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Letter from the Editors

Shaping the environment for innovation

When talking about innovation, the environment in which scientists and corporations operate is a crucial factor. Innovations are often generated in strong ecosystems with complementary resources. The increasing interest of companies in topics such as, for example, opening up corporate culture to external impulses, exchanging with suppliers and/or customers, or assessing employee competency to promote innovation are all part of the effort to increase the capacity of the chemical industry to innovate. Chemical companies are actively using changes in their environment to stay competitive and prepare for future challenges. In the literature there is also evidence that innovation performance is affected by the establishment of employee development programs or the exploitation of emerging synergies.

The article "Novel approaches in professional education to foster innovation in the chemical industry" by Dorit Lehr and Christoph Auch, introduces Climate KIC's Certified Professional Program, which was founded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and focuses on defining an innovation competency framework. The relevant competencies include five working areas: Addressing challenges, creativity, envisioning & planning, leading innovation and flexibility & learning. They highlight how important it is for companies in the chemical industry to not only think in terms of "molecule" innovation, but to search for innovation in overall encompassing systems (e.g. health, nutrition, mobility) and thereby reconfigure the field of inquiry for innovation. Consequently they argue that successful professional education activities should be challenge-based, action oriented as well as crossing disciplinary boundaries.

The article "The future of German chemical sites: Potential pathways and organizational readiness – Introduction to a study design" written by Clara Hiemer and Carsten Suntrop presents a research design, that aims to identify the status quo and the future development of chemical sites. By starting with a common definition and presenting the everyday challenges of chemical sites resulting from the different stakeholder groups involved, the scope of the study is set. In the following chapters the authors describe the two-step approach of the study, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection to assess the current internal performance of chemical sites as well as developing hypotheses of future challenges.

Finally, the commentary "Successful Management of chemical sites: A challenge for management theory and practice" by Jürgen Vormann, the CEO of Infraserv GmbH & Co. Höchst KG, offers additional insights into the management of chemical sites. By highlighting the reorganization of chemical sites and the application of various business models, he also emphasizes the importance for further in-depth research. The author advocates a cooperative approach to analyzing the business models of chemical sites with researchers, practitioners and industry associations playing complementary roles.

Please enjoy reading the first issue of the fourteenth volume of the Journal of Business Chemistry. We are grateful for the support of all authors and reviewers. If you have any comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us at contact@businesschemistry.org.

Ruth Herrmann (Executive Editor)

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