

25th business@school German Finals

## An idea that gives you a lift: Team from Kaiser-Wilhelm- und Ratsgymnasium of Hanover wins first place for bathing suit with safety features

"SEASCUE," a bathing suit with floating devices that can be manually activated, was a winning business idea for an all-girl team of five students from the Kaiser-Wilhelm- und Ratsgymnasium of Hanover at the German Finals of business@school, the educational initiative of the international consultancy Boston Consulting Group (BCG). Second place was shared by a team from the Erzbischöfliche Liebfrauenschule of Cologne, for a sustainable alternative to conventional bottle caps made of recycled rubber, and a team from the Nymphenburger Schulen, for a light, wireless, magnet-based gaming mouse.

**Munich, June 20, 2023.** "Conventional life jackets restrict freedom of movement, and the way they look turns off many water sports enthusiasts. In contrast, our product is comfortable, visually appealing, and above all, safe." This is how Johanna (18) described the winning team's bathing suit **SEASCUE**, which she developed together with team members Emma (16), Julia-Chiara (16), Katharina (17), and Nina (18). The bathing suit, which is available in various designs, contains a CO<sub>2</sub> cartridge for the manual activation of integrated floating devices. The team from the Kaiser-Wilhelm- und Ratsgymnasium in Hanover hopes this will mean improved safety for activities in and on the water.

The idea's potential and the girls' clear vision convinced the judges: The team from the Kaiser-Wilhelm- und Ratsgymnasium was named the winner of the German Finals, prevailing against eleven other top regional business@school teams from all over Germany. "I think it's going to take a few days to sink in," said Nina, smiling (18). "Today, the many days and nights we invested to work on our idea paid off."

Besides capturing the title for the best business idea of 2023, the team can also look forward to redeeming the special prize awarded by Schaeffler AG and presented by Corinna Schittenhelm—Finals judge, member of the business@school Advisory Board, and Chief Human Resources Officer of Schaeffler AG. She invited the team to visit the company in Herzogenaurach for a behind-the-scenes look at its operations.

### Fostering entrepreneurial spirit at schools for 25 years

This year, for the 25th time, more than 1,000 students at around 70 schools immersed themselves in the world of business as part of business@school. Over

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the past ten months, participants discovered their entrepreneurial spirit and developed impressive business ideas. They were supported in this by over 400 coaches from roughly 20 partner companies of the initiative and BCG. For participants, business@school is much more than a special project. The b@s "network for life," including participating students, alumni, teachers, schools, coaches, partner companies, the business@school support team, and the initiative's Advisory Board, was established 25 years ago.

Eleven teams qualified for the finals in eleven regional competitions around Germany. Two additional teams won tickets to participate in the German Finals with special prizes at the regional level: With their idea ReEntner, the team from Gymnasium Kirchheim won the Social Entrepreneur Prize sponsored by SOS Kinderdorf e. V., while the team from the Erzbischöfliche Liebfrauenschule in Cologne, already winners of their regional competition, captured the Sustainability Prize sponsored by Boston Consulting Group with their idea greencaps. The twelve teams that qualified for the German Finals presented their business ideas at the Munich office of Boston Consulting Group, after which they answered the judges' critical questions. The teams from Hanover, Cologne, and Munich prevailed in three preliminary rounds to advance to the final round, where they presented their pitches to a large audience and the panel of expert judges. Michael Brigl, chair of the judges' panel, who is Managing Director and Senior Partner and Head of Central Europe at BCG, praised the work of all the student teams: "What really impressed me again today is the teams' passion for their ideas, their strong teamwork and keen sense for technical innovation."

**The panel was comprised of the following judges:**

- Michael Brigl, Managing Director and Senior Partner and Head of Central Europe, Boston Consulting Group
- Andreas Dinger, Managing Director and Senior Partner, Boston Consulting Group
- Dieter Heuskel, Senior Advisor, Boston Consulting Group
- Corinna Schittenhelm, Chief Human Resources Officer, Schaeffler AG
- Prof. Helmut Schönenberger, Chief Executive Officer, UnternehmerTUM GmbH
- Prof. Gunther Schwarz, Managing Partner, Mentor & Advisor, Schwarz & Pfeiffer Executive Advisory Partners GmbH
- Carla Spörle, Managing Director and Partner, Boston Consulting Group
- Jens Uhlendorf, Partner, Hogan Lovells International LLP

**Second place for team from Nymphenburger Schulen for "MagnoSense OneShot"**

Luis (17), Ferdinand (17), and Jan (17) of Munich came in hard on the heels of the winning team. The trio of students introduced an innovative magnet-based

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mouse that they believe will change everyday life for gamers. The idea combines magnet technology and modularity and applies this to how mouse and mousepad interact. Judge Prof. Helmut Schönenberger, CEO of UnternehmerTUM GmbH, presented the student team with an invitation and one-year membership to MAKERSPACE, Europe's biggest prototype lab: "The judges all agree: You are true 'techies,' who don't just talk, but invent and experiment. We need more people like you in Germany."

### **Second place shared with team from Erzbischöfliche Liebfrauenschule of Cologne for greencaps**

Bennet (17), Christopher (17), Jonathan (17), Lion (16), and Mika (17) presented an alternative to bottlecaps made of recycled rubber. The idea enthused business@school founder and judge Dieter Heuskel, Senior Advisor at BCG: "You chose an issue that's urgent and real. I can definitely understand why you're looking for solutions to it," he commented. In addition to sharing second place, the team from Cologne also won the special prize sponsored by BCG X and can look forward to traveling to Berlin to discuss their idea with the company's experts.

### **Twelve teams from different schools brought their business ideas to the German Finals:**

- **Anton-Philipp-Reclam-Schule, Leipzig: CO2Y**—a universal automatic window opener for the regulation of ventilation
- **Bischof-Neumann-Schule, Königstein: FrameFinder**—a capsule for attaching GPS trackers to bicycle frames
- **Canisius-Kolleg, Berlin: VersaCarrier**—a flexibly adjustable bicycle basket
- **Erzbischöfliche Liebfrauenschule, Cologne: greencaps**—a sustainable alternative to bottlecaps made of recycled rubber
- **Friedrich-Wilhelm-Gymnasium, Cologne: GameChanger**—board and party game events at cafés in Cologne
- **Gymnasium Eppendorf, Hamburg: reAppled**—a biodegradable bottlecap made of apple pomace, the waste product from apple juice production
- **Gymnasium Kirchheim, Kirchheim: ReEntner**—an online job site for retirees
- **Gymnasium Ottobrunn, Ottobrunn: Shat**—an alternative to a bicycle helmet in the form of a cap
- **Immanuel-Kant-Gymnasium, Leinfelden-Echterdingen: Wash´N Wear**—an app for the digitalization of laundry labels
- **Internatsschule Schloss Hansenberg, Geisenheim: VentiLayer**—a weatherproof and moisture-wicking sports sweater with a preventive ventilation system
- **Kaiser-Wilhelm- und Ratsgymnasium, Hanover: SEASCUE**—a bathing suit with built-in floating devices that can be manually activated

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- **Nymphenburger Schulen, Munich: MagnoSense OneShot**—a light, wireless, magnet-based gaming mouse

**business@school**

Founded in 1998, business@school, the educational initiative of the international management consultancy Boston Consulting Group (BCG), now gives more than 1,000 students a hands-on taste of business each school year over the course of three phases: first with the analysis of a large company, then of a small one, and finally with the development of students' own business ideas, including a business plan. Student teams are supported by participating teachers and around 400 volunteer coaches from roughly 20 partner companies and BCG.

**Social responsibility**

Boston Consulting Group (BCG) is a global management consulting firm and the world's leading advisor on business strategy. Founded in 1963 by Bruce D. Henderson, BCG now has more than 100 offices in over 50 countries. In addition to their work for clients, BCG consultants also support selected organizations on a pro bono basis, such as Save the Children and the World Food Programme of the United Nations. BCG currently works with over 200 partner organizations on 350 social impact projects around the globe. In Germany, the firm is particularly active in the education and support of youth and young adults. Through its initiative business@school, BCG has partnered with other companies and teachers for 25 years to provide high school students with the opportunity to learn about business first-hand at their schools, as well as teaching them key skills for their later professional lives and awakening a spirit of entrepreneurship.

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