
WHY THE FUTURE IS OURS TO MOLD

AN INTERVIEW WITH
DR. WOLFGANG PICHLER

The Business Development and Digitalisation Director at MANZ, Austria's oldest legal publishing house and LTHV Lab Partner talks about the future of the legal industry and the challenges ahead.

How do you see the future?

I have a positive view of the future for our industry, even if nobody can say exactly what it will look like. Adaptability will be required, as well as courage and competence to maintain innovative strength in changing situations. But the general conditions for the legal industry are not bad, since the pandemic and the social changes that followed it have given rise to numerous new legal issues.

What does innovation mean to you?

Innovation means "renewal". In this sense, it means first listening to the customers and constantly adapting and developing products and services. This naturally includes internal processes. But there is a second component of innovation, and that is "thinking beyond the borders." Both must be reflected in the company.



How is innovation lived at MANZ?

Multiplex. The impetus for innovation comes from management, product management, from our software company Manz Solutions, from sales and hotline, and - we are particularly pleased about this - increasingly from employee groups. As we are very broadly based, from content products such as the RDB to infrastructure such as the lawyer-safe Manz Cloud, there is no uniform process. And there's also no fixed meeting after the moth "Let's be creative for the next 90 minutes."

What does MANZ bring to the LTHV?

First and foremost, we can contribute our market experience. Most of the younger companies lack the connection to the reality of direct sales. Currently, we actively support the participants of the LTHV by opening our customer magazine "Recht Aktuell" for them and thus making them known to a broad legal public. And then our broad portfolio offers various starting points for common projects.

What challenges are there in the cooperation with start-ups?

Many believe that the innovator's dilemma, in which every grown organization is caught, can be avoided or overcome by working with start-ups. But that's a bit of a short thought; not every employee responsible for a legacy product is spontaneously excited about new ideas or approaches that are brought in from outside. Sometimes, that's my impression, expectations are also somewhat unspecified: Brand values and the associated quality standards, existing customer relationships and copyright barriers can be serious hurdles. However, the resource issue is crucial: from the perspective of the established company, cooperation can only work if the appropriate resources are made available in the organization.

Do you believe that Europe will be fragmented in terms of technology?

What is the future: pan-European or regional solutions? As far as infrastructure issues are concerned, I think Europe missed the boat. At the application level, I believe that regional, language area-specific solutions have a chance, because the language areas correlate with the legal systems in some way.

What does the "MANZ-Red" of the future look like?

MANZ will continue to wear its traditional color, the legally protected Manz Red, with pride. The color will continue to uphold our values such as quality, respect and sustainability. But at the same time the color will also document the change, as the products and services behind it will be digital to an even greater extent.

Simultaneously we assume that a relevant basic stock of printed specialist information will very likely remain. Ultimately, the color will also be the anchor for employees who will no longer meet their team members and managers regularly in persona if a relevant part of their working time is spent in the home office.

What are the demands on lawyers in the 21st century?

The most important requirement is to continue being an excellent lawyer. This is often forgotten in the discussion about "coding". At the same time, lawyers need a functional understanding of technology and will be required to follow developments so that they can estimate how they might influence their clients' processes. Ultimately - and this is perhaps the biggest change - they will have to be prepared to constantly adapt their own business to the changes that their clients are making; this may be a focus of activity or fee models or the industrialisation of legal services provided. But they will not have to master any programming language.

