The Mittelstand or the impossible adaptation of Germany’s successful model for French companies?

Gerald Lang, a professor specialising in supply-chain management and international management at Kedge Business School, will give a talk entitled “Very small businesses will become big” at the MEDEF conference on 30 August. The talk will focus on the Mittelstand—Germany’s network of small and medium-sized companies—and the interest they are arousing in French politics and among French companies.

Mr Lang believes the Mittelstand is the backbone of the German economy. It is characterised by German quality, innovation, internationalisation, training and management. But can this model, which has proven so successful in Germany, be easily introduced in France?

According to Mr Lang, there isn’t enough political will in France to create a network of companies like the one in Germany. The economic, technological, political, societal and managerial characteristics are very different from those of Germany.

Mr Lang adds: "The Mittelstand companies operate in a complex system that is highly dependent on the country’s political, geographical, societal and educational organisation, whose various components are closely linked and all but inseparable. That makes for a very stable system, but clearly shows the impossibility of incorporating it into a country like France, which is structured very differently."

See Gerald Lang’s article on The Conversation France and on Kedge Insights: https://kedge.edu/insights/creer-un-mittelstand-a-la-francaise-l-impossible-adaptation-du-modele-allemand

Gerald Lang is at your disposal for any requests for reports or interviews concerning this news item.

More about Gerald Lang:
Gerald Lang has been a professor at Kedge Business School since 2008. He holds a doctorate degree from Ecole Polytechnique, where he is now an associate researcher at the management research centre (I3-CRG). From 1996 to 2008, he was in charge of operations as director of strategy and development and project manager at different French and German companies (Bertelsmann, Kering, etc.). He was in charge of strategic repositioning and improving operations at the international level. His fields of research and teaching mainly include supply-chain management, strategic changes in the distribution sector and international and intercultural management. He coordinated a special edition of the review Annales des Mines – Réalités Industrielles on the topic "Is Germany a model for French industry?" with French and German experts.

About Kedge Business School:
Kedge Business School is a benchmark French business school with four campuses in France (Paris, Bordeaux, Marseille, and Toulon), three abroad (Shanghai, Suzhou and Dakar) and three partner campuses (Avignon, Bastia and Bayonne). The Kedge BS community is made up of 12,600 students (25% of whom are international students), 183 professors (44% of whom are international), 275 international academic partners and 54,000 alumni around the world. Kedge BS offers a portfolio of 32 training programmes in management and design for students and industry professionals. It also provides customised educational programmes for businesses at
national and international levels. Kedge was ranked 33rd by the Financial Times in the European Business School ranking and 22nd globally in its Executive MBA ranking. It is AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA-accredited, and is a member of the Conférence des Grandes Écoles. It is also recognised and covered by the French government.

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