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THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE
OF THE CANTON OF FRIBOURG

2015



**THE ECONOMY
& EDUCATION**



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Beat Vonlanthen,
Fribourg State Councilor,
Minister of Economic Affairs



EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY: FRIBOURG'S RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Feet firmly anchored on the ground with eyes focused on the future. Nothing could better describe the character of our Canton, at one and the same time pragmatic, yet ever open to innovation. So it comes as no surprise that in pursuing the ambitious goal of offering the best possible future to its younger generation, Fribourg's strategy is to foster practice-oriented professional training in close alignment with the economic sector. In particular, it has brought together under one roof – the Ministry of Economic Affairs – the responsibility for both professional training and Universities of Applied Sciences. This approach has borne its fruit. Year-after-year, our Canton has registered the lowest unemployment rate in all of French-speaking Switzerland, particularly in terms of youth unemployment.

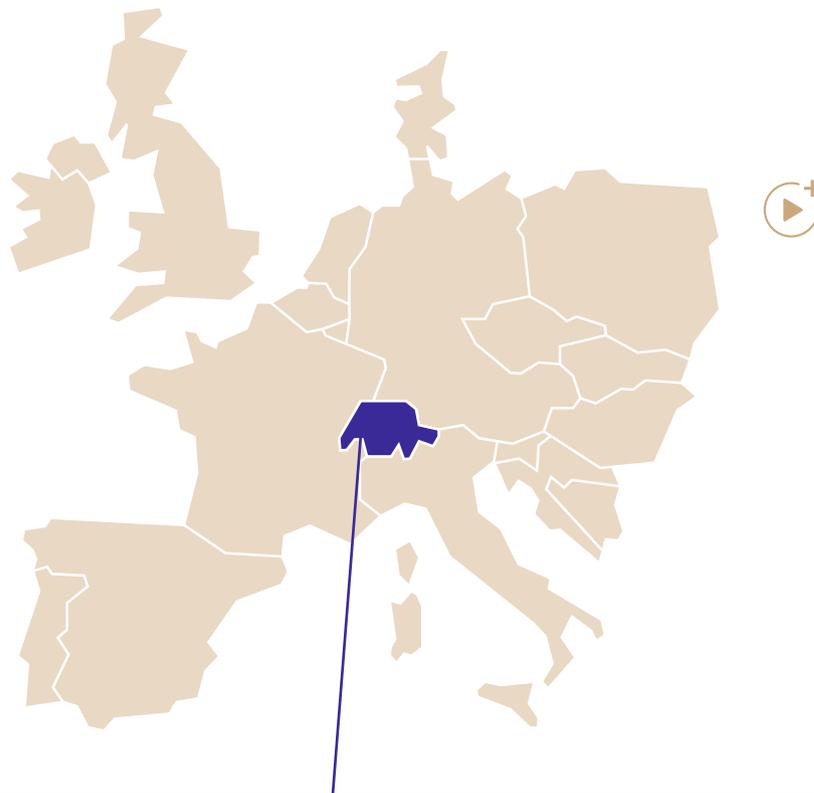
A champion in Switzerland in terms of the population growth rate, our Canton also prides itself on having a population with the youngest average age in all of Switzerland. Providing our youth with the best possible training tools is therefore a priority. And so the strong links between training and the economy represent a public-private partnership generating both growth and employment. This policy is also being ambitiously implemented in our innovation quarter blueFACTORY, where technology platforms will henceforth bring together the Universities of Applied Sciences, the University of Fribourg, the Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL) and the private economy.

At a time when Switzerland is being confronted by major challenges – in particular in connection with the results of the February 9, 2014 vote on mass immigration and with the overvaluation of the Swiss franc – our strategic approach is a wise choice.

Our training institutions thereby remain in direct contact with the real economy, while setting their sights on a future of innovation so as to be able to satisfy the demands of the knowledge society unfolding before our eyes.

This magnificent edition of Fribourg Network Freiburg, whose new format highlights digital technology, brilliantly bears witness to this.

FRIBOURG, THE IDEAL BUSINESS LOCATION



With around 300,000 inhabitants, the canton of Fribourg is situated on the main road and rail networks of Switzerland and Europe. Switzerland's main centers and airports (Basle, Bern, Geneva and Zurich) are all a mere 90 minutes away. Around 68% of its population speaks French as main language and 29% speaks German, making Fribourg one of Switzerland's three officially bilingual cantons. English, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese are also widely spoken. In comparison with Switzerland's largest metropolitan areas, the cost of living and operational costs for companies are considerably lower in Fribourg.



HIGH CONCENTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES



As well as a cosmopolitan university, attended by more than 10,000 students, Fribourg has an additional five *hautes écoles* (technical colleges and institutes). These include the schools of engineering and architecture, management, social work, health and education. The main campus of the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), which has an outpost in Fribourg, is less than one hour away. The canton also has several specialized institutes of learning, providing professional training in trade, agriculture, music, art, multimedia and hospitality. At almost all levels, instruction is offered in French and German, as well as in English in the case of postgraduate courses.

A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

The Fribourg Development Agency is on hand to advise and guide you through the many different support mechanisms and opportunities offered by the canton.

→ www.promfr.ch

AN AMBITIOUS TECHNOLOGY PARK

Work is currently in progress on the blueFACTORY innovation quarter in downtown Fribourg. Switzerland's first "zero carbon" park is aimed primarily at innovative high-tech companies in business sectors such as life sciences, biomedical, materials, plastics processing, nanotechnology, energy and information sciences. Created under a partnership between the city and the canton, the blueFACTORY innovation quarter heralds the start of a new era in Fribourg's competitiveness.



MULTINATIONALS BY THE DOZEN



Many well-known global companies have selected Fribourg as their home, including Alcon Pharmaceuticals (USA), Bayer International (Germany), Bongrain (France), Nestlé (Switzerland), Geberit (Switzerland), Ladurée (France), Liebherr (Germany), Mapei (Italy), Meggitt Sensing Systems (United Kingdom), Michelin (France), Nespresso (Switzerland), Novartis (Switzerland), Pall (USA), Richemont International (Switzerland), Scott Sports (USA), Johnson Electric (China), Tetra Pak (Sweden), Tupperware (USA), UCB Farchim (Belgium) and VeriSign (USA).



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www.heia-fr.ch/formation-continue

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EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION



The Péroles campus has the greatest concentration of higher education establishments and training institutes in the canton of Fribourg.

No matter what form education takes, whether it be vocational, academic or adult, it generates considerable returns for the individual, the economy, and society as a whole.

Education nurtures personal growth and shapes the individual. It improves employability and motivation, as well as contributes to employee well-being and safety in the workplace.

For employers, a well-educated workforce boosts productivity and profitability. Qualified employees keep the firm flexible, make it more innovative and ultimately more competitive.

Education also fosters social cohesion by supporting and advancing technological progress, helping prevent unemployment and considerably benefiting society as a whole.

FRIBOURG NETWORK FREIBURG GETS A FACELIFT!

Fribourg Network Freiburg felt it was time to update its look and feel. The new design is sleeker, more contemporary, and fully interactive. Published every year by the Fribourg Development Agency, the magazine now comes in three monolingual editions: French, German and English. The digital version has a wealth of supplementary features. For example, clicking on an icon will call up additional content (articles, videos and

photos) related to the original article. To access or download the online version, simply click on the link below. Enjoy!

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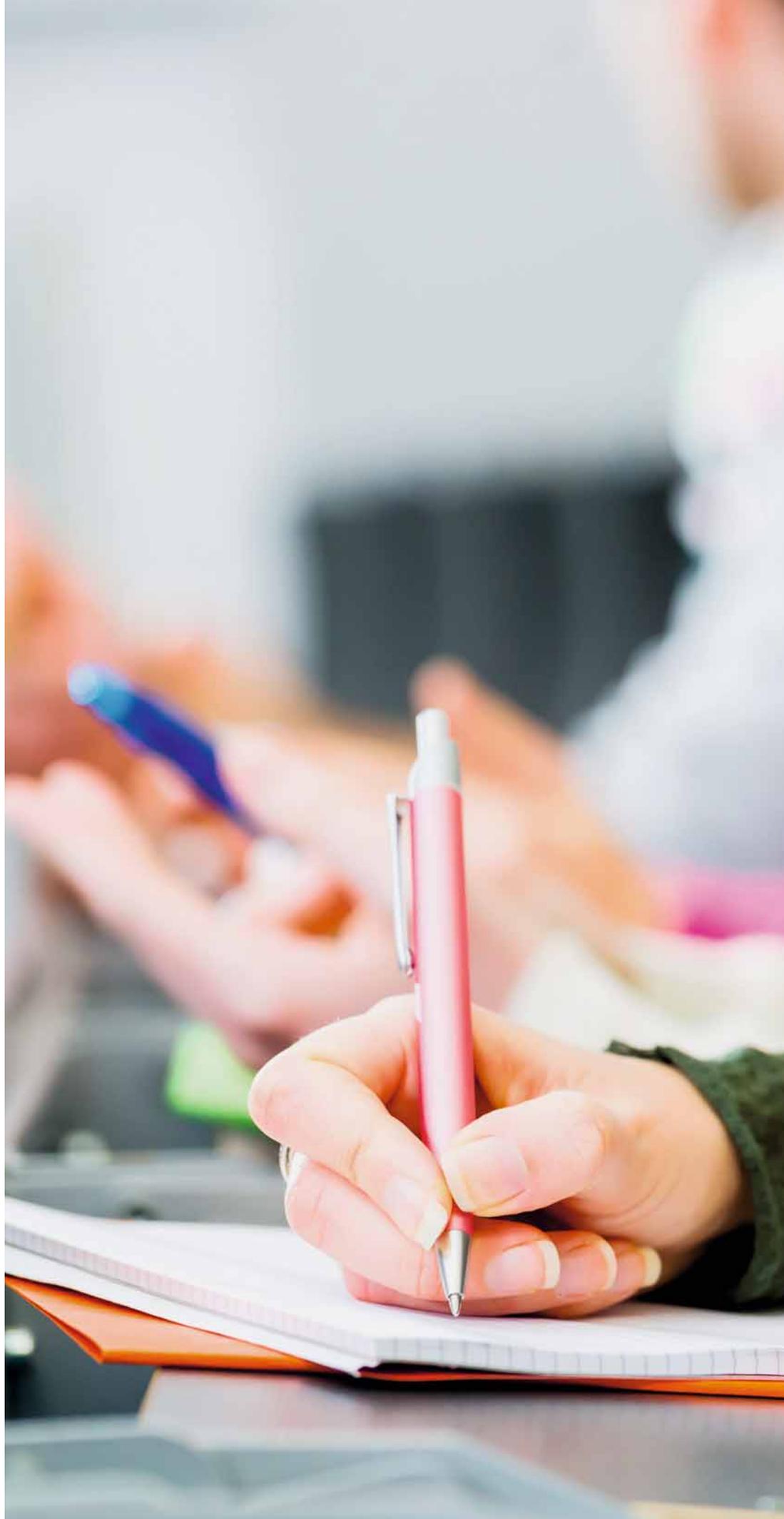


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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

They are students, captains of industry, self-employed entrepreneurs, apprentices, professors, and cantonal government ministers. All have forged a successful career either in Switzerland or abroad. All are products of the outstanding and highly flexible education system in Switzerland. In a world in a constant state of economic and social flux, these people are proof positive that lifelong learning really does exist and its benefits are undeniable.

0



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CYRILL ELTSCHINGER

A BUSINESS CAREER IN CHINA

Cyrill Eltschinger is not a man to sit on his laurels. Fresh from his baccalaureate at the *Collège St-Michel* in Fribourg in 1985, he underwent the mandatory Swiss military service which, he says, "prepared me 100% for my international career". Graduating with a BA in finance from Texas' A&M University in 1989, Eltschinger went on to get a certificate in systems engineering development from EDS, a former subsidiary of General Motors. After a stint at the then General Motors Asia-Pacific headquarters in Singapore, he was posted to China on a three week temporary assignment – and is still there 20 years later. However, he always kept close touch with his native Fribourg and still retains a home here. "After living in China for so long, you learn to be highly tolerant towards other cultures and other ways of doing business," he admits. "You can't just impose your point of view."



PATRICK MAILLARD

SOFTWARE CEO GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Patrick Maillard was not your typical student. When he was an undergraduate computer science major at the University of Fribourg in 2004, he was already running his own software company. "I already had some web clients when I was a student, as a way to earn some money," he says. "As I was designing the website of a property firm, I came up with the idea of creating software that I could 'lease' to them – and other firms – for an annual fee." Immomig (an amalgamation of "*Immobilien*", or property, and Maillard's own name) was founded shortly afterwards. "Although it was hard to juggle my studies with running my own company, the experience taught me a lot. I went on to get a MA in business and computer science from the University of Fribourg in 2010, which provided me with the core competences I need to do my job today." Maillard won the Swiss "Venture Leader" prize in 2007, ahead of 140 other Swiss candidates. His prize was a 10-day trip to Boston, meeting investors and pitching ideas to them. "It gave me invaluable insight into how business is conducted in the US," he said. Today, Immomig SA provides a leading property software in Switzerland.

→ www.immomigsa.ch

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HANSPETER PILLER A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROFESSION



Hanspeter Piller has witnessed some interesting design trends in the past forty years since he trained as a bricklayer at construction firm Tacchini in Fribourg. He has been in his current role – a director at local construction firm Frutiger – for the past year,

managing a team of 95 people. He previously worked at Tacchini for nine years, until Frutiger acquired its rival in 1989. He then worked at various other construction firms before joining Frutiger in 2002. "Training as a bricklayer has several advantages," says Piller. "Firstly, it gives you a good understanding of practical and technical matters, which are easily applicable to construction in general. That's a big help in my current role." Piller has some big projects to his name, including the distinctive glass-fronted technical and vocational college, the "École des Métiers", next to the original Villars chocolate factory in Fribourg. Completed in 2009, the 50 million francs project "is really special to me", according to Piller, who cites it as one of his favorites to date.

→ www.frutiger.com

CLAUDE AMBROSINI "LEARNING IS A LIFELONG ACTIVITY"

In 1979, Claude Ambrosini was coming to the end of his commercial apprenticeship with the Fribourg Cantonal Bank. Fast forward to 2015 and the 54-year-old is the Managing Director of one of the canton's largest firms, Liebherr Machines Bulle SA. Claude Ambrosini has worked hard to reach the top rung of the career ladder. Not long after arriving at Liebherr in 1980, he was quickly put in charge of the company's cost/performance accounting, IT and site management. "I was also studying part-time



for my Advanced Federal PET Diploma in Finance and Controlling", he explains. By 1988, he was working alongside the company's top executives, officially becoming part of the management board in 2000. In 2009, he was named the company's Chief Financial Officer and administrative director. "I learn something new every day. Learning is a lifelong activity", before adding, "When you get to the top, you have to make sure that you stay there."

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JEAN TROTTI

CHOOSING THE PRACTICAL WAY

For Jean Trotti, 2014 is not likely to be a year he will forget any time soon. Having won the SwissSkills competition, the budding automotive mechatronics engineer took gold again at the "Five Nations Cup" in Bolzano (Italy), which also earned him an automatic qualification for the 2015 WorldSkills in Sao Paolo. "I've been interested in engines ever since I was a kid. I was particularly fascinated by my uncle who worked as a truck driver in Canada", explains the young apprentice from Fribourg. When he finished his compulsory schooling, the aspiring engineer opted to go to high school, "because I was planning to study for a degree at a Federal Institute of Technology". Three years on, the



then 18-year-old student decided to change direction, choosing the more practical Federal VET Diploma instead. "I don't regret my decision for one minute. There are a lot of advantages to starting an apprenticeship when you're older – you're more mature, serious and motivated." As for the future, Trotti hopes to pass his Federal PET Diploma and get a job as a garage workshop manager.

GEORGES GODEL THE SCHOOL OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT

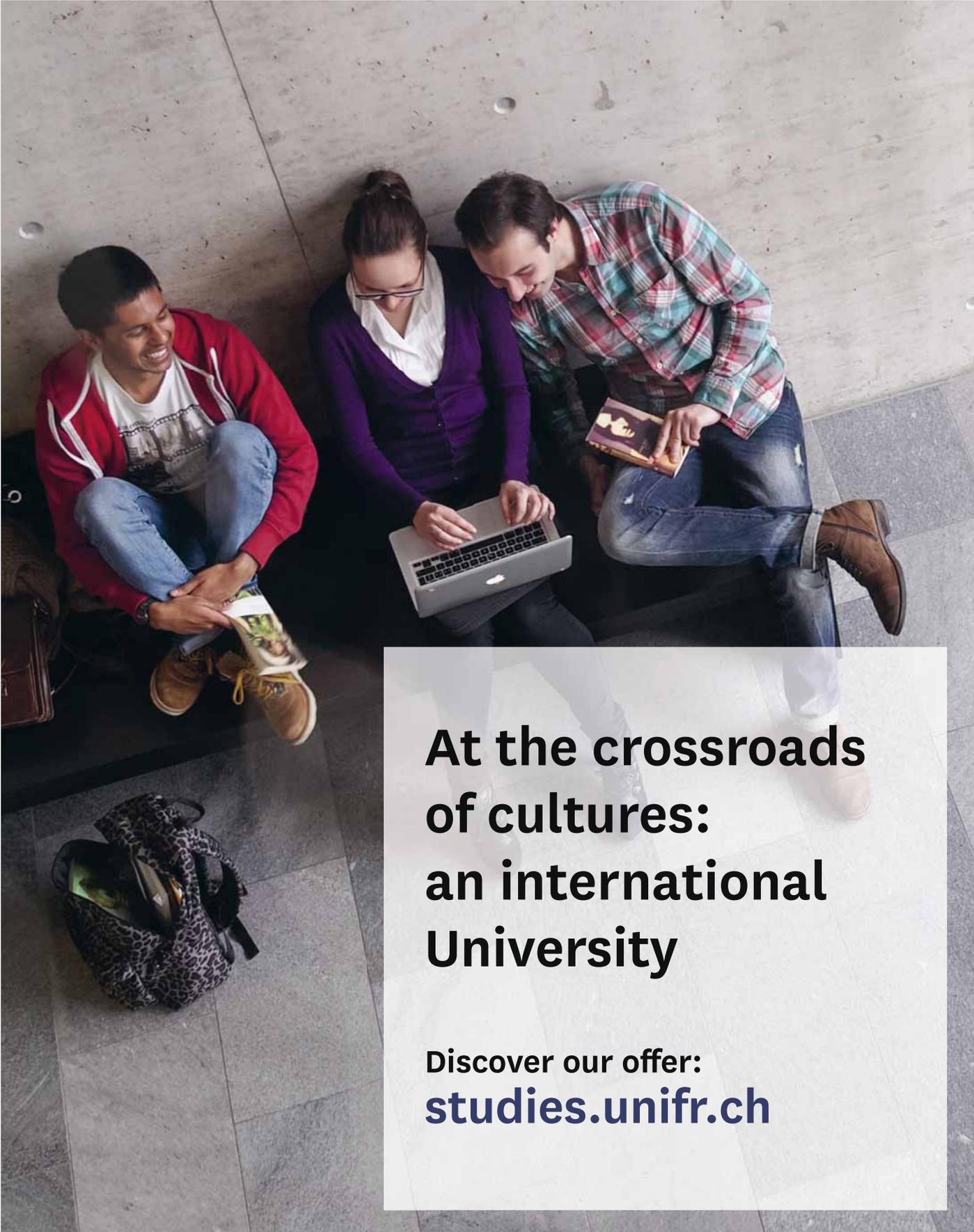


"People often tell me that I have a natural talent for finding pragmatic solutions". George Godel, cantonal Minister of Finance, attributes his level-headedness and matter-of-fact approach to his choice of career.

At the tender age of 24 and not long after graduating from agricultural college, Mr. Godel set up his own business. "Being self-employed at such a young age was the best training I could get!" he explains. The rapid growth in his industry, coupled with the involvement of the Christian Democratic Party in agricultural associations and organizations, earned him the nickname of the "farmer businessman". At the end of the 1970s, this native of Domdidier began studying for an Advanced Federal PET Diploma in agriculture, "acquiring business management skills that benefited both my farming and political activities". A member of the cantonal government since 2007, Georges Godel now ploughs all his energies into the political side of his career.

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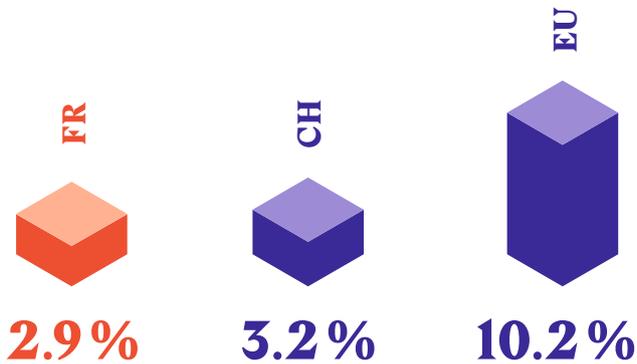


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Upon completion of their compulsory education, **95** out of 100 young people go on to study for a higher secondary qualification. 71 successfully complete an apprenticeship, while the remaining 24 successfully complete a high school or an upper-secondary specialized school program.



In 2014, **2.9%** of the working population of the canton of Fribourg was unemployed, compared to 3.2% nationwide and 10.2% in the EU.



22.3%

Percentage of the canton's population who were in general education during 2014. 57.8% were in either primary or lower secondary school; 9.1% were at high school or an upper-secondary specialized school; 10.7% were enrolled in a basic vocational education and training program; 2.2% attended a professional education and training program; 4.6% were at a University of Applied Sciences, and 15.6% attended a cantonal university.

2016

The number of basic vocational education and training programs in the canton of Fribourg. The ten most popular occupations are: commercial employee, retail manager, care worker/community healthcare worker, social worker, electrician, cook, IT professional, designer, polymechanic and car mechanic.

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HERMANN GUGLER A PRODUCT OF HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

"I grew up in a family of 15 kids. After I left secondary school, serving an apprenticeship was not up for debate. I went straight out to work!" Hermann Gugler, founder and Managing Director of Gugler Elektronik in Marly, cut his teeth working in watch-making and vending machine factories. "I learned a lot on the job and worked hard, though I've also taken a whole range of courses and attended training seminars", adds the 60-year-old Swiss German. His adage: "practical experience over theory!" His keen entrepreneurial spirit led him to set up his own company in 1990, specializing in the manufacture of cutting-edge electronic components and products. He attributes his feeling for business "to more than just education and training". 25 years on and Hermann Gugler still prefers to work with machinery than with a computer. "I am very happy delegating the administrative work!" he wryly confesses, heaping praise on his wife and his extremely well-qualified team for their support.

→ www.gugler-elektronik.ch

CLARISSE VON WUNSCHHEIM FROM FRIBOURG TO BEIJING



"There is no reason why students at Fribourg University's Law Faculty should be envious of their peers who study at the world's most prestigious academic institutions. I encourage them to be bold and self-assured when it comes to choosing the career path they wish to follow!" Clarisse von Wunschheim leads by example. After graduating from Fribourg University and obtaining her attorney-at-law qualifications in Zurich in 2005, she headed straight for Beijing. A specialist in international arbitration, she worked for several major law firms in the Chinese mega city before setting up her own company, WunschARB, in 2010. With one foot in Switzerland, the other in China, her firm "offers SMEs in both countries affordable access to effective dispute resolution mechanisms". Having obtained a doctorate (written in Chinese and supervised by a Fribourg professor), this go-getting lawyer returned home in 2013 and was invited by her alma mater to teach one of the courses in its Master of Laws in Cross-Cultural Business Practice program.

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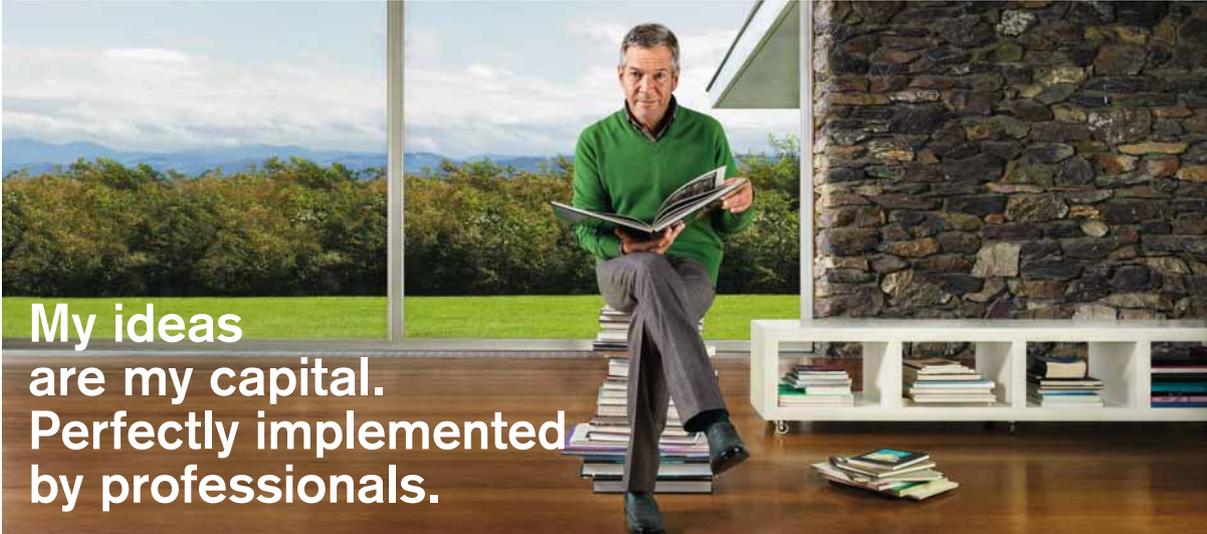
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ANNE-CLAUDE DEMIERRE

SHATTERING THE UNIVERSITY- OR-BUST MYTH

"I'm very proud of my career choices", declares Anne-Claude Demierre. The cantonal Minister of Health and Social Affairs began her working life at the age of 16, serving an apprenticeship in a book shop. "By the end of my first year at high school, I realized that the academic route wasn't for me and that I really wanted to do something practical." The avid bibliophile spent the following three years working at the Albert le Grand bookshop in Fribourg, "where I not only learned the ropes but also acquired administrative and business skills". She honed these skills further during her time working for a daily newspaper,



several publishing houses, a library and an SME. But it is perhaps her involvement in politics that has kept the member of the Swiss Social Democratic Party on the lifelong learning path: "For the last 25 years I've regularly attended seminars and conferences on a variety of subjects, and my work as a government minister means that I'm exposed, on a daily basis, to topics that are completely new to me. I totally thrive in such a knowledge-filled environment."

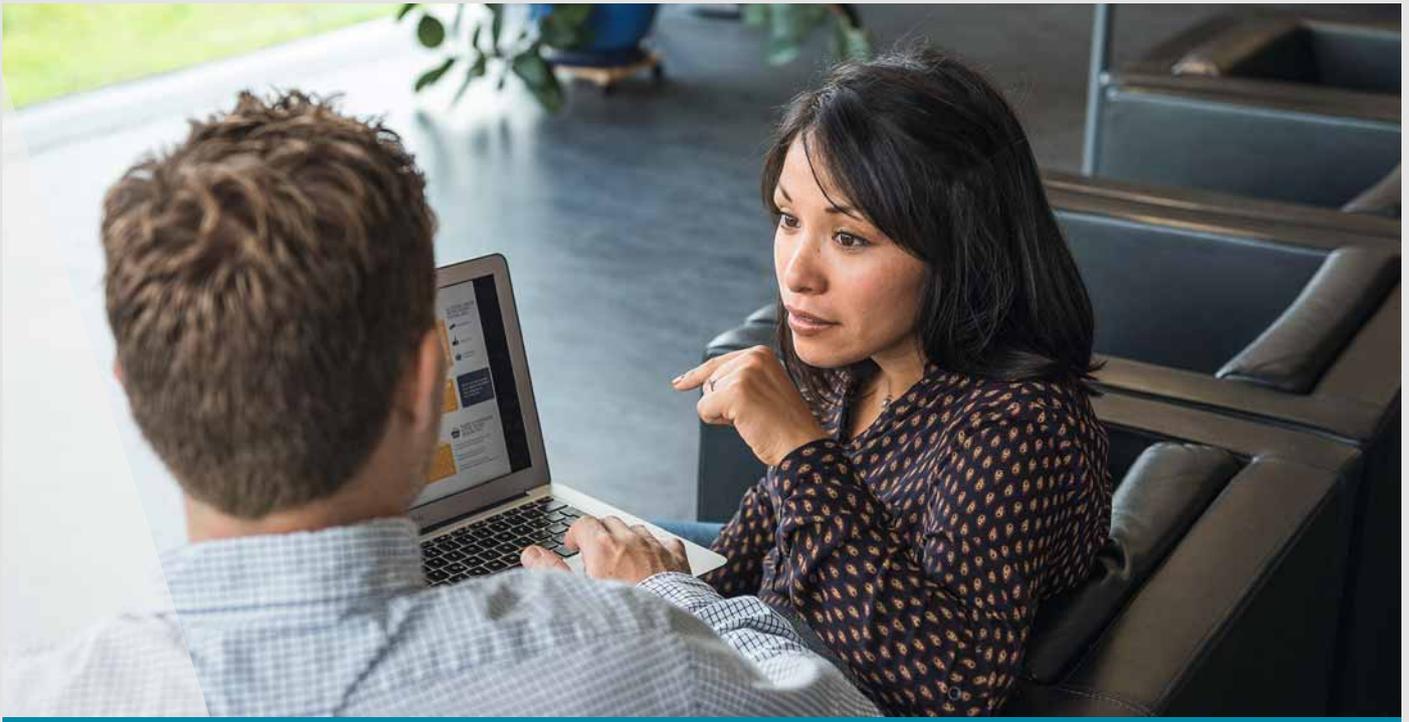
MORGAN CONUS

FROM CHILDHOOD DREAM TO WIDE RECOGNITION



"Even when I was little, I knew I wanted to be a bricklayer, like my dad." Although he had his mind set on taking over the family business one day, Morgan Conus decided to serve

his apprenticeship with a competitor. In 2008, the 25-year-old obtained his Federal VET Diploma and joined the small business run by his father in Vuarmarens, just as he had planned as a child. But the young bricklayer did not stop there. He completed a team leader training course and began studying for a Federal PET Diploma as a construction foreman. He is still thinking about continuing his education by taking the Advanced Federal PET Diploma exams. "I love anything to do with masonry", he declares, citing the skills involved, human interaction and the construction site atmosphere as some of the reasons why he enjoys his work so much. The future company owner put this enthusiasm to good use in 2011, winning the Swiss masonry championship. That same year, he took bronze in the WorldSkills competition in London.



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CAITLIN BLUM TO LEARN ON THE JOB

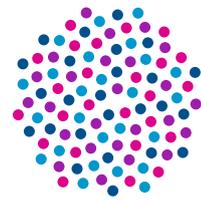
With her strong grasp of all things theoretical, it seemed that Caitlin Blum was destined to take the academic route. However, the young student had other ideas and decided to work as an apprentice laboratory assistant in the Chemistry Department of Fribourg University. "Spending years with my nose in books wasn't for me. I wanted to get out there and learn on the job." And she was right. At the inaugural SwissSkills competition, which was held in Bern in September 2014, the young scientist took gold in the laboratory assistant category. But far from resting on her laurels, Caitlin is more interested in thinking about the options open to her once she has served her three-year apprenticeship and passes her Federal Vocational Baccalaureate: "I could probably find a job in the pharmaceutical industry or continue my studies at the Fribourg School of Engineering. But I'm also drawn to forensics, though that would mean having to take a bridging course first." The promising young scientist seems spoiled for choice.



EDDY VOCAT MASTER CONFECTIONER AND MANAGER

Eddy Vocat is a man of many talents. The Manager of the Cailler chocolate factory in Broc – a role he took on in the summer of 2014 – has gotten where he is today thanks to an apprenticeship and BA that set him on course for an international career. Vocat did an apprenticeship as a pastry chef, confectioner and chocolatier in Valais, Switzerland in the late 1980s, before obtaining a BA in Food Science four years later: "I always wanted to do it," says Vocat. "As a child I always loved to bake with my mother, so this was the natural next step." His training stood him in good stead when he joined Nestlé in 1996, working on innovating the company's product line. "Each aspect of my training has brought me different skills," says Vocat. "My apprenticeship taught me to be good with people and to respect experience, and my BA taught me a lot about problem solving, which has been invaluable in every role since. I deal with apprentices a lot at Nestlé as well and feel it helps that I can put myself in their shoes because I have been there myself."

→ www.cailler.ch



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YVES RUBIN
CALIFORNIA
DREAMIN'

Yves Rubin has come a long way since he started school in the Fribourg countryside more than 40 years ago. After receiving his diploma in chemistry from the University of Fribourg in 1987, he headed off to UCLA in Los Angeles, initially to just help set up a lab, thanks to contacts his then professor had in the area. A PhD at UCLA followed in 1991 and after post-doctoral work at Columbia, he joined the faculty at UCLA in 1992, where he is now a faculty professor. "I'm very lucky that I did my main studies in Switzerland," says Rubin. "The education system is excellent and the university classes are much smaller in Switzerland than in the US. That suited me personally and prepared me really well for the future. In the US, I can teach undergrad classes of up to 350 students!" And despite the California sunshine, Rubin misses the "easy access to nature" that he took



for granted growing up in Switzerland. "I have two dogs and love hiking with them. You can be in the mountains so quickly in Switzerland – I miss that."

ANTON AEBY

FROM APPRENTICESHIP
TO DOCTORATE



Anton Aeby is living proof that you do not need to go to high school to get a doctorate from the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETHZ). The first rung on his career ladder was a job as an apprentice laboratory technician with the Institute for Organic Chemistry at Fribourg University. It was during this time that the local man discovered his passion for the subject. He then spent three years studying for a chemistry degree at the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture. "I had to take a one-year transfer course at Winterthur Engineering School before I was able to enrol at the ETHZ", recalls Mr. Aeby. Some years later, he embarked on an ETHZ doctoral program. With a PhD finally under his belt, the scientist was offered a job in the research & development unit of Basel firm Clariant AG. Today, he is project manager and chief safety officer with Basler Chemische Industrie Betriebs-AG, a company in charge of remediating the former hazardous waste landfill site of Bonfol, in the canton of Jura.

→ www.bci-info.ch

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The culinary profession is one of the most popular occupations among the 206 vocational education and training programs offered in the canton of Fribourg.



2

LIFEBLOOD OF INDUSTRY

Successful companies, as illustrated by many firms in the canton of Fribourg, not only embrace innovation but they also appreciate the vital role that a well-educated and highly qualified workforce plays in their survival and growth. This collective ability to adapt and move forward requires solid individual skill sets that must be nurtured and enhanced. With this in mind, several companies in the canton have pooled their training resources to ensure that the next generation of employees has the skills and knowledge needed to boost their productivity and give them a competitive edge. Likewise, other companies have opted to link with academic partners or develop and implement pioneering pilot projects. It is not only the company which benefits, but the economy as a whole.

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SWISS PLASTICS CLUSTER

PLASTICS ACADEMY PLANNED FOR WESTERN SWITZERLAND



"When the Swiss Plastics Cluster was created in 2005, one of the main goals of all the partners involved was improving the choice of training opportunities", recalls Jacques P. Bersier, coordinator of the Fribourg-based consortium which seems to boost the competitiveness and productivity of companies in the plastics industry. A working group was set up specifically to look into the issue of education and training. Currently, the Swiss Plastics Cluster, whose members are drawn from both academia and business, offers B2B conferences and courses dealing with a variety of subjects from quality, leadership, and safety, right up to injection faults. In addition to creating further education opportunities, the cluster has set itself the ambitious goal of creating a designated training center in Western Switzerland for budding specialists in synthetic materials. The planned facility will be based at Fribourg's blueFACTORY technology park.

→ www.swissplastics-cluster.ch



The 2014–2015 Fribourg Innovation Award went to Bumotec for its s100, a new generation of high-precision milling machine.



BUMOTEC INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE



Bumotec may be a leading manufacturer of machinery for high-end industries but a brutally competitive job market means that this firm, just like other companies in the sector, has to fight hard to attract top talent. To get around this problem, Bumotec (part of the Starrag Group since 2012) made the decision to step up its investment in young people. As Managing Director, Jean-Daniel Isoz explains: "We've taken on around 20 new staff members over the last two years. Half of them had recently completed either an apprenticeship or a vocational school." What are the benefits of hiring young professionals? "They come to us with the latest techniques and knowledge, which they can then pass on to their older colleagues", continues Isoz. Bumotec, which won the 2014–2015 Canton of Fribourg Innovation Award, has also introduced a mentoring program to ensure the swift and smooth integration of all its young employees.

→ www.bumotec.ch

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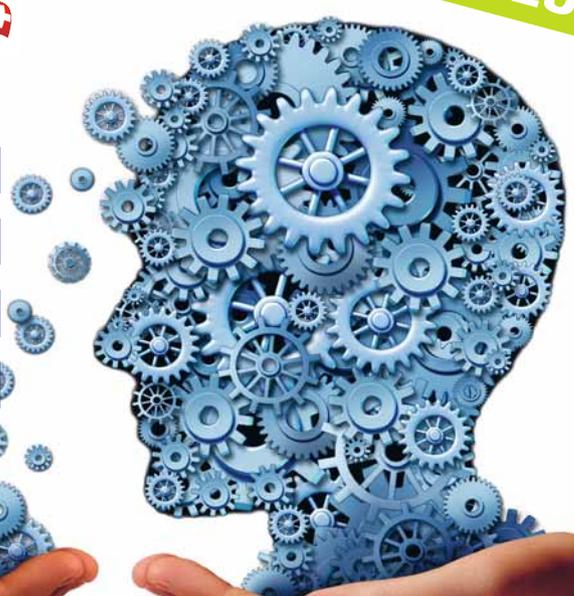
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EXTRAMET

YOUNG PEOPLE: THE KEY TO FUTURE SUCCESS



Extramet, a manufacturer of high-grade carbide components in Plaffeien, is committed to providing young people with a good future and regularly trains young apprentices. The company put considerable effort into establishing an occupational profile of an "industrial ceramics specialist", and offers young women and men apprenticeships as polymechanics (see *photograph*), logistics specialists and sales agents. It even offers younger school children "taster" apprenticeships to help them decide on the career path they want to take. Sylvia Hayoz, Apprenticeship Supervisor at Extramet, also works at a local secondary school where she coaches young people for job interviews and gives them feedback on their job applications. The Planfayon firm also takes on university graduates preparing to make the leap from academia to the world of work.

→ www.extramet.ch

GROUPE E

SAFETY TRAINING FOR ALL



"It is the culmination of 10 years' work." This is how Yves Bovay, Director of Human Resources at Groupe E, describes the prestigious Suva Safety Award, which the company won in 2013. Suva praised the electricity producer and supplier for the fact that it trains all new staff members. The HR man is quick to qualify this statement "Not only new staff but all of our employees working on

the ground. These 500 people receive at least two days' safety training a year". Groupe E has introduced a raft of other measures since setting up an in-house safety promotion unit in 2006. "Thanks to colossal awareness-raising efforts, safety has become an automatic reflex for all our employees, just like wearing a seatbelt."

→ www.groupe-e.ch



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TECHNOLOGY PARKS DREAM TEAMS

Fribourg's three technology parks, Le Vivier, Marly Innovation Center (MIC) and blueFACTORY, enjoy a complementary and collaborative working relationship. Whatever they do, it is not strictly in their own interests but for the broader benefit of the local economy.

For example, although still under development, blueFACTORY, in downtown Fribourg, concentrates its efforts on academia-industrial collaborations thanks to its highly specialized technology platforms, such as BCC (see p. 55), Innosquare (p. 45), SICCH (p. 63), and the Smart Living Lab (FNF 2014).

Le Vivier Park, in contrast, is much more industry-oriented, boasting state-of-the-art infrastructure and offering a vast range of services adapted to the training needs of its tenants. "Our meeting rooms and our one-hundred seat auditorium are ideal for seminars, training courses, conventions and strategic-planning workshops. We also have a permanent coaching team on site that

provides rapid and professional support to both start-ups and companies who are based at Le Vivier", explains Bernard Chassot, Director of Le Vivier. The Venturi incubator provides start-ups with tailor-made management, strategic, administrative and technical advice.

MIC was formerly home to the Adolphe Merkle Institute (p. 59) for six years. "As a result, we have a lot of classrooms and laboratory space that cater perfectly to the needs of a university research institute or similar facility", explains Jean Marc Métrailler, Managing Director of the Marly technology park. "Our premises are probably best suited to companies in the scientific industry because the entire chain of supply, production and removal of laboratory products, as well as air-conditioning, ventilation and fire safety systems have been designed precisely with this type of use in mind. Our conference rooms accommodate up to 120 people and can be booked year-round."

- www.bluefactory.ch
- www.marly-innovation-center.org
- www.vivier.ch

This building is the nerve center of Le Vivier Technology Park. As well as being home to a start-up incubator, there is a restaurant, an exhibition mall, conference rooms and a 100-seat auditorium.



FREWITT

CONTINUING EDUCATION: A WIN-WIN SITUATION

Continuing education and training is part of Frewitt's DNA. According to Antoine Viridis, Director of the Granges-Paccot company that specializes in high-tech solutions for mixing, dosing and transporting powders: "We organized 40 internal training courses and 27 external courses in 2014. Most of the in-house training programs dealt with subjects such as quality, safety, environment and machine maintenance, while the outsourced courses dealt with innovation and new technologies". One of the more original courses was on the use of social networks and was

aimed specifically at senior management. "Many of us use social networks in our private life. However, the aim of this course was to teach management how to use them effectively for professional and business purposes." Frewitt employees also attended continuing education courses on subjects such as maritime transport and free trade agreements. "For a company that exports 90% of its products, these courses were a no-brainer."

→ www.frewitt.com

SCOTT SPORTS TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

Scott Sports receives apprenticeship applications from across Europe. Here, in the Product Design Department, trainees benefit from one-to-one contact with the company's experts.



Scott Sports is famous around the world for its bikes, ski equipment and outdoor sports goods, but there is something else it does which attracts international attention, namely its training programs. "All our departments, whether engineering, product design, graphic design and marketing, mentor and train one to two apprentices for extended periods of time. These young people come from some of the best schools in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe, like Germany, France and the UK", explains Peter Naegeli, Art Director at Scott Sports in Givisiez. Attracted by the company's excellent reputation and international standing, "they are trained up by our specialists in a highly professional environment over a six-month period". Many obtain their qualifications while serving their apprenticeship and more than a few of them decide to stay in Fribourg. "We regularly hire former trainees. We value their skills, as they are already familiar with our working environment – the ideal set-up for all!", adds Peter Naegeli, proudly.

→ www.scott-sports.com

HOTEL MURTEN WHEN APPRENTICES RUN THE SHOW



Of the Hotel Murten's 60-strong workforce, around one dozen are apprentices.



For one week every year, the management of Hotel Murten hands over the reins to its apprentices. As Usko Wegmüller, a member of the board of directors, explains: "They are responsible for devising the restaurant's menu around a given theme, for example Austria. They have to decide on what goods need to be purchased and how the hotel should be decorated, and put together a budget for this expenditure. They also have to welcome and look after guests, take orders and much more. Our aim is to teach

our apprentices to work in a collaborative way. Future hotel and restaurant professionals, as well as chefs and sales personnel should understand how other sections of the hospitality industry work and how it all comes together to ensure the smooth running of a hotel. The board of directors takes a back seat, simply observing the apprentices in action and giving them useful tips, where necessary."

→ www.hotelmurten.ch

BCOMP ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO LAUNCH THEIR OWN START-UPS



"When Bcomp launched in 2011, it received generous support from the canton. It therefore seemed completely natural to us to give something back to the local economy", explains Cyrille Boinay, one of the two CEOs of the start-up specializing in organically-sourced composites. The company, which has its offices at the blueFACTORY innovation quarter, provides students at Fribourg's higher education facilities with topics for their dissertations and theses, and follows up on this work. "I also try to familiarize these young people with the inner workings of a start-up, with a view to motivating them to set up their own business." As a multi-award winner, including the 2014–2015 Innovation Award of the canton of Fribourg, Bcomp is swamped with requests for apprenticeships. "It's a win-win situation", declares the entrepreneur. "Students get the chance to work on real projects in a motivational environment, while we benefit from the constant stream of innovative ideas and knowledge of the latest trends that these young people bring."

→ www.bcomp.ch



This former Bcomp trainee, and graduate of the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture, was offered a permanent post by the Fribourg company.



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Liebherr Machines Bulle SA belongs to the component division of the Liebherr Group. As a subsidiary of Liebherr-Component Technologies AG, it operates a very modern production plant where drive and control components for Liebherr construction machinery are developed and manufactured. The company covers a total surface area of over 118,000 m² and currently employs more than 1,000 people. In Bulle, in the canton of Freiburg, eleven different categories of diesel

engines, from 130 kW to 750 kW, and gas engines in performance classes 100 kW to 516 kW, are developed and produced. For almost 30 years, Liebherr has developed and manufactured hydraulic axial piston pumps and motors as well as hydraulic valves and components. A range of gearboxes complete the offer. These complete systems with multiple hydraulic circuits equip our machines with a modern and powerful drivetrain.

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LIEBHERR

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Since its introduction three years ago, the mechanical engineering program has become a popular choice among students.



LIEBHERR MACHINES BULLE PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

In 2012, the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture (HEIA-FR) introduced a bilingual option in its mechanical engineering degree program. The one-semester "drive technology" course offers third-year undergraduates the chance to study pure mechanics, with subjects ranging from motorization and hydraulic pumps and engines, right up to machine design and computer-integrated manufacturing. What sets this course apart from others is the fact that it is the product of a public-private partnership between the Cantonal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the HEIA-FR, and Liebherr Machines Bulle (LMB), a company specialized in

the development and manufacture of high-performance diesel and gas engines, injection systems, hydraulic components and distribution gear. While LMB covers the costs, the HEIA-FR controls course content and the appointment of teaching staff.

All of the partners are delighted with the initial results. "The course has proven very popular since it was introduced three years ago. In the 2014–2015 academic year, almost half of our third-year students chose it", notes Bernard Masserey, Co-Director of the Mechanical Engineering degree program at HEIA-FR. He attributes this success to two factors: "Of course, Liebherr is a major draw given that it

is one of the largest companies in the region as well as being a leader in its field. The second reason is the desire among students to do something practical and get their hands dirty again".

This view is echoed by LMB: "Our seminars and practical modules on subjects such as decontamination, internal combustion engines, injection systems and hydrostatics have been particularly popular", confirms LMB Managing Director, Claude Ambrosini. "This partnership means that we can source the highly qualified labor we need right here in Fribourg rather than having to look abroad."

→ www.liebherr.com
→ www.heia-fr.ch

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ÉCOLE DU MÉTAL SHARED INVESTMENT IN THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

In an increasingly competitive market, metal construction companies need to be able to attract and hold on to their well-qualified workers if they are to survive and grow. This was the reason why four of Fribourg's leading metal construction firms (Constructeurs Métalliques Associés SA, Progin SA, R. Morand & Fils SA et Sottas SA) joined forces to launch an innovative project to create a private apprenticeship training facility. Originally the brainchild of Bernard Sottas, the *Ecole du Métal* (School of Metal) in Bulle opened its doors in 2006. First-year students attend classes given by in-house teaching staff and spend one day per week at Fribourg vocational college. In their second year, they return to their respective companies to serve out their apprenticeship.

"In some ways the *Ecole du Métal* acts as a kind of bridge between the world of education and the world of work",

explains Pierre-André Woeffray, who worked in the industry for 40 years before becoming the principal of the school, where he also teaches. "In the past, young people were simply parachuted into a company. Some found it difficult to adapt to the new situation and the drop-out rate was relatively high." The launch of the facility structure – a first for the metal construction sector – has led to a drastic fall in the number of apprentices abandoning their training, and better results for those who stay. In his miniature metal construction workshop, which can seat around 20, Pierre-André Woeffray teaches the young students the basics, while instilling in them the love and enthusiasm that he also has for his profession. In summer 2015, the metal construction engineer and his students will move to new premises. The future is certainly looking bright for this groundbreaking training facility.

→ www.ecole-du-metal.ch

Apprentices spend their first year acquiring on-the-job training. Afterwards they attend vocational college where they develop the broader skills that their future occupation requires.





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In every Nespresso production center, several hundred cups of green coffee and finished product are tasted daily as part of the company's rigorous quality management system.



NESPRESSO MAKING TRAINING A SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Although construction work only began less than two years ago, the Romont site, the third of Nespresso's production centers, has been dispatching its coffee capsules since January 2015. Among its 100 employees (and growing) are the sensory technicians. It is they who guarantee the unmistakable quality of the Nespresso "grands crus" range. A huge responsibility given that only 2% of the world's coffee beans meet these high standards.

"Any employee can be trained as a professional taster", explains Laurent Coste, Quality Manager at the other Nespresso production center in Avenches. "When it comes to green coffee (ed.: lightly roasted coffee beans), though, there are only 25 approved tasters in our Avenches panel, as well as around 10 trainee sensory technicians. However, they perform these tasting duties alongside their full-time jobs in the production, roasting or technical services departments." The Romont production center has also adopted this set-up.

Basic training teaches future sensory technicians to recognize the basic tastes: acidic, bitter, sweet and salty. They then move on to identifying defects and the specific aromatic qualities of coffee beans from a given region. "Brazilian coffee, for example, has a certain sweetness, while there is an acidic yet slightly fruity note in Colombian coffee", explains the quality manager. It takes between 6 and 18 months to train coffee tasters, with all trainees taking part in two to three sensory analysis meetings every week.

When the Romont production center hits cruising speed, between 300 and 500 cups of green coffee or finished product will be tasted every day as part of the company's stringent quality control procedure. As Laurent Coste explains, the main goal is to "make sure that our customers always enjoy the best possible cup of coffee."

→ www.nestle-nespresso.com



HEAD OF THE CANTONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICE

CHRISTOPHE NYDEGGER

Switzerland has the lowest youth (15–24 age group) unemployment rate in Europe. Is this a result of our dual education system, which combines practical on-the-job training with classroom-based instruction?

The great strength of the dual vocational education and training (VET) system is that it operates in sync with the labor market. By offering training programs that closely match the professional qualifications sought by employers and the job opportunities that are effectively available, the system offers young people a fast track to gainful employment. Once in the workplace, they very quickly pick up the additional social and occupational skills they need.

What advantages does the dual system offer firms that take on apprentices?

Firms are direct beneficiaries of a well-functioning VET system, because it provides them with a constant stream of young skilled workers. Study after study has shown that for the overwhelming majority of the 250 occupations concerned, training an apprentice is a worthwhile undertaking for companies.

Does the canton of Fribourg excel in any particular field?

Compared to their peers in the rest of Switzerland, proportionally more young people from Fribourg study for a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB) while serving their apprenticeship. Holders of a FVB can then continue their education at a University of Applied Sciences (UAS) or, providing they satisfy certain conditions, a cantonal university or one of the two Federal Institutes of Technology.

→ www.fr.ch/sfp



DIRECTOR OF THE INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION CENTER (CPI)

STÉPHANE ROLLE

With around 4,000 enrollees every year, the CPI is the leading adult education provider in the canton of Fribourg. Which are your most popular courses?

Human resources, management, IT, crafts, and teaching are the most popular modules and programs. 45% of our students work in the public sector, 25% come from the private sector and 30% are private individuals..

What are currently the main growth areas?

HR-related professions have changed considerably in recent years. Although HR is still concerned primarily with the administrative and extremely operational aspects of managing a workforce, the approach has become more holistic. HR now also addresses problems such as executive succession planning, corporate culture and better employee retention. Among the management-related professions, I am struck by the greater value that is now placed on leadership and project management skills. The cross-cutting nature of these skills means that other sectors like finance, mechanics and construction can also be brought on board.

What do you think will be the next key trend?

I'm pretty sure that the prevention of psychosocial risks affecting workers' mental and physical health is going to be a major trend in adult education over the coming years. Demand for this type of course already exists and we are currently working with the health promotion agency PRO BEST to design an occupational health diploma program.

→ www.cpi.ch

CSD INGÉNIEURS

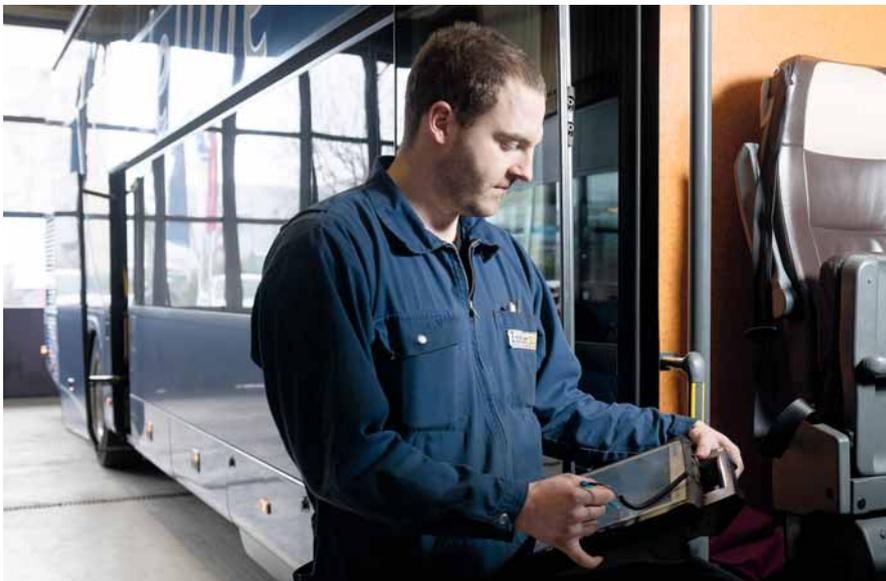
SANDWICHES WITH A SIDE ORDER OF BRAINS

Providing attractive career prospects, nurturing the skill set of every employee, and keeping pace with latest technological advances are the three priorities of the continued education and training policy pursued by the CSD Ingénieurs group. "Most of our 550 employees will, at some point, take the lead in one of our projects", explains Laurent Idoux, Managing Director of the Fribourg branch of the international engineering consultancy firm. This stance is reflected in the company's ambitious continuing education and training structure, the CSD Academy. As well as providing all new employees with the necessary

basic training, the academy offers a wealth of courses at differing levels and on a wide range of subjects, such as project management, finance and general management. "These modules not only give our employees an opportunity to develop existing skills and acquire new ones, but they also help us to hold on to our talented workforce", adds Laurent Idoux. In addition to nationally stipulated training reviews, CSD regularly organizes brown-bag seminars. As the Managing Director explains: "These in-house sessions last around one-hour and employees are free to opt out."

→ www.csd.ch

INTERBUS BRINGING TRAINING BACK HOME



The new Interbus maintenance and repair center in Kerzers is set to open in April 2015. The Fribourg company, which is an official partner of Evobus, a manufacturer of Mercedes-Benz and Setra buses and coaches, firmly believes that education and training will help it sharpen and maintain its competitive edge. "Our new premises, which will cost an estimated

10 million francs, will allow us to organize in-house training courses for our dozen or so mechanics, coachbuilders and auto electricians", explains Michel Kaltenrieder, Co-Owner and Technical Director of Interbus. "Until now, we had to send our employees to France or Germany. The center will also become the training platform in Western Switzerland

for Evobus clients". Given ever-changing norms that require regular technical updates, Mr. Kaltenrieder adds: "These changes not only concern the engine, but also the entire drive assembly, coachwork and hybrid technology, which is a high-growth segment. As a result, we need to make sure that both our vehicles and our workforce are always up to speed."

→ www.interbus.ch

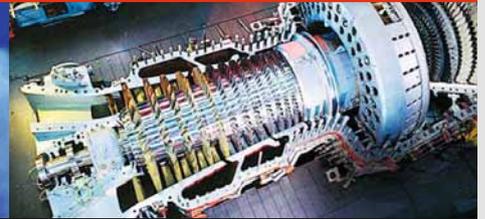
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INNOSQUARE/ROSAS
AN AMBITIOUS
TECHNOLOGICAL
ALLIANCE

The Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture (HEIA-FR) has teamed up with three global industry leaders based in the canton to create ROSAS (Robust and Safe Systems Center) in Fribourg. Johnson Electric International, Liebherr Machines Bulle, and Meggitt Sensing Systems will join forces with the Institute of Intelligent and Safe Systems (ISIS) of the HEIA-FR in this ambitious new center of excellence – the first of its kind for the technology and innovation platform Innosquare. Their mission is to pool the individual strengths and skills of each partner to carry-out applied research and development projects in the growing field of robust and safe embedded systems. “These independent electronic systems, which combine both software and hardware, are an ever more prevalent part of day-to-day life. For example, there are plans in the near future to use such systems in driverless cars (see photograph) to help ensure the highest levels of safety and security, no matter what”, explains Pascal Bovet, professor at the HEIA-FR and Head of Strategic Projects of the Innosquare platform.

“As a truly national center of competence, ROSAS will help us develop and test the latest and most advanced methodologies, especially those for optimizing product robustness and safety. Of course, this gives our industrial partners a huge competitive edge”, adds Yvan Bourqui, Head of Global Engineering at Johnson Electric.

ROSAS has set itself the goal of building a 20-strong team of researchers, which will be based at the blueFACTORY technology park and will include professors, students and experts from the three industrial partners. Peter Kupferschmied, Vice-President Engineering & Technology at Meggitt Sensing Systems, could not be happier: “Together, academic and industry partners will develop new building blocks based on real needs. The campus will be like a nursery, where these technological seedlings can grow and mature. blueFACTORY is the ideal place to foster such exchanges.”

- www.innosquare.com
- www.johnsonelectric.com
- www.liebherr.com
- www.meggittsensing.com

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WIFAG-POLYTYPE TRAINING – PART OF THE COMPANY'S DNA



Close to 40% of Wifag-Polytype employees were trained in-house.



At Wifag-Polytype, training is an integral part of its organizational culture. "Over our 50-year history, we have trained more than 1,000 technical apprentices", explains François Butty, Director of Human Resources at the Fribourg-based company, which specializes in printing systems and machinery for the packaging industry. The company has even gone so far as to create its own in-house training center, which produced around 20 qualified young workers every year. "Over the last few years other companies have outsourced the basic training of their apprentices to us, in other words the first two years of the vocational training course." The training prowess of Wifag-Polytype has also not gone unnoticed by the Fribourg Mechanics, Electricity and Machinery Association (Frimeca). It has joined forces with the company to create an independent facility based around the company's in-house training center. As the HR director explains, "Demand for vocational training continues to rise, making it increasingly difficult for employers to shoulder the burden of providing basic training alone. Pooling our resources is the perfect solution!"

→ www.wifag-polytype.com

CISEL MAKING LEARNING FUN



"A company is made up of a chain of interlinked activities. The more the workforce is familiar with each individual link, the better they understand and accept the company's general operational structure." It is this thinking which motivated Nicolas Roch-Neirey, CEO of Cisel, to try out an experimental training exercise in 2014. "A dozen employees drawn from all areas of the company took part in a two-day training workshop, built around a board game and led by an external consultant." As explained by the CEO of this company specializing in the outsourcing of IT systems, printing services, and the integrated management of SAP, this approach made it possible to address a wide range of issues, from managing customer relations to handling the company budget, in an unconventional way. "Even our more number-phobic employees were intrigued by this game-based training exercise. It was an out-and-out success!" So much so, that the Matran-based company plans to hold similar workshops in the coming years.

→ www.cisel.ch

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Offizielle Vertretungen / Représentations officielles



The pilot Junior Shop project in Dürdingen could be rolled out across the country.



SWISSCOM

TRAINEES AT THE HELM OF FIRST SWISSCOM JUNIOR SHOP

Anyone who has visited the Swisscom Shop in Dürdingen since the end of August 2014 will have been served by a team of retail trainees. It is the company's first Junior Shop in Switzerland, an innovative idea that allows future retail professionals to hone their business skills under supervision. At the Dürdingen shop, the nine-member team is in charge of planning, shop layout and sales. "The company is providing us with the opportunity to further develop ourselves during our apprenticeship and put our skills to the test", explains shop manager, Maria Veronica. The team also has two specialists in the back office who are there to advise them, where necessary. "The Junior

Shop has been a really positive experience for me. I've become much more independent and have a better grasp of what management actually means", continues Maria Veronica, who is delighted that customers are also happy with the services that she and her team provide.

Swisscom currently employs some 850 apprentices, offering training in six different occupations. With the launch of the first Junior Shop in Switzerland, the company has introduced a new approach to training the retail professionals of the future. For Emanuel Jungo, director of the Midlands marketing region, it is important that the team of trainees

enjoy complete autonomy if they are to improve their business skills. "The Junior Shop is the ideal environment for trainees to develop their sense of responsibility and to think and act like a business person", he explains. "We're very happy with how the project is going so far and are really proud of our trainees. We've had great feedback from our customers who are impressed with the specialized expertise and friendly and professional service they have received", he adds. "I have a super team who are fun to work with, treat me with respect and trust me", declares the young trainee store manager.

→ www.swisscom.ch

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ACPC

Now in its fifth year, **START!**, an interactive career fair, which is jointly organized by cantonal agencies and local employers, attracted more than 23,000 visitors in February 2015.





THE GLUE THAT HOLDS SOCIETY TOGETHER

The principles that underpin education are the same as those which underpin modern society: personal development, economic prosperity and social cohesion. Driven by a shared vision and common interests, the public sector, academia and industry work together, pool their resources, form alliances, and design and pursue innovative collaborative projects that meet the real needs of a plural and rapidly changing world.

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in the heart
of Fribourg**



A MODEL EDUCATION SYSTEM

At the end of their compulsory schooling, young people in Switzerland who wish to continue their education have three avenues open to them.

Vocational education and training, better known as the apprenticeship system, is practice-oriented. Education and training are provided by either a host company or in a school setting.

Specialized middle schools provide young people with the general knowledge and soft skills required by their chosen profession (primarily health-care, education and social work).

Senior high schools provide instruction in languages, human sciences, natural sciences, mathematics and arts. Holders of a high-school diploma (or Baccalaureate) can enroll in a cantonal university, a Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL/ETHZ) or a University of Teacher Education (HEP).

One aspect that singles out the Swiss education system from other national systems is the many **bridging courses** which are open to holders of Federal VET Diploma (CFC), an upper-secondary diploma, a high-school diploma or a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate. These courses allow students wishing to enroll in a more specialized higher education program to acquire the additional knowledge that such a course demands.

Holders of a high-school diploma, a specialized baccalaureate or a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate have the option of entering higher education.

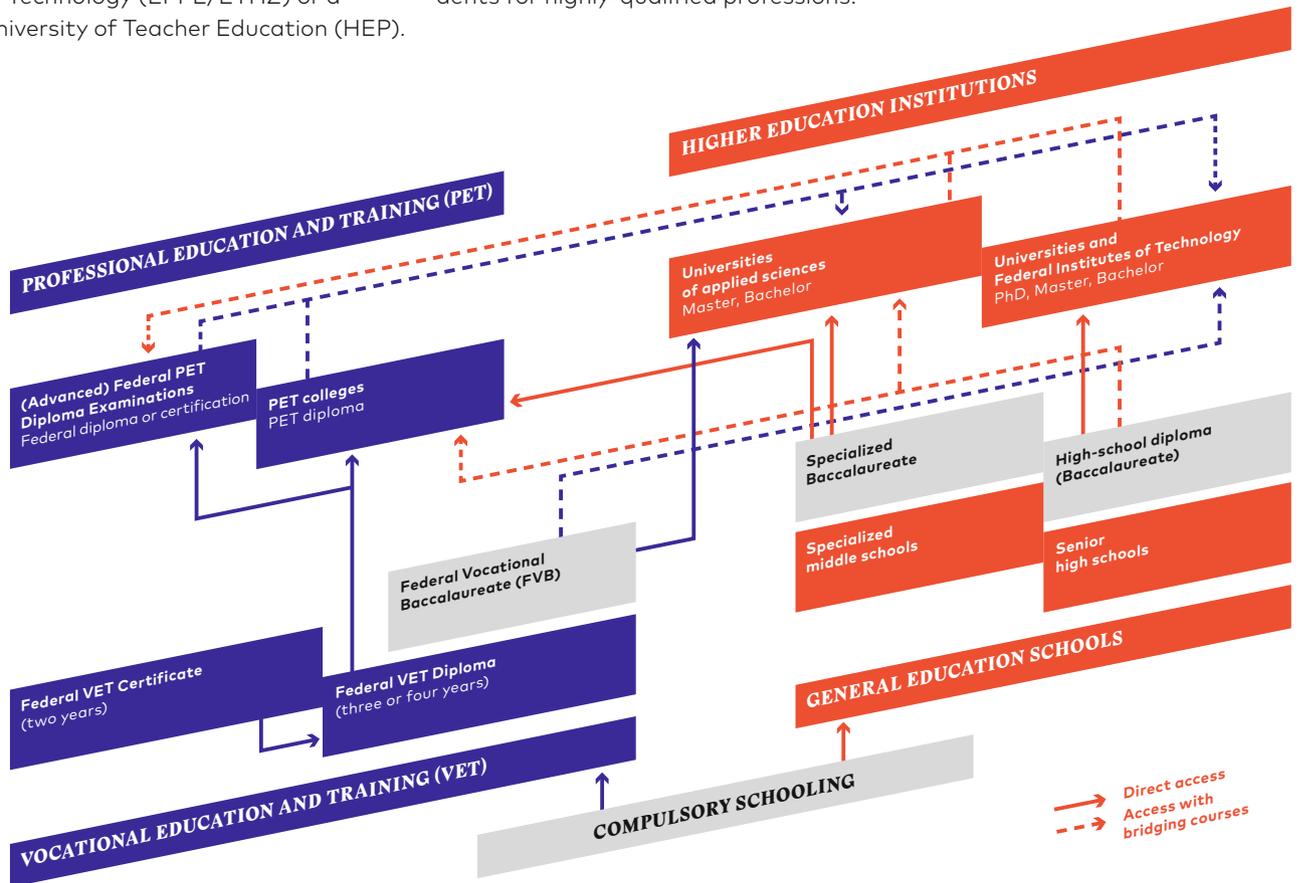
Switzerland's ten **universities** – which include Fribourg University – and the **Federal Institutes of Technology** (in Lausanne and Zurich, with an outpost in Fribourg) offer an academic and scientific education that prepares students for highly-qualified professions.

Universities of Applied Sciences, of which there are five in the canton of Fribourg, equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for highly qualified and executive positions in sectors such as architecture, engineering, industry, design, health-care and social work.

Universities of Teacher Education train future pre-school and primary school teachers.

Professional education and training colleges dispense a practice-oriented education that equips students to pursue a managerial or executive career.

→ www.educa.ch





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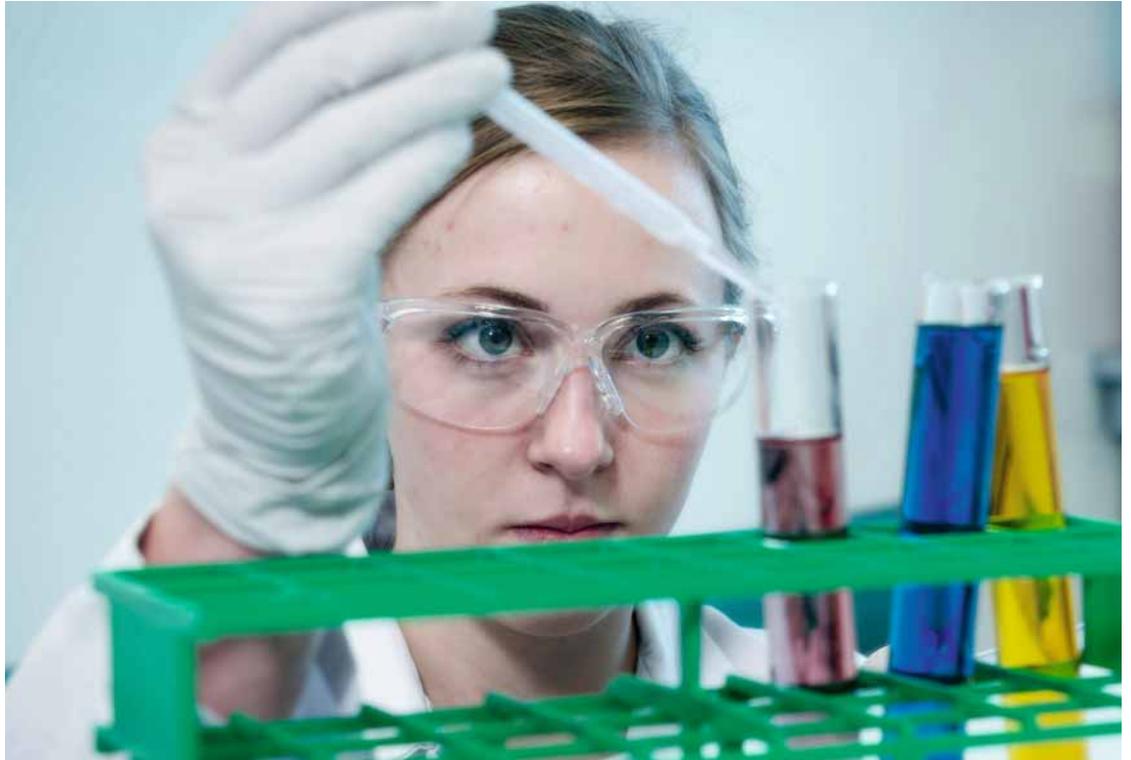
SCOTT E-SPARK

SCOTT-SPORTS.COM

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 **SCOTT**

Biotech and pharma professionals, such as these specialists from UCB Farchim, will now be able to train at the new BioFactory Competence Center in Fribourg.



BIOFACTORY COMPETENCE CENTER A PIONEERING MODEL FACTORY IN THE HEART OF FRIBOURG

"We were immediately won over by the BioFactory Competence Center (BCC) project", recalls Amer Jaber, Chief Executive of UCB Farchim. So much so that the biotech company based in Bulle and subsidiary of the Belgian UCB group, decided to help fund the future center of expertise, which will be based at the blueFACTORY innovation quarter. This ambitious project includes the creation of a model factory equipped with all the infrastructure of a biotech firm. As well as sharing its specialist knowledge, the BCC will provide basic and advanced training to biopharmaceutical professionals

at all levels. "Why go to facilities like MIT (Ed.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology) for advice, when you can get it closer to home?" asks Ian Marison, the future director of the new structure.

Amer Jaber points out that Western Switzerland, including the canton of Fribourg, is one of the most dynamic pharmaceutical and biotech regions in the world despite the fact that "there is currently no facility in Switzerland that trains both bioreactor operators and supervisors, or even managers of biotech firms". Industry professionals are either recruited from other

sectors, or trained directly by their employer. The BCC aims to pool its resources, "which will not only save time, but also increase effectiveness and acquire new fields of expertise". Focused on production processes rather than on theory, the future organization "will work hand in hand with industry and academic partners such as the Fribourg School of Engineering". The BCC, virtually the only structure of its kind in Europe, "will also attract foreign interest", and will allow home firms such as UCB "to keep pace with the latest scientific advances and ensure that our workforce remains highly motivated".

→ www.bcc.ch
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BLUE MAGIC CLUB SCIENCE CLUB FOR 6 TO 16-YEAR OLDS



Laure Schönenberger is sure about one thing: "When it comes to innovation, you need to catch them when they're young!" At the end of 2014, the Marketing Director of Fribourg's innovation quarter, blueFACTORY, and a team of volunteers launched the *Blue Magic Club*, a project aimed at engaging 6 to 16-year-olds in the "magical world of science". In the beginning, the non-profit association will run workshops on four subjects – chemistry, IT, the human brain and ecology – but plans to expand its activities in the future. There is also an online platform which, as the President of the association explains, was set up with a view to "creating a real community of interest where young learners can share their ideas and passion for innovation." The platform is also a good way of attracting budding scientists from other cantons to the Blue Magic Club. The established scientific community wholeheartedly welcomes this initiative, with Ms Schönenberger proudly declaring that: "We've received nothing but positive feedback!"

→ www.bluemagic.club

FRIBOURG UNIVERSITY RAISING THE PROFILE OF FAMILY MEDICINE

The canton of Fribourg, like Switzerland as a whole, is currently suffering from a shortage of family physicians. This state of affairs has prompted Fribourg University to devise a Masters program in Human Medicine, which aims to train around ten general physicians every year in a bid to overcome this shortfall. "Rather than continuing their education in one of the five specialist faculties in Switzerland, holders of a Bachelor's degree in medicine from Fribourg University can continue their training with a three-year

Master's program", explains Eric Rouiller, head of the Medicine Department of Fribourg University. So, what is the program's USP? "It will give medical students a taste of the world of family medicine by allowing them to work as interns in a hospital and by involving working family physicians in the program as part-time lecturers." Despite the positive findings of a feasibility study commissioned by the cantonal government, the Master's program project is still a work in progress.

→ www.unifr.ch

INSTITUT ADOLPHE MERKLE A NEW MASTERS PROGRAM FOR THE RESEARCH ELITE



According to Christoph Weder, Director of the prestigious Adolphe Merkle Institute (AMI): "Universities consider education and research as an inseparable whole." Keen to make knowledge transfer a core part of the activities of the Fribourg nanomaterials center of expertise, Weder and his management team decided to launch an interdisciplinary Masters in Soft Matter. The program, which is offered jointly by Fribourg University (to which AMI belongs), is open to Swiss and foreign holders of a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Material Sciences or Biomedical Engineering. "We intend to painstakingly review the quality of each application we receive", adds Weder who explains that student intake on the program will be set at around 20 per year.

The institute, which was founded in 2008 thanks to a private donation of 100 million francs, can well afford to be selective since nearly

three-quarters of its 80 researchers are young doctoral or post-doctoral students from abroad, hailing from some of the best universities in the world. "This situation has led me to conclude that the AMI has a good reputation and that it is positioning itself well as an education provider", the director proudly declares. The institute intends to bolster its leading status in the field of bionanomaterials, polymers, physics and biophysics. Having taken over the former premises of the Clinique Garcia in September 2014, and following renovation work costing 50 million francs, the Adolphe Merkle Institute forecasts that in a few years' time it will have a 120-strong workforce. This scientific elite will also benefit from the constant inflow and outflow of promising young researchers. "One of the major advantages of working almost exclusively with doctoral and post-doc students is that they come and go, which means that we enjoy a continual supply of innovative ideas."

→ www.am-institute.ch

Three-quarters of the 80 researchers at AMI are foreign doctoral or post-doctoral students; proof, if any were needed, of the international renown and prestige enjoyed by the institute.



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One of the main tasks of the Fribourg Economic Observatory is to provide a snapshot of the cyclical and structural state of companies based in the canton.

FRIBOURG ECONOMIC OBSERVATORY INTERNSHIPS FOR PROMISING YOUNG TALENT

The Fribourg Economic Observatory, the only initiative of its kind in Switzerland, has decided, for the second time, to focus its energies on tackling the labor shortage problem. "In 2014 we noted that there was a deficit of at least nine qualified employees per company", explains Paul Coudret, coordinator of this new economic monitoring center, which is a public-private partnership involving the Chamber of Commerce, the cantonal bank, the cantonal government, academia and industry. Those in charge of running the observatory responded by issuing a series of recommendations, which included

stepping up collaboration between universities and industry, and offering businesses the opportunity of employing young graduates on a six-month internship.

"Companies sometimes have to drop projects due to a lack of staff. Yet, some of these projects match the research requirements of Bachelor and Masters programs run by the School of Management and the School of Engineering and Architecture, adds Paul Coudret. In July 2014, the Chamber of Commerce and the Fribourg Economic Observatory launched

an initiative to link up education providers and the business community. "Companies send us their proposals. We check that these satisfy the requirements that the students must meet to complete their course and then we pass them on to the universities." The company manages the internship, while the University oversees the general terms and conditions, such as salary levels. Initial feedback has been positive, with the coordinator citing the example of a student who developed a lifting clamp for a manufacturing company that allowed it to save 880 working hours per year.



**STATE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION,
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

MAURO DELL'AMBROGIO

What developments can we expect in the world of vocational education and training in 2015?

We have set ourselves the following priorities: promoting higher vocational education and training (PET), the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate, access to Universities of Applied Sciences, and vocational qualifications for adults, as well as stepping up the provision of careers, study and professional development advice. For each priority, there will be an accompanying set of measures, such as the package of PET measures which have received the Federal Council's seal of approval.

What do you hope to achieve?

By promoting and enhancing PET, we hope to improve the standing of vocational qualifications and at the same time ensure that Swiss demand for skilled labor can be met. As of mid-2017, those taking courses to prepare for federal exams will receive financial support from the federal government in the form of direct subsidies. A draft of the partial revision of the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act is currently at the consultation stage.

At the higher education level, you're mulling over the possibility of introducing part-time Master's programs. Why?

For me, part-time Master's programs could help fix the current skills shortage in Switzerland. Employers will be able to tap well-qualified young workers much earlier if these young people are able to work in their chosen occupational field and complete their studies at the same time. It would also mean that Switzerland would be much less reliant on skilled labor from abroad. A part-time Master's program would be particularly well-suited to law, business, and teacher training students.

→ www.sbfi.admin.ch



**CANTONAL MINISTER OF
PUBLIC EDUCATION**

JEAN-PIERRE SIGGEN

The findings of the last PISA survey, which evaluates and compares the education systems in the 34 OECD countries and 31 partner economies, provides further proof that Fribourg has an excellent education system.

Indeed. In French-speaking Switzerland, Fribourg pupils lead the class in math and science, and place second in reading. That is why they are at the top of the international leader board. Furthermore, the gap between the best-performing and the worst-performing pupils is narrowing, which is proof that our school system is pretty egalitarian.

Given that Fribourg is a bilingual canton, how much value does it place on language teaching?

The canton of Fribourg has always placed great importance on pupils learning either French or German as a second language, as well as English. The canton introduced a language concept in 2010 which strengthens existing language-learning programs at all education levels. The new bilingual high-school curricula have been a resounding success so far. Already, more than one-third of pupils have selected this option for the 2014–2015 academic year.

Work on revising the Cantonal Schools Act is scheduled to finish in 2015.

This new legislation, which is the result of more than 10 years of continual dialogue between all partners concerned, highlights the dynamism of our school system. The new act will provide our schools with the resources they need to adapt with the times, innovate, and rise to the challenges of a fast-changing society.

→ www.fr.ch/dics

SICCH DRIVING INNOVATION

Providing companies, scientists and clinicians with advanced equipment and highly specialized skills is the mission of the Swiss Integrative Center for Human Health (SICHH), a public-private partnership launched by the University of Fribourg and Fribourg Hospital in 2012, which specializes in fields such as medical technology, biotechnology, food technology and all areas related to human health. "By letting start-ups, SMEs and major groups outsource all or part of their R&D activities, SICHH drives innovation and guarantees that projects are managed proficiently and professionally", explains Jean-Marc Brunner, Director of the SICHH.

The center also has its own "Forum", where academics and business people can brainstorm and share experiences and ideas. "Our aim is to nurture an enduring networking culture and strengthen synergies between the various disciplines. Helped by its great geographical location within Switzerland and Europe, we want to make Fribourg the European hub in the field", the

Director adds. Academic partners include the Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics (SIB), the Swiss Center for Electronics and Microtechnology (CSEM), the *Cardiocentro Ticino*, the Foundation for Cardiology Research and Education (FCRE), the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland (HES-SO), the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture (EIA-FR) and the Universities of Fribourg and Neuchâtel. "We are currently in talks with around 15 manufacturers of high-tech appliances, who have expressed an interest in collaborating with our center of expertise", reveals Jean-Marc Brunner, with a smile.

Working with an initial budget of 12 million francs, SICHH has set itself the longer-term goal of becoming financially self-sufficient. The center, which is based in 1,200 m² offices in the Fribourg technology park blueFACTORY, is currently preparing for the launch of its new platforms in summer 2015.

→ www.sichh.ch

The mission of the SICHH is to strengthen synergies between human health-related disciplines.





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CLEANTECH FRIBOURG

WINNING THE PUBLIC SECTOR ROUND TO CLEANTECH

When Cleantech Fribourg was launched in 2010, the range of further education opportunities in relation to sustainable development “was pretty limited”, recalls the Director, David Avery. When it was launched by the cantonal Scientific and Technological Center (PST-FR), the platform organized courses specifically geared towards businesses. A few years later, the picture was very different. “Most professional organizations had launched their own training modules on subjects such as the installation of solar panels

and insulation.” Cleantech therefore needed to re-think its original mission. As well as running clean technology awareness campaigns, the platform is involved in organizing ad hoc training courses aimed at the public sector. For example, David Avery is in charge of the CAS (Certificate of Advanced Studies) Energy City course at the HES-SO, which is targeted at local government officials with responsibility for energy-related issues.

→ www.cleantech-fr.ch



The ZiG project nurtures the critical faculties of high-school students.

FREIBURGER NACHRICHTEN

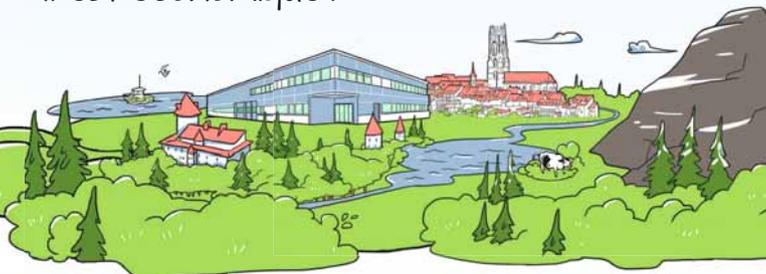
AN INNOVATIVE NEWS LITERACY PROJECT

During the 2014–2015 academic year, more than 300 students from five Fribourg high schools will get the chance to take a behind-the-scenes look at the newspaper industry thanks to a pioneering project “ZiG – Zeitung im Gymnasium”, the only one of its kind in Switzerland. Every day, the 15 classes taking part will receive a free copy of the local German-language daily, *Freiburger Nachrichten* (FN). Students will read, analyze and discuss the current affairs articles featured in the paper and in doing so, hone their media skills, improve their news literacy, and expand their all-round general knowledge. They will also pen their own articles to appear in the FN during the year. Project supervisor, Winfried Spiegel, from the IZOP Institute (Institute for Objectivizing Learning and Examination Processes) in Aachen, Germany, sums up the reasoning behind the project in four words: “Newspaper readers are smarter”. The FN Editor-in-Chief, Christoph Nussbaumer sees an additional benefit of the project – showing the younger generation that print media might be old but it still has much to offer: “Equipping young students to understand what connects a daily newspaper with other forms of media will improve their powers of critical discernment and therefore allow them to bring the deluge of information facing them as adults into better focus.”

→ www.freiburger-nachrichten.ch

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EIKON BEHIND THE SCENES AT MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL

The Fribourg International Film Festival, Art Basel, Montreux Jazz Festival and the *Festival Images de Vevey* are just a few of the major cultural events of international standing that Eikon has been involved in over the last couple of years. "Our students get a chance to immerse themselves in the world of project development. These projects can be either for the school or for our external partners", explains Nicolas Porchet, the creative brains behind Eikon, the Fribourg School of Art and Communication.

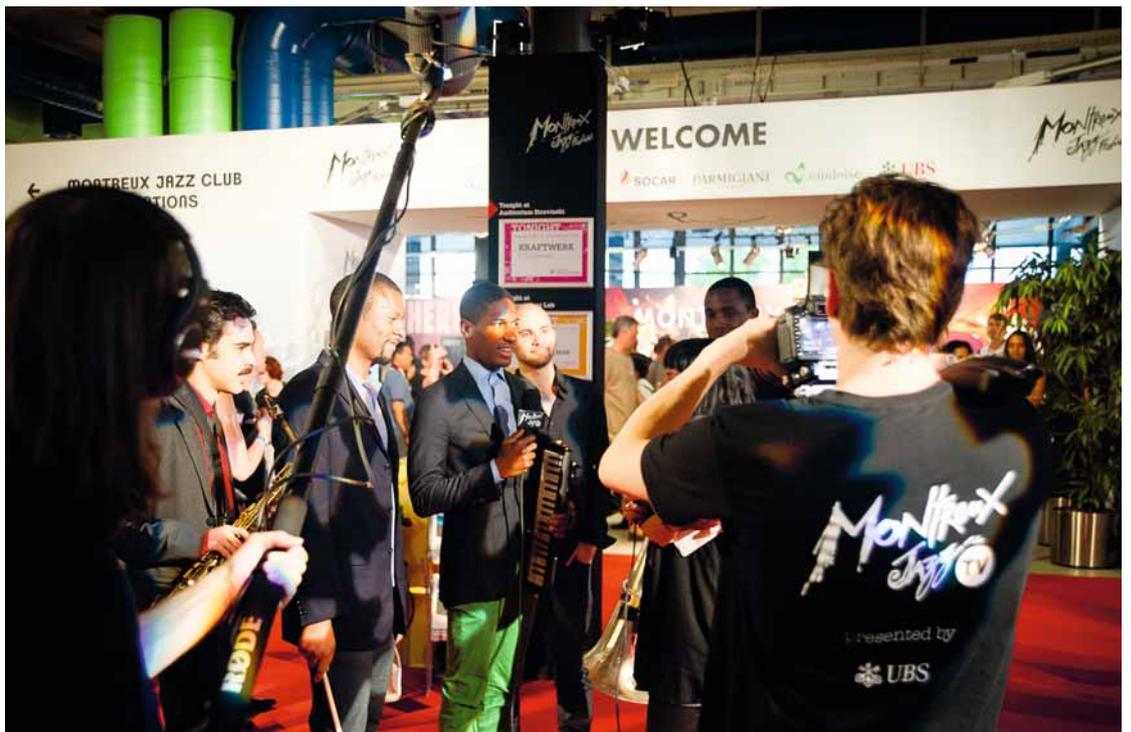
The partnership between Eikon and the Montreux Jazz Festival dates back to 2010. Four students who are nearing the end of their studies are put in charge of creating video content (interviews, ambient videos, clips from the many free concerts) for the 16-day-long festival's virtual channels. "The first artist we interviewed was none other than Carlos Santana. Not bad as far as baptisms of fire go!" recalls Porchet.

In 2012, Eikon and the festival organizers expanded their collaborative activities to include the publication of the *Montreux Jazz Chronicle*, the official festival daily featuring photos and articles in both English and French. "Some thirty people make the trip to Montreux every year. This is almost our entire production unit. It is a kind of communication research laboratory, where trainees can build on their knowledge and come face to face with the realities of working life. Through their collaboration with the Montreux Jazz Festival, students acquire skills in a range of fields such as web design, video-making, photography, graphic design, interactivity and journalism.

However, all of this requires a huge organizational effort said Nicolas Porchet, "The intensity of the work, the exacting quality standards as well as the tight deadlines require military-like discipline. Here, rigor and creativity go hand in hand."

→ www.emf.ch/eikon
→ www.montreuxjazz.com

Eikon students – here with the North American artist Jonathan Batiste in 2013 – design and develop the video content for Montreux Jazz Festival's WebTV.



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3D printers and laser cutting machines are just some of the state-of-the-art equipment available to FabLab members.

FABLAB FRIBOURG INFORMAL TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGICAL KNOW-HOW

Pooling technological resources and creating a community of individuals capable not only of exploiting these resources, but also transferring their know-how to their peers, are the objectives of FabLab Fribourg, an outpost of the international network of the same name. "The technology boom has had an alienating effect on people", explains Charly Pache, member of the founding committee of FabLab Fribourg, which was launched in October 2014 and based at the blueFACTORY. Private loans, *crowdfunding*, corporate donations and start-up funding from local government have allowed the laboratory founders to equip their premises with 3D printers, a laser cutting machine and other electronic devices. The general public and small businesses can use all of these appliances. All they need is a membership card and the payment of a small fee. "Our aim is to get people to start helping each other out."

→ www.fablab-fribourg.ch

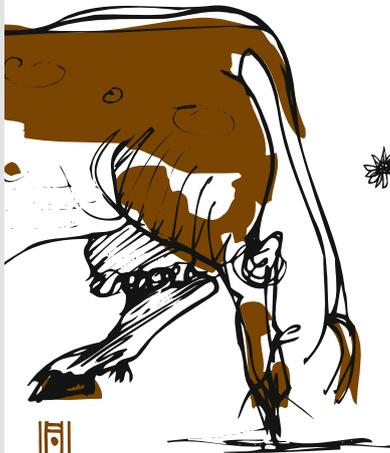
ACPC A PIONEERING FUNDING ARRANGEMENT

From the outset, the Cantonal Vocational Training Center Association (ACPC) has been a trailblazer, using both public and private funds to finance the regional VET system. In 2011 it celebrated its 50th anniversary in grand style, the highlight of which was undoubtedly the *Boucle* project (see *photograph*). This complex in downtown Fribourg includes a substantial school house, three sports halls and an array of additional facilities. "It is a perfect example of an integrated urban development project. The complex will provide an extension to the existing ACPC campus and enable students to make the most of everything that downtown Fribourg has to offer", explains Thierry Bruttin, cantonal architect and member of the ACPC committee. Around 6,000 people from across the canton attend dual education classes in an ACPC-managed building.

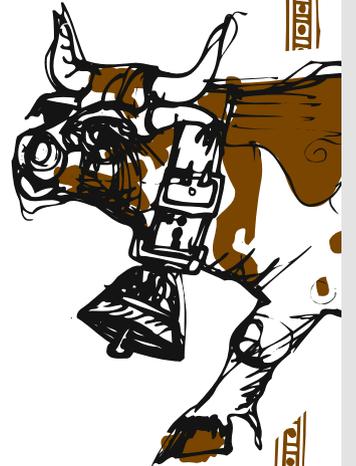


The canton, the home municipality of the student, the municipality where the student goes to school, and employers (companies) each contribute 25% to the funding of these premises. Any surplus from the employers' contributions is transferred to a foundation which helps fund intercompany courses and activities aimed at promoting education and training.

→ www.fr.ch/sfp/fr/pub/service/sfp_portrait_org/acpc.htm



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AUTHORS
Frank-Olivier Baechler
Patricia Michaud
Sara Seddon-Kilbinger
Arthur Zurkinden

TRANSLATIONS

Barbara Horber, Elaine Sheerin and
Clara Wubbe from Transit TXT SA

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Banque Lombard Odier & Cie SA · Bureau de Fribourg
Rue de la Banque 3, 1700 Fribourg
T 026 347 55 66 · fribourg@lombardodier.com

www.lombardodier.com

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