IZET
Innovationszentrum Itzehoe
The future starts here.

TRAIN-IT®

Success Stories

Turning technology into business:
Business plan training for start-ups and SMEs
in Information Society Technologies 2000-2003

www.izet.de

The Challenge

TRAIN-IT

"TRAIN-IT drives commercial exploitation of IST results"

Dr. Ingo Hussla, Director, Gesellschaft für Technologieförderung Itzehoe mbH

www.train-it.org

TRAIN-IT addresses an ongoing challenge uniting technologists worldwide: **how to turn technology into business.**

Research and Development activities continuously generate an excellent output of innovative technologies, new solutions, services and products. However, the initiative to turn such potential into commercial activities is all too rarely taken due to insufficient business knowledge and lack of competent advice. The key to the transfer of technology into business is hands-on training and coaching in **business planning.**

The TRAIN-IT concept of **six-day training courses in business plan writing** was first initiated by Gesellschaft für Technologieförderung Itzehoe mbH in 1997. The Gesellschaft manages IZET Innovationszentrum Itzehoe, venue of the TRAIN-IT courses. In a pilot activity funded by the European Commission, a special curriculum for technological entrepreneurs was developed and implemented in a series of courses.

A follow-on project was won in the IST Information Society Technologies Programme of the European Commission: the IST Programme Accompanying Measure TRAIN-IT, which ran for 36 months from September 2000 to August 2003. Prime objective of TRAIN-IT was to facilitate the commercial exploitation of IST research and development project results.

15 business plan training courses were conducted, based on the proven TRAIN-IT curriculum and supported by a **pool of 41 international experts.**

The results of this activity are presented in this brochure.

TRAIN-IT Course

The content of the TRAIN-IT course revolves around central business planning issues, which are specifically prepared to fit the informational needs of technologists:

- Business strategies and business models
- Market research and competitive analysis
- Financing strategies and options
- Marketing and sales
- Financial planning
- Intellectual property rights and patent issues

The TRAIN-IT course is taught in a combination of training modules: **lectures, individual coaching** and **business plan writing sessions.**

Additionally, participants are challenged to deliver their business offer in the form of an **elevator pitch:** a one-minute presentation which is optimised in video analysis-based coaching.

The six-day course is completed by a **follow-up support** phase accompanying the participants in the finalisation and implementation of their business plans. This includes business plan evaluation as well as mediation of contacts to investors and business partners.

Specifically developed **TRAIN-IT course materials and equipment** support participants during and beyond the training week:

- Business Plan Guidelines and Template
- Elevator Pitch Guidelines
- Internet links for entrepreneurs
- Glossary of business terms
- Entrepreneurship library
- PC training facilities

EURO TRAINING

TRAIN-IT received the
EuroTraining Quality Label
2001-2003

TRAIN-IT 2000-2003

The 15 TRAIN-IT courses hosted 156 participants (20,5% female) from 22 countries. The participants developed 133 business cases in Information Society Technologies.

Number of participants per country

Germany	46
Italy	18
UK	14
Spain	13
Greece	10
Iceland	8
Austria, France, Netherlands	6 each
Belgium, Portugal, Romania, Russia	4 each
Czech Republic	3
Poland, Switzerland	2 each
Finland, Hungary, Macedonia, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden	1 each

Technology sectors represented

Software tool development	22%
Communication, telematics, logistics	16%
Internet platforms & services	15%
Multimedia	10%
Software consultancy	8%
Microsystem technologies	8%
e-learning	8%
Life sciences & medicine	6%
e-business & e-commerce	5%
Technology transfer	2%

In a survey conducted end of 2003, participants were asked to comment on the status of finalisation and realisation of their business plans.

Three types of business plan realisation were considered:
- Start-up of a new company
- Spin-off of a new company from an existing business or academic institution
- Intrapreneurial activities: expansion or enhancement of an existing business through innovatory steps taken inside the business, e.g. introduction of a new product line to the market or setting-up of a new department.

Results and Benefits

The results reflect an anticipated rate of 85% regarding business plan completion and realisation. 90% of the successful business cases took advantage of the TRAIN-IT follow-up support. The good turnout proves the sustained effect of TRAIN-IT training and follow-up, which ensures that the task of business plan writing is carried out and carried through to realisation of the plan.

TRAIN-IT achievements
(status: December 2003)

58 business plans
36 start-ups and spin-offs
16 intrapreneurship cases

Total outcome
(expected by 2005)

114 business plans
69 start-ups and spin-offs
45 intrapreneurship cases

TRAIN-IT advantages

- Best practice business planning support based on a proven training curriculum
- Intensive and focused six-day workshop in a business environment
- Hands-on support and follow-up conducted through the TRAIN-IT expert network: unlimited access to key experts
- Individual coaching providing a sounding board for specific challenges and solutions
- Access to sources of financing and mediation of business contacts

TRAIN-IT benefits

- Verification of business viability in the early stage, allowing corrective steps based on expert advice: saving time and money
- Encouragement from fellow entrepreneurs and TRAIN-IT alumni, feeding back experiences and offering peer support
- Becoming part of an international network of entrepreneurs and experts

The following pages present a selection of 16 TRAIN-IT start-ups, spin-offs and SMEs, illustrating the impact of TRAIN-IT activities on entrepreneurial success.

Condias GmbH

Background

Matthias Fryda and Thorsten Matthée participated in the TRAIN-IT course in November 2000. At the time, they were employed as research team leaders at Fraunhofer IST Institute for Surface Engineering and Thin Films in Braunschweig, Germany and involved in several ESPRIT projects.

"The full TRAIN-IT support enabled us to accelerate our business planning and realisation and move forward at optimal speed."

CVD Chemical Vapour Deposition Machine in the CONDIAS production plant
©pictures by hirseweb

Business idea - start-up - achievements

A unique and innovative technology, DIACHEM® conductive diamond electrodes, was developed in co-operation between Fraunhofer IST and CSEM, the Swiss Center for Electronics and Microtechnology. DIACHEM electrodes exhibit prize-awarded innovative advantages with regard to water treatment, electrochemical synthesis and special galvanic applications.

Based on the innovative technology developed, the two founders decided to start-up CONDIAS GmbH to further develop, produce and sell diamond coated electrodes for industrial applications. Through TRAIN-IT support, a business plan was written and a contact was made to a business angel who mediated an **investment combinaton of EUR 2.5 million** from public venture capital and bank funds. Fraunhofer ISIT Institute for Silicon Technology provided access to its low-cost electricity resources, which led to a site decision in favour of Hightech Itzehoe.

CONDIAS GmbH was founded in August 2001. A new production plant was opened together with Solid Energy GmbH in June 2002. CONDIAS are fully operational and **expect to grow from 8 employees to 25 by 2006**.

CONDIAS won the **Schmidt-Römhild Technology Prize 2003** for the pioneering capacity of their diamond coated electrodes to disintegrate toxic substances in water: use of diamond electrodes in industrial waste-water will efficiently destroy any harmful organic substances - oils, lubricants, germs or hormones. This process is enabled through hydroxyl radicals - molecules, which evolve when water is split up by the diamond electrode. In addition to industrial applications, CONDIAS also manufacture bespoke diamond coated devices on customer demand. The prominent property of these particular electrodes is the high overvoltage for oxygen evolution which they exhibit.

Customer benefits are a high current efficiency and a potential for new processes resulting in cost reduction and innovative applications.

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Future outlook

First international partners are won and CONDIAS are on the right track to pursue their aim of world-wide leadership in diamond electrodes.

www.train-it.org

WORNEX International SRL

Background

Alfredo Cotroneo took part in the TRAIN-IT course in November 2000 to write a business plan for the future activities of NEXUS-International Broadcasting Association. At the time, NEXUS-IBA were facing what they called "the nice problem": due to overwhelming sales of their product WorldDirector, the non-profit company had to find a for-profit business solution. NEXUS-IBA was associate partner in the IST project DEMOS - Delphi Mediation On-line System (IST-1999-20530).

Business idea - spin-off - future

NEXUS-IBA was founded in 1990 and developed the WorldDirector technology in 1995. From 1999 onwards, WorldDirector was met with increasing demand. The opportunity which arose was to spin-out a for-profit company.

In the TRAIN-IT follow-up phase, a review of the business plan and business model was conducted and an adaptation to market changes was prepared. In May 2001, WORNEX International SRL was founded. The company is based on self-financing through product sales.

WorldDirector is an Enhanced Content Delivery Network (E-CDN) and provides hardware and software to enhance network and server side connectivity. It offers several strategically located parallel servers solving network congestion, increasing download speed and bandwidth costs. WorldDirector is a modular product: offered as service, it may also include content acceleration by HTTP compression, virus and worm protection, and global load balancing. Further, it may be used to provide an inexpensive solution to disaster recovery and bundled to provide several Internet services, such as hosting, housing, audio and video streaming. As WORNEX put it, **"World Director is to the Internet as bypass surgery is to the heart: a fast, easy and reliable way around harmful congestion"**.

WORNEX have served over 300 domains so far. 90% of their customers are outside Italy and include Swiss banks and financial institutions, B2B and B2C e-commerce applications, online event management for large corporations, media companies portals and multimedia streaming.
WORNEX have been **profitable since day one.**
Currently employing three people, WORNEX aim to **create 7 new jobs** over the next 3 years. In parallel, they expect to increase their annual revenue from EUR 500,000 to EUR 3.5m.

"TRAIN-IT help and support contributed in producing a good business plan, which was certainly one of the reasons for our nomination for the IST prize."

IST Prize
nominee 2003

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Certimeter s.r.l.

"TRAIN-IT was an extremely useful and practical experience, it helped us transform ideas into a company."

Background

Francesco Bergadano took part in the TRAIN-IT course in February 2001. He joined the course to write a business plan for the start-up of a new company based on the ESPRIT project ILP2 (project no. 20237). At this point he had already filed relevant patent applications. In particular, he wished to learn about deriving financial figures for his business plan.

Business plan - start-up - company activities

Based on continued follow-up support through TRAIN-IT experts, Francesco Bergadano finalised his business plan. He was able to win the University of Turin as well as the Italian Business Angels Networks founder CentroSviluppo S.p.a. as shareholders. He started and gradually expanded business activities for Certimeter. The company was eventually founded in July 2003 as a spin-off from the University of Turin.

With their slogan **"We count on the Web"**, Certimeter provide certification and analysis of web access data: web access statistics, certified access counts, certified web logging, web usage analysis and consulting, access control, verified online polls and voting. Target customers are online newspapers, portals and web content providers, adservers, public administration, online banking and trading.

Certimeter received a grant of EUR 50,000 from the Province of Milan, co-financing development expenses for their web traffic certification project. Furthermore, they obtained a grant to support the development of an online poll system with advanced security features demonstrated at www.certimeter.com/poll.

Future

Certimeter expect to **create 8-10 new jobs within the next 3 years**, mainly employing computer science graduates and young computer specialists. They target EUR 500,000 in revenues within the next 3 years.

In the future, they plan to expand their business to online polls with lightweight security properties, information and system security, and web application consulting and integration.

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efm-systems GmbH

Background

Gerd Bauer took part in the TRAIN-IT course in February 2001. He joined the course to write a business plan for the start-up of a new company based on an innovative approach: the toolkit-style production of micro-technical parts and customer-specific microsystems. He has a background in the IST project EU-Network Adhesives.
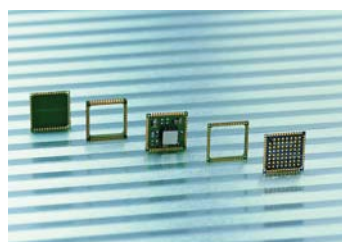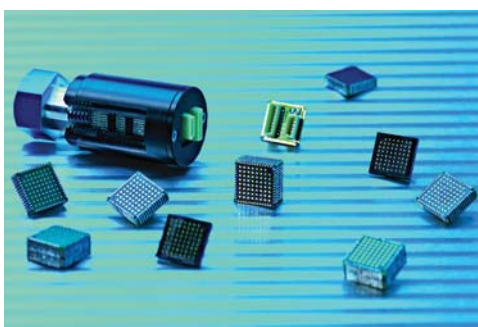
Start-up a - company activities - future plans

Following his participation in the TRAIN-IT course, Gerd Bauer started-up **two interconnected companies**: Mikrosystemhaus Bauer, founded in May 2001, is a privately owned engineering office developing microtechnological modules and miniaturised systems. efm-systems GmbH, founded in April 2002, is a distribution company marketing and selling the products of Mikrosystemhaus Bauer as well as other companies.

The efm-systems toolkit allows construction of products covering a large scale of functionalities and usabilities. Based on prefabricated modules, efm-systems build customised products and complete systems. All of these follow the Match-X principle and are therefore standardised, guaranteeing compatibility with modules from other makers. Clear **customer benefits** are the high variability due to easy combination, quick availability even in small quantities, short development time-span and low costs, easy use and robust casing, and high compatibility.

In their toolkit catalogue, efm-systems offer a diversity of around 30 microtechnological parts. This includes miniaturised connectable temperature assessment units as well as the efm-kit for practical education targeting universities and polytechnics, R&D laboratories etc.

efm-systems currently employ a team of four. They plan to **create 6 further jobs** within the next 3 years and are particularly seeking electronic developers. Gerd Bauer intends to grow his companies organically on revenue only. Their expected revenue for 2004 is EUR 300,000. With their customer-specific Microsystems efm-systems endeavour to become niche market leader.

"The TRAIN-IT course was greatly profitable, especially the cross-referencing effects of getting feedback from different experts. Very helpful in structuring the planning and start-up preparation stage."
(Gerd Bauer, second from right)

For their innovative production model, efm-systems won second prize in the StartUp competition of the state of Baden Wuerttemberg in May 2003.
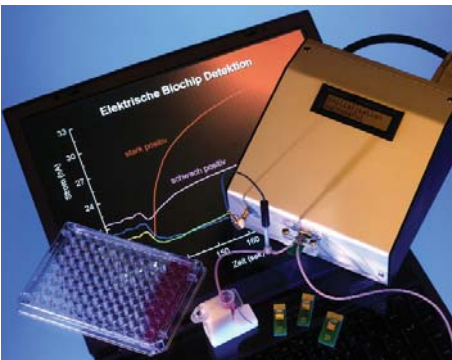

efm kit (left)
and module structure (above)

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eBiochip Systems GmbH

"TRAIN-IT helped us focus on our business strategy."

Background

eBiochip Systems joined the TRAIN-IT course in May 2001 to write a business plan for the company, founded in late 2000 as a spin-off from Fraunhofer ISIT Institute for Silicon Technology in Itzehoe. Their aim was to push forward innovative products and launch them on the market.

Company activities

eBiochip Systems develop and manufacture highly competitive biosensor systems based on electrical biochips made in silicon technology. The electrical detection principle enables the construction of portable and highly sensitive biosensor systems. Affinity binding biomolecules like DNA, proteins or small molecules are targeted. The flexible biosensor platform can be adapted to a variety of assay formats using microarray biochips for multi-parallel detection.

The electrical biochips are produced in the cleanroom of Fraunhofer ISIT, suitable for low cost industrial production enabling new innovative applications for biosensors.

eBiochip conduct R&D for big industry, as well as analytic solutions for SMEs. They are devoted to offering the best possible service in:
- Development of fully electrical biosensor devices
- Design and manufacturing of highly sensitive ultra-microelectrode arrays in Si-technology
- Loading of sensor arrays with nucleic acid or protein affinity binding probes (on-demand spotting)
- Surface chemistry of the biointerfaces and adaptation to analytical applications
- Packaging of chips and integration into fluidic systems
- Adaptation of fluidic handling components (e.g. valves, mixers, flow cells, reservoirs) to customer needs
- Software development for user interfaces, evaluation and visualisation of data

Electrical biochip detector

Future plans

Currently employing 6 people, eBiochip plan to **create a further 4 jobs** over the next 3 years. Accordingly, eBiochip´s annual revenue is expected to increase from currently EUR 500,000 to EUR 1-2m over the next 3 years.

eBiochip´s future plans are to develop products with low density electrical biochip arrays and devices for identification of harmful microorganisms, bioweapons and drugs.

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DNV Maritime Partner AS

DNV Maritime Partner AS

Background

Peik Jenssen participated in the TRAIN-IT course in September 2001. He works for Det Norske Veritas DNV and joined the TRAIN-IT course with the purpose of developing a DNV spin-off company. DNV was involved in the project MARVIN - Maritime Virtual Enterprise Network (ESPRIT 29049).

Business idea - spin-off - future plans

From the project-based R&D work, an innovative product idea arose, which was to be exploited commercially. For this purpose, the spin-off company DNV Maritime Partner AS was founded in January 2003.

The company´s main product DNV Navigator is a computer-based tool used onboard ships to help the Master and his deck officers clear in and out of ports. It contains a database with relevant national and port information, report forms and checklists specific for each port. The tool automatically produces reports on paper or as e-mail attachment. DNV Navigator thus relieves the workload of the bridge team, secures ship operation and safety, and reduces costs and risk. The Arrival and Departure checklists are unique to this tool. The system is regularly being updated via CD, distributed four times a year.

"TRAIN-IT participation helped me understand what is important in selling a business idea. It also helped me gain momentum in my process and to find the break through point."

The next step in product development is implementation of a new technology for data integration, through which data can automatically be loaded to the database via XML e-mail attachment. The reports produced onboard the vessels can automatically be loaded into port or other shore based systems.

DNV Maritime Partner currently employ a team of eight, which they plan to **increase by 10-15 people** over the next three years. The company has **sold 150 licences** so far and aims at hitting the 1000 mark in 2005. Until 2006, the annual turnover is expected to increase from EUR 0.5m to EUR 2m.

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Centrica srl

Roberto Fargion, Marketing Director of Il Sole 24 Ore, hands over the Prize to Marco Cappellini (right)

"Participation in TRAIN-IT helped think through the various aspects of the business. It surely accelerated the process of writing. I have felt supported from morning to evening and I have brought in my mind suggestions and enthusiasm which I still take advantage of."

IST Prize
nominee 2004

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Background

Centrica srl was founded in June 1999. Marco Cappellini, CEO of Centrica, took part in the TRAIN-IT course in November 2001. He needed a business plan to push forward the young start-up and introduce a new product to the market. Centrica have been involved in several European R&D projects, such as the IST project TRADEX - Trial Action for Digital Object Exchange (IST-1999-21031), which supported the development of their products.

Business idea - products - activities and achievements

Centrica started out as a service activity in web and multimedia development and digital imaging, mainly in the cultural heritage sector and in territory valorisation. On this basis Centrica developed their proprietary image server XLimage®. Unique features of XLimage are enabling very high resolution images over Intranet/Internet and 3G mobile networks (GPRS, UMTS), and integrating IPR management through digital watermarking.

In November 2003 Centrica received the **Prize for Premio Impresa e Cultura (Enterprise and Culture Prize) from Il Sole 24 Ore**, the most important economic newspaper in Italy and one of the most important in Europe.

XLimage is being acquired and adopted by strategic companies and government agencies in Italy like Scala Group, Fratelli Alinari, Uffizi Gallery, A.C. Milan, Tuscany Region, ICCD, National Library in Florence. **The image server is a reference technology for Internet imaging in Europe**, being the technological basis for many European projects.
Centrica proved XLimage potential also in 2,5G environment (GPRS) with mobile operator WIND and Tuscany Region - a prototype is available at www.imageflorence.com. Through active EU project involvement, Centrica have established a network of international potential customers. First non-Italian customer is the Royal Library in Brussels.

During 2003 Centrica have pursued imaging software development with the product XLspider®, a software agent for retrieval of images via the Internet, and XLphoto, a software for management of collection of images on a web site. Centrica are thus boosting their offer in the digital imaging area with a combination of services and products to provide to its customers a complete path for a digital presence in Internet.

Future plans

Centrica aim to become a major player in Internet imaging software with EUR 2m turnover in 2006 (EUR 550,000 in 2004, 1m in 2005) and an exit perspective of acquisition by a larger company.

Currently employing 7 people, Centrica expect to create two further jobs in 2004 (one commercial and one technical), and to reach the number of 12 employees in 2006.

MYconsult GmbH

Background

Stephan Kassanke and Markus Toschläger participated in the TRAIN-IT course in February 2002. They brought with them a first business plan draft to be verified with the help of TRAIN-IT experts. At University of Paderborn, Germany, they had developed their business idea as a result of their Ph.D. research and of practical experiences in conducting IT consulting projects. They were involved in the IST project "OR-World - Learning and Teaching Operations Research and Management Science (OR/MS) with a Web based Hypermedia Learning Environment" (IST-1999-11124).

Business plan - start-up - services

Through the support given in the TRAIN-IT course the founders were able to refine their business model and business strategy. MYconsult was registered as a GmbH (limited company) in July 2003 and has so far been self-financed and supported through co-operation with the University of Paderborn. Customers have been acquired from the university environment, and first reference projects are available.

MYconsult provide **consulting services for managing and realising IT projects in SMEs.** Typical projects deal with the introduction of IT and the transformation of the data processing landscape in an enterprise. Such IT projects are highly complex, as successful introduction or modernisation of IT needs to be based on a comprehensive analysis and re-organisation of basic business processes. Controlling this complexity requires an intensive application of manifold project management mechanisms. MYconsult faces this problem with an extensive and coherent services and product portfolio consisting of four complementary segments: **project management, methodological consulting, project realisation, and training.**

If requested, MYconsult take over the project management for ongoing projects in SMEs, including the co-ordination of network partners. As an accompanying asset MYconsult offer a wide range of methodological consulting trough all project phases, helping SMEs to generally manage the often unfamiliar challenges related to IT projects. Moreover, MYconsult realise IT projects focusing on re-organisational aspects and requirements analysis, which are a prerequisite for finding an appropriate IT solution.

To create real added value for SMEs, the portfolio is complemented by customer specific trainings that ensure efficient knowledge transfer to the SMEs. All of these segments are supported by tools based on latest web technologies that have been developed and evaluated in the IST project activities.

Future plans

MYconsult have one employee and plan to **create 5-8 jobs** in the first five years. They plan to expand the existing network of experts from inside and outside the university and will focus on the current and future challenges for SME that will arise from the continuing globalisation of the economy.

"TRAIN-IT provided a creative atmosphere to reflect on our business idea and to specify it in our business plan. The experts´ feedback encouraged us to realise this plan." (Stephan Kassanke, left)

Together with their colleague Yvonne Groening, the three founders build an excellent management team with common competences in consultancy, as well as complementary competences in latest information technologies, human resources development and training.

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mimori technology group

Background
Marc Mausch participated in the TRAIN-IT course in February 2002 to write a business plan for a start-up company. Based on the IST project SABRINA - Secure Authentication by a Biometric Rationale and Integration into Network Applications (IST-2000-26273), he and his collaborators had developed a biometrical authentication methodology which they sought to commercialise.

Start-up and company activities
Marc Mausch founded mimori technology group in January 2003 from private resources. The company is going to be registered as a GmbH in the near future.

Mimori technology group are active in information/mobile technology and e-government solutions. Their focus is on Internet security, especially authentication issues, with a software on e/m-voting and a database access software. Their unique selling points are higher security and an integrated view of online and offline environment.

Future plans
mimori anticipate an annual turnover of up to EUR 300,000 developing over the next 3 years. In parallel, they see a potential for creation of 5-10 jobs.

Their envisaged market position is that of edge end visionary.

Investment offer
Partnerships with Sun Microsystems and Alcatel are to be signed shortly. mimori technology group are currently seeking EUR 700,000 venture capital.

"TRAIN-IT added a lot of valuable contacts to my database"

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Gentleware AG

Background

Marko Boger took part in the TRAIN-IT course in April 2002. He joined the course to write a new business plan in order to win a second round of investment for his company Gentleware AG. This spin-off from Hamburg University was founded in June 2000 and incorporated in November 2000. Marko Boger and his team have a background in IST related international projects, notably the open source project ArgoUML from which their business idea developed.

Company activities

Gentleware provide software modelling tools for Unified Modelling Language (UML). Their product Poseidon for UML has been **installed worldwide in over 500,000 cases** and is established as one of the world´s leading UML CASE tools.

Next to the free Community Edition, Gentleware offer a range of product formats - standard, professional, embedded - available via their website. Poseidon for UML´s particular customer benefit is the unique usability of its products. It enables software developers to graphically visualise the structure of a software and directly generate the programming code, decisively simplifying software maintenance and documentation. Gentleware further provide know-how transfer through training and consulting as well as development of bespoke systems for their customers. Gentleware´s strategy relies on internationality, organic growth and high-end products at low prices. Their business model has successfully enforced a step-by-step market penetration.

Business plan and investment

Following course participation and iterative business plan checks with the TRAIN-IT team, Gentleware´s business plan was ready for investors in August 2002.

TRAIN-IT expert Marc-Michael Braun, Investment Manager from the VC company Dr. Neuhaus Techno Nord, took Marko Boger under his wings, developing a strong partnership. In mid-2003, Gentleware received an **investment of over EUR 1.6m** from Dr. Neuhaus Techno Nord.

As success factors leading to the investment, Marc-Michael Braun names the innovative product, a solid customer base, steady revenue and an exceptional management with an excellent network. Gentleware are now striving for leadership in automatic software generation and software modelling tools.

Future

Currently working with a team of 24, Gentleware plan to create six further jobs in 2004. Gentleware´s current annual revenue is EUR 550,000. With a growth rate of 60% per quarter in 2003, Gentleware can reckon with a further steady increase of revenues.

"TRAIN-IT course participation was an excellent preparation for our search for financing options."

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![ConfigWorks - e-focus on your customers' needs]

ConfigWorks
Informationssysteme & Consulting GmbH

Background
Markus Zanker took part in the TRAIN-IT course in April 2002. He joined the course to write a business plan for a university spin-off to market an innovative technology. In particular, he sought to learn about how to assess market size and competitor situation in a young, developing market. The company ConfigWorks evolved out of the IST project CAWICOMS - Customer-Adaptive Web Interface for the Configuration of Products and Services with Multiple Suppliers (IST-1999-10688).

Start-up and company activities
ConfigWorks GmbH was founded in March 2003. The company is a spin-off from University of Klagenfurt, currently incubated in the academic start-up centre BUILD!.

ConfigWorks provide e-sales advisor systems, supporting businesses in transforming their corporate sales knowledge into personalised handling and servicing of customers via various distribution channels - the Web, sales force, branch offices and call centre. The **innovative "virtual sales consultant"**, enabled by the CW AdvisorTM software, guides online customers through the product selection process, facilitating decision support and significantly increasing e-commerce success. The software is based on artificial intelligence methodologies and has been awarded with the international **TOPCALL Innovation Prize** and the **Innovation Prize of the state of Carinthia** (Kärnten) in 2003. ConfigWorks is further nominated for the Austrian state Prize for Innovation 2004.

"The TRAIN-IT workshop confirmed us in moving forward with our business idea and provided us with valuable contacts for developing our business plan and convincing first reference customers."

Mortimer, the virtual advisor "employed" by a cigar company

Present and future
Initial financing of EUR 150,000 was provided through the founding members. Having launched their first product on the market in 2003, ConfigWorks expect to start generating revenue in their second year, increasing from an anticipated EUR 150,000 to EUR 400,000 in year 3.

ConfigWorks currently employ a team of 5 and expect to **create 15 jobs** over the next 3 years.

ConfigWorks aim to become a specialised solution provider for virtual advisor systems and market leader in German speaking countries. They have made an excellent start with key customers won in Austria and Switzerland. They have a co-operation partner in Munich and are now **seeking reference customers in Germany.**

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Duplicon

Background

Martin Mißfeldt took part in the TRAIN-IT course in April 2002. He planned the start-up of a new company out of an existing one which was facing bankruptcy. Trusting in his own competence as well as the know-how and customer contacts established in his former company, Martin Mißfeldt joined the course as an employee and left it as an entrepreneur.

Start-up and company activities

Duplicon was founded in June 2002. Martin Mißfeldt established Duplicon as a privately owned company without external financing and runs it through profits. He plans to grow his company organically, considering a limited company formation at a later point. Duplicon´s focus is regional, as Martin Mißfeldt believes in proximity to his customers. He is striving towards expansion within Northern Germany.

Duplicon is a **full-service e-culture multimedia provider**. Focused on presenting cultural content, they develop and produce multimedia art.

Sample references are:

- Digital Gallery for Gemäldegalerie Berlin: visitor information system
- "The Legend of the Life of Buddha" for the Museum of Indian Art Berlin: visitor information system (POI) and CD-ROM
- "The Codex Leicester by Leonardo da Vinci" for Museum der Dinge Berlin: website **www.odranoel.de**
- "The Federal Programme" for Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz: website and CD-ROM **www.foederales-programm.de**

Present and future

Duplicon have an excellent reputation and are in the lucky position that customers recommend them by word of mouth. In their business strategy, Duplicon are pursuing a clear profile in transfer of cultural content and expecting stronger investments in this sector from cultural institutions in the future. Out of the projects on which they currently work, they aim to develop long-term maintenance contracts.

Duplicon currently employ three freelancers, one of them long-term. They expect to raise their annual revenue from EUR 80,000 to EUR 150,000 over the next three years.

"The decisive learning achievement was that TRAIN-IT enabled me to view my own business through the eyes of a competitor or a customer.
This perspective vision has become the basis of business decisions taking us forward."

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Expertys Solutions SARL

"The TRAIN-IT programme was of much help to me as I believe that, given the general European sceptic and conservative mentality, it is a very good way to create incentives for entrepreneurs to go ahead with their plan."
(Erwin Feldhaus, CEO, left)

Background

Erwin Feldhaus participated in the TRAIN-IT course in June 2002. At the time, he was Managing Director of Ekmai Technologies Ltd and already had experiences co-founding a company. He was involved in the IST project ACKNOWNET - Active Knowledge Manager Using Dynamic Self-Modifying Knowledge Models (IST-2001-32533).

Business idea - start-up - company activities

Erwin Feldhaus came to the course with the concrete purpose to start-up a new company, seeking independence in his professional work. Within a week of course participation, he had finalised the first draft of his business plan. He states that "TRAIN-IT provided a very good environment to concentrate on doing the task. There was a collaborative `climate´ that helped challenge ideas and make the business plan more robust".

Expertys Solutions SARL was founded in November 2002 by Erwin Feldhaus and two partners who invested the necessary seed money to get the business started. The company provides IT-centric process and knowledge management services as well as general and project management expertise. With their holistic approach, Expertys help client organisations to better understand their internal and external business processes by efficiently identifying, preparing and exploiting valuable information that is generally kept in often unrelated corporate IT systems and databases but which is seldom utilised due to the difficulties that this entails. Expertys´ clients belong to different industrial and service sectors.

Currently, Expertys employ a team of five and have an expected annual turnover of EUR 700,000 in 2004 and up to EUR 1.2m in 2005.
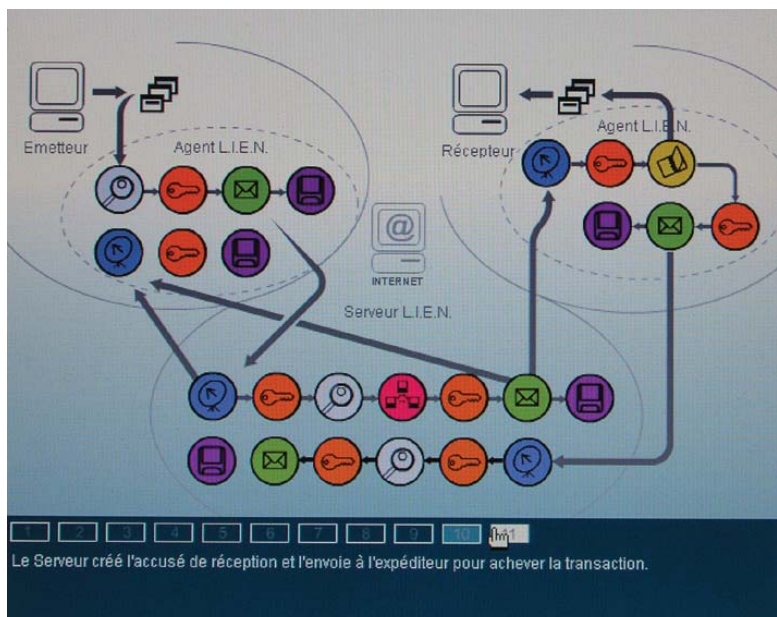
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LIEN Lightweight Inter-Enterprise Integrator, a tool for secure electronic exchange of documents

www.train-it.org

ESTeam AB

Background

Gudrun Magnusdottír participated in the TRAIN-IT course in July 2002. She is the CEO of ESTeam AB, founded in 1995 in Sweden, and joined the training to write a business plan to market their product ESTeam Translator®. ESTeam AB was involved in the IST project MUMIS - Multimedia Indexing and Searching Environment (IST-1999-10651).

Business idea - intrapreneurial activities - future

ESTeam Translator® is a multilingual translation software product, which integrates Translation Memory (TM) and Machine Translation (MT) technology to produce a full translation in one or multiple languages. The MT already supports translations in any direction between all the European Union languages and Norwegian. The ESTeam Translator is unique on the market, due to its technology, language coverage and customisability. The product and its innovative aspect is subject of an IDC Report and was nominated for the IST Prize 2004.

"I would like to thank the IZET team for great work, and I hope that many more people can benefit from their knowledge as I did, even after years in business. I had serious doubts about my skills as a business women, being a researcher at heart, and I got very good advice and great support at the TRAIN-IT course."

Gudrun Magnusdottir (centre) with ESTeam colleagues at the LangTech Conference in Berlin 2002

IST Prize
nominee 2004

ESTeam AB have been funding their development from sales and currently have their second product on the market. They have already won large clients such as the EU, Olympics 2004 and Thompson Corporation. Their aim is to win further large clients and become market leader in corporate translation software. The small global budget in translation tools is currently estimated at EUR 30m. ESTeam AB expect an annual turnover of EUR 2m over the next three years.

Currently working with 15 employees, CEO Gudrun Magnusdottír estimates that staff may be doubled within the next two years.

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DES

Decision Engineering Solutions Ltd

Background

Rajkumar Roy took part in the TRAIN-IT course in November 2002 in order to prepare the spin-out of a new company from the Decision Engineering research group at Cranfield University. In particular, he wanted to learn about business modelling, business skills and financing. Rajkumar Roy realised the great potential for commercialisation of their new tools and techniques for cost engineering, process optimisation and knowledge sharing. He further recognised the benefits of a commercial activity: increased motivation for the researchers, creation of additional revenues for Cranfield University and the transfer of Cranfield´s intellectual property into industry.

Cranfield has been involved in the IST project EUNITE - European Network of Intelligent Technologies for Smart Adaptive Systems (IST-2000-29207).

Start-up - products and customers

The company DES was set up in September 2003 to market a portfolio of decision and cost engineering tools and services:

- DECIDE-Cost was specifically developed for SMEs of up to 250 people.
- DECIDE-Info is a web based service that will provide data and information to cost estimators in bigger companies.
- DECIDE-Associates is a loosely coupled network of cost estimators from industry available for short term contracts.

Customer benefits of DES products are: user friendliness, specialisation of cost databases for each type of engineering and integration with leading ERP and accounting systems.

Present and future

DES have won first champion customers. Currently supported by Cranfield University, DES expect to achieve positive cashflow by the end of their third year after foundation. In parallel, DES plan to **create five new jobs** in sales and product development. Eventually, they aim to become market leader in the field of cost engineering software.

As part of the new EU-funded project V-CES Virtual Cost Engineering Studio conducted in co-operation with IZET, it is planned to set up a **subsidiary of DES in Itzehoe, Germany.**

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Axetel Consulting

Background

Eduard Tric and Elena Zvarici took part in the TRAIN-IT course in February 2003. They needed a business plan to push forward Axetel which had been started up in 1997, and to prepare the marketing of a new open source software developed in the IST project EUPKI - European Libre Software Public Key Infrastructure (IST-2001-34340). They brought with them a first business plan version to be reworked in the course based on individual coaching from the TRAIN-IT experts.

Start-up and company activities

Axetel Consulting is a private IT services and consultancy company with **locations in Romania and France** and a team of six programmers. Axetel are specialised in the field of electronic signature, encryption and security. They have positioned themselves as an ambitious player on the PKI market by **initiating EuPKI, the first open source public key infrastructure with an industrial vision**. This flagship product allows them to diversify their offer in the field of outsourcing and IT services consulting. The design and implementation of EuPKI is modular, allowing an easy integration with other commercial components: directory, ocsp responders, key archive, application servers and databases.

EuPKI has already attracted the interest of a large programming community and has started to welcome code contributions from programmers all over the world. The need for strong encryption, timestamping and authentication of sensitive data exchanges over Internet is today recognised by an ever increasing number of public administrations, banks and certification authorities. Customers from the public and banking domains are showing interest in EuPKI.

Having updated and optimised their business plan through the TRAIN-IT training, Eduard and Elena took the logical step of participating in two European Investment Fora organised in Prague and Milan in 2003. They further presented their project results at the IST 2003 Event in Milan. The product was one of five **presented by the European Commission to e-government VIPs all over the world.** The business model was exposed in a panel on e-government and identity, together with Microsoft, Sun, HP and British Telecom.

Axetel was recently selected by Sun, St Microelectronics and Axalto (Schlumberger) to present Eupki at their worldwide java smartcard contest. Also, they were invited to present at the Open Source World Conference 2004 in Malaga, Spain.

"Our presentation at the European Investment Forum was received completely beyond expectations, thanks to the TRAIN-IT training - I had four investors running after me." (Eduard Tric, CEO)

Investment offer

The amount of financing needed to expand operations in Western Europe is EUR 1m. The business is already profitable, with a very low burn rate and constant growth. The capital will be used to move marketing and sales to Western Europe and to transform Axetel into the leader of open source security.

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TRAIN-IT Organiser

TRAIN-IT courses are organised by IZET Innovationszentrum Itzehoe, a non-profit technology and entrepreneurship centre in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region, Germany.

The IZET infrastructure provides conference and seminar rooms as well as PC training labs, to which the TRAIN-IT participants withdraw for their business plan writing sessions.

Helga Bechmann
TRAIN-IT Project Manager

As a business incubator, IZET rents out office, laboratory, and production space to start-up companies. For growing companies, fully developed land is available in the surrounding science park Hightech Itzehoe. Both office space rent and land prices are subsidised.

IZET´s company services comprise counselling and support in all issues of company start-up and financing. IZET mediates access to banks, state venture capital, VCs, business angels, and to potential business partners on the basis of strong national and international networks.

IZET is a one-stop shop for company start-up and expansion.

IZET´s currently over 40 incubatees are mainly in microelectronics applications, e-business, software development and IT consultancy.

TRAIN-IT lecture on patent issues: discussing brand names

In partnership with the neighbouring Fraunhofer ISIT Institute for Silicon Technology, IZET forms the motor of the science park Hightech Itzehoe, specialised in technology transfer in microsystem technologies and their applications in medical, bio, environmental, energy and other technologies.

IZET is internationally active in incubator organisations, as well as co-ordinator and partner in a number of EU-projects in the fields of entrepreneurship, technology transfer and e-business.

TRAIN-IT PC lab working session

www.train-it.org

TRAIN-IT Licencing Offer

The TRAIN-IT® concept of six-day training courses in business plan writing was developed by IZET Innovationszentrum Itzehoe and successfully implemented between 1997 and 2003.

The proven course concept is now available for licencing. First licencees and reference contact are Synergy eBusiness Incubator SeBI, Belfast, UK.

Licencees are entitled to all relevant materials and information:

1. Use of the TRAIN-IT Curriculum and course materials
2. Mediation of TRAIN-IT experts
3. Iterative business plan follow-up over six months conducted by IZET
4. Access to IZET infrastructure
5. Access to Hightech Itzehoe neighbourhood and IZET networks

Licencees will receive a training of trainers and intensive coaching in the TRAIN-IT methodology, quality standards and ethics. The curriculum and all other materials are handed to the licencees with detailed instructions. The TRAIN-IT team is available for any questions and reserves the right to monitor course conduction in order to ensure quality control. Licence duration and costs are variable according to individual concepts and needs.

**Join the TRAIN-IT success story!**

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"The TRAIN-IT course provides a valuable all-round grounding for the start-up entrepreneur. In delivering the NITAP Northern Ireland Technology Assessment Programme, SeBI believes that licencing the TRAIN-IT course will provide real value to our clients, ultimately reflected in the quality of the businesses created by the programme. The TRAIN-IT team has been exemplary in the support offered to us as licencees, and the course material comprehensive and relevant."

Alex Büchner, SeBI
www.nitap.com
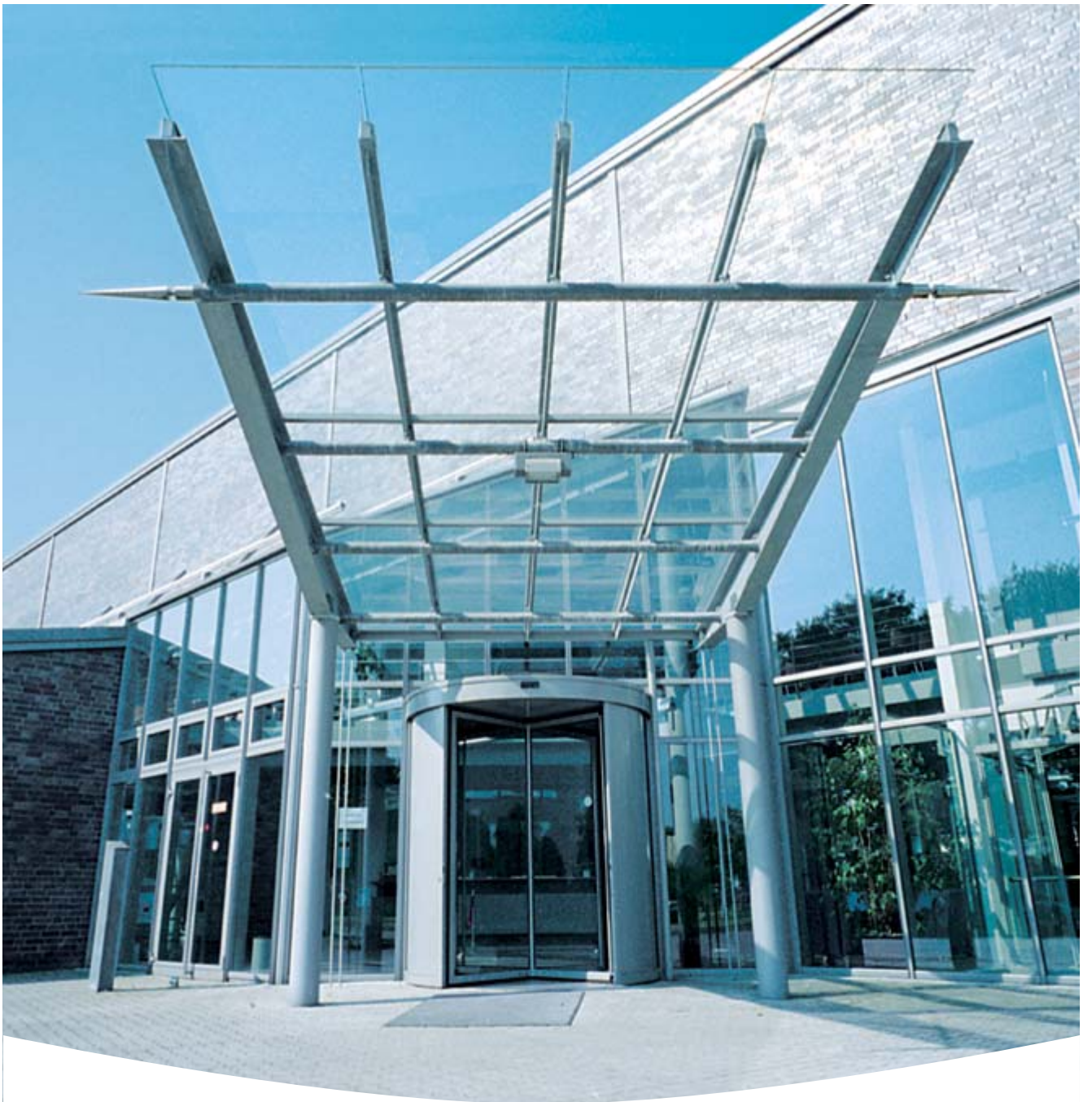
Step inside:
We open all doors for you!