SUSTAINABLE  Why employees are also customers

INDEPENDENT  How Germany’s oldest private bank manages relationships

LONG-TERM  Where sleep quality builds on Eclipse Scout
We are currently investing heavily in BSI: The office in Baar is being expanded and renovated, Bern and Baden will be next. We welcome new team members every month and are actively recruiting students at German and Swiss universities. Many man- and woman-hours are going into product development, driven by Christian A. Rusche, who has handed over the business administration to Markus Brunold, in order to devote his time to the development of the next generation of user interface. We interviewed Chris for you in this issue.

We intentionally invest every franc to strengthen the foundation that will support BSI in the future: excellent software, a values-based participative culture and employees with a customer focus.

But wouldn’t we be able to grow even faster with outside capital? Perhaps: But our independence is valuable to us too. We prefer to serve our customers, not foreign overlords.

Our role models are the hidden champions, usually family-run companies who lead their respective markets with top performances. They grow continuously, innovate persistently and appreciate customer proximity, and are characterized by strong values, low employee fluctuation and high R&D intensity. What is interesting is that they nevertheless often remain unknown to the masses. Perhaps this is because they conduct effective marketing and avoid scattering loss; or maybe it is because they focus on their employees and customers and need not please anyone else?

We are pleased to introduce two outstanding family-run companies in this issue. Their sustainable values-based cultures are both inspiring. I hope that our company will still belong to us in 100 years. If so, then we will also be able to continue doing what we love and do best: developing software that eases the lives of our customers and pleases them.
Everyone is talking about the shortage of skilled labor. Hardly a day passes without reports about it in the daily news. There is also no lack of political discussions and proposals for taking action to counter this major threat. Politicians and industry associations are launching task forces to come up with solutions. It seems to be a major challenge to find and retain qualified employees. That is why a few thoughts will be formulated here that are both intentionally provocative and also aimed at opening up new perspectives. Rehashing what is already known does not generally lead to solutions.

The following objectives are based on the analysis of various interviews with line managers, HR professionals and current studies. What becomes apparent is that the repetition of the same old stereotypical statements solidifies into a pattern that is hardly ever questioned anymore. These arguments are best summarized in four myths, which we will counter in the following.

**Myth no. 1**

The shortage of skilled labor is omnipresent.

The impression is often given that our economy is about to collapse. Everyone is talking about a widespread shortage of skilled labor that is primarily attributable to the demographics problem. Those who do not talk about it, or who question it, are not taken seriously. It is considered good form to place this topic on the agenda. What is often lacking is an in-depth discussion, because simply naming the problem suffices to garner sufficient attention and confirmation by others who share the same problem.

That is why an in-depth analysis of the labor market and its impact on one’s own company is urgently needed. The shortage of skilled labor does, in fact, exist, though not everywhere and not in all professional categories. This is impressively shown in a study conducted by B,S,S. Volkswirtschaftliche Beratung AG, Basel, on behalf of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). What’s more, there are indications that demographics alone cannot offer sufficient explanation in professions showing signs of a shortage of skilled labor. Hence, we need to look for other reasons. The explanation is also offered that the demographically caused replacement requirement is especially acute in professions in which the portion of employees over 50 years of age is relatively high. Apparently, there are other causes to explain the shortage of skilled labor, such as the attractiveness of the industry or the unwillingness to continue employing those over 50.

The study encourages companies, and particularly HR heads, to precisely analyze the situation in the labor markets that are relevant for their company and to become clear about the real problem.

It is entirely possible that the shortage of skilled labor does not apply to all industries and all professions. The mantra-like moaning about the unbearable situation generally tends to hinder those geared to solutions. What is also apparent is that the shortage of skilled labor is nearly exclusively quantitatively defined. This is a limitation that blocks the view of potential entrepreneurial solution approaches. Companies generally not only determine the quantitative needs for personnel, but also their qualitative requirements, i.e. the job profile and the associated requirements for potential employees. The provocative question here is whether all companies really need the three top graduates of the world’s best three universities for all activities?

Upon closer, and a more professional observation, it may be that a well-trained vocational school graduate with professional experience may well be able to meet the job requirements. And already a new labor market segment opens up. If you really only need academic personnel, then even in this market there are highly qualified people who do not always find a job because they do not precisely match the profile 1 to 1.

This means that when searching for solutions, it also makes sense to consider other labor market segments. However, before we formulate solutions, let’s take a look at the other myths.

**Myth no. 2**

The shortage of skilled labor is nearly exclusively quantitatively defined.

The impression is often given that the shortage of skilled labor can be reduced to a simple matter of numbers. This is a limitation that blocks the view of potential entrepreneurial solution approaches.

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Myth no. 2
The shortage of skilled labor is short-term and primarily cyclical.

The problem of the shortage of skilled labor is still viewed in many companies from just a short-term, economically managed point of view. Unfortunately, this also applies to those companies which claim to operate a professional, strategic management. How does this operative hecticness manifest itself? If there are many open positions, then recruiting is very important. Once the positions are filled, then the activities are wound back down. This approach is often pursued jointly by the company management and HR departments. This operative hecticness does not permit medium- and long-term solutions towards eliminating the shortage of skilled labor. The labor market, however, is often just as important as the sales market, especially in industries that constantly emphasize that their competitive advantages are attained through the know-how, experience and competencies of their employees. It takes strategies, processes and concepts to be successful in the labor market. Employees are to be viewed as customers who make their human capital available – especially when there is a shortage of them. We also do not wait in the sales market until we no longer have any customers before taking action, right? A short-term, economic orientation is therefore not helpful. The shortage of skilled labor, to the extent that it exists, is not a short-term phenomenon!

We have so far shown that ongoing moaning combined with operative hecticness certainly do not solve problems. Now we come to the third myth.

Myth no. 3
Promises are formulated and kept.

An additional challenge is represented by communication towards existing and potential employees. Let me explain this by means of an example: From marketing, we know that a product can only be sold in the long term if the advertising message does not promise something that cannot be delivered. This truism, however, applies to “sales” and is not entirely applicable to jobs. Communication in the labor market, as formulated in the myth no. 3 can be described as “fact or fiction.”

If you page through the “help wanted” ads across all media, you will notice that nearly all companies promise the same thing in a cookie cutter approach: internationality, development possibilities, a participative management, and corporate culture, interesting duties and a high degree of autonomy. Research has shown that a major information asymmetry exists between applicants and the company. The applicant can hardly verify these advertising messages during the recruiting process. However, he or she will – especially if it involves a highly coveted specialist from a professional group in which there is a shortage – quickly find out whether these promises will indeed be kept. It is thus not enough to hang management principles on the wall in the hallway or to publish values on the website or print them on mouse pads. There is an expectation that promises will be redeemed.

Nevertheless, there are features that we publish in job offers which can actually be experienced immediately during the recruiting process and thus are verifiable. Companies that list flexibility and openness as aspects of their corporate culture should also be able to act accordingly in the recruiting process. Those who are incapable of reacting to applications within a reasonable time period or to provide reasons to justify a negative response will hardly be perceived as communicative and flexible. Surely you can come up with hundreds of examples of this.
Kuno Ledergerber

**Myth no. 4**
Recruiting does the trick.

This leads us to the myth no. 4. Those professions for which there is a potential shortage of skilled labor are also highly competitive. That is why it is especially important to establish professional relationship management with these professionals.

“**A LARGE INFORMATION ASYMMETRY EXISTS BETWEEN APPLICANTS AND THE COMPANY.**”

Kuno Ledergerber

When it comes to this issue, we can also reference experiences in marketing: “The systematic, active designing of customer relationships (Customer Relationship Management – CRM) has long been an essential component of professional marketing when it comes to customers in the sales market.”

Professional relationship management of employees or ERM (Employee Relationship Management) is just as essential. However, this requirement entails considerably more than just filling in performance management forms once a year or conducting employee surveys every three years, only to file the results in a drawer. It is an attitude towards existing and potential employees with an enormous impact on performance, motivation, and the image of the company. This association should be clarified again in regard to the top three graduates of the top three universities: Should we really manage to recruit these people, then we should also be able to appropriately apply their skills and establish a relationship that ensures that they won’t consider reentering the labor market again tomorrow. If this is not the case, then valuable human capital is wasted, which is not value creation but value destruction. These considerations show that professional recruiting is a necessity, but is insufficient for finding a medium- and long-term solution for the shortage of skilled labor.

**Recommended actions**

With regard to this topic, the company management is encouraged to attribute the same importance to the labor market as it does to the sales market. If we are to take the moaning over the skilled labor shortage seriously, then it involves a strategic influence factor that can be crucial for competitiveness. What recommended actions can be derived from this?

1. **New labor market segments**
A comprehensive examination of the relevant segment of the labor market is absolutely necessary. The shortage of skilled labor is not acute in all professions. Not every diagnosed skilled labor shortage is caused by demographics. In this regard, the job profile should be critically reviewed by companies in terms of its significance for performance. Is a top academic really important for every job? Are we also ready to employ people over 40? Have we exhausted our internal potential or even considered it?

2. **Strategic recruiting**
If we determine that there is a shortage of skilled labor, then medium- and long-term strategies are needed. Short-term, economics-driven, hectic recruiting only solves short-term problems at best. What is necessary is interaction between the company management and HR management. If there really is a shortage of skilled labor, then this challenge should be made a priority at the management level.

3. **Authentic communication**
Can we really deliver what we promise both internally and externally? Advertising alone does not sell jobs, even if they are communicated in a contemporary manner through social media! Particularly for professions with a tight supply of labor, the relationship to the existing employees is very important. To moan about a lack of skilled labor and, at the same time, to insufficiently appreciate existing high performers or to demotivate them through micromanagement and by constantly setting new rules, is not very convincing.

**4. Employee Relationship Management**
More than just recruitment is needed. If a company manages to recruit new employees, then the work has just begun. Human capital belongs to the employee and is invested by him or her in the company. The company is responsible for applying this within the organization in a manner that is value-creating. If the company also manages to not only retain the employee, but to create the conditions that develop a sense of belonging and responsibility, then this is a sure sign of successful relationship management.

**“THE COMPANY MANAGEMENT IS ENCOURAGED TO MAKE THE LABOR MARKET AS EQUALLY IMPORTANT AS THE SALES MARKET.”**

Kuno Ledergerber

The relationship with existing employees is especially important, particularly for professions for which there is a labor shortage.

**Literature references**

To develop Release 14, more than 16 BSI team members processed around 1,000 tickets, change requests and revision comments from our customers and employees. Many of the new functions are focused on large, complex organizations, with an eye towards more efficient administration and improved procedures. The main emphasis of the innovation was on the marketing module – and something entirely new: the rule engine.

Rules as daily assistants

The new rule engine enables administrators and expert users to define complex rules – without any programming skills. For example, you can send your users an automated e-mail if one of the tasks they are to complete is overdue. Rules can be carried out manually, or automatically – either upon entry or modification of data (e.g. as soon as a communication is created) or defined in terms of time (e.g. at the beginning of each week). Rules can be set up for all main entities (companies, person, business, tickets, communications and tasks). As with the advanced search function, various combinations are possible to enable definition of even complex filter criteria (e.g. people who have had no communication within the past twelve months and A-list customers). You determine which operators should operate the system if the criteria is met: modify data or set up new data, create communications and tasks or send e-mails. And everything can be tracked at any time, both in the administration view under “Rules” and in the respective data record in the time machine.

BSI CRM Release 14: Efficient administration and improved procedures

TEXT: MELINA MERKLE

BSI CRM Release 14 offers something for everyone: marketers, administrators and users. You have greater control and less work thanks to central campaign management, a rule engine, intelligent partitioning, finer configuration of permissions and groupware integration, which leaves you with more time for your customers.

Use the rules for your daily work

- **Customer segmentation** All customers with a turnover exceeding CHF 10,000 in the last twelve months will automatically be classified as A-list customers; customers with between CHF 5,000 and CHF 10,000 will be classified as B-list customers and the others as C-list customers.
- **Data cleaning** Automatic data cleansing is carried out once a month: people who have not purchased anything in more than three years and with whom no communication has occurred, will be deactivated.
- **Check visit frequency** The team leader can manually check which A-list customers were not visited in the last twelve months and set up a “Visit” communication with the main representative for the next week.
- **Preparation for the visit** As soon as an order is entered for a company with a volume exceeding EUR 100,000, an SMS or e-mail is sent to the main representative.

**Refined configuration of partitions and permissions**

BSI CRM was upgraded to include partitioning with Release 12.9.2. We have now further improved it based on the experience gathered. Partitioning enables a hard separation of databases so that, for example, partner companies, as well as organizational units, only see the data for which they have been approved. A central position – e.g. the parent company or the top management – can nevertheless see all data in all partitions.

The permissions concept was also enhanced to enable finer configurations. As before, the user interface can be individually adapted for various partitions so that the respective parties only see the views and the navigation tree that are relevant for them. This is now possible with finer granularity. In addition, the configurability is independent of whether partitioning is used or not. Configurations such as fields or processes can be activated or blocked for specific roles and value lists can be defined for each role so that each user only sees relevant values. Likewise, the displaying of document templates can be managed with the new permission concept – also differently per partition.

**Interplay between central and local marketing**

During the development of BSI CRM 14, we focused on marketing and developed functionalities that facilitate campaign management for complex organizations, e.g. decentralized campaigns: A central department can prepare an entire marketing campaign, including actions, define what is predetermined and what the decentralized sales positions – such as agencies or partners – can determine for themselves. Which sales positions may or must participate in a campaign can also be defined. Marketing actions can now be conducted on a local partition – even centrally controlled. This enables an Excel export for a specific data according to defined criteria, e.g. for forwarding to an external service provider.

Analyses can also be carried out on a local partition. In this way, for example, the results found in a potential analysis can be saved as target group in a marketing action. Incidentally, the improved flexibility with target groups, helps to exchange them quickly and easily between actions.

**And what’s more...**

Integration of groupware on the server (Outlook Exchange and Lotus Notes) enables the processing of e-mails, tasks and calendar (with appointment coordination) directly in BSI CRM. Many other features, such as group-wide performance management and the possibility to process multiple data records simultaneously, round off BSI CRM 14. As always: Everything is accessible on the desktop, as well as for tablets and mobile devices.
Students in 3-D

IT students love gadgets and surprises. So do we. After last year’s successful Raspberry Pi promotion, we wanted to also offer them something special in 2014. They could design a figure (of themselves) online, and we printed it out in 3-D. We handed them out along with beer and sausages at our offices in Bern, Munich, Frankfurt and Zurich.

GPS Navigation by Scout (iPhone, Android, CHF 2)
The inexpensive navigation app for iPhone has nothing to do with Eclipse Scout. Nevertheless, it works like a charm. For two francs, you receive maps for Switzerland, Germany and Austria, and for an additional CHF 12 you can get maps for the entire world for offline use. The maps are not very detailed, but they were good enough for a road trip to Georgia as well as for searching for a hotel in Istanbul’s old city. Be sure to bring your charging cable with you though, because the iPhone gets quite hot when the app runs and quickly empties the battery.

bring! (iPhone, Android, free)
With the Swiss app bring! you can create a shopping list and share it within a group. The app is intuitively operable and actively further developed. It’s ideal for couples and roommates.

Splitwise (iPhone, Android, Web, free)
If you travel in group, it is easy to quickly lose track of who has paid what. That’s how it also went for the BSI delegation this year at the EclipseCon – a developer conference in the USA. Splitwise solves this problem. Expenses are entered as they are incurred and you have an overview at all times of who spent how much and how it can be compensated. The app could be a bit more clearly designed, but it functions.

Mallorca getaway
At the beginning of September, around 250 BSIers (nearly three-quarters of all BSI staff plus guests) took a coffee break, not at their workplace, but on a plane heading for Mallorca. We spent a weekend together on this Mediterranean island enjoying the beach and sun as well as culture, action and, of course, great food. Whether it was a balloon ride, paddling in kayaks, a catamaran trip, exploring the city, diving or just kicking back, there was something for everyone.

Nicolas’ Apps
Software Engineer, BSI

The apps featured in this issue relate to my trip to Georgia in June. We purchased an inexpensive car, drove it to Georgia where we traded it for a guided tour through the country and then flew home. We made a video of our travels, captured with my BSI Christmas GoPro :)

www.bsiag.com/nicolas-roadtrip

Nicolas, our app columnist, also designed a figure of himself and shows it off in this video:
www.bsiag.com/nicolas
“Tradition and innovation must go hand in hand.”
Friedrich von Metzler, personally liable shareholder

For Metzler, independence also means freedom – when it comes to forming an opinion, when conducting analyses, when designing services and with customer service. Furthermore, independence creates staying power, if you are convinced of the long-term success of a business idea. No quarterly reports demand rapid success stories and new concepts have time to prove themselves.

“My son, enjoy doing business during the day, but only the kind of business that allows us to sleep peacefully at night,” is a quote from the book “Buddenbrooks” by Thomas Mann, which became a motto for Friedrich von Metzler. The banker and patron of the arts joined the company’s management board in 1971. And with success: The bank profits year after year and steers clear of externally held shareholders who could potentially place the priority on short-term profit goals.

“Sustainable innovations arise when you listen to customers.”
Friedrich von Metzler, personally liable shareholder

The strengths of a family-owned company

One of the major strengths lies in the clear structure of a family company the size of Bankhaus Metzler, which employs around 700 people. Flat hierarchies favor a climate in which talking with one another is more important than delegating from above. Such a climate promotes the productive potential of each individual employee and that, in turn, immediately benefits the company, because business success is designed by the people who work here.

Operational duties are undertaken by small, autonomous groups. The advantage lies in the direct customer contact and the management size of the departments. The customer has fixed, reliable contact partners who look after his concerns intensively as specialists. And in return, the high degree of flexibility enables the company to quickly react to customer requests and to develop appropriate concepts to meet all their needs through extensive market expertise.

 Tradition and innovation – a contradiction?

Tradition and innovation must go hand in hand for Metzler, “otherwise even the longest tradition will one day come to an end. Sustainable innovations arise when you listen to customers. What are his or her needs? Which products make sense for them in the respective market environment?” This leads to ideas that give our employees a profile and which offer the customer added value,” according to the philosophy of Friedrich von Metzler.

Employee satisfaction is extraordinarily high. The long-term business strategy, looking ahead to the day after tomorrow, also benefits the employees, because a healthy, stable company is attractive to them. A consensus about the company’s values and, above all else, its independence, fosters a sense of belonging.

In addition to the banking business, the commitment to science, art, education, and social issues have a long tradition in the Metzler family. The Metzler Foundation focuses on projects for children and youth with an emphasis on the promotion of language. While doing so, the foundation places great importance on looking after each project personally, whether through a foundation representative or a bank employee.

Bankhaus Metzler decided to replace the separate solutions operated by the individual departments with a new, central CRM system. The primary focus is on the holistic view of the customer with contact and activities management along with campaign management. The Unicode capability and multilingualism of the system were especially important when it came to deploying a new system.

“TRADITION AND INNOVATION MUST GO HAND IN HAND.” Friedrich von Metzler, personally liable shareholder

Carl Alexander von Metzler, his son, married Wilhelmine von Bock in 1674 – assuring the independence of the private bank. Bankhaus Metzler has been solely owned by its founding family for eleven generations. The capital has been held by the von Metzler family since 1674 – assuring the independence of the private bank. For Metzler, this central value means to act solely in the interest of the customer and orient business with a view towards long-term sustainability – there are no externally held shareholders who could potentially place the priority on short-term profit goals.

CARISMA® customer relationship management

Since the term CRM was already in use for another purpose at Metzler, the team decided to use CARISMA for the project and system name. CARISMA stands for Customer Acquisition and Relationship Management. The go-live of the first release at the end of August was the first important milestone. “We are really looking forward to seeing how the software proves itself in daily use and what findings and requirements we will still be confronted with,” stated Thorsten Heinen. He is confident: “We have come to know our colleagues at BSI to be extremely reliable. They are very committed and adapt to our needs. A trusting, partnership-oriented working relationship has arisen.”

After subjecting it to close scrutiny, Bankhaus Metzler chose BSI due to its thoroughly positive customer references and its similar corporate philosophy – and because the CRM software matched the private bank’s strategic orientation.

CARISMA® customer relationship management

On behalf of the customer

Text: Claudia Gabler
Photos: Metzler

Long-term sustainability instead of short-term profit targets and ongoing relationship management instead of perfunctory tactics. Bankhaus Metzler is the oldest German private bank in continuous family ownership. Independence is paramount – and also has been an essential success factor through the centuries. The customer relationships of this traditional company are also designed to be long-term. Metzler will maintain these relations in future with BSI CRM.
The probability is high that you woke up today on a mattress with an innerspring from AGRO, a top supplier worldwide. The second and third generations of this family company from Bad Essen now work daily to improve the sleeping comfort of people around the globe. However, the typical AGRO customer is not the end-consumer, but the mattress industry. As developer, producer and supplier of innersprings, AGRO is an innovative and reliable industry partner with its production site in Germany.

Very individual software requirements

AGRO’s business software requirements are as unique as the company itself. Nils Israel, Head of IT at AGRO, is in charge of the company’s database applications. His goal was to avoid having to manage many different systems. That’s why the IT expert sought to set a standard for database applications. After viewing and testing various concepts and technologies, AGRO chose the Eclipse Scout open source framework. “On the one hand, I had already had good experiences with applications based on Eclipse, while on the other hand, we were convinced by Eclipse Scout’s architecture, the tutorials, the short training times and the large competence of the community,” explained Nils Israel. The IT department has been in the process of successively replacing the previous Excel solutions with special software based on the Eclipse Scout Framework since September 2012.

“THE GREATEST ADDED VALUE WITH SCOUT: WE CAN DO EVERYTHING OURSELVES.”

Nils Israel, Head of IT

Productive in a week

Nils Israel and his team were ready to go on the open source framework within just one week. “We received two days of training and were already able to develop for ourselves on the two following days. The BSI experts were standing by to answer our questions. We attended the continuous integration workshop on the fifth day, where we learned a great deal about the continuous merging of components within an application, to increase the quality of the software on an ongoing basic. This day in particular really took us a great leap forward. We certainly would not have learned as much if we’d taught ourselves,” explained Nils Israel, who continued: “The BSI Scout team is very competent. The best thing though, was that beyond the initial training we needed very little support. The forum is actively supported and tutorials are constantly further developed. We appreciated the exchange, but in terms of concept, we can stand entirely on our own two feet.” It was precisely this autonomy that Nils Israel considers to be a major added value for AGRO: “We can do everything ourselves. We can connect multiple data sources on a single platform, have a standard interface and can store data centrally.”

“THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.”

Matthias Zimmermann, Scout Co-Lead at BSI

First implementations in Scout framework

The application for machine master data management proved to be quite easily and quickly implemented by the small team. It has already been tested by staff in the technical departments and was very well received. This means that Nils Israel and his team can now dedicate themselves to the next project: an application with various modules for the administration of test reports for quality assurance. This should be completed by fall. “We are using Scout support for WebServices for the first time in this application in order to communicate with mobile end devices,” explained Nils Israel.

Great benefit even for small teams

“It is impressive to see what major progress even the smallest of teams can make with the Scout framework. After just a little help at the beginning, AGRO can already develop everything themselves and has already contributed back to the community,” enthused Matthias Zimmermann, Scout Co-Lead at BSI.

“WE APPRECIATE THE EXCHANGE, BUT STAND ON OUR OWN TWO FEET IN TERMS OF CONTENT.”

Nils Israel, Head of IT

Sleep quality made in Germany, special software built with Scout

Around 400 employees work daily at the family-owned company AGRO so that we get a good night’s sleep. The roots of the company go back to 1948. After the destruction of the Second World War, there was a huge demand for furniture, which led the farmer Friedrich Grothaus to found a company that produced furniture components for the regional furniture industry. The company was named after his wife, Mrs. Anneliese Grothaus: the company name AGRO was formed from her initials, and was intended to represent a promising future. In 1979, the son Wolfgang Grothaus, who studied economics, joined the company. At that time, AGRO had a headcount of 12 and produced exclusively cylindrical innersprings. Today a wide variety of Bonnell innersprings, light innersprings (LIF) and pocket springs are produced at the company headquarters in Bad Essen near Osnabrück. Besides the innerspring production, the company has also established a wine factory which provides around half of the wine AGRO needs to produce its innersprings. The company continues to place great emphasis on personally providing customer consultation, continuous investments in the Bad Essen plant and further development of the product portfolio. With the perfect combination of a hands-on mentality and entrepreneurial thinking, Wolfgang Grothaus has won the trust of customers and employees alike and made the firm what it is today: one big family in which all employees are dedicated to the company and are fully committed to meeting the new challenges presented by a global market. The transfer of the majority of shares to his children, Sabine and Christian Grothaus, ensures that the values of the family business – long-term perspective, responsibility for employees, short decision-making channels and sensible economic activity – will continue long into the future. This is part of what makes family-owned AGRO so special.

Also homegrown is the business software AGRO uses. There was no standard solution to be found on the market for such a highly specialized product. Highlights from the development of the special software based on Eclipse

Machines for producing spring cores are not mass-produced goods, but are tailored for the tasks they must conduct – just like Scout applications.

Production staff enters the data. It is transferred to Scout through WebServices and written in the database. Evaluation of the test reports also takes place in the Scout application. AGRO has already given something back to the Scout community: “We wrote a Scout tutorial on the integration of a reporting engine in Scout,” Nils Israel added.

Efficient: An internal 15-man team is productive within just a week

Innovative: Connection of mobile end devices through Scout WebServices

Compact. Multiple data sources are connected on one platform

Autonomous: Independent development of special software
Allow us to introduce?

People evolve; their goals change. That’s why at BSI, our jobs are only on loan. Christian A. Rusche is a prime example of how this works in practice. The day before yesterday he was a project manager, yesterday our CEO, and now today he is a product developer. However, what has never changed for him is his love for BSI and for good software. Chris is an original shareholder and since July 2014 a member of the Board of Directors.

What was your original dream job?

Physicist; I wanted to understand the world.

Who is your role model?

My father.

What have you learned, and from whom?

From children: to have an open heart and open eyes.

How do you further develop yourself?

Life is constant change: When I started at BSI, I was a software developer, but not a particularly good one, and perhaps that’s why I became a project manager. But I wasn’t the absolute best at that either. Then for almost ten years, I was our CEO and really enjoyed that, now I am working more in product development.

Why did you want to become a shareholder?

Perhaps because I wanted to be able to work together with Jens (our founder) more? Or perhaps to be on the front lines of the development of BSI? As a student and intern, I scraped together every franc I could to buy a 3% stake in BSI.

What sense does employee participation make?

It is a vital essence of BSI, perhaps the most important. I believe that a flat, value-guided company needs it. That’s because if the shareholders are also employees and the employees also shareholders, then their interests are congruent; everyone is committed with heart and soul; everyone is an entrepreneur, and a lot of things in daily work life become easier.

What do you like about good software?

“Just do it!” There are so many ideas, but it’s not enough to just have ideas. Create a software application, develop something that pleases customers. Or a tool that eases work for you and your colleagues. Or something that is fun, just: do it!

What in retrospect would you do differently or would do over?

When I took a sabbatical the year before last and spent three months in Japan, I told myself: “Your life has been brilliant; you sure have been lucky! Everything that comes after this is icing on the cake. Don’t forget to appreciate everyone!”

Who is your role model?

Physicist; I wanted to understand the world.

Favorite travel destination

Japan

Allow us to introduce?

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How do you further develop yourself?

Life is constant change: When I started at BSI, I was a software developer, but not a particularly good one, and perhaps that’s why I became a project manager. But I wasn’t the absolute best at that either. Then for almost ten years, I was our CEO and really enjoyed that, now I am working more in product development.

Why did you want to become a shareholder?

Perhaps because I wanted to be able to work together with Jens (our founder) more? Or perhaps to be on the front lines of the development of BSI? As a student and intern, I scraped together every franc I could to buy a 3% stake in BSI.

What sense does employee participation make?

It is a vital essence of BSI, perhaps the most important. I believe that a flat, value-guided company needs it. That’s because if the shareholders are also employees and the employees also shareholders, then their interests are congruent; everyone is committed with heart and soul; everyone is an entrepreneur, and a lot of things in daily work life become easier.

What do you like about good software?

“Just do it!” There are so many ideas, but it’s not enough to just have ideas. Create a software application, develop something that pleases customers. Or a tool that eases work for you and your colleagues. Or something that is fun, just: do it!

What in retrospect would you do differently or would do over?

When I took a sabbatical the year before last and spent three months in Japan, I told myself: “Your life has been brilliant; you sure have been lucky! Everything that comes after this is icing on the cake. Don’t forget to appreciate everyone!”

Who is your role model?

Physicist; I wanted to understand the world.
Ready for training?

BSI is convinced that training goes beyond studying thick handbooks. That’s why we don’t just deliver good software, but also share the know-how needed to get the most out of it. Our training sessions are designed to be practical and targeted towards different users. When can we set up an appointment for you?

Discover the range of training sessions available and sign up at: [www.bsiag.com/trainings](http://www.bsiag.com/trainings)

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