

START-UPS

Dear Alumni,

Steve Jobs advised graduates to “Stay hungry, stay foolish!” As the Department of Alumni Management begins an exciting new chapter with the publication of our first ever alumni newsletter, we would like to offer you this same advice.

Newly established in July 2016, the Department for Alumni Management is very similar to a start-up, which also happens to be our first topic. We are available to answer all alumni-related questions and concerns, but like any start-up, we need some help in spreading the word to our target audience, the alumni of BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg. Therefore, we would like to ask you, our dedicated alumni, to help us by sharing our website, www.b-tu.de/alumni, by any means possible - word of mouth, email, Tweet, Snapchat, WhatsApp, or anything else you can think of!

To best support the growth of our network, please promote our newsletter and encourage other alumni to sign-up for it by sending an email with the subject “Alumni recruit alumni” along with their name to alumni@b-tu.de. All new registrations will automatically be entered to win an Elbenwald gift certificate. Don't know what Elbenwald is? You can find the answer by reading this month's newsletter! It is also packed with helpful information concerning BTU's start-up services, as well as the dates for the first half of this year's alumni meetings.

Sending my best New Year's wishes,
Daniel Ebert
Manager for Alumni Affairs

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1 ELBENWALD

A remarkable start-up story

The story of one of BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg's most well-known and successful start-ups is one of imagination and fantasy. In the year 2000, Alexander Lapeta, Jens Geppert and Dirk Wiedenhaupt were trying to figure out a way they could wear their passion and excitement for the *Lord of the Rings* saga on their sleeves...literally. The result? They created Elbenwald, a place where fantasy enthusiasts from all across Germany could go to purchase high-quality merchandise from their favourite films and series. Since its establishment, Elbenwald has become the largest provider of fantasy merchandise in Germany, ranging from Star Wars and Chewbacca themed hoodies to replica wands from Harry Potter. In cooperation with international film companies such as Warner Bros., 20th Century Fox, Marvel and Disney, Elbenwald's fan products are available to purchase in their twenty retail stores, as well as their online shop. Having grown to over 300 employees, in 2015 the company was awarded the Brandenburg Future prize, with the jury praising Elbenwald for their combined “passion for innovation, technical understanding and sound business management know-how [and] their innovative marketing and the impressive numbers of growth. In addition, Elbenwald is a family-friendly company in the city of Cottbus and voluntarily meets many environmental standards.” If there is one thing to learn from the success of Elbenwald's founders, it is that in a start-up, one can never be too passionate about their own product. For additional information about Elbenwald or to purchase your own cool fantasy merchandise, please visit their website: <https://www.elbenwald.de/Ueber-uns>.

2 CHEEEZBUDE

Unique memories at the push of a button

When alumnus Stefan Mehner rented a photo booth for his wedding, he and two of his friends, Martin Noack and Alexander Stahl, immediately knew they could do better. With their Cheeezbude, the three founders wowed at the 2016 Berlin-Brandenburg Business Plan Competition and were the top team coming from BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg. But what exactly is a Cheeezbude? The answers to your questions can be found [here \(in German\)](#). If you would like to find out more about the Business Plan Competition, just keep reading!

3 BERLIN-BRANDENBURG BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION (BPW)

Where participation pays.

All founders from Berlin and Brandenburg have the opportunity to submit their business plans to the BPW – and it's definitely worth it! In addition to prizes amounting to 53,000 Euro, the competition also offers all participants free consulting and networking. The BPW is not only Germany's largest regional foundation initiative, but it is also the oldest of its kind. Since 1996, the competition has resulted in the founding of 1,864 companies, which account for over 12,300 jobs! Further information regarding the BPW can be found on their website: <https://www.b-tu.de/gruendungsservice/businessplan-wettbewerb-berlin-brandenburg>

4 THE NEW »START-UP MENTORING«

Founders supporting founders

Here at the Department for Alumni Management, we want to help strengthen the start-up network as much as we can. For this reason, we have created an initiative called "Start-up Mentoring". Beginning in 2017, this program will provide current start-up teams with advice and support from experienced alumni who have volunteered to serve as mentors.

Are you an alumni with start-up experience who would like to share your knowledge and help mentor current students either in-person or via Skype? If yes, we are looking for you! If you would like to get to know some of our dedicated start-up teams, please send Daniel Ebert (daniel.ebert@b-tu.de) an email with the subject »Start-up Mentoring«.

5 FOUNDATION SERVICE

Foundation consulting for alumni

Before realizing the dream of having their own company, many alumni must first navigate the job market and gain a bit of professional experience. Because we understand that good things come to those who wait, our foundation services are available not only to current students, researchers and employees, but also to alumni up to five (5) years after their graduation. In addition to providing start-up project advice and various qualification and support programs, we also help to support start-up applications and offer a wide range of further information and events. More information can be found here: <https://www.b-tu.de/gruendungsservice/start-up/erstberatung>

6 EXIST

Securing your livelihood as a founder

The question that nearly every founder asks themselves before establishing a start-up is: How can I earn enough money to properly support myself and my family during the foundation of my start-up? One solution is the EXIST-Foundation scholarship. Also, if you are founding a particularly technology-oriented business start-up, it is possible to receive financial support through the EXIST Research Transfer program. If you have any questions regarding the EXIST start-up scholarship, please contact the foundation service directly: <https://www.b-tu.de/gruendungsservice/start-up/foerderung/mittels-exist-gruenderstipendium>

7 REGULAR'S TABLE FOR FOUNDERS

Exchange with pioneering spirit

Besides concrete consultations, we frequently offer start-up regular's tables at which you can exchange information without obligation and can be infected by the pioneer spirit of other start-up teams. Please contact us: <https://www.b-tu.de/gruendungsservice/kontakt/team/ansprechpartner>

8 SAVE THE DATE

13th January 2017 | Central Campus Cottbus
Alumni meetings at the University Ball

12th April 2017 | Unbelehrbar, Karl-Marx-Str. 65, Cottbus
Regular's table for founders

10th June 2017 | Campus Senftenberg
Alumni meeting at Open Day Senftenberg

16th June 2017 | Central campus Cottbus
Alumni meeting for IT study programmes

IMPRESSUM

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