

THE FACE OF DIGITAL LEADERSHIP



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Why did you want to join TM Forum's board?

Life is for sharing – that is what Deutsche Telekom stands for. TM Forum is a great place for sharing ideas, experiences, vision and perspectives. The digital future holds great opportunities and risks for telcos. The Forum can make a contribution to shape a positive future for the industry and its customers.

How does your vision for digital leadership align with TM Forum?

Digital puts the customer in the centre as opposed to the product or service. Also open architectures are becoming the new normal. I find these well reflected in TM Forum's Open Digital Architecture approach. In order to achieve digital leadership, culture and empowerment are key for me. This aspect can probably be strengthened in TM Forum.

What do you want TM Forum to achieve in the next 2 years?

TM Forum should make a strong contribution to defining and establishing an open architecture in the industry that spans the IT and NT realms.

Where were you educated?

I received a Masters in Mathematics and Physics from Universität Bielefeld in Germany – working for example on generalized functions over infinite-dimensional spaces. McKinsey & Company introduced me to the world of business and finance. I completed my academic education with a PhD in Financial Mathematics on “quantile hedging” and I have been learning on the job ever since.

Describe a typical day.

Luckily my days are very different. I try to find the right balance between operational issues and leading change and cultural evolution. While there are more and more agile formats and open discussions, there are still too many traditional corporate meetings for my taste.

What do you consider your biggest professional achievement?

Co-leading the integration of Dresdner Bank into Commerzbank (formerly number 2 and 3 in the German market). We achieved full integration after 1,000 days, shut down half the applications, migrated all data without customers having to change their account numbers and realized more than €2 billion annual cost savings.

What big idea are you working on now?

I am working very hard on building a culture where the big ideas come from great minds all over the organization and not necessarily from the top.

What have been the low and high point in your career?

A low point was certainly a major production incident with corrupt DB2 tables. Another was when many stakeholders lost faith in the master plan of the above mentioned integration because of serious issues in testing – it felt pretty lonely. A high was the CIO of the Year award. The highest highs are when a team achieves a ‘mission impossible’ moving to a hitherto unimaginable level of performance.

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