

Bertelsmann Business Consulting cooperates with HHL

Interview



HHL news talks with Dr. Mark-Ken Erdmann, CEO of Bertelsmann Business Consulting (BeBC), about his business model and the partnership with HHL's Chair of Accounting and Auditing.

HHL news: *What are the medium to long-term challenges you see confronting large companies or corporations in their reporting?*

Dr. Erdmann: The first challenge is to adapt to what has come to be accepted as a permanent state of flux in the international accounting environment, especially IFRS, and to ensure that any changes to standards are efficiently and properly integrated into the

reporting workflow. This means looking not only at the effects on external reporting but typically also at the consequences for integrated reporting concepts. Second, reporting must adapt to the constantly increasing compliance requirements that result from numerous legal amendments such as BilMoG. One focus of these efforts will certainly be the documentation and monitoring of internal control systems. The main difficulty here is in defining the minimum requirements for internal control systems that are relevant from a German perspective.

HHL news: *What considerations led to the founding of BeBC?*

Dr. Erdmann: The impetus for this business venture was a change in strategy by software developer SAP, which in the past focused primarily on "preconfigured" system solutions in the field of consolidation and reporting – namely, EC-CS and SEM-BCS – but is now shifting toward "open and flexible" modular concepts. One of the market's leading modular systems is the BO Financial Consolidation reporting solution, now part of the SAP portfolio, which Bertelsmann has used for all standard reporting processes throughout the Group since 2004. Of primary importance here is Bertelsmann's understanding of the software's content,

concept and processes. The solution is largely a "blank slate" as shipped, creating a great need for consultation. We do not expect this need to abate in the future given the long-standing upward trend in the accounting requirements companies face.

HHL news: *You work with a network of partners. Who exactly is involved?*

Dr. Erdmann: Our network has a clear focus on content, just as we do. Our partners – who include the Saarbrücker Institut für Rechnungslegung, Visea Consulting, PricewaterhouseCoopers and HHL – cover complementary fields, so we can provide the customer with what we feel is an extremely attractive spectrum of services from a single source.

HHL news: *And what will be the future role of HHL in the BeBC partner network?*

Dr. Erdmann: HHL possesses considerable academic expertise, which has earned it an excellent reputation. This is exactly what we wish to tap into by intensifying our long-standing cooperation with the Chair of Accounting and Auditing under the direction of Professor Dr. Henning Zülch. Both parties profit from this collaboration: We secure access to current academic insights in the field of accounting and consolidation while providing constant input from hands-on accounting practices.

“Mercedes supports - and transports - success!” Mercedes-Benz is HHL's new Mobility Partner



Norbert Wingenfelder (Sales Manager) hands over the shiny new E 250 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY limousine

In July Mercedes-Benz Leipzig became HHL's new Mobility Partner, providing a brand-new E-class Mercedes for one year under the motto "Mercedes supports - and transports - success!"

Building on the partnership which has existed between HHL and Mercedes-Benz Leipzig under the leadership of Michael Friedrich for some time, the generous new sponsorship agreement moves the partnership to a new level. "The idea of supporting one of the best German business schools on its way to becoming

one of Europe's best appealed to us at Mercedes-Benz Leipzig from the beginning. The business school which educates our future management leaders ought to have its own 'good star'," affirmed Norbert Wingenfelder, Sales Manager of the Leipzig branch.

On July 13, 2009, he handed over the car keys to Dean Professor Dr. Hans Wiesmeth and Chancellor Dr. Judith Marquardt.

Professor Dr. Hans Wiesmeth: "We very much appreciate this commitment of Mercedes-Benz Leipzig and hope that the additional (horse-)power will also help accelerate the implementation of HHL's growth strategy."

Professor Dr. Burkhard Schwenker, CEO of Roland Berger Strategy Consultants

Interview



Professor Dr. Burkhard Schwenker (right) talking with two HHL Diploma students

HHL news: Roland Berger Strategy Consultants is strongly involved in the area of education. What are the reasons for this?

Professor Schwenker: Business is a cornerstone of any functioning society, and we at Roland Berger recognize and assume our social responsibility in the area of education. Together with professors and students, we develop innovative approaches for resolving economic and social issues. We cooperate

with leading academics and institutes to familiarize ourselves with trends and new methods. Everyone benefits from this teamwork: Professors see how management issues are dealt with in practice. Consultants refine their project experience and translate it into modern problem-solving approaches. And last but not least, our clients profit from the business concepts that we design within the partnerships in the world of education.

HHL news: How would you describe the partnership between your company and HHL?

Professor Schwenker: Our cooperative relationship has many aspects. For instance, Roland Berger Strategy Consultants participated enthusiastically in putting together the strategy paper "HHL 2020" and at the start of the fundraising. With the Center for Scenario Planning, founded earlier this year, we would like to turn our attention to implementation; in other words, expanding the academic chairs and competence centers. As a strategy consultancy, we find it especially important to actively follow ongoing research.

It's also important that students can learn how to use key tools for scenario planning. And on a personal note, I try to teach at the HHL as often as possible. Talking and debating with students both challenges and enriches me, making teaching a lot of fun. As an honorary professor at HHL, I regularly teach a course in the M.Sc. program entitled "Strategy for Growth".

HHL news: From your point of view: what does a manager need today?

Professor Schwenker: "A cool head, a warm heart and working hands," as Martin Hilb from the University of St. Gallen once put it: Today's managers must possess excellent analytical skills as well as empathy. They must have the will to roll up their sleeves and get to work, to live out their values every day and to be role models. They need integrity, so that they can project credibility in times of permanent uncertainty. They have to think strategically, manage boldly and be able and willing to communicate directly. Being bold also means accepting your own limitations.

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