



New Images

When being trained at Celle Management Academy international high potentials learn about business and administration in Niedersachsen. Like Elena Korneva from Russia they gain surprising insights and new contacts.

Text: Julia Koch, Photos: Regine Rabanus

Red, orange and yellow – her three-coloured hair is one of the things one first notices about Elena Korneva. Then her bright smile. She now smiles into the camera on a rainy day in the small town of Celle. She presents places of interest in the picturesque old town which is so different from her hometown in Russia. Elena Korneva has spent a month at the German Management Academy which is located in the beautiful castle of Celle. She takes part in the so-called President's Programme that teaches junior managers from the CIS Western management know-how.



The German Management Academy in the historical town of Celle provides information as well as inspiration for trainees.

Without coyness Elena poses according to the instructions of the photographer. There is neither boasting nor shyness in her demeanour, just a quiet self-assurance. Although Elena would have reason to boast:

A swift and straightforward career – she agrees with a bright smile.

The 32-year-old finished her law studies nine years ago, started a family (she has an eight-year-old daughter) and is now heading the legal department of the municipal utility in her hometown Ulyanovsk. A swift and straightforward career – she agrees with a bright smile.

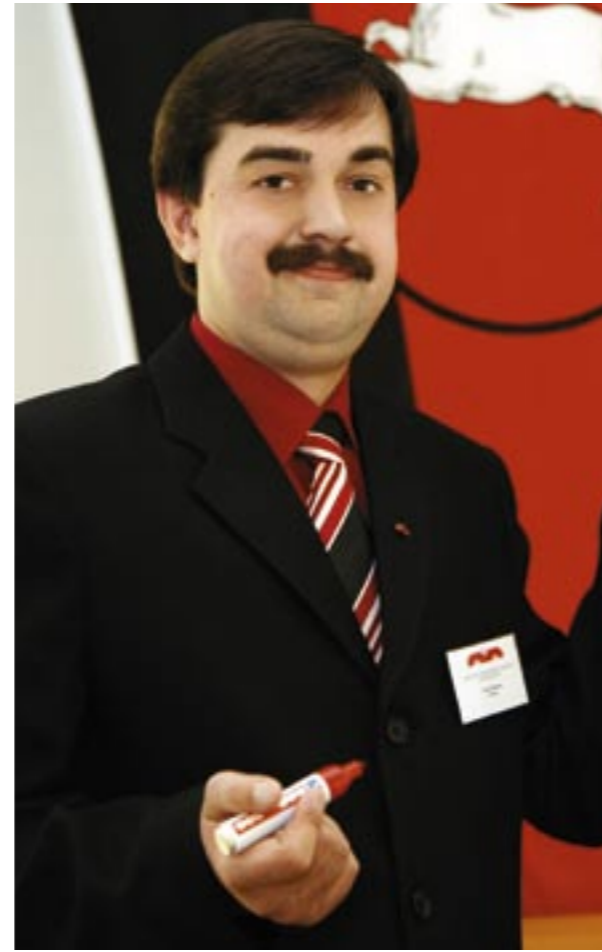
Strict Selection Procedure

That is not unusual in Russia according to the experience of programme manager Dr. Ronald Pschierer: "The women know exactly what they want and how to reach their goals. They pursue a scheme. They know which questions to ask in the course." It is plain that Elena is ambitious, if only from her taking part in the programme. There is a strict selection procedure: applicants have to take three tests before being admitted. The month abroad is only the grand finale. Before coming to Germany, Elena trained for nine months at home. Every day after her regular work



she went to study for three more hours. "I enjoy continuing to learn," she says. "Course participants are on a certain level and they are interesting people. Besides, it's important for business contacts." The stay in Germany was demanding, too: the group travelled all over Niedersachsen, visiting a range of companies that are exemplary in some respect. Courses focus on different areas according to participants'

backgrounds, and Elena's group learned about the management of small and medium-sized businesses. "We received lots of impressions," says Elena. The visit to the municipal utility of Soltau was particularly useful for her. Another highlight was the Volkswagen factory and Autostadt. Even weekends were spent travelling: Elena went to Berlin, Düsseldorf, Amsterdam, Denmark and Paris. "All in all it has been a



A friendly campus atmosphere at the "fairy tale castle" stimulates an exchange of ideas.

little exhausting, even for me, even though I know Germany." She spent several holidays and a semester here in the past. She speaks German very well, having studied the language besides law.

Questions and Answers

Today the group visits the last company. Effinghausen Getränke-Fachgroßhandel GmbH in Celle trades with beverages and was chosen because of its market share of 90 percent. The group is shown over the premises, past huge piles of beverage cases. The managing director talks about his company without being interrupted by a single question from the group. "They have been brought up differently," explains Winfried Bostelmann who accompanies the group. "In their

culture it is considered well-mannered to wait until the director has finished. Then the first tentative questions come." He is right: later the young managers ask about competitive advantages, the acquisition of new clients, delivery times and the motivation of the sales managers. Managing director Heinz-Carsten Follmers gives an impression of being very down-to-earth, a man who doesn't mince matters. Consequently the atmosphere becomes soon very relaxed with much laughter. Follmers explains in detail how his company works, even revealing exact figures. But such has been the group's experience in every company, says Elena: „I was surprised that everywhere people took so much time for us. And they answered all our questions without reserve." Besides: "Everything was au-

tomated, clean and tidy, just like one imagines Germany." According to Pschierer, participants are often astounded by the openness of the companies, the flat hierarchies and by the amount of responsibility given to the individual. "They also say that Germans are friendlier and more humorous than they thought."

Signpost in Russian and Chinese

Though most days were spent on study tours, there were also many seminars in the Academy. If an environment can inspire learning, it should do there: courses are held in large rooms with elaborately decorated ceilings, fireplaces adorned with sculptures and large windows that present pretty views over the castle grounds and the town. Pschierer is aware of it: "Who else has the chance to work in a fairy tale castle?" All signposts are in German and Russian and some also in Chinese. The Russian visitors learned there about project management, intercultural management, business organisation, personnel management, corporate communication, marketing, creativity techniques and the like.

The programme was first set up to show people from former communist Russia how companies work in a free market economy.

Today, participants are already very well educated and only have to catch up on certain fields like service, quality management and customer orientation. The programme also offers three-month courses, including a two-month internship in a German company.

At first, Pschierer says, he feared that the young visitors coming from large cities would find Celle boring. The town is a tourist attraction because of its many half-timbered houses, but it has not much to offer for entertainment. But he was wrong: "In their home countries not much old structure is preserved. They are thrilled by



Chatting and enjoying a good beer and the atmosphere of a small town will be a long lasting memory of a traineeship in Niedersachsen.

Celle and its historic atmosphere." Elena is, too: "I love those old houses with the modern shops inside." Although she is used to shops in Ulyanovsk being open till ten pm at least, while in Celle everything is closed by seven pm. But she also enjoys the quietness and thinks it comfortable. "It feels like home." The programme is a proved success: a study has shown that it gives a boost to participants' careers. They either

get promoted or get a better job somewhere else or start their own business. Pschierer meets them one year after the course and notes personality changes: "All of them become more self-assured and dynamic. They gain vision." Elena plans to stay with her employer for now, but she hopes to be promoted in the future. "What I have learned about staff motivation will definitely be of use to me."



Celle academy is aims at building a sound relationship connections with potential business leaders worldwide.

The German Management Academy of Niedersachsen (DMAN) was founded in 1989 to promote Niedersachsen's foreign business. It organises specialist and industrial seminars, training programmes and internships for managers from Middle and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and China. The courses take one week to three months time.

The DMAN is committed to the exchange between companies from East and West, thereby laying the foundation for new business contacts and cooperative ventures.

The Academy is located in Celle, about one hour from Hannover. It is also represented in Moscow, Kiev, Budapest and Prague. It has so far provided further education for about 23,000 managers in 1,500 seminars and trainings. The DMAN employs 25 people and contracts 60 freelance trainers, lecturers, tutors and interpreters as well as over 100 international experts. Shareholders are the federal state of Niedersachsen, Deutsche Messe AG, the Nord/LB (State Bank), TUI, Volkswagen, two regional Chambers of Industry and Commerce and several medium-sized companies in Niedersachsen.

Since 1998 the Academy has been participating in the so-called "President's Programme," an initiative to reform the Russian economy under the patronage of the President of the Russian Federation. Junior managers from the CIS are given further training in modern management techniques and expertise in courses of one and three months' time. Germany is the most important supporter of the programme, having so far provided about 3,500 further training positions in various companies. The programme is financed by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology and coordinated by the non-profit organisation InWEnt. 500 of those young executives have been under the care of DMAN. The success of the programme has prompted the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Uzbekistan to set up similar programmes. Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, China and Vietnam have also signed agreements. The DMAN is also involved in national trainings. Since 2006 there have been swaps: junior managers from Germany have visited Russian companies to learn about their business practices and to establish contacts.

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