understands that something has to change, many companies refuse to see the need to adapt their business models. We feel that companies in the U.S. are much more open to new technologies and are seeing change as a chance, not as a threat.

A new type of collaboration makes it possible to optimize internal processes, to seamlessly integrate service providers from all over the world, and also to meet the new requirements for remote work.

GACC NY: Is that why you joined our STEP USA program in December 2019?

CB: Yes, absolutely! It was the perfect opportunity to get to know the US market in a compact way, to make first contacts, and to develop a strategy for a future market entry.

GACC NY: What is your most valuable takeaway from the STEP USA program as an entrepreneur?

CB: Our biggest takeaway from the STEP USA program is the number of valuable contacts we gathered. We now know where to turn to if we want to found a US subsidiary or if we have tax-related questions. We also met with investors, enjoyed U.S. pitch training, and learned a lot on how to shape our US product-market fit.

GACC NY: In your opinion, what do startups generally underestimate when coming to the US?

CB: It depends on many factors, but in general I would say that the sheer size of the market and its competitiveness can be overwhelming in the beginning. It's hard to get enough visibility if you only have a limited budget.

GACC NY: So, what are your next steps?

CB: Our next big milestone is to expand business within Germany and get through the COVID crisis in good shape. We are also continuing to implement our market entry strategy. This means we are entering a specific market segment – the tool and die makers in Germany – providing them with great added value. If we have a certain relevance there and also get a 5/5-star rating, we will grow into broader markets. In addition, we are planning to get another business angel on board in March 2021 in order to leverage great financing from Landesbank Berlin (IBB).

GACC NY: Last question: On Nov. 7, 2020, Joe Biden won the election as the 46th US President. Does that have any implications for your business?

CB: I hope that the election of Biden will improve the transatlantic relationship and above all that the US as a deeply divided country will be able to overcome their current challenges. Stability, a reliable legal framework, and intact business relations are important factors for us once we are ready to take the step into the US market. ■



Class Blume (left) and Thomas Vorsatz

More Information:

STEP USA is a 5-day startup boot camp launched and organized by the German American Chamber of Commerce New York (GACC NY). A highly successful program, it focuses on facilitating US market access for young innovative companies and takes place four times a year. It also exists in a virtual format. STEP USA prides itself on having created a network of more than 300 STEP USA alumni, more than 60 US incorporations, and 35 investment rounds. It is tailored to the needs of startups who intend to scale their business internationally.

>> www.stepusa.io

“Grow Your Own” Philosophy Pays Off For Dürr Systems, Inc.

When it comes to excellence in apprenticeships, Dürr Systems, Inc., based in Southfield, MI, stands out from the rest: the leading supplier for paint shops and paint application technology, final assembly, and air pollution control systems throughout North America was recognized with this year’s GACC Apprenticeship Award.

The Apprenticeship Award recognizes Dürr in multiple ways: for its implementation of and investment in apprenticeship programs in the US; for the impact of apprenticeships on the career paths of its apprentices; and for the exemplary progress of the company’s first apprentice, Scott Kristian.

Dürr Systems, Inc. is a subsidiary of Dürr AG in Bietigheim-Bissingen, Germany. The company has a strong track record of US investment, with a presence in the US since 1970 and a \$40 million dollar office and technology complex that opened in Michigan

in 2016. Dürr is no stranger to German-style apprenticeships, either - Dürr has been training apprentices in Germany for decades, so when Dürr Systems, Inc. opened in the US, apprenticeships were a natural fit. Dürr was an early participant in the GACC Midwest-managed Michigan Advanced Technician Training (MAT²) Program, hiring their first MAT² apprentice in 2014.

“Dürr Systems, Inc. is a prime example of how a company takes an apprenticeship program and makes it their own. I’m proud to call Dürr a MAT² Network Company and look forward to our future cooperation in building a skilled workforce pipeline,” said Virginia Rounds, Director, Apprenticeship Networks at GACC Midwest.

The MAT² Apprenticeship Program brings German-style apprenticeships to Michigan high-tech manufacturing companies to help close the skills gap, create sustainable workforce pipelines

for companies, and provide apprentices with hands-on experience in desirable industries, debt-free education, and national and international credentials. All of this fits right in with Dürr’s training philosophy and workforce needs.

According to John Edelhauser, Senior Manager, Systems Installation, Modular Build and Apprenticeship Mentor, Dürr is committed to investing in their apprentices and ensuring their training gives them a holistic education and diverse repertoire of skills. This starts with sending their apprentices to Dürr’s headquarters in Germany to train, network, and become familiar with the workings of the company. When they return to the US, the apprentices are introduced to the different facets of the company and can explore which areas interest them the most. Highlighting these unique opportunities, Edelhauser stated that “our apprentices are almost guaranteed success if they apply themselves.”

He emphasized that this is especially important in an industry where the most important skills aren’t regularly taught in schools. The only way to gain knowledge is to work directly with experts in the industry, and this “grow your own” approach permeates all aspects of Dürr’s apprenticeship training. Seasoned employees work together with apprentices to pass on vital knowledge, enhancing the apprentice’s learning and ensuring the company will have a pipeline of qualified employees once the more experienced technicians retire. “In the next five years or so, there’s going to be a huge turnover in the industry,



Dürr’s current apprentices with Dürr staff - Front row: left to right - Jonah Jedel, Julian Gladden, Kaitlin Bowen, Michael Peruski, Ralph Gilmore, Addie Hughes / Back row: John Edelhauser, Darren Wesserling, Zach Judson, and Senior HR Generalist Chayna Eno. Dürr’s “grow your own” approach permeates all aspects of their apprenticeship training



Scott Kristian, Dürr's first MAT² apprentice, was awarded the GACC Apprenticeship Award along with Dürr.

not only for Dürr, but for other companies as well. And that knowledge somehow has to be transferred to the next generation of people for the finishing industry," Edelhauser said. "We expect our apprentices to become the future leaders of our company."

In addition to the mentorship from experienced employees, apprentices in the final stages of the program also mentor the ones who are just starting out, bolstering the apprentice's overall knowledge and letting apprentices in their second and third years take on a leadership role. Apprentices emerge from the program well-rounded with both mechanical and electrical skills. These training methods remove the pressure to hire outside talent that might not have the highly specific industry skills Dürr needs. "We're a total believer in a hands-on approach," Edelhauser said. "We think that's so valuable for our apprentices." Edelhauser calls this training "the Dürr way."

Scott Kristian, Dürr's first MAT² apprentice, is well on his way. Dürr chose to honor Kristian as an outstanding apprentice to receive the GACC Apprenticeship Award for his exemplary work ethic. After graduating from the program,

Kristian became a full-time Associate Installation Technician at Dürr in 2017 and is currently working towards a project management role.

Edelhauser remarked that Kristian fits in especially well at the company. "If Scott is assigned a task or an assignment, it's executed to the best of his ability, and if he's got questions, he's going to stop and ask to make sure he's going down the correct path and do it right the first time," Edelhauser said.

The GACC Apprenticeship Award honors a company that exemplifies excellence in German-certified apprenticeship programs in the US that pave the way for sustainable workforce development, and Dürr's commitment to hands-on training, helping their apprentices grow in areas that interest them most, introducing them to international perspectives, and setting them up for global success distinguishes Dürr as an outstanding facilitator of apprenticeship programs in the US.

High-tech manufacturing companies in diverse industries across the US can see similar benefits from participation in German-style apprenticeship programs such as those certified by the German American Chambers of Commerce. Edelhauser said he believes apprenticeship programs are advantageous to companies serious about building a stable future workforce, and the initial investment is worth the excellent results, not only for companies but for apprentices and employees as well.

He reported that Dürr is committed to investing in apprenticeships in the US, and that he's excited for what the future will bring.



John Edelhauser and Dürr apprentice Zach Judson. Edelhauser stated that "our apprentices are almost guaranteed success if they apply themselves."

"Working with young people keeps me young at heart, and I like to hear all the things that they're doing in their lives," he said. "We're very honored to receive the award, and it puts a stamp on the program: Dürr's doing all the right things." ■

Michigan Advanced Technician Training Program (MAT²) is an innovative, industry-driven approach to education. Developed in conjunction with global industry technology leaders to combine theory, practice and work to train a globally competitive workforce, MAT² addresses two critical issues facing the manufacturing and technology industries: a widening skills gap and an aging workforce. This is an apprenticeship program where students alternate between classroom instruction and on-the-job training, gaining the necessary hands-on skills and real-world experiences for them to become a successful and productive member of the skilled workforce.

Learn more at mat2apprenticeships.com and contact Virginia Rounds, Director of the MAT² Apprenticeship Program, at >> rounds@mat2apprenticeships.com

GACC facilitates placement of apprentice at Dr. Schär Inc. facility in New Jersey



We're delighted that a long-established and trusted European manufacturer of gluten-free products has accepted a local New Jersey resident into the company's internship program.

Elias Lott started his apprenticeship on November 3 at the Dr. Schär Swedesboro facility in South Jersey. Elias is just completing his related associates degree at Camden County College.

Dr. Schär's story began in 1922 in South Tyrol, the heart of the Italian Alps, with a vision to improve the lives of people with special nutritional needs. Ever since the company was founded, proximity to the consumer has been a guiding commitment.

The company's core competence combines the specific, complex requirements placed on nutrition with dedication and joie de vivre. Responsibility, progress and proximity are the values that give Dr. Schär stability and reliability. It's a family-run company with a global reach, with 18 sites in 11 countries and more than 1,360 employees worldwide. Dr. Schär products are available in about 100 countries.

subsidary of Dr. Schär, is backed by over 30 years in the marketplace and a world-class team of food technologists, dietitians, and scientists. The company provides the Celiac and gluten sensitive communities a flavorful selection of quality, gluten free and trusted products so that they may lead a carefree, pleasurable life.

With a commitment to delivering worry-free dining experiences for the Celiac and gluten sensitive communities, the company opened its first ever manufacturing facility dedicated to producing gluten free breads in New Jersey. ■



Elias Lott, left, with Simon Steckholzer, plant manager at the Dr. Schar Swedesboro, NJ facility.

Dr. Schar USA

Dr. Schar USA (www.schar.com), a

Dr. Schar USA, Inc.

305 Heron Drive
Swedesboro NJ 08085

>> www.dr.schar.com



Thais Voet

Customer Experience Manager,
Marketing, GACC South



From: Born in Campinas, Brazil and raised in Atlanta, Georgia by Belgian parents.

Interests: Outside of planning events, I have enjoyed spending time with our quarantine puppy and playing tennis.

Professional Background: I have been in the events field for over 5 years. My events career began in New York by assisting with the behind the scenes production of Fashion Week shows.

Contact: 404-586-6833
>> tvoet@gaccsouth.com

What do you like about your job?

The most rewarding part of my job is seeing members form connections through our network. I like seeing how people connect and enjoy themselves at our in-person events. For some of our large scale events, there are various months of lead-time and prep, and all the effort is worthwhile when we see guests enjoying themselves at our annual Gala or learning something new at our SME Business Development Conference.

What are you currently working on?

It is such a crucial time for companies to focus on business development and adjusting to the new way of doing business. To support our members during this pandemic, we started offering the option to host a webinar free of charge for the remainder of 2020 as a temporary membership perk. I have been busy connecting with members and

co-hosting webinars with them on a wide range of topics. Currently my focus is brainstorming different outlets and ways for our members to connect virtually. We have found success using Zoom breakout rooms which provides the opportunity for members to connect on a more personal level.

How has COVID-19 affected your work?

Although I miss hosting in person events, I was very impressed by how seamlessly we were able to transition to virtual events. In mid-March, we had 2 in person events scheduled and within days, we converted them to webinars. Ever since, we have hosted and supported 80 webinars with over 4000 of attendees. Our webinars focus on topics that are top of mind for the German American businesses community and strive to be a great resource for our network. ■

Welcome, New Members!

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www.abatadahgroup.com

ARGO-HYTOS Inc.
www.argohtyos.com

Ariosio Systems GmbH
www.ariosio-systems.com

ATEQ Corp.
www.atequsa.com

Blocksize Capital GmbH
www.blocksizecapital.com

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Casey Mack
Student Membership

Charleston Sister Cities International
www.charlestonsistercities.org

Cloud10 Strategies
cloud10strategies.com

Consistency GmbH & Co. KG
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Deuter USA, Inc.
www.deuterusa.com

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www.egresswindowtastic.com

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www.edwardjones.com/anja-decker

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GC Leasing AZ LLC (GRENKE Arizona USA)
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Guardian Life Insurance Company of America
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