

**Prof. Dr. Andreas Pinkwart,
Dean of HHL - Leipzig Graduate School of Management,
Former Minister for Science, Innovation, Research, and Technology of
the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia**

Prof. Pinkwart, ideas and innovation are necessary for a country to remain competitive in the global job market. What is the university's role within this competition?

On the one hand, it is important to attract the best students and professors. Through excellent teaching and research, we should stimulate the best minds, which are needed to develop ideas and innovate in both scientific research institutions and the business world. Additionally, it is necessary to collaborate with entrepreneurs at an early stage in order to comprehend the economic usefulness of new findings as early as possible and to put them into practice.

In which scientific and technological areas do you consider Germany to have the greatest innovation potential?

Germany can build on traditional strengths, in particular, within sectors such as chemistry, pharmaceuticals, mechanical engineering, automotive engineering, and materials. Here you can find important fields, which through biotechnology or nanotechnology can facilitate the efficiency of new materials, new drugs or renewable raw materials. Thus, Germany can leverage its strong technological roots in areas such as biotechnology, communication and information technologies, as well as nanotechnology. This will allow existing strengths to develop into new strengths.

As Dean of HHL - Leipzig Graduate School of Management, what steps will you take to enhance the entrepreneurship culture at your university and in German society at large?

At HHL we are further developing the fields of innovation management and entrepreneurship, not only through our teaching but also through research and knowledge transfer. Today we are one of the leading incubators for start-ups in our country. In order to forge ahead, we want to make these our flagship skills, and therefore, must continue to refine our excellence in teaching, research, as well as the transfer of information.

As Innovation Minister for the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, you designated a significant amount of the state research budget to entrepreneurial contests. At the university, how significant are competitions for both innovative creation and turning that creation into a successfully marketable product?

Competition allocates resources where they can be used best. Additionally, competition sets free creativity and mobilizes entrepreneurial drive. Therefore, competition is suitable at universities. This promotes excellent minds and strong partnerships, between the disciplines as well as between business and science, to develop the best ideas and most

successful innovations. This has proven to be successful and has resulted in the building of additional entrepreneurial clusters.

If you could convey one message to tomorrow's academic entrepreneurs, what would it be?

Remain enthusiastic in thinking the inconceivable and know that the impossible can become reality.