

# Dr. Benedikt Unger

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

**Email:** benedikt.unger@unibz.it

## CURRENT ACADEMIC POSITION

- Since December 2025: Post-doc (Habilitation Track) at the Chair of Business Administration, esp. Information Management (B\*IMA), Focus Group Digital Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Business and Economics, FernUniversität in Hagen, Hagen, Germany.
- Since April 2026: Research Affiliate, EBS University of Business & Law, Oestrich-Winkel, Germany.
- Since October 2025: Lecturer (Adjunct Professor) at Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Faculty of Economics and Management.
- Since February 2026: Associate Editor at Journal of Organization Design.
- Since July 2025: Paper Development Workshop Officer at EURAM SIG 03 – Entrepreneurship.

## EDUCATION

July 2025. PhD in Management & Economics at Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Faculty of Economics and Management. Dissertation "ORGANIZING FOR COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS: A NOVEL CONFIGURATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON CORPORATE-STARTUP ENGAGEMENT", **con lode / cum laude**<sup>1</sup>. Supervisors: Prof. Michael Nippa; Prof. Christian Manfred Lechner. Reviewers: Prof. Elisa Villani; Prof. Christian Baccarella. Jury: Prof. Antonio Majocchi; Prof. Leonardo Corbo; Prof. Thomas Maran.

July 2019. M.Sc. in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Bolzano (Italy). Thesis title: "Corporate accelerator as a strategy to thrive open innovation: Assessing open innovation climate and its impact on absorptive capacity", with grade **110/110**. Thesis advisors: Professors Alessandro Narduzzo and Christian Manfred Lechner.

August 2016. B.A. in Media and Communication Science, University of Passau, Passau (Germany). Grade: 1.2 (**very good** in German grading system and best grade of the academic year).

## OTHER AND PAST ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

November 2020 – July 2025. Doctoral Researcher at Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy.

October 2022 – September 2025. Doctoral Stipendiary at Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Italian higher education system, the PhD ("Dottorato di Ricerca") is awarded without a numerical grade. The designation "con lode / cum laude" is the highest possible distinction and is granted only upon unanimous decision of the doctoral examination committee for dissertations and defenses of outstanding quality.

January 2025 – February 2025. Visiting Scholar at Universität Innsbruck, Austria.

May 2024 – July 2024. Visiting Scholar at LUISS (Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli), Rome, Italy.

October 2019 – September 2020. Research Assistant at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Faculty of Economics and Management, Bolzano (Italy). Title of the research project: “SIAA: Social Impact for the Alps Adriatic Region” (Interreg V-A Italy-Austria).

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

Corporate Entrepreneurship; Startup Support Structures; Organizational Design; Digital & Sustainable Innovation; Design Science; Causal Complexity

## RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

### Peer-reviewed journals

- Schückes, M., Unger, B., Gutmann, T., & Fels, G. (2025). Innovation at the interface: A configurational approach to corporate venture capital. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 40(1), 106438.
- Unger, B. (2025). Toward a design science of corporate venturing modes: Diagnosing challenges and outlining a research agenda. *Journal of Organization Design*, 14, 283–293.
- Unger, B., & Gutmann, T. (2025). Deconstructing corporate accelerator programs: Insights from a systematic literature review. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, 72, 784-799.
- Unger, B., & Nippa, M. (2024). Determinants of firms' initiative and inertia in pursuing climate neutrality strategies—Theoretical explanations and empirical evidence. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 33(5), 4086–4107.

### Conference proceeding

- Unger, B., Sanguineti, F., Sansone, G., & Vasi, M. (2025). Building dynamic capabilities through intrapreneurial action: Exploring equifinal pathways from a multi-level fsQCA study. In *EURAM 2025 Conference. Managing with Purpose*.
- Unger, B. (2024). Value Dynamics in Corporate Startup Programs-Organizational Framework and Theoretical Explanations. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2024, No. 1, p. 13341). Valhalla, NY 10595: Academy of Management.
- Unger, B. (2023). A Multidimensional Framework of Corporate Acceleration: Review, Propositions, and Research Agenda. In *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2023, No. 1, p. 12512). Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510: Academy of Management.

### Other publications

- Carrasco, A., Unger, B., Münzenrieder N. & Nippa M. (2022): Bridging the Gaps of Technology Transfer. *Südtiroler Wirtschaftszeitung*. 42 (22). p. 19.
- Eichler, G. & Unger, B. (2020): Building an Alps Adriatic social entrepreneurship ecosystem. In: Handbook Part II. Deliverable of the SIAA-Project. SIAA-Project: Social Impact for the Alps Adriatic Region (Interreg V-A Italy-Austria). Klagenfurt.

*Work in progress: I am currently developing several co-authored and single-authored research projects addressing topics such as effective organizational accelerator setups (recently submitted to Technovation), the design of optimal organizational contexts to foster employee intrapreneurship (winner of a Best Paper Award at EURAM 2025; currently submitted to JSBM), and the role of national innovation systems in enabling climate-neutral innovation (recently submitted to Research Policy).*

## PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND SEMINARS

### Conferences

- June 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025. EURAM 2025, Florence, Italy. Unger, B. et al.: Building Dynamic Capabilities through Intrapreneurial Action: Exploring Equifinal Pathways from a Multi-level fsQCA Study (Best Paper Award – ST03\_02 Entrepreneurship Processes).
- August 9<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. 84th AOM Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois. Unger, B. & Gutmann, T.: Deconstructing Corporate Accelerator Programs: Insights from a CIMO-based Systematic Literature Review.
- June 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Scaleup Conference, Rome, Italy. Unger, B. & Lechner, C.: Exploring Varied Accelerator Effects on Entrepreneurial Financing: The Critical Roles of Prior Funding, Startup Quality, and Contextual Venture Capital Activity.
- June 24<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. EURAM 2024, Bath, UK. Unger, B.: Value Dynamics in Corporate Startup Programs - Organizational Framework and Theoretical Explanations. (Accepted for presentation).
- November 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023. 10<sup>th</sup> Annual World Open Innovation Conference (WOIC), Bilbao, Spain. Unger, B.: Startup-Accelerator Fit --- Assessing the Interplay of Startup Characteristics and Accelerator Configurations.
- June 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Sinergie-SIMA 2023 Conference, Bari, Italy. Unger, B.: Corporate Acceleration Through the Ages: Reviewing its Origins, the Current Landscape, and Prospects for the Future.
- June 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Sinergie-SIMA 2023 Conference, Bari, Italy. Unger, B.: Examining Startup-Accelerator Fit: The Interplay of Startup and Accelerator Characteristics in Catalyzing Growth Across Market and Technological Uncertainties.
- August 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Academy of Management (AOM) 2023, Boston, USA. Unger, B.: A Multidimensional Framework of Corporate Acceleration: Review, Propositions, and Research Agenda.
- July 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. 9<sup>th</sup> EGOS Colloquium 2023, Cagliari, Italy. Unger, B. & Nippa, M.: Firms' Exposure to Climate Change and Firm Structural Factors Affect the Pursuit of Climate Neutrality Strategies: Evidence from the Flash Eurobarometer Initiative.
- March 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. 10th Sustainability, Ethics & Entrepreneurship (SEE) Conference and Consortium 2023. Reference of the paper: Unger, B. & Nippa, M.: On the impact of national exposure to climate change on the pursuit of climate neutrality by firms –Empirical Evidence from Europe. (Accepted for presentation).
- November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. SFScon 2019, Bozen/Bolzano (Italy). Reference of the paper: Unger, B. & Theiner D.: Corporate accelerator as a strategy to thrive open innovation.

### Seminars and Workshops

- May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Paper Presentation at Euregio Research Workshop – Research on Managing the Dual Challenge of Digitalization/AI and Sustainability/CSR, Bolzano, Italy. Unger, B.: Exploring Pathways to Climate-Neutral Innovation: A QCA Study of Institutional, Economic, and Policy Configurations at the National Level.
- December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. Paper Presentation for EIM Seminar Series, Faculty of Economics and Management, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Bolzano, Italy. Unger, B. & Lechner C.: Temporal Dynamics of Corporate Venture Capital:

A Longitudinal Study on Startup Acquisitions and Innovation Performance in German Corporates.

- May 8th, 2023. Paper Presentation for EIM Seminar Series, Faculty of Economics and Management, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Bolzano, Italy. Unger, B.: The Antecedental Role of Impatient and Patient Capital in Accelerating Growth in Nascent Ecopreneurial Startups: A fsQCA Study of Startup Support Structure.
- September 9th, 2022. Co-Organization of Seminar for EIM Seminar Series, Faculty of Economics and Management, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Bolzano, Italy. Unger, B. & Nippa, M.: I found an interesting large-scale dataset for my research – well then?
- April 12th, 2024. International Doctoral Seminar ‘From Start-ups to Corporates: Financing and Growth in Entrepreneurship’, Bolzano, Italy. Unger, B. & Lechner, C.: Exploring Varied Accelerator Effects on Entrepreneurial Financing: The Critical Roles of Prior Funding, Startup Quality, and Contextual Venture Capital Activity.
- October 23rd, 2023. EURAM SIG Entrepreneurship PDW, Online. Unger, B.: Startup-Accelerator Fit – Assessing the Interplay of Startup Characteristics and Accelerator Configurations.

## **PARTICIPATION TO RESEARCH PROJECTS**

January 2022 – December 2022. Search for Market Applications of Thin-film Electronics Assessing technological, economic, social, and ecological success factors – SMArTE. Project responsables\_ Niko Münzenrieder & Michael Nippa (both Free University of Bozen-Bolzano).

November 2020 – October 2021. Collaboration with NOI A.G./S.p.A. Development of a new innovation management method.

October 2019 – October 2020. “SIAA: Social Impact for the Alps Adriatic Region (Interreg V-A Italy-Austria)”. Project responsible: Alessandro Narduzzo (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano).

## **ORGANIZATION OF EVENTS FOR THE PUBLIC**

- December 2019 – 2020: Organization of Social Impact Lab 2020: Planning, execution and analysis of an incubation program for entrepreneurial ideas with social impact at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. Co-organizers: Alessandro Narduzzo, Christian Lechner, Valeria Cavotta, Chiara Menini (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano).
- April 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. European Commission #EUvsVirus Hackathon. Mentor for participating teams and presenter for lean-startup and pitching.
- December 2019 – May 2020. *Alperia Startup Factory*, held together with Alperia AG/SpA, WhatAVenture-Consultancy and Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. Teaching assistant for involved student teams and communication with partners.
- November 26th, 2019. Discussion on Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship at BASIS Vinschgau-Venosta (Italy). Speaker together with Prof. Alessandro Narduzzo and Chiara Menini.
- November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019. unibz Industry Day 2019 held at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Bolzano (Italy). Preparation of the material and presentation of research topics in Open Innovation and related student projects of the Faculty of Economics and Management.
- September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019. LUNA – La Lunga Notte della Ricerca at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and NOI Techpark, Bolzano (Italy). Participation to the presentation of “ SIAA: Social Impact for the Alps Adriatic Region (Interreg V-A Italy-Austria)”.

## **SPECIALIZED EDUCATION: ATTENDED COURSES AND SUMMER SCHOOLS**

- January 10th – 14th, 2022. Winter School “Academic Writing Skills: From PhD Paper to Publication for Business School Students”, organized by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- June 28th – 30th, 2021. Summer School “Introduction to Qualitative Methods (Ethnography)” (M Pratt), organized by Erasmus Research Institute of Management.
- May 5th, 2021. Webinar “Generating Theory by Abduction” (A Van de Ven, AS Saetre), part of seminar series Advancing Management Theory and Practice, organized by Cranfield School of Management.
- April 16th, 2021. Webinar “How to Write Theory” (J Cornelissen), part of seminar series Advancing Management Theory and Practice, organized by Cranfield School of Management.
- March 25th, 2021. Webinar "Theorizing from Case Studies: How Far Have We Come? And Where to From Here?" (C Welch, R Piekkari, E Plakoyiannaki, E Paavilainen-Mäntymäki), organized by International Business Webinar Series hosted by GSU-CIBER.
- February 01st – 5th, 2021. Winter School “Scuola di Metodologia della Ricerca” for PhD students and junior researchers, organized by SIMA - Società Italiana di Management. Online.
- January 10th – 11th, 2023. Winter School “Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Economic Development” (Erik Stam, Massimo Riccaboni), organized by Scuola Alti Studi IMT Lucca, Italy.
- January 1st – 4th, 2023. Winter School “Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)” (Fadi Hirzalla), organized by Erasmus University Rotterdam. Online.
- February 15th – 17th, 2023. Winter School “Wissenschaftskommunikation” (Beatrice Dernbach), organized by Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, Bad Staffelstein, Germany.

## **TEACHING AT VARIOUS LEVELS**

From April 2026. Evaluator (Prüfer) for the Master’s seminar “Angewandtes Digitales Entrepreneurship” Faculty of Business and Economics, FernUniversität in Hagen, Hagen, Germany.

From April 2026. Lecturer for the Master’s module “32901 Digital Entrepreneurship” Faculty of Business and Economics, FernUniversität in Hagen, Hagen, Germany.

From September 2025. Lecturer for the course “25572 Scaling-up MAND OPT” (36 lecture hours + 18 office hours; 6 ECTS) within the Master in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (LM-77 EI), Faculty of Economics and Management, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. Course taught in English. Academic Year 2025/2026. (Contract renewed for coming academic year)

September, 2025: Modul “Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten (6 ECTS)” at Wilhelm Büchner Hochschule, Darmstadt.

March-April, 2025: Modul “Projektmanagement und wissenschaftliches Arbeiten (6 ECTS)” at Wilhelm Büchner Hochschule, Darmstadt.

August 22-30, 2024: Seminar Instructor, Sommerakademie der Begabtenförderungswerke, Kloster Banz. Blocked seminar „Einstieg in Gründung und Soziales Unternehmertum im Kontext der Demokratieförderung“ (Introduction to Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship in the Context of Democracy Promotion), (15 students; ~ 25 hours with practical elements; office hours and direct contact with student outside of seminar hours).

Udemy Online Course: “Impact Starter (Ultimate Social Entrepreneurship Guide)”. Online workshop developed fully by myself to start up a social impact business, incorporating tools and methodologies from Design Thinking & Lean Startup.

March, 2022. Business@School seminar at Sächsisches Landesgymnasium Sankt Afra zu Meißen (Boarding school for highly gifted students), organized by Boston Consulting Group (10 students; ~ 5 hours; lecturing and mentoring of startup ideas).

April 24-26, 2020: European Commission #EUvsVirus Hackathon. Teaching entrepreneurship theory (lean-startup and pitching) and subsequent mentoring for participating teams (mentoring of 4 teams; ~ 15 hours of involvement).

December 2019 – 2020. Social Impact Lab 2020: Teaching entrepreneurship theory (lean-startup and pitching) and subsequent mentoring for participating teams (10 projects; ~ 50 hours; mentoring, workshops, and office hours).

2019/2020. Teaching assistant of Professor Christian Lechner of BLAB: Entrepreneurship, M.Sc. in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (Faculty of Economics and Management), Free University of Bozen-Bolzano (10 students; ~ 30 hours; teaching assistant for the students who participated at ALPERIA Startup Factory, taught in English).

2014/2015. Teaching assistant of Dr. Frederik Weinert, within the course “Germanistische Medienlinguistik” (Qualitative analysis of advertisement and public relation activities), B.A. Medien und Kommunikation (Faculty for Philosophy), Universität Passau, (50 students; ~ 50 hours per semester, as two parallel classes were held; taught in German; full responsible for the content of the exercises as a supplement to lecture by Professor).

## **GRANTS, HONORS AND AWARDS**

2025. Best Paper Award – EURAM Conference (Track ST03\_02 Entrepreneurship Processes & Journal of Small Business Management). Paper title: Building dynamic capabilities through intrapreneurial action: Exploring equifinal pathways from a multi-level fsQCA study. Authors: Benedikt Unger (first author), Francesca Sanguineti (University of Pavia), Giuliano Sansone (University College Dublin), Melissa Vasi (DHAW). Awarded at the EURAM 2025 Annual Conference (22–25 June, University of Florence, Italy).

2022. Doctoral Scholarship, awarded by Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung and with funds of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) (2022-2025).

2020. Doctoral Scholarship, awarded by Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. Sponsorship by NOI AG/SpA (November 2020-October 2021).

## **RELEVANT INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Since late 2021. Founder & Consultant – Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Sustainability (Self-Employed). Applied consulting and training activities for non-academic stakeholders, including:

- Impact Starter (since 2021): Development and commercialization of entrepreneurship and social innovation education formats (online courses, workshops, external partner programs, keynote speeches).

- forum novum (since 2025): Design and delivery of applied innovation and entrepreneurship formats for non-academic stakeholders, with responsibility for concept development, execution, and evaluation.
- Benedikt Unger: Business Research, Teaching & Consulting (since August 2025): Independent consulting services for organizations and practitioners, focusing on innovation management, entrepreneurial strategy, and sustainability-oriented transformation processes.

November 2020 – October 2021. Applied Innovation Consulting – NOI A.G./S.p.A. (Italy). Collaboration with an industry-affiliated innovation organization on the development and implementation of an innovation management method. Tasks included analysis of organizational innovation processes, co-design of managerial tools, and translation of research-based insights into applied management solutions for corporate and regional innovation contexts.

October 2019 – October 2020. Applied Consulting & Stakeholder Engagement – SIAA Project (Interreg V-A Italy–Austria). Practice-oriented consulting and mentoring activities within an international innovation and social entrepreneurship project involving public authorities, private organizations, and startups. Responsibilities included startup mentoring, stakeholder coordination, and the application of entrepreneurship and innovation methods in real-world regional development contexts.

## **LANGUAGE SKILLS**

German, native.

English, fluent (C1).

Italian, fluent (C1).

## **CERTIFICATIONS**

2018. Zweisprachigkeitsprüfung / Patentino di Bilinguismo C1, Autonomous Province Bolzano – South Tyrol.

2018. unibz certificate – Italian C1.

2017. unibz certificate – English C1.

Memmingen, May 27, 2026

*I authorize the use of my personal data in the attached CV in accordance with EU Regulation 2016/679.*