Klaus MUELLER, PhD

Salt Lake City, Utah, United States of America
Berlin, Germany
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

PROFILE

33+ years of experience in the communications industry. As e.g. CEO of a high-growth mobile&fixed operator applying an ambidextrous (innovative & efficient) leadership approach, CEO of an underinvested fixed business creating a national champion by integrating 3 operators into one efficient machine, advisor with a top strategy consultant company and a consultancy startup, COO of a large multi-national telco holding realizing synergies in making its value greater than the sum of the 12 OpCos, CEO of a distressed MNO achieving a turnaround and strategic revival, Deputy CEO of a national incumbent generating superior profits, Co-CEO of a corporate telco in-house start-up overcoming innovation resistance. Versed in all tricks of the trade as member of the Boards of several billion-dollar telcos in Europe and Asia, and an American Chamber of Commerce in Europe.

Holds a PhD (magna cum laude) in economics. Studied economics, business administration, and political science at Friedrich-Alexander University (Germany), Instituto de Empresa University (Spain), and University of Utah (USA). Executive education at Chicago Booth School of Business, London Business School, Seeon Bertelsmann Academy, Stanford Graduate School of Business. A member of The Worldwide Strategic Management Society founded in London and The Academic Golden Key International Honour Society based in the U.S.

Lots of experience with large-scale transformation programs, including effective team play with top-tier consultancies. Led culture change when competing operations were being merged. An intuitive thinker who sees context and big picture first, focuses on creative solutions for the future, and takes action with a human touch. Believes in beating yesterday as a target, instead of stealing market share. What others say: When Klaus was hired, things became clear, and since he left, the place has been much better off than he found it.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CEO, Bakcell, Azerbaijan — 2026 MAY ◂ 2023 JAN

Bakcell was the first and largest private telecoms company in Azerbaijan, an 11m population country in the transcontinental sweet spot where Europe, Asia, and the Middle East overlap. Having been a me-too player in the Azeri mobile market before 2023, I repositioned the company as going for innovation leadership in the full techco market (mobile, fixed, fintech, smart devices, IPTV), applying an ambidextrous approach.

Interim CEO, Aztelekom, Azerbaijan — 2022 DEC ◂ 2022 JAN

Aztelekom, together with smaller sister companies Baktelecom and Azeronline, the fixed incumbent in Azerbaijan had 9+ k employees in total. Led the virtual team to merge all 3 operations and rolled out new fiber lines to 400+ k homes combined.

Independent Advisor, Salt Lake City, U.S. 2021 DEC ◂ 2018 JAN

Adviced on telco/techco strategy and transformation on online consultancy platforms. Continued at AZF as Chairman of the Board till mid 2020, having turned the company around as CEO before. Became External Advisor and Chief Futurist at Dubai-based telco consultancy start-up Backdimension from late 2020, and External Advisor at McKinsey & Co. in the US from early 2021. Also, served as Board Member for 4 years at Parc at Gateway in Salt Lake City, a not-for-profit property ownership association.

CEO, Azerfon, Azerbaijan 2017 DEC ◂ 2016 SEP

Azerfon (AZF), the #3 in Azerbaijan's mobile market, had lost half of its 2014 revenues of USD 200+ m as a consequence of an aggressive, unsuccessful attempt to grab market share, before I was hired. Changed course from 'customer acquisition' to 'value creation', turned the company around and at the end of 2017 debt load was halved, and AZF was a profitable, growing company again. In an additional role, board member of AzerConnect, a joint venture of AZF and the #2 mobile.

COO, Chief Strategist of DT EU Division, Deutsche Telekom, Germany 2016 AUG ◂ 2011 OCT

Deutsche Telekom was #102 of Fortune Global 500 in 2015, has always been a top 5 telco globally and the lead telco in Europe. DT's Division of Foreign Operations in Europe (DT EU) had infrastructure in 12 EU (member, candidate) countries (Poland, Romania, Netherlands, Greece, Czechia, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Croatia, and Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro), and made USD 13+ bn revenues in 2015, with 50 k employees. In additional roles Co-CEO of PanNet, an in-house start-up to centralize technology platforms for pan-European service provisioning, and board member of OTE and Cosmote (Greece), as well as Telekom Romania (Romania).

Dep. CEO & COO Mobile Division, Makedonski Telekom, North Macedonia 2011 SEP ◂ 2008 MAR

Makedonski Telekom (MKT) was majority owned by Magyar Telekom and DT. 2010, revenues were USD 350+ m with an employee base of 2,500. MKT was awarded for becoming the most profitable company in both North Macedonia and DT footprint. From SEP 2008 - SEP 2010 also served as board member of AmCham N. Macedonia.

Corporate SVP Regulatory Strategy, Deutsche Telekom, Germany 2008 FEB ◂ 2005 FEB

In 2007, DT was #60 of Fortune Global 500 companies with 240 k staff worldwide, including 100+ regulatory professionals across DT footprint companies and liaison offices in Berlin, Brussels, and Washington. Selected into Executive MBA program by DT.

EVP Intercarrier Business, Magyar Telekom, Hungary 2005 JAN ◂ 2000 NOV

In 2004, Magyar Telekom was the incumbent telco operator in Hungary with revenues of 3+ bn and 13 k staff, majority owned by DT. The Intercarrier profit center sold to (and purchased from) 60+ competitor-customers, creating USD 190+ m revenues.

VP Pricing, Telekom Deutschland, Germany 2000 OCT ◂ 1997 APR

Telekom Deutschland as telco incumbent in Germany had USD 33+ bn revenues in 1999. In a period of price war after the 1998 big-bang liberalization (1,000+ new competitors), 150+ price decisions were made yearly by the CEO-lead Pricing Committee.

Manager Tariffs & Regulation, Deutsche Post DHL, Germany 1997 MAR ◂ 1992 DEC

In 1996, Deutsche Post generated USD 16+ bn in revenues with 285 k employees. Selected into PhD program, researching regulatory alternatives for postal services.

Financial Planner, HMI (today Ergo, a subsidiary of Munich Re), Germany 1990 SEP ◂ 1986 OCT

Built a clientele for retirement planning on a flexible work schedule. Attended vocational training. HMI became the pyramid sales organization of Ergo in 1997.

Management Assistant, SWH Public Utility Company, Germany 1985 JUN ◂ 1981 AUG

The utility company served an area of 100 k inhabitants with electricity, natural gas, water, and public transport services. Attended vocational business school.

EDUCATION

	COMPLETED
Courses in Business Administration, University of Utah, USA (4 years, part-time)	2021 AUG
Executive Education on Ambidexterity (1 month), Stanford Graduate School of Business, US	2015 JUL
EMBA Program (13 months, valedictorian), IE BS & Chicago Booth SoB, Spain & US	2007 SEP
European Policy for Young Leaders (1 week), Bertelsmann Summer Academy, Germany	2006 SEP
Strategic Management (3 weeks), London Business School, United Kingdom	2006 JUN
Doctor of Economics (3.5 years, magna cum laude), F-A University, Germany	1996 JUL
Diploma in Economics (6 years, magna cum laude), Friedrich-Alexander University, Germany	1992 NOV
Certified Investment Advisor (2 years), SpringerGabler Institute, Germany	1988 SEP
Military training and service (15 months), Pioneer Division of German Army	1986 SEP
High school diploma at a vocational business school, Germany	1985 JUN