

About netzwerk nordbayern

Since 1999 the netzwerk nordbayern organizes the Northern Bavarian Business Plan Competition, one of the most successful competitions in Europe. netzwerk nordbayern's core activities are specialized services and networking forums for business entrepreneurs and growth companies in Northern Bavaria. The goal of netzwerk nordbayern is to create an effective networking platform and to provide, at no charge, a comprehensive range of services designed to promote the initiation and growth of companies.

Within its business areas of business planning, financing and training, netzwerk nordbayern offers a number of valuable support services such as seminars, coachings, access to financing and, last but not least, assistance in building up useful contacts. All services are free of charge: "No equity, no fee" is one of the key principles of the network. It is financed by public-private partnerships and is an excellent example of regional business development. netzwerk nordbayern is supported by the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology as well as a number of private business sponsors.

In addition to the activities in Northern Bavaria, netzwerk nordbayern has developed consulting projects for other regions by setting up Business Plan Competitions, Business Angel Networks (BAN) and other measures with the aim to improve entrepreneurship. These include Business Plan Competitions in Saxony and Lithuania, BAN's in Hungary and Lithuania as well as different projects for the German development organization GTZ in Mongolia and Tunisia.

Results of netzwerk nordbayern's activities

Around 2,000 teams participated in the first thirteen years of the Northern Bavarian Business Plan Competition. 528 of them started up a new business and are still active on the market. By 2012, combined revenues of these companies reached more than € 400 million, employing around 4,000 people. Almost 50 companies were already taken over by larger enterprises. € 158 million venture and business angel capital has been invested in 125 single deals, which were initiated and supported by netzwerk nordbayern.

Northern Bavarian Business Plan Competition – The learning program

Growing companies, strategic planning, business foundation, financing, growth; these are keywords in the Northern Bavarian Business Plan Competition (BPWN), which has been held annually since 1999. It targets both new entrepreneurs as well as established businesses. Reasons for participation are the planned start-up of a new company, the expansion of an existing one or the takeover of an existing family-owned business by a new management. The competition is organized in three phases. At each stage, the entry conditions are becoming progressively more demanding. Thus BPWN offers a broad range of support in writing a suitable business plan, which is then at each phase evaluated by a competent jury of senior entrepreneurs, bankers, venture capitalists, consultants, etc.

Participants benefit from the intense training program and individual coaching with regard to their specific business concepts. In addition, participants are encouraged to use the netzwerk nordbayern platform which offers events and networking opportunities on a regular basis providing ample opportunity to build up contacts with other entrepreneurs, banks, venture capitalists, consultants, or other regional institutions.

Business Angel Network – Money for rapid-growth companies

Originally formed as a pure Business Angel Network, the Business Angel netzwerk nordbayern has grown to become a universal financing platform for growth-oriented businesses. Within netzwerk nordbayern, the Business Angel Network is the first place to go for SMEs and business start-ups seeking support for financing. It facilitates the access to financing for innovative entrepreneurs in the region by a combination of private and public investors. It helps entrepreneurs to find and match up with suitable financing partners and guides them through the financing process.

netzwerk nordbayern acts as an independent and neutral agent, charging no fee, commission or other remuneration, e.g. shares. Currently, approximately 150 Business Angels, venture capitalist organizations and public investors are listed. The Business Angel netzwerk nordbayern has been active as a Member of the Board at EBAN (European Business Angels Network) since 2001.

Training by netzwerk nordbayern – Knowledge transforms the idea into a success!

In addition to assistance in planning, financing and networking, netzwerk nordbayern offers a comprehensive training program. This is targeted primarily at company founders, entrepreneurs and other decision-makers with ambitions to grow their companies. The content has been focused on four topics:

- Marketing and sales
- Business planning
- Management
- Financing

The training sessions offer a combination of business theory and praxis-oriented know-how transfer. Some of the trainings have been structured to reflect the three-phase concept of the Northern Bavarian Business Plan Competition (BPWN).

In 2010 the netzwerk nordbayern funded, together with UK based Finance South East and IBAN (Italian Business Angel Network), the Ready for Equity! Academy™ as an international provider of training for Business Angels, Entrepreneurs and professionals working in the early stage investment market.

Global Collaborations – Successful knowledge transfer helps to be one jump ahead

In 2002/2003, netzwerk nordbayern supported the local organization team of the “Sächsische Aufbau Bank” to establish the first regional, Business Plan Competition covering all industries in the German state of Saxony. The competition, called “futuresax” (www.futuresax.de), has been a big success from the start, and has developed into one of the largest regional competitions in Germany since then. The implemented concept is very similar to the Business Plan Competition in Northern Bavaria.

Till July 2005, netzwerk nordbayern established the first Business Plan Competition in Lithuania. At that time it was the very first activity of this nature in one of the new EU member states. The competition, called “Verslo plano turnyras” (www.versloturnyras.lt), is mainly organized by four regional technology parks and led by North Town technology park in the city of Vilnius. The concept follows the Northern Bavarian model in principle, but has been adapted to cope with a shorter timeframe and specific regional situations.

In 2005, on behalf of the German GTZ, netzwerk nordbayern entered in a co-operation with the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce & Industry to build up a comprehensive network (MEN – Mongolian Entrepreneurship Network) in Mongolia. MEN initiates and gives sustained support by means of intensive learning and coaching programs to the formation of ambitious Mongolian enterprise, and accelerates the growth of existing companies. The enterprises are accompanied intensely during the process of foundation and their future development. In addition co-operations between network participants – entrepreneurs, founders, investors, universities, institutions, etc. has been initiated. netzwerk nordbayern accompanied the project for two years.

In 2010, also on behalf of the GTZ, different universities in Tunisia were supported in setting-up Ideas-Contests to identify interesting business concepts. The three month project was a huge success with of over 400 participants.

Why netzwerk nordbayern matters: SME-support at its best

High-Tech-Start-ups, i.e. quickly growing, in most cases technology-oriented enterprises, have an enormous economic importance. According to various studies made by McKinsey, the net increase in jobs by start-ups during an examined 4-year period was up to 10 times higher than that of established enterprises. Regions with a large share of "young" but already very successful enterprises (turnover of > USD 50 million, not older than 10 years) showed a massively higher increase in jobs compared with other regions. Successful regions such as Silicon Valley or Route 128 in the USA have around 70% young enterprises. However, these start-ups do not only create high number of jobs above-average, in addition they create highly qualified employment. And also the investment volume is much higher than in large enterprises. Further an overall positive economic development results in additional growth and new jobs in other industries within the regions.

	Portfolio of 500 VC-financed enterprises	Fortune 500 US groups
Percentage of highly qualified employees	59	15
Ø increase in jobs	25	-3
Ø capital investments in turnover	23	7

Source: McKinsey, comparison over a period of 4 years, figures in percent

The formation and development of such enterprises requires specific know-how and outline conditions for proceeding in an ideal manner. For example specific know-how is required for determining appropriate business models, preparing business plans and accessing financing. In most cases such enterprises require financing by VC and/or private investors (business angels). The existence of an appropriate network in which founders, managers and staff of such enterprises can exchange views and ideas and are able to establish relevant contacts is of great importance.

Business Plan Competitions (BPC) are suitable instruments for the development of such know-how and contact networks. Business Plan Competitions go back to an idea developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the eighties already. Through the establishment of BPCs and in close cooperation with universities, entrepreneurial environments and investors, it was possible to promote the formation of innovative enterprises and the mobilization of economic growth potentials. In the middle of the nineties, management consultants of McKinsey & Company, Inc. brought BPCs to Europe and established competitions in Germany in Berlin, Munich and Northern Bavaria. Long-term results of BPCs are: continuous set-up of young companies in a region; rising numbers of highly qualified employment and business revenues; strengthening of economic policy and growth.

Contact

netzwerk nordbayern
 Managing Director
 Dr. Benedikte Hatz
 Neumeyerstr. 48
 D - 90411 Nuremberg, Germany
 Phone: +49 911 59724-8058
 Fax: +49 911 59724-8049
 E-mail: hatz@netzwerk-nordbayern.de
 Internet: www.netzwerk-nordbayern.de