

# Chapter 17

## Leadership. Personality. Education:

### The Innovation–Promoting Triad in University–Industry Collaboration – Real–World Projects Foster Students’ Innovative Capability

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*The challenges of today’s rapidly changing environment are tremendous. Almost every organization has new tasks; some must even completely modify their strategy or business model. In most cases, these processes are accompanied by the implementation of innovations. To achieve important innovations that are suitable to change our world for the better, the cooperation between academia and industry must be enhanced. A dual education model is suggested, as knowledge and competencies are mainly delivered by institutions of higher education, but the implementation of new ideas occurs most often in organizations. Besides the generation of new ideas, a successful realization may be challenging. Therefore, leadership is necessary. Taken together, a contemporary educational program should focus on innovation development and leadership competencies. Based on a literature review, the current situation is analyzed, and a summary of the educational requirements is given. Finally, a newly developed study program—the Diploma of Performance and Leadership—is presented.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The world and its inhabitants must cope with challenges in all areas of life: social, economic, global, national, and individual (Willke, 2014). These sweeping changes not only occur in politics, states, and businesses. Humanity is strongly affected by digital and biological transformation, overpopulation, and so forth. In the face of today's and tomorrow's challenges, a dramatic rethink is indispensable.

To change our lives for the better, revolutionary innovations have had far-reaching effects in history. Ever since, innovations are crucial especially to the long-term growth and survival of organizations (Tucker, 2008, as cited in Xu et al. 2006) and society. Innovations are useful ideas that become value-creating reality (Faix, Mergenthaler, Ahlers & Auer, 2015). Thinking about the origin of new ideas that become innovations, new knowledge is required, which is mainly produced in universities (Huggins, Johnston, & Steffenson, 2008) and higher education institutions (HEI). Gaining knowledge is one important educational outcome. Furthermore, university students, scientists, and scholars develop key competencies crucial to the implementation of innovations, such as critical thinking, curiosity, and the ability to ask questions (Reichert, 2019). Based on this, universities have the potential and the obligation to impact practice, to be more relevant for economy and society as well as to yield human prosperity and well-being (Alajoutsijärvi, Juusola, & Siltaoja, 2015; Watermeyer, 2014).

Today the realization of innovations in organizations "[...] is no longer restricted to R&D laboratories. Innovation could be and is more general and horizontal in nature, including social, business model, and technical innovation" (Dutta, Lanvin, & Wunsch-Vincent, 2019, p. 205). Given this widespread occurrence of innovations, typically several organizational areas and their respective leading managers are responsible for decision making and implementation (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006). Those leaders show specific traits and competencies (Sikora, 2017) as well as a certain personality (Schumpeter, 1934) that are important to generate an innovative environment. The development of competencies and personality is the central aspect within the Humboldt's humanistic educational model for universities.

The need for innovations is evident in our fast-changing world. However, the challenges caused by digitalization and the search for sustainable development can only be solved when multiple actors jointly merge their respective strengths (Reichert, 2019). Therefore, discussions focus on the opportunities that may arise out of university-industry-collaborations (Cohen, Nelson, & Walsh, 2002; Feldman, Feller, Bercovitz, Burton, 2002; Murmann, 2003).

This chapter focuses on the questions:

- How and to which degree do industrial players and HEIs collaborate in order to achieve innovations?
- Which educational approaches lead to competencies and personality traits that are important for innovation management?
- Which role does leadership play with regard to innovation management and which didactical strategies are suitable to develop respective leaders?
- How could a state-of-the-art program with regard to leadership development look like that involves HEI and industry?

In this chapter, the above-mentioned questions are addressed in form of a literature review. The current state of research is presented and definitions of the most important terms are given. An educational strategy derived from these findings will be exemplified by the description of a newly developed higher education program. This chapter therefore makes a theoretical contribution in order to understand to

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