



InnoTruck initiative: Campaign profile

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Out and about as an ‘innovation ambassador’: mobile interactive exhibition generates enthusiasm for science and technology

During the course of its nationwide tour, the new information and dialogue initiative organised by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF), will highlight ways that innovation can have a positive impact on our lives. The diverse range of exhibits and varied programme of events presents the future tasks that make up the government’s *High-Tech Strategy* and gives visitors the opportunity to get involved and try things out for themselves.

How does a good idea become a successful innovation? What does the word “innovation” even mean? How do innovations help us – and what risks do they entail? Answers to these and numerous other questions are provided by the InnoTruck - as the “innovation ambassador” of the BMBF, this double-decker exhibition truck will be travelling all over Germany throughout the year, giving easy-to-understand demonstrations of the roles that innovations play in our everyday lives. The exhibition is designed to appeal to a large cross-section of society, in fact to anyone who happens to be interested, but especially to young people and their parents and teachers.

Through its InnoTruck initiative, the BMBF is seeking to encourage public debate on the question of how innovations in technology and science can be driven ahead in order to generate the greatest possible benefit. After all, an idea on its own does not constitute an innovation. For it to become an innovation, an idea requires the help of technology, as well as people who can research and further develop the idea, and ultimately transform it into products or services that will shape our society in a sustainable and positive way. And since technological developments can sometimes also have negative consequences, the InnoTruck initiative not only tells visitors about the opportunities but also about the risks involved, and the precautions needed to keep these to a minimum.

Seeing, touching and exploring innovation

With its new *High-Tech Strategy*, the Federal Government is prioritising particular areas for research and innovation. In doing so, it is concentrating on fields that exhibit a high level of innovative momentum, and which appear promising in terms of economic growth and prosperity. The exhibition in the

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InnoTruck presents each of these “future tasks” within its own dedicated zone and with the aid of 80 informative exhibits, most of them interactive. In this context, it will be made clear which technologies - and in which areas - promise to bring the most significant developments on the road to making Germany a leader in terms of innovation. Page 2 of 3

Arranged over two levels and across 100 m² of exhibition space, visitors can look forward to an exciting journey of discovery, ranging from research to technology and applications, not forgetting careers information and opportunities for active participation. The exhibits here are not just to look at, but to touch and explore and try out for yourself. And there are expert staff on hand in the InnoTruck to conduct guided tours of the exhibition, to provide explanations to visitors or engage in discussion with them on particular themes of interest.

Make use of opportunities – act responsibly

The experiments which have been set up on the various focal themes will give young people in particular the chance to step into the researcher's shoes, under the guidance of the scientific support staff. This is a setting in which visitors have the opportunity to investigate a given phenomenon, such as how hydrogen can be used as the basis of electromobility in the future, how we can use plants as a model in the generation of power using organic solar cells, or how an organic light diode (OLED) is constructed. The aim of all these practical experiments is to convey the importance that technical innovations have in our everyday lives, and so to generate enthusiasm for advancements in science.

Aside from this, there are also further highly-interesting event formats available, above all for the tour stops organised at schools. From innovation workshops, which call for creativity rather than technical skills for the solving of problems, to workshops for teachers and even parents' evenings. One critical aspect here, and especially relevant to young people, is the constant focus on the careers that lie behind these innovations. After all, it is only through people and their spirit for research that genuine innovations are created from all the possibilities created by new technologies.

Together for an innovative society: The “hands-on tour”

Alongside the programme provided inside the exhibition vehicle, during the planning of each tour stop, local event organisers are invited to contribute their own ideas and components for the creation of a framework of supporting events. These additional events enable a wide variety of plans to be put into action according to each location, and transform the InnoTruck into a

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springboard for wider-ranging commitment to the promotion of innovation in the local community. In order to fulfil this mission, the local event organiser might want to set up additional dialogue forums in collaboration with the BMBF initiative, such as panel discussions, “meet-the-expert” events or a series of lectures. Other less conventional formats are also conceivable, such as an “innovation slam”, special guided tours behind the scenes of selected innovation centres, or a discovery tour through the town with the use of social media.

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The InnoTruck initiative is working directly in cooperation with the competent ministries of the federal states for the implementation of particularly extensive “hands-on” tours, covering a number of successive locations. Through the incorporation of selected locations and institutions, thematically related events will be organised with wide coverage, as part of a two to three-week tour of the state in question. The state authorities thus have the chance to use the presence of the InnoTruck to direct public awareness towards their own promotional activities in the area of innovation, and the initiative for its part can benefit from the specialist support of the authorities, as well as valuable contacts in terms of experts from academic and research institutions.

Innovation on-site: inquire about the mobile programme, free-of-charge

The InnoTruck is suited to a wide range of occasions and settings - for schools seeking to enrich their lessons, for universities and research institutions looking to generate more public awareness for their focal activities, or as a highlight at town festivals, scientific evenings, technology days, careers and industry fairs. Customised event concepts comprising the most diverse programme elements will be created for each location in order to satisfy the prerequisites and wishes of local partner organisations. The programme provided by the InnoTruck initiative is in all cases free-of-charge – both for visitors and for event organisers.

The initiative is, however, also seeking to establish a dialogue over and above the nationwide tour, through an extensive range of online events and material on its website www.innotruck.de and through its social media presence. In this way, the InnoTruck hopes to become a vibrant forum for all the many and varied facets presented by the theme of innovation.

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