

# SEA / CHANGE

Sometimes things don't turn out the way we expect – but don't worry.  
How even tough changes can bring us forward.

ALLIANZ DEUTSCHLAND

# Result for the customer 2017

# 2.1

## Overall result 2017

For details on the calculation basis, please refer to the "This is how you rated us" section of this report.

## Editorial



# Everything is new

Author: **Bernd Heinemann**  
Photography: **Markus Burke**

**T**ime goes by, it trickles away, it moves forward. Evenly and unremittingly – but only as a physical measure. We often experience our lives differently. We feel accelerations, slowdowns and disruptions, rather than an even and unremitting pace. In exciting times, we hardly know how we will get everything done. And then sometimes time seems to stand still and we ask ourselves when it will start moving again. Ultimately, it is the upheavals, the turning points that primarily give our lives direction.

In this issue of the “Result for the Customer” report, we present stories of turning points and upheavals throughout our life cycles – from birth to adulthood to old age. People talk about their moments, about wonderful or awful events, about planned change or change that comes completely out of the blue.

All of these changes, turning points and new beginnings naturally involve uncertainty. We leave our comfort zone and open ourselves up to the new and unknown, often out of necessity and not by choice. As your insurer, Allianz can help you, our customers, bear the financial risks more easily, get

back on your feet faster and live your life. Not every turning point is easy – we experience the same thing as a company. For example, when changing our health insurance system in 2017, there were initial backlogs – instead of the planned advantages – in processing customer claims. We quickly mobilized all of our forces to return to providing the best possible service. Changes require energy and strength – but then often become the basis of comprehensive improvement.

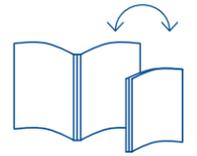
We see our customers’ satisfaction as our greatest asset and therefore also regularly measure where we stand in a market comparison. Last year we received a good overall rating of 2.1, but we still have a long way to go toward our goal of consistently inspiring our customers and filling them with enthusiasm.

**Member of the Board of Management, Allianz Deutschland AG**  
Market Management

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Are you missing this pull-out section? If so, email us at: [kundenbericht@allianz.de](mailto:kundenbericht@allianz.de)

We'll be happy to send you your personal copy.

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Birth



Infancy



Puberty



Adulthood



Rush hour of life



Working life



Old age



Death

# Our lives, upheavals

*Pregnancy, moving or changing jobs: Everyone has to face new challenges, important decisions, and changes during the course of their lives. Allianz customers reveal their own greatest challenges – and how they coped with them.*

## Dialed 911 just in time

*After the Wall came down, the Karaoke boom swept eastward from West Germany. I didn't even know who Joe Cocker was then, but everyone said that I moved and sang like him. When I impersonated him for the first time, singing one of his songs, everyone went crazy! That's why I've been performing as a Joe Cocker impersonator since the '90s. I have a cool apartment, a cool car and a Harley. I'm doing really well, but I don't take all this for granted. A few years ago, I was diagnosed with high blood pressure. One morning I woke up and my legs were like Jell-O. When I dialed 911, the emergency call number, I couldn't even speak. The diagnosis: a stroke. You can't tell when I step on stage these days. When I had my stroke, I weighed 180 kg, but I've lost 50 kg over the last few years. Sometimes I can hardly believe I survived and made it past 50. I actually feel like a healthy 30-year-old. And my audience seems to notice that, too."*

**Peter R.,**  
51, from Berlin, Allianz customer since 1998

## Not hip but home

*We lived in the Munich slaughterhouse quarter for five years. It's not the most elegant part of Munich, but there's a creative energy about it, with its exciting exhibitions, art auctions, and a very lively bar culture. My husband and I are both designers and already had one child. We wanted a second child, but our flat was too small. We decided to move out of the city to the countryside because it's less expensive. We found our home in Mering: a bargain, built in 1930, which we would renovate ourselves. Our joy turned fairly quickly to disillusionment though. Moving from the lively city culture to the countryside, far from all the creativity and hip people who know the trends, was really hard for the first year. But now four years later, when I sit out in my backyard and watch my children play, I know what "home" really means."*

**Sabrina G.,**  
37, from Mering, Allianz customer since 1997

## Unable to work, but happy

*After my apprenticeship as a carpenter, I decided against going to university and became a master carpenter instead. But in 2011, a seven-meter-long, 80-kilogram beam hit me on the head. My face was disfigured and I was in a coma for three days. Even today I still have difficulty concentrating and get dizzy easily. I sold my company but still work there on a 450-euro basis. Thanks to my disability and accident insurance, I'm financially secure. I also have more time for voluntary work, for example, in probationary services, and I feel free. I'm very happy."*

**Wolfram O.,**  
49, from Wolpertshausen-Rudelsdorf, Allianz customer since 1984

# New role

**»** I worked in one industry for more than 20 years, ran the German branch of a US company and was chief representative for a publicly traded company. But I reached a point where I noticed I was no longer wanted there – so I left. My social status dwindled, so did my finances and I realized I had to take control of my life again. In the meantime, I play a lot of sports, have the body of a 40-year-old and manage an environmentally friendly farm. Most importantly, I have the feeling that my main purpose in life has yet to reveal itself.”

Paul S.,  
62, from Hamburg, Allianz customer since 1984

## Suddenly, the car was too small

**»** When we found out we were expecting twins, my first thought was: Darn, the car is too small! And when they told us at the next ultrasound appointment that there would be triplets, I thought – well, is that car I picked out even big enough? Our eldest was two and a half and suddenly it hit me that we would basically double in number: from three family members to six. That meant I had to ask myself a lot of very practical questions. The most troublesome questions were the medical ones that come with a high-risk pregnancy. I once made the mistake of reading online about all the things that could possibly go wrong. That was really scary! A normal pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks. With triplets, it's considered a successful pregnancy if you get past 30 weeks. We made it to 32 weeks and three days until our three tiny, healthy humans came into the world. Until that time, each ultrasound appointment was extremely stressful and caused our blood pressure to soar. Since the beginning of November, all of them are now home from the hospital. Raising triplets is only manageable with financial support, professional help and friends and relatives. Otherwise, I couldn't even take a shower, let alone drive to work. We manage with hard work and lack of sleep. What irks me is that our government doesn't help a large family like ours much and the bureaucracy makes life even harder. Still, we're incredibly happy. My most amazing moments are when I stand at the bed where the little ones sleep peacefully. The first thought that often comes to mind is, "Wow, those three were all in my wife's belly!"

Holger S.,  
42, from Ulm, Allianz customer since 2003

## Hard work for our own home and family

**»** The first time I saw our future apartment I thought – “Oh my God! Nobody can live in that place.” An empty shell, no walls, no plumbing or electricity. We originally meant it as a joke when we asked my now-husband's grandmother if she would sell the apartment upstairs. At 24, I actually felt too young for such a project. But we really wanted to move in together and stay in our hometown. So, we got to work. Construction took over a year and we did almost everything ourselves. And at some point, our home was finished. Then our daughter was born two and a half years ago. We're really happy – we're parents and proud owners of our own apartment.”

Sandra T.,  
34, from Weil im Schönbuch, Allianz customer since 2004

## My wedding band gave me strength for the future

**»** On December 23, 2000, I was officially dead. I was 30 years old and driving to my mother's house to help decorate the Christmas tree. I crossed a bridge with black ice. The oncoming driver lost control of his BMW and drove right on top of my car. His six-cylinder engine crashed through my passenger side. The gas tank under his engine burst into flames and I was trapped. The only reason I'm still alive today is thanks to two brothers who reached the accident site right after the collision. They pulled me from the burning wreck and extinguished the flames on my body with their jackets. I had a lot of fractures, a punctured lung, liver and spleen, third degree burns on my face, back and thighs. When I woke up from an artificially induced coma after three weeks, my wedding band was dangling above me on a string. The doctors wanted this to be the first thing I saw when I woke up, so it could give me strength on the tough road to recovery. Since that accident, a lot has changed for me. But I'm very happy. I had to give up my job as project manager in construction. I still have many health problems today and had to endure a lot of follow-up surgery. But I can spend my valuable time with my three children, my wife and my friends who never left my side. I'm also very lucky because I had purchased an occupational disability insurance policy when I was 16, which now provides me with a decent standard of living.”

Stefan K.,  
47, from Altötting, Allianz customer since 1985

## Turn your hobby into your profession

**»** When my father passed away two years ago, I sold our consulting firm. I wasn't confident I could run the firm by myself. I had always been passionate about decorating and interior design, and one of my friends suggested turning this passion into my profession. I visited various interior design expos and kept thinking about it until I opened my own concept store, “Saus & Brause,” in Gauting. For me, the biggest challenge was making all those decisions alone. Which items would sell well? How should I furnish the store? But today, when people come into my store and like all the nice things they find there, it makes me really happy.”

Verena H.,  
40, from Gauting, Allianz customer since 2006

# In all beginnings dwells a magic force

Authors: Bernd Heinemann and Alexandra Nennstiel Illustration: James Dawe

*A sudden turning point in our life generally triggers fear at first. Why? On the trail of a misunderstood concept.*

**A** voice cracking during puberty, retirement, a broken leg, a broken heart, a forest fire, a wedding, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Euro and a high school graduation. What do these things have in common? Nothing really, yet something connects all of these events: All of them involve farewells and loss – but also transformation and new beginnings (even if they're not yet in sight). The underlying principle for every single one of them is: undergoing a sea change. A principle that is equally fascinating and frightening. Some people view it positively, while others await it anxiously. But what exactly does it mean to undergo a sea change? By definition, it's a transformation that is both fundamental and involves serious consequences. Such a turning point includes a "before" that comes to an end and an "after" that begins. That people perceive change with ambivalence is inherent in their nature. People cling to "before" because it's familiar and comfortable, because it doesn't involve uncertainties – and every transformation requires initial effort. Only in hindsight do we recognize that "after" wasn't so awful after all – or is maybe even better.

Just like with our first love. Years later, the memories still awaken wistful feelings – until you see this person again at your 25th high school reunion, and the reckless heartbreaker has turned into a real bore. "That was lucky," you think secretly to yourself. In a situation involving change, it's difficult to let go of what is familiar and comfortable and trust that the "after" will be better. People only recognize what they are losing or giving up, only what is changing. We don't recognize the opportunities, or the potential happiness.

For example, when children move out of the house, parents often focus on the sadness of the perceived loss. Naturally, they keep the large family home and leave the children's rooms unchanged, ready for them to visit. All those plans and ideas for "when the kids are finally out of the house" seem forgotten at first. Only slowly, when the new situation isn't so new anymore, can they enjoy and take advantage of their newfound freedom and independence.

Or the grandfather who vehemently rejects smartphones and doesn't want this "newfangled stuff" in his life. At some point, he gets one as a Christmas gift, though, and his granddaughter shows him how WhatsApp works. A few weeks later he's set up a bunch of chat groups and is in constant contact with his grandkids, gets pictures from them and can participate in his family's life in a whole new way with video calls.



Both positive and negative –  
turning points are part of life.  
Even those we would really  
rather avoid are always the start  
of something new.

But accepting the new and unknown takes courage and determination, to correct the status quo and overcome the fear of “after.” In his famous poem, *Stages*, Herman Hesse writes “As every flower fades and as all youth departs.” First, we have to understand that and – even more difficult – accept it. After all, it’s our personal upheavals, that we interpret especially critically, much more than social, political or economic changes. Because our emotions are in play, because our degree of concern is much higher and because we ourselves have to change and decide.

It’s clear to most of us, of course, that change is something completely normal. For everybody. Life in and of itself is change and upheaval. We go through development stages that are often

unsettled and marked by changes. Many of these changes are planned, even fully anticipated: by the six-year-old boy with a light saber on his Star Wars backpack on the first day of school; by the 17-year-old girl dancing proudly with her father at the graduation ball. From the big white wedding with the romantic *Ave Maria* being played in the church, all the way to a baptism with a screaming infant surrounded by family. All of these are rituals for undergoing sea changes in our life. And these turning points are planned and accompanied by celebrations.

### Finding good in unwelcome events

If you ask your friends about the big turning points in their lives, they will rarely mention high school graduation, their first job or getting married. Those changes are part of life and people consider them as a logical sequence of events. At most, it might be odd if these things hadn’t happened. They’re more likely to mention unplanned, unexpected turning points: a serious accident, an unexpected inheritance, buying property at a bargain price, the loss of a loved one. All of these changes shape us, touch us emotionally and burden us occasionally as well. However, all of these things also offer us – just like planned changes – the opportunity to develop and grow personally.

Which leads us to ask: How much change is the right amount? High school graduation? Of course. Job? Naturally. A car, wedding and two children are also part of the deal. Something more perhaps? Sure, as long as it’s positive. But negative turning points? No thanks. Divorce, job loss, failed home construction project – we would rather not have all that in our life.

No one wants serious accidents, illnesses or life-threatening situations. Nevertheless, we all know that these things are part of life – and that something good can even come from misfortune. There are plenty of examples. Paralympic athlete Markus Rehm, who won a gold medal and set a world record after losing his lower leg, made the best out of the aftermath of his accident. The friend who finally found happiness in his third marriage. Acquaintances who had to change their profession against their choice but now have more time for themselves and their family – and the change enabled them to climb the next rung on the career ladder.

The fact remains: Every turning point is also a beginning and – as Herman Hesse phrased it so poetically – “In all beginnings dwells a magic force for guarding us and helping us to live.”

As different as these turning points may be, when they burst into our lives, they all have one thing in common – both the planned and unplanned events – along with the accompanying new beginnings: we need support to get through them. This can be support from family and friends, good medical care, professional advice or financial security. We cannot replace friends and family, but for everything else, we at Allianz want to stand by our customers’ sides.

### Stages

*As every flower fades and as all youth  
Departs, so life at every stage,  
So every virtue, so our grasp of truth  
Blooms in its day and may not last forever.*

*Since life may summon us at every age  
Be ready, heart, for parting, new endeavor,  
Be ready bravely and without remorse  
To find new light that old ties cannot give.*

*In all beginnings dwells a magic force  
For guarding us and helping us to live.*

*Serenely let us move to distant places  
And let no sentiments of home detain us.  
The Cosmic Spirit seeks not to restrain us  
But lifts us stage by stage to wider spaces.*

*If we accept a home of our own making,  
Familiar habit makes for indolence.  
We must prepare for parting and leave-taking  
Or else remain the slaves of permanence.*

*Even the hour of our death may send  
Us speeding on to fresh and newer spaces,  
And life may summon us to newer races.  
So be it, heart: bid farewell without end.*

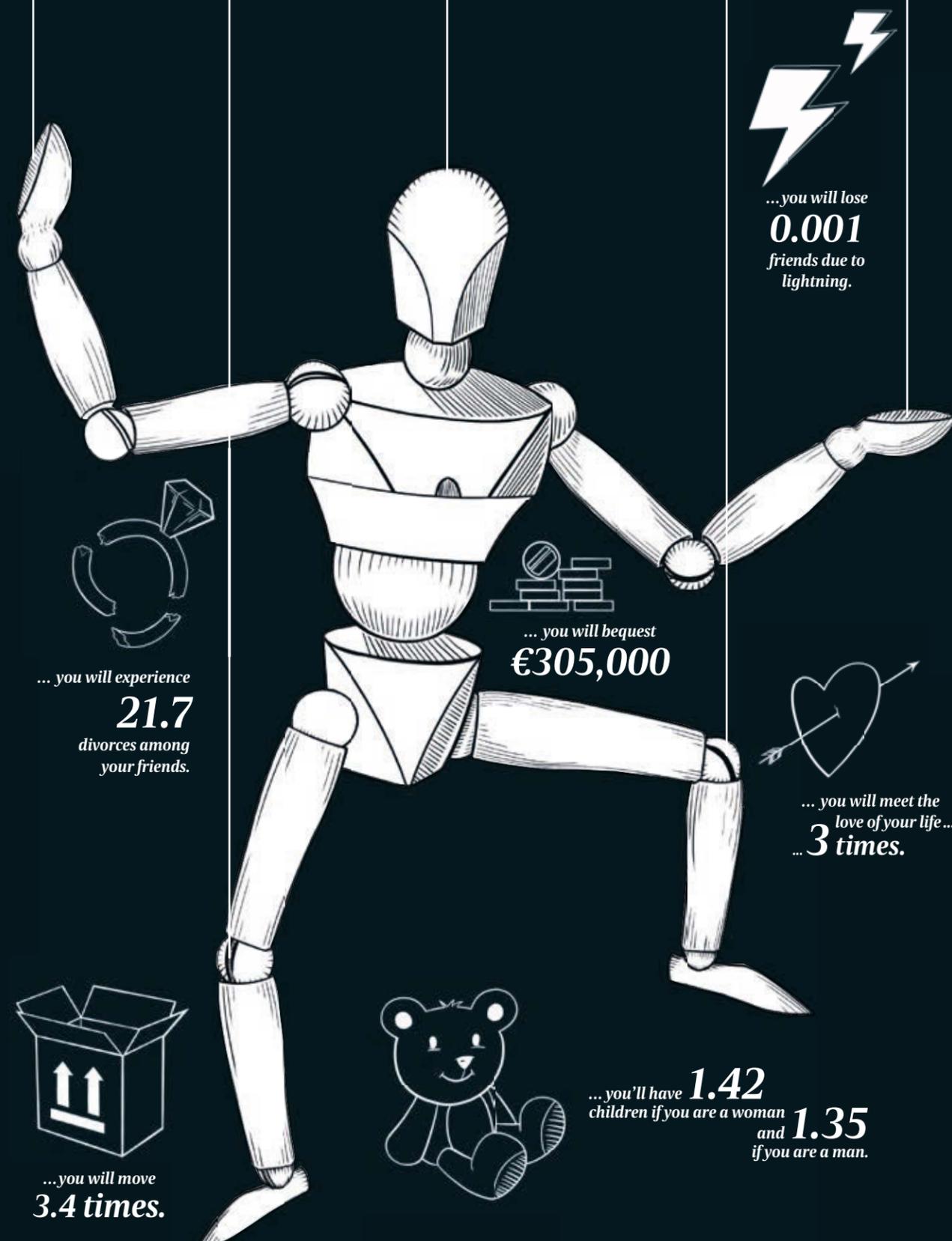
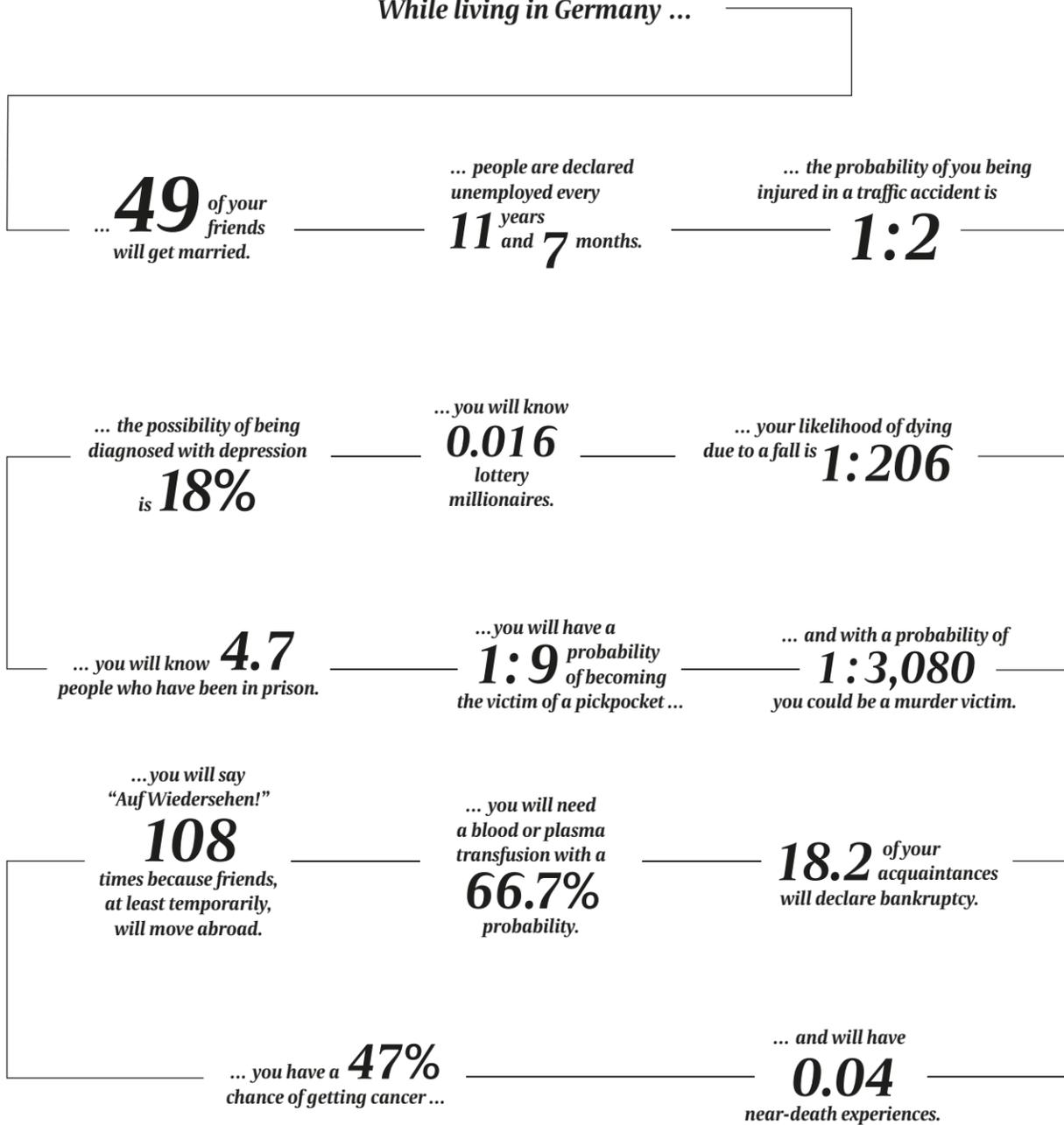
Hermann Hesse

*In all beginnings dwells a magic force  
for guarding us and helping us to live.*

# A twist of fate

Observing birds' flight paths, reading coffee grounds or tarot cards: people have always tried to read the future. If you are looking for answers, you don't need a crystal ball, you can just look up some statistics. Major changes in an average lifetime shown in numbers.

## While living in Germany ...



... you will lose **0.001** friends due to lightning.

... you will experience **21.7** divorces among your friends.

... you will bequest **€305,000**

... you will meet the love of your life... **3** times.

... you will move **3.4** times.



... you'll have **1.42** children if you are a woman and **1.35** if you are a man.

Everything is new  
Even if you can't  
remember it later: Birth  
is a radical turning point  
for every infant.



# Bursting onto the scene

Author: Stephanie Struthmann

*One turning point we all have behind us is birth. Well-prepared by nature, the life of a newborn changes radically – thanks to a true feat of strength by its mother.*

**T**he upheaval that a child experiences during birth could hardly be more extreme: Softly cradled in its mother's warm body, gently rocking in the darkness, floating weightlessly in the amniotic fluid, held so carefully in the womb, provided with everything it needs. And then comes the explosion into nothingness. Suddenly this tiny person finds itself in a blindingly bright, cold world, its umbilical cord to its mother is severed and the infant has to breathe on its own. In my experience, there are also perfectly healthy children who come into the world without a sound. Triggered by the moro reflex, a startle and stretch reflex arising from a sense of falling and a lack of feeling cocooned, the baby cries for its mother. When still connected and nourished through the umbilical cord, the infant has a gentler transition to managing its own circulation as well as breathing on its own. That's important for stabilizing its breathing. For example, premature infants need artificial respiration for an additional week on average if the umbilical cord is cut after 90 seconds following birth.

Nature prepares every woman well for pregnancy and birth. The womb grows from the size of an egg to that of a basketball, from 60 to around 1,000 grams. For nine months, it's the perfect elastic home for the baby and then powerfully brings the child into the world. From an evolutionary biological perspective, the mother's body induces birth – after a mutual preparation period – because it would be dangerous and risk the preservation of the species if the infant could determine when it is born. All mammals seek out the safest and quietest location for giving birth. They need protection for themselves and their offspring. Once they've found a suitable spot, the time has come. It's the same with humans – and is, by the way, one of the reasons women often go into labor at night.

Once they arrive at the hospital, the contractions often stop – relaxation and quiet are in short supply. Things only start moving again when those conditions are restored. The



**Stephanie Struthmann**

has been a midwife for 25 years and has helped deliver over 3,000 babies.

most important job of the father-to-be and the midwife is to provide the best possible service: The father becomes the butler and the midwife, a chambermaid in service to the queen, the mother. It should be as comfortable as possible for her.

### **When she reaches the end of her strength, that's when the baby is born**

And even though labor, which can last a good 15 hours with a woman's first child, is extremely hard work for the body. A baby can only enter the world when the mother is relaxed. And she is relaxed when she's tired: When she says she can't do anything more, then it's often time. Shortly afterwards, she gets to hold her baby – and her child has experienced the first turning point of its life. It recognizes its mother's voice and feels a bit safer again in this strange new world.

### **Out of the home**

**In 2015, only 1.3 percent of newborns in Germany saw the light of day for the first time at home or in a birthing clinic run by midwives: that's only 9,562 births out of 740,362 total. 730,800 occurred in a hospital.**

# Everyone is awake

Author: Axel Hacke

*Nothing changes life so much as having a small child in the house. Germany's most famous columnist tells what it was like for him: above all, sleep deprived.*

**F**or the last few months, a small child who cannot feed itself yet has been sitting at the breakfast table, now and again letting loose a really juicy belch across the table, especially when you spoon three or four jars of strawberries in applesauce into its wide, toothless mouth, as it sweeps coffee cups off the table with its waving arms and fills its diaper as its head turns bright red while the others all eat toast and jam.

"You're disgusting and mean," says Antje quietly. "How can you write something so repulsive about a small child?" "I love all kids. But I also love my sleep." "Sleep?" asks Antje, looking off into the distance with her red-rimmed eyes and thinking out loud. "What's sleep?" I go to the bookshelf and take down a dictionary. "Schlaf, Johannes," I read aloud, noting that "Schlaf" means "sleep" in German. "A German writer born in Querfurt, 1882, died in 1941, also in Querfurt. Invented sequential naturalism together with A. Holz under the shared pseudonym of Bjarne Peter Holmsen. Had nervous breakdowns, spent time in various sanitariums." With my last ounce of strength, I try to put the dictionary back on the shelf. "Nervous breakdown, sanitarium," repeats Antje, "holmsen, holmsen all night long, no waking up, hearing nothing for 24 hours and holmsening the whole night through, not waking up."

"Whywon'tthebabysleepwon'tsleepwon'tsleep?" Did the pacifier fall out of its mouth? Thirsty for fennel tea? Or is it highly intelligent? Highly intelligent children sleep very little, just two hours and 45 minutes a night. They don't need any more, I read it in the newspaper. This is how they finish off their parents. I'm stupid, I have to sleep a lot. Antje is also stupid, also has to sleep a lot. Probably the kid has known for some time now that it has appallingly dumb parents and is torturing them in its fury: waking people repeatedly as soon as they reach the deep sleep phase and begin dreaming. At some point you will never be able to sleep again, you've forgotten how. Or if you do sleep, you have nightmares about never sleeping again.

Argue with Antje over breakfast about who is more tired. Me: Got up at eleven and midnight and two and three, awful. Antje: Yeah, but you didn't hear what happened at 10:30, 11:30, 1:30 and 3:30. It was so much worse! Me (sometimes I lie and say that I didn't sleep at all, even though I did sleep,

just so I don't look so bad): But I had so much work to do yesterday, so I was tired beforehand. Antje: You sit around to find yourself and realize your full potential all day long, while I take care of the kids. That makes a person far more tired. Me: Finding yourself also makes a person very tired, you underestimate it. Antje, smiling derisively: Do you want to trade?

Thus begins the day. My sleep deficit is currently at 421 hours. Add 3 percent interest and that comes out to 433.63 hours. I write it down because I want it all back once that cute little rascal in the highchair is older.

*Over the years, the sleep deficit grew by a few hundred more hours. Axel Hacke is still waiting to cash in the balance.*



**Axel Hacke**

No one manages to impart such luster to the little events of everyday life as Axel Hacke. Born in 1956, the journalist has written many bestsellers.

Text first published in "Der kleine Erziehungsberater" (The Little Counselor) (1991)



**Why sleep**  
when you can stumble  
through life tired?  
Our author gave it a try.



360  
Kmh



**Little devils**  
During puberty,  
an angel turns into  
a nasty pain in the  
neck very quickly.  
A small consolation:  
It has to be that way.

# Suddenly possessed

Author: Kristin Hüttmann Photography: Jan von Holleben

*Adolescents are awful. They rage, try drugs, push the limits and rebel against their parents. But it isn't their fault. It's their brains' fault.*

Puberty

phases occur in the cerebral cortex, which grows during this time and gets thicker before shrinking again, enabling the brain to operate more efficiently," says neurobiologist Henning Beck, who aims to improve laypeople's understanding of the brain in presentations, books and workshops. "This brain growth dynamic also explains the different pubertal developments: The brain regions mature at different speeds, which can lead to imbalances within this process." In other words: It's not the adolescents' fault.

## Radical neural cleanup

During the first years of our life, the brain grows rapidly and creates many more neural connections than it needs. During puberty, the brain undergoes a radical cleanup effort. Neural connections that are often used remain intact, while all the others are pruned. A new insulating sheath increases the conduction speed in the nerves to around 360 kilometers per hour. Once this process is finished by the early 20s, the brain has reached its best-possible thinking speed. "By the way, it's one reason why professional computer gamers often reach their peak performance in their early 20s, because their reaction speed declines after that," says Beck, a neurobiologist. While the speed of thought increases, adolescents lose other abilities – professional memory games, for example, are part of childhood when the brain can still process information without bias. And the opportunity to learn a second native language disappears with puberty.

Through all of this reorganization, the brain seems to finally establish the conditions that experts believe to be puberty's main purpose: Children break away from their parents' cosmos and create their own world. For that reason, parents should not just stand there bewildered when their little angels develop into argumentative, raging creatures. "Adults are not at the mercy of the biological agenda going on in their children's brains," says Laube, a human development researcher. The extent to which adolescents become more aggressive, uninhibited or impulsive also depends on their social environment. So the following applies: Adolescents can't do anything about it. The adults can. At least a little bit.

**T**he 14-year-old girl is standing on the sidewalk, surrounded by her friends. Her eyes are wide open and panic is written all over her face. She cries and makes a phone call, stomping her foot on the cobblestones. "Mama!" she practically screams into the phone, then lowers her voice. "I'm disfigured forever." The girl wasn't robbed and wasn't in a car accident either – she went to a beauty salon to have her eyebrows plucked. "The beautician plucked way too much, my eyebrows will never grow back..." She sobs desperately while her friends put their hands on her shoulders and show their sympathy with bowed heads.

The scene was captured in Hamburg-Eppendorf. For an outsider, this emotional roller coaster is difficult to comprehend. The beautician plucked three hairs too many from her right eyebrow? So what! But Corinna Laube is not surprised by these kinds of outbursts. "Children are extremely emotional during this time," says the psychologist from the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. When she says "this time," Laube means puberty – the crucial transitional phase from childhood to adulthood that brings many changes for everyone involved.

## The cerebral cortex shrinks, which enables them to think more efficiently

It's no fun for the rest of the family when pubescent adolescents ignore the rules, develop risky behaviors and discover drugs and alcohol for themselves. What's more, they're chronically unbalanced and in a bad mood. "Maybe it's easier for us to understand this unpredictable behavior if we know what's happening in their brains," says Laube. "During adolescence, a child's brain works very hard and gets completely reorganized." Individual areas of the brain grow, others shrink, neural connections are pruned. The adolescent body is flooded with hormones. Biochemistry produces obvious results: Girls grow breasts, boys get broad shoulders and deep voices.

Scientists still don't understand all the details about what happens in the body during this time. But new findings about brain reorganization are improving the explanations we have for adolescent behavior. "The most important reorganization

### FACTS

**120 billion**  
nerve cells are  
connected with each other  
during puberty.

**100 milliliters**  
of blood flows through each  
100 grams of a child's  
brain mass. In adults, it's  
only 50 milliliters.



# as in Adult

*One of the most defining turning points in life is the moment when we realize we're no longer kids – and we're not young people anymore either. Six memories of that moment.*

### Recognition in hindsight

**Elke L.,**  
49, from Gröbenzell,  
Allianz customer since 2006

It was shortly after I moved away from home. I didn't move out of my parents' house on the best of terms, and once I was in my own place I realized how great my parents really were, and still are. Recognizing this made me grow up."

### Insight in the desert

**Christoph N.,**  
50, from Munich,  
Allianz customer since 2009

I sat there with a friend in the desert of Morocco – two men, two off-road vehicles, one great adventure. I gave myself the trip as a 50th birthday present, and also to escape all the hubbub surrounding a milestone birthday. Some people might call it a midlife crisis, but I just thought, damn, I've grown up."

### Late certainty

**Frank S.,**  
37, from Berlin,  
Allianz customer since 2009

I thought I was grown up when I went off to university. But it wasn't until 17 years later when I looked into the eyes of my newborn son that I knew: I really am now."

### Salad instead of beer

**Sebastian F.,**  
33, from Munich,  
Allianz customer since 2010

Four years ago, I took a salad to my best friend's birthday party instead of beer. Back then, I wondered if that made me old, but looking back now I realize I was just grown up."

### My rules

**Roland W.,**  
43, from Munich,  
Allianz customer since 2017

My moment was more of a process. I've had supervisory responsibilities since my early 30s, and noticed more and more that I was quoting important people from my youth and apprenticeship – my mother and master craftsmen. I thought a lot about it and realized that I wasn't doing it because I had heard their 'rules' so often when I was younger, but because I understood them – and they had become my rules, too."

### Becoming a man with a hammer

**Christian C.,**  
38, from Berlin,  
Allianz customer since 2008

Sure, moving away from home into a shared apartment was an important step. But the first time I felt really grown up was when I walked out of the hardware store carrying my very first toolbox."

# Fail with a smile

Author: Benno Stieber Photography: Lêmrich

*Professional failure is celebrated at Fuckup Nights. Because failures are just as important as triumphs – and you actually learn a great deal more when things don't go smoothly.*

**W**ho wants to be this penguin? He takes a few waddling steps across the slippery ice and then his penguin colleagues shove him in the icy water with a decisive slap of their flippers. Yannick Kwik plays this short video over and over while the audience laughs: waddle, shove, splash, laughter. "I love this video," he says and plays it again. The film illustrates what his presentation addresses as one of the most common causes for business failure: aggravation with business partners.

Talking about failure and freeing yourself from the supposed stigma of failure is what "Fuckup Nights" are all about. There are currently 159 of them being held worldwide. That's why 1,000 people have gathered this evening in the Audimax at the Goethe University in Frankfurt. Students, entrepreneurs and wannabe entrepreneurs fill the auditorium. They want to hear stories about defeats, laugh with the defeated, learn from it and gather the courage for their own new undertakings. "Talking about it openly can only do Germany's startup culture good," says Elena, the evening's moderator. Because



**There are now around 160 Fuckup Nights worldwide. They originated in the startup scene, and are attracting large companies that want to change their culture of failure.**

failure is taboo in Germany – unlike in the US, where failure is practically celebrated in Silicon Valley and considered something you can learn from, as well as an important developmental step toward success. That's also why large companies keep sending employees and trainees to Fuckup Nights. Frankfurt hosts one of the largest meetings in Europe, says



**Nhan Vu** was successful with his business idea, but his partners wanted to get rid of him. He stepped down and learned the lesson of starting a business only with people who have similar values.



**1**  
**Yannick Kwik**  
is the busy founder and CEO of the international Fuckup Night movement.

**2**  
**Oliver Dobisch**  
was a police officer, nightclub owner, singer, failed and now tours as a motivational trainer.

**3**  
**Laughter helps**  
us get over many failures. And it gives us the energy to start over.



2



3

Kwik. He has wanted to stop by for some time now. The American is now head of the worldwide Fuckup network, which originated in Mexico.

Three men will tell their story on this day. Three stories that approach the very limits of pain. There's Pascal Lauria, whose pizza delivery service for the mobile Internet failed 20 years ago – and only because he was ahead of his time. Mobile Internet was still in its infancy back then, and the business only lasted a few months. The now-successful entrepreneur is still paying off the debt from that venture. "Even if it sounds contradictory at first, a total crash like that can restore your faith in people," says Lauria. "Help usually comes from the most unexpected places."

Then Oli Dobisch stepped up: With his big sideburns and black T-shirt, he looks like a slender version of rock star Lemmy Kilmister. He's a colorful character – and not just here among business people. He says he never would've dreamed that he, with his high school diploma, would ever be allowed to speak at a university, and then talk about failure. Everyone laughs. He was a police officer, then a nightclub owner, then a singer in a hard rock band. He's happy as an artist, but doesn't make any money. He drowned the resulting bankruptcy in alcohol. He almost drank himself to death. He only managed to break the cycle with the help of his girlfriend. These days the two of them tour successfully with their band. Dobisch is also on the road as a comedian and motivational trainer. Today he knows that an artist also needs to be a businessperson. "You always need to have enough money for rent and health insurance at least," he says.

Like Lauria, Dobisch gets sympathetic applause. It seems no one in the audience today is here out of voyeurism. Some of them have failed themselves, although few of them were hit as hard as Dobisch. The rule here: Anyone who talks openly about their experience can expect respect and recognition.

**The most important thing:  
depart with composure**

Then Nhan Vu steps up. Blue business shirt under his hoodie, his head practically shaved. Vu is only 36 years old, but can talk directly about his failure like no other this evening. His fuckup was only three months ago. Vu is a programmer and has worked in the IT scene in his homeland of Vietnam for the last four years. He had an idea as an employee of a midsized printing company: software that you can use to create programs

for companies without actually having to write code. He and a developer worked on the program in the evenings after work. That went on for months. When the first version was finished, his days as an employee were numbered. Vu and his programmer invited the printing company boss to be the third board member and got started. It was turbulent for Vu: industry trade shows, acquiring customers – all new experiences for him. The initial successes came and after many hard months, Vu took a vacation with his wife and two small children for the first time. When he got home and checked his emails, a message was waiting for him: the business partners wanted to meet with him. At the meeting, they said outright that they

**“A total crash like that can restore your faith in people.”**

Pascal Lauria

no longer wanted him there. He was just all over the map. Vu didn't engage in discussion: Within 24 hours, he packed his things and told employees that he was stepping down.

You could say that Vu is the penguin that got shoved into the cold water in this story. But he sees it differently. He doesn't want to complain about his business partners, he says. He believes that everyone made mistakes. "Why didn't we argue openly?" he asks today. That was the main mistake. The lesson he learned: "You can only work together with partners who have the same values." Someone in the audience asks why he left without resisting. After all, there were no grounds for throwing him out. "No," says Vu, the company would have blocked it. "The product and the employees didn't deserve that."

Vu just learned that his former partners made a deal worth millions. And that doesn't make him bitter either, he says bravely. There is applause and praise on Twitter for this attitude: "A departure with composure." This evening, Vu appears as though a burden has been lifted. Long afterward, people from the audience stand around him, asking questions, offering him their business cards. The most important thing is to deal with failure openly, says Vu at the end of his presentation. He has new projects now, hoping for the next big thing. He also works as a consultant – for startups, naturally.



# Innovation in an herb garden

Interview moderator: **Ben Arora** Photography: **Markus Burke**

*Whether they're very small or extremely large: For businesses, it's all about fresh ideas and sustainable business practices. A conversation between Bernd Heinemann, Member of the Board of Management at Allianz Deutschland, and Osnat Michaeli, cofounder of the produce and herb startup Infarm in Berlin.*



**The name Infarm** is derived from "indoor" and "farming." That's what this young company does: indoor farming of produce and herbs.

**Allianz and Infarm could hardly be more different as businesses: The first is one of the world's largest insurance companies that was founded in 1890 to turn the risks of others into a business model. The second is a startup that began revolutionizing urban produce supply in 2013.**

**Bernd Heinemann:** I just picked a couple of leaves of your Thai basil and tasted it. It's really delicious, very intense!

**Osnat Michaeli:** I'm glad. You just described our most important goal: Customers should be excited about the flavor, they should be able to tell immediately how fresh our products are.

**Heinemann:** Many hip young Berliners enjoy urban farming as a hobby, but you operate it as a business. Can you explain how that works?

**Michaeli:** We're bringing agriculture into the city. We give our customers, primarily supermarkets and restaurants, the opportunity to offer their customers and guests super-fresh organic herbs, lettuce and vegetables – without using pesticides or packaging, 100 percent from the region, and with the shortest possible distance to the consumer.

**Osnat Michaeli shows Bernd Heinemann the high-tech greenhouses that provide plants with exactly the right light, nutrients and watering.**



////////////////////////////////////  
**92%**  
 of people feel it is important  
 or very important  
 to eat healthy food.  
 //////////////////////////////////////

*“Addressing  
 a real need at  
 the right time  
 can trigger a  
 revolution.”*  
 Bernd Heinemann

////////////////////////////////////  
**€4.28 BILLION**  
 Record investment  
 in German startups  
 In 2017, investments grew by €970 million  
 more than the year 2015, which  
 held the previous record amount.  
 //////////////////////////////////////



- 1**  
Optimal growing conditions prevail in the boxes at Inform.
- 2**  
Herbs couldn't be fresher – the distance between harvest from the box to the produce department at the Edeka Sapphire in Berlin is about one meter.
- 3**  
Fascinated by the possibilities of data and algorithms: Osnat Michaeli and Bernd Heinemann.



**Heinemann:** It sounds like a lot of effort. Is it expensive for customers?

**Michaeli:** We cost about the same as organic produce. We don't even have some typical costs. After all, our "field" is right where the consumer is – so there's no need for transportation. Our vision is to revolutionize urban produce supply and reduce the supply chains in the produce market to a minimum.

**Heinemann:** What motivated you to turn your vision into a business?

**Michaeli:** My cofounders Guy and Erez and I had the dream of being as self-sufficient as possible. That isn't easy for city kids like us. Guy studied Chinese medicine and worked as a cook, while Erez and I come from the film industry. Together we developed a solution that brings us closer to self-sufficiency.

**Heinemann:** You're from Israel. What brought you to Berlin?

**Michaeli:** There's no need for this kind of project in Israel: Everything grows outside and is sold locally. In Berlin, the fruit comes from Spain or Italy. In addition, Berlin is startup-friendly and people are open to new ideas.

**Heinemann:** I find it fascinating. If you meet a latent need for people, it can become a really big thing. It was the same thing with insurance back in the late 1800s. It wasn't nearly as widespread as today. Addressing a real need at the right time can trigger a revolution. The origins of Allianz were shaped by growth and innovation. During that process, it was especially important to

find out two things: What exactly does the customer need and how can we make a marketable product out of it?

**Michaeli:** As a new company, we're also seeing how essential it is to be close to our customers. We always develop products in direct contact with customers. Do you need that, does it taste good? When I think back to our first attempts at home in our living room ... the question, "will anybody want this?" kept coming up.

**Heinemann:** It almost sounds like you're already on your third or fourth development step. Now you need to scale up your business and grow.

**Michaeli:** You're right. That's why we're working with large companies. Our partners include Edeka and Metro. Our farms are already represented in several stores.

**Heinemann:** It makes sense that you sought out large partners to help you grow. We do the exact opposite. We work together with small, innovative partners or acquire shares in them. These can also be insurance startups.



1

**“Our vision is to revolutionize urban produce supply.”**

Osnat Michaeli

**Michaeli:** So you work with companies that are technically competitors?

**Heinemann:** In a connected world, new partnerships are simply a necessity. Some innovations cannot be achieved alone. Your collaboration with Metro is a great example. Both sides benefit: You gain from the distribution channels and financial strength of a large partner and they gain from your ideas and approach. What exactly does your collaboration with Metro look like?

**Michaeli:** We manage our growing equipment at Metro ourselves. One of our employees takes care of the plants and technology regularly. He

picks the ripe products and packages them for sale. Metro pays us a fee for that. And we get feedback right away on what works well.

**Heinemann:** What’s special about your greenhouse?

**Michaeli:** We grow primarily lettuce and herbs, including types that you couldn’t normally buy in the supermarket, like the Thai basil you tried before, for example. We imitate nature’s processes to do that: We adjust our box temperatures, light and nutrients specifically to meet our plants’ needs, and it’s highly efficient thanks to LEDs and dripper technology. We use 90 percent less water. And our LEDs enable us to customize the lighting for each individual plant’s sunlight requirements – we can set conditions ranging from sunny to cloudy. That consumes 40 percent less energy while increasing plant growth by 50 percent.

**Heinemann:** Phenomenal how relentlessly technology and algorithms are taking hold in every type of business – even in an herb garden.

**Michaeli:** We wouldn’t exist without technology. We can capture all kinds of data from ambient humidity and light levels in the greenhouses to the size, shape and color of the plants. From all that, we can determine the optimal lighting for leaf growth, for example. Every parameter is important and we evaluate each one.

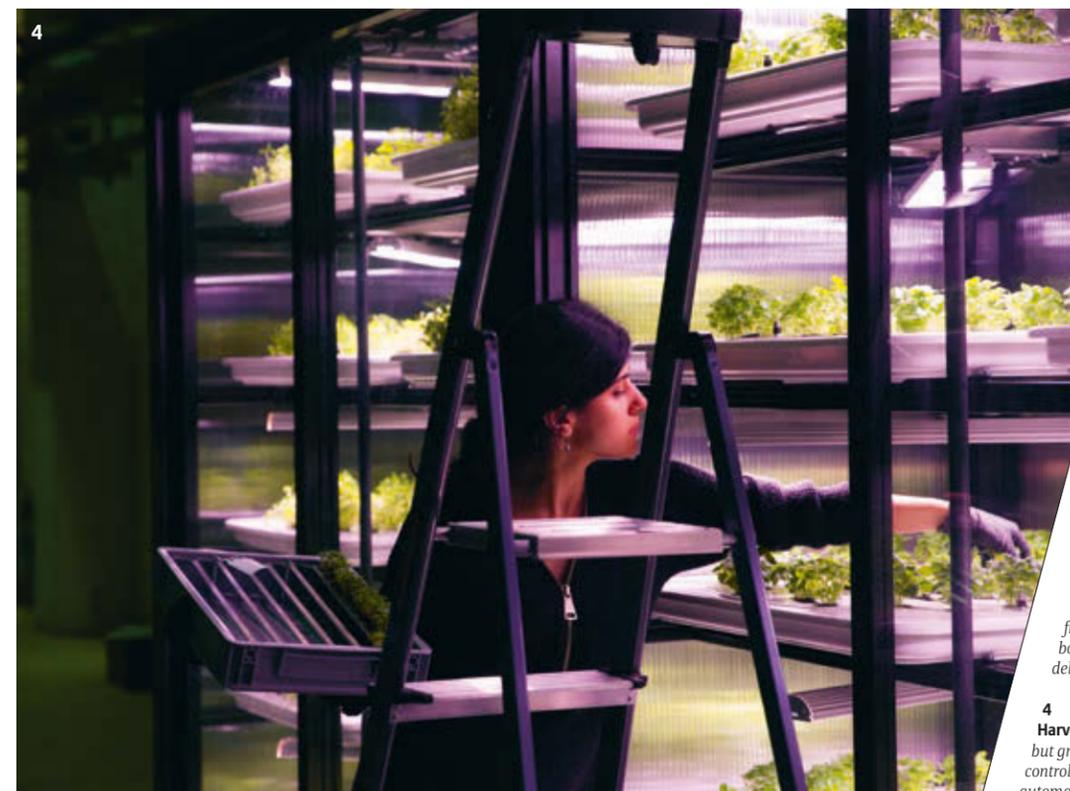
**Heinemann:** In the insurance industry, we have historically built on data and algorithms, especially in the area of risk assessment. Meanwhile, data has become crucial for the entire value chain – in customer interactions, marketing and many other areas. Even at the core, in risk modeling, data has become increasingly important.



2



3



4

## Startups

The German Startup Monitor describes startups as having three specific characteristics:

- / less than 10 years old
- / have highly innovative technology or business model
- / significant growth in workforce and/or revenue

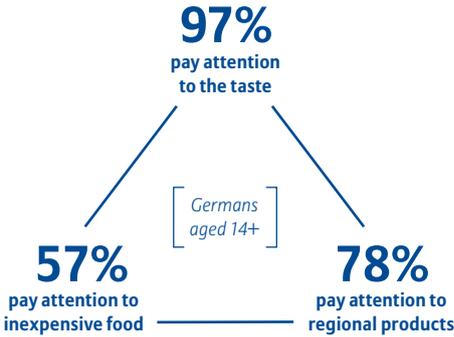
**1 Large and small companies can learn from each other, like in the conversation between Osnat Michaeli and Bernd Heinemann.**

**2 Infarm employs vertical farming, meaning they stack their growing beds vertically.**

**3 Ice plant from an Infarm growing box – one ingredient in delicious salads.**

**4 Harvesting is by hand, but growing conditions are controlled and monitored automatically.**

**Infarm uses fresh herbs, lettuce and vegetables from its own greenhouses for the team lunch.**



**Michaeli:** Can you give me an example?

**Heinemann:** Sure, the telematic rates from Allianz auto insurance: Speed, acceleration, braking and steering behavior – all that is captured via a telematics app and displayed to the driver. If the app demonstrates to him and us that he drives safely and doesn't speed, he gets a portion of his premium back.

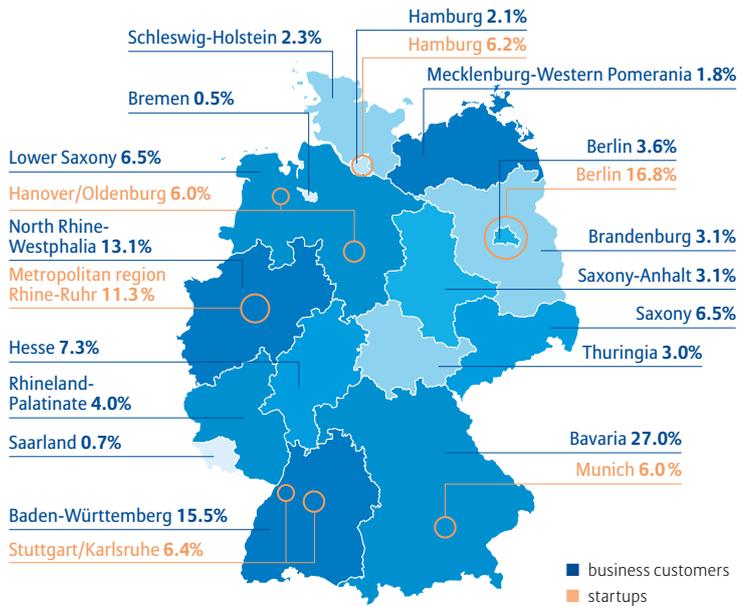
**Michaeli:** The penetration of every business area by data and algorithms, your new partners, the digital customers – all this must lead to changes in your company culture. Is that an issue for you? It certainly worries us a great deal. We're growing fast, but at the same time we're trying to retain our creativity. That isn't easy.

**Heinemann:** Today, more than ever, regardless of the size of a business, a culture of change and transformation is crucial for long-term success. We're increasingly operating in small teams and have implemented agile work methods. In the end, the important thing is to see change as a new beginning and a way to shape the future.

FACTS / FIGURES

**Metropolitan areas as pioneers**

In Germany, startups are concentrated in metropolitan regions. Infarm is one of Allianz's 1.9 million business customers. The graphic below also shows the percentage of distribution by state.



# Change is the only constant

*Many radical changes only become visible when we compare the past with the present. This also applies to places where we spend most of our waking hours – our workplaces. And yet, not that much has really changed. See for yourself.*

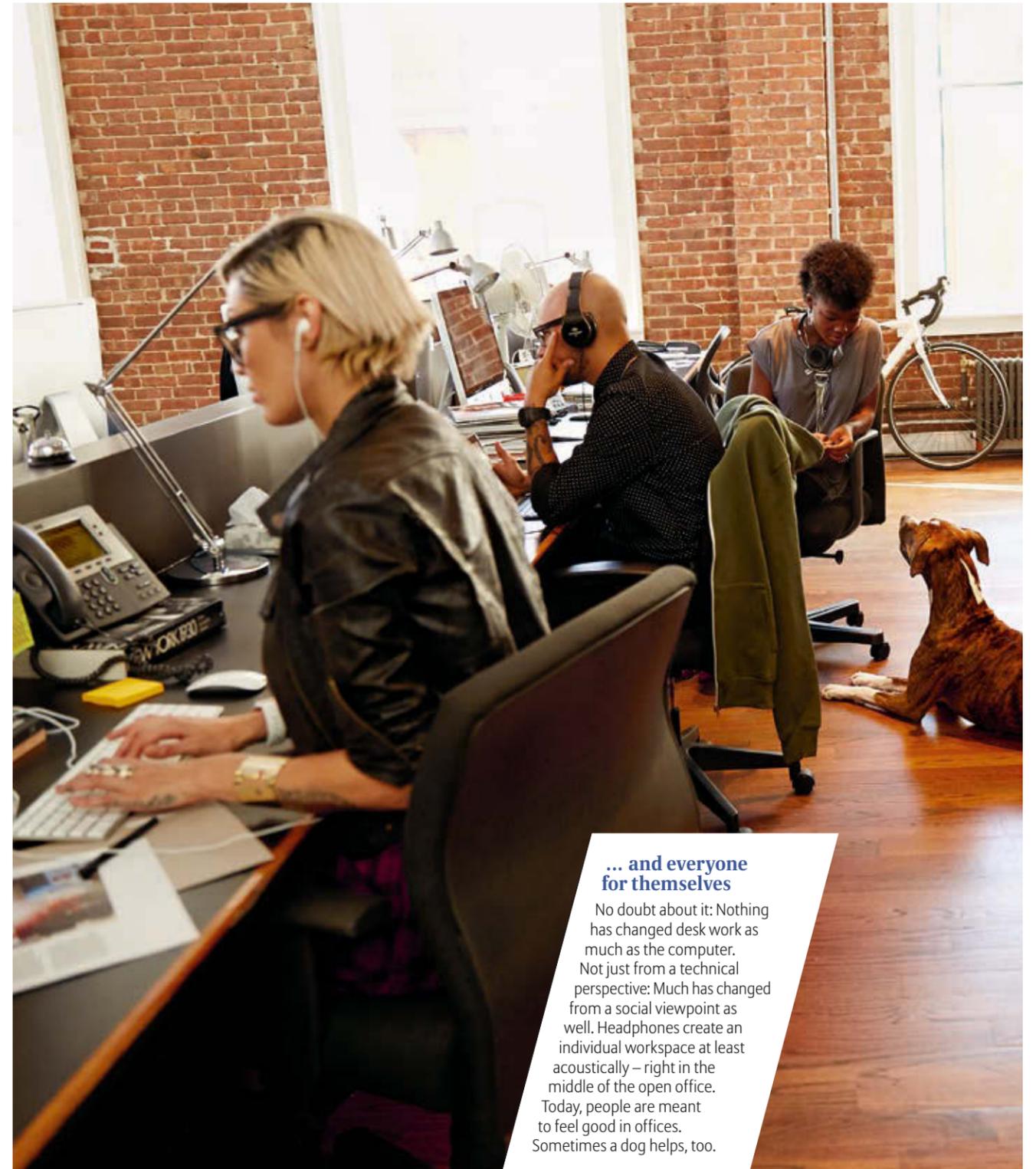
**All together ...**

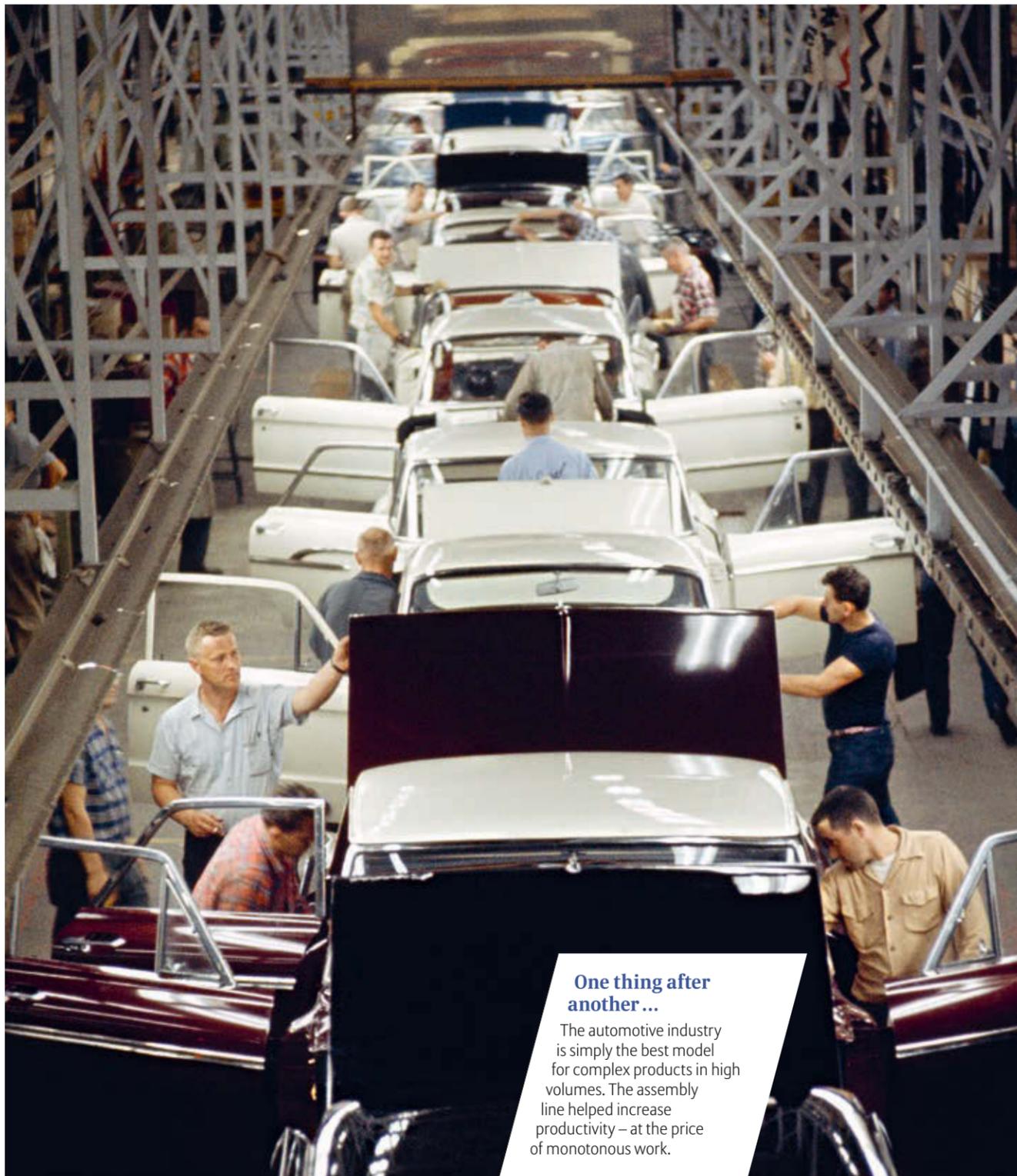
We have long since accepted an innovation from the 1960s as completely normal: the open plan office. A big open space that can be divided up and used in almost unlimited ways. The difference in our time comes from changes to work equipment and in breaking up uniformity.



**... and everyone for themselves**

No doubt about it: Nothing has changed desk work as much as the computer. Not just from a technical perspective: Much has changed from a social viewpoint as well. Headphones create an individual workspace at least acoustically – right in the middle of the open office. Today, people are meant to feel good in offices. Sometimes a dog helps, too.





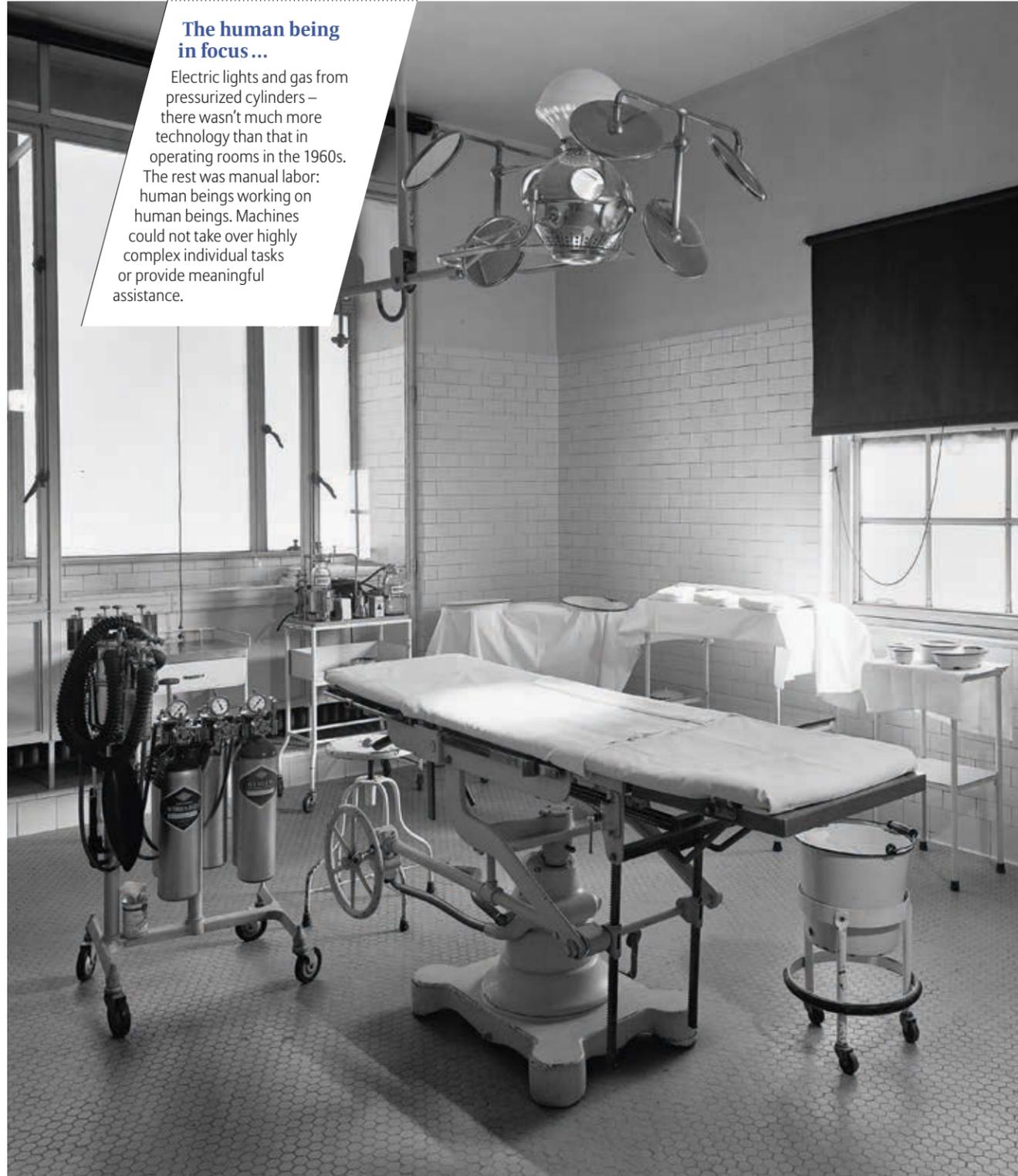
**One thing after another ...**  
 The automotive industry is simply the best model for complex products in high volumes. The assembly line helped increase productivity – at the price of monotonous work.



**... automated, please**  
 The production steps are more or less the same, but robots are increasingly the ones performing them. Today, machines often execute complicated procedures while humans step back from physical work and supervise.

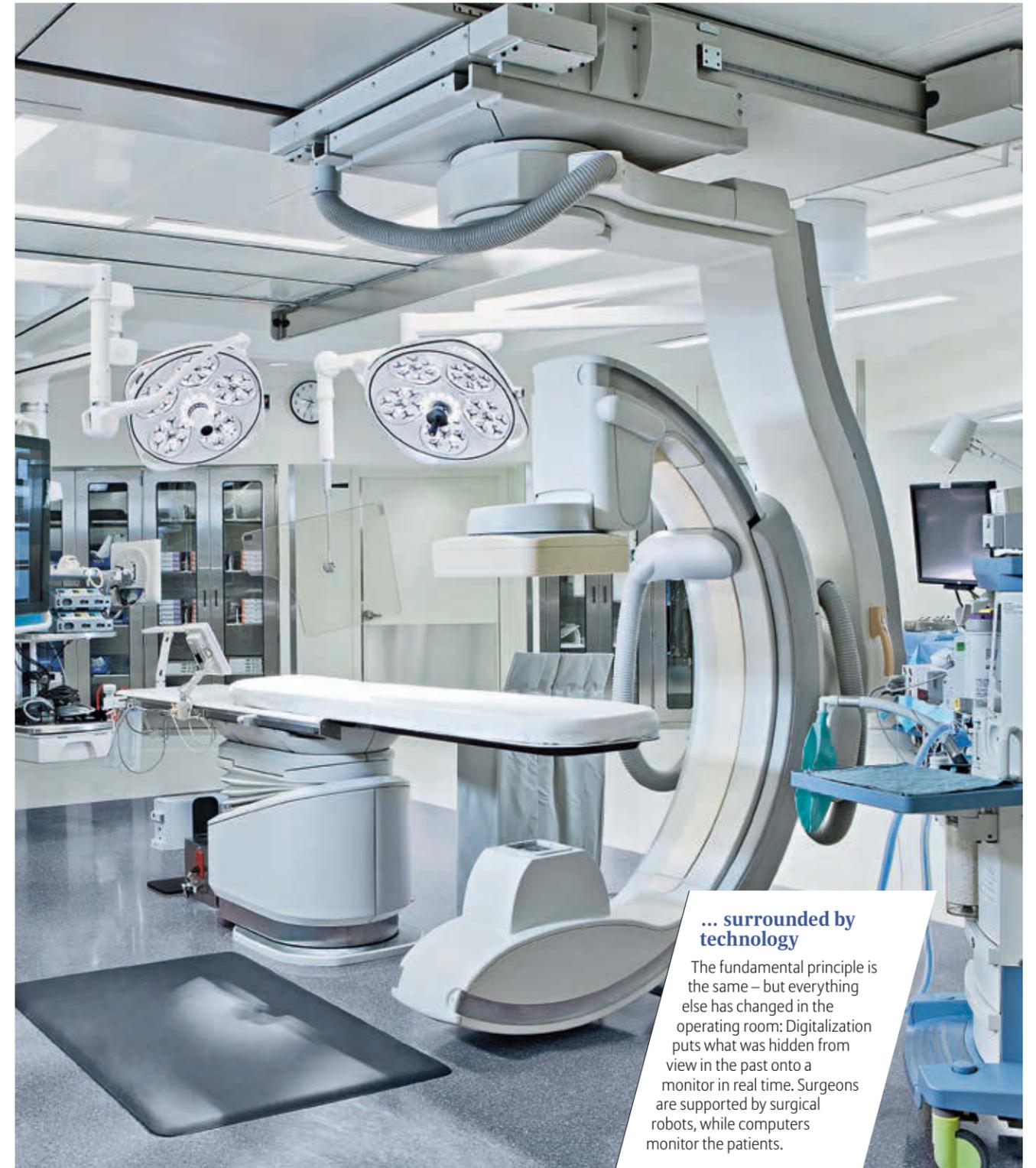
### The human being in focus ...

Electric lights and gas from pressurized cylinders – there wasn't much more technology than that in operating rooms in the 1960s. The rest was manual labor: human beings working on human beings. Machines could not take over highly complex individual tasks or provide meaningful assistance.



### ... surrounded by technology

The fundamental principle is the same – but everything else has changed in the operating room: Digitalization puts what was hidden from view in the past onto a monitor in real time. Surgeons are supported by surgical robots, while computers monitor the patients.





**Hot air ...**  
 Even though diesel and electric locomotives were becoming more common in the 1960s, Deutsche Bahn Railways kept steam locomotives in service until 1977. The field of vision in the engine's cab was dominated by countless gauges, valves and set screws. The view ahead was limited, and it was hard physical labor.



**... and cool technology**  
 In a modern high-speed train, the view forward is clearer and the physical work is far less challenging. The technology, by contrast, is similarly complex – even if it is digital instead of mechanical and hidden behind monitors and just a few switches.

# Gone to the dogs

Author: Matthias Oden

*Actually, Yvonne Hofschneider had it all: money, a career, a secure future. Despite all that, she decided to pursue a new life – with a husky racing team in Norway. The story of a radical change.*

**S**he gets up earlier now than she did in her old life. It's still dark outside except during the short summers. Sometimes she can already hear the dogs. She used to reach for her BlackBerry to answer the first emails waiting impatiently for an answer. Here her first thought goes to the thermometer and the question of whether or not she should put on another pair of socks. After slipping into her clothes, she opens the door and air colder than ice chills her face. Yvonne Hofschneider then takes a deep breath through her scarf and walks out into her new life. Her pack is already waiting for her.

Self-actualization, freedom, escaping the rat race – this dream runs through millions of minds every day then set aside when everything starts over the next day: an eternal sometime-I-really-should fantasy that brings a little color into our gray everyday lives. A daydream as a substitute and

consolation. That wasn't enough for Hofschneider. She made her dream a reality – in Norway, at –30° in winter, on the runners of a dogsled – as a dog handler for a husky racing team.

## ***Changing what bothers you can be very simple***

Hofschneider had it all, so to speak: a well-paying job with tangible prospects for a brilliant career, a great apartment in Munich-Bogenhausen, a stable relationship. She gave it all up in 2014 and turned her back on her old life. The reason for this radical step was really very simple: What she had was not what she wanted. So she set about changing that. "It's all really obvious," she says.

However, the road to this "obvious" goal was a long, cautious approach, moving step-by-step to the big decision. It actually started back in Hofschneider's childhood.

**Friends for life**  
Yvonne Hofschneider with Happy, one of her 47 huskies. As an attorney, she would never have been able to make her wish for a life with dogs come true.





1



4

**1 Training**  
Sled dogs have to run dozens of kilometers every day.

**2 Care**  
Huskys are smart. Taking care of them is a full-time job.

**3 Trust**  
Ranger the husky with his handler. Hofschneider has known him since 2014.

**4 Rest**  
Light training consists of 5 hours of running, 5 hours of resting.



2

*“No one understood why someone would give all that up just to pet dogs.”*



3

She was born in Berlin in 1984 and later moved to Thüringen with her parents. Dax the German Shepherd was always there – until they had to give him away because her father had to go away on business for a long period of time. “I cried almost every day for six months.” Until, one day her dad comes home with Rex, a German Shepherd-mix puppy. When Hofschneider moves back to Berlin to attend university, Rex stays in Thüringen due to a lack of space. “But the desire to have a dog was always there.” That desire never left her.

She studies law and passes her exams with top grades. Hofschneider wants to be a judge, but realizes that the work at the public prosecutor’s office doesn’t keep her busy. She already has experience in a law firm and is used to a much faster pace. She finishes her daily workload in a few hours, then has nothing left to do. “I couldn’t imagine having to kill time every day,” she says – and quits her job. And that shows for the first time the radical approach Hofschneider takes to facing existential questions: If the conditions aren’t the way she envisions them, then she will seek out different conditions. Even if that means completely giving up her life plans.

**At some point, it was clear: “I want to go.”**

She reenters the private sector with her old employer in Munich at one of Europe’s leading commercial law firms. Instead of traffic law cases crossing her desk, she now has corruption and tax evasion cases. She is paid well, much more than in public service: “But,” she says, “money was never important to me.” She has trouble settling in. She hardly ever sees the courtroom anymore, and court days are what she likes

most about her profession. And she still doesn’t have room in her life for a dog, a big dog, because that’s the only kind that she will consider. “That kind of dog can’t be in an office all day long.” Hofschneider is right in the middle of her life, but somehow she’s also outside it. That’s where Scandinavia comes in. She had vacationed a couple of times in Finland on sled tours. That’s where she recharged: spending the entire day with dogs. Finally she realizes that life in the Arctic Circle is more than just a vacation experience that can sustain her through her regular everyday life. It’s an alternative.

This doesn’t happen overnight. “It percolated inside me for a while,” she says. Even when she openly confronts the idea, she doesn’t rush into anything. She talks with the people at the vacation farm about the possibility of working there. She discusses it with her parents and her boyfriend, too. She doesn’t go easy on herself: She comes from a blue-collar family and was the first to go to university. Is she really going to give all that up? It’s difficult, her conscience plagues her. But she battles her way through. At some point, it was clear: “I want to go.”

She writes to the husky farm: Yes, they’re interested. She quits her job: Yes, she’s really serious. She gives up her apartment: Yes, she’s really moving to Äkäskero, Finland.

Naturally, she has to explain herself. “No one understood why someone would want to give all that up just to pet dogs.” No one understood, especially her colleagues. Her parents have enough empathy to understand what is going on with their daughter, and her friends can somehow comprehend her decision, too. But every time she visits Germany, her former boss still offers her a job. “He probably just can’t understand it,”



- 1 Early evening**  
*In wintertime, the sun already sets in the afternoon.*
- 2 Young husky**  
*47 dogs of every age are part of Hofschneider's pack.*
- 3 Cold workplace**  
*It gets down to -30°, but the reward is snowy white splendor.*

she says. "Something like this doesn't even exist in his world." Eventually all the conversations have been had, all the preparations are made, and now the time has come. Hofschneider starts her new life in the autumn of 2014.

The cold is the toughest part. She's outside all day long with the dogs, so her hands and feet are always freezing cold. Otherwise, everything is finally as it should be. She pays a high price for it: her relationship falls apart, the couple's life plans no longer align – and add to that the long distance. At least work helps, and there is plenty of work: Hofschneider is a guide for tourists, helps manage the place and is starting to gain experience as a dog handler with the farm's husky team.

**A job where you lose money**

And in 2017, when there's a change in management in Äkäskero and her friends leave, she moves on. This time to

Grimsbu in Norway, a village deep in the backcountry near a river and a country road surrounded by forested mountain ranges. No more tourists, just dogs, because here she will be delving deep into the Scandinavian husky racing scene. It's a strange sport, one that few spectators or TV broadcasts know about. The races are 600, 1,000 kilometers long or even longer and they last several days – there are very few opportunities to set up fan zones. Most of the time the drivers are all alone on their sleds. They meet up with competitors and dog handlers at the checkpoints when they take a break to give their dogs a rest. Dog handlers are responsible for everything in a racing stable except for the actual racing. They are the racing crew, they train the dogs, drive dozens of kilometers with them every day, rear them, teach them the commands. They feed them, raise them, play with them. Hofschneider takes care of 47 huskies – puppies, the actual racing dogs, and

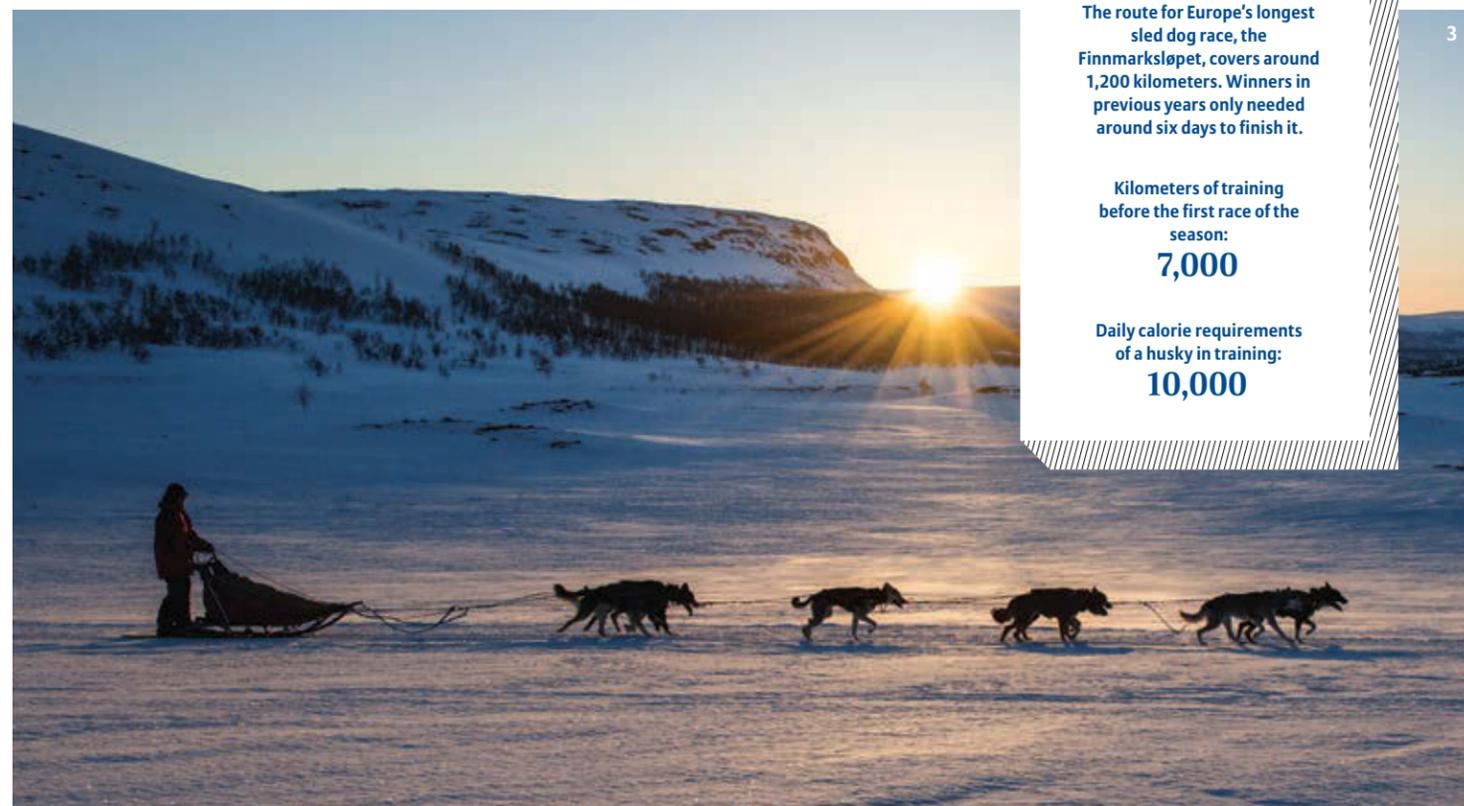
old dogs that cannot pull the sled anymore. The days are long, "as long as in a large law firm." Sometimes longer. She is outside in all weathers – and, above all: it's voluntary work. It pays room and board, nothing more. Everything else, clothes, equipment, she has to pay for herself – and that costs a pretty penny. Hofschneider has a job that makes her poorer every month. That's not really a fair description, she thinks. "I pay to be able to help someone realize her dream." But that's how the sport works and she won't change it. Is that a bit crazy? Yes, probably, she says, but that's not what's important. What's important is doing what you want to do. That's what counts. She has never regretted her decision.

**It only looks courageous in hindsight**

And only when looking back in hindsight does she understand why others thought her step was radical or courageous. She herself never thought in those terms: "For me it was perfectly clear." Hofschneider doesn't divide her life into a before and after. Both things, law and huskies, belong together for her. She wouldn't want to do without either one. "Without going to university, I never could have afforded my first vacation in Finland," she says, and without that she wouldn't be in Grimsbu now. "It's not as though everything in my former career was bad, not at all." But if she talks about herself these days, it's always with the intention of highlighting that there are alternatives. "So people see that there is more than just one straight path."

Returning to Germany isn't in the cards for her, she says. Of course she still visits her parents and friends, but now she feels like a stranger in her old homeland. Life up here is more real, and she met her new love here as well – a Swiss man who moved here for the same reasons she did. Both of them realize "that we can't afford to do this job forever." But giving up life with the dogs is out of the question. Having their own husky farm, now that would really be something. Offering tours that put the dogs' needs first, not chasing experiences with tourists who only want to be on a sled for a few hours. Both of them know that it's difficult, that they would need capital. Capital that they are currently consuming every single day while they continue to be dog handlers. "That does worry us," says Hofschneider.

The fact that she nevertheless stays calm and optimistic likely has plenty to do with the self-confidence required to take a path as winding as Hofschneider's has been. She knows that whatever may come, in the end it will be something that she can say yes to. Something that she really wants, because anything else would just be another stop along the way. At least for someone like her.



FACTS / FIGURES

**Let 'em run**

The route for Europe's longest sled dog race, the Finnmarksløpet, covers around 1,200 kilometers. Winners in previous years only needed around six days to finish it.

Kilometers of training before the first race of the season:  
**7,000**

Daily calorie requirements of a husky in training:  
**10,000**

# Stand up!

Author: Johannes Laubmeier Photography: Lêmrich

*Boris Grundl's life changes suddenly when he breaks his neck cliff diving at age 25. He bounces back – and becomes a millionaire.*

**B**oris Grundl tosses his words at the audience like balls. “If you concentrate on what you can change,” he calls out in the rapt silence, “then you adopt an attitude that people love, that colleagues love and that your partners love.” On this fall day, Grundl is the keynote speaker at the Dell EMC Forum, which the IT company has invited its customers and partners to attend. “The magic of change” flickers across the screen behind him. The fact that his presentation is not about IT doesn’t bother anyone. The audience is glued to their seats in the big hall at the Messe Frankfurt Center. They hold their smartphones up and take pictures of the presentation. Grundl – black pants, light blue shirt, scarcely noticeable Swabian dialect – speaks with an intensity that makes people forget that he can barely move. He’s in a wheelchair.

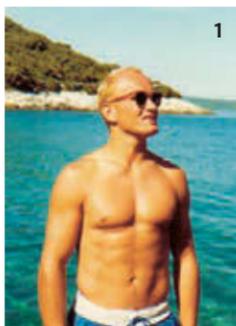
Grundl is one of Germany’s most successful coaches and speakers. For over 15 years, he has advised and inspired managers at companies both big and small, helping them concentrate on the essentials so they can continue to develop and grow. He’s in demand because he knows what he’s talking about when he speaks of change and life-altering turning points. After all, he experienced one himself.

1990, he’s 25 years old, and Grundl has everything that you could want at this age. The physical education student plays semi-pro tennis, is a sought-after coach. He’s a charmer and, yes, a golden boy. Whatever he tries works out. His life at this time is like a highway in the late morning – no traffic, plenty of sun, a free ride. Until 3 December 1990. Grundl is on vacation with a friend. They’re driving from California to Mexico and make a stop in Puerto Vallarta: Cliff diving! No problem, thinks Grundl to himself. After all, he recently served in the paratrooper squad – earning a distinction. He slowly works his way forward, and jumps from halfway up first – “Pretty cool!” At some point he climbs all the way up to the top. Once there, standing on slippery rocks 10 meters above the water, he thinks he hears a little voice saying: “Boris, don’t do it.” He ignores it. You have to fight your way through fear, he thinks. And jumps.

“From today’s perspective, it was completely senseless of me to ignore my intuition,” he says now, describing the moment. “But back then I thought I was immortal.” As soon as he hits the water, he notices that



**Never give up hope**  
That's Boris Grundl's motto in life. The title of one of his books is: "Steh auf! Bekenntnisse eines Optimisten" (Stand up! Confessions of an optimist). He is 90 percent paralyzed.



- 1 Golden boy...**  
*Grundl at age 25: physically fit, handsome.*
- 2 ...and paralyzed**  
*A photo taken shortly before the moment that would change everything.*
- 3 Leadership coach...**  
*Now he motivates managers and makes speaking appearances.*
- 4 ...and millionaire**  
*It made him rich. And gave him the chance to cheat fate a bit.*

something isn't right. He dives in, but instead of swimming to the surface, the 25-year-old athlete, the soldier, the invincible one, sinks like a stone. "It was as though my body betrayed me. I thought, That can't be right – I'm immortal, I can do anything," he recalls.

His friend pulls him out of the water. On the beach, Grundl's entire body feels like it has gone numb. Spinal column, he knows right away. "After 20 seconds I knew that I would spend my life in a wheelchair." A boat brings him from the beach to a nearby hospital. The diagnosis: neck sprained, seventh cervical vertebra broken, muscles up to 90 percent paralyzed. An emergency surgery is performed to set a brace that should stabilize his spine, then a Red Cross plane brings him back home to Germany.

After undergoing another operation to remove splinters from his vertebra, Grundl finds himself in a hospital bed again – in a body that no longer feels like it's his own. His neck is clamped in a brace, cut off from any sort of movement. Every few hours he's turned mechanically from lying on his back to his stomach, stomach to back, so he doesn't get bed sores.

He says there were only two views for him during this time: floor and ceiling, nothing else. His new situation threatens to overwhelm him.

The athletic young man, the tennis player, the winner seems to have disappeared – loneliness is all that's left. Self-pity and doubt roll over him, and again and again, the question emerges: What is his life worth now? Once he asks one of the nurses just to sit next to him and hold his hand until he falls asleep. "During that time I often just concentrated on breathing to help clear my mind."

**Three hours to get dressed**

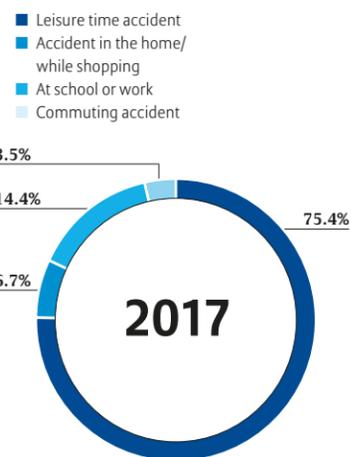
Grundl lies there like that for close to four weeks before he can move into a normal bed. He has to relearn how to do just about everything: He practices how to sit up by himself, hold a fork, works with a speech therapist to learn how to speak again after paralysis of the recurrent nerve. He slowly makes progress. When his right thumb twitches again for the first time, it holds a world of meaning, his future, all the possibilities. He starts accepting his new reality. One morning in the hospital, he finally realizes that this reality could also be a good one. He wakes up at 4:13 in the morning lying on his side, darkness still filling the sky. His wheelchair waits next to his bed. "I can use that," he thinks to himself thankfully. He decides to get up. He needs almost three hours to get dressed in the basics. He heaves himself into the wheelchair, leaves his room and goes to a small athletic field on the hospital grounds. As the sun rises above him, he begins to cry from happiness, and more than 25 years later you can still hear the emotion in his voice when he talks about it.

FACTS / FIGURES

**Dangerous leisure**

Four out of five accidents happen during leisure time.

Breakdown of accident types:



After nine months, Grundl is able to leave the hospital. He moves back to Cologne and finds an apartment in a project for differently abled seniors, families and people. Once there, he's starts fighting his way back into life, one bit at a time. He has to deal with setbacks again and again. The first time he goes shopping, he realizes that he will have to get used to needing more time than other people to do the simplest things. When he's at the cash register with the "pedestrians" waiting behind him, he gets so nervous that he drops everything. Getting up in the morning, getting dressed and going shopping rob him of all his energy in the beginning: Afterward he's usually so tired that he needs to lie back down.

He depends on public assistance during this time. "We'll have to see where we can find you a job," they tell him at the employment office. "That was brutal, I almost broke down because of it," recalls Grundl. Looking back, that's his moment of awakening.



**"I thought, That can't be right – I'm immortal, I can do anything."**

**“Either you sink into self-pity, or you do something.”**

He doesn't want to be taken care of anymore, and decides to find a job for himself. After nine months, he goes back to his old university faculty, he wants to finish his degree. Since he can't play tennis anymore, he adds a minor in psychology. But he uses his expertise nonetheless: For his thesis project, he performs the first systematic analysis of wheelchair tennis and, according to him, becomes the first severely paralyzed person in a wheelchair to earn a degree in sports science in Germany.

**Full of energy**  
Boris Grundl is one of the best-paid speakers and coaches in Germany.



“Back then I was just so focused on this goal. These days I would say, ‘Man, you're crazy,’” says Grundl on this afternoon in Frankfurt. Then he becomes serious. “If you're down so far, there are only two possibilities: Either you surrender to your self-pity, or you do something about it. Pulling yourself together is the only thing that counts.” Fresh out of university, Grundl finds a job at a company that makes rehab products. Instead of being on public assistance, he earns management wages now. He purchases three lots next to his parents' house and starts building – a bungalow, of course: “I am not too fond of multi-stories,” he says and laughs.

**Teaching as the meaning of life**

He also finds his way back to sports. He starts playing wheelchair tennis, becomes the German champion. He stops playing fairly quickly despite that: “It didn't satisfy me the way it did before my accident – it was just nicer when I was on two legs.” He starts looking for a new sport for himself and finds wheelchair rugby. And since he pursues that with the same energy as everything else, it only takes two years before he becomes a national player and then the best European player. In 2000, he flew to Sydney to represent Germany in the Paralympics. He's invited into the sports studio – not because he can play, but because he can speak well, he says.

However, Grundl discovers his true calling elsewhere. In his search for meaning, for a reason to exist, he finds teaching. He gave seminars regularly when he was a product manager. When he comes back from Australia, he decides to earn his money this way exclusively. In 2001, he starts his own business as a coach and seminar facilitator. “I was already good as a tennis instructor, and I realized that my true talent wasn't really playing tennis, it was teaching.”

Since then, 16 years have passed. These days Grundl is a highly paid speaker and coach in Germany. He has written several books and heads up a leadership academy with 15 employees. But there's more: There are his wife and two grown children, whom he helped raise. There is his Porsche 911 Turbo S, which he drives himself. There is also the fact that he doesn't need to work anymore if he doesn't feel like it, and there are the 50-kilometer bike tours that he does in his free time with an electric handcycle.

That's why, he says, there are one or two moments every day where he secretly – and a bit defiantly – sticks out his tongue at his fate. Because he simply concentrates on the things he can change – and then changes them. When Grundl says goodbye – “I have to go to Spain tomorrow” – you're surprised at how gentle his handshake feels. Because you've almost completely forgotten that he is paraplegic.



**1 Voice**  
When Grundl talks about change, everyone listens: He experienced it himself.

**2 Body**  
The dive off the cliff left him a paraplegic with 90 percent paralysis.

**3 Calling**  
Grundl's latest project is the Responsibility Index, a study that investigates the social value of responsibility.

**Brief moment with long-term consequences**

An accident happens in a fraction of a second. The consequences can potentially affect you for a lifetime. With accidents that happen at school or in the workplace, statutory accident insurance only covers costs for necessary medical care and rehab. Lump-sum payments for remodeling, a new car, or therapeutic aids and treatments are not covered. Personal accident insurance offers this financial assistance. Moreover, it stands by your side with advice and resource from the very first second – regardless of when and where the accident happened.

An occupational disability and long-term care policy can be a meaningful supplement, particularly when dealing with long-term consequences.



**1,600**

people become paraplegic in Germany every year; 4% of those (more than 60) suffer permanent paralysis from swimming accidents, like Boris Grundl.

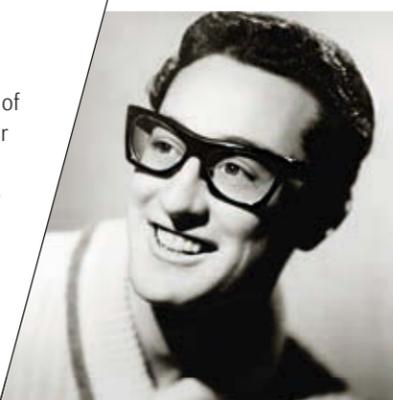


# Things never turn out the way you expect...

*Doors left open, rotten weather, dirty laundry – sometimes the world is changed forever by completely unremarkable things. And sometimes it even takes those things to defeat Nazi Germany. Seven examples of major turning points with surprising causes.*

## **Washing can be deadly**

In late January 1959, rock legend Buddy Holly is fed up: The logistics of his Winter Dance Party tour are a catastrophe. Not only does the tour bus not have heating – and it's -30° outside – he's run out of clean laundry. So he charts a small private plane to have enough time to wash his laundry at the next tour stop. On 3 February, Ritchie Valens and The Big Bopper board the plane that is supposed to take them to North Dakota. The three stars never arrive: The plane crashes in a snowstorm. That day became sadly well-known as "the day the music died" – all because of a few pairs of underwear.



## **The last one out please close the door**

In 1453, Sultan Mehmed II laid siege to the city of Constantinople for 53 days when coincidence came to his aid: His troops noticed someone forgot to close a small gate to the fortress. The Ottomans invaded through the gateway and hoisted their flags on the segment of wall, unleashing panic among the defenders and leading to the fall of the city. The consequences: The Byzantine Empire falls, that of the Ottomans flourishes, the Balkans convert to Islam and advance as far as Vienna. Constantinople is henceforth known as Istanbul.

## **A death and a stroke of luck**

*It's the end of 1241, and Mongolian commander Batu Khan is on the verge of conquering Europe: The Golden Horde has already reached the Adriatic, and between them and the Atlantic there is nothing that can stop them. But then, on 11 December, Ögedei Khan dies back home. Batu Khan must return to Mongolia to pay last respects to the ruler. The Mongolians withdraw, and Europe is saved.*

## **Night becomes day**

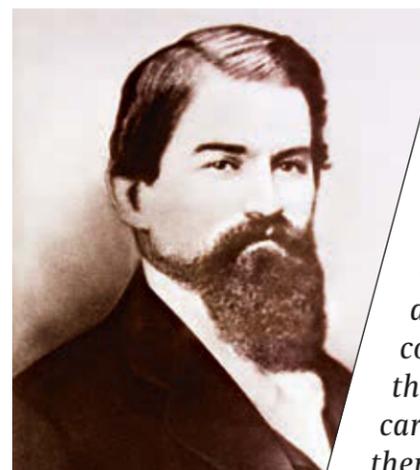
*People who wake up in the middle of the night and are suddenly wide awake don't have a sleep disorder – they're just following a habit thousands of years old. Up until the mid-19th century, it was completely normal to get up during the night for a few hours to do things by candlelight and then go back to sleep. Once electric light became widespread, the end of the day shifted because, unlike candles, it can actually extend the day. And so our biorhythms lose out – to this day.*

## **No place in the sun**

Witch hunts are a result of religious zeal? Not quite. They're primarily the result of – bad weather. During the "Little Ice Age" (15th to 19th centuries), average temperatures declined noticeably all over the world. This was especially severe between 1570 and 1630: Summers were cold and wet, and winters long and harsh. One harvest failed after another. Food was scarce, and epidemics spread. Witch hunts in Europe reached manic proportions precisely during this time – people needed scapegoats for the endless misery. And belief in witches offered such scapegoats. Thousands died just because summer was a long time coming.

## **Not helpful, but delicious**

*A slow-healing saber wound from the American Civil War gets pharmacist John Pemberton addicted to morphine. To fight his dependence, he starts looking for an antidote and fiddles around with all sorts of substances, including cocaine and wine. But in the end, he leaves out the alcohol and carbonates his product because carbon dioxide was thought to be healthy back then. He markets it in 1886. He calls it Coca-Cola.*



## **All in one boat**

*In the 1930s, Andrew Higgins was just a small shipyard owner with a predilection for swearwords. Ten years later, he ensures that Germany and Japan lose World War II. He builds a boat that changes everything: it renders harbors unnecessary. It has a ramp in its bow, so it can drop troops directly on the beach. The landing in Normandy? Not possible without Higgins. Nor island hopping in the Pacific. Hitler calls him the "new Noah;" Eisenhower honors him as the man "who won the war for us." And although the number of casualties from the Western Allies' invasions was high, the Higgins boat saves thousands of lives because it enables fast landing and deployment. To this day, the Higgins boat is the only piece of US military equipment that bears the name of its inventor.*

# The comfort of happy memories

Author: Christian Merten Photography: Markus Burke

*Getting old brings gradual changes along with it. Hardly perceptible from one day to the next – and yet so fundamental that we have to give up more and more of the life we're used to. A visit with an elderly woman.*

**H**er favorite place is by the window with a view of the playground at the kindergarten next door. "It's always fun to watch the munchkins when they're out playing," says Therese Huber,\* smiling. The playground is under the big beech tree across from the Kreszentia-Stift nursing home in Munich. The 91-year-old has lived here for a good 12 years. Not of her own volition, but not against her will either.

She received an unpleasant letter 12 years ago: a termination notice for her apartment because the landlord needed it for his own use. "The tenants association told me I had very little chance of finding an affordable new apartment. Most landlords prefer younger renters," she says without resentment. So she was glad an acquaintance from her church had set up a viewing appointment for her at the Kreszentia-Stift without asking her first. The home is only about four kilometers from her old apartment, and Therese Huber liked the idea of going into a nursing home run by nuns. The senior citizen grew up close to Scheyern Benedictine Abbey in Upper Bavaria. Being close to the church was and still is important to her.

## **Life as she knew it got left behind**

For Huber, moving into her new home meant starting to say goodbye to her independence. She left behind more than just the majority of her furniture and many mementos.

Above all she lost a significant portion of her independence with the move. Just recently she was running her household on her own, went shopping regularly, cooked for herself – and if she cooked a little extra, then for her neighbors, too. She cleaned, did her laundry. Her home was always spotless. No wonder – housework shaped a major portion of her life: As a building caretaker in Munich's ritzy Königinstraße area, she didn't limit herself to cleaning the stairwell and ensuring that the building and garden stayed in good shape. Since the mid-1950s, she worked more as a jack-of-all-trades in the big villa that was occupied by four renters after post-World War II reconstruction.

Looking back on it now, she considers this one of the best times of her life, even though there was always a lot to do – the residents had high standards, as befitted the location. She cooked for the guests, served meals, cleaned and took care of the building's equipment. She even took care of the students – to whom the owner rented a room in the building superintendent's apartment – like a mother. Huber lived mostly happily with her husband and daughter in the semi-basement apartment. The residents' little cares and hardships were in good hands with her – whether it was one renter's worries about her cancer diagnosis or a lady's secret visits to another renter.

Her life was a lot quieter when she retired and moved into a small one-bedroom apartment in Munich-Maxvorstadt. But

**Without a job to do**  
Therese Huber liked to work for her family and for others. But in old age, the work and the need both fade. Just like her whole life.





**1 Routine**  
Therese Huber has her established seat in the dining room.

**2 Empty**  
The wide hallways have room for a walker – and not much more.

**3 Highlight**  
A visit in the big garden is a welcome change.

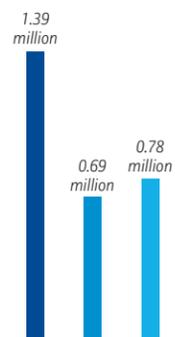


FACTS / FIGURES

At home

A good three-quarters of the 2.9 million people needing care in Germany are taken care of at home.

- Care provided by family members
- Supplemented by in-home care service
- Care in nursing homes



having nothing left to do except run her own household wasn't enough for her in the early 1990s. So she helped out at the butcher shop next door: accepting deliveries in the wee hours of the morning, frying burger patties before lunchtime – called "Fleischpflanzerl" by Bavarian locals. And on weekends she baked a cake for the butcher's family. She didn't get bored. She was still needed. And even though her daughter lived further away, at least she had a substitute family of sorts – and was a substitute granny for the butcher's children.

**The tasks start to dwindle**

But moving into the nursing home changed all that out of necessity. She left her substitute family and work behind. At 79, she didn't feel the need anymore to work for other people. Yet she would have liked to continue doing her own housework. But single rooms with a bathroom at the Kreszentia-Stift aren't



set up that way. A bed and nightstand, a small table, three chairs, a small shelf with a TV, refrigerator, armchair and armoire are all that fit in the 20-square-meter room. There's no space for a kitchenette. And even if there was, it wouldn't be allowed: Even burning a candle is prohibited in the rooms for safety reasons. Now if you want to set the mood, you have to use LED lights shaped like candles.

"It was really good that I moved here," says Huber. She thoroughly appreciates the conveniences of the all-round care at the retirement home. These days it would be difficult for her to stand at the stove for long. And until six months ago, she was one of the few there who still washed her own laundry. Now she's glad someone else is doing it for her. But she's not truly happy about it: Food from the big kitchen is never the same as home-cooked. And the laundry doesn't smell quite the way she likes it to. To say nothing of the ironing – it's never done the way she did it for herself. "But it doesn't matter," she says with good humor. "The main thing is that everything is taken care of. And I'm well cared for."

She lost another piece of independence a few months ago. Therese Huber was never good on her feet, because she contracted polio when she was a year old. So she never really learned to run, but she could certainly walk on her own. She

**"The main thing is that everything is taken care of. I'm well cared for here."**

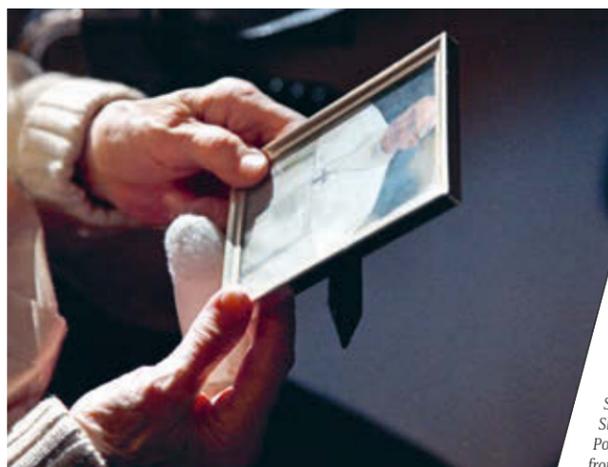
started using a cane to help her feel secure when she got older. At the Kreszentia-Stift, it wasn't long before she needed a walker to get around safely. Now she prefers to be pushed in a wheelchair. Just last spring, all she really needed was moral support when she went shopping for goodies at the nearby supermarket. Now she doesn't dare to go the few hundred meters to the store.

More and more from her old life is disappearing. Her own household isn't the only thing she's lost. Technological progress doesn't make it any easier for her to take part in major developments. For example, it was a big challenge when her old tube TV died three years ago and her daughter gave her a new flat screen TV: What was she supposed to do with all those buttons on the remote control? Why can't she just switch

4.5 million

people will need care in the year 2050. Of those, 60% of the men and 70% of the women will be 85 years old or older.

**Playful sense of humor**  
Therese Huber doesn't want to have her face photographed, so she holds her flowers in front of her face and laughs – because it lets her escape the photographer.



**New idol**  
She's a fan of Pope Francis. She wasn't so happy with Pope Benedict, whom she knows from his time in Munich.

things right on the TV? And doesn't the TV remote look just like her cordless phone? After initial difficulties – sometimes there was no picture, other times her favorite station (Bavarian Broadcasting) was missing – she did learn how to work her new TV.

**Many things are not like they used to be**

The phone has turned into a new challenge. Although she has used a wireless phone for several years, the interface is increasingly unsuitable for an older person. A quick tap on the red button to end a call often turns into a long tap for her, which shuts off the phone completely so she can no longer receive calls from her daughter. At least in this case, old technology works as a practical substitute: Now she also has a corded phone in her room, one without an off switch.

Not much of Therese Huber's earlier independence is left. She has long outlived her siblings and cousins. "I'm the last of my generation now," she says sadly. And memories of those days are becoming less clear. When she talks about her life, dates no longer play a role. The days blur together – the routine is mostly the same. As in the past, she gets up early, at

6 a.m., has breakfast in her room at around 7:30 a.m. The next event is the group lunch at around noon in the dining room. Then dinner is served in her room again around 5 p.m. Reliable entertainment comes from the TV. Visitors are one of the few high points. And so the only thing that's left for her is the view of the playground outside. At least there's colorful hustle and bustle over there sometimes. Budding life. A view that still means a bit of happiness for Therese Huber.

**Family as a key pillar of care**

How much the statutory long-term care insurance pays depends on which care level is needed (1 to 5), and then whether family members or an outpatient care service will be taking care of the person needing assistance, or whether that person needs to be in a nursing home. When family provides the care, it only pays if the person's independence is significantly impacted, and then it pays €316. The highest payment benefit of €2,005 is only paid for especially extensive care requirements in a nursing home. In 2015, a space in this kind of nursing home cost on average €3,165.

He who rests, rusts

Author: Christian Merten

No one wants to lose their mental and physical capabilities. But even if you can't stop the decline, you can slow it down.

**Professor Kurz, the saying goes: He who rests, rusts. How much truth is in that statement?**

It's true for both our physical as well as mental condition.

**So what role does being challenged play?**

Challenged is good, overwhelmed is not. Taking on new tasks keeps us young.

**As we age, our physical and mental abilities decline slowly, but steadily. What can we do to counter that?**

Get moderate but regular exercise starting in middle age. Physically, that means doing 40 minutes of aerobic activity three times a week. That means your pulse and breathing are elevated, and it's difficult to sing while doing it. I don't have quantitative recommendations for cognitive activity, but it's certainly good to focus on intellectually challenging things several times a week. It doesn't matter what: play computer games or a musical instrument, learn a new language, paint, do sudoku puzzles, play bridge. Just don't watch TV. By the way: Athletic activity has a positive effect on the brain similar to many medications. So there's no reason not to engage in regular athletic activity as a supplement. Social activity is also important. Talking and sharing with others, doing something together, interacting with people can also counter aging. But we shouldn't indulge the illusion that we can prevent dementia this way. However, the studies all indicate that physical, mental and social activity can at least delay the onset.

**When can we – when should we – take action?**

When it comes to prevention, it's never too early and never too late.

**What role does retirement play?**

I think the concept of retirement comes from a time when most people had to work hard physically and were worn out at age 65. They often died shortly thereafter. So it's a sociopolitical concept, not a medical one. These days the working world looks different for most people. There is no natural age limit that renders people unable to work anymore. However, our abilities do change. As we age, our speed slows down, but our experience and general overview improve. For that reason, some companies are starting to keep older employees on the job after age 65. Being occupied and challenged can delay the onset of physical and mental decline, and slow it down.

**Is there a correlation between education and dementia?**

We studied the correlation between working and frequency of dementia in a Catholic women's order. It revealed that the nuns who performed household activities had a significantly higher risk of dementia compared to the teachers. However, we shouldn't conclude that peeling potatoes and cooking cause dementia. But it certainly doesn't hurt to do more.



**Prof. Dr. Alexander Kurz**

is a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, a researcher and instructor at the Klinikum rechts der Isar Hospital at the Technical University of Munich. The 67-year-old has focused on the area of dementia for over 30 years. He is one of the founders of the memory clinic at TU Munich, which he has headed up for many years.

# People grieve for a long time on Facebook

Text: **Andreas Marx**

*How we deal with death is changing: It's becoming more individual, but also more public and digital. A conversation about being buried with pets, diamond burials and the desire for dignity.*

## *Professor Fischer, are cemeteries obsolete?*

Well, not quite, but there's competition now. Cremation and urn burials as well as natural interment in a burial forest are two rising trends. In other countries, water burials in lakes, rivers and the ocean are becoming more popular, as are mountain burials.

## *Where do these trends come from?*

In the past, the clergy had more influence on burials. Today, with so many people no longer affiliated with a church, this is no longer the case. In metropolitan areas such as Hamburg, more than half of burials are not religious. In rural, predominantly Catholic areas, the clerical liturgies are still dominant. The traditional elements of a funeral, such as speeches, music or certain songs are still maintained, although the content is more individualized these days. Now it's more popular to play the deceased's favorite songs and more people give funeral speeches.

## *What's behind this development?*

Today's society is marked by individualization. Familial structures and social institutions, such as the church or trade associations, are losing significance, whereas mobility and voluntary organizations for sports, leisure and culture are becoming more important. This creates more flexible social structures. So, cemeteries with their strong ties to church and family have lost their singular importance as the site for grief and remembrance.

## *How is this changing cemeteries?*

There's financial pressure since they're receiving fewer fees. Since tens of thousands of people are being cremated, cemetery managers are having to deal with excess space. They still need to maintain their grounds, which is typically taken care of through fees. They're reacting to this trend by offering alternative burial forms, such as burial forests within cemeteries.



**Prof. Dr. Norbert Fischer**

The burial researcher was born in Hemmendorf, Lower Saxony, in 1957. After a near-death experience, he turned his attention as a young person to the topics of dying, death and burial. He is currently a visiting lecturer and associate professor at the University of Hamburg.

*Other European countries offer many more possibilities for natural burials, as well as for aerial burials or cremation memorial diamonds.*

## *Why is this different in Germany?*

In Germany, burials are still subject to state law and are highly bureaucratic. In this country, community and church cemetery organizations are still so powerful and well-positioned that in 2003, they were able to block the proposed repeal of the requirement to bury the dead in a cemetery in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. However, in Bremen, as of January 2015, you can now have your ashes buried in your front yard or scattered in designated areas. So far, less than 100 people have taken advantage of this option.

**Final resting place:**  
While cemeteries are reporting increased vacancies, other forms of burial are booming – such as burial forests.

**Diamonds are forever:**  
These days, surviving family members can have diamonds made from the ashes of their loved ones.



#### Estate advice

In addition to getting advice on the phone about living wills and care directives, healthcare proxies and advance directives, the Allianz Best legal insurance policy also offers legal assistance for issues with wills in the private sphere through a specialized service provider. Since 2015, the service also includes advice by phone for settling the digital estate for private citizens: They can determine what should happen to their entries and data in social networks and similar platforms after their death.

#### Are there any other developments?

In certain cemeteries, people can now be buried with their pet, but this is still strictly regulated. The animal must be cremated prior to the owner's death and can be added to the grave when the owner dies. This is in response to the pet cemeteries that have been springing up like mushrooms lately. Local governments are hoping this will help them win back clientele.

#### What else is new about how we deal with death?

Digital grieving is new. We've noticed that people grieve for quite a long time in their Facebook profiles and in many different ways. Social media somehow causes us to show more emotion and display our grief more publicly. Beyond that, we see how grief is entering the public realm more. Besides crosses on roadsides as early examples, we're seeing expressions of grief for private individuals in public spaces more often. For example, for crime victims, we see more makeshift memorials with candles and condolence cards than we used to.

#### The French historian Philippe Ariès noted in the 1970s that death seems to have disappeared from daily life in industrial countries over the last half century. Why aren't people dying at home anymore?

This is a lengthy historic development that goes hand-in-hand with the institutionalization of illness, dying, and death. Since the advent of hospitals in the 18th century, they increasingly became the place where people died, and, more recently, retirement homes have joined this trend. In Germany, 70 to 80 percent of deaths occur in such institutions. This is due to growing professionalization of nursing care and medical progress on one hand, and with the loosening of family ties across generations on the other.

#### Has this "outsourcing" of death made it a taboo subject?

Certainly, its routine nature has been lost to us through this trend. In Germany, World War II led to countless experiences with death, and the Holocaust caused people to repress the topic after the war. But these days you can't really call it taboo – quite the opposite. We talk about dying, death and grieving in a very enlightened way.

#### What does responsible preparation for your own death involve in this day and age?

You should have a living will and care directive. Moreover, you should specify who will cover the cost of the funeral, of course. Many funeral homes offer suitable options, such as a savings account. I think it's important to tell family members how you would like to be buried, too.

#### A funeral is expensive, and death benefits have been phased out. How can less affluent households even afford a dignified funeral?

First, you need to define what a dignified funeral is and what it should cost, although dignity and cost are not linked in my mind. However, it is a big problem when isolated people in large cities have to make use of funerals financed by local authorities. The number of these cases is rising, and that certainly is not a dignified burial. We need to take care of these people as cities and communities, and as a society as well. Like charitable organizations that feed the poor, some cities have private volunteer initiatives to provide a dignified burial and a headstone marked with the name of the deceased for people without the financial means to afford one.

# Sources and comments

When referring to persons in general, we have used the masculine form in this document for reasons of readability. However, all persons are always spoken to in the spirit of gender equality.

#### p. 12–15: In all beginnings dwells a magic force

Reprint of Hermann Hesse: "Stages" with kind permission of Suhrkamp Verlag. All rights reserved. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston

#### p. 16–17: A twist of fate

The given probabilities and numbers are based on approximations. A German population of 82 million people was assumed as well as an average maximum age of 80 years. Further calculation basis is the maximum number of acquaintances determined by the psychologist Robin Dunbar. This so-called Dunbar number is 150 people with whom an individual can have social relationships ([www.theguardian.com/technology/2010/mar/14/my-bright-idea-robin-dunbar](http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2010/mar/14/my-bright-idea-robin-dunbar)). Further data:

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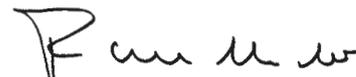
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# We place customers at the center of everything we do

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# IN/SIGHT

ALLIANZ DEUTSCHLAND

# Result for the customer 2017

This is how you rated us

# Contents / 2017

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# Our goal: to delight our customers!

Overall satisfaction with Allianz improved slightly in 2017 and is above the market average. But we are still a long way from reaching our goal.

In the relationship between insurance provider and customer, the demand is high, in that, the things that are most important to you are insured – your health, your job, your children, your house, your dream car.

The expectations of our customers naturally depend on the situation they are in. For example, when finalizing a contract and getting intensively immersed into the topic, competent advice is particularly relevant. When something happens later and we are needed as an ally, the needs are completely different: then fast help or unbureaucratic handling are of key importance. What our customers need is as varied as the people and their life situations themselves. The diverse needs are shown in infographic 1.1.

## 1.1 / The needs of Allianz customers

(Font size according to frequency of naming)



### What we want

We want to address all these needs. And our customers are not only satisfied, but also enthusiastic. What does that mean? We want to exceed our customers' expectations to such an extent that they give us the highest mark in terms of satisfaction and actively recommend us to friends and acquaintances.

### Where we stand

We measure exactly where we are positioned in the market, both in terms of satisfaction and recommendation. When it comes to satisfaction, we use a public study to create the greatest possible transparency. In 2017, we performed slightly better than the market, as shown in chart 1.3. This is gratifying because customer satisfaction is the currency in which we measure our performance.

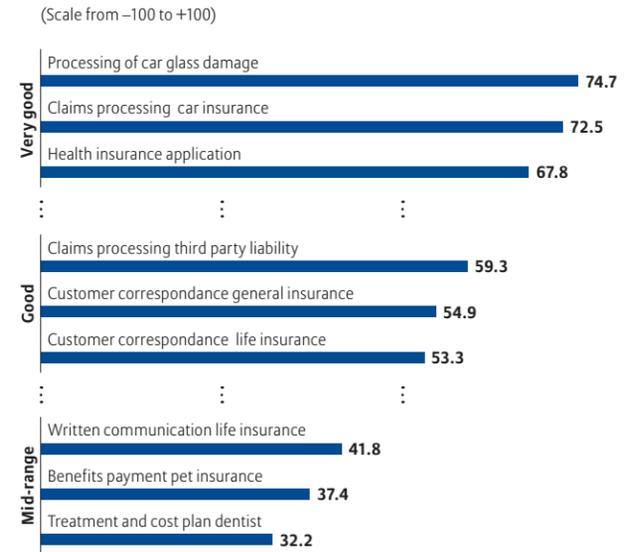
The willingness to recommend others is also very important. On the one hand, it is a very good indicator of high satisfaction, after all, we only recommend things that we are really convinced about. On the other hand, a high willingness to recommend our business to others strengthens our business. We therefore measure them against more than 60 different customer experiences – from consulting to claims settlement. Individual examples are shown in graph 1.2.

Our customers are exceptionally satisfied with most of our contact points. On a referral scale from 0 to 10, they often give us a 9 or 10; in technical jargon, such customers are called promoters; detractors are customers who rate between 0 and 6. The corresponding index, the "Net Promoter Score" (NPS), is derived as follows: Proportion of promoters – Percentage of detractors = Net Promoter Score.

On a scale from –100 to +100, our NPS reaches an average value of +56 over our 60 contact points, but these values were collated following a concrete contact with Allianz. If one asks customers, on the other hand, one special feature of the insurance business is that they often have little contact with

## 1.2 / Willingness to recommend us to others with regard to selected points of contact

Every year, we measure the willingness to recommend us through more than 200,000 customer interviews in over 60 different scenarios for customer contact, from the processing of car glass damage to deciding on benefits in dental insurance. The graphic shows which values are achieved at selected contact points



customers, and so there is no concrete experience with Allianz in the recent past. However, the longer ago the positive experience, the less often people give a recommendation. The Net Promoter Score then drops quickly to the negative. It is therefore important for us to improve relevant positive contacts.

### What we do

This is why Allianz initiated numerous programs and measures in 2017, such as optimizing our handling processes, revising our written communication and providing online

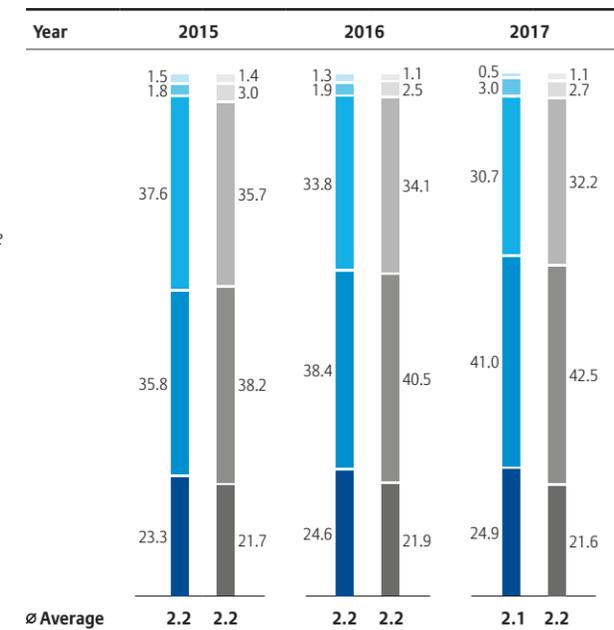
services to our customers. Last but not least, since 2016 we have also had a Chief Customer Officer (CCO) who takes care of our customers and their satisfaction on a full-time basis. He is responsible for quality control from the customer's point of view and thus plays a central role in product and service development: The CCO thoroughly tests products before they reach the market and also examines our processes from the point of view of our main person, our customer. We are only at the beginning of our journey of improvement and still have a lot we want to achieve.

## 1.3 / Customers' overall satisfaction with Allianz

The data shown was published by MSR Insights, which carries out a nationwide representative survey of customers of insurance companies, building societies and health insurance providers every year. The "KUBUS" study shows that we were able to improve slightly compared with the market for the first time in 2017. In 2017, our customers gave us an overall score of 2.1, while the market came in at 2.2.

Allianz — Market (score ranges from 1 to 5, in %)

- completely satisfied
- very satisfied
- satisfied
- less satisfied
- dissatisfied

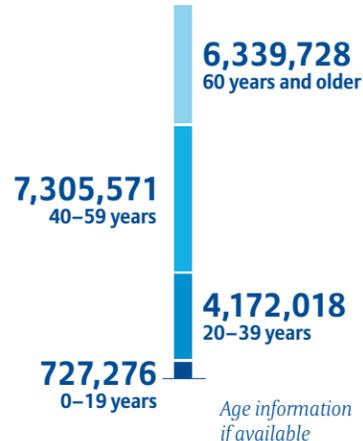
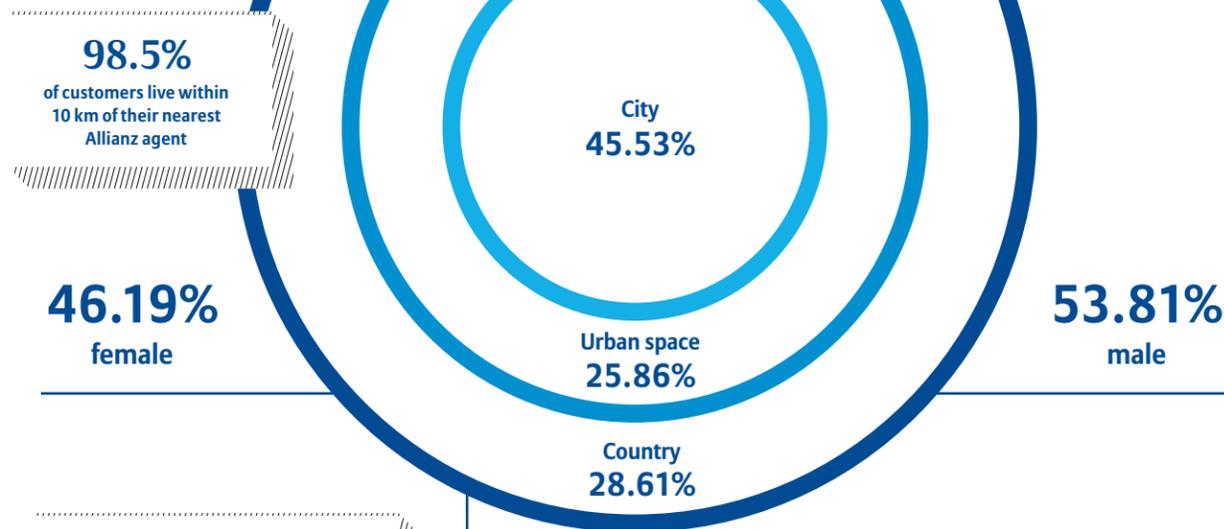


# Allianz in figures

Overview of our customers, agents and employees as well as the solutions we offer.

## 20.4 million

customers



A private customer has on average **2.05 policies**



Most common month of birth  
**March**

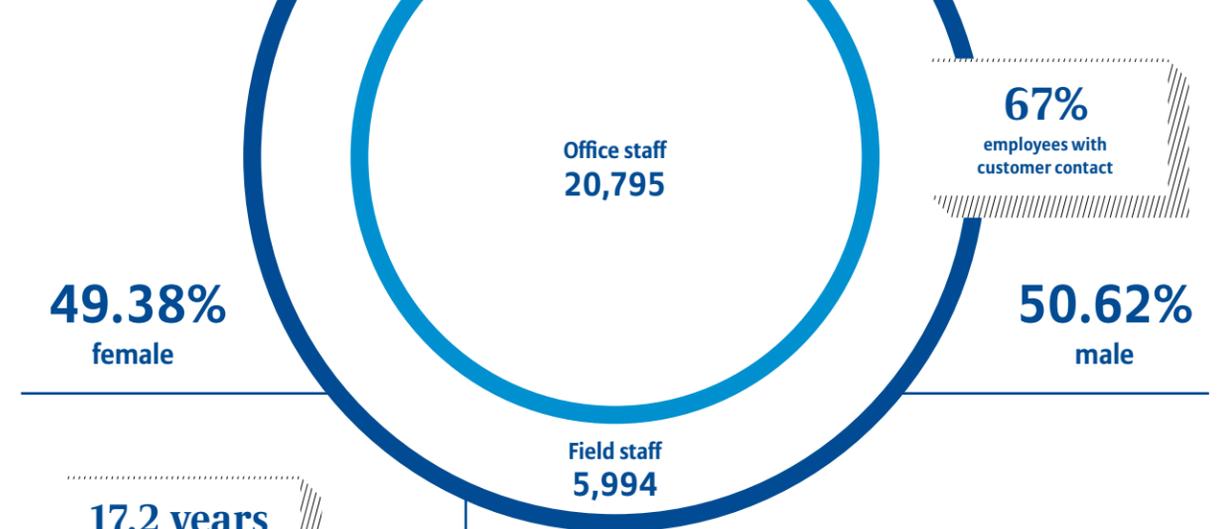
Most common first names  
**Sabine and Michael**

Most common last name for both sexes  
**Müller**

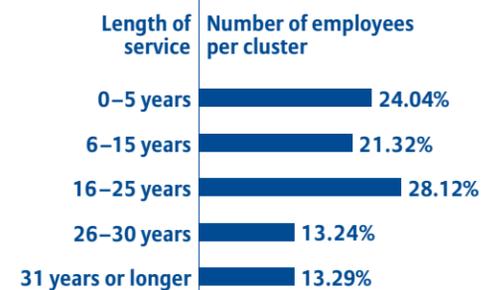
Corporate customers  
**1.9 million**

## 26,789

employees



17.2 years average length of service



8,337 general and main agents

~11,000 brokers and independent sales partners

2,246 branches of banking partners

Most common month of birth  
**March**

Most common first names  
**Sabine and Thomas**

Most common last name for both sexes  
**Müller**

Trainees  
**1,008**

# Solutions

So that we can meet our customers' needs as well as possible, we offer a variety of insurances from all areas.

## health insurance

- / Travel
- / Private comprehensive health insurance
- / Supplementary health insurance
- / Nursing care insurance

**€2.5 billion**  
Benefit costs in total

## life insurance

- / Private pension provision
- / Survivorship provision
- / Income / nursing care provision
- / Child insurance
- / Wealth
- / Company pension scheme

**€12.9 billion**  
Benefit costs in total

## Non-life and accident insurance

- / Personal liability insurance
- / Pet owner liability insurance
- / Domestic liability
- / Household contents insurance
- / Joint household contents and domestic liability
- / Legal insurance
- / Home insurance / contents insurance (not homeowners insurance)
- / Vehicle insurance
- / Animal health insurance
- / Accident insurance
- / Art insurance – ArtPrivat

**€5.1 billion**  
Claim costs in total

# Benefits

Selected facts about benefits and claims for our customers

 **350,875**  
reimbursed dental cleaning sessions

 **€118 million**  
premium reimbursements

 **27**  
invoices in Chinese characters

 **137,206**  
reimbursed visual aids

 **1.3 million**  
reimbursed massages

Health is our most important asset. This applies around the globe. Allianz's health insurance services are correspondingly diverse.

 **€8.7 billion**  
maturity benefits

 **€2.1 billion**  
pension benefits

 **€2.1 billion**  
deaths and repurchases

For decades, customers have been providing life insurance policies to ensure that they and their relatives are well provided for during and after their working life and that misfortunes are cushioned financially.

 **€220.7 million**  
for storm-damaged property

 **€18.9 million**  
for storm damage to vehicles

 **€8.5 million**  
for damage to mobile phones

 **€67.8 million**  
for hail damage

 **€13.9 million**  
for bicycle thefts

 **€1.8 million**  
for damage to glasses

The smartphone has become an expensive companion. And nature shows its power in many a storm. Many damage risks lurk in everyday life.

# Background and details

Every year in “Result for the customer,” we publish how satisfied our customers were with us in the customer-relevant areas of products, advice, service, communication and claims.

**PRODUCTS**  
Overall rating in 2017 **2.1**

2015 — 2.1  
2016 — 2.2

The quality of our products is the basis for the satisfaction and trust of our customers. This is why we see to consistent customer orientation at all stages of product development. In this way, we ensure that we meet changing needs with our new and enhanced offers. In addition, the role of Chief Customer Officer has been established – he keeps an eye on customer needs and, together with Allianz customers, checks the products before they are launched on the market. In 2017, the numerous positive product ratings for life, health and non-life insurance confirmed that we are on the right track.

Allianz’s financial strength is of great importance to our product range. This strength enables optimal solutions and gives our customers security. The current company ratings show that this pays off.

**Allianz’s range of products enables me to have insurance that is tailored to my very personal life situation.”**

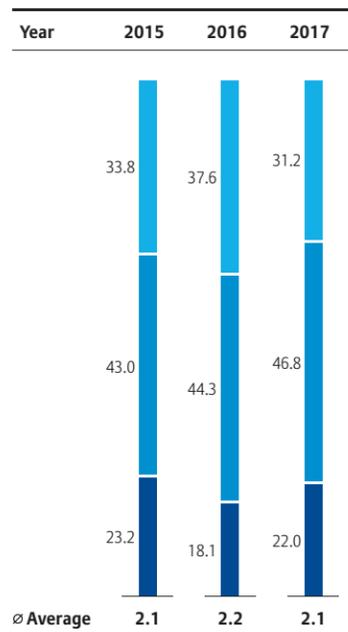
Fabian Böckeler,  
23, Allianz customer since birth

### 3.1.1 Customer satisfaction

The question “How satisfied are you overall with the insurance product you have at Allianz?” was answered by more than 46% of the customers with “very satisfied” and by 22% with “completely satisfied.” This can also be seen from the score of 2.1, which we could keep relatively constant over the last three years.

- completely satisfied
- very satisfied
- satisfied
- less satisfied
- dissatisfied

(score ranges from 1 to 5, in %)



### 3.1.2 Selected corporate and product ratings (as of 31 December 2017\*)



#### Life

##### PRODUCT RATINGS

- PrivatRente Perspektive**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg
- PrivatRente KomfortDynamik**  
Excellent, IVFP – Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung
- RiesterRente InvestFlex**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg  
Outstanding, Focus-Money
- RiesterRente IndexSelect**  
Outstanding, Focus-Money  
Excellent, IVFP – Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung
- BasisRente Perspektive**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg
- BasisRente InvestFlex**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg
- Additional disability insurance**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg  
5 stars, Morgen & Morgen
- Term life insurance**  
1st place (DLVAG) and 2nd place (Allianz), Focus-Money  
5 stars (DLVAG und Allianz), Morgen & Morgen
- PflegePoliceFlexi**  
5 stars, Morgen & Morgen  
Excellent, IVFP – Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung
- KörperSchutzPolice**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg

##### COMPANY RATINGS

- Excellent**  
IVFP – Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung, Life insurance rating, company quality
- 5 stars**  
Morgen & Morgen, Life insurance company rating
- Excellent**  
Morgen & Morgen, stress test
- Europe’s financially strongest life insurer**  
Focus-Money, Finanzstärke

#### Health

##### PRODUCT RATINGS

- AktiMed Tarife**  
Very good, Assekurata
- Ärzte Plus 100/Ärzte Best 100**  
Very good, Assekurata
- AktiMed Plus 90 P/AktiMed Wechsel Option**  
Best health services, Focus-Money  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg
- AktiMed Best 90**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg
- Pflegetageldest + Pflegetageldest Erhöhung ambulant + Pflege Einmalzahlung**  
Very good, Assekurata
- PflegeBahr + Pflegetageldest Best combined care policy**  
Focus-Money
- Reise-Krankenversicherung Einzel R32**  
Very good, Finanztest
- Reise-Krankenversicherung Familie R33**  
Very good, Finanztest
- Betriebliche Krankenversicherung**  
Outstanding, Focus-Money
- DentalBest**  
Very good, Deutsches Finanz-Service Institut
- ZahnBest (mit Zahnfit)**  
Very good, Deutsches Finanz-Service Institut

##### COMPANY RATINGS

- Best private health insurance – Award for the year 2017**  
Focus-Money
- Very good**  
Assekurata, Unternehmensqualität
- Highest recommendation**  
Focus-Money
- Best service**  
Focus-Money
- 5 stars**  
Morgen & Morgen, Finanzielle Stabilität

#### Property

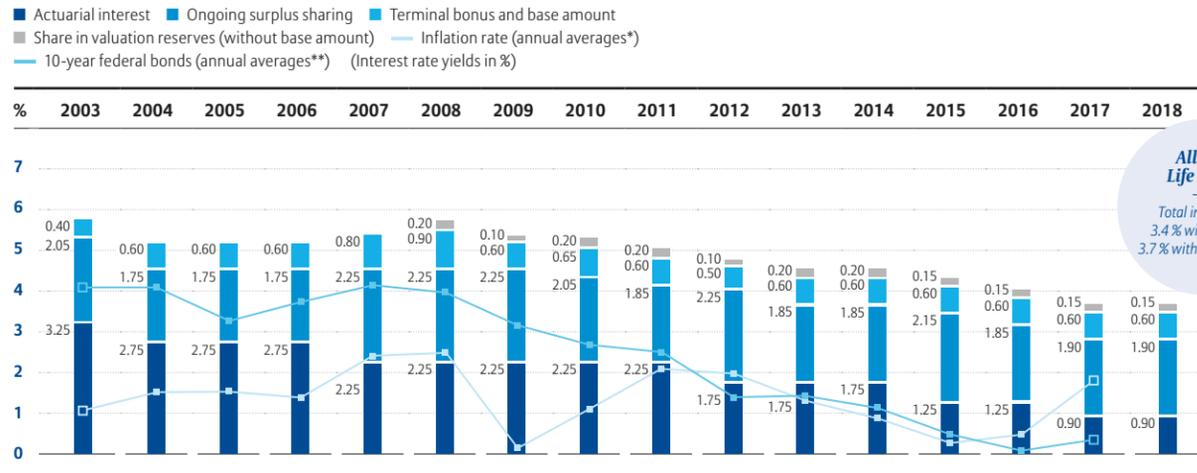
##### PRODUCT RATINGS

- Allianz Autoversicherung Smart**  
Very good, TÜV-Saarland
- Allianz Autoversicherung Komfort**  
Very good, TÜV-Saarland
- Allianz Autoversicherung Premium**  
Very good, TÜV-Saarland
- Allianz Autoversicherung Fairest car injurer**  
Focus-Money
- Telematiktarife Fairest standard rates for electronic data transmission**  
Focus-Money
- Allianz Wohngebäudeversicherung Fairest home insurer**  
Focus-Money
- Wohngebäude SicherheitPlus Recommendable**  
Finanztest
- Hausrat SicherheitPlus**  
Very good, TÜV Saarland
- UnfallSchutz Plus**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg
- UnfallSchutz**  
FFF, Franke und Bornberg
- UnfallSchutz Basis**  
FF+, Franke und Bornberg
- Rechtsschutz Fairest legal expenses insurer**  
Focus-Money

\* The selection of company and product ratings was finalized as of 31 December 2017. Additional explanations and notes regarding the validity of individual ratings are presented in the Sources and Comments section.

### 3.1.3 Allianz Lebensversicherungs-AG: Guarantees and opportunities for profit as competitive factors

In a long-term low-interest environment/capital market environment, the overall rate of return\*\*\* has remained stable and at a high level – significantly above the capital market interest and inflation rates. For Perspektive products, clients have guaranteed 100 percent security for their contributions, combined with an attractive interest rate on their pension capital – in 2018 it will remain unchanged at 3.7 percent.

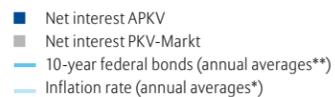


\* Source: Statistisches Bundesamt \*\* Source: Bundesbank, WX3950 \*\*\* Graph refers to the Klassik pension plan concept

### 3.1.4 Allianz Private Krankenversicherungs-AG (APKV): Financial strength as a competitive factor

High net interest rates and a high valuation reserve ratio are indicators of a company's successful capital investment strategy. APKV's net interest rate lies significantly above the returns of 10-year federal bonds and the inflation rate. APKV's valuation reserve ratio has been clearly above the market average for years. An above-average "provision for premium refunds" (German acronym: RfB) allows APKV to pay out high premium refunds and to stabilize premiums as customers get older. High RfB distributions will also make funds available for premium-reducing measures and premium refunds.

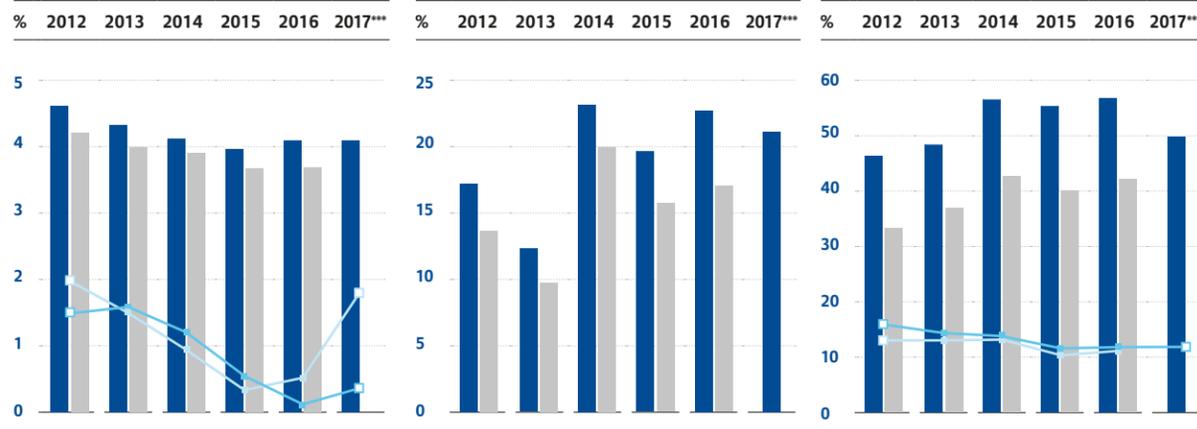
#### a Net interest



#### b Valuation reserves



#### c Provisions for premium refunds (RfB)

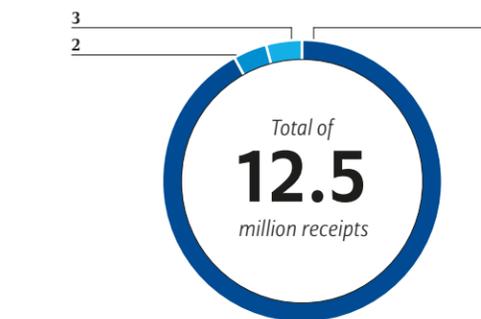


\* Source: Statistisches Bundesamt \*\* Source: Bundesbank, WX3950 \*\*\* The 2017 Allianz private health insurance figures are preliminary figures. The private health insurance market figures for 2017 will not be published by the German Insurance Association until mid-2018.

### 3.1.5 Reimbursement rate for health insurance claims

As before, we reimburse, without deductions, 92 percent of submitted receipts. In about four percent of cases, there is a deduction or the submitted claims are not insured due to respective contractual agreements.

(percentage of submitted receipts, in %)

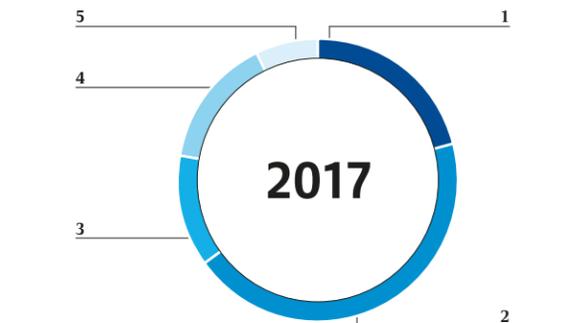


|                         | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|
| 1 With no deduction     | 92   | 92   | 92   |
| 2 With deduction        | 4    | 4    | 4    |
| 3 With uninsured claims | 4    | 4    | 4    |

### 3.1.6 Speed of reimbursement for health insurance claims

At the end of 2017, delays in the processing of contracts and benefits by Allianz Krankenversicherung unfortunately led to longer waiting times for reimbursement. The reason for this was the conversion of the IT system, in which a total of more than 2 million contracts, over 300 million bookings and around 30 million cases of reimbursement have been transferred to a new system since summer 2017.

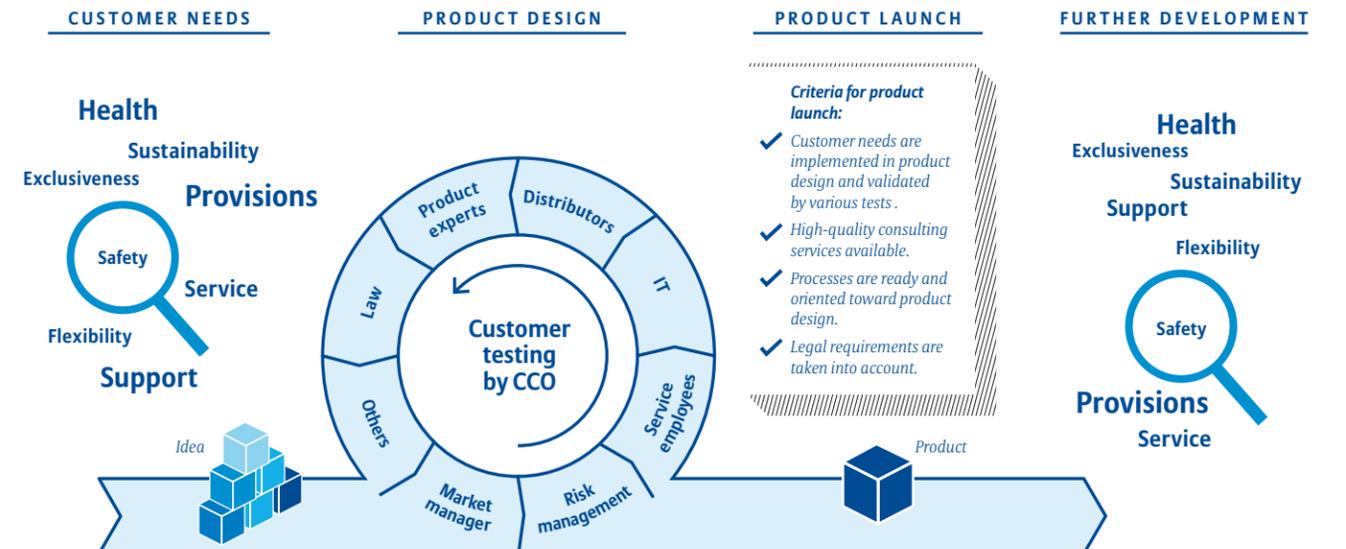
(business days in %)



|                       | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|
| 1 1 business day      | 12   | 23   | 21   |
| 2 2–5 business days   | 56   | 49   | 44   |
| 3 6–10 business days  | 22   | 19   | 13   |
| 4 11–20 business days | 8    | 7    | 15   |
| 5 20+ business days   | 2    | 2    | 7    |

### 3.1.7 Customer-oriented product development

Allianz's product development follows a clearly defined process in which all company functions involved are systematically included at an early stage. It is our aim to develop future-oriented and innovative products with the greatest possible customer focus. For this reason, customer requirements are obtained from potential customers in various phases by means of customer tests and taken into account in product design. Our launched products are continuously checked and further developed. The regulatory requirements of the Insurance Distribution Directive (IDD) of the EU are taken into account in the entire process as soon as they come into force.



# ADVICE

Overall rating in 2017

## 2.1

2015 — 2.2  
2016 — 2.2

Often, the first experience our customers have with Allianz is when one of our brokers gives them advice. It is therefore crucial for us to meet the requirements of our customers during this first interaction. We ensure the quality of our consulting and sales services by means of professional development and coaching, among other things, and we train our employees and brokers at a high level from the very beginning. The high quality of advice that Allianz provides is reflected in an online rating system in which Allianz agencies achieve an average of 4.9 out of 5 stars.

In addition, the demand-oriented, holistic consulting process Pro3 takes these requirements into account. The “3” in the name stands for the partnership-based cooperation of customers and Allianz, with the broker as a connecting link. As a result, we comply not only with the guidelines of the Code of Practice of the Gesamtverband der Deutschen Versicherungswirtschaft (GDV, German Insurance Association), but also with all regulatory requirements. One of these requirements is the Insurance Distribution Directive (IDD) of the EU, which was introduced on 23 February 2018. The aim of IDD is to strengthen consumer protection, ensure high-quality advice, guarantee fair competition, avoid conflicts of interest between insurance brokers and customers, and increase transparency for the customer. Allianz’s comprehensive advisory service already covers all IDD regulations.

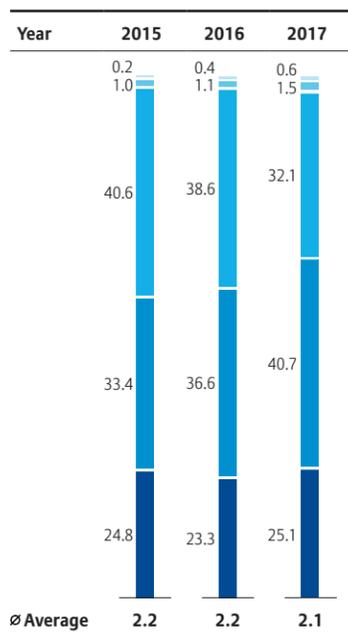
**For me, the relationship of trust with my agency is very important. There I feel well looked after and understood.”**

Marie-Lena Urban,  
32, Allianz customer since 2010

### 3.2.1 Customer satisfaction

Positive customer feedback regarding our advisory services also went up in 2017. With an overall score of 2.1, we were able to further improve upon previous years. More than 65 percent of customers are “completely satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the advisory services provided by their Allianz advisor.

■ completely satisfied  
■ very satisfied  
■ satisfied  
■ less satisfied  
■ dissatisfied  
(score ranges from 1 to 5, in %)



### 3.2.2 Code of Practice for Quality in Sales

The German Insurance Association (GDV) reformed the Code of Practice for the sale of insurance products to private customers in 2013. The Code now places a greater focus on the highest quality in advice, sales and service. The overview shows how Allianz implemented the requirements in the GDV Code. The suitability and effectiveness of measures taken were confirmed in 2016 by auditing firm PwC.

#### 01 Clear and comprehensible insurance products

The comprehensibility of Allianz products and all documents is continually checked by quality assurance. Allianz agents are trained to provide comprehensive information materials and to explain the products in such a manner that customers can understand them. This creates transparency and trust.

#### 02 The focus is on customers' needs

An Allianz agent will identify, analyze and assess a customer's needs. To do that, agents have access to the latest analysis, consulting and rate calculation tools of the Pro3 system. Providing sound advice is also part of our sales management.

#### 03 Adhering to compliance guidelines

In 2011, Allianz published an in-house code of practice for its agents as well as brokers. Allianz also monitors compliance with these provisions pertaining to anti-corruption and anti-bribery measures, as well as data privacy violations and anti-competitive behavior.

#### 04 Consulting documents upon signing a contract

Every time Allianz agents sign an agreement, they document the content of the consultation meeting. The detailed report contains all key components of the consulting service, making it transparent and verifiable. The binding content gives the customer the right level of assurance.

#### 05 Advising the customer after the contract is signed

Allianz agents shall continue to advise their customers after an insurance contract has been signed, such as in the case of claims or benefits. This lets the agents know if a policy needs to be changed based on the customer's contract or new circumstances.

#### 06 Taking into account the customer's interests in regard to solicitation and coverage adjustments

If an existing insurance policy is terminated prematurely and replaced by a new contract, this can have an adverse effect on life and health insurance. In such cases, Allianz agents make customers aware of the issue and document it in their records.

#### 07 Specific credentials of agents, brokers and advisors

Allianz agents and brokers who work with Allianz are required to notify customers when first meeting them about their status as intermediaries. Agents carry an official Allianz business card for identification purposes.

#### 08 The value of a highly qualified broker

Agents and brokers prove they have passed their initial training by means of an examination given by the IHK (Chamber of Commerce and Industry). The new “Gut beraten” continuing education initiative ensures, through a point system, that these individuals also receive additional professional training on a regular basis.

#### 09 Additional compensation received from insurance brokers

Sales-related agreements between Allianz and independent brokers are negotiated in such a way that customers are not disadvantaged. Undue influence is thus avoided.

#### 10 Note regarding the Ombudsman system

Allianz ensures that it responds fully, correctly and in a timely manner to every complaint as part of the complaint management process. Agents may refer to the impartial Versicherungsombudsmann (insurance Ombudsman) who can make decisions about complaints involving up to €10,000 without taking the matter to court.

#### 11 Binding nature of the Code of Practice and evaluations

Allianz is committed to complying with the Code of Practice and also imposes it on its sales partners. Every two years, an independent audit company reviews whether the rules are indeed being followed. In doing so, it differentiates between an adequacy check and an effectiveness check. In 2016, both checks were conducted by the auditing company PwC. Its findings confirmed that our provisions and regulations are suitable, appropriate and effective.



**i** To see PwC's complete audit report, please go to: [www.gdv.de/resource/blob/5568/9369bcf74d3b507edd22515d9351102e/allianz-beratungs--und-vertriebs--ag-pr-fungsbericht--1212446064-data.pdf](http://www.gdv.de/resource/blob/5568/9369bcf74d3b507edd22515d9351102e/allianz-beratungs--und-vertriebs--ag-pr-fungsbericht--1212446064-data.pdf)

# SERVICE

Simple and easy-to-understand documents, more communication by telephone, and the continuous optimization of our internal processes – this was the focus of our work last year, and it has enabled us to improve more than 140 customer issues, from the filing of applications to the payment of benefits.

It is particularly important for customers in contact with us that an employee takes care of customers' concerns from start to finish. It is exactly this desire for continuous support that we have followed.

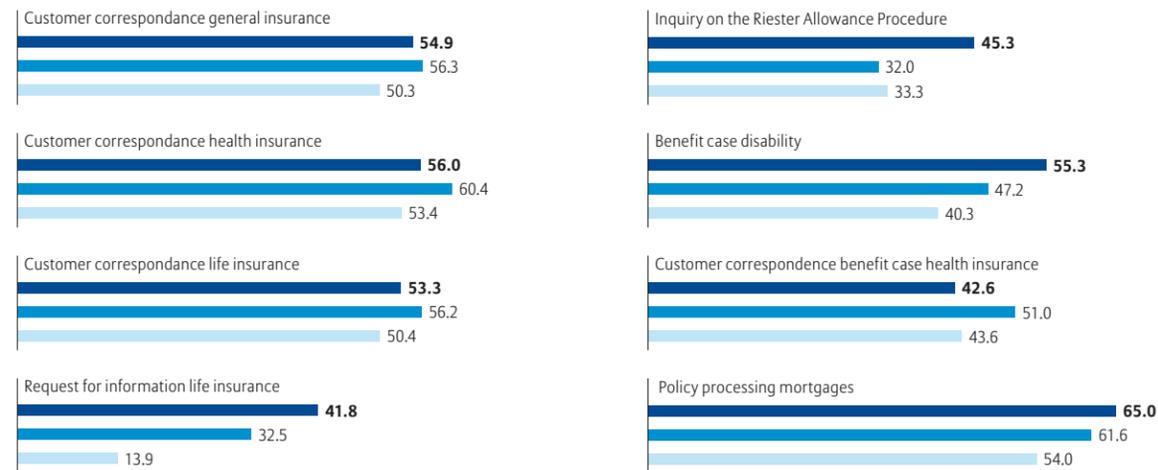
**"I think it's great that Allianz's client advisors take their time to answer my questions in an easy-to-understand and competent manner."**

Gökhan Koc,  
23, Allianz customer since 2017

### 3.3.1 / Willingness to recommend us to others in the service area

Each year, Allianz conducts more than 200,000 customer interviews to measure satisfaction and customers' willingness to recommend its products and services. The chart shows the results for eight service events compared to the last 3 years.

■ 2017 ■ 2016 ■ 2015 (Scale from -100 to +100)



### 3.3.2 / Continuous improvement

We systematically check completed customer requests for processing quality. In 2017, we developed and implemented improvements in more than 400,000 cases in all divisions and operating units.

**400,963**  
tested cases with the aim of continuous quality improvement.

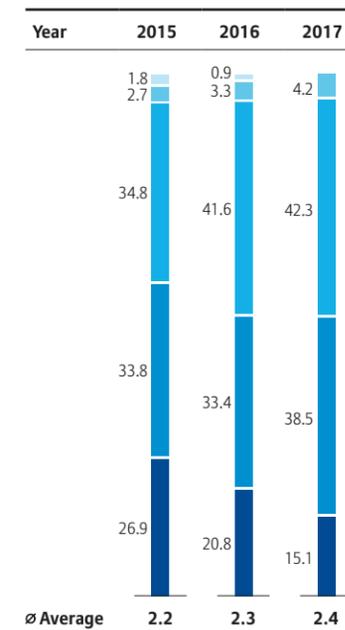
# BY POST

Overall rating in 2017 **2.4** 2015 — 2.2  
2016 — 2.3

### 3.3.3 / Customer satisfaction

More than 38% of our customers are very satisfied with our correspondence and 15% are completely satisfied. However, our rating has worsened here in recent years. This is mainly due to increased complexity caused by legal requirements, the growing number of products, the complexity of the systems and the resulting larger number of different letterheads. Through new initiatives, we want to improve this area in the future.

■ completely satisfied  
■ very satisfied  
■ satisfied  
■ less satisfied  
■ dissatisfied  
(score ranges from 1 to 5, in %)



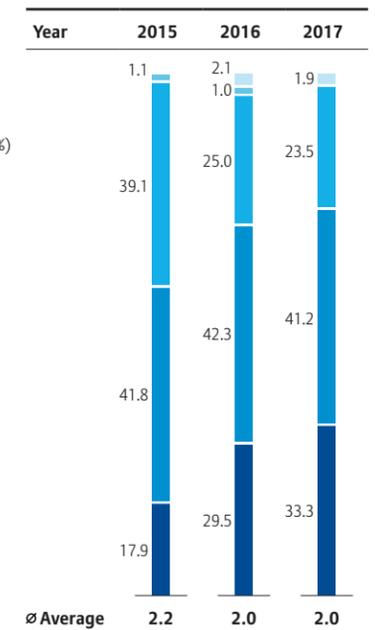
# BY TELEPHONE

Overall rating in 2017 **2.0** 2015 — 2.2  
2016 — 2.0

### 3.3.4 / Customer satisfaction

In 2017, our customers were very satisfied with our telephone contact. The overall rating of 2.0 corresponds with the previous year's and shows an improvement compared to 2015. Three out of four customers rated the service with "completely satisfied" or "very satisfied."

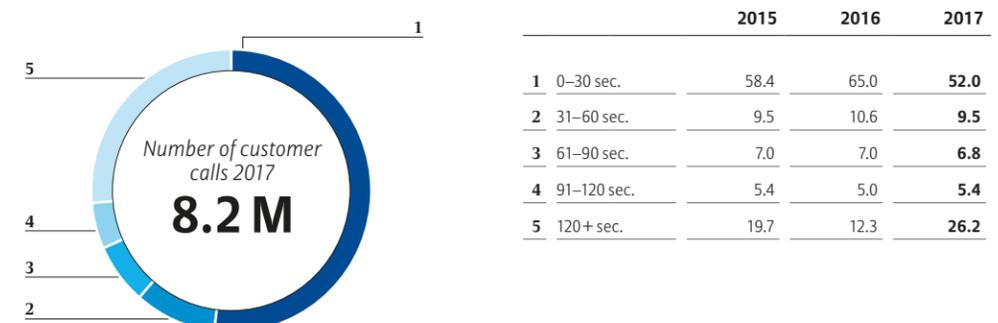
■ completely satisfied  
■ very satisfied  
■ satisfied  
■ less satisfied  
■ dissatisfied  
(score ranges from 1 to 5, in %)



### 3.3.5 / Time on hold on the phone

We want to be fast on the phone, even if the number of calls is constantly increasing. We have repositioned ourselves internally for this purpose. However, the changes have not yet led to a positive development in all areas, and some callers had to accept longer waiting times.

(percentage of customer calls based on hold period, in %)



# COMMUNICATION

Overall rating in 2017 **2.6**

2015 — 2.6  
2016 — 2.5

**O**ur goal is to communicate in a transparent and empathetic way. In order to achieve this, we continually examine and improve our means of communication. We take into account the latest scientific and market research findings, adapted to the customer's needs and the communication channel used. Direct, plain and transparent language is important.

This also applies, of course, to digital media forms, which are increasingly being used and changing reading habits. We make digital interaction with our customers as transparent and intuitive as possible. An example of this is the online portal "Meine Allianz" – where our customers can easily and conveniently manage their contracts and find all relevant documents.

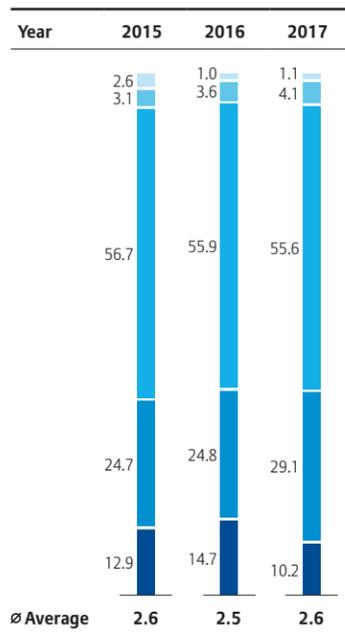
However, the best way to communicate is still the personal conversation. Many questions can be clarified faster and more easily on the phone than by letter.

**"I find 'Meine Allianz' practical, because the paperwork has come to an end, thanks to the online portal, and all documents can be viewed online!"**

**Stefan Sigmund,**  
36, Allianz customer since 2008

### 3.4.1 Customer satisfaction

The graphic shows the development of the results in the area of information and advertising letters. Unfortunately, we have not been able to improve in the last three years, as the score of 2.6 in comparison with the last three years shows. Nevertheless, just under 30% of customers can answer the question with "very satisfied" and 10% with "completely satisfied."



- completely satisfied
- very satisfied
- satisfied
- less satisfied
- dissatisfied

(score ranges from 1 to 5, in %)

### 3.4.2 Communication as self-service

One example of the changes in the communication behavior of Allianz customers is the success of "Allianz hilft" (Allianz helps). This forum answers customer questions, reaching many readers. If the answers are easy to understand, further contact with the customer is usually no longer necessary.

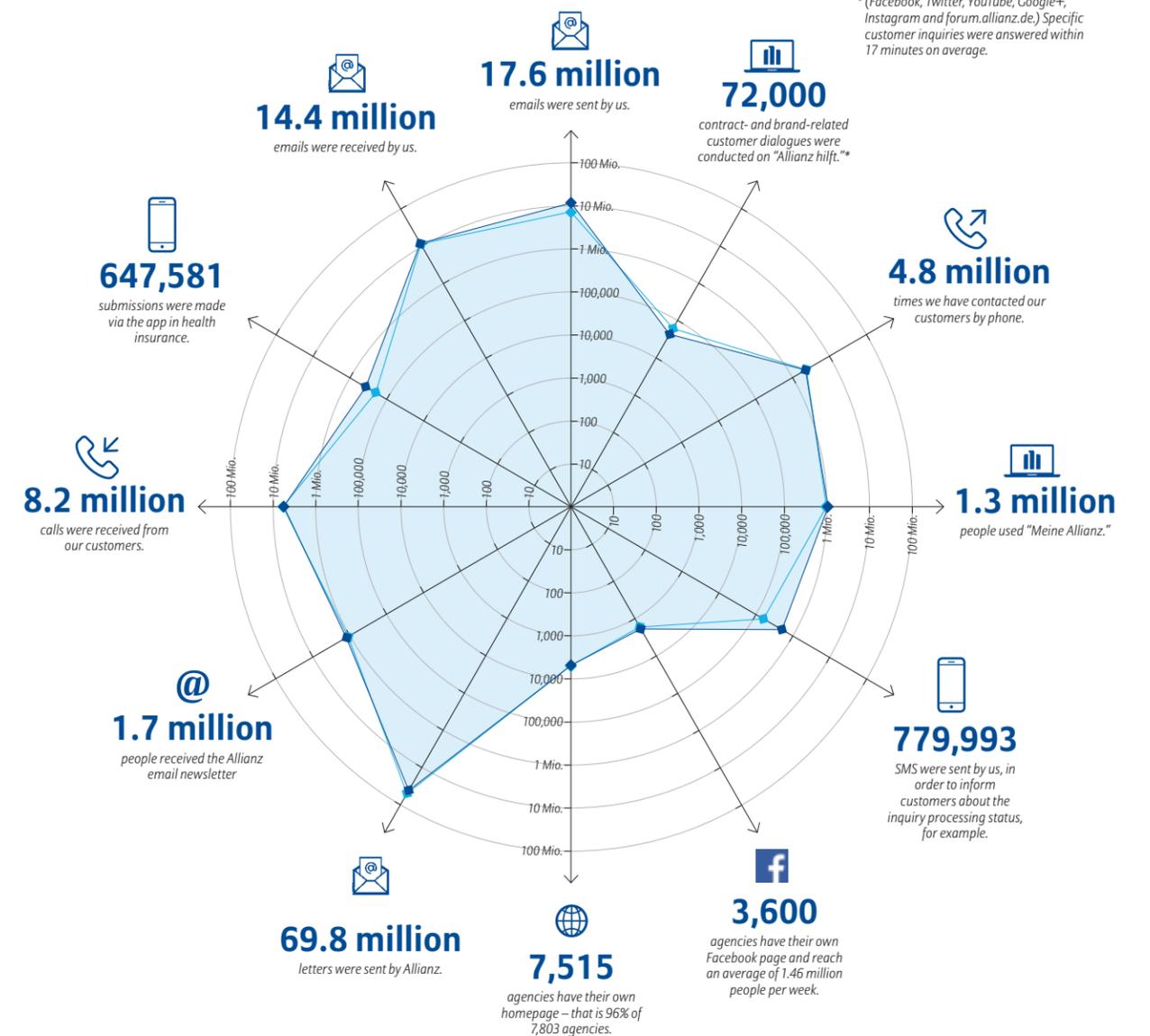
# 921,000

customers using the "Allianz hilft" forum as an online forum self-service platform in 2017.

### 3.4.3 Communication channels

The communication needs of our customers are changing and present us with new challenges: Where just a few years ago a letter was the means of choice, our customers now prefer to contact us by telephone, email or other digital channels. We accompany our customers and prospective customers, prepare content to suit the respective situation and the preferred channels and thus create satisfactory customer experiences.

■ 2017 ■ 2016



\*(Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Instagram and forum.allianz.de.) Specific customer inquiries were answered within 17 minutes on average.

# CLAIMS

Overall rating in 2017 **2.0**

2015 — 2.2  
2016 — 2.0

The way in which we, as an insurance company, process claims and settle them through payment is one of the key quality criteria for our customers. Fortunately, the year 2017 was spared very large loss events, such as floods, even though many medium and large storms – primarily in northeastern Germany – caused damage, especially to buildings. The front-running storms were Paul in June and Xavier in October.

In addition to cash benefits, services for our customers are becoming increasingly important in the event of a claim. Allianz Tradesmen Service takes over the complete damage management on site and takes care of repair work from start to finish. At the beginning of July, we were also needed on site after the G20 summit in Hamburg: We were able to assess the sometimes-dramatic damage to cars and buildings very quickly and help our customers.

More and more often we are also available digitally for customers. For example, our customers used the Allianz Schaden-Assistent (Claims Assistant) app for car insurance 13,381 times to photograph and evaluate damage.

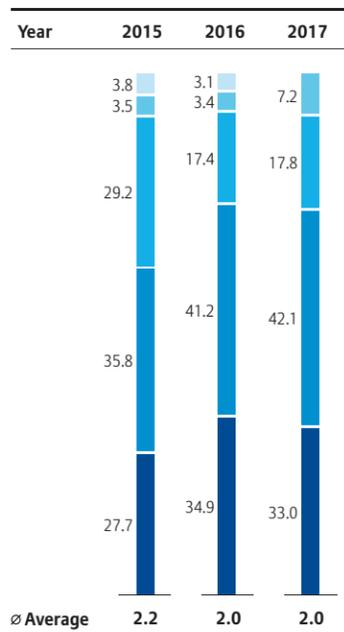
**Our major water damage was paid for by Allianz within a few days. This has shown us that we are in good hands."**

Ingrid Fritz,  
68, Allianz customer for over 40 years

### 3.5.1 Customer satisfaction

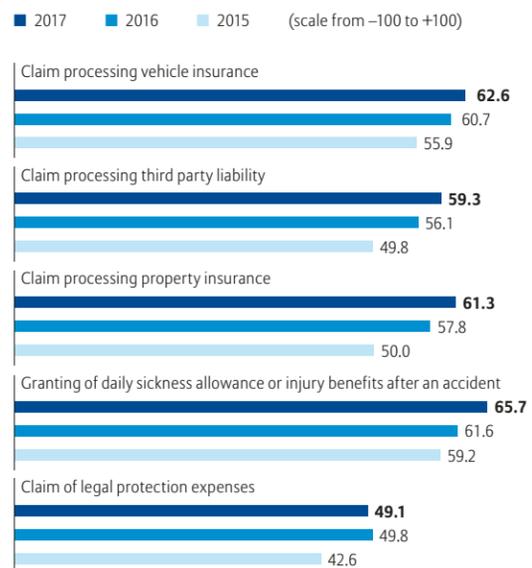
In 2017, we were able to maintain our satisfaction with claims processing in general insurance at the previous year's high level. Three out of four customers answered the question "How satisfied are you with the handling of the claim" with "completely satisfied" and "very satisfied."

■ completely satisfied  
■ very satisfied  
■ satisfied  
■ less satisfied  
■ dissatisfied  
(score ranges from 1 to 5, in %)



### 3.5.2 Willingness to recommend us to others in the area of claims

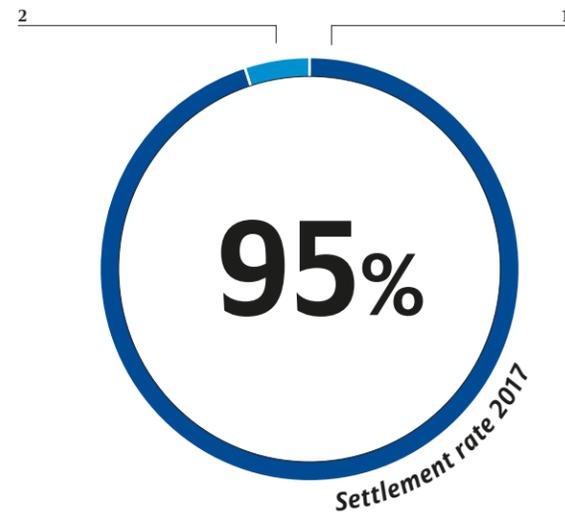
Each year, Allianz conducts more than 200,000 customer interviews to measure satisfaction and customers' willingness to recommend its products and services. Customer feedback is always based on a concrete contact. The graph shows the results for five of these scenarios in the claims area.



### 3.5.3 Incurred losses in the reporting year

€5.14 billion in incurred losses in the 2017 reporting year

5% of the claims are rejected due to attempted fraud, or lack of coverage and liability; this figure is equivalent to about 123,000\* claims.



95% of the claims are settled; this figure is equivalent to about 2,329,000 claims. Usually, Allianz's claims settlement process runs smoothly. This is also in our interest, because it increases customer satisfaction.

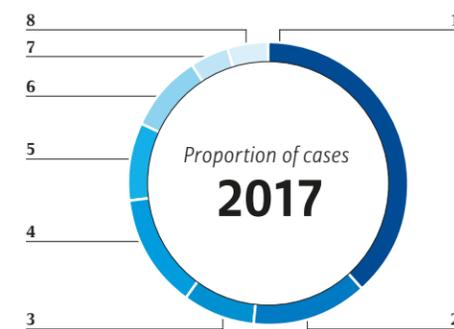
\* Estimated value. Based on 2,452 million reported claims in 2017 (excluding automotive industry insurance services).

**Allianz on site**  
More than 600 employees in the claims field service are responsible for ensuring that claim service runs smoothly. They inspect damage on site and discuss further courses of action with their customers. Our field service employees process approximately 1.3 billion euros in claim settlement payments per year.

### 3.5.4 Time required from creation of claim file to first payment

Speedy and unbureaucratic settlement of claims is the most important concern of our customers. For this reason, we measure the duration from the claim file creation date to the date of the first payment made to the customer. We settle many claims very quickly. In some cases, however, it can take longer: with some claims you have to adhere to deadlines (e.g., car theft). Other cases involve drawn-out scenarios (e.g., water damage followed by a long drying period).

(business days in %)



|                       | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|
| 1 1 business day      | 42.2 | 41.9 | 38.5 |
| 2 2–5 business days   | 11.2 | 11.5 | 13.3 |
| 3 6–10 business days  | 8.2  | 8.8  | 8.2  |
| 4 11–20 business days | 12.6 | 13.3 | 13.1 |
| 5 21–30 business days | 8.4  | 8.2  | 8.9  |
| 6 31–50 business days | 8.6  | 8.0  | 9.1  |
| 7 51–75 business days | 4.3  | 3.9  | 4.4  |
| 8 > 75 business days  | 4.6  | 4.5  | 4.5  |

# For society

Allianz Deutschland AG is aware of its social responsibility and wants to give something back to society.

**T**ogether with its employees and representatives, Allianz is especially committed to helping children and young people, and is also active in environmental and cultural areas. The Allianz children's foundation, Stiftung Allianz für Kinder, together with four regional children's charities, focuses on supporting young people with special needs. The company's environmental foundation mainly supports projects that focus on nature and, in particular, on sustainable environmental protection.

In the field of culture and art, the Allianz Cultural Foundation contributes to the development of a European identity and at the same time promotes regional cultural projects. Many of these initiatives and projects are made possible by the strong commitment and expertise of our employees.

*"We are very grateful for the support of Allianz and its project sponsor. We feel that it comes from the heart."*

Hans Kiel, CEO Initiative krebsranke Kinder München e.V.

### Children

**Stiftung Allianz für Kinder**  
Grant sum: €370,000  
In 2017, **31 projects across Germany** were funded, for instance, the Bananenflankenliga football league, children's trips through the Deutsche Fernseh Lotterie and Special Olympics Bayern.

**Wishing tree**  
In 2017, several hundred children from welfare organizations were able to fulfill their Christmas wishes at various Allianz locations in Germany.

**Societies**  
Allianz für die Jugend e.V. Nordwest,  
Allianz für die Jugend e.V. Südwest,  
Allianz Kinderhilfsfonds Berlin/Leipzig e.V.  
Allianz für Kinder in Bayern e.V.  
These four regional associations, together with 272 Allianz project sponsors, supported 273 projects with a total of €758,117 in funding.

### Social

**Start Social**  
Out of 100 projects funded by "startsocial 2017," 24 are supported by **coaches of the Allianz Group**. Social projects benefit from the experience of business enterprises as "companies." Allianz employees contribute their know-how on a voluntary basis.

**Charity initiative Restcent**  
A total of almost **6,300 employees** have donated more than €50,000 for three social projects since 2016.

**Help for helpers**  
Donations to relief organisations, e.g. fire brigade, Red Cross and the Federal Agency for Technical Relief.

**Refugees**  
In the existing dual training paths, refugees were also recruited as apprentices or in entry-level training at three locations. Allianz employees take on language coaching and mentoring duties in their free time.

### Environment

Foundation capital: €50 M.  
**Der Blaue Adler**  
**107 local projects** were supported by Allianz's local representatives. A total of **€200,000** was poured into local environmental projects.

**Initiatives with project partners**  
**25 major national projects** in the fields of environmental and climate protection, biodiversity, sustainable regional development, urban living and environmental communication.

**Allianz Environmental Foundation nature film stage**  
Nature films that address controversial environmental topics, show threatened landscapes or species and provide examples of responsible use of our environment.

**BenediktbeuernTalks**  
Independent, non-denominational and non-partisan forum for discussions on fundamental environmental issues

### Culture

Foundation capital: €50 M.  
**Operational Projects**  
10 international projects reflecting European thought in art, culture and education.

**Funding projects**  
Approximately **90 cross-border projects** of different sizes in the fields of cultural education, fine arts, performing arts, literature and music.

**Alumni network**  
over **200 alumni** from 30 nations and 17 partner universities.

**Allianz Cultural Foundation**  
**100 regional cultural and integration projects** annually, with cooperation from four distribution companies for the northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest regions.

# Complaints report

We see complaints as an opportunity to make improvements. That's why we take them seriously and deal with them thoroughly.

**C**omplaints are an important indicator of the quality of our work, because they show how and where we can improve it. Every complaint focuses on the best possible solution for the customer. To this end, we are increasingly seeking direct initial contact and attempting to resolve complaints much more frequently by telephone. Our customers should perceive us positively, especially in the event of a complaint – as people who attend to issues quickly and actively seek solutions.

In addition, we continuously improve products and processes for all customers on the basis of customer feedback. In the past year, for example, adjustments were made to the online insurance folder "Meine Allianz," and automated technical measures were set up to check the correctness of written communications.

*"When I was annoyed about Allianz and had a complaint, I was called back promptly and I felt like they took me seriously."*

Iris Breunig-Kiendl, 57, Allianz customer since 2008

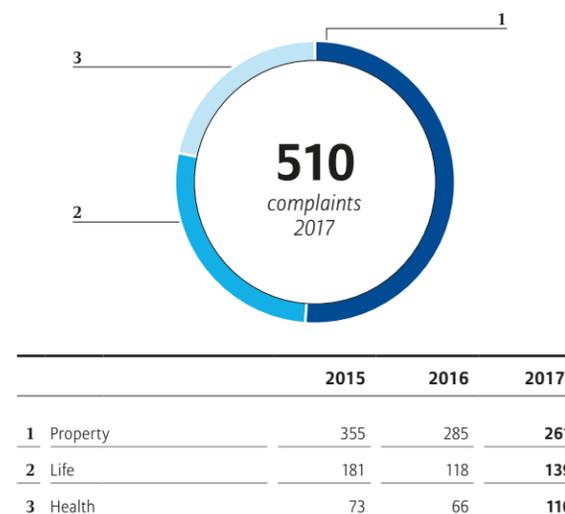
## 5.1 Complaints sent to BaFin and the Ombudsman

Both BaFin (Federal Financial Supervisory Authority) as well as the neutral insurance Ombudsman allow for formal complaint procedures. On an individual basis, BaFin can issue formal notices or generally perform supervisory audits. The Ombudsman reviews actual decisions made by the insurance company within the scope of an arbitration process. Its decisions are binding for the insurance company.

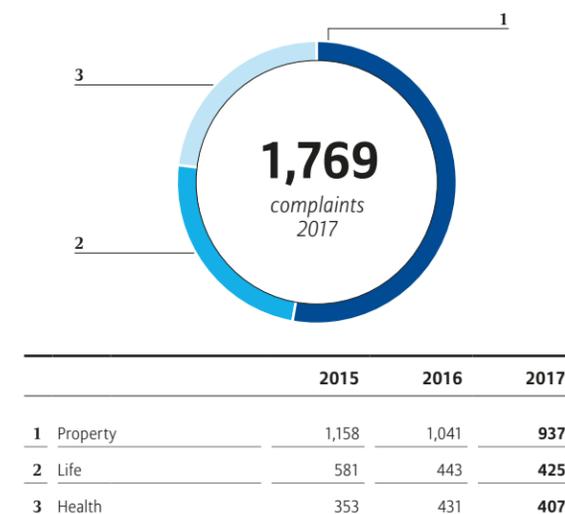
### 5.1.1 Number of complaints

In 2017, the BaFin complaints showed a differentiated development at Allianz companies. While the number of complaints in property insurance continues to fall, there has been a slight increase in the life insurance segment, following a sharp decline. In the course of an IT conversion, there were delays in processing customer requests in the case of sick patients. This led to a significant increase. The number of Ombudsman complaints continues to decline slightly.

BaFin (number of complaints, sorted by Allianz company)



Ombudsman (number of complaints, sorted by Allianz company)



\* Source: internal count, since official BaFin statistics will not be published until May 2018

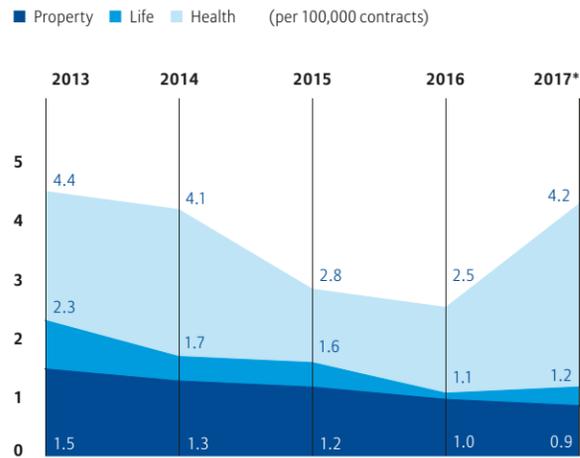
### 5.1.2 Comparative rates of complaints

Due to a change in the IT system, the BaFin complaint rate in the health care sector increased in 2017. The rates of Ombudsman complaints have fallen slightly in annual terms.

#### BaFin

Every year, the insurance supervisory authority publishes detailed, company-specific complaint statistics.

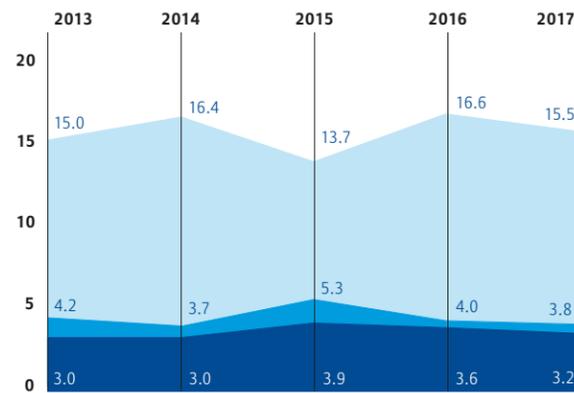
[www.bafin.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Statistik/Beschwerde/dl\\_st\\_2016\\_beschwerde.html](http://www.bafin.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Statistik/Beschwerde/dl_st_2016_beschwerde.html)



#### Ombudsman

The insurance Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for private health insurance also report on trends regarding complaints filed with them.

[www.pkv-ombudsmann.de/taetigkeitsbericht/](http://www.pkv-ombudsmann.de/taetigkeitsbericht/)  
[www.versicherungombudsmann.de/wp-content/uploads/Jahresbericht2016neu.pdf](http://www.versicherungombudsmann.de/wp-content/uploads/Jahresbericht2016neu.pdf)



### 5.2 Satisfaction with complaint-handling procedures

All in all, our customers are very satisfied with the handling of their complaints. They perceived the handling of complaints as fast, appreciative and committed.

#### Property Contract (Score ranges from 1 to 5)

|            | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------|------|------|------|
| Speed      | 1.7  | 1.7  | 1.8  |
| Respect    | 1.8  | 1.7  | 1.9  |
| Commitment | 1.8  | 1.9  | 2.0  |

#### Property Claims (Score ranges from 1 to 5)

|            | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------|------|------|------|
| Speed      | 2.0  | 1.8  | 2.2  |
| Respect    | 2.2  | 1.9  | 2.3  |
| Commitment | 2.2  | 2.1  | 2.5  |

#### Health (Score ranges from 1 to 5)

|            | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------|------|------|------|
| Speed      | 1.7  | 1.5  | 1.5  |
| Respect    | 1.4  | 1.4  | 1.3  |
| Commitment | 1.5  | 1.5  | 1.5  |

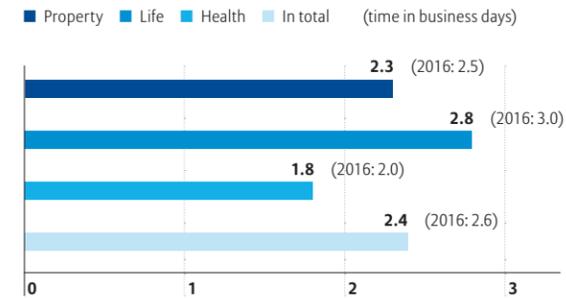
#### Life (Score ranges from 1 to 5)

|            | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|------------|------|------|------|
| Speed      | 1.6  | 1.7  | 1.6  |
| Respect    | 1.5  | 1.6  | 1.4  |
| Commitment | 1.7  | 1.8  | 1.6  |

\* Source: internal count, since official BaFin statistics will not be published until May 2018

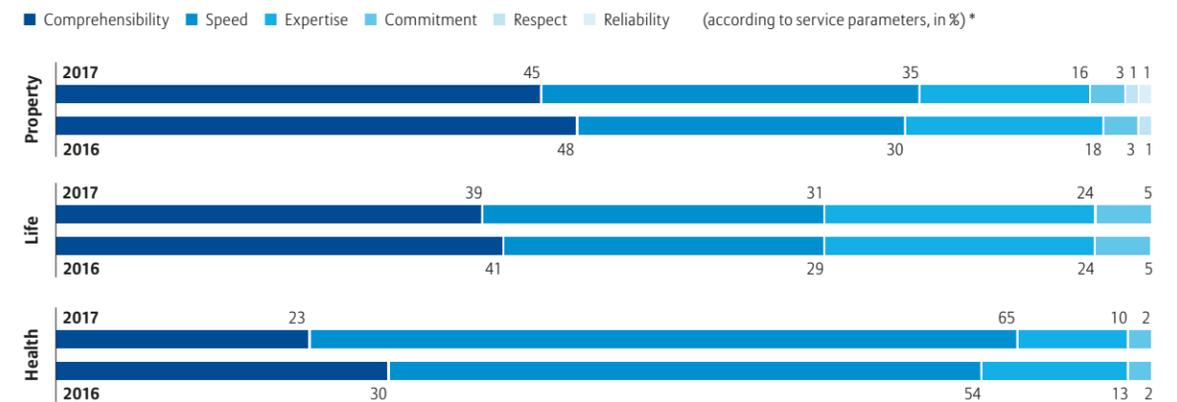
### 5.3 Average complaint-processing time

On an annual basis, we were able to reduce the average time taken to deal with complaints in all lines of business.



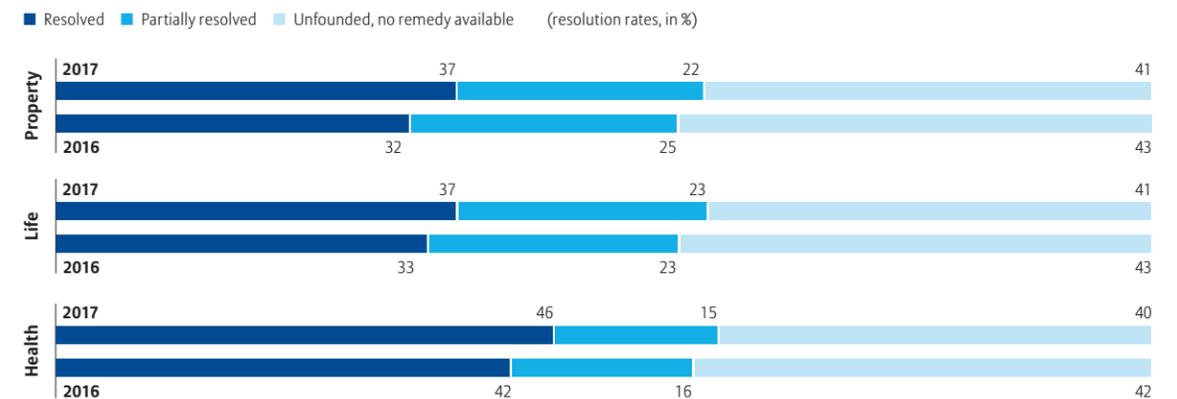
### 5.4 Major causes of complaints

In all divisions, most complaints were about comprehensibility and speed. The overall total number of complaints has decreased again.



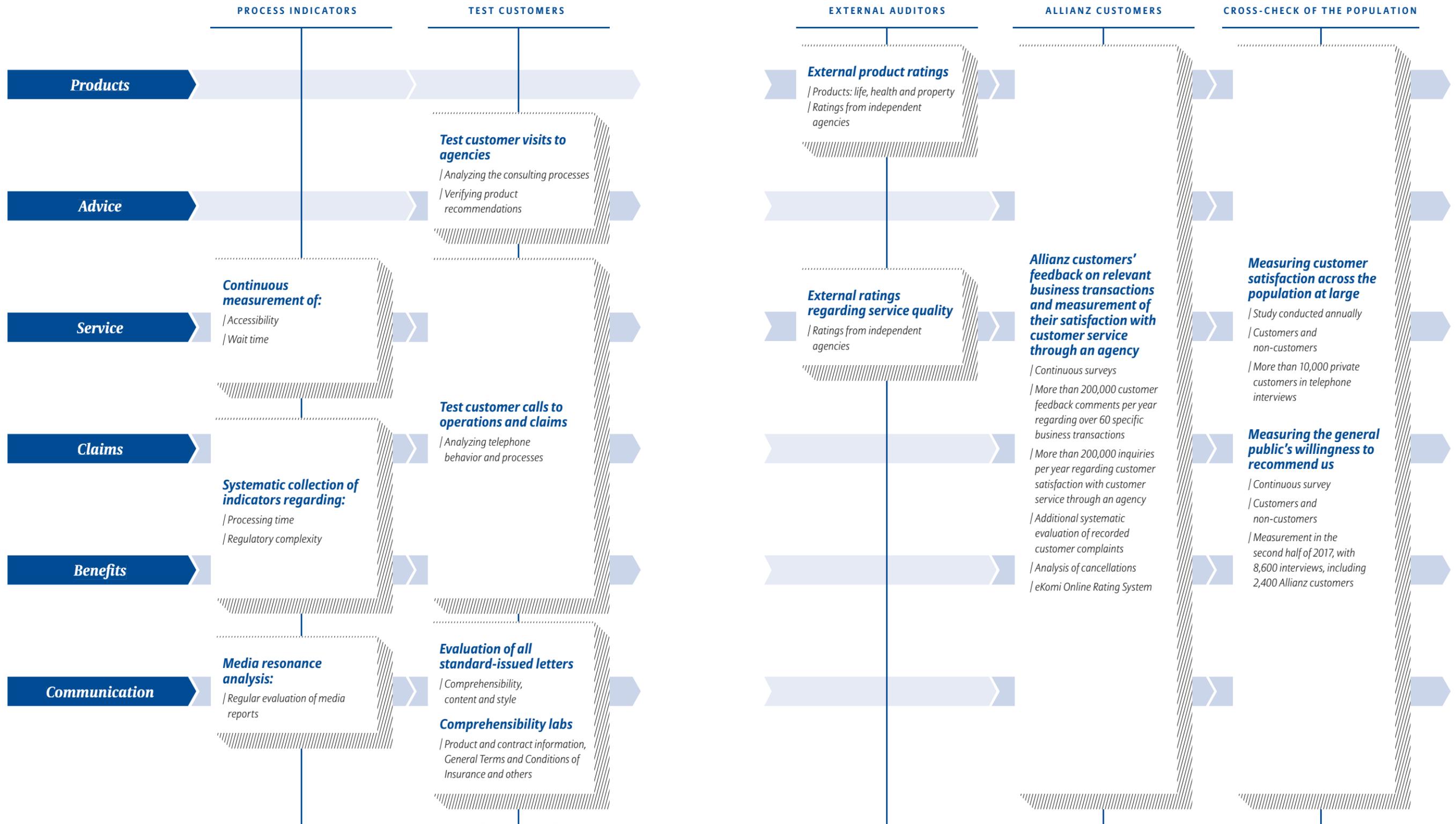
### 5.5 Complaint resolution

In a large number of cases, we were able to fully or partially resolve the complaints. Particularly in cases of complaints about comprehensibility and processing time we were able to find a remedy.



\* If no figure is shown for a service parameter, then it is 0%.

# Customer orientation measured systematically



# Sources and comments

When referring to persons in general, we have used the masculine form in this document for reasons of readability. However, all persons are always spoken to in the spirit of equal treatment.

## I. Our goal: to delight our customers!

### 1.1 The needs of Allianz customers

Representative survey in the Toluna online panel, n=500 Allianz customers.

### 1.2 Willingness to recommend us to others with regard to selected points of contact

Willingness to recommend (Net Promoter Score) based on customer satisfaction survey after experience at over 60 contact points: internal survey.

### 1.3 Customers' overall satisfaction with Allianz

#### Customer satisfaction

Unless otherwise stated, the comprehensive source for all satisfaction values has been the KUBUS Versicherung study, which has been continuously carried out by MSR Insights since 2017. To this end, more than 10,000 private customers are surveyed by telephone; the sample size of Allianz corresponds to 434 customers in 2017. Satisfaction ratings are measured on a five-level rating scale: 1) completely satisfied, 2) very satisfied, 3) satisfied, 4) less satisfied, 5) dissatisfied.

The overall assessment (2.1) corresponds to the weighted average of the rating scores for the areas. The weighting of the areas (Products, Advice, Claims, telephone, letter, communication) is calculated from statistical regression analyses. Their validity was confirmed by the Institute for Market-Based Management at the Ludwig Maximilian University Munich. The weighting refers to the relative explanatory strength of the respective area of activity for customer satisfaction. Claims and Benefits, reported separately in the past few years, are since 2017 being shown together under Claims. The former individual weightings of 14% for Claims and 13% for Benefits thus add up to 27%. In addition, the service area is broken down into the individual dimensions "by telephone" and "by post." The original weighting of 13% is divided between the new fields as follows: The telephone service area is made up of the fields telephone contact 5% and customer-oriented office staff 3%, which were previously included in the service dimension. As in the past, communication by post is weighted at 5%, but is shown as a separate area. The following areas are therefore included in the overall result with appropriate weighting: Product (2.1) 22%, Advice (2.1) 26%, Post (2.4) 5%, Telephone (2.0) 8%, Communication (2.6) 12%, Claims (2.0) 27%. The competition will be weighted accordingly.

As announced in last year's edition, customer ratings of the principles and values are no longer shown in the Result for the customer 2017. This is due to the change to the market study MSR KUBUS Versicherung.

## II. Allianz in figures

### 2.1 Customers

**Infographic for Customers:** internal evaluation; the number of customers, 20.4 million refers to AZD private customers. A private client is a named person who has a contract with Allianz which he has taken out himself, or which has been taken out on his behalf and is therefore relevant to the contribution.

Business customers are those customers who have taken out business contracts with Allianz.

Proportion of private customers with representatives within a radius of 10 km: calculation based on values from 31 December 2017; the division of private customers by settlement structure is made in accordance with Acxiom area segmentation. This classifies areas, interrelated due to commuter links, by means of population numbers and population density. Urbanized areas include municipalities with a population of 100,000 to 500,000 and a population density of 250 to 400 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> within a 15 km radius.

### 2.2 Employees

**Infographic for Employees:** SAP-HR data status 12/2017 Allianz Deutschland Gruppe excluding Oldenburgische Landesbank and Münchener und Magdeburger Agrarversicherung AG; employees with regular customer contact: internal evaluation, based on basic functional analysis, excluding apprentices, temporary staff and employees undergoing training.

**Bank partners:** Commerzbank – 1,400 branches, Volks- und Raiffeisenbanken – 336 branches, Santander – 300 branches, Oldenburgische Landesbank – 210 branches.

### 2.3 Solutions & benefits

**Infographic for Solutions and benefits:** internal evaluation; premium refund: Basis is the amount €118.0 million paid out in July; expenses for hail damage claims: basis is property insurance without use of force.

## III. Background & details

### 3.1 Products

#### 3.1.1 Customer satisfaction

Rating scores of the last three years: KUBUS study (see 1.3), agreement to the statement: Question = "How satisfied are you overall with the insurance

products you have taken out with [selected insurance company]?" Filter: New feature in the last two years. On a five-point scale: 1) completely satisfied, 2) very satisfied, 3) satisfied, 4) less satisfied, 5) dissatisfied.

#### 3.1.2 Selected corporate and product ratings

Below are the sources of the ratings and tests cited, including the number of ratings and test results that are the same as, or better than, those of Allianz.

#### Legend Ratings:

##### Assekurata

A++: Excellent, A+: Very good, A: Good, A-: Generally good, B+: Fully satisfactory, B: Satisfactory, B-: Still satisfactory, C+: Weak, C: Very weak, C-: Extremely weak, D: Inadequate.

##### Deutsches Finanz-Service Institut

AAA: Very good, AA+: Very good, AA: Good, A+: Good, A: Satisfactory, BBB+: Satisfactory, BBB: Adequate, BB: Adequate, B: Inadequate, C: Inadequate.

##### Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung

5 stars: Excellent, 4 stars: Very good, 3 stars: Good.

##### Franke & Bornberg

FFF: excellent, FF+: very good, FF: good, FF-: satisfactory, F+: still satisfactory, F: adequate, F-: weak, F--: inadequate.

##### Morgen & Morgen-Rating

5 stars: Excellent, 4 stars: Very good, 3 stars: Average, 2 stars: Weak, 1 star: Very weak.

##### Morgen & Morgen stress test

3 points: Excellent, 2 points: Very good, 1 point: Passed, 0 points: Critical.

#### Product ratings Allianz: Life

##### PrivatRente Perspektive

Franke und Bornberg (12/2016): FFF, excellent – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings).

##### PrivatRente KomfortDynamik

Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung (05/2017): Excellent (1.1) – associated certificate valid until new results are available; details at: [www.ivfp.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Ergebnisse-des-Privatrenten-Rating-2017.pdf](http://www.ivfp.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Ergebnisse-des-Privatrenten-Rating-2017.pdf)

##### RiesterRente InvestFlex

Franke und Bornberg (02/2018): FFF, excellent – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

Focus-Money (Issue 36/2017): Outstanding, "Best Riester pension" – three other companies received the rating "Outstanding" – Rating in cooperation with Franke and Bornberg; associated seal valid until 30 August 2018

##### RiesterRente IndexSelect

Focus-Money (Issue 36/2017): Outstanding, "Best Riester pension" – three other companies received the rating "Outstanding" – Rating in cooperation with Franke and Bornberg; associated seal valid until 30 August 2018

Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung (10/2017): Excellent (1.1) – associated certificate valid until new results are available; details at: [www.ivfp.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Riesterrenten-Rating2017.pdf](http://www.ivfp.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Riesterrenten-Rating2017.pdf)

##### BasisRente Perspektive

Franke und Bornberg (02/2018): FFF, excellent – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

##### BasisRente InvestFlex

Franke und Bornberg (02/2018): FFF, excellent – no cut-off date, but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

##### Additional disability insurance

Franke und Bornberg (12/2017): for all BU rates FFF, excellent – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; associated certificate valid until new results are available – except if there are product changes. Details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

Morgen & Morgen "M&M Rating Berufsunfähigkeit" (05/2017): 5 stars for all BU Plus rates – 69 rated companies, of which 54 received 5 stars in the overall score; associated certificate valid up to and including 10.05.2018; details at: [www.morgenundmorgen.com/ratings/produktatings/mm-rating-berufsunfaehigkeit/](http://www.morgenundmorgen.com/ratings/produktatings/mm-rating-berufsunfaehigkeit/)

##### Term life insurance

Focus-Money edition of 04/12/2017 (Issue 16/2017): Rating 1 (DLVAG and Allianz) – associated seal valid until 04/25/2018.

Morgen & Morgen "M&M Rating Risikoleben" (08/2017): 5 Sterne für Allianz Risikolebensversicherung E7 Plus; 5 stars for Allianz term life insurance L0; 5 stars for DLVAG term life insurance L0(DL) – associated seal valid until January 2018; details at: [www.morgenundmorgen.com/downloadcenter/RATINGS/mm\\_rating\\_risikoleben.pdf](http://www.morgenundmorgen.com/downloadcenter/RATINGS/mm_rating_risikoleben.pdf)

##### PflegePolice Flexi

Morgen & Morgen "M&M Rating PflegeRente" (01/2018): 5 stars for "PflegePoliceFlexi" – associated seal valid until January 2019; details at: [www.morgenundmorgen.com/downloadcenter/RATINGS/mm\\_rating\\_pflegerente.pdf](http://www.morgenundmorgen.com/downloadcenter/RATINGS/mm_rating_pflegerente.pdf)

Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung (12/2015): Excellent (1.3) – associated seal valid until new results are available; details at: [www.ivfp.de/rating/rating/biometrie/](http://www.ivfp.de/rating/rating/biometrie/)

##### KörperSchutzPolice

Franke und Bornberg, "MultiRisk-Lebensversicherung" (07/2017): FFF, excellent; – associated seal valid until July 2018 or until new results are available; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

#### Product ratings Allianz: Health

##### AktiMed Tarife

Assekurata (09/2016): AktiMed Best 90 – very good (1.2); AktiMed Best 5 – very good (1.2); AktiMed Plus 100 – very good (1.3); AktiMed Plus 70P – very good (1.4); AktiMed Plus 90 – very good (1.3); AktiMed Plus 90 P – very good (1.4); AktiMed 90 P – very good (1.5) – rating valid until 14 September 2018; details at: [www.assekurata.de/tarifanalysen/krankheitskostenvollversicherung/](http://www.assekurata.de/tarifanalysen/krankheitskostenvollversicherung/)

##### Ärzte Plus 100/Ärzte Best 100

Assekurata "Ärzte Best 100" (09/2016): very good (1.3) – associated seal valid until 14.09.2018; details at: [www.assekurata.de/tarifanalysen/krankheitskostenvollversicherung/](http://www.assekurata.de/tarifanalysen/krankheitskostenvollversicherung/)  
Assekurata "Ärzte Plus 100" (09/2016): very good (1.4) – associated seal valid until 14.09.2018; details at: [www.assekurata.de/tarifanalysen/krankheitskostenvollversicherung/](http://www.assekurata.de/tarifanalysen/krankheitskostenvollversicherung/)

##### AktiMed Plus 90 P/AktiMed Wechsel Option

Focus-Money (Issue 39/2017): outstanding, "Beste Krankenversicherung," Rating in cooperation with Franke und Bornberg; associated seal valid until 20.09.2018.

Franke und Bornberg (04/2017): FFF, excellent – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

##### AktiMed Best 90

Franke und Bornberg (04/2017): FFF, excellent – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

##### PflegeTagegeldBest (+ PflegeTagegeld Erhöhung ambulant + Pflege Einmalzahlung)

Assekurata (04/2017): very good (1.1) – associated seal valid until April 2019; details at: [www.assekurata.de/tarifanalysen/pflegetagegeldversicherung/](http://www.assekurata.de/tarifanalysen/pflegetagegeldversicherung/)

##### Pflegebahr + PflegeTagegeldBest

Focus-Money: (Issue 33/2017): "Beste Pflege-Kombi-Police"; rating in cooperation with DFSI; associated seal valid until 09.08.2018.

##### Reise-Krankenversicherung (Einzel R32)

Finanztest (Volume 04/2017): very good; no seal acquired; further details available in the corresponding issue, pages 82-89

##### Reise-Krankenversicherung (Familie R33)

Finanztest (Volume 04/2017): very good; no seal acquired; further details available in the corresponding issue, pages 82-89

##### Betriebliche Krankenversicherung

Focus-Money and DFSI (Volume 16/2017): outstanding, "Beste Betriebliche Krankenversicherung" – rating in cooperation with DFSI; associated seal valid until 21.04.2018.

##### DentalBest

Deutsches Finanz-Service Institut (Test FOCUS 42/17): very good "Beste Zahnzusatzversicherung" – associated seal valid until 14.10.2018.

##### ZahnBest (mit Zahnfit)

Deutsches Finanz-Service Institut (Test FOCUS 42/17): very good, "Beste Zahnzusatzversicherung" – associated seal valid until 14.10.2018.

#### Product ratings Allianz: Property insurance

##### Allianz Autoversicherung Smart

TÜV-Saarland (09/2017): Nr. 2986, very good – associated seal valid until 31.08.2019; details at: [http://zertifikatsabfrage.tuev-saar.net/de/abfrage\\_nach\\_zertifikatsnummer](http://zertifikatsabfrage.tuev-saar.net/de/abfrage_nach_zertifikatsnummer)

##### Allianz Autoversicherung Komfort

TÜV-Saarland (09/2016): Nr. 3033, very good – associated seal valid until 31.08.2019; details at: [http://zertifikatsabfrage.tuev-saar.net/de/abfrage\\_nach\\_zertifikatsnummer](http://zertifikatsabfrage.tuev-saar.net/de/abfrage_nach_zertifikatsnummer)

##### Allianz Autoversicherung Premium

TÜV-Saarland (09/2017): Nr. 3034, very good – associated seal valid until 31.08.2019; details at: [http://zertifikatsabfrage.tuev-saar.net/de/abfrage\\_nach\\_zertifikatsnummer](http://zertifikatsabfrage.tuev-saar.net/de/abfrage_nach_zertifikatsnummer)

##### Allianz Autoversicherung

Focus-Money (Issue 12/2017): "Fairster Kfz-Versicherer", very good – 26 rated auto service insurers, eight of which awarded top marks for "very good"; associated seal valid until 17.03.2018.

##### Telematiktarife

Focus-Money (Issue 12/2017): "Fairste Telematiktarife" – eight rated automobile service insurers, two of which were rated as "very good"; associated seal valid until 17.03.2018.

##### Allianz Wohngebäudeversicherung

Focus-Money (Issue 20/2017): "Fairster Wohngebäudeversicherer" – 29 rated residential property insurers, of which seven were rated "very good"; associated seal valid until 02.06.2018.

##### Wohngebäude SicherheitPlus

Finanztest (05/2016): Recommended – associated seal valid until 22 May 2018.

##### Hausrat SicherheitPlus

TÜV-Saarland (09/2016): Nr. 2342, very good – associated seal valid until 31.08.2018; details at: [http://zertifikatsabfrage.tuev-saar.net/de/abfrage\\_nach\\_zertifikatsnummer](http://zertifikatsabfrage.tuev-saar.net/de/abfrage_nach_zertifikatsnummer)

**UnfallSchutz Plus**

Franke und Bornberg (04/2017): FFF, excellent – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

**UnfallSchutz**

Franke und Bornberg (04/2017): FFF, excellent – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

**UnfallSchutz Basis**

Franke und Bornberg (04/2017): FF+, very good – no cut-off date but uses a dynamic rating that is continually updated; details at: [www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/](http://www.franke-bornberg.de/ratings/)

**Rechtsschutz**

Focus-Money (Issue 37/2017): "Fairster Rechtsschutzversicherer," very good – 25 rated companies, seven of which rated with "very good"; associated seal valid until 06.09.2018.

**Company ratings – Life insurance: Allianz Lebensversicherungs-AG****Institut für Vorsorge und Finanzplanung, "LV-Rating Unternehmensqualität" (11/2017)**

Excellent (1.0) – 71 companies examined, one of which had the highest rating (1.0); associated seal valid until 30.11.2018; details at: [www.ivfp.de/rating/unternehmensvergleich/lvu-rating/](http://www.ivfp.de/rating/unternehmensvergleich/lvu-rating/)

**Morgen & Morgen "M&M Rating LV-Unternehmen" (10/2017)**

5 stars – Financial years 2012 bis 2016 – 66 companies were rated; of these, seven other companies received the top rating of 5 stars; associated seal valid until 18.10.2018; details at: [www.morgenundmorgen.com/ratings/unternehmensratings/mm-rating-lv-unternehmen/](http://www.morgenundmorgen.com/ratings/unternehmensratings/mm-rating-lv-unternehmen/)

**Morgen & Morgen "M&M Belastungstest" (12/2017)**

Excellent – 43 companies examined; of these 24 other companies had the highest rating "excellent"; associated seal valid until 07.12.2018; details at: [www.morgenundmorgen.com/ratings/unternehmensratings/mm-belastungstest/](http://www.morgenundmorgen.com/ratings/unternehmensratings/mm-belastungstest/)

**Focus-Money (Issue 45/2017)**

"Europe's financially strongest life insurer." The 10 largest life insurance companies in Europe were tested; associated seal valid until 1 November 2018.

**Company ratings – Health insurance: Allianz Private Krankenversicherungs-AG****Focus-Money (Issue 3/2018)**

"Best Private Health Insurance – prize for the year 2017" – In cooperation with Franke und Bornberg; all full-coverage auto insurers in the test; associated seal valid until 10.01.2019.

**Assekurata "APKV Unternehmensqualität" (01/2017)**

A+, very good – associated certificate valid until 31.01.2018; details at: [www.assekurata.de/ratings/rating/allianz-private-krankenversicherungs-ag-2839/](http://www.assekurata.de/ratings/rating/allianz-private-krankenversicherungs-ag-2839/)

**Focus-Money (Issue 27/2017)**

"Highest recommendation," First place among private health insurers – associated certificate valid until 03.07.2018.

**Focus-Money and DFSI (Issue 41/2017)**

"Best service" – top score awarded multiple times; associated certificate valid until 04.10.2018.

**Morgen & Morgen "M&M Rating KV-Unternehmen" (08/2017)**

5 stars, excellent – financial years 2012 to 2016 – 31 companies were rated, with three other companies receiving the top rating of 5 stars; associated seal valid until 30.09.2018; details at: [www.morgenundmorgen.com/ratings/unternehmensratings/mm-rating-kv-unternehmen/](http://www.morgenundmorgen.com/ratings/unternehmensratings/mm-rating-kv-unternehmen/)

**3.1.3 Allianz Lebensversicherungs-AG: Guarantees and opportunities for profit as competitive factors**

The graph for the classic pension concept "Allianz Lebensversicherungs-AG Guarantees and opportunities for profit as competitive factors" is being published for the last time in Result for the customer 2017.

**3.1.5 Reimbursement rate for health insurance claims**

Internal evaluation; the calculation is based on submitted receipts for full and supplementary health insurance 2017.

**3.1.6 Speed of reimbursement for health insurance claims**

Internal evaluation; as part of a system changeover, there is also a change in the measurement of the queue time. The basis for this is not, as has been the case up to now, the time from receipt of a claim by the postal center to the final settlement date, but rather the duration of processing time in the settlement process (specialist advice and customer service). All values refer to the new measurement logic.

**3.2 Advice****Introductory text:**

Evaluation of Allianz agencies in the online rating system eKomi: eKomi, The Feedback Company, Europe's first and largest independent provider of transaction-based customer opinions and product reviews. Status: 10/2017.

**3.2.1 Customer satisfaction**

Rating scores from the last three years: KUBUS study (see 1.3), agreement to the statement:

Question = "How satisfied are you with your advisor? Filter: Advisor contact in the last two years.

On a five-point scale: 1) completely satisfied, 2) very satisfied, 3) satisfied, 4) less satisfied, 5) dissatisfied.

**3.2.2 Code of Practice for Quality in Sales**

Basis see also: [www.gdv.de/2015/04/verhaltenskodex-fuer-den-vertrieb/](http://www.gdv.de/2015/04/verhaltenskodex-fuer-den-vertrieb/)

**The graphics for the test customer visits and the pass rate of the IHK are no longer shown in this year's Result for the customer. In 2017, the pass rate was 88% (previous year: 94%).**

**3.3 Service**

Introductory text: Information on improved customer issues: internal evaluation.

**3.3.1 Willingness to recommend us to others in the service area**

See 1.2.

**3.3.2 Continuous improvement**

Internal evaluation.

**3.3.3 Customer satisfaction by post**

Rating scores of the last three years: KUBUS study (see 1.3), agreement to the statement: Question = "How satisfied were you with the overall correspondence with the [selected insurance company]?" Filter: Written contact in the last two years. On a five-point scale: 1) completely satisfied, 2) very satisfied, 3) satisfied, 4) less satisfied, 5) dissatisfied.

**3.3.4 Customer satisfaction by telephone**

Rating scores of the last three years: KUBUS study (see 1.3), agreement to the statement: Question = "How satisfied were you with your last contact by telephone with the [selected Insurance company]?" Filter: Telephone contact in the last two years. On a five-point scale: 1) completely satisfied, 2) very satisfied, 3) satisfied, 4) less satisfied, 5) dissatisfied.

**3.3.5 Time on hold on the phone**

Internal evaluation 2015 to 2017; only customer service calls that were picked up within the maximum wait time were counted.

**The graph "Simple resolution of pending issues" from the Result for the customer 2016 is shown in graph 3.4.3.**

**3.4 Communication****3.4.1 Customer satisfaction**

Rating scores of the last three years: KUBUS study (see 1.3), agreement to the statement: Question = "How satisfied are you with the information or advertising letters you currently receive from [Selected Insurance company]?" Filter: Information material in the last two years. On a five-point scale: 1) completely satisfied, 2) very satisfied, 3) satisfied, 4) less satisfied, 5) dissatisfied.

**3.4.2 Communication as self-service**

Number of users: internal evaluation

**3.4.3 Communication channels**

Letters, phone calls (inbound/outbound), health insurance app, e-mails, "Meine Allianz" users, agencies with homepage, agencies with their own Facebook, text messaging, email newsletters: internal evaluation; "Allianz hilft": Improvements in customer processes made in 2017. As a result of this change, more customers found their answers in online self-service and less in individual case processing (2016:83,000).

**The graphic "Comprehensibility of the top 10 letters according to the Hohenheimer index" is no longer shown in this year's Result for the customer, but the value is still measured.**

**HIX values 2017:**

Life insurance: 16.15 (previous year: 15.92); Health insurance: 14.57 (previous year: 13.50); property insurance: 13.71 (previous year: 15.47).

**3.5 Claims**

Introductory text: Information about the Claims Assistant: internal evaluation.

**3.5.1 Customer satisfaction**

Rating scores of the last three years: KUBUS study (see 1.3), agreement to the statement: Question = "How satisfied were you overall with the settlement of the claim you reported to the [Selected Insurance company]?" Filter: claim reported in the last two years. On a five-point scale: 1) completely satisfied, 2) very satisfied, 3) satisfied, 4) less satisfied, 5) dissatisfied.

**3.5.2 Willingness to recommend us to others in the area of claims**

See 1.2.

**3.5.3 Incurred losses in the reporting year**

€5.14 billion. Basis: 2.452 million claims in 2017 in property and casualty insurance (not including insurance services for the automotive sector), internal evaluation.

**3.5.4 Time required from creation of claim file to first payment**

Internal evaluation of comprehensive property and auto claims of private customers, whereby the first payment was made in 2017 (2016, 2015).

**The graphic for "Service guarantee for comprehensive auto insurance" is no longer shown in this year's Report for the customer.**

**IV. For society**

Culture: Information according to Allianz Kulturstiftung.

**V. Complaints report**

We used the figures available to us from our inventory management system as a basis for the internal rating. Evaluation cut-off date: 01/02/2018

**5.1 Complaints sent to BaFin and the Ombudsman**

Federal Financial Supervisory Authority (BaFin): For 2013 to 2016, we used the official figures of BaFin statistics, available at [www.bafin.de](http://www.bafin.de). For 2017, we used the numbers from our internal count, as the official figures of BaFin statistics will not be published until May 2017. Figures may differ slightly compared to official BaFin statistics due to different limits, such as dates; Ombudsman: contains only permissible complaints, i.e., compliance with the Ombudsman's rules of procedure; industry figures are available at [www.versicherungsomбудsmann.de](http://www.versicherungsomбудsmann.de).

**5.2 Satisfaction with complaint-handling procedures**

Internal evaluation, agreement with the statement "Allianz responded quickly to my complaint" (speed), "I feel that Allianz took my complaint seriously" (respect), and "I had the feeling that someone personally took care of my concern" (commitment) on a five-point scale: 1) Strongly agree, 2) Agree somewhat, 3) Agree in some respects, 4) Disagree somewhat, 5) Strongly disagree.

**5.3 Average complaint-processing time**

Internal evaluation, based on all complaints settled in 2017. Information in terms of working days.

**5.4 Major causes of complaints**

Internal evaluation; based on all complaints recorded in 2017.

**5.5 Complaint resolution**

Internal evaluation; based on all complaints recorded in 2017.

**The graphic "Input channels" is no longer shown in this year's Report for the customer.**

**VI. Customer orientation measured systematically**

Evaluation of relevant business transactions, internal measurement value n=200,000 customers. Customer satisfaction measurement value of the agencies n>200,000 customers. Measurement of customer satisfaction of the general public see 1.3 Measurement of the willingness to recommend TNS 2017 n=2,400 Allianz customers.

**The graphics for "Our approach for achieving a systematic customer focus," "Board committees for a systematic customer focus," "An organization willing to learn" and "Contin-**

**ous customer feedback" are no longer shown in this year's Report for the customer.**

**Reservation in relation to future predictions**

Where we make projections or express expectations, or make statements relating to the future, such statements may concern both known and unknown risks and uncertainties. As a result, the actual results and developments may differ significantly from the expectations and assumptions made. For other reasons not listed here, variations may arise as a result of changes to the general economic situation and competition, in particular in core Allianz business fields and markets, as a result of acquisitions and the subsequent integration of companies, and also through restructuring. Variations may also arise owing to the extent and frequency of claims (for example, following natural disasters), the increase in claim costs, cancellation rates, death and sickness rates/trends, and in the field of banking and investments, through default by borrowers and other debtors. Developments in the financial markets (such as market fluctuations and loan defaults) and in exchange rates, and also national and international statutory changes, in particular in relation to tax provisions, may also have an effect. Terrorist attacks and their consequences may increase the likelihood and extent of such variations. The company accepts no liability for keeping such statements in relation to the future up to date.

Totals deviating from 100 percent may occur due to rounding.

# KPMG on “Result for the customer 2017”

The KPMG auditing firm performs the “Result for the customer” audit every year. Allianz is committed to the report’s professional nature and meeting its obligation to provide accurate information.

**I**n a letter of instruction dated 21 December 2017, we were tasked to perform a business audit of the 2017 results for the customers of Allianz Deutschland AG (“Result for the customer”) to ascertain with sufficient certainty whether:

/ the data published on pages 5, 10, 14, 16 to 18 and 20 of the separate “This is how you rated us” pull-out section of “Result for the customer 2017” corresponds to the results of the KUBUS Versicherung study carried out by MSR Insights in 2017 and the overall score thus results from the satisfaction ratings obtained.

/ the areas of activity, namely Products, Advice, Service, Claims/Benefits and Communication, illustrated and evaluated in the separate “This is how you rated us” pull-out section of “Result for the customer 2017,” correspond to the internally established customer-focus structure.

/ the information disclosed on pages 5-25 of the separate “This is how you rated us” pull-out section of “Result for the customer 2017” are in agreement with evaluations by complaint management and the customers’ internal evaluations.

### **Responsibility of legal agents**

The Board of Management of Allianz Deutschland AG is responsible for preparing “Result for the customer 2017” and establishing the criteria.

### **Responsibility of the auditor**

Our mission is to perform a business audit, and based on that, to provide a sufficiently reliable assessment of whether the aforementioned audited areas can be rated as positive. We conducted our business audit according to the International Standard on Assurance Engagements 3000 (“Assurance Engagements Other Than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information” (ISAE 3000)) as a “Reasonable Assurance Engagement.” Accordingly, the audit is to be planned and executed in such a manner that we can confirm with sufficient reliability after conducting a critical appraisal that the statements made in “Result for the customer 2017” are relevant in regard to the aspects mentioned above. An audit of the aforementioned areas of “Result for the customer 2017” consists of performing audit procedures to obtain audit-based evidence so that an assessment of the statements in “Result for the customer” can be made in regard to the aforementioned areas. The audit procedures are selected at the auditor’s discretion. In conducting the audit of the aforementioned sections of the “Result for the customer 2017,” we carried out the following audit procedures among others:

/ Comparison of the values provided in the mentioned pages of the customer survey with the results of the performed study by KUBUS Versicherung.

/ Examination of the documentation and task procedures pertaining to the customer focus program.

/ Comparison of the figures listed on the mentioned pages in “Complaint report” and “Background information and details” against the evaluations generated by complaint management and the customer’s internal evaluations.

The accuracy and completeness of the customer satisfaction and customer benefit data are subject to inherent limitations that stem from how the data was collected and compiled. Our Assurance Report should therefore be read in connection with the procedures used regarding the customer survey and satisfaction metrics. In addition, the statements contained in “Result for the customer 2017” were made in the past and are subject to the unavoidable risk that the portrayal of customer focus conveyed according to the established criteria cannot be extrapolated to the future due to changed circumstances.

### **Assessment**

Based upon the findings of the aforementioned audit procedures that were carried out, and taking into account the aforementioned specifics of the audit’s subject matter, we have come to the following conclusions:

/ The figures published on pages 5, 10, 14, 16-18 and 20 of the separate “This is how you rated us” pull-out section of “Result for the customer 2017” match the results of the KUBUS Versicherung study carried out by MSR Insights in 2017. The overall score is calculated from the total satisfaction ratings for the individual areas of activity. Each of these aspects is evaluated on a five-point scale by

customers who have had experiences with a given area. It contains the following comments: completely satisfied, very satisfied, satisfied, less satisfied, and dissatisfied. The points of the overall score are calculated from the average value of the respective points on the scale pertaining to the detailed questions mentioned. The overall score itself corresponds to the mean value of the scale.

/ The areas of activity described and evaluated in “Result for the customer 2017” correspond to the internally established structure of the customer focus program.

/ The data published on pages 5-25 in the separate “This is how you rated us” pull-out section of “Result for the customer 2017” matches the evaluations made by complaint management and the customer’s internal evaluations.

**Munich, 23 January 2018**  
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**Auditing firm**

**Andreas Dielehner**  
Auditor

**Rainer Pfaffenzeller**  
Auditor

# We place customers at the center of everything we do

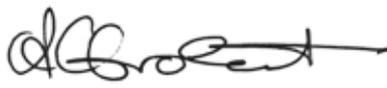
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