

career news

STARTING YOUR CAREER IN CENTRAL EUROPE
Free Issue, third edition

ERSTE CAMPUS

The power of sharing
has arrived at the work place

FIRST IMPRESSION

How to make yourself
stand out in a job interview

DATA IS THE NEW OIL

Working in Big Data
is the hot job of the decade

How to balance work and family in banking



A designer walks into a bank

It's not a joke, it's a job. The Erste Hub in Vienna is a workplace that breaks down clichés. A classic white collar sector meets startup fanciness, thereby innovating not only digital financial services and products but maybe even banking itself.

» Your internet banking has a new name: George «

In the beginning was a buzzword: innovation. Awesome, trendy, promising and pioneering. Everybody wants to be, has to be innovative. But what does this actually mean? Can a banker be one of the cool kids? And should she/he even try? Where is the business beef behind the buzzword?

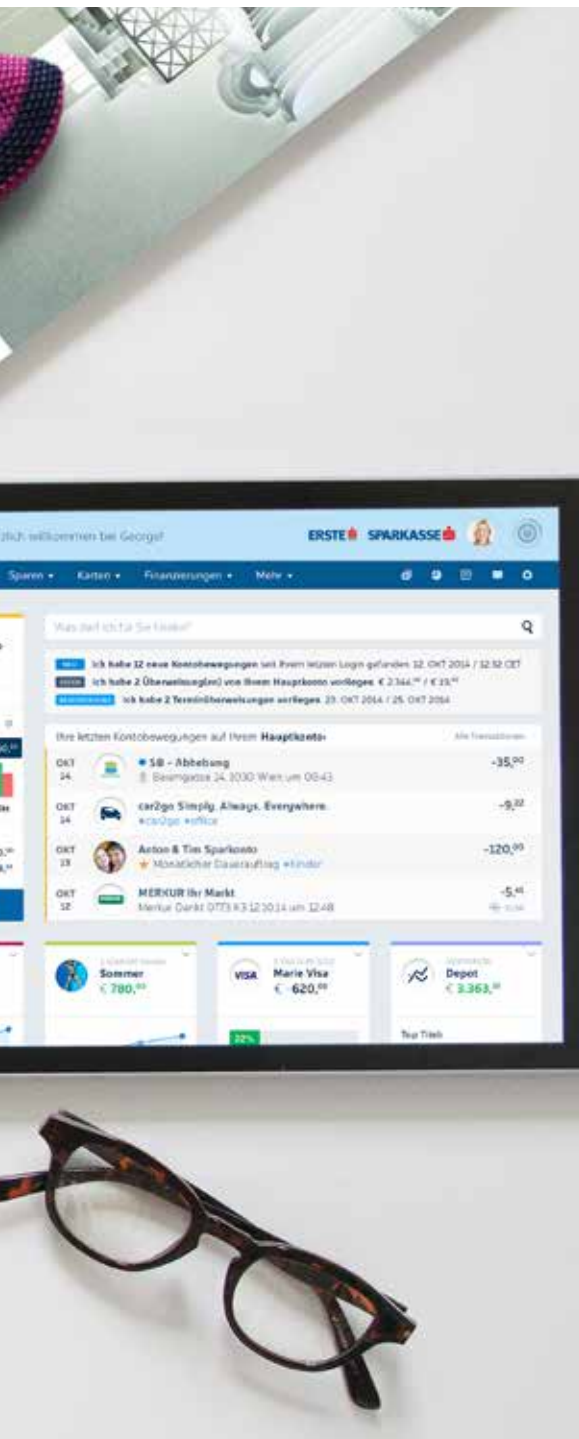
It's all about the user experience

Maybe another word helps – though it sounds quite contrary: tradition. So here's the story: Back in 1819, a young woman called Marie Schwarz opened something new: the first savings bank book in Central Europe, issued by the Erste Oesterreichische Spar-Casse, the great grandmother of Erste Bank and Sparkasse. It was a groundbreaking invention. A novelty in banking. An innovation. Ever since then, this bank has regarded innovation as its tradition, i.e. to offer real solutions for the real financial life of real people in real times. In other words: user experience is an old concept, just go back and ask Marie.

So far, so good. Yet, the times just keep changing faster and faster. A phenomenon which we call the

digital revolution and which does not stop in front of banks. As in any uprising, revolutionaries don't respect anything, certainly not the banks. Therefore, this bank's quest for relevance has to adapt itself to the digital era. Even banks have to constantly re-invent themselves, their attitude and of course their products and services in order not to fall behind and get eaten by the revolution. Actually, it's pace-making or being overtaken by the bunch of new and hungry players in the business: we know them, you name them.

So Erste Group has clearly identified digitalisation as key for its own future. But to be frank, "digital" has not always been a familiar term in the banking thesaurus. Sometimes it takes some input from outside to enrich the way we think and work. For Erste Group, this input was incorporated in 2012 when "The Hub" and its daughter "BeeOne" started up: designed as a strategically thinking and quickly deploying innovation in itself, a think tank, playground, laboratory and manufactory for real and digital banking all rolled into one. Unlike many other established banks around the world, Erste Group decided not to invest in an outsourced R&D centre, which develops ideas to be implemented by others.



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Erste Group aims at delivering outstanding customer experience across all channels to its clients. If you are interested to start a career in Austria's most modern bank, please visit www.erstegroup.com/career

cliché, but a productive culture of mind diversity – with three common values: creativity, usability and ability. While many of these terms seem to be heard all too often, the aim is not to play the fintech “bullshit bingo”, but to be real. What is wanted is not necessarily an ultimate passion for banking (to be honest, there are fancier things to be passionate about in your life), but a will to implement ideas and to implement them well.

George made 300.000 new friends

Each innovation produced by this mindset has a very tough coming-of-age behind it: In its very first moments of life, an idea has to survive a heavily Darwinistic attack from all sides. Only the good and strong make it through to prototyping and further on to development and market launch. Before an idea becomes an innovation, it is thought and re-thought, designed and re-designed, developed and re-developed, written and re-written, checked by business and re-checked by legal, tested and re-tested. All in a fast and furious time to market in close co-operation with real customers who supply their own ideas and feedback.

Need an example? Here's one: George. George is the new digital banking service of Erste Bank and Sparkassen in Austria, soon

a big bang campaign that caused a great stir. By August 2015, George had made 300,000 new friends. With the “old” netbanking solution still in existence, this outcome was nothing but overwhelming. George's claim to be Austria's modern banking service is substantiated with every new innovation that is added to the constantly growing George. A digital innovator, invented, developed, raised and educated in the Hub.

Sounds like the Hub Bees working wonders? No, and to put it the way George might: Who's perfect? The Hub certainly isn't. While wanting to change banking from inside, we are being changed by banking as well. In a highly regulated sector, creative designers and uncompromising developers better make friends with compliance, business cases, multiple rounds of alignment and an infrastructure that can ground many high-flying ideas. Probably the most important lesson

Nor did Erste Group simply buy itself into some promising startups to exploit their know-how and to get their codes. Actually, the hub cooperates with many startups, but is clearly an internal startup “sui generis”. Independent enough to think by itself, but integrated enough into the bank to implement by itself – for Erste Group, yes, but mostly for its customers.

Driven by a culture of innovation

The culture of innovation that the Hub embodies is one that overcomes traditional banking's notorious passion for silo thinking by means of human resources, which literally doesn't mean the catchphrase, but the actual human treasure: brains. Brains that originated from many different backgrounds and grew big in real life: a very international team of designers, thinkers, developers, writers, gamers, doers, sellers, analysts, testers and relievers – bankers and anything but bankers. This is more than the “suit meets sneaker”



George brings banking to the digital age

to be introduced to other markets of Erste Group, such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Being easy, intelligent and personal, George is much more than just a refreshed version of our existing online banking. George brings banking into the digital age by introducing personality. Because money is personal. So should banking be. After almost two years of development and an extensive beta testing phase with several thousand selected customers, George started on 1 January 2015 with

learned is that innovation is not done when you're out in the market. That's when it begins. But from Marie to George, there is one secret which actually isn't one: We just like innovation. If you do, too, you might want to prepare yourself for the potentially tricky question of what to wear to a job interview in a white-collar company's street-style spin-off.

YouTube More information about George: <https://goo.gl/KNRHNH>

People like him need people like you



Your job at Erste Group is built around the needs of our customers. They need bankers who listen actively, ask questions and can react flexibly to changes. This is us. Are you ready to join the most modern bank in Central and Eastern Europe? www.erstegroup.com/career

ERSTE 
Group