



## GERMANY EINFACH ANFANGEN- SIMPLY START

### General details

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### Details of activity

Background to the case study	<p><b><i>Einfach anfangen (Simply start) – a campaign to increase entrepreneurial spirit in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania</i></b></p> <p>Like the other new German states, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania faces an enormous challenge. The task: to create new jobs. In order to do so, one of the key prerequisites is an increase in the number of start-ups in the state. In 2002, the Ministry for Labour, Building and Regional Development started a campaign to increase entrepreneurship which was unique for Germany and has now been repeatedly recognised for its success. The goal: to revive the entrepreneurial spirit within the state. The leitmotif: success stories in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. The slogan: <i>Einfach anfangen (Simply Start)</i>.</p> <p>Because if the people of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Simply start, then work is created. For example, 60% of the self-employed who are successfully supported by the Ministry for Labour, Building and Regional Development survive beyond the critical first five years and at the same time create on average 2.7 new jobs. Thus if this process can be successfully accelerated, a powerful "job motor" can be developed in the state.</p> <p><b>Success stories out of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.</b> One of the essential prerequisites for an increase in start-ups is the belief that it can work. The campaign shows exactly that. It targets people who can lead by example. This creates the positive messages that promote entrepreneurial spirit. And</p>
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	<p>entrepreneurial spirit does exist, throughout the state. At the centre of the campaign are therefore founders of new businesses with their own particular individual success stories. These entrepreneurs are displayed on billboards and thus become the new stars of society. The same protagonists tell their success stories in notices in the daily newspapers. On the radio, they are also given a voice. They become credible and at the same time appear real. They are the building blocks of a change in atmosphere in the medium-term.</p> <p>The campaign does not have to invent "news", it is kept going with the stories which arise and creates new, positive role models. The message is clear and simple every time: We can do this. We just need to make a start.</p>
Description of activity	<p><b>A state supports its entrepreneurs:</b> Only a short while after the start of the project, prominent individuals from sport, the economy and society began to show solidarity with the aims of the campaign. A cross-party support group developed which provides considerable help towards the creation of a new start-up culture and today facilitates many actions under the campaign, which in 2002 only a few thought were possible.</p> <p><b>The individual tools of the campaign to increase entrepreneurial spirit in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania:</b></p> <p><b>1. The helpline for entrepreneurs: 0180 123 4 123</b> In 2002, a new service was set up alongside the campaign: the helpline for entrepreneurs. This is far more than a phone number to call for reliable information on start-ups. It is rather a central point, through which all of the types of help which the state provides for potential entrepreneurs can be found.</p> <p><b>2. The mentor programme</b> If the founders of new businesses had the experience and the know-how of successful top-managers, the move into self-employment would perhaps be a little easier. And more rich in opportunities. With this in mind, over 60 successful entrepreneurs have in the meantime begun to provide the founders of new businesses with advice and help.</p> <p><b>3. The business plan competition</b> It can only run to plan if there is a plan. This is the thinking behind the Simply Start Business Plan Competition for</p>



Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, an essential starting help in order to make a successful start-up out of an idea. The lucky winners could receive prize money for their business idea in amounts which altogether add up to 33,000 Euros.

#### **4. The internet portal [www.einfachanfängen.de](http://www.einfachanfängen.de)**

In October 2004, the MV-Gruenderportal which was set up in 2001 was linked directly with the Simply start project in order to make use of its wide range. For 2005, that meant a 300% increase in the number of visitors to the site from 10,000 to 30,000 visits per month. Within the framework of the optimised portal structure, a more dynamic dialogue became possible. The significant improvement in the quality of the transfer of experience and knowledge this brought should help each individual start-up along the way.

#### **5. The e-commerce award**

This year the first “Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania E-commerce Award 2006” will take place. This is a joint action of the IT-Initiative Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Simply Start and the Electronic Commerce Centre for the promotion of internet trade. The prize is altogether 45,000 euros and should go to founders of new businesses and young entrepreneurs in the state who have innovative internet business ideas, to support their start-up.

#### **6. Simply Start radio**

Since January 2006 the dynamic goings-on within entrepreneurship in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania can also be heard over the internet via a podcast. ‘Simply start, just listen’ on [www.gruenderradio.de](http://www.gruenderradio.de) is produced in Neubrandenburg. In the programme, entrepreneurs’ stories of courage, hard work, of starting out, of engagement and success, but also of problems are told in an authentic, lively and informative manner.

#### **7. The micro-loan**

The Ministry of Labour set up a fund for micro-loans to founders of new businesses, up to a maximum amount of 10,000 € In 2005, the first year, over 300 entrepreneurs in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania benefited from this fast and bureaucracy-free help for their start-up.

#### **8. Student firms are on the increase**

The promotion of an entrepreneurial spirit has a future, if the





	<p>entrepreneurs of tomorrow “Simply start” today in the schools of the state to develop business ideas and also to translate them with competent support. Together with teachers, schools and training providers and with the support of the Ministry of Education, the project has spread since November 2004. Information days have been carried out since the beginning of 2005 in all schools within the state, with the aim of the setting-up of student firms. Meanwhile the newly-emerged student firms sector can be found on the website <a href="http://www.schueler.einfachanfängen.de">www.schueler.einfachanfängen.de</a></p>
<p>Policy context within which the programme operates</p>	<p>The idea to promote an entrepreneurial culture in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania through a marketing campaign and the construction of a new uniform support structure for the founders of new businesses was developed 2002 in the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Labour. Within the framework of the <i>Politikfeld D</i> (promotion of an entrepreneurial culture) a guideline for support to new businesses was developed which was necessary to carry this out. Since then, the Ministry of Labour promotes all measures for the support of founders of new businesses under the same “Simply Start” framework. The campaign has also meanwhile been supported by representatives of other ministries and by the Prime Minister Dr. Harald Ringstorff:</p> <p>“The East is Great“, read a headline from the information service of the Institute of the German Economy in October. The Cologne institute referred to the strong increase in start-ups in the previous year in east Germany, which had exceeded the welcome development in the whole of the country. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which reached second place among the states, after Berlin, is described in the report as “Mecca for new businesses”. It is unmistakable: The shoulder-to-shoulder stance of politics, science and economics with the goal of creating a new business and entrepreneur friendly climate in our state, pays off increasingly.</p> <p>Quote taken from a speech of the Prime Minister of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Dr. Harald Ringstorff, on the occasion of the award of the OZ new business founder prize, 02.11.2005, in Rostock.</p>
<p>Geographical focus of the case study</p>	<p>Simply Start is active via all media in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and is meanwhile also recognised nationwide.</p>

Impact	<p>The impact of the campaign is regularly reviewed by the Forsa market research institute. The most important results are:</p> <p>The people in the state stand behind the initiative. Today, 89% of the 18–50 age bracket know of “Simply Start” and for more than 70% of them this motto has a good, or very good ring to it. Nearly 90% find the project good, or very good. Compared to 35% in the year 2003, 41% in January 2005 could imagine a life as a self-employed person. In fact, the number of self-employed people rose during the campaign period from 7% to 10%. And 3% indicate, in spite of the difficult conditions, they want to venture into self-employment in the next twelve months.</p> <p><b>Simply Start is recognised nationwide.</b> Simply Start received the 2004 Politik-Award in the category of public institution campaigns. As a 2005 EFFIE finalist, Simply Start is one of the 45 most efficient advertising campaigns in Germany.</p>
Partners’ details	<p>Under the umbrella of the campaign are almost all institutions, training providers, initiatives and institutes in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania that are active in the area of start-ups, either within qualifications or advice. In addition the campaign is strongly supported by the voluntary engagement of leading heads of the economy and business sector in the Mentoring Programme.</p>

### Theme-Specific Questions

Who was targeted by the programme?	<p>The programme was about raising the awareness of the entire state. We therefore refer to and address all people in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania aged 18 to 50 years. In particular people with vocational or educational qualifications, who can imagine setting up in business in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.</p>
Which levels of government were involved, informed or consulted?	<p>The idea of the campaign was developed by the Ministry for Labour, Building and Regional Development and has since then been set in motion, driven and developed further by the Ministry.</p>
What actions resulted in	<p>Simply Start has meanwhile not only been welcomed by experts</p>

<p>mainstreaming?</p>	<p>such as Prof. Dr. Rolf Sternberg and Dipl. Volkswirt Heiko Bergmann (University of Cologne Institute of Economic and Social Geography / Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – GEM) but has also been strongly supported by the media for years and is perceived and used nationwide as a motto for the growth in entrepreneurial spirit. This year the Thüringer Business Plan Competition was held for the first time under the motto “Simply Start” and Federal Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel in her new year speech for 2006 called all Germans to take more action with the sentence “Let’s all Simply Start – from tomorrow morning”. After the successful introduction of the mentoring programmes in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, nationwide initiatives have meanwhile been set up such as the Knowledge Factory, an amalgamation of more notable German businesses, to carry out mentoring programmes.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p><b>The results:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• over 13,000 calls to the helpline for entrepreneurs since 2002</li> <li>• 3,500 founders of new businesses were referred from the helpline to the advice network</li> <li>• over 30,000 visitors per month to <a href="http://www.einfachanfange.de">www.einfachanfange.de</a></li> <li>• 84 new business projects entered the business plan competition in 2005</li> <li>• 30 new business projects were involved in the 2005 mentoring programme</li> <li>• 40 new business projects were involved in the 2006 mentoring programme</li> <li>• at least one PR article per week</li> <li>• over 4,500 students and over 1,300 teachers were reached through the student information presentation</li> <li>• 130 student firms are being founded</li> <li>• 100 Student firms exist already</li> <li>• - increase in the number of self-employed from 7% to 10% in the campaign period</li> </ul>
<p>Successes / lessons learned</p>	<p>Through continuous linking of the media and advertising power through all “channels“ the programme succeeded in increasing motivation for more entrepreneurial spirit and self-initiative in the state and also to establish a visible umbrella brand for the new business sector.</p>



# IDELE

Identification, Dissemination and Exchange of good practice in  
Local Employment development and promoting better governance

	<p>Together with strong partners from politics, the economy, sport and culture, it is easier to Simply start. The more we approach the public through different actions, the more opportunities become visible to the public, to Simply start. Through public events, we support and strengthen the messages of the PR- and advertising measures and offer “Simply Start” for people to access, to enquire about, to discuss and to join in.</p>
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