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Bavaria's companies: favorites with employees, executives and students

The 2006 rankings of Germany's best employers are out and they, like their predecessors, have resulted in a near-sweep for Bavarian-based companies.

Compiled by the aptly-named "Great Place to Work" Institute and published in **Capital** magazine, the rankings named Munich's ConSol Software GmbH the best employer in Germany. Founded in 1984 by Dr. Ulrich Schwanengel, the fast-growing company provides IT services.

Other top five finishers were Putzbrunn's W. L. Gore & Associates (#2) and Oberhaching's Skytec AG (#4).

The rankers were the companies' employees. Another recent study, published in **WirtschaftsWoche**, polled the country's graduating business administration students as to where they would most like to work. Their favorite was BMW, the booming automobile manufacturer. Number two was another one of Bavaria's champions: Siemens.

BMW recently scored another top grade. The company was named "the most admired company in Europe" by America's **Fortune** magazine. This ranking resulted from a survey of the world's leading business executives.

Innovation in Bavaria: ramping up the records

Bavaria is number one. That's what the latest patent figures are reporting. As has been the case throughout the high-tech era, the figures rank Bavaria as the most innovative region in Germany and in Europe as a whole.

Bavaria's inventors applied for 13,688 patents in 2005. Up slightly from 2004, the total was, once more, the most of any region in Europe. It was also 28.3% of the Germany-wide total. The percentage was an all-time high for Bavaria and, correspondingly, for any state in Germany. These figures enabled Bavaria to extend its lead over perennial runner-ups Baden-Württemberg (26.5%) and North Rhine-Westphalia (16.9%).

There's no doubt as to which was the year's hottest invention in Bavaria – hottest as judged by the number (200!) of companies trying to buy or license it. The invention: SpidTex synthetic spider silk. Spider silk is three times stronger than Kevlar and five times stronger than steel. The silk is more flexible and expandable than nylon or rubber. The silk was, up until Munich's Thomas Scheibel and his partners at the newly-founded Amsilk came along, impossible to reproduce.

Amsilk has already developed its first marketable product: silk interwoven with steel. The result: the world's finest and highest-performing wire.

Patent registrations in Bavaria		
2005		
number		13,688
share, Germany		28.3
2004		
number		13,449
share, Germany		27.8

As has been the case throughout the last decade, number one patenter among Germany's companies was in 2005 Siemens AG, with 2,398. Other Bavarian-based top ten finishers included Infineon Technologies (#4), BMW (#8) and the Fraunhofer Institute of Applied Research (#10).

World Cup Watch

Thomas Glöckner: the designer of stadiums

Two of the twelve stadiums in which the World Cup will be played are very much Thomas Glöckner productions. The 44 year-old Nuremberg-based architect designed the revamping of the arenas in his hometown and in Leipzig. Issuing from his drawing board over the last few years has also been a stunning array of indoor stadiums, spas, schools and apartment buildings.

Glöckner's highest profile project is now being realized. Beating out no less than 800 competitors, among them the highest-powered firms in the world, he won the commission to design Beijing's €81 million,

18,000-spectator National Indoor Stadium, which will be the centerpiece of the 2008 Olympics.

Glöckner's edge over his competitors: his design incorporated the principles of Feng Shui, the Chinese canon of the relationship between spatial elements and on-premise events. The result is a building which seemingly flows over its site.

Glöckner is by no means the only Bavarian architect nabbing top commissions in China. Among the others: Munich's Thomas Jocher, the designer of a new city in the Shanghai area.

Key figure

One. That's the ranking of Munich's quality of life among Germany's major cities, reports the latest installment of the study published every year by ECA International, the world's leading HR (human resources) network. Earning the city the top spot in the country (and a top four ranking Europe-wide) was the excellence of the city's infrastructure and public services, and of its environmental, political, personal and resources-related security.

Fun and festivities at the World Cup

The best dates and ways for fans and their families to enjoy the festivities in Munich and Nuremberg

Munich

June 6, Olympia Stadium, the Three Orchestras (3 Orchestras and Stars)

One stage presenting three of the world's most famous orchestras – the Munich Philharmonic, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Bavarian State Orchestra – playing Orff, Gershwin, Bernstein and Strauss, led by their renowned conductors Christian Thielemann, Mariss Jansons and Zubin Mehta – and accompanied by such

international stars as tenor Plácido Domingo and pianist Lang Lang alongside Diana Damrau and German pop superstar Xavier Naidoo.

www.muenchenticket.de

June 9 – July 9, Olympia Stadium, Public Viewing broadcast of 56 games on a 60 square meter screen. In easy reach: a beer garden, stages offering live entertainment, a play-it-yourself soccer stadium and much more.

June 10, Olympia Stadium, Children's Festival also open throughout the tournament: Children's World

July 2, all of Munich, Long Night of Sports The Leopoldstraße is Munich's north-south thoroughfare. On the evening of July 2, instead of cars, the street will be occupied

by trampolines, badminton and streetball courts, and much more. The English Garden will be home to a Wellness & Fitness Night. Team sports will be played at the university's stadium. Munich's pools will offer all-night swimming, other water sports and other activities.

Nuremberg

June 2 – 4, Rock in the Park largest open-air rock festival in Europe

June 9 – July 9, Volksfestplatz, Public Viewing Attractions include a wellness area, Franconian beer village, a wine fest and tons of activities for kids

June 19, August 7, Adult Education Centre From the Kaiser to Klinsi's Boys Exhibition



Bavaria in Europe

Inside the state

Scheinfeld – where the World Cup's ball was developed

Brazil? Argentina? Italy? Or maybe even Germany? We don't know who's going to win the World Cup. We do know that the action will be more exciting than ever before. And that will be thanks to the "best ball of all time". That's what experts are calling the ball developed over the last three years at Adidas Salomon AG's "Global Technology Center". Along with the company's shoe production facility, the center is located in Scheinfeld, a town of 5,000 some 50 kilometers to the west of Nuremberg.

Employing robots capable of kicking balls at up to 80 km/h and sensors able to record distances at the nanometer level, the center's engineers developed a ball displaying an unprecedented roundness and thus speed and surety of movement. Thanks to its streamlined design and an advanced adhesion technology, the new "Team Spirit" imparts a 30% greater precision to player passes and absorbs far less water than its predecessors.

Bavaria's sports gear manufacturers: high-performance leads to high growth

It would be easy to describe Bavaria's sporting goods industry with one word: Herzogenaurach. The Franconian town of 23,000 is, after all, home to two of the world's three largest and most successful manufacturers of sporting goods and sportswear: adidas and Puma.

Both companies are wracking up one record after another, and both have positioned themselves to profit from the World Cup. Founded in 1920, adidas set in 2005 new corporate highs for sales (up 12% to €6.6 billion) and operating margins.

'Because we're number two, we try harder'. That motto applies to Puma, adidas' cross-town rival. Under the 13-year tenure of Jochen Zeitz, long regarded as one of the world's most accomplished CEOs, the company has returned from the brink of bankruptcy to become one of the fastest-growers in its field. In 2005, revenues increased 18% to an all-time best of €2.4 billion. Also reaching all-time highs were profits and orders on hand.

The World Cup will very much be an adidas and Puma affair. adidas is supplying the tournament's ball and 6 of the 32 teams' uniforms. The company has forecast that this high-profile exposure to the world's viewers will boost its sales of football gear over the €1 billion mark for the first time.

The outfitter of no less than 12 teams, Puma also stands to benefit from the World Cup boost.

More than just Herzogenaurach

The size and success of these companies notwithstanding, there's a lot more to Bavaria's sporting goods sector than just Herzogenaurach. As any follower of the Tour de France or championship skiing would be happy to tell you, there's Fürth. The central Franconian metropolis is home to Uvex, the world's leading manufacturer of sports helmets.

And then, of course, there's also Munich. Headquartered in the state's capital are

Roeckl, number one in sports gloves, and Salewa, a name known and loved by mountain sports enthusiasts all around the globe. Their passion for the company's attire and equipment have made Salewa number one in its field.

In a story very reminiscent of Puma, the company was teetering on the brink of bankruptcy in 1990. It was then that Heiner Oberrauch, himself an avid climber, took over Salewa. Within two years, the company was in the black. Today the Salewa group is a €121 million-a-year business. Oberrauch has no intention of stopping there. He's now orchestrating the company's move into the shoe business.

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Bavaria in New York: Ten Years of Success

Headed by Dagmar Cassan, a former corporate finance executive, the state of Bavaria's office in the United States recently marked its 10th anniversary. There were many reasons to celebrate. During the past decade, Ms. Cassan and her staff have facilitated investments by more than 100 American companies. Twenty-four of these start-

ups were made in 2005 alone, making it one of the most successful years in the office's history. One of those 100 companies was General Electric, which in 2004 established a Global Research Center, its fourth such facility worldwide, in the northern Munich suburb of Garching.

"American companies know that Bavaria is one of the leading high-tech bases in the world. Bavaria is for Americans the best-known and most beloved state in Germany," states Erwin Huber, Bavaria's Minister for Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology, explaining these results.

A state of entrepreneurs

Uli Hoeneß: the cool head behind the world's most successful and solvent football club

Things looked bad for FC Bayern in 1979. The dominant team in Europe in the mid-70's, FC Bayern had come upon hard days. Its revenues were dwindling, its debts were mounting, and, worst of all, it hadn't won a championship in three years.

It was then that knee injuries forced the team's star striker – Uli Hoeneß – to end

his career at the age of 27. He quickly found a new vocation: managing his team. Twenty-seven years and 32 titles later, FC Bayern is one of the most successful teams in the world. It ranks fourth in the world in annual revenues and first in solvency, and first in Germany in number of members – more than 100,000.

While achieving all this, Hoeneß, the son of a butcher, also found time to start up a highly successful sausage factory. Located in Nuremberg, the factory had sales of €30 million in 2005. It employs 150. These accomplishments won Hoeneß in 1999 another, this time personal title: "Manager of the Year".

Pleasures to be pursued

Open Air in Bavaria

Start with some of the world's most beautiful settings. Add some of the world's best music and theater. Throw in the enchantment of a warm summer evening. That, in a nutshell, is the recipe for Bavaria's open-air festivals.

One of those settings is the Chiemsee. Framed by the Alps, this huge and pristine lake has, as you would expect, an extensive shoreline. Anchored on it from July 14 – August 6 will be a floating stage, Germany's first, and the venue for musicals, circus, Japanese drummers and much more. These events will be viewed from the theater set up on the shore.

Its islands and what's on them make the Chiemsee one of Europe's great tourist attractions. The largest of the islands, Herrenchiemsee, is the home to King Ludwig II of Bavaria's take on Versailles. The palace's courtyard will be home to the "Festival under the Stars" from June 1 – 5.

Much of the stone used to construct the Herrenchiemsee came from the nearby, gigantic, now decommissioned quarry of Rohrdorf. In 2005, the quarry was found to have perfect acoustics and was turned into an open-air stage seating up to 4,500 and offering opera and other classical music. This year's playbill features Carmina Burana. Orff's masterpiece will be performed on May 26 by a cast of 400.

For information on all three venues, www.tourismus.prien.de.

Carmina Burana is stirring; reggae, equally so. And that pulsating Jamaican music is the main fare of the Chiemsee Reggae Summer. Held in the delightful, shore-side town of Übersee, the festival features top international and local groups, and will be staged next summer from August 25 – 27. www.chiemsee-reggae.de



Floating stage, Herrenchiemsee

The Chiemsee is located in Bavaria's southernmost reaches. Found at the other, northernmost end of the state is another and perhaps even more interesting open-air stage-amidst-the-rocks.

Located near Wunsiedel, Luisenburg is a jumble of crags and caves. In 1890, a theater was built in its central clearing. The festival held in the theater is thus the oldest open-air event in Germany. It is also one of the most popular, with 137,000 spectators having attended its performances in 2005. From May 5 to August 22, information at www.luisenburg-aktuell.de

Munich is chock-full of royal courtyards, squares and parks. These, too, become the venues for open-air concerts in the summer. Top date: July 9, Marstallplatz. The august square will be the setting for a free-of-charge, open-to-all performance of Beethoven's 9th. Conductor: Zubin Mehta.

For the thousands attending the Public Viewing of the World Cup's matches in Munich's Olympic Park, Tollwood, Europe's largest alternative festival, will be only a short, in-Park walk away. With an amazingly long list of open air and in-tent concerts, the festival will take place from June 14 to July 9. www.tollwood.de

Our representative in ...

Quebec, Canada is **Axel Ströhlein**. Born in 1972, Ströhlein earned a degree in jurisprudence. In 2001, he joined the state of Bavaria's ministry of the interior. In 2005, Ströhlein was appointed to his present position.

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Trade fairs ...



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