Dirk Ploss

Innovation, Foresight & Growth Strategy

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For more than 25 years, I have combined innovation, foresight and strategy with the aim of transforming the future into measurable business opportunities at an early stage. Based on relevant market, technology and customer trends, I develop strategic options, new business models and effective innovation initiatives. In doing so, I contribute experience from international corporate structures, corporate management and the establishment and development of my own companies.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Beiersdorf AG, Hamburg

Associate Director Strategic Foresight & Trend Research — since 01/2025

- Development and implementation of an innovation intelligence solution for the systematic observation and evaluation of market, technology and innovation developments.

Senior Early Innovation Manager — 01/2022–01/2025

- Identification and interpretation of relevant trends, weak signals and disruptions as well as translation into innovation hypotheses, strategic options and concrete initiatives.
- Development and management of the Beiersdorf intrapreneurship program "UPSTARTER", support for >30 international teams.

Senior Innovation Manager — 08/2020–01/2022

- Development and implementation of several international innovation conferences, including "Innovation Festival", "Innovation Fair" and "Beiersdorf Connect".
- Support and optimization of a global onboarding program with a focus on product innovation and collaborative innovation.

Head of Digital Technologies Scouting & Advisory — 01/2018–08/2020

- Development, testing and evaluation of digital business model options, including the conception and implementation of prototypes and pilots with 17 international startups.
- Support in the development of Oscar & Paul Beiersdorf Venture Capital, permanent member of the Venture Lead Team (until 06/2023).
- Development and launch of the kindergarten app CARE (later sold to Carlo & Friends GmbH).

Head of Global eCommerce Multichannel — 01/2016–01/2018

- Strategic development of the global e-commerce business as well as rollout of multichannel retail conditions and assortment strategies.

Manager Global eCommerce Multichannel (Freelance) — 02/2015–12/2015

- Strategic development of the global e-commerce business

CMO on Demand, Freelancer, Leipzig

Interim CMO — 07/2014–01/2015

- Advising and providing operational support to companies on strategic marketing, digital and growth issues.

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LANGUAGES

- German – Native
- English – Fluent
- Spanish – Basic

SKILLS

- Curious and analytical
- Strategic and forward-looking
- Entrepreneurial and execution-driven
- Effective communicator at executive and operational levels
- Combines creativity with structure and business acumen
- Translates complex developments into clear decisions

Lecturio GmbH, Leipzig

Chief Marketing Officer, Member of Executive Board 02/2013–06/2014

- Responsible for marketing, growth and the further development of B2C marketing.
- Increase in new B2C business by 40 percent compared to the previous year.

Sabbatical and book project, Hamburg 06/2012–01/2013

- Author of a regular column in the trade journal "iBusiness" (Hightext Verlag)

Otto GmbH & Co. KG, Hamburg

Division Manager Brand Management & Marketing 12/2011–05/2012

- Strategic and operational responsibility for brand management and marketing communication across all channels, budget responsibility of €75 million.
- Management of 53 employees in four departments.

Head of Online Marketing 09/2010 – 11/2011

- Management of four teams in the areas of e-mail marketing, eCRM, onsite marketing and online service management, responsibility for 21 employees.
- Conception of the most successful on-site promotion in the company's history with more than 200,000 new leads.
- Winner of the Online Star Award as the most popular online shop, winner of the Gold New Media Award 2010 and the Silver GWA Effie 2010.

Team Leader Email Marketing 06/2008 – 08/2010

- Led a seven-person team for planning, technology, content and shipping.
- Increased direct revenue from email marketing by 275 percent.

Entrepreneurial career (Cubic Consulting GmbH, DICOM 24 GmbH, Clearing Solution GmbH, Loyalty Hamburg GmbH, Hamburg, Cologne and Stuttgart)

Founder, Co-Founder and Managing Director 1997–2008

- These stations form the basis of my experience in entrepreneurship, business model development, market analysis, customer understanding and the implementation of new business ideas.

FCB Hamburg GmbH

Formerly: MWI Markenwerbung International, today: Publicis Dialog

Copywriter, Creative Group Head, Creative Director 1992–1996

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THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Publications (Excerpt)

- Modernes Innovationsmanagement (Kapitel) – Gabler, 2025
- Intelligentes Couponing – Galileo Business, 2002
- Das Loyalitäts-Netzwerk – Galileo Business 2000

International speaker on various topics

- Strategic Foresight und Zukunft der Märkte
- Künstliche Intelligenz und ihr Einfluss auf Geschäftsmodelle
- Innovation Strategy und Radical Innovation
- Marketing, E-Commerce und Konsumentenverhalten

Selected keynotes

- How to Startup as a Corporate, SXSW, Austin, 2018
- Marketing to Machines, ECR Tag, Essen, 2019
- Innovation Through Corporate Venture Capital, NextRise, Seoul, 2019
- Why The Future Of Beauty Is Digital, Beauty Leaders Summit, Paris, 2023
- AI and Foresight, Innovation Roundtable, Paris, 2026

Podcasts and Interviews - Selected appearances

- Innovation Brief – Innovation, Transformation, And Getting Things Done
- Perception Paradox – The Power of Bad Ideas
- Signals from the Future – Blamiere dich täglich!

Awards

- Digital Communication Award, 2012, 2019, 2023
- German Brand Award, 2019
- Interactive Media Award, 2012
- Online Star Award, 2011
- Gold New Media Award, 2010
- Silber GWA Effie, 2010