

Press Release

Success factors for crowdfunding in the sports sector - Leipzig Fraunhofer Center researchers provide academic support to "crowdFANding – Südkurve bleibt!"

Leipzig, 6 June 2016, 19:03 – Perfectly timed to coincide with the start of the European football championships this Friday, the international crowdfunding campaign "crowdFANding – Südkurve bleibt!" kicked off yesterday in Jena at 19:03. Researchers from the Fraunhofer Center for International Management and Knowledge Economy are providing academic support to the project. They want to investigate the success factors for crowdfunding campaigns in the sports sector.

Over the past few years, crowdfunding has developed into a successful financing alternative for creatives, artists, start-ups and also for film or real estate projects. In the sports sector, this alternative form of participation is a relatively recent phenomenon, especially when it comes to football and its fans, despite the fact that this sport offers particularly excellent conditions for potentially very successful targeted crowdfunding campaigns due to its internationally well-connected (fan) community.

The citizen's initiative "Unser Stadion Jena e.V." has asked the financing experts at the Fraunhofer Center for International Management and Knowledge Economy to provide academic support during the initiation and realization of the campaign. They will analyze relevant successful examples of similar national and international campaigns and will supervise the project throughout in order to determine scientifically sound, accurately matched success factors for crowdfunding in the sports sector.

In keeping with the motto "One voice has little chance of being heard – but thousands of voices cannot be ignored!", the "crowdFANding – Südkurve bleibt!" campaign kicked off at 19:03 yesterday in Jena. The precise starting time was inspired by the founding year of local football club FC Carl Zeiss Jena. The pilot project in collaboration with the citizen's initiative Unser Stadion Jena e.V. gives the fans and financial supporters of FC Carl Zeiss Jena an innovative tool for active citizen participation that not only allows them to become financially involved but also to have some political influence on the decision-makers. This currently unique international crowdfunding campaign intends to mobilize supporters and funds over the next two months to allow the Jena fans to remain in their traditional Südkurve spot in the stands of the new stadium.

Dr. Robin Bürger heads the team of football enthusiasts at the Leipzig Fraunhofer Center: **"We – the Innovation Financing Unit – are investigating new ways of citizen participation. Crowdfunding gives projects a voice. It allows fans and supporters to become actively involved, and goes perfectly with this year's Fraunhofer motto: Focus on People. As a Fraunhofer expert and member of the FC Carl Zeiss Jena club, this project is particularly**

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important to me. We want to find out which gaps crowdfunding can fill in the sports sector, especially in football."

All of the financial support gained will be used for the benefit of the concerns of the fans, in this case the preservation of the Südkurve stand at the Ernst-Abbe-Sportfeld. The plans for the new football stadium involve the "relocation" of the active Jena fans from the future Südkurve stand to elsewhere in favour of the away fans, a suggestion made by the police and the fire brigade. The fan scene is highly sensitive to traditions and objects to this scenario. The term "Südkurve" has come to symbolize the club's fan culture.

The Fraunhofer researchers developed the technical infrastructure for the realization of the campaign in collaboration with Innovation Service Network GmbH, a leading Austrian innovation service provider, and Dr. Willfort, co-founder and President of the European Crowdfunding Network. The research results from the academic support provided will be published in the form of articles, conference contributions and a project summary for the citizen's initiative.

The campaign will run until 15 August at 19:03 on: www.crowdfunding.net

Fraunhofer Center for International Management and Knowledge Economy
Neumarkt 9-19, 04109 Leipzig, Germany

Academic support contact crowdFANding project

Dr. Robin Bürger, Head of Innovation Financing Unit
Phone +49 341 231039-136
robin.buerger@moez.fraunhofer.de

Press contact Fraunhofer Center Leipzig

Dirk Langolf, Head of Marketing and Communications
Phone +49 341 231039-250
dirk.langolf@moez.fraunhofer.de

The Fraunhofer Center for International Management and Knowledge Economy develops scientifically sound solutions for the challenges associated with globalization. Companies and regions profit from potential analyses, the initiation, financing and realization of international project and network activities, and the analysis and optimization of business models up to knowledge and technology transfer. The institute established a Big Data Center in 2014. It is equipped with more than 220 processor cores and around 450 terabytes of storage capacity. With this technical infrastructure and the institute's economics expertise, the Fraunhofer Center assists clients who are getting ready to digitalize their own processes and business models. The international and interdisciplinary team of experts at the Leipzig Fraunhofer Center consolidates its economics, social, political and cultural science expertise to investigate and find answers to questions such as: corporate development in the international competitive environment, knowledge and technology transfer, and sustainability management and infrastructure economics.