

Benedikt Unger

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Address work: Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Faculty of Economics and Management, Universitätsplatz 1 - Piazza Università 1, 39100, Bozen-Bolzano, Italy

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CURRENT ACADEMIC POSITION

- Adjunct Professor at Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Faculty of Economics and Management.
- Paper Development Workshop Officer at EURAM SIG 03 – Entrepreneurship.

EDUCATION

November 2020 – 18th of 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", **cum laude**. 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

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

Entrepreneurial Finance; Scale Ups; Corporate Venturing; Corporate Entrepreneurship, Intrapreneurship; Digital Entrepreneurship; Open Innovation; Institutional 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., & 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. (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 working on several co-authored research projects addressing themes such as effective organizational accelerator setups, temporal dynamics in corporate venture capital activities, the design of optimal organizational contexts to foster employee intrapreneurship, and the role of national innovation systems in enabling climate-neutral innovation.

PRESENTATIONS AT CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND SEMINARS

Conferences

- August 9th - 13th, 2024. 84th AOM Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois. Unger, B. & Gutmann, T.: Deconstructing Corporate Accelerator Programs: Insights from a CIMO-based Systematic Literature Review.
- June 10th - 11th, 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 24th - 28th, 2024. EURAM 2024, Bath, UK. Unger, B.: Value Dynamics in Corporate Startup Programs - Organizational Framework and Theoretical Explanations. (Accepted for presentation).
- November 9th - 10th, 2023. 10th Annual World Open Innovation Conference (WOIC), Bilbao, Spain. Unger, B.: Startup-Accelerator Fit --- Assessing the Interplay of Startup Characteristics and Accelerator Configurations.

- June 29th - 30th, 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 29th - 30th, 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 4th - 8th, 2023. Academy of Management (AOM) 2023, Boston, USA. Unger, B.: A Multidimensional Framework of Corporate Acceleration: Review, Propositions, and Research Agenda.
- July 6th - 8th, 2023. 9th 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 3rd - 4th, 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 15th, 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

- December 2nd, 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 24th-26th, 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 7th, 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 27th, 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

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).

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).

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).

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).

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).

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

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.

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

October 2019 – October 2020. Within “SIAA: Social Impact for the Alps Adriatic Region” (Interreg V-A Italy-Austria)” close collaboration with various stakeholders from the public and private sectors, startup mentoring and consultancy.

November 2020 – October 2021. Collaboration with NOI A.G./S.p.A. for the development of a novel innovation management method.

October 2021 – Present: Founder of the "Impact Starter" initiative, dedicated to democratizing entrepreneurship education. Activities include developing an Udemy course, hosting workshops (e.g., Sommerakademie der Bildungswerke 2024), and fostering entrepreneurial thinking across diverse audiences.

Additional Industry Engagements: Regular interactions with industry partners for empirical data collection and collaborative projects, emphasizing applied insights into corporate innovation and entrepreneurship.

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.

Bozen, July 29, 2025

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