



„I would advice anyone to gain work experience through internships. It is the only way to truly discover what is behind a profession. When I began to work after I had finished my studies, I hardly had an idea of what an entrepreneur's job looks like.“

Name:

Bernd Kochannek

Job title:

Agricultural engineer, CEO and owner of the ADDCON – Green Chemistry

Career:

First, I trained to be a farmer in my parent's agricultural business, born and raised in the country so to speak. Afterwards I completed my high school diploma through evening classes and finished my degree in Agricultural Science. Later, I took on further studies in chemistry at university, to eventually be trained for a position at a French corporation as a Foreign Language Management Assistant French.

Responsibilities:

Entrepreneurship, business travel, visiting manufacturing sites in Germany and Norway; developing new ideas to improve the business and establishing business plans, in order to receive funding from banks (in these plans I need to precisely explain the investment and how exactly we are going to amortise the debt)

Essential skills in my Job:

- Creativity
- Flexibility
- „Thinking outside of the box“
- Be bold and timely (contemporary)
- Profound knowledge of foreign languages

What I need to know in my job:

- Business Management
- Guidelines for drafting applications and business plans
- Profound knowledge of chemistry and technology
- Customer Needs
- Current and prospective challenges of society (e.g. the supply of food for an expanding world population)

ADDCON – Green Chemistry



The German based ADDCON looks back on more than 60 years of history. Over the years, the company grew from a producer of Silage additives to a global player in various industries.

To date, there are ADDCON offices in Germany, Norway, China, the Philippines, Thailand and South Africa as well as a global network of business partners. ADDCON specialises in Green Chemistry. In its production sites in Bitterfeld/Germany and in Porsgrunn/Norway ADDCON adds value to organic acids and their respective salts. The products are used in the feed and food industry as well as in de-icing of airports and in the oil drilling industry. All products break down by nature and have little impact on the environment. ADDCON serves its customers through four business units: Feed, Food, De-Icers and Industrial.



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Agricultural engineer, CEO and owner oft ADDCON – Green Chemistry Bernd Kochannek

I started my career with the apprenticeship for agriculturalists and have learned in different agricultural holdings, including my own parents' farm. After that, I took my Abitur (A-level) and started to study agricultural sciences at university. After my studies, I received further practical training by working in different fields, e.g. in chemistry. Moreover, different language skills were very useful for my career. Since I worked for a French company, I even earned a French language business certificate („Fremdsprachendiplomkaufmann Französisch“).

People working in our Team at the ADDCON Company are salesmen, scientists, lawyers, and some financial experts. Women are working in all these sectors as well. Many employees, especially those in management, have a scientific background, e.g. a PhD in chemistry.

My normal working day is characterised by a lot of different issues and finding solutions for them. I am responsible for everything: staff, sales and marketing, production and administration. Moreover, writing business plans and finding new partners for investments takes a lot of my time. Business travels make up half of my working hours. Normally these trips are within Europe. If I have to travel to our factory in Bitterfeld (in the Eastern part of Germany) for example, I take a flight at 6:40am from Cologne/Bonn airport. I get to Leipzig at 7:40am and start working at 8:00am in Bitterfeld. Often I travel back the same day at 6:40pm. If I travel to Asia or in the US I am usually away for a week, but two days and two nights I spend on the airplane. In foreign countries, I often even work on weekends as this is common in a lot of other nations.

The biggest challenge in my sector is the transport of our products. We have to guarantee that our customers receive their products (like de-icers) in time. If we deliver too late or not enough, we have to pay for the loss. Moreover, it is very important to have new and innovative ideas. There is always a need for investments and progress, because there are some things that are not predictable and you have to be able to react to a changing situation. The last three winters for example were very mild, so we sold less de-icers. This is why we invest more in our *feed* and *food* sectors now. The world population is growing and thereby the need of food and animal feed is increasing.

Unfortunately, I also have to do things that I don't like very much, like administration tasks. Furthermore, I don't have much leisure time and there is not as much time left for my family as I would like to, neither. The most interesting part of my work is the diversity of tasks. I talk to the executive board of Lufthansa about the delivery of our de-icers. I debate with the leaders of the biscuit industries about rotten cookies and I'm constantly under discussion with environmental authorities.

The skills you need for my job definitely include knowledge, creativity and flexibility. A good basic education is very important. This means that you should try to get to know different sectors at the beginning. Later you become a specialist working in a specific company and you should make use of further education during work.

I recommend students to earn experiences by traineeships. They should get to know different companies in different sectors to find out what is behind all this.