



"115 years of HHL - 11+5 HHL faces" portraits Wolfgang Topf

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HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management, the first business school established in Germany, celebrates its 115th anniversary this year. The institution was founded in the Auditorium Maximum of Leipzig University on April 25, 1898, to train young merchants seeking to lead large companies in an appropriate manner. After World War II, it was absorbed into Leipzig University: in 1969, the GDR opened a business school with a focus on domestic trade. In 1992, today's HHL was re-established as a private university by the Leipzig Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Association of Friends of HHL.

Teaching all its programs in English, HHL has been one of the trailblazers in Germany since the mid-1990s. Long before the financial crisis, HHL was one of the first business schools to focus on the conditions for responsible and sustainable leadership.

HHL now responds to the new challenges of leadership in the 21st century through its innovate125 Future Concept, keeping in tune with a holistic approach and expanding the dimensions of effectiveness and responsibility, aided by the perspective of innovation.

On the occasion of the 115th anniversary of HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management, the school publishes the "11+5 HHL faces" series introducing personalities connected with HHL.

*** Wolfgang Topf (*1948)

As the President of the Leipzig Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Wolfgang Topf is a member of various HHL bodies. Since 2000, he has chaired the Shareholders' Meeting and served as Vice Chairman of the Supervisory Board and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Kramer Foundation of HHL. In addition to all these tasks, Wolfgang Topf commits his time to the Board of Trustees of HHL as well.

Born in Leipzig, he completed his studies at Handelshochschule Leipzig and graduated in 1973 with a degree in Economics (Diplom-Wirtschaftler).

In 1973, Wolfgang Topf, who is also a degreed civil engineer specialized in steel construction, started his career at Industriemontagen Leipzig (today IMO Leipzig GmbH). The company was privatized in 1992 (MBO and employee participation) and Wolfgang Topf became Chief Executive Officer. IMO Leipzig GmbH developed into a nationally and internationally renowned steel engineering company with currently about 300 employees.

Since May 2000, Wolfgang has been the President of the Leipzig Chamber of Industry and Commerce working in an honorary capacity. In this position, he represents the interests of about 67,000 companies in the Leipzig region. In June 2012, he was elected to the highest honorary post of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce for the fourth time in a row. As a result, he will continue to preside over the institution representing the economic interests of regional companies until 2016.

It was exactly this special interest group of the local economy, the Leipzig Chamber of Commerce, which in 1862 initiated the establishment of Germany's first commercial college. A forerunner of this innovative movement was the dual education, offered for the first time in Germany at the public commercial college in Leipzig in 1831 following an Initiative by the merchants' guild, the Kramerinnung.

The school was founded to provide adequate training for young merchants on an academic level.

It was determined that the commercial college to be founded was to be an independent organization with a senate presided over by the President of the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber agreed to furnish a financial guarantee for the new school for the first two to three years. The Leipzig Mayor as well as the Royal Saxon Ministry for Internal and Cultural Affairs and Public Education were direct supporters of the cause. When the opening of Handelshochschule was celebrated on April 25, 1898, the outcome of the "first commercial college in Germany" experiment was completely open.

Like all other German universities, Handelshochschule survived the Third Reich heavily wounded. After World War II, the school was deprived of its independence and absorbed into the University of Leipzig as a faculty. In 1969, a new Handelshochschule was founded in Leipzig, though it only dealt with domestic trade within the GDR.

After German reunification, HHL was re-established in 1992. Once again, the Leipzig Chamber of Industry and Commerce was the catalyst advocating for the establishment of present-day HHL as a private university with great determination. A driving force at the time was Hans-Dieter Manegold, the then Managing Director of the Leipzig Chamber of Industry and Commerce, who, upon the re-establishment of his institution, intensively reflected on the question of how Leipzig with all its historical foundations and the structures of the early 1990s could be integrated successfully in the economic region of Central Germany. The business school as part of the unique identity of Leipzig as a trade fair city was at the center of ideas. However, according to a draft of the Saxon University and College Act dated May 1991, there was no more room for HHL as a state-run institution in the future academic landscape of the Free State of Saxony. Talks at Witten/Herdecke University and the University of St. Gallen (HSG) in Switzerland encouraged Manegold to promote the re-establishment of HHL as a private university. He actively advocated his plans with the then Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Kurt Biedenkopf as well as State Minister Prof. Dr. Hans Joachim Meyer. Moreover, he succeeded in convincing the still new Executive Committee of the Leipzig Chamber of Industry and Commerce with its President Dr. Rudolf Sommerlatt of his ideas. On October 2, 1992, the "new" Handelshochschule HHL with its two shareholders, the Leipzig Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Association of Friends of HHL, was entered into the Commercial Register. Later, the newly-founded Kramer Foundation was added as a third shareholder.

Wolfgang Topf is glad about the positive development of HHL over the last few years. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the re-establishment of HHL in 2012, he said: "As one of the shareholders, we congratulate HHL on making an excellent name for itself in the national and international research landscape. We would also like to seize this opportunity to thank all those contributing to this successful development - that mainly includes the Free State of Saxony, the chair donors, cooperation partners as well as further individuals. For the future, we wish the university dedicated students so that we will see even more future executives and successful start-ups for the Leipzig economic region."

*** HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management

HHL is a university-level institution and ranks amongst the leading international Business Schools. The goal of the longest standing business school in German-speaking Europe is to educate effective, responsible and entrepreneurially minded leaders. In addition to HHL's international focus the combination of theory and practice plays a key role. HHL stands out for its excellent teaching, its clear research focus, its effective knowledge transfer into practice as well as its outstanding student services. The school offers an 24-month full-time as well as part-time Master program in Management leading to the degree Master of Science (M.Sc.) and also an 18 month Global Executive MBA. HHL's program is complemented by the two-year

Euro*MBA-Program, a program based on e-learning (electronically supported learning). A three-year doctoral program, which can be studied part-time as well, completes HHL's courses of study. The department of Executive Education offers company specific and open training programs for advanced education for specialist and leading positions. HHL received the accreditation of AACSB International in April 2004 and was the first German private school to be re-accredited in April 2009. <http://www.hhl.de>

<http://www.hhl.de/115years/wolfgang-topf/>
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Die HHL ist eine universitäre Einrichtung und zählt zu den führenden internationalen Business Schools. Ziel der ältesten betriebswirtschaftlichen Hochschule im deutschsprachigen Raum ist die Ausbildung leistungsfähiger, verantwortungsbewusster und unternehmerisch denkender Führungspersönlichkeiten. Neben der internationalen Ausrichtung spielt die Verknüpfung von Theorie und Praxis eine herausragende Rolle. Die HHL zeichnet sich aus durch exzellente Lehre, klare Forschungsorientierung und praxisnahen Transfer sowie hervorragenden Service für ihre Studierenden.
www.hhl.de

Anlage: Bild



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GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF MANAGEMENT

115 Years
11+5 Faces