

NAME:
Karl Fuchs

COMPANY:
T.CON

POSITION:
Co-Founder & CEO

LOCATION:
Plattling, Germany



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“IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER”

T.CON HAS BEEN HELPING BUSINESSES INTEGRATE THEIR PROCESSES FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS. AND FOR CO-FOUNDER AND CEO **KARL FUCHS**, THE SAP SOFTWARE THEY HARNESS HAS A UNIQUE, TRANSFORMATIONAL POWER.

WORDS PAUL MERRILL • IMAGES MATTUNDGLAENZEND.DE

Karl Fuchs has a favourite saying: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” As a freelance software consultant in the 1990s, he was certainly going fast, earning an enviable reputation helping a string of large enterprises adapt digital processes to better serve their markets. But he could see that there was so much more he could achieve if he formed a team with people who shared his passion and ambition.

Luckily, those people weren’t hard to find. Together with Stefan Fiedler, Michael Gulde and two other business applications experts, he formed T.CON, which is an abbreviation of ‘Team Consulting’. Their first office was in a small, cramped townhouse in Deggendorf. It was a year before they could afford a photocopier and another two before they splashed out on a modest coffee machine.

Early clients included paper manufacturers and an automotive supplier, all drawn to T.CON’s expertise in integrated software for business operations and customer servicing, first developed by SAP, a German multinational that’s since become the world’s third-largest publicly traded software company with 425,000 employees in more than 180 countries.

SAP helps companies manage complicated processes by centralising data systems and giving real-time insights across the business through industry-best enterprise resource planning software. “Nearly every company will become a digital company. And that leads to completely new business models and corporate processes,” the CEO says. “Our job is to help them improve and expand their operations on a solid and flexible digital foundation.” »

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T.CON now has 340 employees, more than 220 customers worldwide and six branches throughout Germany. In 2019, it opened its first international office in Austin, Texas. Growth has been organic and sustained rather than based on acquisitions; the company has never made a loss.

“We make our customers’ problems our problems and develop a deep understanding of their industries,” Karl shares. “We then supply the technical knowledge, as we live and breathe SAP. The software is so fast and companies we work with are sometimes slow, so we’re in the middle, which means we show them how to embrace high-end optimisation and organisational change to fulfil their potential.”

T.CON provides end-to-end solutions, stressing long-term goals over short-term gains. The beauty of SAP is that it brings more certainty to future planning as corporations are better placed to react quickly to rapidly changing circumstances. “The pandemic taught us that resilient supply chains are critical for the entire economy,” Karl reveals. “So we ensure our clients have an integrated system-based set-up for their suppliers together with a digital network of business partners.”

The technology available today to achieve that is worlds away from that of 20 years ago. “When we started, it was a completely different story because there was one integrated SAP system, one installation. So nearly all the processes were in the one system,” Karl recalls. “These days, the possibilities are endless as it’s so advanced, but it’s also complex – a huge bundle of systems for planning, analytics, customer relationship management, enterprise resource planning, finance, manufacturing execution systems and everything else.”

Nowadays, installations aren’t just on the premises; one part is in the cloud, one part is with a third-party provider, one part is installed at the hosting partner and elsewhere, according to Karl. “There are so many aspects and what we always do is bring it together so it’s as easy as possible for our customers. We can’t do it all by ourselves so we have our own partners including SAP itself,” he says.

The culture at T.CON is all about collaboration to secure the best possible results and take initiative. “We always tell our team they should ask for forgiveness, not permission. They have the freedom to make choices as long as they take responsibility for the results. It’s empowering and why we still have just as much drive and passion as we did 22 years ago. I’m very proud of that.” ■

“Our partnership with T.CON means that our customers can trust in our single-source support. Together, we create leeway for the area of human capital management, where T.CON can respond quickly to today’s rapidly changing business world.” – Michael Kleine-Beckel, Member of the Board, t.serv



KEEPING CUSTOMERS ON COURSE

“The software providers seem to bring out new features nearly every day. There’s always a new version available to install,” Karl says. “If it’s an app on your iPhone, then it’s easy to update it, but you can’t do that in business because it’s too disruptive. So part of our role is to steer our customers along the right course for them, updating only when they need to, and making sure we keep the business stable and resilient.”

