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German American
Chambers of Commerce
Deutsch-Amerikanische
Handelskammern



Fraunhofer

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Research and Innovation
Made by Fraunhofer



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With 2020 firmly in the rear mirror, 2021 has brought change and new opportunities. Not only did the beginning of the year mark the start of a new US administration with its own agenda to combat the pandemic and boost the economy; with a speedy roll-out of the vaccines and a forecasted GDP growth of above 6 percent the outlook looks bright. 2021 also saw the opening of the newly established Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Washington DC, LLC. The Delegation, located in the heart of the US capital, aims to promote and deepen economic and commercial ties between the United States and Germany. Our mission is to advance, facilitate and foster commercial interests of German business and industry in the United States as well as commercial interests of US business and industry in Germany.

We serve as a point of contact for German companies and subsidiaries interested in business opportunities in Washington, DC. Beyond being the US capital, the city has made a name for itself as an ambitious business location. More than 350 federal agencies procure goods and services, a thriving tech and cybersecurity sector attracts a skilled workforce, 19 colleges and universities support top-notch health and research services, DC is the hub for international development, and daily non-stop flights to and from Frankfurt and Munich make visiting us easy.

We look forward to supporting German companies that want to establish or expand their presence in the US capital and helping them navigate the unique business opportunities in Washington, DC. The new Delegation offers companies both from Germany and the United States a networking platform on



*Dr. Christoph Schemioneck,
Acting Delegate, Delegation of German
Industry and Commerce in Washington,
DC, LLC*

transatlantic business topics and connects the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHKs), the German Chambers of Commerce in Germany (IHKs), trade associations and decision-makers from federal, state, and local governments. The Delegation is supported by Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy.

Having worked with German companies for the past thirteen years to help them navigate the international development sector and showcase their positive economic contribution in the United States, I personally look forward to this new opportunity and to working together even more closely with our colleagues of the German American Chambers of Commerce.

Hope to see you all soon in-person!
Best,

C. Schemioneck

Dr. Christoph Schemioneck

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AHK

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The Best of Both Worlds: Research and Innovation Made by Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

Dr. Sebastian Wicklein, Lead Corporate R&D Coordination at Fraunhofer USA Inc.

Fraunhofer USA – transatlantic collaboration platform

Fraunhofer USA, Inc., a nonprofit applied research organization, was founded in 1994 and is a legally independent affiliate of Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in Germany. The company is headquartered in Plymouth, Michigan with Prof. Dr. Thomas Schuelke serving as its President since 2018.

In 2021, Fraunhofer USA consolidated all research units into three major research centers cooperating as a larger team offering comprehensive capabilities to research custom-

ers and addressing converging technology trends, which require multidisciplinary solutions.

Through its close collaboration in research and outreach activities with Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft's research institutes in Germany, Fraunhofer USA fosters transatlantic research cooperation and supports access to the US-market for Fraunhofer institutes and their high tech R&D portfolio.

An important aspect is the new incentive funding program of Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft to encourage

close research collaboration between its own research institutes in Germany and Fraunhofer USA's research Centers, called PACT (Program Affiliate Collaboration for Knowledge Transfer). This funding program also supports Fraunhofer USA's Centers in expanding and developing existing and new core competencies to proactively address emerging technologies and market developments in the US. Through the exchange of scientific personnel and active knowledge transfer as well as the joint development of demo-systems, the transatlantic cooperation capability is significantly improved to successfully deliver results meeting the US market needs.

In order to better implement and coordinate these efforts, Fraunhofer USA created an Outreach Office which is led by Dr. Sebastian Wicklein and collaborates closely with the US-Research Coordinator of Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Dirk Friebe, in Germany.

Fraunhofer USA's Outreach Office has two main objectives, (1) to engage in US R&D-market analysis and segmentation to identify technology trends to adjust the Fraunhofer USA R&D-strategy and (2), to coordinate and intensify transatlantic R&D collaborations.

One example of converging technologies and transatlantic coopera-



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Fraunhofer USA

tion is in the area of biotech and biomedical applications where Fraunhofer USA combines their abilities in artificial intelligence, microelectronics, drug development and smart manufacturing and is currently supporting the “InnoHealth USA” campaign funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in Germany. It focuses on Digital Diagnostics (image recognition, molecular markers, pathology) and Smart Sensors (bioelectrodes, wearables, etc.) and helps research oriented SMEs to enter the US-market and to connect them with US-industry partners and investors (venture capital - VC). Learn more about InnoHealth below.

With its “TechBridge” program led by Russ Zarras, Fraunhofer USA offers startups and VCs the opportunity to engage in projects to de-risk their investments and connect them to interested corporations and offers independent validation and verification services.

As a close collaboration partner of Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Fraunhofer USA can act as a first contact point on the US-market to support clients accessing the vast R&D portfolio of Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

InnoHealth USA – Innovators in Cross Atlantic Applied Solutions for Health Data

The world is not only fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, there many more challenges that we are facing in the healthcare sector, such as the aging world population and its consequences, or digitalization and the increasing global demand for technologies facilitating remote care. All this must be tackled with scientific diligence and entrepreneurial expertise, the pillars of progress that the InnoHealth USA campaign also focuses on. The campaign is led by the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft as part of the BMBF initiative “Research in Germany”, aiming to strengthen joint international innovation by involving SMEs and start-ups.

The German and the US digital health markets are among the fastest growing and most innovative in the world, the exchange of scientific excellence and cooperation of industrial know-how are core components of this partnership. In this context, InnoHealth USA called for innovators and innovation in Digital Diagnostics and Smart Sensors, including the field of ‘Aging with technology’. The winners – tandems of researchers and entrepreneurs – will now promote

Fraunhofer USA offers the following expertise at its own research Centers in the USA:

Fraunhofer USA Center Midwest CMW (East Lansing, Plymouth/Michigan)

Development of diamond and thin-film technologies and processes, plasma sources, power electronics, laser systems and processes, microelectronics and sensing layers, 3D-printing and microfabrication.

Fraunhofer USA Center for Manufacturing Innovation CMI (Boston/Massachusetts)

Development of smart specialized automation systems, biomedical technologies and biosensors, alternative energy sources and power grid engineering.

Fraunhofer USA Center Mid-Atlantic CMA (Riverdale/Maryland, Newark/Delaware)

Software and software-platform development, and analysis, cybersecurity, AI, biotech and drug development

Fraunhofer USA Alliance Office South Carolina (Columbia/South Carolina)

In partnership with the department of commerce of South Carolina and local Universities, Fraunhofer USA helps support local SMEs with R&D projects.

This model is currently transferred to other states as well.

Fraunhofer USA Office for Digital Media Technologies DMT (San Jose/California)

Consulting and contact office.

The German and the US digital health markets are among the fastest growing and most innovative in the world, the exchange of scientific excellence and cooperation of industrial know-how are core components of this partnership.

their ideas and the excellence of the German research and innovation landscape in the USA and attract suitable partners. Let's take a look at the ideas and the masterminds behind them!

Digital Diagnostics in Biomedicine

We'll start with the Research-SME-Tandems in Digital Diagnostics. Moritz Spiller, Otto-von-Guericke-University, and Rutuja Salvi, IDTM GmbH, developed *BODYTUNE*, a computer-assisted system that enables patients to monitor their carotid artery by using an inexpensive audio sensor and their own smartphone. In this way, asymptomatic carotid disease that affects a large part of the population can be detected at an early stage.

A personal challenge motivated the creation of *Insulin Dose Calculation*. The engineer and entrepreneur Thomas Wuttke, diafyt MedTech, was looking for the optimal insulin dosage for his diabetes. To facilitate this complicated concern for himself and for all diabetics, Thomas Wuttke and his partner, Dr. René Richter, Dresden University of Technology, created a device that can calculate the optimal amount of insulin at any time.

The next innovation aims to improve the - yet - unpredictable success of implant-supported prostheses. Now, *MeDe21*, a highly accurate in vitro test method, enables this simulation of osseointegration. In addition, the procedure provides a documentation system to support regulatory acceptance. *MeDe21* is developed by Dr. Franziska Ehlicke, University Hospital Würzburg and Dr. Jörg Hauffe, seleon GmbH.

How to perform a decentralized mass screening, e.g. in a pandemic situation, with a fully digitized workflow? To this end, Dr. Florian Groeber-Becker, Fraunhofer Institute for Silicate Research ISC and Dr. Miguel Roncales-Poza, OZA Analytics GmbH, developed a unique platform: *MAXSAM*. The platform is merging 96 patient samples for multiplexed testing in a micro-well plate offering a compact footprint and low power requirements.

Tumor detection through histological tissue analysis should enable faster diagnoses for patients and a simpler daily routine workflow for pathologists. *Patho AI & Image Fusion*, project of Dr. Johannes Lotz, Fraunhofer Institute for Digital



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Medicine MEVIS, and Felix Faber, MindPeak GmbH, aims to achieve this by combining AI and multistain image registration. In doing so, the data trains AI algorithms that leads to more accurate and robust results.

Chronic kidney disease is prevalent worldwide, but patients rarely find nutritional service providers. *Dina*, the 'Digital intelligent nutrition assistant' offers dietary recommendations, concepts of behavioural therapy and visual analytics in one single app. Prof. Jörn Kohlhammer, Fraunhofer Institute for Computer Graphics Research IGD and Max Frese, Zeys One, designed the device.

Smart Sensors: Improving Patient-centered Care

Salima Houta, Fraunhofer Institute for Software and Systems Engineering ISST and Dr. Johannes Kreuzer, Cosinuss GmbH, developed *H-EAR Signs*, a highly precise and versatile in-ear vital sign sensor that enables effective monitoring and multifunctional use. The sensor records vital signs and body movements, AI uses the data to classify critical patient conditions.

Technology can provide solutions to aging and its implications. This is the focus of *Miimex*, the innovation by Prof. Frank Steinicke, University of Hamburg and Peter Konrad, Velamed GmbH. The virtual reality based exergames are specifically targeted at people with neurological diseases such as dementia or parkinson.

Here is another innovation in the field of 'Aging with technology', the *Virtual Care Assistant* 'Hannah' that supports patients and nursing relatives in organizing and managing

the daily outpatient care. Armando Statti, ucura Deutschland GmbH, and Maurice Boiting, Fraunhofer ISST, developed 'Hannah' that is trained to extract "digital biomarkers" from contextual information provided by the user.

Opportunities for exchange and cooperation with research and industry in the US

All these innovators will participate in the one-week virtual Matchmaking Tour to the U.S. from June 7 – 11, 2021. The tour will include insights into research institutions, companies, and clusters on the East and West coast as well as the Midwest; it will offer opportunities for exchange and networking with US stakeholders from science and industry to identify potential partners in digital health. Our close

cooperation partners in the US, e.g. the German American Chambers of Commerce and the German Consulate General, are supporting this exclusive event.

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft – Research Dedicated to the Future

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is the world's leading applied research organization. With its focus on developing key technologies that are vital for the future and enabling the commercial exploitation of this work by business and industry, Fraunhofer plays a central role in the innovation process. Based in Germany, Fraunhofer is an innovator and catalyst for groundbreaking developments and a model of scientific excellence. By generating inspirational ideas and spearheading sustainable scientific and



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The world is changing, now more than ever. We can wait and see what comes – or we take the future into our own hands. Against the backdrop of the current pandemic, it is important to act decisively to emerge from the crisis with renewed strength.

technological solutions, Fraunhofer provides science and industry with a vital base and helps shape society now and in the future.

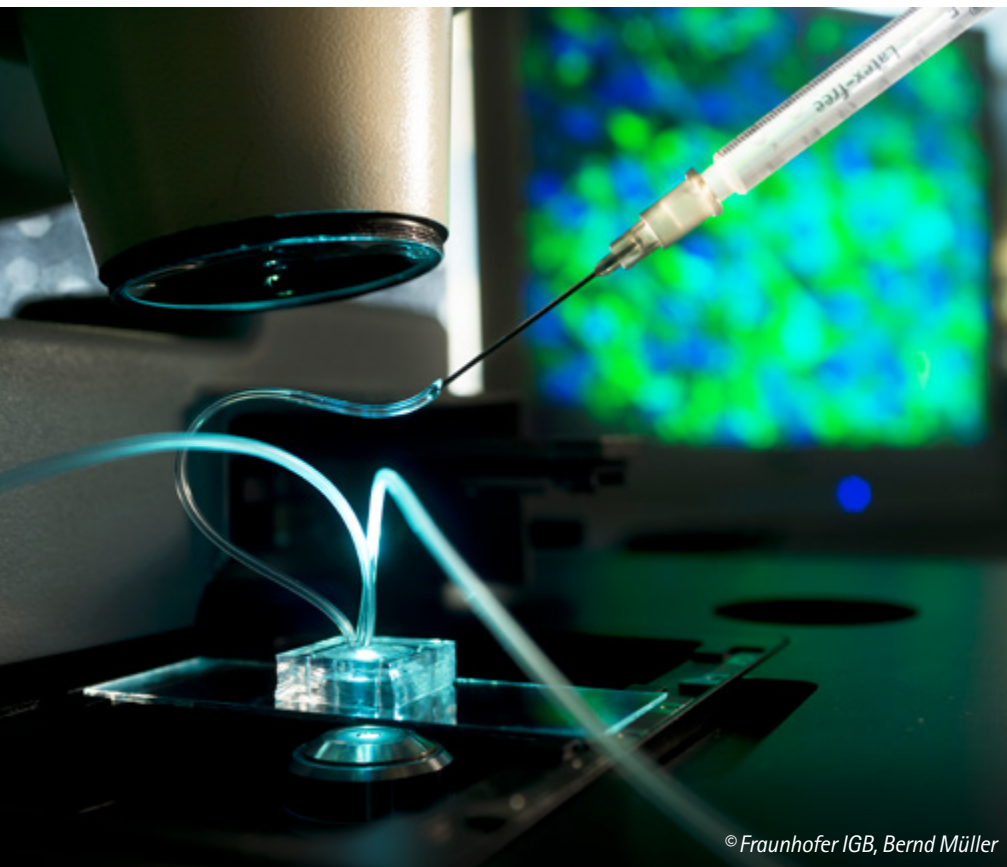
Interdisciplinary research teams work together with partners from industry and government in order to transform novel ideas into innovative technologies, to coordinate and realize key research projects with a systematic relevance, and to strengthen the economy with a commitment to creating value that is based on human values. International collaboration with outstanding research partners and companies from around the world brings Fraunhofer into direct contact with the key regions that drive scientific progress and economic development.

Fraunhofer Strategic Research Fields

Forming the core focus of our research portfolio, seven Fraunhofer Strategic Research Fields aim to address needs and markets that will shape our future: Digital Healthcare, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Next Generation Computing, Quantum Technologies, Resource Efficiency and Climate Technologies, Bioeconomy and Hydrogen Technologies. Within these fields, our outstanding pre-competitive research specifically targets projects that have high commercial potential, thereby enhancing our impact on society and across multiple sectors. By pursuing the Fraunhofer Strategic Research Fields, we aim to continuously strengthen the roles of Germany and Europe as key hubs of business and innovation while fostering our technological sovereignty and promoting sustainable value creation.

Let's take for example the Strategic Research Field Digital Healthcare: More than half of all Fraunhofer Institutes and research institutions are involved in the four major areas of health research – drugs, diagnostics, devices and data, or 4D for short. Many innovations emerge at the interface between medical science, natural science, computer science and engineering. With its emphasis on transdisciplinary research, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft offers the perfect environment for a close collaboration on health research – and on a cost-intelligent precision medicine for the benefit of patients.

The steadily increasing health care expenditures worldwide require cost-intelligent innovations, which



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result from the convergence where scientific disciplines intersect. Novel, cost-efficient ideas can only be translated into concrete applications under new forms of collaboration. In this context, the collaboration between the four major areas of drugs, diagnostics, data and devices – the 4Ds – is crucial. Currently, only organizations that conduct application-oriented research and operate in a highly transdisciplinary manner, such as the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, are in a position to cover and combine the range of technological disciplines required for cost-efficient innovations.

Research focuses on expanding the sovereignty of medical product and device supply in Germany and Europe, improving the usability of medical data, decoding the immune system and defining transdisciplinary

translation cycles to accelerate the applicability of innovative medical products and devices. Against the backdrop of an aging population, cost pressures and shortages of skilled healthcare professionals, our research also focuses on automating healthcare provision in order to maintain quality of care, free up more space for human interaction, and take the pressure off staff.

Requirement-driven and Problem-oriented Research

Fraunhofer conducts research in the fields relating to social challenges in order to achieve tangible improvements for mankind. The essence of our research portfolio is formed by widely diverse issue-oriented and problem-driven research questions that are approached in an interdisciplinary and networked manner, with

a constant focus on rapid transfer.

The world is changing, now more than ever. We can wait and see what comes – or we take the future into our own hands. Against the backdrop of the current pandemic, it is important to act decisively to emerge from the crisis with renewed strength. We are meeting this challenge by developing innovations that will make life easier tomorrow. With our commitment, we promote the preservation of know-how and contribute to securing technological leadership and sovereignty, competitiveness and prosperity. ■

More Information:

Fraunhofer USA

>> www.fraunhofer.org/

InnoHealth USA

>> www.research-in-germany.org/innohealth.html

Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

>> www.fraunhofer.de/en.html

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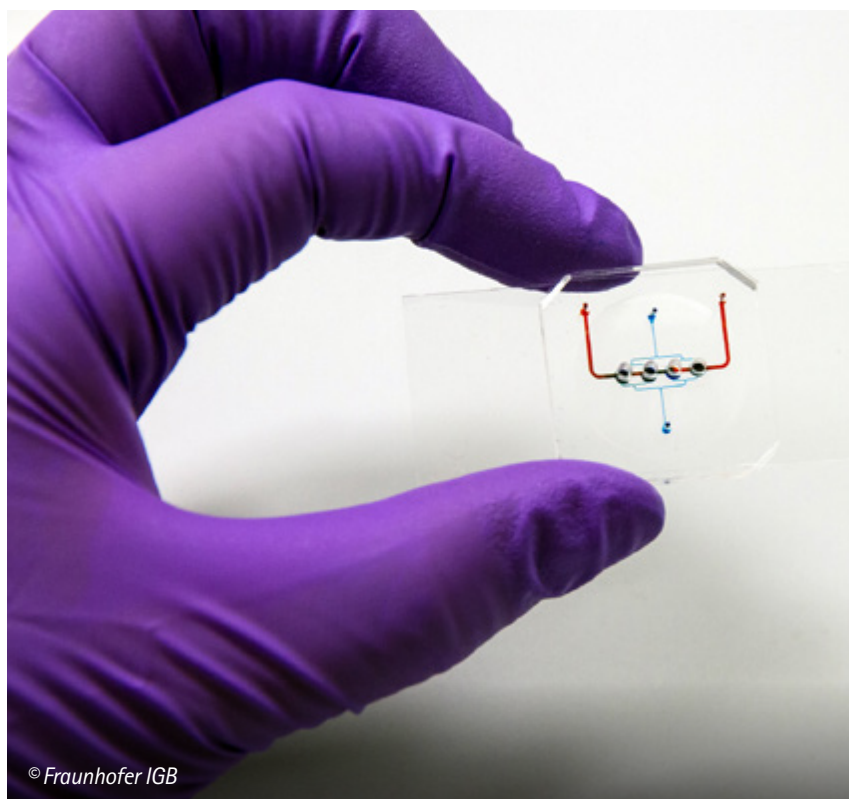
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Kicking the stimulus habit

By Clarissa Dann, Deutsche Bank Corporate Bank

While the US\$1.9trn American Rescue Bill has economists revising US economic growth upwards, what does this mean for the longer term? And are the stimulus cheques going back into the economy? flow's Clarissa Dann shares some Deutsche Bank Research insights

With more than a year of the Covid-19 pandemic behind us, a way out of what the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) World Outlook 2021 calls "this health and economic crisis" has become clearer. "Thanks to the ingenuity of the scientific community, we have multiple vaccines that can reduce the severity and frequency of infections," notes the IMF.

The report explains how additional fiscal support in some economies (particularly in the US), on top of an unprecedented fiscal response in 2020 and continued monetary accommodation has made possible an increase from an earlier forecast of global economic growth to 6% in 2021 and 4.4% in 2022.¹

However, as pandemic measures are eased, former Bank of England Governor Mervyn King asked, "Given

that central banks have already introduced expansionary monetary policies last year, and are going further, what on earth is the case for a further fiscal expansion?"²

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), federal debt held by the public reaches 107% of GDP (surpassing its historical high) in 2031 and continues to climb. The CBO has increased their debt-to-GDP projections for 2050 from 180% to nearly 200%.³

Spend or save?

So is the US\$1.9 trn stimulus package a cause for concern? Our flow article, America's US\$1.9trn kick start (19 March 2021)⁴ took a closer look at not only the components of the fiscal package, but the wider issue of how the stimulus would lead to increased consumer spending (rather than hoarding and saving), thereby driving the enhanced economic growth for 2021.

With stimulus cheques having hit personal bank accounts in March, the team highlight apparel and used cars as "two categories that could see demand-induced prices surges over the next couple of months".⁵ They note that BEA card spending data on apparel purchases surged over the last two weeks of the month to 34.2% above baseline. Why could this mean price rises, given that retail spending on apparel rarely has an impact on apparel? Inventories are low, and supply chains are strained, so "may not be able to accommodate such a surge in demand.



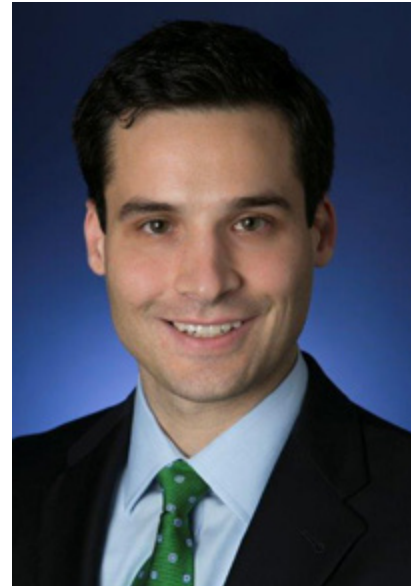
“Concerns about debt loads should be shelved, at least for the time being. The motivation for this emerging view is multifaceted but relies heavily on the fact that government borrowing costs – both nominal and real – have trended lower over time and currently remain near record lows even as economic growth rebounds.”

Borrowing cost absorption

As Deutsche Bank's Chief US Economist Matthew Luzzetti (pictured) and his team observed in February,⁶ the consensus in Washington is evolving to believe that “concerns about debt loads should be shelved, at least for the time being. The motivation for this emerging view is multifaceted but relies heavily on the fact that government borrowing costs – both nominal and real – have trended lower over time and currently remain near record

lows even as economic growth rebounds”.

In other words, nominal GDP growth could be set to outstrip nominal borrowing costs by the widest margin in decades, so all else being equal the arithmetic works out to keep debt loads contained in the long term. Analysis of 20 advanced economies from 2000 to 2019 does, they point out, demonstrate how “government borrowing costs became less sensitive to debt in the



Matthew Luzzetti, Chief US Economist, Deutsche Bank

decade following the Global Financial Crisis and preceding the Covid19 pandemic”. For the US, the muted impact of the huge fiscal responses on borrowing costs is particularly important.

However, the team circles back to a comment partly in line with Mervyn King's point that shock responses must not become habits. “Most of this analysis was conducted in a global regime where fiscal policy-makers at least expressed concerns about keeping debt at sustainable levels over the long run.” ■

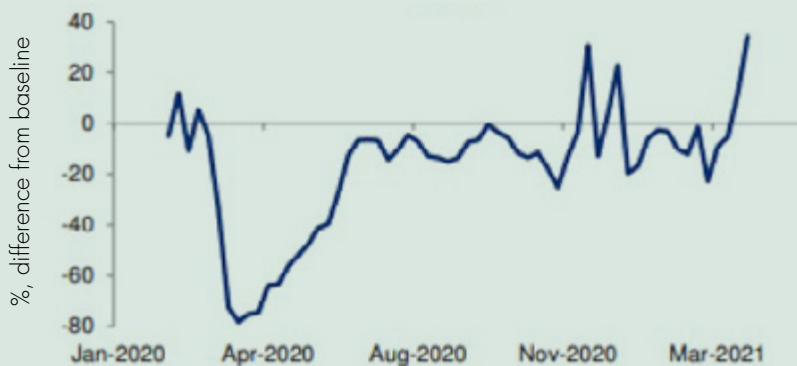
Clarissa Dann
Editorial Director of Marketing,
Deutsche Bank Corporate Bank

Deutsche Bank



Fig 1: Surge in apparel spending after stimulus cheques posted

Median change in card spend: cloth & cloth accessories stores



Source: BEA, Haver Analytics, Deutsche Bank

- <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2021/03/23/world-economic-outlook-april-2021>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/apr/12/central-bank-hooked-covid-stimulus-plan-mervyn-king-bank-england-governor-inflation-risk>
- <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56977>
- <https://flow.db.com/more/macro-and-markets/america-s-us1-9trn-kick-start>
- US Economic Notes: March CPI: Econ and strategy preview (12 April 2021)
- US Economic Perspectives: Some pleasant fiscal arithmetic (2 February 2021) by Matthew Luzzetti, Amy Yang, Brett Ryan, Justin Weidner, Krishna Bhimavarapu at Deutsche Bank Research

Saxony!

A Business and Textile Location at its Best

Saxony, one of the 16 Federal States in Germany, has many pictures which tell many tales and create lots of history. The digital heart of the microelectronics / ICT industry beats in Dresden. Geared towards the future, researchers and young entrepreneurs between Leipzig and Dresden are working hand in hand in the life sciences and environmental technology sectors.

The traditional heart of Saxony's economy is found in the Chemnitz-Zwickau region. Whether it be mechanical engineering or more than 100 years of "Autoland Saxony," strong and highly efficient industries have evolved from smart ideas and intelligent solutions for each business segment. Saxony's Textile Industry observes all those business segments.

Saxony sets business transactions in motion. Highly motivated and educated employees transfer innovative ideas into practical applications such as Smart-Textiles in no time in one of Europe's designated "Innovation Leader" regions.

From DHL's European air cargo hub in Leipzig, a vast variety of products such as technical textiles are shipped to any point on the globe around the clock. When taking a break from work, Germany's most popular cultural destination provides multifaceted moments of recreation.

In the 18th century, the Industrial Age began in Saxony with the founding of the first machine construction companies. The local textile industry and mining industry were major driver for it. The region, thus, headed the field on the European mainland. Pioneering innovations come from Saxony. Today you still find mechanical engineering companies such as TERROT, STC Spinnzwirn or Filztuchfabrik Rodewisch.

Filztuchfabrik Rodewisch is a supplier for filter screens and conveyor belts for manufacturing plants as well as felts and dryer fabrics for the paper industry. The name Terrot stands worldwide for quality and top performance in the production of electronically and mechanically controlled circular knitting machines. STC Spinnzwirn supplies high-tech textile machinery and equipment from Chemnitz all over the world. Founded in 1866, the company is a leading manufacturer of complete solutions and single components for the extrusion of monofilaments and slit film tapes as well as high-speed winders and accessories for man-made fiber spinning plants.

Saxony has become an essential stakeholder in Germany's lightweight engineering and technical textiles sector. Find a textile-concrete network in Saxony. When it comes to research and development, Saxony

is well ahead of the competition. Universities and research institutions are found and are creating a dense R&D landscape unlike anywhere else in Germany.

Technical textiles and lightweight construction are pioneering markets of the future with considerable growth potential. The entire textile value creation chain exists in Saxony, which creates a very potent textile hub with solutions for diverse applications.

Whether it be training, research and development, or machine and plant construction, yarn production, knitted fabrics, design and ready-made clothing, textile finishing, sustainable and smart textiles solutions, home and luxury interior applications or textiles with special need for industrial and mobility aspects, a suitable partner can be found for every need in Saxony.

Visit Saxony's Textile Hub:

come and see what Saxony's Textile Hub has to offer

>> <https://business-saxony.com/en/visit-saxony-s-textile-hub>

Saxony is enchanting. Germany's number one travel destination for culture enthralls residents and tourists with a superb blend of a historical heritage, a wide range of cultural attractions, and natural beauty.

SAXONY!

WIRTSCHAFTSFÖRDERUNG
SACHSEN

Fascinating beauty and impressive elegance in architecturally precious exhibition rooms can be seen at the Plauen Lace Museum. Saxony was one of the most important embroidery regions in Europe, making embroidery a part of the cultural heritage of Saxony. To this day, quality embroidery products are produced under the name of "Plauener Spitze / Plauen Lace" and are being marketed internationally.

The company "Kleiderwahnsinn" won in 2020 with its your collection "Black Pearl" the European Fashion Award. The designer was be invited to the next New York Fashion Week.

Additionally, a host of adventures can also be found at the 400 museums in Saxony. Do you want to discover fabulous, sparkling treasures? Then you should visit the "Green Vault" or the "Turkish Chamber" in Dresden. Or do you love technical history? Then a visit to the Saxon Museum of Industry Chemnitz will be perfect for you or the extraordinary monument Textile Factory Bros. Pfau Crimmitschau with its originally preserved, 100-year-old machinery. Visitors step back in time and also have a future oriented inside at Saxony's Textile Industry at the special exhibition "Textile? Future."

Curious to learn more about Saxony's Textile Hub? Then join the project and "Visit Saxony's Textile Hub."

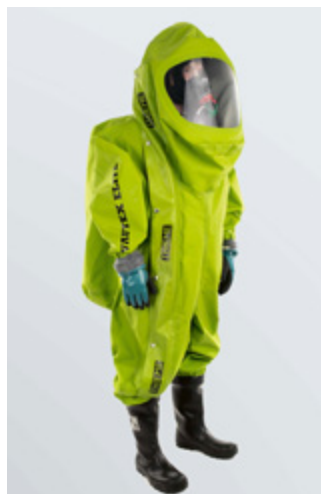
Learn more about potential textile companies in Europe and in Saxony.

Gain a virtual inside in June 2021. ■

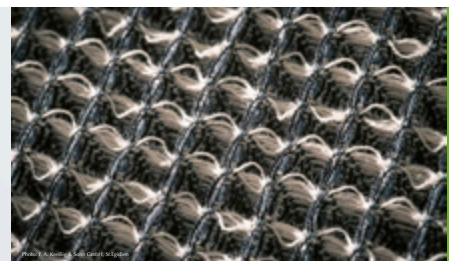
For more information:

Get a unique inside at the Textile Industry in Saxony and just explore the 3D Tour

>> <http://saxlink.de/Exhibition-TuchfabrikCrimmitschau>

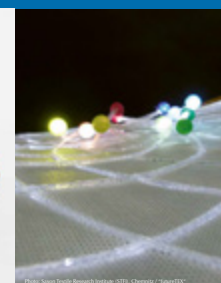


WWW.BUSINESS-SAXONY.COM



Textile Hub Saxony

- More than 200 years of textile tradition
- More than 100 companies along the entire value creation chain
- Industry-related R&D landscape with such leading stakeholders as STFI Chemnitz, ILK TU Dresden
- Core competences: Modern home and fashion textiles, technical textiles, textile materials for lightweight construction
- Innovation topics: High-performance fibers for industrial applications, healthcare textiles, carbon concrete, geotextiles



German, American experts discuss energy efficiency in buildings during virtual forum

The GACC NY last month hosted a virtual forum focusing on technologies and solutions related to energy efficiency in buildings. The event targeted professionals, researchers and thought leaders in the fields of energy efficiency and green buildings.

The export initiative “Energy Solutions - Made in Germany” of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy sponsored the program, which included a delegation of eight German companies that presented their latest energy efficiency solutions, technologies and services. More than 80 guests logged

on to hear the keynote speakers and company presenters.

Our partner in Berlin, Laura Scharlach, Head of Division within the German Energy Solutions Initiative, selected the German companies participating in this delegation. She addressed the export initiative and its goals as part of her presentation. Other expert speakers from Germany included Dr. Olaf Böttcher from the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning and Dr. Robert Himmler from DGNB Auditor.

They were joined by local experts from the US namely, Donovan

eco2heat GmbH

eco2heat is a global leading manufacturer of far-infrared heating systems and products, which range from wall and surface heaters to therapy solutions. Their patented and certified far-infrared technology produces a safe, energy efficient, maintenance-free heat with a carbon-neutral footprint.

>> <https://eco2heat.us/>



EcoSyst GmbH

EcoSyst takes on the challenge of creating a healthy indoor climate for everybody, thus avoiding illness caused by draft. Their technology provides for an indoor climate control that is eco-friendly, comfortable and helps save energy, costs and carbon emissions. The unique idea of decentralized production provides craft firms all over the world with the opportunity to manufacture and directly promote their innovative product.

>> <https://ecosyst.de/en/home-en/>



“New York is on track to transition our economy from fossil fuels to clean energy. The market for retrofitting buildings in the city can be up to \$20 billion.”

Donovan Gordon, NYSERDA

Gordon of NYSERDA and John Mandych of the Urban Green Council, who provided valuable insights on New York City's bold energy efficiency efforts. One such initiative is the “Climate Mobilization Act,” which aims to improve energy efficiency for certain buildings in New York City and reduce greenhouse gas emissions of buildings by 40 percent by 2030.

Gordon enthusiastically pointed out that there are great opportunities for German companies in New York State. “New York is on track to transition our economy from fossil fuels to clean energy,” he said. “The market for retrofitting buildings in the city can be up to \$20 billion. So we greatly

welcome your solutions here!”

New York City is one of the fastest growing cities in the world and buildings generate 80% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions. The city's plans to produce energy are quite ambitious: by 2030, the Big Apple intends to obtain 70 percent of its electricity from renewable sources. The city hopes to build on its clean energy future, in part, by bringing experts from Germany and local US innovators together to discuss ways to cooperate on creating solutions. Germany has been known for decades as a leader in energy efficiency and renewable energy.



Engelmann Sensor GmbH

Engelmann Sensor has been a leading manufacturer of heat and cold meters for over 40 years. With a complete product portfolio for submetering applications, the company established itself as a market leader in the field of electronic consumption data acquisition. The portfolio is supplemented by the appropriate software for reading out and transferring customer data. With Smartest Metering Technology, Engelmann creates the basis for electronic processing of consumption data and the prerequisite for excellent customer service. The remotely readable hardware meets the requirements of the EED and thus enables the digitalization of processes.

>> <https://www.engelmann.de/en/>



KBR GmbH

KBR - Solutions for Reactive Current Compensation and Energy Data Management - Made in Germany! For more than 40 years the company develops and produces a wide range of solutions for energy saving and energy efficiency by power capacitors, filter reactors, power factor controllers, complete power factor correction units, measuring devices, energy optimizing systems and energy management systems.

>> <https://www.kbr.de/en/>



mfh systems GmbH

mfh systems is a technology company for the development and production of innovative surface heating and cooling systems as well as controlled domestic ventilation. In the offices, production and logistics rooms, three generations work on the further development and documentation of surface heating and cooling systems. The company supports its customers in technology, sales and marketing.

>> <https://www.mfh-systems.com/en/>





The forum's goals include:

- Highlighting efficient solutions from Germany that can be implemented in the US
- Supporting climate protection and resource conservation through smarter buildings and infrastructure
- Sharing industry knowledge internationally to further develop the sustainable building and infrastructure market
- Raising awareness among political decision makers and opinion leaders concerning the importance of energy efficiency and the synergy between the two countries

These days, there's an increasing dedication toward achieving clean and efficient energy solutions, not only in New York, but elsewhere in the US. Such an environment provides exciting and lucrative opportunities for both German and American companies that offer innovative products and services. ■

PURUS PLASTICS GmbH

PURUS has reengineered the entire recycling process and developed one of the world's most modern recycling plants for used plastics. Their product ECORASTER is a hardwearing and sustainable ground reinforcement system for the stabilization of permeable ground, which has been developed, manufactured and enhanced by the company for more than twenty years. Thus, they epitomize ground reinforcement solutions and prove that durable surfaces can be ecologically friendly and affordable. Their systems can be used in almost any application, particularly in gardening/landscaping and civil engineering, for equestrian sports as well as forestry and agricultural applications.

>> <https://www.purus-plastics.de/>

>> <https://www.ecoraster.com/en/>



RESOL GmbH

RESOL is a worldwide market leader in solar thermal control technology. Among the products are solar thermal controllers, pump stations and a wide range of additional modules and accessories for the efficient use of energy. All RESOL products are futureoriented, sophisticated and unique in their design.

>> <https://www.resol.de/en>



UHRIG Energie GmbH

UHRIG Energie is a market leader in the conception, design, construction and installation of wastewater heat exchangers. Their heat exchanger is called Therm-Liner and is used across Europe. The company has already realized and evaluated over 90 systems for the use of wastewater heating. Thus, they know: Energy from wastewater offers a substantial potential for the burgeoning heating revolution.

>> <https://www.uhrig-bau.eu/en>



Innovative architecture firm transforms building for increased COVID-19 testing

As part of New York City's coordinated program to increase capacity for COVID-10 testing, our GACC NY member 1100 Architect worked with the Department of Design and Construction to transform an existing office suite within Riverside Health Center into a full-service COVID-19 testing lab.

An adjacent clinic space was repurposed to function as a self-testing facility with a reception area, socially distanced seating, and 13 testing rooms where patients are guided with electronic devices to self-administer tests. Conceived as a response to the COVID-19 crisis, the new facility is designed to remain in place, allowing the city to quickly adapt to future health testing needs.

Utilizing an integrated design-bid-build delivery method on a tightly compressed schedule, 1100 Architect delivered the project—including all approvals—on schedule. “The new facility is seamlessly integrated into the existing building without impacting existing uses,” said Juergen Riehm, one of the principal co-founders of 1100 Architect. “Complex mechanical and electrical systems for the lab were installed with minimal disruption to surrounding spaces and functions.”

As part of the design, the architecture firm reconfigured circulation to incorporate social distancing requirements in all shared spaces. 1100 Architect led an earlier renovation of Riverside Health Center in 2015. ■



Juergen Riehm, principal co-founder of 1100 Architect

More Information:

>> www.1100architect.com



Don't forget to look over the big pond when litigating Intellectual Property Rights

By Dr. Martin Schlosser / Armin Azod

Intellectual Property (IP) rights like patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, and designs see a continuously increasing importance, and intrinsic value, in many business sectors. Infringement of such rights may be intentional or unintentional.

Enforcing IP rights against infringers is often considered a complicated

task. In most cases, the standard approach is a lawsuit filed against infringers at a court with jurisdiction over the infringers to stop the harm (e.g. get an injunction), and recover money damages.

However, looking beyond standard procedures may help significantly in litigation proceedings, both for the plaintiffs and the defendants. Specifically, a comprehensive strategy can take advantage of the different IP Systems and litigation regulations of Germany and the United States.

This article provides a short introduction in both German and United States IP litigation systems. A further article will show possible opportunities for combined strategies.

IP Litigation in Germany

Germany's courts enjoy high international reputation when it comes to litigation of Intellectual Property rights. Special procedural issues are one reason behind this excellent reputation; for example, the Hamburg courts allow intellectual property proceedings to be conducted in English. The losing party generally has to pay litigation costs to the winning party. While costs may reach several hundreds of thousands of Euros there is a cap even in case of losing the lawsuit.

Germany's courts may hear witnesses, but do not order production of a large number of documents like in US discovery. However, in case of a sufficient likelihood of infringement of an Intellectual Property right, the court may order that the defendant has to show documents relating to the potential infringement and that even production facilities or other locations may be inspected.

In contrast to other jurisdictions, a stop of further sale of an infringing product can also be obtained by a preliminary injunction in Germany, which may be issued in only a few days.

A German specialty is bifurcation, meaning that validity of an intellectual property right is typically determined in a proceeding separate from infringement proceedings. In principle, this gives the plaintiff a stronger position, because the court determining infringement has to assume validity of the right and may only stay the proceedings if there is a high likelihood for revocation of the respective IP rights.

IP Litigation in the United States

Those who navigate the difficult US federal court system successfully take advantage of US litigation substantive and procedural frameworks that



A comprehensive strategy can take advantage of the different IP Systems and litigation regulations of Germany and the United States

allow for parties to seek detailed discovery into the opposing side to gather evidence and prove allegations of infringement. US discovery, especially electronic discovery, in combination with depositions, allows a party to gather evidence it otherwise would never be able to access. Depositions allow US counsel to require of relevant witnesses, parties, experts, and others who are related to the dispute, to answer questions under oath. This can also produce relevant information for a party.

US courts can issue temporary and permanent injunctions, hold evidentiary hearings, hold trials on validity

(including jury trials), issue orders for monetary damages, issue orders for punitive damages, issue orders for treble damages in certain circumstances, and order in special circumstances for the losing party to pay the prevailing party's litigation costs.

Another aspect of US litigation is the use of experts to help educate the court.

Preliminary Conclusion

The court systems in Germany and in the United States provide efficient enforcement of IP rights, but have significant differences. We will show in a future article how these differences can be used in combined strategies. ■

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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.



Armin Azod is a United States patent attorney with technical expertise in chemistry and chemical engineering. He is licensed in California and before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. He is a founding partner in the boutique IP firm of Steffin Azod LLP based in Los Angeles.



Digitalizing Transatlantic Business in 2021:

3 key challenges for German American SMEs... and some solutions

By Edward Vick, EVS Translations

COVID-19 has accelerated digital transformation and is challenging the traditional notion of the workplace. 2021 will be a pivotal year for many businesses.

There is a physiological reaction known as Acute Stress Response. This may be more familiar to you under its alternative name: the 'fight-or-flight response'. This was a phenomenon experienced by our ancient ancestors when they faced danger, such as the presence of a predator. During this event, the brain makes a series of rapid calculations and releases the necessary hormones which prompt the human to take action: run or fight. These days, for better or worse, there are no predators, nevertheless, in 2020, there was COVID-19.

Massive sociological and commercial disruption played out on a scale never seen before in our lifetimes. Both Europe and the US were hit hard by the pandemic and since early 2020, businesses have had to assess and reassess their plans, or simply roll out a set of emergency measures to survive. The threat of COVID-19 demanded quick responses and rapid adaptation. But, if last year was a year to react and respond, this might be the year to move beyond that initial 'fight or flight' response. What comes next, in 2021?

Digital laggards and digital leaders: a reckoning

Last year, one of my employees wrote a company blog which included the question: 'Is your business a digital leader or a digital laggard?' (terms used in research by Dell Technologies). That is a big question. The pressure to commit to and carefully execute digital transformation weighs heavily on the shoulders of many businesses. But 2020 was certainly the year of reckoning. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the pace of digital transformation, and three key areas immediately come to mind: capitalizing on the sudden increased shift by audiences and consumers to the digital space (including how we leverage data), managing a remote workforce, and managing cybersecurity while navigating the regulations which surround it.

For EVS Translations, the future lies in a mix of product and process innovation. More specifically: increased application of AI and machine learning (automating large volumes of linguistic output), automating workflows within multimedia localization work, and



Edward Vick, CEO EVS Translations

leveraging data and analytics to inform decision making. Renewed investment and a proactive approach to implementation are key to future growth and survival. These areas, however, represent a very specific set of skills, so another challenge is to nurture the kind of talent that will future-proof the business. For new hires, the demand will be, more than ever, on technology and related skills, yet we know that the supply of and demand of such skills are not always in equilibrium. For us, Atlanta is fertile ground, and the future looks promising.

Aside from this long-term mission, this year we are, of course, re-evaluating the workplace model. Indeed, in the not-so-distant future, the notion of the 'workplace' may be

The future lies in increased application of AI and machine learning, automating workflows within multimedia localization work, and leveraging data and analytics to inform decision making.



assigned to the pre-COVID-19 era. Discussion surrounding flexible or home-based working models is not new, but COVID-19 has forced the change. Whether remote working models really become the norm remains to be seen, but all options are firmly on the table. Keeping a remote workforce connected and communicating is an arduous task, especially when, as is common for EVS Translations, very stringent data security measures must be maintained. Certain high-security work simply cannot be processed in a remote working model. That is why we are also concurrently developing stand-alone security solutions such as a virtual data room, and other client support features which are fit for this type of model.

Cybersecurity as an advantage, not a barrier

Due to the types of clients that EVS Translations traditionally works with, our infrastructure and personnel for data protection and information security is robust. We are TISAX listed (Trusted Information Security Assessment Exchange) and have invested in dedicated staff to manage information security and ensure compliance as a company that is located across Europe and the US. The sudden move to a remote working model, however, is certainly something which pushed our IT team last year.



On the one hand, they are working hard to ensure teams stay connected and that all IT infrastructure runs without issues. They also ensure protection for client data throughout the process chain: from communication and data transfer to storage and disposal. For some, data protection can be a barrier for digital transformation. In our case, it is an example of how a company takes it strengths and turns them into a key feature of the business and which attracts the attention of new clients.

Unlike in the EU, data protection in the USA is not regulated in a general and comprehensive manner. Instead, there are industry-specific regulations. However, a large part is based on voluntary commitments on the part of the companies. The difference in approach has its origins in a different perspective. While the protection of personal data is seen as a fundamental right in Europe, data protection in the US is considered part of consumer protection law, ultimately an element of economic life.

The EU-US Privacy Shield is a prime example to illustrate this. The ruling by the European Court of Justice against the agreement was a landmark moment of 2020. It has a significant impact on German American businesses, perhaps especially SMEs, in terms of Transatlantic data flows and how we manage them.

Germany (or Europe) has a different perspective on company culture than the US and we do need to understand this difference. The challenge for a US company with a German mother company is to unite these differences and connect the company's values and employees. It is in a German company's interest to establish long-lasting relationships with both employees and vendors and offer as well as receive security. Our challenge is not only to translate between languages on "paper" for our clients but also for ourselves in the way we define our company culture across different countries, cultures, people and given circumstances and regularities, like laws.

Future business growth in the US market: Atlanta and beyond

EVS Translations' head office is in Germany and we opened the US office in Atlanta in 2008. With the city's thriving business scene and reputation as a growing tech hub (further bolstered by the local universities and through on-going large-scale investment by major businesses), it was the right international setting to innovate and diversify as a business. Georgia consistently performs well in studies surrounding its digital economy and has excellent international access via Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Interna-

tional Airport. It is also a great base for further US growth.

Our Atlanta office was not intended as a replica of its German HQ. In the initial stages of market entry, perhaps it started life as a kind of German template, but then came a process of differentiation. The needs and expectations of the US market differ from those in Germany. There is a certain amount of organic development and a natural push and pull. For EVS Translations, at least, COVID-19 has neither impacted this dynamic nor caused a sudden change of direction or strategy. The approach to balancing the relationship between a Germany-based HQ and a US arm of its operation perhaps differs from company to company. For us, the US office in Atlanta is at the forefront of innovation for the company. It is our center for the development of customized machine learning solutions and home to our media localization department. We grow with our clients as they also seek to transform and optimize their processes, capabilities, and supply chains.

A catalyst for change and innovation

2020 may have been a defining year for many businesses. As German American businesses, we are not dependent on the conditions of a single domestic market. This is, at once, our advantage and our challenge. Years ago, many of us looked to innovate and take a risk by committing to a plan for US market entry. Now is the time to innovate again for further growth and by taking full advantage of the technologies which surround us.

As members of the German American

Chamber of Commerce, we move forward with caution and, also, with a great deal of common ground. Much is hinged upon the success of vaccination programs, but the outlook looks mostly optimistic. This year we do not focus on fight-or-flight. We embrace this catalyst for change. ■



Company summary:

Founded in Germany in 1991, the privately owned language services provider EVS Translations supports multinational businesses to deliver corporate and creative digital content across a wide range of languages. The company's in-house team of 150+ linguistic and localization experts are based across its network of offices spanning Europe and the USA.

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As part of the Berlin Senate for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises, we offer cost-free and confidential location advisory services. For U.S. companies expanding to Berlin and Berlin companies expanding to the U.S., we provide economic and industry information, introductions and support with site selection, talent, financing, and more.

Berlin's unique offerings from industry, science, academics, and tech foster its competitive edge and promote the creation of new innovative products and services. With its population of 3.7 million, Berlin stands out as an attractive destination for ambitious companies and investors. Berlin's startup ecosystem generates 500+ new tech startups per year, which receive 58% of Germany's investments. And since 43% of company founders are foreign, the business language is English!

Let us help establish or strengthen your connectivity to Berlin's business and tech community.

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Berlin Business Office, USA

NautilusLog closes a 1 million Euro seed financing round

STEP USA alumnus company NautilusLog has closed a 1 million Euro seed financing round and added the Lower Saxony state bank (NBank Capital) as a new investor on board. In addition to NBank Capital as the main investor, another investment company as well as business angels have participated, some of whom have excellent networks in the international shipping industry and have already been mentoring company's NautilusLog Co-Founder Otto Klemke. Congratulations to Otto and his team on this great achievement!

The article below by Tim Reinsch of TecPier provides some great insight on NautilusLog's path to success.

- NautilusLog is a ShipTech start-up that sees itself as a digital data engine in shipping.
- As a pioneer, the start-up not only sets new standards in digitalization in shipping, but also defines new business models via the platform.
- The funds from the seed financing round will be used to expand the team and platform for further

services and enable the company to serve the rapidly growing global customer demand.

- The investors in this funding round underline the confidence in NautilusLog and its long-term vision to unite all maritime stakeholders as well as partners.

The investors' confidence builds on TecPier's 2019 pre-seed funding round as well as NautilusLog's rapid growth. "We recognized NautilusLog's potential early on and see our investment as a confirmation of this". Within just one



year, the team had already more than 2,000 vessels signed up. In December 2020 alone, the launch of a new service attracted an additional 700 vessels to the platform. This is just the beginning, NautilusLog has an ambitious roadmap and plans to launch more services,” explains Tim Reinsch, Managing Partner at TecPier.

The NautilusLog application already revolutionizes shipping by combining and making the most of data and knowledge available. The app transforms previously unusable data into usable expertise, stakeholders into partners, and obstacles into opportunities for growth. New services are developed that not only digitize shipping, but above all focus on automation and sustainability. Customers benefit thanks to efficient processes and lower costs, giving them the opportunity to pass on the advantages to their own customers.

This potential was also immediately recognized by the investment company of the Lower Saxony state bank (NBank Capital) as the main investor. “Laws and regulations for shipping are becoming increasingly complex, but technical progress does not always develop in parallel. Stricter environmental conditions and international competition are creating enormous cost pressures. Therefore, the market is just asking for NautilusLog’s digital solutions,” explains Martin Ranic, investment manager at NBank Capital.

NautilusLog currently employs 14 people and will continue to grow strongly in the future. “We are



excited to grow our team to be able to place new services faster into the market. To this end, we will also continue to invest in marketing and sales to be able to serve the rapidly growing global demand for our digital solutions,” commented Otto Klemke, Co-Founder and CEO of NautilusLog. “Through our investors, we not only gain capital, but strategic support for our international growth plans.”

In addition to NBank Capital as the main investor, another investment company as well as business angels have participated, some of whom have excellent networks in the international shipping industry and have already been mentoring Mr. Klemke since 2017.

Thus, NautilusLog is accompanied in various networks by well-known

experts, companies and more and more interested market participants. The start-up is also contributing its innovations for shipping to a new ISO standard. ■

About STEP USA

The German American Chamber of Commerce New York supports young companies and entrepreneurs looking to enter the US market through STEP USA – our Startup & Entrepreneur Program, a one-week strategy development and fundraising program on the East Coast.

We are currently offering STEP USA Virtual, a 4-day startup program, uniquely designed and adapted in direct response to the current needs of startups to enable companies to join and work from anywhere.

>> www.stepusa.io

The USA could be facing an economic boom in 2021

By Ullrich Umann, Heiko Steinacher | Washington, D.C., San Francisco

A whole series of economic stimulus programs have de facto financed the economy as well as the health and social system from March 2020 to March 2021, fueled consumption and revived optimism for the future on company boards. The US Federal Reserve (Fed) also rushed to the rescue, granting loans at extremely low interest rates to large companies, which are only sporadically affected by the economic stimulus programs.

Since the second half of 2020, the economy has been gaining ground. In the first half of 2021, the race to catch up even accelerated. The consensus forecast of the Blue Chip Economic Indicators for the real growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021 climbed from month to month and last reached a record 5.7 percent in March. This means that GDP could find its way back to the pre-crisis level in the 2nd quarter of 2021.

Industry is recovering noticeably

There is consistently positive news from other sources as well. The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) reports on increasing incoming orders, growing production figures and a recovering employment level in the manufacturing sector. It is not for nothing that the institute's own purchasing managers' index PMI was 60.8 percent in February, an improvement of 2.1 percentage points compared to the previous month - values over 50 generally indicate growth. Of the 18 manufacturing sectors covered by the PMI, 16 saw growth. Only the printing industry and the processors of crude oil and coal reported declines.

Growth in most industries

In the chemical industry in particular, plastic compounds for the manufacture of personal protective equipment recorded growth in 2020. There was also growth in cleaning agents and disinfectants, packaging plastics and electronic chemicals. These trends are likely to continue in 2021. In addition, growth will expand to other areas such as construction chemistry, and with increasing vaccination progress due to the increased demand of the automotive industry, also for paints, plastics and battery chemicals.

In addition to Covid-19 diagnostics, major earnings drivers for the manufacturers of medical technology will be treatments that were postponed during the pandemic, including neurological and cardiovascular diseases. E-health solutions are in great demand. The acceptance of telemedicine is increasing, "wearables" are very popular.

Skilled workers shortage and delivery bottlenecks

In addition to the chronic issue of a dearth of skilled workers, industry managers now also see problems in long waiting times, quantity restrictions and cost explosions in the delivery of raw materials and intermediate products. The high-profile issue of missing semiconductors and computing chips as built-in parts for long-life industrial products must not hide the fact that bottlenecks occur again and again with other components.

GTAI GERMANY TRADE & INVEST

- Industry is recovering noticeably
- Growth in most industries
- Skilled workers shortage and delivery bottlenecks
- Mechanical engineering and the metal industry are restructuring

The “Lean Production” or “Just in Time” system is currently being reconsidered by executive boards and planning staff of many companies. Terms such as “reshoring,” reintegration of once outsourced

component production and precautionary warehousing are making the rounds instead. Billions in investments in transport systems are also imminent, including freight transport by rail. The aviation industry has received massive state aid several times over the past twelve months.

Mechanical engineering and the metal industry are restructuring

Small and medium-sized mechanical engineering companies as well as processors of plastics and metals are investing primarily in the digitization and automation of their production models. In this way, they can increase the physical distances between workplaces and better protect their employees from the transmission of infections. Added to this are efficiency gains and shorter changeover times for manufacturing new products. ■

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NEWS FROM INSIDE THE BELTWAY

Build Back Better

The Economic Agenda of US President Biden Takes Shape

by Viola Meyerweissflog, Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Washington, DC

With his *Build Back Better* program, President Joe Biden has put a clear focus on domestic challenges, overcoming the Corona crisis, and rebuilding the US economy. What does this mean for German companies operating in the United States?

The overall focus of *Build Back Better* is to equally promote the economy, the environment, and social equity. It aims to boost the recovery of the US economy after the Covid-19 recession by addressing underlying structural constraints, taking advantage of future economic opportunities, and focusing on job creation, primarily in the infrastructure, energy and environ-

mental sectors. After passing the first pillar of *Build Back Better* – the \$1.9 trillion *American Rescue Plan* – earlier this year, President Biden announced its second part, the *American Jobs Plan* on March 31, 2021.

The comprehensive proposal dedicates over \$2 trillion to boost the US job market through upgrading America's infrastructure and transit centers, rebuilding its water infrastructure, modernizing the building sector and revitalizing manufacturing. The *American Jobs Plan* proposes to spend \$768 billion on buildings, schools and senior care, with a specific focus on energy efficient housing. Transportation infrastructure would benefit from

\$621 billion, including a notable \$174 billion for electric vehicle incentives, funding for 500,000 charging stations across the US, as well as investments into the public transit sector. Various funding proposals in workforce development, manufacturing and innovation, such as R&D for semiconductor manufacturing, make up the third bucket of \$593 billion of the plan while \$311 billion are intended for utilities infrastructure, such as broadband, water and the power grid.

To pay for the *American Jobs Plan* the US administration has released the *Made in America Tax Plan* with its headline proposal of increasing the corporate tax rate from 21 to 28





Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Washington, DC

Delegation der Deutschen Wirtschaft in Washington, DC

percent and changes to the tax regime on global intangible low-taxed income (GILTI). The plan would increase the global minimum tax for US multinational corporations with foreign earnings to 21 percent, cut the incentive to offshore tangible assets by ending the tax exemption for the first 10 percent return on foreign assets, and calculate the GILTI minimum tax on a per-country basis. The principal goal here is to incentivize US job creation and investment while disincentivizing offshoring.

So far, Biden's *American Jobs Plan* has received mixed reviews from lawmakers and the business community. While some are taking issue with the wide scope and financing of the plan, others are criticizing its lack of ambition. It remains to be seen if the plan will receive bipartisan support, if it will be passed by way of budget reconciliation along party lines, as did the *American Rescue Plan* in March, or if it will be passed as a compromise and smaller version.

President Biden's wider economic and trade agenda also emphasizes independence from global supply chains and is built around a worker-centric strategy. New *Buy American* regulations are supposed to "maximize" the US Government's purchasing of goods and services produced in the United States. This includes

proposals to increase the domestic content threshold and tighten longstanding exceptions to domestic preference requirements in federal contracts.

For the Biden Administration, trade must "protect and empower workers" and "lead to wage growth." Against this backdrop, it is reviewing past trade policies while indicating to keep others, such as the section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum as "they helped save American jobs in the steel and aluminum industries", according to US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo.

At the same time, the US administration has spoken out in favor of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, noting it will work together with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and like-minded trading partners to implement reforms and address challenges facing the global economy. Furthermore, the administration has re-joined the Paris Climate Agreement and announced that it is working with the Group of 20 (G20) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Inclusive Framework to reach an agreement on a global minimum tax rate. Similarly, Biden aims at collaborating with allies to address global market distortions created by industrial overcapacity, especially by China.

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Biden's approach in areas such as climate, energy and multilateralism is expected to give companies more planning security. After a turbulent 2020, German subsidiaries in the US are confident about the region's development. According to the *German American Business Outlook* conducted by the German American Chambers of Commerce (AHK USA), 92 percent of the surveyed subsidiaries expect growth for the US business in 2021 and nearly 50 percent plan to expand their workforce.

Biden's *Build Back Better* places its focus on sustainability in terms of the economy, the environment and equity. German companies have long contributed to the US economy at the intersection of economic growth, innovation and quality jobs, and should thus be well equipped to succeed in the time to come. ■

The gentle vs the not-so-gentle art of persuasion

By John Otto Magee

There is no action
without making
a decision to act.
There is no
decision to act
without considering
the options to act.
And there can be
no consideration of
options without
presenting them.
Present. Decide. Act.

When we present, we persuade. We want the receiver of our message to agree with it, to affirm it, to say yes. Collaboration is working together, acting together.

But Germans and Americans persuade differently. Their logics do not fully align. If they do not understand these differences, they will make suboptimal decisions.

German Approach

The Germans separate message from messenger. The presenter consciously and purposely moves into the background. In the German business context, the message takes center stage. Germans believe that arguments should speak for themselves.

Example:

Important in Germany is not to stick out too much. Is it because they don't want to make others envious? Or because one should demonstrate how to maintain balance, not get a big head? Or demonstrate a proper

balance between individualism and belonging to a group, whose help one may need at any time?

Whether giving presentations in grammar school, in high school or at the university level Germans train, practice and stress over and over again objectivity: stick to the facts, no emotions, avoid gaps in your argumentation, be so comprehensive that hardly any questions are necessary in the question and answer part after your presentation.

You see it in German résumés (curriculum vitae). Factual. Unemotional. Objective. No holes in the educational and professional background. Anticipate all the questions a potential employer might ask. Subjective and personal information is kept to a bare minimum. Adding things such as interests or hobbies is a new trend, imported from the US and not a part of the German logic.

American Approach

Americans link message and messenger. The message, its form, and most importantly its presenter, create a unity. In the US business context the presenter takes center stage. Americans believe that "you sell yourself first", then your product or service.

Example:

The goal of the American presenter is initially to get the audience to accept them as interesting, motivated, experienced, as a person with



expertise. It is the initial hurdle the presenter needs to overcome, the first “yes” to be gained. The audience needs to be convinced of the messenger before being convinced by the message. Otherwise audiences ask themselves “If the presenter isn’t convinced of himself, why should I be convinced?”

In amazon.com there are 226 results when searching for “sell yourself first.” On YouTube 37,900 videos are found. The bookstore chain Barnes and Nobles sells 24 books related to “sell yourself first” with titles such as: *Invisible to Remarkable: In Today’s Job Market, You Need to Sell Yourself as ‘Talent’, Not Just Someone Looking for Work...*, *Good in a Room: How to Sell Yourself (and Your Ideas) and Win Over Any Audience...*, or *The One Minute Sales Person: The Quickest Way to Sell People on Yourself, Your Services, Products, or Ideas—at Work and in Life*.

German View

Germans react ambivalently to linking speaker and content. An overly personalized presentation style is on the one side both motivating and attractive. At the same time, however, it is overly personified. Germans are persuaded more by objectivity than by subjectivity. “There must be a reason why he is appealing to our emotions instead of to our minds.”

American View

Americans, in stark contrast, find the

separation of speaker and content as impersonal, sterile, drab. To distance oneself from the message is interpreted by Americans as risk-averse, disinterested, and anything but persuasive. “If he himself is not convinced by his message, why should we be?”

Advice to Germans

Identify yourself with your message. Literally use the word “I.” Draw on your personal experience by using anecdotes. Put your heart into it. Show emotion. Give signals when you are a subjective participant in your story and when you are an objective observer. When persuading Americans, you cannot take yourself out of the equation.

Advice to Americans

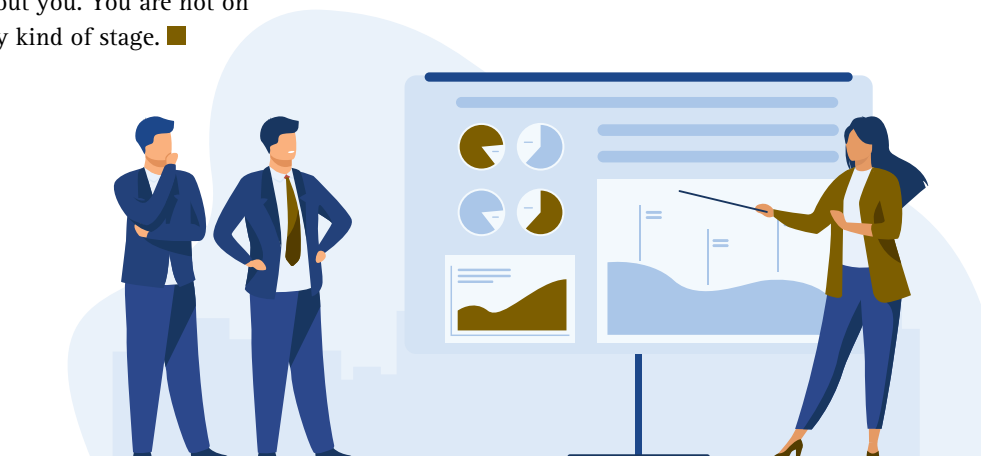
Temper the showman in you. Be coy. Hint at almost a skepticism in your own message. Neither invite nor challenge your listeners to like or dislike you. In fact, take yourself out of the equation altogether. It’s all about the content and not about you. You are not on any kind of stage. ■

About the Author:



John Otto Magee has lived and worked in Germany 25+ years, consulting for many well-known German brands as well as governmental organizations. He is an expert in explaining the differences in how Americans and Germans think and work. Visit his website *Contrasting Cultures* to learn more on how to effectively navigate German-American workplace interaction.

>> www.contrastingcultures.com



Corona shifts priorities in expats' health insurance

Proper international health insurance stands in the frontier of the basic employee benefits for expats, being subject to employers' legal duty of care. With Corona, changing the requirements for international health insurance, what should employers consider and what can employees expect?

According to a survey performed following the outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic, health and family concerns are among the top priorities of employees abroad. Lower importance was registered for hobbies maintenance, reduction of work-hours or time-out-of work. It is also implied that the safe being of employees is a key factor in their productivity and in employment retention.

It is therefore important to align employees' interests with those of the employers'. This is in fact not necessarily contradictory: The employees' safety is also a top priority for the employer, taking into account that legally in most cases the employer is carrying the financial risk to its expats' well-being.

The financial effects of Covid should not be taken lightly, not only with regards to immediate Covid-related treatment, but also in correlation to other treatments which may have been postponed. Those should lead to additional unexpected expenses.

In the coming months, upon the expected containment of the virus's outburst with vaccinations and additional means, international health insurers are expected to incur higher costs, which are also likely to be passed on to policyholders in the form of premium increases.



Cover companies which had already relied on innovative solution prior and during the pandemic, would be able to save costs and at the same time maintain high level of personal service. A prominent example is PassportCard (www.passportcard.de): when medical treatment abroad is required, PassportCard pays the provider directly. Neither the patients nor their employer have to pay out-of-pocket expenses or worry about reimbursement. PassportCard guarantees the standard of private health insurance abroad with personal as well as innovative digital processes while keeping premiums stable.

PassportCard is also taking a different approach and encourage work with brokers and offers its brokers active personal telephone and back-office support by a specialised team of experts in the field of international health insurance from the heart of Hamburg. They offer the unique opportunity to conclude a contract within minutes also in a completely paperless way and offer full commission also be referral of information to the company's experts.

Eithan Wolf, CEO of PassportCard (Hamburg), explains how digitalisation scores in administration: "PassportCard relies internally on innovation and big data together with a personal approach. This ensures fast processes and saves



Eithan Wolf, CEO of PassportCard

administrative efforts. With our payment solution PassportCard validates and pays medical treatment directly and instantly, while also offering 24/7 telephone consultation worldwide. This means less effort or lengthy verification and reimbursement processes." For the brokers, this is a timesaver with their customers, and it avoids unpleasant incidents. The digitalisation of processes simplifies work, just like having your own back office. "There is also no additional effort after the contract conclusion, it reduces the maintenance costs during the contractual term. The customer receives excellent service, is satisfied and stays with us". Eithan Wolf adds: "Our brokers bring us potential clients, and in return, we give them back enthusiastic fans". ■

"With our payment solution PassportCard validates and pays medical treatment directly and instantly, while also offering 24/7 telephone consultation worldwide."

**Eithan Wolf, CEO
of PassportCard**



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Continental Tire Goes Full Steam Ahead with Apprenticeships:

“We’re setting a new standard in the area”

When forecasting its future local plant employment needs, the Mount Vernon, IL, based tire manufacturing facility of Continental Tire the Americas, LLC saw room for significant growth. Many senior employees were on the way to retirement, and the specialized machines Continental uses require hands-on training and advanced technical skills, making open positions difficult to fill. That’s why the Engineering Management team identified a clear need to look for better ways to close this gap. Matthias Kretschmer, Truck Tire (TT) Engineering Division Manager at Continental, led the project to find a better solution and invest in a skilled workforce from the ground up as a new ICATT Apprenticeship Program Network Company.

Continental’s Mount Vernon location is one of the company’s largest plants, with more than 3,400 employees producing over 10 million passenger and light truck tires and over 3 million TT tires each year at the 100-acre facility. Continental Mount Vernon’s products also include pre-cured tread. The company is headquartered in Hanover, Germany with tire plants all over the world, and the German plants already utilize the traditional German apprenticeship model to successfully train their skilled workforce.

Together with his HR colleague Tanja Trenk, Kretschmer researched various options for implementing apprenticeships at the Mount Vernon facility, eventually finding the German American Chamber of

Commerce of the Midwest’s website with information on the ICATT Apprenticeship Program. Trenk contacted a few ICATT Network Companies in the area, and they recommended the program to Continental. From there, it was full-steam-ahead, and Continental became an ICATT Network Company.

Now in the initial implementation stage, Continental intends to hire 10-12 ICATT Apprentices this fall in the Industrial Electronics Technician training pathway, eventually increasing that number to around 20 new apprentices per year, with approximately 60 in the program at all times, while adding other training pathways. Our goal, Kretschmer said, is to establish a maintenance team that is well-trained, skilled, and motivated to make efficient, high quality repairs throughout the plant, with personnel always available. “Right now, we have a lack of experience, skills, and people in our maintenance department, which leads to engineers having to support maintenance work, reducing their capacity for engineering projects, improvements, and expansion planning,” Kretschmer said.

Continental Tire Mount Vernon’s intention is that having these trained ICATT Apprentices will also allow it to improve its efficiency in new ways. “Good people make the company more successful,”



Continental

Kretschmer stated. “They may find new solutions for problems you didn’t have time to get to before.”

Continental had an internal apprenticeship program before joining the ICATT Network, with the company paying for college tuition while technicians worked off shifts or on the weekend. However, according to Kretschmer, their current training process made coordination difficult, with each apprentice on a different class schedule. Continental plans to phase out the old program in the next couple of years to be replaced by the ICATT Apprenticeship Program, whose structure appeals more to the company. ICATT Apprentices will have greater opportunities to work with specialists on the day shift to further their practical skills.

“With ICATT, we can discuss with our local colleges to immediately coordinate the subjects apprentices are learning in school, so they can connect the book work with hands on work,” Kretschmer said. Having a workforce specially trained on Continental’s machines allows the company to confidently plan its workforce succession while offering a debt-free education and career pathway to apprentices.

If Continental hadn’t joined the ICATT Network, Kretschmer said, those 10-12 apprenticeship positions would be difficult to fill. “The competition between companies to get good technicians is very high. Because of the



high automation rate, we need more skilled electricians and people who understand these complex machines. That makes it necessary for us to think in a new direction.” Kretschmer is looking forward to connecting with other ICATT Network Companies to exchange best practices, as well as to hiring and training apprentices from the local community.

“Other companies probably face the same challenges we do,” he said. As the word spreads on the factory floor and in the community, Kretschmer has already received interest from parents looking to tell their children about the ICATT Apprenticeship Program at Continental Tire. “I’m excited to get the young people here in Mount Vernon to train in a highly skilled job and stay here for the future. We’re setting a new standard in the area,” he said. ■

Industry Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (ICATT) is the leading apprenticeship program for high-tech manufacturers and companies with complex technologies or logistics. It is the largest program fully benchmarked on the German Dual Education System – an approach recognized globally for its combination of company-specific knowledge, theory, and hands-on learning – resulting in highly-trained employees that position companies to embrace technical advances, keep pace with market demands, and harness growth opportunities.

Learn more at:

>> icattapprenticeships.com
and contact Sascha Kuhn,
Deputy Director of Apprenticeship
Networks, at:
>> kuhn@gaccmidwest.org.

Geneva Scurek

Senior Manager, Apprenticeships Exams and Certification, GACC Midwest



From: Originally from Nashville, Tennessee but now based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Interests: My two children with one on the way, being outdoors, coaching cross country at a local high school, Milwaukee architecture, and traveling

Professional Background: Prior to joining GACC Midwest, I worked a variety of positions in the Education field ranging from teaching English abroad in Austria and Japan, training others as an Outdoor Educator, and serving as an Apprenticeship Coordinator with GPS Education Partners Inc.

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How did you get into apprenticeships and/or your current job?

Previously, I was an Apprenticeship Coordinator with GPS Education Partners Inc. which offered an alternative schooling option for apprenticeships in the manufacturing field. Acting as a liaison between the students, teachers, and companies, I built experience in outreach and mentor training. When applying to GACC Midwest, I realized I had years of educational experience along with knowledge of manufacturing apprenticeships in the US and Germany.

How have you managed the challenges COVID-19 brings to your department?

Although I was skeptical at first when moving all of my normal responsibilities to online platforms, the quality and amount of services we offer has actually improved. Making the online transition of the Train the Trainer course was one of the biggest challenges we faced. We were able to find an effective learning platform and create innovative alternatives for translating the curriculum into a virtual setting. For many, it is a preferred alternative to the in-person course. It is essential to remember that the way you construct a teaching activity and how you reflect on it is much of what creates value for the participant.

What do you like the most about your job?

The most rewarding part of my job is working with trainers and other field experts who have a passion for training in order to see trainees become leaders in their industry after they've had time to apply and reflect on their learned knowledge. I believe it is important to understand the reason and relevance in retaining concepts or theories and the ability to carry them forward through practice. I have a natural desire to create better content and more engaging environments even if it takes more time and effort. Receiving positive feedback from different audiences in this regard is gratifying.

What are you looking forward to for the rest of 2021?

I'm hoping to see Train the Trainer utilized by a larger audience. Not only can aspiring trainers find this program useful, but managers, supervisors, college instructors, and other like-minded individuals can find it valuable in developing soft skills, gaining more perspective, and establishing new tools for reflection. Outside of this, I am excited to see what other advantages come from including additional services online such as our occupational exams. As always, I plan to take more classes and learn what other leadership/training programs are doing and integrate new and valuable practices back into our own programs. ■

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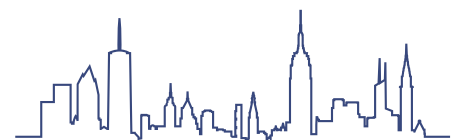
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