



Erlangen

Top Business Location



Inspiration
Innovation
Innovation
Inspiration



Innovation Inspiration

Perspectives and visions

Lord Mayor Dr. Siegfried Balleis and Economic Advisor Konrad Beugel
about Erlangen as a business location



*Focussing on the future of Erlangen as business location:
Lord Mayor Dr. Siegfried Balleis and Economic Advisor Konrad Beugel.*

What is the reason for the special attractiveness of Erlangen as business location?

Dr. Siegfried Balleis: In the competition to attract business Erlangen has two unique features. On one hand the confidential exchange of ideas between research and business, based on its tradition as university city and the importance of Siemens. On the other hand Erlangen has an incomparably large number and variety of companies, institutions and qualified employees in the area of medical engineering and health.

Konrad Beugel: In addition, the municipality not only fosters the exchange of knowledge, but creates reliable conditions for a climate friendly to company founders. As partner of medium-sized business, the economic development office in Erlangen advises and provides assistance in planning and approval matters, informs about promotional programmes and

offers industrial space – This offer is directed quite expressly not only to the medical and high-tech industry, but, within the meaning of commercial diversification, also to decision makers in all forms of trade and industry.

Balleis: Yet also with regard to "soft location factors", the city has shown special far-sightedness from early on. The quality of life is quite excellent in Erlangen: high purchasing power, optimum health services, decades of profiling as environmental city, unique cultural programmes, plus short distances between home, work and life – a combination that couldn't be better.

What importance do you attach to the soft location factors?

Beugel: Following the general trend they will become increasingly important for business location. In the present competitive atmosphere a community cannot stand out against the competition solely by allocating land for commercial use and favourable rates of assessment. It must work hard at offering a comprehensively attractive living environment for the new company – not only towards the company itself, but also for future employees and their families.

Balleis: A concrete example of our commitment: The policy in Erlangen has been for a long time in favour of an "alliance for the family". Among other things it provides for extending the availability of high-quality day nursery facilities in co-operation with local business, or else of developing flexible models for part time work and working at home. In this way highly qualified employees with children can remain in their companies and combine profession and family in the best possible way. Such a concept has just been put into practice at the Fraunhofer

Institute in Tennenlohe: With the support of the city and borne by the welfare association Arbeiterwohlfahrt, the institute has set up a day nursery which employees from all companies in the Tennenlohe "innovation park" can use.

To what do you ascribe the success of business promotion?

Beugel: The numerous prizes awarded to Erlangen prove that we are on the right path. They honour both the higher than average innovation potential of the companies in Erlangen as well as the business-friendly commitment of the community. Thus Erlangen is the sole German city that is the home of two companies each of whom received one of the five German Founder Prizes from the "StartUp" initiative.

In 1998 the city administration itself was the first to be awarded the Bavarian Quality Prize by the Bavarian state government for its speedy building approval procedures, its very active city management as well as for activities supporting technology transfer. And Erlangen was even named the "innovation capital of Germany" by one of the most important business newspapers, the Handelsblatt. A global player like Siemens also decided to invest 100 million euros for a new factory in Erlangen. A further indicator of a successful business development policy is the constantly lower unemployment rate in comparison with the rest of the country and similar cities.

What goals will the city of Erlangen follow?

Balleis: Our strengths in the medical sector should grow further and cumulate in being the "German capital of medical research, production and services", this being our short-term goal for 2010. This goal will receive intensive support from its citizens, institutions and companies. In the longer term we have set further ambitious objectives: As "E city" we will exploit all the possibilities of information and communication technology to simplify the dialogue between citizens and administration. In a further step Erlangen as "knowledge city" will decisively contribute to finding innovative new forms of acquiring and processing knowledge on the way to the information society.

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