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# PRESS RELEASE

## Combining Theory and Practice in Education

**Practical experience is an important counterpart to the theoretical knowledge universities and schools provide.**

**Munich, November 16, 2016.** In 2016, msg conducted a survey of students and IT professionals that examined which professional and social skills universities and schools held in high esteem and which skills companies tended to value. The results showed that it is very important for students to balance out the knowledge they gain at universities and schools with practical experience. As good an education as a university or school may provide, some skills are actually better learned in a practical, hands-on setting.

Social skills in particular fall into that category and many assert that students are able to acquire important additional competences through practical experiences as student employees or interns: thus, while the students surveyed confirmed that team and communication skills were competences they learned at both their universities or schools and in companies, they also stated that creativity, the ability to give and take criticism and a sense of responsibility were aspects they specifically acquired during practical experiences. Compare that to the fact that IT professionals named a sense of responsibility as a skill very important in their own positions that leads to the clear conclusion that combining theoretical and practical experience is important in providing young people with a well-rounded education.

In regard to professional skills, the results showed that IT architectures, IT security and project management are especially important to companies. Academic study programs, on the other hand, tend to focus on databases, programming languages and software development. Thus, closing the gap between what companies want and the skills students are acquiring at educational institutions is very important for both companies and students. Even though universities and schools do provide a very sound basis, that basis must be built upon through practical experience in order for students to meet all of the demands modern employers have.

These discoveries correspond to msg's past experiences with graduates. That is why the company group established training and advanced training options long ago; options that prepare young professionals for the responsibilities they will assume. msg also works in close cooperation with numerous universities and schools, sharing know-how and skills from the practical side of the business world with students and promoting contact between students and companies. This collaboration ranges from guest lectures and seminars to internships, thesis positions and student jobs.

"When we receive applications, we pay close attention to whether the applicant already has practical experience, because our experience has shown that it is the perfect complement to theoretical knowledge," explains Herbert Wittemer, Head of Human Resources at msg. "At the same time, we also feel responsible for making practical experience available to students, since young people can only gain a wide range of knowledge if companies are willing to get involved."

#### **About the Survey**

Around 500 students at the RWTH in Aachen, the University of Augsburg, the University of Magdeburg, the University of Bayreuth and the Technical University (TU) of Darmstadt were surveyed. University and school selection was based on the rankings published by the CHE (center for higher education) in the subject of computer science for academic year 2016/2017. 700 IT professionals from different levels were interviewed throughout Germany for the comparison of skills to the requirements in companies. The survey included questions such as which professional and social skills universities and schools emphasize and which of those skills IT professionals consider important in their current position.

#### **msg**

msg is an independent, international group of companies with more than 5,500 employees around the world. The group of companies offers a holistic service spectrum of creative, strategic consulting and intelligent, sustainable and value-added IT solutions for the following industries: automotive, financial services, food, insurance, life science & healthcare, public sector, telecommunications & media, travel & logistics, as well as utilities, and has acquired an excellent reputation as an industry specialist during its more than 30 years in business.

Within the group, independent companies cover the wide variety of industry and issue-based competence: msg systems ag forms the core of the company group and works in close cooperation with the subsidiaries, both on a business and organizational level. This allows the competence, experience and know-how of all the members to be bundled into a holistic solution portfolio with measurable added value for its customers.

msg holds seventh place in the ranking of IT consulting and system integration companies in Germany.

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