

DR. FLORIAN FORSTER



Empathic Leader Delivering Excellence in Digital, Strategy, and Transformation

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Decisive and empathetic leader in digital innovation and operations with 13+ years of international experience across 20+ countries. Honored as a 'Top 100 Thought Leader in E-Commerce' [🔗](#), I excel in scaling high-performing teams from 0 to 650 FTEs, managing P&Ls exceeding €12M, and leveraging AI- and tech-driven solutions to drive growth, operational efficiency, sustainable results, and above all, a positive, goal-oriented culture.

Adaptable to complex VUCA environments, I combine hands-on execution with a strategic vision to solve challenges, deliver transformative business outcomes, and foster a growth-oriented mindset. My expertise is underpinned by a top-notch postdoctoral education [🔗](#) in entrepreneurship and technology, alongside certifications in Systemic Business Coaching [🔗](#) and Generative AI [🔗](#) - enabling me to foster trust-based cultures, empower teams, and implement innovative strategies.

Beyond these lines, I invite you to explore my feature on the Entrepreneur Podcast 'Mission: Machen' [🔗](#), read testimonials from my peers [🔗](#), and view my further certifications [🔗](#) and awards [🔗](#) on my LinkedIn profile [🔗](#).

WORK EXPERIENCE

Forster&Co - Founder, CEO, Strategic Consultant & Advisor **Since 01/2016**

- Helping organizations thrive in today's fast-paced, ambidextrous world by proving excellence in digital, strategy, and transformation through principles grounded in academia and successfully applied at international corporations [🔗](#).

IU.org - International University Group - Senior Director, Global Education Excellence **01/2024 - 11/2024**

- Led agile transformations of 170 FTEs for DE, UK, and CAN, boosted efficiency by +15% and employee NPS by +36 bps.
- Directed a 20-member AI/SaaS tech team to develop GenAI solutions for video/text development, cutting costs by 75% and increasing productivity by +50% through process training and workflow optimization.
- Managed a €12M P&L and achieved €1.3M annual OpEx savings with process, organization, and partner optimization.

Alibaba.com - Country Manager - Germany, Austria, Switzerland (DACH) **04/2022 - 01/2024**

- Delivered go-to-market (GTM) for Mittelstand (SME) and formed a high-performing sales and marketing team of 12 FTEs.
- Secured 10 strategic partnerships, grew B2B customer base to 100+, delivered the highest global basket value of +30%.
- Served as media spokesperson at 25+ industry events, boosted brand visibility and sales pipeline to 1000+ leads.

zooplus - Head of Operational Excellence & Head of Customer Care & Head of Product (VP level) **09/2019 - 04/2022**

- Delivered strategic guidance to the COO and board by establishing an agile Project Management Office (PMO, 12 FTEs), setting OKRs to prioritize operational and strategic improvement initiatives for 300+ FTEs across 9 departments.
- Initiated digital transformation of the global customer service team (30 FTEs, 600 agents) for 5M inquiries p.a. in 22 languages with 5 BPOs. Head of Product: launched new CRM, reduced budget by 15%, and improved customer satisfaction by +25%. Stock delisting by Hellman & Friedmann and EQT.
- Championed a €900K carbon footprint offsetting program and positioned Zooplus as the industry leader in sustainability.

Dirk Rossmann - A.S. Watson Group - Head of International Strategic Innovation **10/2018 - 09/2019**

- Defined and led a European innovation hub, driving New Retail and digital transformation while enhancing cross-border collaboration for six European entities.
- Advised C-level on strategies to optimize operations, redesign business processes, and define new product development (e.g., self-checkout, loyalty app), improving efficiency and fostering innovation.

Amazon.com - Acting Country Leader - Marketplace Prime Now Germany **06/2016 - 10/2018**

- Launched ultra-fast delivery service in 9 months, exceeding revenue targets by +50% through cross-functional collaboration with a team of 8 and 5 strategic partners.
- Created a new logistics and organizational structure, reduced costs by 25%, and improved fulfillment efficiency and scalability through technical leadership.
- Co-founded an awarded tech initiative promoting inclusivity across thousands of Amazon employees, improved cross-team collaboration, and drove employee engagement.

Amazon.com - Senior Program and Technical Product Manager - Marketplace Germany & Europe **05/2014 - 06/2016**

- Coordinated interdisciplinary collaboration between 50 stakeholders to launch the European Fulfillment Network, reducing fulfillment costs by 20% while enhancing delivery speed and customer satisfaction. Ownership of FBA program.
- Developed business requirements and deployed an innovative data collection tool for EU Account Managers, improving seller insights by 5x accuracy and speed, driving business growth and customer satisfaction.
- Streamlined operations procedures for long-tail selection and returns, driving a +5% to +25% increase in product assortment and profitability across key European markets.

- HSG Entrepreneurship Campus - Head of Business Incubator & Co-founder** **07/2010 - 11/2013**
- Co-founded a business accelerator, raising €1M+ in venture funding and supporting the launch of 13 start-ups. Designed and led founder programs, boosting awareness and participation among entrepreneurial students and alumni.
- WHU Accelerator - Project Leader & Startup Coach** **11/2008 - 07/2010**
- Launched an entrepreneurial ecosystem engaging 100+ students, alumni, and corporations. Securing €500K in venture funding. Established a mentoring program for entrepreneurial students and successfully ran two prestigious international business plan competitions.
- fon.com - FON Technology S.L. - Head of Business Development Central Europe** **05/2006 - 05/2010**
- Scaled a peer-to-peer business model to achieve 2M+ hotspots globally, pioneering pre-SaaS innovations. Built strategic partnerships with major European corporations in telecom and media (e.g., DTAG, KPM, XING). Launched an urban Wi-Fi Community showcase, increased user engagement by 3x, and enhanced public network visibility in key cities.

EDUCATION

- University of California, Berkeley - Haas School of Business - Postdoctoral Researcher and SNCF Fellow**
- Research on Sustainability and Cluster of Innovation [↗](#), MBA teaching staff, Berkeley Postdoc Entrepreneur Program.
- University of St.Gallen (HSG) - Institute of Technology Management - Doctoral Student in Entrepreneurship**
- Doctoral student, lecturer in entrepreneurship and innovation, recognized as youngest faculty in HSG-MBA program for excellence. Visiting researcher at Copenhagen Business School (CBS), DK [↗](#), and Max Planck Seminar for Innovation & Entrepreneurship [↗](#).
- WHU - Otto Beisheim School of Management - Doctoral Student in Entrepreneurship**
- Dr. rer. pol., equivalent to Ph.D.: Magna cum laude, lecturer for bachelor and master students, incl. Alumni, RWTH, and business partners. Published award-winning research papers, teachings [↗](#), and accolades [↗](#) cooperating with DHL, Schwab Foundation, and Vodafone.
- Technical University of Munich (TUM) - Graduate Student in Management and Computer Science**
- Dipl.-Kfm. Univ., equivalent to Master in Business and IT: Magna cum laude; awarded thesis [↗](#) on Business Process Improvement Patterns; visiting student at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), AU [↗](#) and Tampere University, FI [↗](#).

AWARDS

- **Top 100 Leader in E-Commerce** [↗](#) (**Internet World Business**): Recognized for thought leadership in global e-commerce innovation.
- **Extra Mile Award** [↗](#) (**Amazon German**): For developing a quantitative market analytics tool with EU-wide Account Management rollout.
- **Best Social Entrepreneurship Research Award** [↗](#) (**FGF e.V.**): Honored for impactful research publication in social entrepreneurship.
- **Swiss National Science Foundation Fellowship** [↗](#) (**UC Berkeley**): Fully funded postdoctoral research on innovation & sustainability.
- **Communication Impact Award** [↗](#) (**HSG**): For launching an entrepreneurship campus fostering innovation with students and beyond.
- **Karl Max von Bauernfeind Medal** [↗](#) (**TUM**): Awarded for interdisciplinary excellence in MedTech entrepreneurship and innovation.
- **Munich Business Plan Competition** [↗](#) **Winner overall**: Recognized for founding and leading a tech entrepreneurship team to success.

STRENGTH & SKILLS

- **Team Leadership & Organizational Growth**: Skilled in building cross-functional, high-performing teams, promoting talent development, and aligning strategic initiatives with business goals. Adept at computational thinking and forming strategic partnerships.
- **Digital Transformation & Strategy**: Expertise in digital ecosystems, technology adoption, and innovation frameworks, leading complex digital transformations to drive resilience and efficiency.
- **Stakeholder Communication**: Expertise in written and oral executive-level reporting, relationship management, and stakeholder alignment, ensuring cross-functional cohesion and clear communication of strategic priorities.
- **Technical Mastery**: Proficient in AI, AI Agents (e.g., Chat Engine), GenAI, Power BI, Python, SQL, Tableau, Qualtrics, Looker, AWS, Oracle, and Salesforce. Experienced in e-commerce, SaaS, CRM systems, predictive data analytics, and AI-driven decision-making.
- **Project & Process Management**: Proven mastery in Agile methodologies (Scrum, SAFe, LeSS), CIP, Lean Six Sigma, OKRs, business intelligence, PMI and Prince2, process optimization, and KPI management.
- **Change Management & CSR**: Proven ability in change management, crisis navigation, conflict resolution, training, and fostering resilient organizations - experienced in CSR, sustainable business practices, and ESG initiatives.
- **Language Skills**: German: Native (C2), English: Distinguished (C2), French: Intermediate (B1), Spanish: Elementary (A2)

SPECIAL INTERESTS

- **Sports & Outdoor Activities**: Enthusiastic about cycling, running, volleyball, hiking, kayaking, climbing, and the outdoors.
- **Innovation & Sustainability**: Passionate about entrepreneurship, sustainable technology adoption, and smart tech/IoT solutions.
- **Personal Growth & Education**: Avid reader of utopian literature, DIY, advocate for digital education initiatives, renewable energy [↗](#).

Links included at [↗](#) - See <https://forster.company> for full profile