



# Successful together

Expert article

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“Sustainable success can be achieved only through open and constructive cooperation between individuals who respect each other as equals.”

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**Virtually every service provider claims they are committed to delivering an optimal solution but, regrettably, such promises often turn out to be no more than empty words. What lies at the heart of a successful customer relationship? At Ergon, everyone agrees that the company’s culture is not only fertile ground for fruitful cooperation with clients, it is the bedrock of the firm’s success as a whole. Gabriela Keller, Ergon Informatik AG’s CEO, explains why personal responsibility, flexibility, trust and partnership are key to the company’s success.**

#### **Challenging problems, personal responsibility and ambition**

Autonomous teams, where personal responsibility is strongly encouraged, are the key building blocks at Ergon. Unlike in many other organisations, Ergon’s experts work in stable teams and, therefore, share long-term responsibility for a portfolio of client projects in specific sectors or specialist areas, building trust and expertise and generating sustainable success for customers. A wealth of experience and a broad knowledge base are complemented by a range of different personalities within the teams – people know each other well, trusting, challenging and encouraging one another

within an established system of cooperation. Our integrated site, the proximity of both Ergon buildings, and numerous centralised activities maximise opportunities for knowledge-sharing with experts from other teams or departments.

We deliberately avoid rigid technological stipulations – team members decide among themselves how projects can be delivered in the most cost-effective, user-friendly and secure way, given available resources. Such an approach leaves room for prudently calculated experiments and allows staff to accumulate valuable experience that is then shared with the whole company.

# “The high expectations of our customers and the leeway our teams are left in finding a solution motivate us to deliver our very best performance.”

This is often carried out via so-called “communities of practice”: hands-on, cross-team groups of experts facing similar challenges who can learn from one another. These groups give others access to their knowledge and findings, for example, as architecture blueprints or in the form of analyses and reviews. The “Technology Sounding Board” is exactly that, an advisory panel for teams, offering support in designing solutions.

The high expectations of our customers and the leeway our teams are left in finding a solution motivate us to deliver our very best performance. Not giving up until an optimal solution to a given problem has been found is an important aspect of our work that spurs on our ambition.

## Cooperating in trust and partnership

Our top priority is to find solutions to the challenges facing our customers but sustainable success can be achieved only through open and constructive cooperation between individuals who respect each other as equals. Agile approaches and responsive organisational forms have thus become some of the most important vehicles for delivering software projects efficiently in the IT industry. Close collaboration and sustained, open communication between all stakeholders are fundamentally important in such contexts.

Transparency and openness in customer relationships are a matter of course for Ergon staff as they are essential elements of our company culture.

Transparency, both within the organisation and in the personal conduct of each individual, is crucial. Ergon staff have access to the company’s figures, key data and development plans. The pay scales and bonus scheme, as well as individual salary packages, are also known to all employees. Staff have a stake in the company’s risks and overall success. This transparency engenders trust, fosters an entrepreneurial spirit and drives individuals to go the extra mile in their project work and wider contribution – both within and beyond their teams.

## Flexibility and experimentation as key components of success

New insights are generated and new requirements arise in the course of every project and it is vital to react appropriately to these. When all the facts are on the table, the right decisions can be made quickly and expediently with the customer. The best solutions are devised when familiar patterns are questioned and we both – customer and service providers alike – succeed in leaving our comfort zone.

We aim to be aware of all major digitalisation trends with a view to creating unique customer benefits. To achieve this, we experiment at our own expense in fields relating to our clients’ projects to ensure we have a direct line to their needs. We also cultivate this experimental work with technological trends via a range of strategic initiatives. The focus here is on unlocking commercial value; any insights we gain are used for the benefit of our customers, thus providing them with ongoing competitive advantage.

## Questions about the article?

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