

Made in Cologne.

A METROPOLIS WITH A VISION

PRAISE FOR HER FAVOURITE CITY

An interview with
Mayor Henriette Reker

SETTLING IN AND NETWORKING

A stroll through
the metropolitan region

CRANKING UP CREATIVITY

Cologne as a
talent pool

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“Cologne – Europe’s greenest, most digitalised city”

Entrepreneur meets business promoter: In this double interview, **CHRISTIAN BERNER**, CEO of the Berner Group, and **DR MANFRED JANSSEN**, Managing Director of consultancy at KölnBusiness Economic Development Agency, discuss the advantages and the potential of Cologne as a business location.

Mr Berner, five years ago you consciously chose Cologne as the base for your company. What aspects of the metropolis on the Rhine appealed to you?

Berner: Our establishment in Cologne was the result of a long analytical process. For us, location factors such as workplaces, population, infrastructure, culture and universities were important. And we wanted to know where would we and our company philosophy – namely, never settling for what we had already achieved – fit in. For us as a B2B trading company with international subsidiaries, the question of infrastructure was very important – from here we have access to multiple airports, ports, a major motorway intersection and flight connections to all over Europe.

Dr Janssen, imagine a classic elevator pitch. How do you convince the CEO of a major international company to choose Cologne as their next location in two minutes?

Janssen: There’s just one thing to say: Cologne is the most beautiful city in the world (laughs). But fortunately, Cologne offers much more than that. Firstly, it’s a city of



THE INTERVIEWEES: **DR MANFRED JANSSEN**

has been Managing Director of KölnBusiness Economic Development Agency since 2019. The organisation is the first port of call for businesses, start-ups, investors and project developers.

Janssen is restructuring business promotion in Cologne, relying on services that are strongly oriented towards the demands and needs of business.

more than a million people in one of Germany’s and Europe’s strongest growth regions with an enormous catchment area. Cologne is not only innovative, but also digital – and you don’t necessarily expect that. We are well ahead in every digital ranking, and what’s more, Cologne has a very positive image. Lots of people want to live here, as evidenced, for example, by the more than 100,000 students who represent a tremendous skilled-worker potential right on the doorstep.

Berner: That’s true. Of the approximately 60 higher-education institutions in Rhineland, more than 20 are located in Cologne – that’s an enormous field for recruiting new staff. The many skilled digital workers and their networks, in particular, offer optimum conditions for taking Cologne-based businesses into the future and for further developing business models together. Cologne is, likewise, the city of modernism, the cool and hip. It’s a city that reflects the spirit of the times and at the same time embodies attractiveness and joie de vivre. This atmosphere, coupled with a relaxed attitude, wit and openness, appeals to people from all countries.

What hard aspects distinguish Cologne as a business location?

Berner: Around the metropolitan region, there is also tremendous growth potential with regard to space – both for companies to settle and for housing construction. In short, Cologne boasts huge potential, for example in the B2B sector, on a service level, and also in industrial production. If the opportunities are utilized, then Cologne can position itself even better as a location for the headquarters of international corporations with a view to digital and creative services as well as innovation themes. The conditions for this are good – what's important are clear statements about where a city aims to go.

The establishment of the Berner Group shows how things go ideally, but it doesn't always work out so smoothly. Which projects do Köln-Business and the City of Cologne still have to tackle?

Janssen: As in many other major German cities, it's all about managing future growth. For this, you need long-term, predictable, overall conditions, modern infrastructure, and you need to be able to deal proactively with change. This is the foundation for enabling change and for us to develop further as a business-friendly metropolis.

Berner: In short, it's about conveying a vision for Cologne. And this image of the future needs to be sustainable as well as ecological, and it needs to generate growth at the same time.

Janssen: In order to support economic growth, Cologne is already working more intensively on expanding services for businesses. The approval procedure, for example, needs to be speeded up a great deal. In addition, the city is currently carrying out a pilot project in the field of "digital construction files". Our



THE INTERVIEWEES: CHRISTIAN BERNER

is CEO and sole owner of the Berner Group. Under his direction, the headquarters of the Europe-wide group of companies was relocated to Cologne from its original location in Künzelsau in Baden-Württemberg in 2016. The Berner Group trades in direct sales of consumables, tools and workshop equipment. The Group employs a good 8,200 people.

goal is also to activate as much building land as possible over the next few years. In cooperation with different municipalities, there is a regional planning process for the development of as many specific land-use projects as possible and along with that, of course, also the complete transport and infrastructure planning.

What might be the vision for Cologne from the perspective of an entrepreneur?

Berner: Cologne has what it takes to become the greenest, most diverse and most digitalised city in Europe. It's important, though, that we are economically positioned in such a way that we can also devote resources to sustainability and diversity. After all, it's only with a strong economy that taxpayers' money can flow into the municipal budget so projects can be funded and developed over the long term. The willingness to pursue this path and to try out new things is part of the DNA of our city and its people. That's another reason why the Berner Group decided to settle in Cologne.

How does Cologne keep pace with the times so that it knows what business needs?

Janssen: Personal contact is key here. That's also one of the reasons why there has been a business promotion consultancy as a limited company since 2019. The City of Cologne made a conscious choice: We want to provide better service for businesses and start-ups – a business promotion consultancy that actively supports entrepreneurs. One important instrument here is the expansion of digitalisation in administration. The KölnBusiness team can, for example, work remotely and cloud-based from anywhere – and offer the best possible service. ■

One city, many faces

There are **MANY REASONS** for companies to settle in Cologne – we discover some of them on a stroll through the city and its surrounding area.

Deutz

This district on the right bank of the Rhine boasts the world's seventh-largest exhibition site covering 7,284,000 square metres and comprising eleven halls. Each year, it sees around 80 trade fairs, exhibitions, guest events and gatherings, nearly three million visitors from all over the world, more than 54,500 exhibiting companies from 122 countries, and 2,000 conferences – which all make it a magnet for exchanging goods and information. It's been that way since the Middle Ages: Cologne's first Easter fair was held in 967.



Cool atmosphere: the exhibition site in Deutz.



A key hub for concentrated cargo power: Cologne/Bonn airport.

Grenzel

The international Cologne/Bonn airport lies just 17 minutes by train from the main railway station of Cologne and just 26 minutes from that of Bonn. Passenger numbers and cargo volumes on flights to 31 countries are growing continuously: from around 9,100,000 to 12,400,000 people, and from 740,000 to 863,000 tons (2020) between 2013 and 2019. In December 2020 alone, it handled 87,000 tons of air freight – a new monthly record. During the same period, the airport was ranked first in Europe four times and second worldwide among the most popular regional airports. Two other international hubs, Frankfurt and Düsseldorf, can also be reached by train within a good three-quarters of an hour.

The city as a whole

It's not empirically proven, but the experiences – particularly of newcomers – speak for themselves: The locals of Cologne are open to other people, cultures, ideas, and new things in general. The population is young – one third is under 30 – and one in three inhabitants has foreign roots. Around ten per cent of the population self-identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, inter* or queer. In a study of the City of Cologne, 86 per cent of recruitment decision-makers stated that the cosmopolitan and tolerant climate is attractive for skilled staff from all over the world.

Sülz, Müngersdorf, Südstadt, Deutz, Pulheim ...

With 28 universities and related educational institutions, Cologne is the third-largest German university city. Unique to the country are its Sport University, the Academy of Media Arts, and the Federal University of Applied Administrative Sciences. Cologne University with 51,000 students and the University of Applied Sciences with 27,000 are the largest of their kind in Germany, while the total number of people

studying and researching in the city is 100,000.

Throughout Cologne

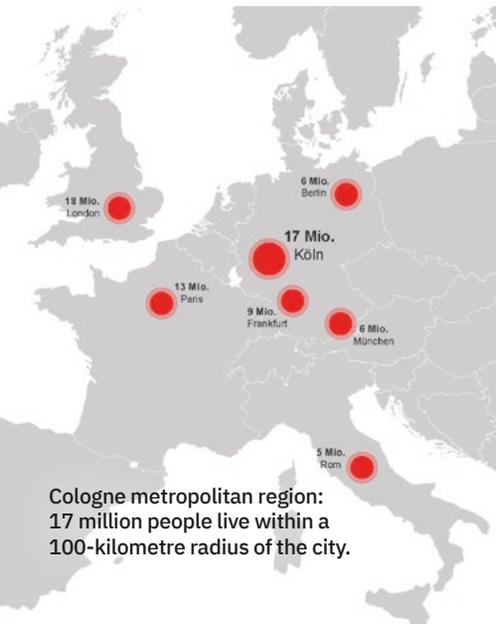
The inter-institutional, non-partisan and interdisciplinary association “Scientists for Future” is committed to comprehensive sustainability for Cologne. The programme “Vision Köln 2030” is aimed at realising liveable and sustainable development for the city.

Greater Cologne area

Cologne lies in the middle of one of Europe’s biggest conurbations. The market of almost 17 million people within a radius of 100 kilometres, trades, service providers, globally leading medium-sized companies and corporations are the beating heart of this region, which is unparalleled in business-to-business, in particular.

City-wide (in figures)

In the ranking of living costs for 78 cities across Germany, Cologne lies in a moderate 20th place. By comparison: In Munich, rent is 67 per cent higher, while transport as well as sport and leisure there cost 13 and 12 per cent more respectively.



A commitment to tolerance: The main railway station is illuminated in rainbow colours.

Müngersdorf, Deutz

The football club 1. FC Köln, with its 111,578 members (note Cologne’s magic number 11!), is the city’s biggest sports club, the sixth-biggest nationwide and thirteenth-biggest worldwide. It is based at the RheinEnergieStadion and plays in the first or second Bundesliga depending on form. The Cologne Sharks ice hockey team plays at the LANXESS arena (still stubbornly called the Kölnarena by the locals), which is also a venue for sporting and other large-scale events.

Underground, city centre up to Äußere Kanalstrasse

The expansion rate for fibre optic lines is 80 per cent – putting Cologne in first place nationwide. According to the smart city ranking by the business magazine “Bilanz”, Cologne is Germany’s bastion of digitalisation: “smart” in strategy and implementation, infrastructure, education, energy, government, health, home and mobility. Almost 2,000 companies make up the digital sector, including computer games powerhouse EA, IBM, Microsoft, Siemens and the most important players in InsurTech. From two-person incubators in the backyard to the future market leader in glass-fronted offices all

over town: Cologne is home to 550 start-ups, driven by business centres, hubs, incubators and accelerators (see also pages 18-21).

Downtown and Hürth (Rhein-Erft-Kreis)

Film, TV, radio, press, software and games: Cologne is Germany’s media capital with 43,600 people working in the industry. Every year, more than 1,000 national and international films and TV shows are made in the city. Around 30 per cent of the content broadcast on German TV is made in Cologne.

Focus on downtown

The opera house, Schauspiel Köln theatre, Romano-Germanic Museum, cathedral, philharmonic, cabaret, photography and music scenes, urban culture – in terms of art and culture, it’s all there.

The entire city from carnival day to Ash Wednesday

Be it the Rose Monday parade, the Schunkelsitzung or Stunksitzung stage shows, the Schull- und Veedelszöch community parade, or the ghost parade: The people of Cologne LOVE their carnival. And (normally) more than 1.5 million guests come to the city to enjoy the celebrations. ■

Well-connected across all channels

If any city knows about networking, it's Cologne. And we're not just talking about interpersonal connections. In **INFRASTRUCTURE, TOO, AND FOR DIGITALISATION**, the business metropolis ranks highly.

People know each other, they help each other – that's the way it's always been among the approachable, cosmopolitan folk of Cologne. These days, we call it networking, and anyone with a good network can really get things done. In Cologne, with its more than one million inhabitants, and the Greater Cologne Area that encompasses around 17 million people within a 100-kilometre radius, there is enormous potential for cooperation between companies.

This economic region is well connected, for example, in terms of infrastructure: Cologne boasts Germany's second largest inland port after Duisburg, and the city's main railway station is the western hub of all long-distance rail traffic in the country. No less than three international airports in North Rhine-Westphalia – Cologne/Bonn, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt – can be reached from the city centre in around an hour by car. Cologne/Bonn airport is also one of Germany's busiest cargo airports. In the coronavirus crisis year of 2020, the 863,000 tons of freight handled there represented an increase of six per cent over the previous year.

Cologne also ranks highly for digitalisation: According to the "Smart City Index 2020" from Bitkom Research, the city comes in

first for "IT and communications infrastructure" in a comparison of 81 German cities. This is advantageous for companies settling here not only in terms of location, but also when it comes to recruiting skilled staff. In a current survey by the digital association Bitkom, more than a quarter of 16- to 29-year-olds stated that overly slow digitalisation would be a reason for them to move elsewhere.

"Anyone wanting to keep young people in the area needs to invest in digitalisation in order to increase quality of life," stresses Bitkom's president Achim Berg.

Cologne is the capital of digitalisation

The influx of young and educated people benefits around 2,000 companies from the digital economy, of which around 550 are start-ups. Added to this are more than 30 co-working spaces, business centres, hubs and incubators, which are connected to each other and to the world with fibre optics and super-fast internet. This is ensured by the biggest regional telecommunications provider NetCologne, which is based in the city. With more than 28,000 kilometres of laid cables, its fibre-optic network is



Physical or digital? The future is unequivocally hybrid – and this also applies, of course, to the events at Koelnmesse like gamescom.



among the most modern in Europe with more than half a million private and business customers. “The coronavirus pandemic has shown how important it is for our society to have an efficient, stable network. That’s why we are consistently expanding the digital lifelines of Cologne and the region – both underground and overhead,” explains Timo von Lepel, Managing Director of NetCologne. With NetCologne and other partners, the City of Cologne is equipping itself for the digital future with its “Gigabit Masterplan Cologne 2025”, which is set to provide comprehensive gigabit networks with fibre optics as well as high-performance, fifth generation (5G) mobile communications. Armed with this technology, networking in the future will even extend to applications in the Internet of Things (IoT).

Cologne, where the world comes together

The city’s digital offensive also extends to Cologne’s leading trade shows, such as the International Dental Show (IDS), Anuga (the global fair for the food and beverage industry), the computer and video games fair gamescom, and the imm international furniture and interiors fair. “During the crisis, exhibitions are taking on new formats: They’re becoming hybrids!”, says Gerald

Böse, Chairman of the Board at Koelnmesse. “Nevertheless, there’s an unmistakable echo in the industry: People want to get back into exhibition halls. That’s why the future belongs to hybrid events.” In essence, these are physical events that facilitate discussion on site but on a digital basis, also offer a global reach, innovative streaming formats and more networking.

2,000
companies from the
digital economy benefit
from the influx of young
and educated people.

“You get the experience and the networking on site, and the knowledge and the content online – with flowing transitions. As a result, the successful model of the trade fair is enhanced,” says Böse, explaining the new concept. Modern, high-performance IT infrastructure is the prerequisite for the long-term competitiveness of Koelnmesse and an important component of the investment programme Koelnmesse 3.0. The aim here is to create the most attractive downtown exhibition

site in the world by 2030. One pioneering example is the new hybrid event polisMOBILITY, which launches in 2022. “Intermodal mobility concepts, sustainable drive systems, digital technologies for networking, urban planning and infrastructure issues or projects to involve citizens will all form part of it,” says Böse, explaining the concept jointly developed by Koelnmesse, the State of NRW, the City of Cologne and polis Convention.

Small events, reinvented

A structural change is also underway among large-scale leading events in the market for MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, exhibitions): Dr Jürgen Amann, managing director of KölnTourismus, expects to see a decline in classic business travel even after the coronavirus. “While major events will remain important or become even more so through hybridisation, small and medium-sized events will have to reinvent themselves,” he predicts. “There are opportunities for their destinations here, since the attractiveness of the chosen location will become a more important aspect. At the same time, there are ever greater demands in terms of digital infrastructure, with new business models emerging here,” he says with conviction. ■

THE ENERGY TRANSITION MADE IN COLOGNE

CLIMATE PROTECTION IS A TASK WE MUST TACKLE TOGETHER.

And businesses in Cologne are also squaring up to this challenge: with digital solutions for network operators and green power producers as well as infrastructure projects.

As part of the energy transition, the energy system is becoming ever more localised. The approximately 800 electricity generators that existed in Germany in 1990 have since multiplied to almost two million. Transmission grid operators are therefore facing huge challenges: The systems have to be integrated into the network, and there are ever-more new consumers – such as charging pillars for electric vehicles or heat pumps. Electricity feed-in and demand must therefore be controlled in such a way that the network remains consistently in balance and stable.



Smart data analysis at envelio.



The founders of the start-up envelio, a spin-off of RWTH Aachen.

Digital help for transmission grid operators

Yet the current grid situation is often not transparent, and some information has to be entered manually in planning and operating processes. This is time-consuming and error-prone. With its Intelligent Grid Platform (IGP), the start-up envelio – a spin-off of RWTH Aachen University founded in Cologne in 2017 – has developed a modular software assistance system for distribution grid operators. “IGP provides digital mapping of the grid,” says marketing manager Laura Fietz. “It can be used to

digitalise and automate important processes in grid planning and operation. Among other things, this simplifies the approval process for connecting new generation plants and consumers and speeds it up from several weeks to a few minutes.” Already, 23 German and seven international network operators are using IGP. www.envelio.de

More flexible distribution of energy consumption

Not only are there more and more localised power plants; wind and photovoltaic systems also supply power dependent on the weather and thus inconsistently. The virtual power plant at Next Kraftwerke, a business founded in Cologne in 2009, ensures that generation and consumption of renewable energy is more flexible and more intelligently distributed within the grid. “We are connecting 10,531 power generators across Europe to a shared supply system,” explains the company’s spokesperson Jan Aengen-

voort. Intelligent algorithms coordinate the various generators and also ensure increasingly accurate grid forecasts. If the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing, adjustable systems such as biogas and hydro-power plants can produce more and keep the grid stable.

Most of the power that networked generators produce goes into short-term trading on the power exchange. "The price here can change up to 96 times a day," says Aengenvoort. "The generators can use these price fluctuations to their benefit, and they get the information they require fully automatically via our control system." In addition, the virtual power plant supplies important balancing energy, which the grid operators rely on to balance out shortages or surpluses of power. A small proportion of the power goes directly to commercial and industrial consumers.



The virtual power plant: Next Kraftwerke bundles renewable energy.

"They can adapt their energy consumption to the varying prices or critical grid situation at short notice using our control system," says Aengenvoort. Through selected cooperation partners, Next Kraftwerke is also incorporating the first flexible units on a household level into the virtual power plant, such as electricity storage units or electric vehicles.

www.next-kraftwerke.de

Infrastructure for the energy transition

The Danish company Nordiske Kabel og Traadfabriker (NKT), also based in Cologne, is partly responsible for ensuring that wind power from the north of the country makes it to the south and solar power is



On a roll: NKT will be laying high-voltage, direct-current cables starting in 2022.

transported in the opposite direction: For the SuedLink and SuedOst-Link power lines, it will manufacture a significant part of the high-voltage, direct-current cables at the Cologne production plant on the Chempark site and subsequently lay them starting in 2022. The factory itself will run on 100 per cent green power.

This is the biggest infrastructure project of the energy transition in Germany: The almost 1,340-kilometre-long SuedLink corridor links up with the NordLink junction line — also constructed by NKT — in Schleswig-Holstein. It brings electricity generated from hydropower in Norway to Germany. The SuedOst-Link spans 580 kilometres in total from Saxony-Anhalt to Bavaria.

NKT aims to invest a figure in the high tens of millions in the projects in Cologne. "We are planning to boost the number of staff here from the current 800 to 100 more," stresses Anders Jensen, Executive Vice President and CTO of NKT. NKT is also currently building a new test centre for high-voltage cables at the Chempark.

www.nkt.de ■



ENERGY TRANSITION START-UPS, MADE IN COLOGNE

The digital energy service provider EINHUNDERT is supporting housing companies with smart meters, innovative software and scalable services for tenant electricity projects.

www.einhundert.de

The digital marketplace Installion incorporates more than 20,000 installers throughout Germany operating in the areas of photovoltaic, storage systems, electromobility and energy monitoring.

www.installion.eu

aedifion has a cloud platform for intelligent and automated optimisation and regulation of existing building and energy system technology.

www.aedifion.com

With its energy management software for business customers and its EnergieCockpit for private customers, GreenPocket makes energy consumption clearer and more transparent.

www.greenpocket.com

PROMOTING THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Consultancy KölnBusiness Economic Development Agency is supporting companies with advice and guidance on sustain-able technologies, resources and climate protection, among others. It also offers a greentech ecosystem that creates synergies between business and science. Info: www.koeln.business

Mission: climate neutrality

On the **PATH TOWARDS CLIMATE NEUTRALITY**, the City of Cologne is aiming to halve its CO₂ emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. Three companies from the consumer, industry and mobility sectors show how this can work.

The mountain of packaging waste has been growing for years. Even before the coronavirus crisis, according to German environmental organisation Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH), around 155,000 tons of waste were produced each year solely from takeaway food packaging and the 2.8 billion single-use cups for hot drinks. Their production consumes substantial resources and generates many thousands of tons of CO₂ emissions. The coronavirus pandemic has boosted the takeaway trend even further. Cologne-based start-up VYTAL, founded in 2019, has developed a resource-saving, environmentally friendly reusable system for food and beverage packaging. “We have since overseen the production of more than 80,000 reusable packaging items,” says its co-founder Tim Breker. Each of these items can be used at least 200 times. “Every item of packaging saves up to 30 kilos of CO₂ compared to single-use packaging.” The trays are made without the harmful plasticiser bisphenol A and are easily recyclable. By now, 1,265 restaurants, cafeterias, butcher’s shops and supermarkets in Germany and Austria are using the deposit-free reusable cups and bowls (as of June 2021). More than



The team of founders at Cologne-based reusables start-up VYTAL.

100,000 users have downloaded the app, via which they can find participating food businesses in more than 40 cities. They have to return the empty packaging to one of these within 14 days, after which there is a fine of 10 euros. The items are then checked and hygienically cleaned for the next use.

Climate-friendly industrial plastics

Cologne-based igus GmbH is a global leader in production of energy chain systems and polymer plain bearings. These machine parts are continually in use, so igus develops and produces them using hardwearing high-performance plastics (called “motion plastics”),

which work without lubricants and, therefore, help the environment. What’s more, their production is carbon-neutral, and they can be subsequently separated by type and recycled. The family-run company is currently constructing a climate-neutral production hall. “Our goal is to be carbon-neutral in all our buildings and our production by 2025,” says managing director Frank Blase. Already, he says, the carbon footprint is measured at all locations worldwide, and in the future igus will procure green power and invest in new injection moulding machines that are around 40 per cent more energy-efficient than the previous ones. “By the end of this year we aim to cut our energy needs by 15 per cent while increasing production.” A large plant is also being built for the innovative chemical recycling procedure HydroPRS. This converts unsorted plastic waste into crude oil for production in an efficient way.

Cologne as a centre of e-mobility

Electric vehicles charged with green power are a carbon-neutral way of getting around. Ford is making its Cologne-Niehl site a centre for electromobility investing a billion

US dollars in the new Ford Cologne Electrification Center. Electric vehicles developed and produced here are to be delivered all over Europe. “For the first fully electric volume model, which will roll off the production line at the Electrification Center as of 2023, we are using the modular e-drive system (MEB) from our strategic partner VW,” says Marko Belser, spokesman for the Ford plants in Cologne. The flexible, modular system makes production of e-vehicles more efficient and economical. As early as 2026, all passenger car models are to be offered in a battery-electric or a plug-in hybrid variant, and from 2030 onwards exclusively as electric passenger cars. At the same time, Ford and its partners are planning a research centre for the sustainable production of electric drives at the Niehl plant.

In a former production hall at the Ford site, the Japanese-Italian automobile supplier Marelli is building a production line for electric engines. “We opted for Cologne because it’s at the heart of Europe, because here you have highly qualified staff with experience in the automotive industry, and because the region is developing into a centre for e-mobility,” says Joachim Fetzer, Chief Technology and Innovation Officer (CTIO) in Marelli’s Electric Powertrain division. ■



Comprehensive coverage: Energy supplier RheinEnergie provides green energy charging points for electric vehicles in Cologne.

STANDING UP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

For Cologne’s municipal enterprises, too, climate protection is on the agenda: The energy supplier **RHEINENERGIE** aims to be entirely carbon-neutral by 2035: That involves a carbon-neutral drinking water supply by 2025, exclusively green energy offerings from 2030, and only renewable heating power plants from 2040. Together with partners, the company already operates 580 green electricity charging points for electric vehicles in Cologne and the surrounding area, and by 2025, this figure is set to rise to 3,000, of which 400 will be publicly accessible. www.rheinenergie.com/de

The **KÖLNER VERKEHRS-BETRIEBE (KVB)**, the city’s public transport operators, want to increase the number of their electric buses to 62 in 2021. Like the city railway, they run on green power from RheinEnergie. That means each electric bus saves 0.46 tons of nitric oxide and 57.20 tons of CO₂ each year compared to a conventional diesel bus. www.kvb.koeln

For the waste management and recycling companies **AWG** and **AVG**, avoiding and recycling waste are a top priority. AWB minimises transport routes for their low-emission vehicles by collecting waste as locally as possible and recycling regionally. Using the organic waste collected, among other things, AVG generates green heat energy, sorts recyclable materials and channels them back into the economic cycle. www.avgkoeln.de



“A home for innovative business models”

She grew up in Cologne’s Bickendorf district, and for six years now, the qualified lawyer has been steering the fortunes of the fourth largest city in Germany. In an interview, **HENRIETTE REKER** reveals why her home city is the perfect place for good business – and what products “made in Cologne” are particularly close to her heart.



Fascinating reading:
an art book from Taschen Verlag.

Madam Mayor, you yourself are “Made in Cologne”. What makes the people here so unique?

I always say: In Cologne, you’ll find friends even if you’re not looking for them (laughs). Here, you immediately get talking to people, since the people of Cologne are open, approachable and curious with everyone they meet. We don’t care where you come from or how long you’re staying. Cologne has been a trading city for 2,000 years, and this tradition of merchants shows that Cologne is the ideal city for good business and for innovative business models. We combine business with our zest for life, which is something you won’t find anywhere else in the world.

The business metropolis uses “Made in Cologne” as an advertising slogan. What does that mean to you?

If I’m travelling as mayor, then I love to take a RIMOWA suitcase or a backpack by FOND OF. And my official car is a Ford. All three of these companies are based in Cologne. In my outfits, too, I wear Cologne labels, including the fa-

shions from city native Ilse Stammberger. As mayor, I’m very proud that so many products are produced or developed here. They accompany me on delegation trips abroad, too, and include one of the world’s oldest fragrances: Farina Eau de Cologne. This scent gave rise to a whole genre of products bearing the name of our city – there can be no better advertising than that.

How do you describe this entrepreneurial spirit in your city?

Cologne’s entrepreneurs are creative, bold and young. People pursue ideas without knowing exactly whether or not they will be successful. This entrepreneurial spirit is also sustainable, in the sense of its

long-lasting business ideas but also its careful use of resources. This is perfectly embodied by the companies VYTAL or Next Kraftwerke, among others, which I visited recently. Next Kraftwerke operates one of the biggest virtual power plants in Europe, and the VYTAL team worked at the University of Cologne to develop a digital reusables system for takeaway and delivery offerings. I see a lot of people in the city coming out of restaurants with the reusable dishes, and I also like using them. This sustainable approach born in Cologne has been successful, and both companies operate across Europe.

You also talked about the scientific landscape in Cologne. To what extent do businesses benefit from this?

Cologne is an industrial and service-sector location, but at the same time, it’s one of the most innovative scientific regions in Europe. Around 100,000 people research and study here, and more than 14,000 highly qualified graduates enter the job market every year. That constitutes

THE INTERVIEWEE: HENRIETTE REKER

has been mayor of the City of Cologne since October 2015. She was re-elected on 27 September 2020. Henriette Reker is an enthusiastic amateur chef and loves celebrating carnival.



huge potential, so science and business are inextricably linked. Important impulses are triggered here, and Cologne is home to four Max Planck Institutes, numerous clusters of excellence at the University of Cologne, and the German Aerospace Centre, as well as the European Union's Aviation Safety Agency.

And astronauts are trained at the European Astronaut Centre for their journeys into space.

Yes, Cologne is the capital of German space travel, and one of the astronauts trained here is Alexander Gerst, who made the city his home. When he signed Cologne's Golden Book, he gave me the badge he wore into space, and now it's sitting on my desk. It's something I'm very proud of, because when I was a child, I wanted to be an astronaut.

As an example of another Cologne product, in front of you is a book published by Taschen Verlag about Gerhard Richter.

He is a renowned artist and an honora-

ry citizen of Cologne. While flipping through the pages, I came across the double spread with his "48 Portraits." This shows his diversity, since a lot of people know him better as an abstract artist. And this is a great example of how Taschen Verlag's illustrated books make art accessible. Founded in Cologne in 1980 as a comic store, Taschen developed into a major publisher. And when it comes to art in Cologne, then I mustn't fail to mention Art Cologne,



From Cologne to the cosmos: the mission badge of astronaut Alexander Gerst.

the beginnings of which I witnessed as a student in the late 1960s. As mayor, I am delighted that the oldest art fair in the world has been imitated countless times the world over.

Does that mean that the art and cultural scene generates massive outward resonance for Cologne?

I believe art is the heart and soul of our city. In our museums, you can experience virtually the full history of humanity – from its Roman beginnings to contemporary art. In the Museum Ludwig, for example, you'll find Europe's most extensive collection of Pop Art. Here you also see what makes the people of Cologne tick: Thanks to the commitment of art-lovers, to their connection to the city, we are able to make regular purchases, and that makes this treasure trove ever greater and Cologne ever more attractive. Our museums, the opera, theatre, philharmonic, Gürzenich Orchestra and WDR Symphony Orchestra, as well as the independent culture scene, are an enormous treasure that is worth at least as much as a DAX company. ■

THE CITY OF THE FUTURE

The needs of people and businesses are changing – including in Cologne. Four projects reveal where there is construction in Cologne and where people will be working in the future.



DEUTZER HAFEN: A NEW CITY DISTRICT

A new development is taking shape in the district of Deutz, directly on the Rhine with a view of the cathedral. In the future, it will be home to 7,000 people and provide workspace for 6,000, with a lively atmosphere guaranteed by seven childcare facilities, a primary school and a host of restaurants. Locals are also able to submit their own ideas for the project. The atmosphere of the new district is modern, open, and offers people high-quality leisure options, with the Hafenpark and additional plazas inviting them to linger or to spend a lunch break outside. The Hafenbecken basin, with its eight hectares of water, provides opportunities for kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding as well as swimming. The infrastructure development plan is to be concluded shortly, while other stages of implementation are in preparation.

I/D COLOGNE: WORKING IN THE HEART OF THE “VEEDEL”

The site of the former freight train station in the city’s Mülheim district is to provide businesses with a new home. This was once a production site for pioneers of industrialisation, and now that entrepreneurial spirit is being reinvigorated. Loft-like architecture with high ceilings provides the outer framework for creative work, and the bright rooms can be individually designed. At its central plaza, the site opens out to the district of Mülheim, which the locals call the “Veedel”. Renowned architects are designing the buildings, picking up on the industrial character of the neighbouring structures with their brick facades. The heart of the development is the “Incubator Service House”, which stands for new ideas. Here, there is a coworking, conference and business centre as well as event facilities, while guests can stay overnight in a design hotel. The first phase of construction is complete and fully let, with eleven buildings being constructed in total. The developers are aiming to realise the project by 2026 and to thereby create space in Mülheim for 7,000 workers.



MAX-BECKER-AREAL: A JUNKYARD BECOMES A NEW DISTRICT

A junkyard is being given a new lease on life. The operator will leave the 500-hectare site in the west of Cologne in 2022, and discussions are now underway as to what will be done with it with local people able to contribute their suggestions and preferences. Building a new urban district presents a huge opportunity: Urban planners can learn from the mistakes of the past and take changing needs into account. The City of Cologne is aiming to create intergenerational housing, and there will, likewise, be space for a variety of commercial operators. At the same time, culture, social aspects and education are not to be neglected, and the new district is set to offer its residents attractive mobility concepts and connections to local public transport. An urban planning competition is planned as a next step.



VORUM: DIGITAL THROUGH AND THROUGH

“New work” is the generic term for new forms of work that have been given a boost by the pandemic. Working hours have changed, and working in the office has become more complex. The new Vorum building under construction in Cologne’s Ehrenfeld district offers the flexibility required. After all, companies will change their project teams more often now, and they want to divide up space in a variable way in line with this. Nevertheless, the focus is on the individual with their specific needs – ultimately everyone has to feel good at work. The building is fully digitalised, so at Vorum, smartphones replace keys. They are used to open doors and the garage, book meeting rooms, and regulate room temperature. A total of five floors are planned at Vorum with total space of 20,000 square metres. By 2024, 800 modern workstations will be ready for occupation.



“Offices will still be needed in the future”

Markus Greitemann, councillor for planning and building of the City of Cologne, discusses trends in urban building and where the cathedral city still has room to grow.

Where is urban development heading?

An important trend is the transformation of former commercial and industrial locations to create mixed districts. Sometimes the focus is on establishing creative and innovative companies, sometimes it’s on urban production. At other sites undergoing transformation, the focus is more on the available housing – but still with a mix, i.e. living and working.

Due to the pandemic, more people are now working from home. Will office sites be empty in the future?

The home office will be a firm fixture in the organisation of work in the future, but that won’t lead to a notable reduction in office space. Offices will still be needed in the future. Even if far fewer people have a fixed desk, companies still need space for teams.

Where can Cologne develop new spaces, and what are the plans for urban development?

The greatest potential lies in the development zones. There’s the “Parkstadt Süd” with around 3,400 residential units, the “Deutzer Hafen” with 3,000 units, the “Mülheim Süd” area and the new “Kreuzfeld” district in the north of Cologne with 3,000 units. On top of that, the city has earmarked 45 sites amounting to 650 hectares as optional areas as part of the regional planning revision. There is also potential in the further development of around 2,200 construction gaps in the city.

KölnBusiness assists companies in their searches for sites and premises. What are the advantages of this?

KölnBusiness supports companies looking for commercial premises, for example. As a municipal subsidiary, it acts as a hinge between business and administration. It markets our commercial plots, holds preliminary talks with our specialist departments to prepare for the planning application, and supervises the planning application process. The City of Cologne and KölnBusiness have established a very good system, always with an eye on long-term location security for businesses.





Good business with good ideas

Anyone wanting to grow a **START-UP** is in the right place in Cologne. The city offers outstanding structures, networks and highly qualified workers – and scores more points than any other metropolis in the country for its positive outlook on life.

The 8th of July in the year 50, according to our calculations: The Roman Empress Agrippina grants city rights to the settlement of Oppidum Ubiorum – from now on it is called Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium, from which it gets its name “Cologne”. The city is a hub in the road network of the Roman Empire, so more and more merchants use it as a place to trade and start settlements. During the heyday of the Hanseatic League during the High Middle Ages at the latest, the city’s economy is invigorated by a growing number of craftspeople and merchants – in a word, entrepreneurs.

A key position in the network of traders and customers

Even today, Cologne remains a good place to set up a business. A testa-

A big appetite for the future:
Rebecca Göckel and Jan Grabow, the
founder team behind NOMOO.



ment to this are around 550 start-ups in a huge variety of sectors, from the digital economy to foodstuffs to clothing. They find a home in one of the numerous coworking spaces and accelerators such as the Startplatz, which has been active locally since 2012. A good overview of Cologne's ecosystem is available at www.start-up-map.cologne.

One of the strongest drivers of this entrepreneurial dynamism is Cologne's location in the middle of one of the continent's biggest urban conglomerations, which represents a particularly weighty argument for companies in the business-to-business sector (B2B for short). "Within a radius of one and a half hours by car, I can reach 20 million people from here, which is why we set up shop in Cologne," says Daniel Bergold, Head of Corporate Communication at the Cologne-based handbag and fashion company FOND OF.

This key position in the network of traders and customers has paid off: Since its establishment in 2010, which gave birth to Ergobag, the first ergonomic school backpack on the market, FOND OF has launched seven other brands worldwide, increased its workforce to 284 and seen a rise in sales from 270,000 to 89 million euros.

Focus on data-driven B2B business models

Yet they didn't stop there: In 2019 the fertile ground of FOND OF gave rise to xdeck, a so-called accelerator. The principle? Based on tough criteria, selected start-ups get operational and strategic support to accelerate the development of their business over four months. The focus here is on data-driven B2B business models, which are particularly compatible with medium-sized

550
Start-ups from a
wide variety of sectors
are a testament to the
fact that Cologne is a
great place to set up a
business.

companies and "hidden champions", the backbone of the economy in NRW. Markus Gick, Co-Managing Director, has this to say: "xdeck is a start-up for start-ups. Businesses that work with us don't have to repeat the same mistakes all start-ups make, whereby our main focus

"TAKE CONTROL"



Parul Madan founded the DueDash platform in Cologne in 2020 with the aim of helping start-ups to deal with recurring challenges.

Ms Madan, how does DueDash help start-up projects?

The basis is our online community of 3,500 members from more than 100 countries. We focus on fundraising and investment, and participants can discuss these topics with one another and with investors. In addition, we organise events targeting investment, for example, for Cologne-based start-ups.

You worked for a long time at a telecommunications company – what prompted you to go it alone?

My father founded and managed multiple companies in India, so it runs in the family to some extent. But what I enjoy most about my job is learning new things – and now I can do that every day.

What advice do you give to people toying with the idea of setting up a company?

One thing above all: Have faith and do it!



“THE CUSTOMERS ARE ON THE DOORSTEP.”



The Economics Minister of North Rhine-Westphalia, **Andreas Pinkwart**, is looking beyond Cologne to the whole of NRW: He talks to us about how politics can nurture the start-up scene.

Mr Pinkwart, you are aiming to make NRW one of the ten leading regions for start-ups in Europe by 2025 – on what do you base this confidence?

NRW is one of the best locations for higher education and research in Europe. In the most recent university excellence initiative, the state gained the most excellence clusters in Germany, with the University of Bonn gaining as many as the whole of Bavaria. That’s something we can build on to become one of the top start-up regions in Europe with our scale-up programme for innovative new businesses.

How are you going to achieve this goal?

One example is with the “Neue Gründerzeit NRW” initiative, which was launched in 2019 by politicians and business and ushers in a new era of business promotion. It matches up offerings and tools – and the 64 measures in the ten strategic areas of

action have largely been implemented already. To enable us to identify the best start-up ideas at universities and further develop them, we are funding Excellence Start-up Centres at six universities in the state, one of which is Cologne University, with up to 150 million euros. On top of that, we have further developed our hubs for the NRW digital economy and hugely expanded the funding available for venture capital with NRW.Bank.

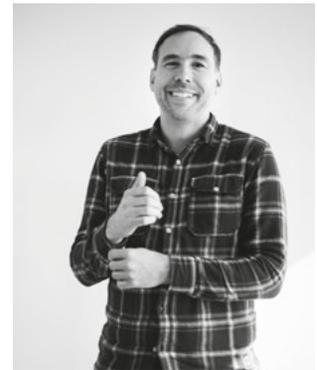
According to a study by the state government, the start-up scene in NRW is growing by around 6.25 per cent every year. Is there scope for more?

Among other things, the study reveals how we could foster sustainable growth in the start-up scene even more effectively. Measures proposed in the study such as the scale-up programme to support start-ups with international scaling are already being addressed.

How can more German and international start-ups be lured to NRW?

NRW is an attractive location for start-up teams with a migration background: More than one in four founders here have foreign roots, which is the highest proportion in the country. Aside from that, the Rhine-Ruhr region, one of Europe’s biggest metropolitan regions with its industrial corporations and hidden champions, also offers access to the digital growth markets. For B2B start-ups, in particular, the customer is on the doorstep in NRW. On top of that, the universities and higher-education institutions attract talent from all over the world and get them qualified for high-tech projects.

“Businesses that work with us don’t have to repeat the same mistakes all start-ups make.”



Markus Gick, Co-Managing Director of xdeck.

launched in February and brings together the University of Cologne, Cologne University of Applied Sciences, the Sport University and the Rhenish University of Applied Sciences in an effort to promote entrepreneurship. At Cologne University of Applied Sciences, the project is led by Kai Thürbach, Professor of Business Management and Entrepreneurship. He explains: “Our goal is to work with partners from business, politics and academia to make Cologne a top region for start-ups.” A whole range of tools are available for this, including expansion of incubators, coworking and maker spaces at the higher education institutions, the involvement of lecturers, and a “booster” programme that brings together investors and start-up teams.

6.25

per cent growth in the
NRW start-up scene
every year.

is on helping start-ups to find their place in the product market, launching pilot projects with our partners, and improving funding for start-up founders.” Another advantage Cologne has to offer is the networking of start-ups with players from other fields. One example is the initiative “Fit for Invest”, which was

A dazzling university landscape

Niklas Hellemann, psychologist and one of the three founders and managing directors of SoSafe, is familiar with the successful support available through university projects.

The company launched as a Cologne-based start-up in 2018, specialising in cybersecurity, and has since grown to employ around 150 people. The SoSafe training platform provides training for more than a million employees at more than 800 client businesses working in digital security. “In our early days, we found our first office via the incubator at the University of Applied Sciences,” says Hellemann, highlighting another advantage of the strong university landscape of Cologne and of NRW as a whole: “The more we grow, the more important it becomes to recruit the right staff, and we find them primar-

“We find new staff primarily from among the highly qualified students in the city and the region.”



Niklas Hellemann, psychologist and one of the three founders and managing directors of SoSafe.

at university. Vegan, sustainably produced and traded ice cream for everyone is its goal – “and it needs to taste like a treat, not like a guilty conscience or a compromise,” says the 25-year-old.

Ice cream lovers, it seems, were simply waiting for the idea: In 2020, NOMOO doubled its sales compared to the previous year, and its initiators are planning to expand into Austria and Switzerland in the future.

The concept is also convincing investors. At the start of the year, the umbrella company behind NOMOO, NRDS, raised fresh money from three venture capitalists and one institutional investor in a new round of funding.

Just as the Roman politician Appius Claudius Caecus said: “Faber est suae quisque fortunae” – “Every man is the architect of his own fortune”. ■

“Our goal is to make Cologne a top region for start-ups.”



Kai Thürbach, Professor of Business Management and Entrepreneurship, Cologne University of Applied Sciences.

ily among the highly qualified students of the city and the region.”

Good living can't be expressed in figures

The most important advantage of Cologne as a location, Kai Thürbach believes, simply cannot be expressed in figures: “You can live well in Cologne. Young people, in particular, like it here, and innovative talent wants a creative and friendly atmosphere, the cultural environment and the dynamism of a big city that is, nevertheless, manageable. The locals say: ‘Kölle is e Jeföhl’, Cologne is a feeling!”

“Full of life” is how Rebecca Göckel describes the city in which she lives and where she and her partner Jan Grabow founded the start-up NOMOO in 2018 while still



CALLING ALL INNOVATORS!

Got a great business idea but too little money to get it off the ground? The NRW start-up grant could be just what you need: If you have a convincing idea, you could receive 1,000 euros a month for your start-up for a whole year.

Find out more at:

www.koeln.business/gruenderstipendium

For insurers with vision: The new insurance fair insureNXT will take place again 2022.



Driving ideas together

Cologne is an important location for **INSURANCE COMPANIES**. At the same time, start-ups are helping established companies to become faster and better digitalised.

The new, digital EU vaccine pass comes from Cologne, and the CovPass app was developed by the Cologne-based start-up Ubirch together with IBM – just one example of how a young company can successfully collaborate with an established one. Ubirch and IBM first encountered each other at a gathering of InsurLab Germany in Cologne.

InsurLab Germany, which was founded in 2017 with support from the City of Cologne, brings together start-ups, established insurance companies and leading service providers from the insurance industry. “We opened the doors so

that the two companies would be able to meet and develop their idea,” says Sebastian Pitzler, Managing Director of InsurLab Germany.

This initiative brings advantages for established insurance companies: “InsurLab Germany offers us access to exciting start-ups working on solutions to insurance-related problems,” says Alexander Behr, Principal of the AXA Innovation Campus. “On the other hand, InsurLab offers exciting formats in which we exchange ideas with other insurers and industry experts and learn from one another.”

One of these formats is the accelerator programme, in which

well-known companies provide guidance for start-ups. In the process, the start-ups help insurance companies to become faster and better digitalised, but also to offer their customers more personalised solutions. The coronavirus pande-



Opening the door to new things: Sebastian Pitzler, Managing Director of InsurLab Germany.

mic has increased the speed of digitalisation. Over the past year, 18 start-ups were supported by more than 50 mentors, developing 40 projects, of which 13 were ultimately implemented in practice within six months. “That’s a very high rate and something we’re really proud of,” explains Pitzler.

The projects are extremely diverse. One example is BetterDoc, a family-run company headquartered in Cologne, which was founded in 2012 by gynaecologist Donata von Dellingshausen together with her husband Nils and her brother-in-law Christoph von Dellingshausen. The idea behind BetterDoc? Measuring quality in medical care and helping people to choose the right doctor. BetterDoc is also independent and accounts solely for the interests of the patient: “We have very good clinics and medical practices, but the crucial thing is finding the right facility for the patient’s individual issues, either close to their home or anywhere in the country,” explains von Dellingshausen.

New possibilities for dealing with data

With almost 100 employees, BetterDoc helps patients in their search for medical specialists, arranges appointments and manages each case for a period of two years. “First and foremost, we help people to make an informed and optimal decision,” says von Dellingshausen. Already, statutory and private medical insurance policies, accident and life insurance companies and employers in Germany and Switzerland are offering their customers and employees free access to the BetterDoc service.

Digitalisation offers new possibilities for dealing with data, meaning insurance companies can better align premiums with the market. Traditionally, insurance companies have calculated premiums based on the risk plus a surcharge, but Ingo Reinhardt, founder and managing director of Cologne-based start-up

PARTNER TO THE INSURANCE WORLD

Business consultancy KölnBusiness Economic Development Agency sees itself as a bridge between young and established companies. The municipal subsidiary responds flexibly to the needs of local start-ups and established companies, and supports InsurLab Germany as well as events like insureNXT. For the insureNXT exhibition in 2021, KölnBusiness sponsored a start-up village and offered ten start-ups the opportunity to present their ideas to an industry audience.

buynomics, is pursuing a new path: “We can calculate the prices customers are willing to pay and where the pain threshold lies,” explains Reinhardt, who set up the company in 2018. The level of an insurance premium has a significant impact on demand. “We are able to predict with accuracy of over 95 per cent what effect changes in the price will have,” says Reinhardt. To do so, buynomics evaluates a lot of data. It helps insurers, but also businesses from other industries to set prices better and optimise their offerings.

For Reinhardt, Cologne is an ideal location: “Here, we have not

only the top business economics programme at Cologne University, but also a university chair dedicated to the insurance industry, a vast number of young start-ups based centrally in the city, and short distances.” It’s an assessment shared by Alexander Vollert, Chairman of the Board at AXA, based in Cologne: “Due to the large catchment area, the high quality of life and the many outstanding universities, Cologne is naturally an important argument for us when it comes to recruiting new staff.”

insureNXT is also planned for 2022

Even during the coronavirus pandemic, the cooperation between young and established companies has functioned extremely well, with lots of formats relocated to the digital sphere. “The number of people participating in our events rose from 1,300 to 1,900 in 2020, and the interest in digital issues has increased significantly,” says Pitzler. The digital insurance fair insureNXT was also launched with great success together with Koelnmesse in 2021 and saw more than 1,200 participants gather virtually to discuss developments in the industry. The event is set to take place again in 2022, when it will be a hybrid event with digital elements and in-person gatherings. ■



A think tank with a view: InsurLab’s roof garden with its magnificent view over Cologne is the best place for fruitful discussions between insurers and industry experts.

A CELL OF CREATIVITY

Thanks to its many higher education institutions with their broad educational offering, Cologne is consolidating its position as the

TALENT FORGE for the state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

We offer an overview of some of the most exciting study courses in the creative cell of Cologne for the movers and shakers of tomorrow!



Cologne School of Games "Game Artist" training course

Main course topics: includes 3D modelling, texturing, animation and character design. Other courses include the "Game Business Plan" with a commercial foundation in project management for games marketing.

www.medienberufe.de/bildungsangebot/school-of-games

Cologne International School of Design (KISD)

Bachelor's degree in "Integrated Design"

Main course topics: includes design-typical forms and techniques for working, includes study abroad at one of 45 partner universities in and outside of Europe.

www.kisd.de

Academy of Media Arts Cologne (KHM)

Diploma in "Media Arts"

Main course topics: includes literary writing, experimental film and video art, creative photography, TV formats, live direction of feature and documentary

films, and experimental computer science.

www.khm.de

Cologne international film school (ifs) New master's degree in "Entertainment Producing" from September 2021

with appointed Professor Jennifer Mival from Netflix (interview: see box). Main course topics: history of entertainment, media transformation processes, market and media research.

www.filmschule.de/lehre/lehrgebiete/ma-entertainment-producing



SAE Institute Cologne Bachelor's degree in "Game Art Animation"

Main course topics: includes technologies for creating 3D models for artistic games design. Graduates gain an internationally recognised BA/BSc (hons) in Game Art Animation, validated by Middlesex University in London.

www.sae.edu



Cologne Game Lab at Cologne University of Applied Sciences Bachelor's degree in "Digital Games"

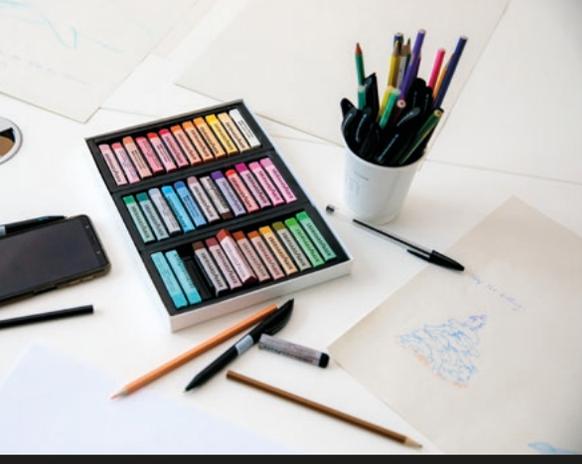
Main course topics: game art, game design and game programming. Graduates are awarded a Bachelor of Arts (BA) regardless of their area of focus.

www.colognegamelab.de

hochschule macromedia Cologne Bachelor's degree in "Fashion Journalism"

Main course topics: includes insider knowledge of major fashion brands, in-depth reporting, developing an insider network.

www.macromedia-fachhochschule.de



Hochschule Fresenius Cologne
New bachelor's degree in "Music Management" from WS 2021/22

Main course topics: includes organisation of concerts/music events and founding a music label.

www.hs-fresenius.de

University of Cologne
Bachelor's degree in "Art"

Main course topics: includes drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, video and performance theatre. The course qualifies graduates to teach at primary schools.

www.uni-koeln.de

Hochschule für Musik & Tanz Köln
Bachelor of Arts in "Dance"

Main course topics: includes stage dance, dance teaching, contemporary forms of training, artistic-choreographic processes, body discourses emphasising diversity, dramaturgy and public relations, stage realisation with light and sound.

www.hfmt-koeln.de



"There's never been anything like this before in Germany"

At the international film school (ifs) in Cologne, Germany's first Master's in Entertainment will launch in the winter semester of 2021/22. Initiated and promoted by Petra Müller, Managing Director of the NRW Film and Media Foundation and an associate of the ifs, the two-year part-time course in "Entertainment Producing" will run in close cooperation with the production industry. The course is headed by **Prof. Jennifer Mival**, who comes from Netflix.

Ms Mival, was it difficult to switch from Netflix to your new position as professor at Cologne's international film school?

No, I bring the broadcaster's view to the course, and it's just really exciting when industry practice combines with the reflective level of academia.

What is the importance of Cologne for the national and international media and TV industry?

Entertainment is one of the most important growth areas in media and Cologne, with its many globally active and powerful production companies – such as Banijay Productions, Bavaria Entertainment, bildundtonfabrik, EndemolShine, ITV Studios, i&u TV, Seapoint Productions, Sony Pictures Television, UFA Show & Factual, Warner Bros. International Television Production and, not least, the media group RTL – is Germany's most important production location for entertainment.

What specific content is covered in the new master's degree in "Entertainment Producing", which begins at ifs in the winter semester of 2021/22?

The degree course covers four semesters and is oriented towards the development process of an entertainment production, from the idea to implementation and evaluation of an entertainment format.

It is aimed at ambitious media creators who want to take the next step towards becoming a producer or executive producer.

What do you see as the biggest challenge as a newly appointed professor at ifs?

I have the privilege of supervising a truly unique study course which is unprecedented in Germany and which is all about bringing theory and practice together in the phenomenon of entertainment to inevitable mutual benefit. My challenge is to ensure that this enriching process becomes established in Germany.





FARSIGHTED SCIENCE

Cologne-based start-ups are making use of digital solutions for **EFFICIENT AND HIGH-QUALITY HEALTHCARE**. In Europe's biggest conurbation, their innovations find fertile ground with industry, university hospitals and major corporations.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, Cologne-based company RIMASYM was a hotspot for surgeons from all over the world. They came from Chile, Australia and the USA to practise operations on forearm fractures at Cologne's BioCampus. Using a machine and an algorithm, RIMASYM creates standardised bone fractures on anatomic specimens. Unlike artificial or unharmed bones, the specimens display realistic fractures on which surgeons can improve their surgical techniques.

Before this invention, surgeons could only ever see and treat fractures on live patients, but since 2016 they had been able to do so on-site at RIMASYM with no patient involvement – until the coronavirus pandemic arrived. “We saw a 90-per cent drop in sales,” says

founder Marc Ebinger, so he and his co-founder Robert Holz came up with an idea: Why not move the training to the internet? RIMASYM invested in digitalisation and hired additional members of staff, and by means of a strategic partnership with the world's leading education, innovation and research organisation, AO Foundation, it has since reached a network of over 215,000 surgeons. In July 2020, 1,800 viewers tuned in to follow an operation on a forearm fracture as if it were an online game. The “World Surgery Tour” ends in November 2021 with a 72-hour surgical marathon, streamed live from Cologne, Boston and Brisbane.

In addition to innovative training formats, digital offerings offer the opportunity to ensure high-quality healthcare across the board in

the face of demographic change. Hence, Cologne-based start-up m.Doc teamed up with pharmaceutical giant Bayer to develop the “it’s my life” platform. As a digital companion, it is aimed at helping people with heart rhythm disorders to get back into everyday life after medical interventions and ensure treatment is successful.

The perfect interplay of insurance and pharmaceuticals

Also developed in Cologne, the alley app helps people with arthritis, while the Fimo app supports those with chronic fatigue syndrome. Fimo’s founder Alexander Krawinkel came to Cologne for a research collaboration with the university hospital. “The important topic of digital health is being supported by both the city and the regional government,” says Krawinkel. “This helps to build a flourishing ecosystem of specialist clinics and companies from the insurance and pharmaceuticals industries.” The alley app, developed by VBMC ValueBasedManagedCare GmbH, shows what the interplay between InsureTech and MedTech might look like. As soon as VBMC was founded, the start-up was assured of funding by Gothaer health insurance, based in Cologne, which provided full financing and acquired 100 per cent of the company’s shares as a strategic partner.

Along with Bonn’s Community Hospital, twelve hospitals are testing out communication via alley. When appointments for surgery had to be delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic, there was huge planning uncertainty among doctors and patients, but with alley, the latter were able to get in touch with the physicians treating them before the op and then to inform them about progress and regress. “A better basis of data reduces the risk of readmission, complications and repeat



BUSINESS ON THE BIOCAMPUS

Companies that grow up in the Rechtsrheinisches Technologie- und Gründerzentrum Köln GmbH (RTZ) have to leave their offices after eight years at the latest. The “post-incubation facility”, as Managing Director André van Hall calls it, is located on the BioCampus Cologne (BCC). Van Hall has headed up RTZ and the BCC since September 2020 with the aim of bringing both locations together: “We want to guide technology start-ups consistently and sustainable through to the growth phase.” In the meantime, more than 30 technology companies have moved to the BCC, a mixture of highly innovative start-ups like RIMASYS, BioEcho, BluCon or InfanDx, and established players such as Bayer, Lonza or Arvato Systems.

To ensure start-ups find the right public funding programme for their industry, KölnBusiness has created its “Förderkompass”, or funding compass. More info online: www.koeln.business/foerderkompass

procedures, as well as other secondary diseases,” says founder and sports scientist Manuel Mandler.

A tradition in the Cologne metropolitan region

Innovative developments in the field of health and biotechnology go back a long way in the Cologne metropolitan region. For more than 30 years, the globally active biotechnology company Miltenyi Biotec has been based in Bergisch Gladbach. It develops solutions for cell and gene therapies and enables production of personalised cancer treatments, for example. Miltenyi Biotec developed in 1989 as a spin-off of the University of Cologne and has since remained loyal to the metropolitan region. “The outstanding density and expertise of clinics, academies and the biomedical industry make the greater Cologne area an obvious location,” says CFO Norbert Hentschel. During the course of the global pandemic, Miltenyi Biotec also used its expertise for research into SARS-CoV-2 and the development of new therapeutic approaches – and it’s doing so in good company: The start-up Fimo, just ten kilometres away in Cologne-Ehrenfeld, is already working on an app for tracking long Covid symptoms. ■

The campus of biotechnology firm Miltenyi Biotec.





DESTINATION COLOGNE

Business meets lifestyle

What does Cologne have that other cities don't? Four analyses from a personal perspective.

Feeling, heart and soul make up the very particular flair of Cologne, which neatly dispels supposed contradictions: Cologne is a city of millions, yet each "Veedel", or district, is like a village. Cosy corner pubs where everyone is welcome, entertain guests right next to fine-dining restaurants for gourmets. Be it Nippes, Ehrenfeld, Sülz, Südstadt or Deutz – cheerfulness and serenity are the order of the day, and not only at carnival, since "et kütt wie et kütt": what will be will be. Cologne stands for a distinctly welcoming culture, for openness and diversity, fuelled by the high proportion of students and researchers from all over the world. Here, there are colourful and diverse art, media, culture and restaurant scenes. Work and holiday merge here into a "workation"; it's a feel-good place for young people to live and work, in, a meeting point for business travellers from all over the world, and a location for young start-ups and international businesses. In short, it's a worthwhile destination for holidaymakers and foreign investors alike.

We asked Dr Stephanie Coßmann, member of the Board of Management and Workforce Director at Cologne-based speciality chemicals group LANXESS, Alexandra Barth, CMO of the HRS Group, Jean-Marc Noël, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Trusted Shops, and Felix Neugart, Managing Director of NRW.Global Business, for their personal views on Cologne.

THE INTERVIEWEE: **DR STEPHANIE COSSMANN**

has worked for LANXESS since 2004: The lawyer is a member of the executive board and is the Labour Director for the Cologne-based speciality chemicals company.



LANXESS employs around 14,200 people in 33 countries. How much of a role does location play for international workers when it comes to choosing an employer?

Cofsmann: An attractive location in a city with a high quality of life like Cologne is certainly an aspect that helps us to score points with our applicants. Lots of people already know us “by sight” – since anyone cycling along the Rhine will go past the LANXESS Tower at some point.

What are the competitive advantages of Cologne over other German cities when it comes to recruiting talent from all over the world?

As a chemical company, we benefit a great deal from the renowned research and higher-education institutions that have developed in Cologne and the surrounding area. We’ve been working successfully with the University of Cologne for years. The city is becoming a hub for start-ups, in particular – and a magnet for creative and entrepreneurially minded talent. On top of this, there’s the typical Cologne lifestyle with its mix of cosmopolitanism, tolerance and optimism – that’s a simple draw for many people.

“Very good connections.”

How do you personally rate the quality of life for young talent in Cologne?

As one of the biggest German cities, Cologne has everything young people expect from a metropolis – nightlife, culture, cuisine, top-level sport and much more. Plus there’s ample nature just a few kilometres away in the Bergisches Land or the Eifel. Cologne is also very well connected, which pays off for us as an international company, too.



THE INTERVIEWEE: **ALEXANDRA BARTH**

is CMO and heads up the Marketing Solutions Unit of all the business divisions of the HRS Group. The Cologne native joined the company back in 2011.

What are the three most important factors that make Cologne so attractive as a city for conferences and meetings?

Barth: Of course, there’s its location in the heart of Europe with outstanding connections, but the approachable nature of the locals also makes the city an ideal location for meetings and conferences. The cheerful spirit and the sights like the cathedral, the old town and top museums like the Museum Ludwig make Cologne one of Germany’s most popular city destinations.

How are the booking figures for business travellers in Cologne shaping up after the gradual loosening of coronavirus restrictions?

We are seeing that the business travel market is growing in parallel to this loosening. Cologne is benefiting from this trend as one of the top five destinations for business travel. Booking patterns and the demand

for business trips to Cologne are rising from week to week. Most specifically, in the first week of June, 80 per cent more people were in Cologne than in the last week of May.

“Art, culture and tolerance.”

HRS is headquartered in Cologne, and you are a native of the city yourself. What do you value personally about it?

What makes Cologne special and worth visiting is the interplay of different trends in art, culture, music and sport and the buzzing *joie de vivre*. The inspiring mix of creativity, openness, tolerance and continuous further development that results from this not only matches my personal approach to life, but also bridges the gap to the headquarters of HRS as the key to the global accommodation industry.





THE INTERVIEWEE: **JEAN-MARC NOËL**

founded his start-up in Cologne in 1999. By now, more than 30,000 online shops use the seal of quality awarded by Trusted Shops.

How has support for young companies in Cologne developed over the years?

Noël: Fortunately a great deal has been done – from practical support offerings and networking meetings to funding from banks and venture capital providers based here. You can't help but notice that everywhere there is a will to strengthen Cologne as a location for innovation and to develop a start-up ecosystem.

Trusted Shops employs people from 40 countries. What role does Cologne play as a location?

For our staff from all over the world, our Cologne location plays a very important role! Diversity is one of Cologne's great strengths, and that's particularly advantageous for international companies like us.

What do you think makes Cologne a great place to live?

First and foremost, it's the people. I've gotten to know so many great people; otherwise I wouldn't have stayed here. And there's the city itself, of course. I previously worked in Paris. Paris is so big and it's like a

museum. Then I came to Cologne in 1989 and grew familiar with the open, friendly lifestyle. One month later, the Berlin Wall fell. That's why I associate Cologne with the notion of freedom.

“Diversity is Cologne's strength.”



THE INTERVIEWEE: **FELIX NEUGART**

has been managing director of NRW. Global Business GmbH, the export business promotion agency for the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, since 2020.

NRW.Global Business has repositioned itself. What does that mean for export business promotion in NRW?

Neugart: With the merger, we are exploiting the synergies of the previously separate perspectives on foreign trade – attracting investors and promoting exports. We ensure a uniform presence and can both promote the state of North Rhine-Westphalia as a location at events abroad and take along NRW companies that want to develop or expand their international business there. Furthermore, we are aiming to broaden our focus to new industries and to future topics spanning

different sectors, such as digital technologies, new mobility, renewable energy and hydrogen.

How is the reorganisation of Köln-Business fostering the settlement of new companies?

We are in very close contact with the colleagues in business promotion, since we depend on each other when it comes to attracting foreign companies. We are often the companies' first port of call. We look for the right locations for them and put them in touch with the business promotion agency locally, i.e. KölnBusiness, which works with us to support them with any investment concerns they might have.

What makes Cologne so attractive for international companies?

Firstly, it's the central location and its infrastructure with the airport and Germany's second biggest inland port, but also the research and development landscape, which is among the biggest and most innovative in Europe. There are four Max Planck Institutes, for example, researching in Cologne. The third factor is the potential for skilled workers thanks to the strong higher-education landscape with around 100,000 students. What's more, Cologne is a trading and exhibition city and therefore, offers foreign investors an ideal platform.

“A business location with the feel-good factor.”

Are there topics that are currently in focus for the metropolis?

We have just welcomed the cloud-based video conference service Zoom to Cologne, which is developing its presence in Germany from here. Last year, the Japanese-Italian automobile supplier Marelli, among others, set up shop here in the vicinity of Ford, and in Cologne-Niehl, Ford is currently building a Europe-wide pilot plant for electro-mobility. ■

“COLOGNE IS LOVE”

In almost no other German city which is such a lightness,
such a cheerful sense of ease that is somehow always in the air.
A little song of praise to the city and with it, of course,
A KÖLSCH!



A very happy resident: Anna Heller, Managing Director of Brauerei Heller in Cologne.

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“Kölsch is the only language you can drink,” is what people say in Cologne, since Kölsch is not only the dialect of the cathedral city but also the locals’ drink of choice. Life without the quaffable little blond is unthinkable for them.

But why in Cologne, more than any other city in Germany, is a frothy head of beer so symbolic of an overflowing zest for life? For Anna Heller, Managing Director of the Heller brewery in Cologne’s Kwartier Latäng district, the answer’s easy.

“The locals simply incorporate it into whatever situation they are in: They sign purchase agreements over a Kölsch, they celebrate every goal their football club scores with it; it is the beer they take along with them when on the way to a party for carnival, and it’s the key element of our kiosk culture,” Heller explains. “In the breweries of Cologne, you don’t get asked what you want to drink; you automatically have a Kölsch placed in front of you, and as soon as it’s finished there’ll be another.”

Among the varieties of beer at the Cologne brewery, Anna Heller has run with her husband Stefan since 1991, there is of course Kölsch, and indeed the first and only one worldwide with an organic label. “Older, long-time locals laugh at us and would never deviate from their regular brand,” says Heller, shrugging her shoulders with a chuckle, “but generally our organic beer is well received by our guests.” And this acceptance, she says, corresponds to the friendly nature so typical of the people in her home city. The

organic brewers, who won the City of Cologne’s “Ökoprofit” seal for particularly sustainable production in 2021, are also open-minded in their relationship with the neighbouring city of Düsseldorf. Heller likewise brews Düsseldorf Altbier and demonstrates once again the typically cosmopolitan nature of the city, which remains ever curious and open to new things.

“That’s another reason why I like living here so much,” enthuses Heller, “Cologne is a big city, but it’s like a village. You’ll always meet someone you know on the next street corner,

“Typical Cologne: remaining curious and open to everything.”

and even if you’re sitting entirely on your own at the bar in one of the many pubs, you’re guaranteed not to spend the evening alone, but rather chatting with the other pub guests around you, talking nonsense, laughing.” And anyone who has already experienced this can confirm it; anybody who comes into contact with the people of this city can sense this lightness, this cheerful sense of ease, which is somehow always in the air and makes Cologne so unmistakable – no matter your age. This is precisely why even young influencers are singing its praises on Instagram: “Cologne is love”. Or, as good old Höchner put it in their singalong hit: “Hey Kölle, do bes e jeföhl ...”, Cologne, you’re a feeling! ■

