

Univ. Prof. Dr. Nikolaus Franke

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Professor Nikolaus Franke founded and established the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU). Former academic stations of Nikolaus Franke were University of Munich and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is married and has two daughters.

He is fascinated by the paradigm-shifting phenomenon of open and user innovation. In his research, he analyzes how firms can benefit from user creativity (such as toolkits for user innovation and design, innovation communities, crowdsourcing, lead user analyses etc.). Beyond this and more generally he is interested in the areas of entrepreneurship, innovation management, marketing, behavioral economics and psychology, and prefers to work empirically. He strongly believes that rigor alone it is not a sufficient criterion for good academic research. Theory needs to be practically relevant as well, and it should be communicated as clearly as possible. He has cooperated with scholars around the globe in projects that have been financed by research funding institutions like EU (Marie Curie), Volkswagen Stiftung, Vienna Science and Technology Fund, OeNB or FWF. His research has been published in academic journals like Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, Journal of Business Venturing, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Product Innovation Management, Management Science or Research Policy.

Under his responsibility, the institute and its members developed a frequently awarded problem-based teaching approach covering the topics of entrepreneurship and innovation in full breadth. In the last years > 300 applied projects with partners ranging from start-ups to leading multinationals were carried out by the institute. Other transfer activities include his role as Scientific Director of the yearly competition "TOP 100 – Germany's most innovative SME", the Ernst & Young Austrian Entrepreneur of the Year Award, AT Kearny Best Innovator and more board memberships. He consulted many firms and served as invited speaker in executive meetings worldwide.

Beyond leading the Institute, he serves WU in numerous other positions (e.g. as Scientific Director of the research studio eSPARK, Director of the TU/WU Entrepreneurship Center, a joint technology transfer organization together with the Vienna University of Technology, Academic Director of the TU/WU Professional MBA in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, initiator of the User Innovation Research Initiative Vienna, as member of the Research Institute for Family Business, the Senate of WU or WU's research commission). He serves the scientific community as Chairman of the Center of Excellence "TIE – Technology, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship" of the Academic Association for Business Research (Verband der Hochschullehrer für Betriebswirtschaft), as advisory board member of VHB journal rating activities, Innovation Research & Policy Network of SSRN, and in many juries and evaluation committees such as the Rudolf Sallinger Award or the Kardinal Innitzer Award.

Research Honors

- Theo Schöllner-Preis (Munich Best Paper Award Innovation Management) for the article "The 'I designed it myself' effect in mass customization" (Management Science, together with Martin Schreier and Ulrike Kaiser, 2011)
- WU Best Paper Award for the article "Testing the Value of Customization: When Do Customers Really Prefer Products Tailored to Their Preferences?" (Journal of Marketing, together with Peter Keinz and Christoph Steger, 2010)
- Theo Schöllner-Preis (Munich Best Paper Award Innovation Management) for the article "Testing the Value of Customization: When Do Customers Really Prefer Products Tailored to Their Preferences?" (Journal of Marketing, together with Peter Keinz and Christoph Steger, 2010)
- Best Paper Award 2010 of the German Academic Association for Business Research (Verband der Hochschullehrer für Betriebswirtschaft) for the article "The 'I designed it myself' Effect in Mass Customization." (Management Science, together with Martin Schreier, and Ulrike Kaiser, 2010)
- WU Best Paper Award for the article "Complementing Mass Customization Toolkits with User Communities: How Peer Input Improves Customer Self-design" (Journal of Product Innovation Management, with Peter Keinz and Martin Schreier, 2009)

- Best Paper Award, American Marketing Association (AMA) Summer Conference, Track New Product Development, Product Management and Entrepreneurship for the article "Does Individualization Pay? Measuring Customer Value of Individualized, Segment-Specific, and Mass Marketing Products in the Newspaper Market" (with Christoph Steger, 2007)
- Highly Commended Winner at the Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2007 for the article "The Six Identities of Marketing: A Vector Quantization of Research Approaches" (European Journal of Marketing, with Josef Mazanec, 2007)
- Best Paper Award, American Marketing Association (AMA) Summer Conference, Track New Product Development, Product Management and Entrepreneurship for the article "Efficient Identification of Lead Users: Screening vs. Pyramiding" (with Eric von Hippel and Reinhard Prügl, 2005)
- Senator Wilhelm Wilfling Research Award (SWWR Forschungspreis) (2004)
- WU Best Paper Award for the article "The 'Making' of an Entrepreneur" (R&D Management, with Christian Lüthje, 2003)
- Kardinal Innitzer Award (Kardinal Innitzer Förderpreis) for Habilitation "Realtheorie des Marketing: Gestalt und Erkenntnis" (2003)
- German Marketing Research Award (Förderpreis der deutschen Marktforschung) for Dissertation "Das Herstellerimage im Handel" (1997)
- POCO Retail Marketing Award for Dissertation "Das Herstellerimage im Handel" (1997)
- German Marketing Research Award (Förderpreis der deutschen Marktforschung) for diploma thesis "Das Image von Taschenbuchverlagen" (1994)

Publications