

Ladies and Gentlemen! Dear Guests!

Welcome to our prize-giving ceremony!

And of course, I would like to give a particularly warm welcome to Professor von Hippel. Let me just start by saying that the jury did an excellent job, selecting such a worthy winner!

Now, I would like to have a little look back over the past few years. When the Schumpeter School was founded in 2008, it was linked to a whole range of objectives, in terms of both content and strategy.

- These included firstly the firm belief that it is more and more important to science, the economy and politics that we consider the phenomena of innovation and entrepreneurship as key factors in economic success.
- Secondly: To be able to research these complex matters adequately, interdisciplinary approaches have been valued and encouraged at the Schumpeter School, right from the beginning.
- And third: Researching these phenomena on a broad empirical basis is, moreover, a central objective. In this way, the Schumpeter School aims to generate knowledge that is not only of outstanding theoretical quality, but also of enormous practical relevance.

I started this speech by praising the jury's decision. I'm not trying to anticipate the laudatory speech, but I'd just like to touch upon that again: Eric von Hippel's work and contributions entirely reflect the philosophy of the Schumpeter School I referred to. Innovation, and those who create it, are all-important to him. He is extremely open to interdisciplinary discourse. And, finally, the results of his research have a high empirical content and are of enormous practical relevance. So – at the same time – he truly walks in the footsteps of Joseph Schumpeter, who gave his name to the prize that is about to be awarded.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues: Sir Karl Popper gave the title "All Life Is Problem-Solving" to one of his essays. If we take that at face value, then in a way, innovation – as a means of problem-solving – is an everyday matter. The more we face new problems in our private and professional lives, the truer this is. And today it's almost a platitude to say that the rate at which the challenges of our world evolve is constantly accelerating.

For this reason, as I said, it is so important that we get thoroughly to grips with the phenomenon of innovation. What is the process? Who is particularly successful? What

are the obstacles standing in the way of problem-solvers? How can managers and politicians make innovation more dynamic in their own areas of responsibility?

Something that I feel is very often not taken into account is the fact that the foundations for the capacity to be “resourceful”, as Schumpeter understood the word, are laid very early on. The Englishman Sir Ken Robinson, for instance, warns us that our education systems must not be allowed to hamper creativity in children and young people. As the successful model of the Wuppertal Junior University has shown, there are excellent opportunities to encourage the next generation to remain curious and inventive. Its work is based on the conviction that virtually every single child is born highly talented in terms of creativity. What we must do is nurture this inherent capacity right from the start: at home, at kindergarten and at school.

Even the smallest children should be allowed to solve simple everyday tasks, by a process of trial and error. Parents can help by being patient and always really praising their achievements, because success and praise trigger endorphins, creating the optimum conditions to develop a passion for innovation.

I saw on our prize-winner’s CV that he was lucky enough to grow up in a family that laid great emphasis on encouraging creativity.

Let us hope that the results of Eric von Hippel’s extremely practical research will go on to bear even more political fruit in Germany.

So, that’s just a couple of thoughts from me. It remains only for me to wish this event every success – and you a great celebration party afterwards!