

NEON

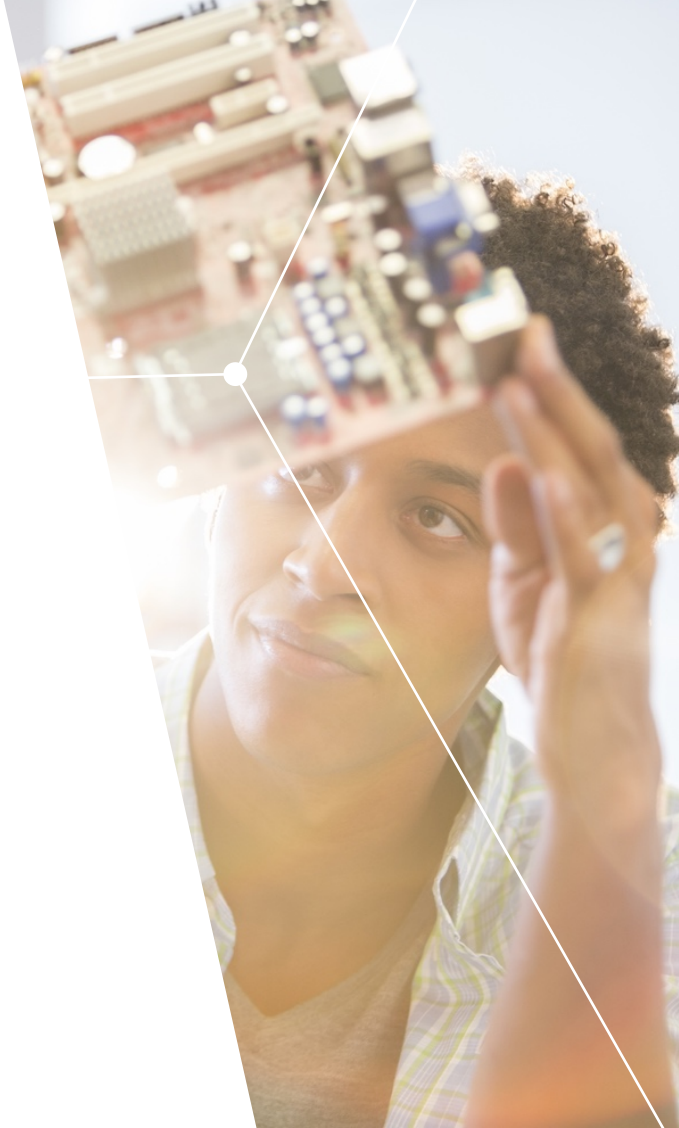
Infineon Leadership Reflection Navigator



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
The Challenge	5
The Commitment	8
The L&D Initiative	10
The Impact	15
Conclusion	17

The index includes links to easily navigate between sections.
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Executive Summary

Infineon Technologies AG, a world leader in semiconductor solutions, sees leadership as a catalyst for dealing with rapidly changing requirements and realizing its growth targets. To ensure flexible and planned adaption to fast moving business environments, ambitious growth targets, digitization and dynamic markets, Infineon developed clear leadership roles and responsibilities: the Infineon Leadership Principles. The vision was that these Leadership Principles would become an integral part of Infineon's culture and corporate strategy and would provide a shared language and understanding of what leadership means at Infineon.

To support this ambitious effort, Infineon explored opportunities to collaborate with a renowned academic institution with expertise in leadership development. Technical University of Munich's excellence in leadership research and experience with creating customized development programs led to a successful collaborative partnership.

The joint project was named Infineon Leadership Reflection Navigator, NEON for short, and includes the methods and tools used to disseminate the Infineon Leadership Principles throughout the company and grow a shared leadership culture. It ran from November 2018 to June 2019 although some activities were available to participants until March 2020. Managers at Infineon completed a self-assessment, received feedback, and reflected on their own leadership behavior using the Leadership Questionnaire and Leadership Profile. They then discussed this feedback in Leadership Dialogs and completed development activities using the Digital Coach App and other methods.

The Leadership Principles continue to have a profound impact on cooperative working at Infineon. Thanks to the NEON project, with its approximately 420 top level participants, they have permeated all areas of the company saturating them with a new leadership culture.



Thus, managers now have a framework to guide their leadership behavior, while employees know what they can expect from their managers. The success of the NEON project and the improved leadership skills demonstrated by the participants inspired Infineon to ensure that the Leadership Principles would become an integral part of corporate strategy embedded into the overall organizational structure.

Introduction

Technical University of Munich

The Technical University of Munich (TUM) is one of Europe's top universities. It is committed to excellence in research and teaching, interdisciplinary education, and the active promotion of promising scientists. The TUM School of Management (TUM-SoM) carries out world-class research and teaching at the interface of management and technology. Its Executive Education Center (EEC) ensures a seamless transfer of knowledge between the university, businesses and society at large.

Research into effective leadership and (human resources) management practices is conducted at the Chair of Research and Science Management

(R&SM) led by current Senior Vice President of TUM and Vice Dean of Executive Education, Prof. Dr. Claudia Peus.

The execution of the NEON Project was entrusted to members of the Center for Digital Leadership Development (CDLD), a special projects team shared by the Chair of R&SM and the EEC, due to their specialized expertise in the areas of leadership development and technology-enhanced learning.

To provide its services, the CDLD worked with 360vier GmbH as software development support for the Leadership Profile application and everskill GmbH as provider of the technical platform for the Digital Coach App.

Infineon Technologies AG

Infineon Technologies AG is a world leader in semiconductor solutions that make life easier, safer and greener. Their semiconductors enable smart mobility, efficient energy management and the secure capture and transfer of data. In the 2019 fiscal year, the company reported sales of €8.0 billion with around 41,400 employees worldwide at more than 70 sites. The headquarter is located in Munich.

At Infineon, the NEON project was based in the HR department and its Vice President of Human Resources and other senior leaders attended workshops and regularly participated in exchanges with the TUM. The project also enjoyed the patronage of the CEO, Dr. Reinhard Ploss, who initiated it and was highly invested in its success.



The Challenge

Prior to the NEON Project, Infineon had introduced a variety of measures and initiatives, as well as conceptual elements, like a High Performance Behavior Model, to increase profitability and to address the challenges of the VUCA world (which stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity). It had also recently revamped its Steps to Employees' Personal Success program, which outlines how goals, expected behaviors and development are agreed upon between managers and employees. In doing so, Infineon recognized that leadership culture is a crucial element for success.

By 2018, Infineon felt ready to tackle the topic of leadership with a palpable will and conviction that common leadership guidelines were necessary and a great openness in discussing goals, solutions as well as problems throughout the company. Three core leadership challenges were identified: Increasingly complex management responsibilities, embracing change as a success factor, and retaining a shared identity. Thus, Infineon wanted to provide a framework for success for the company and for each individual employee. Eight leadership principles were developed and operationalized to guide Infineon's leaders and provide orientation for leadership topics. They strategically complement the Behavior Model and are designed to make all managers think about how they want to lead and succeed in their roles. This forms an important basis for continuous self-reflection and personal development.



Leaders are in a unique position to set the tone, demonstrate the value of human capital, link people to the mission of the organization, and act in consistent, authentic, and strategic ways to make engagement happen."

Markus Fink,
Global Head of Human Resources



What is in the Infineon Leadership Principles?

For Infineon, leadership is a catalyst for dealing with more rapidly changing requirements and realizing Infineon's growth targets. Infineon's markets are becoming more dynamic and the complexity is increasing due to digitalization – leadership needs to be able to handle these challenges and enable the organization to meet future requirements.



The Infineon management team, which consists of the four Infineon Board Members and the four Division Presidents, formulated their vision of leadership at Infineon, including their expectations towards leaders at Infineon. As a corporate strategy, developing and implanting the Leadership Principles was envisioned as a tool for reflection and development throughout the whole company.

They are intended to stimulate leaders to question their actions and behaviors and provide orientation and a basis for discussion and development of leadership. They should also help orient all employees with regards to what they can expect from their leaders at Infineon.

The Infineon Leadership Principles were designed to define the leadership culture at Infineon with an aim towards helping leaders embrace and react quickly to challenges.

Infineon partnered with TUM to navigate the successful dissemination of the Leadership Principles throughout the organization to create a sustainable leadership culture. The guiding principle was to follow a scientific leadership development approach. This involved connecting the applied perspective encased in the Leadership Principles to scientific research on leadership skills and behaviors.

Objectives and Purpose of the Infineon Leadership Principles



Provide orientation: Speak with one voice when articulating leadership expectations at Infineon globally and thus provide clear orientation for employees



Foster reflection: Foster reflection on how leaders at Infineon lead and become successful



Develop leadership skills: Our success depends on our leadership abilities, and the Leadership Principles help us to develop our leadership skills further



Ensure sustainability: Ensure sustainability through continuous improvement and personal development

What were the main constraints?

TUM and Infineon identified several constraints with a bearing on potential solutions. Infineon is a global company with many different units and activities. As such, the solution had to work for managers from all backgrounds, both cultural and professional.

Additionally, as the very top of Infineon's hierarchy was targeted, the solution had to be flexible and non-disruptive and be designed as on-the-job training, precluding prolonged absences from work.

The solution had to fulfill all relevant legal and Infineon-specific quality and privacy regulations. Finally, all of the development had to be accomplished before the High Performance Forum, a hard deadline, as the date for this event had already been set, leaving only five months for development and piloting.



Our success depends largely on our leadership skills and our ability to effectively apply those skills. Our leadership principles are designed to help us further develop our capabilities in this area. They provide a common framework to drive the continuation of our success moving forward."

Dr. Reinhard Ploss,
Chief Executive Officer

The Commitment

Infineon started looking for a way to achieve the implementation of the Leadership Principles after their development by the management team. It was very clear that Infineon needed an approach whereby managers would be able to reflect on their leadership behavior and be actively involved in the deployment.

Infineon had already cooperated successfully with the TUM in a variety of different fields of work and understood the opportunities and possibilities, but also the challenges of working with a renowned public university in Germany. First contact regarding the NEON project was made by CEO Dr. Reinhard Ploss and SVP Prof. Dr. Claudia Peus at a dinner both attended in their respective functions. TUM's Leadership Development Approach, developed by Claudia Peus and her team, fit exceedingly well with Infineon's expectations of what it would take to successfully infuse the company with the new Leadership Principles.



The world of work is changing rapidly as a result of digitalization. This is constantly creating new challenges for managers: complex processes are increasingly challenging them to encourage employees to take the initiative, to motivate in agile team structures even without formal authority and to lead the way as self-reflecting role models for values."

Prof. Dr. Claudia Peus,
Senior Vice President

TUM Leadership Development Approach

- Teaching theories of effective leadership behavior
- Providing practical leadership tools
- Offering evidence-based leadership style feedback
- Encouraging reflective leadership practice



What established the partnership?

The reputation of TUM's excellence in leadership research and the expertise of the Executive Education Center in designing and delivering programs tailor-made to company needs cemented the conviction that a partnership would prove mutually beneficial. Hearing about the Leadership Questionnaire and Profile and the Digital Coach for Leadership offered by TUM, Infineon immediately saw the potential of combining those for deployment.

Further meetings between leadership and program development experts from TUM and leaders from Infineon's HR department followed. The flexibility to translate the scientific Leadership Questionnaire's results into the terms of Infineon's Leadership Principles was a huge advantage for Infineon. The Digital Coach was a means to include new ways of working for Infineon's managers by using an app for their personal, daily leadership development.

After all, the best way to get better at something is to cement practice into routine. The combination of scientifically validated, observable leadership behaviors and daily leadership routines allows individual involvement and reflection – because without reflection there can be no development. The collaboration of Infineon and TUM became an impactful, meaningful, and sustainable system for Infineon to ensure that the Leadership Principles would be firmly anchored into the company culture.



The L&D Initiative

The goal of the NEON project was to introduce the Infineon Leadership Principles throughout the whole company, beginning with management, and to generate buy-in from managers and employees so that the Leadership Principles would be internalized by all as part of the corporate culture. Due to the multinational nature of Infineon, an online program was needed that would not unduly inconvenience the top management participating in the program while still ensuring a sustainable, wide-range impact.

Program Development

During the design stage, the teams from Infineon and TUM met in multiple workshops to create an effective program based on TUM's scientific excellence that would be tailored to the challenges faced by Infineon. The Infineon Leadership Principles and scientific research on leadership were integrated to ensure that the goals contained in the Leadership Principles would match leadership theory. It was also crucial to be sure that using TUM's scientifically validated Leadership

Questionnaire was appropriate. The online questionnaire tool was modified graphically and some administrative functions were added to simplify its use in this project. The Leadership Profile, in contrast, was extensively adapted and expanded to include information about Infineon's Leadership Principles. The assessment results on the scientific dimensions of leadership from the questionnaire were translated to apply directly to the Leadership Principles.

Thus, managers received an individual profile providing feedback and guidance in accordance with the Infineon Leadership Principles. Thanks to the customization process individual results were rooted in a scientifically validates assessment. In addition, the Digital Coach App was adapted to be co-branded with Infineon and to include Infineon-specific learning resources. The Digital Coach serves as knowledge repository and supports training transfer.



Pilot and Roll-out

The NEON program, designed collaboratively by TUM and Infineon, was presented to Infineon's CEO and top HR managers as well as SVP Prof. Claudia Peus of TUM for approval and their input was incorporated before proceeding with the pilot.

The pilot and roll-out stages essentially followed the same process. Potential participants for the pilot stage were identified by HR department leaders to ensure that all relevant subgroups, both cultural and professional, were included.

For the roll-out, all managers above a certain global hierarchy level were encouraged to participate, all the way up to the CEO, and this information was communicated throughout the company.

This was particularly important as some of the participants requested feedback from employees who were not part of this target group. Thus, we needed to make sure that people would not be surprised by e-mails from the TUM and would be aware of the ongoing project their managers were going through.

Program evaluation

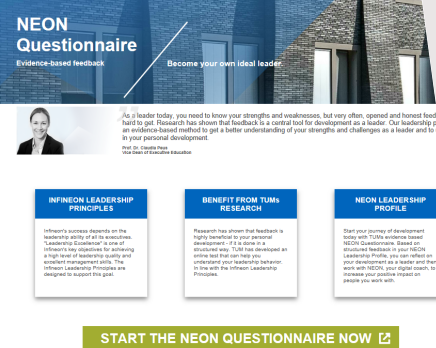
After both the pilot and the roll-out, a survey was conducted to assess the usefulness of and satisfaction with the program. About a quarter of participants responded with their thoughts and feedback. Results are shown throughout this brief.

Step 1: Leadership Principles

The Infineon Leadership Principles were distributed to the target participants, accompanied by a letter from the Board explaining the purpose and goals of this initiative. Additional detailed material was made available via Infineon's intranet.

The target group for the roll-out stage also met at the annual High Performance Forum (HPF) during which SVP Prof. Claudia Peus gave a keynote address regarding the science of leadership as one element of a two-day event aimed at introducing the Leadership Principles and changing the leadership culture at Infineon globally.





NEON Questionnaire
Evidence-based feedback
Become your own ideal leader

As a leader today, you need to know your strengths and weaknesses, but very often, opened and honest feedback is hard to get. Research has shown that feedback is a central tool for development as a leader. Our leadership as an evidence-based method to get a better understanding of your strengths and challenges as a leader and to use in your personal development.

Prof. Dr. Christian Neuhäuser
Head of Leadership Research

INFINEON LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Infineon's success depends on the leadership skills of its executives. Leadership is a skill that can be learned. It is a skill that can be learned by observing a high level of leadership quality and understanding management skills. The Infineon Leadership Principles are designed to support this goal.

BENEFIT FROM TUM LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

Research has shown that feedback is highly beneficial to your personal development. It is a skill that can be learned by observing a high level of leadership quality and understanding management skills. The Infineon Leadership Principles are designed to support this goal.

NEON LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Start your journey of development today with TUM's evidence-based NEON Questionnaire. Based on the feedback in your NEON Leadership Profile, you can reflect on your development as a leader and work with TUM's support team to achieve your personal vision on people you work with.

START THE NEON QUESTIONNAIRE NOW

What do the TUM Leadership Questionnaire and Profile do?

They allow the collection of managers' self-assessments as well as their direct reports' feedback on scientific dimensions of leadership. The results are then compiled in an individual Profile that provides managers with feedback and tools and techniques to improve their leadership behavior and encourages managers to reflect on their behavior. Research by TUM has shown that reflection and feedback are key elements of successful personal and leadership development.

Step 2: NEON Questionnaire

Before the NEON tools were deployed, multiple hour-long webinars were offered by the core project team consisting of members from both organizations. Webinars were well attended and gave an introduction to the purpose of the NEON project and the tools in use, as well as the possibility for questions.

The link to the online tool to take the NEON Questionnaire was distributed via e-mail. Potential participants were reminded of the Questionnaire by the core project team in the pilot and their HR business partners during the roll-out stages.

At the end of the NEON Questionnaire, its online tool allows participants to invite others to give them feedback using the matching questionnaire for external feedback. In the NEON project, participants were instructed to invite all their direct reports.

While focal participants in the pilot only had a period of two weeks in which to take the questionnaire, for the roll-out, this period was extended to three months.

Step 3: NEON Leadership Profile

Ten days after their individual participation in the NEON Questionnaire, managers received their NEON Leadership Profile via e-mail. Provided that a sufficient number of their direct reports gave feedback, their Leadership Profile contained both a self-evaluation and external feedback in an aggregated fashion.

The questionnaire results were put into relation to the Infineon Leadership Principles and indicated both strengths and areas for development. The Leadership Profile also included an open feedback section, which participants valued greatly.



Guiding Questions

Which areas are my strengths?
What are areas for improvement?
What is already working well?
What needs to work better in the future?
What is the gap between the self- and external evaluation?

Step 4: NEON Dialog

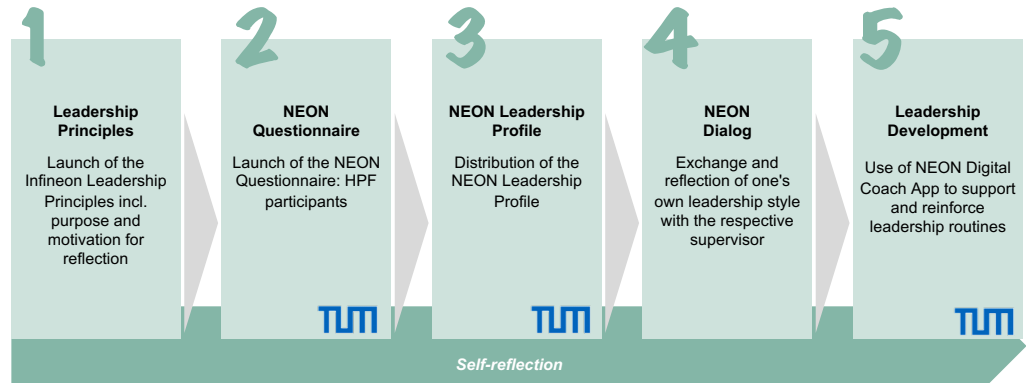
The NEON Dialog was based on the concept of a leadership dialogue, a measure that had been well-established in the company prior to the NEON project. It was adapted to ensure that participants would benefit the most from their Leadership Profiles.

In their NEON Dialog, managers reflected on the feedback they received and what the Infineon Leadership Principles mean for their particular situation in the company. They then created their own personal development plan targeted both at improving their own behavior and changing the leadership culture in their area of responsibility.

Participant support

During the NEON project, participant support was available via dedicated e-mail addresses from both Infineon and TUM. Infineon focused on questions regarding the Leadership Principles and company-internal processes and offers. TUM answered questions regarding leadership science, personal development, and the NEON tools. Technical issues pertaining to the Digital Coach App were addressed by everskill GmbH, the provider of the technical platform.

The NEON Process: An innovative online leadership development program



Step 5: Leadership Development

While participants continued to have access to the existing professional development offers at Infineon to reach their development goals, the NEON project introduced an innovative new learning solution. Making use of the latest in educational technology, the NEON Digital Coach App is designed to foster the development of managers by prompting self-reflection and building behavioral routines. The Digital Coach increases the engagement of participants in proactive learning behaviors and prevents relapses in transfer of training. Participants received access to the Digital Coach for one year with the first six weeks characterized by a frequent provision of new content, as research argues that it takes approximately six weeks for new habits to form. The Digital Coach App makes use of gamification elements to provide individual progress indicators and sustain motivation.

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NEON represents all methods and tools corresponding to the Infineon Leadership Principles and serves as frame for navigating through the leadership reflection progress.



Practical challenges

Several challenges had to be overcome in order to implement the program. Technical difficulties resulted from integrating TUM's questionnaire tool with Infineon's IT-security measures. Regular updates at Infineon required constant vigilance and occasional adjustments to ensure that all participants had access to the tool. In addition, the Leadership Profiles are sent out via email by default, however, for many top managers at Infineon, personal assistants have access to their inboxes. As the Leadership Profile is a sensitive, highly private document, an additional password protection had to be created.

A survey and feedback session after the pilot led to changes in the Questionnaire, Leadership Profile and Digital Coach App. Besides minor changes to increase clarity and ease of use in all NEON products, the Leadership Profile's structure was substantially overhauled. Participants indicated difficulty in gaining a quick understanding of the content offered by the Profile. Thus, it was updated to be more streamlined and easier for participants to navigate.

The global reach of the program required webinars based in Germany to be scheduled early in the morning or late at night to enable attendance from around the globe.

The Impact

The Infineon Leadership Principles have found their way into all aspects of the company, fulfilling the NEON project's intended purpose. In fact, in the current acquisition of a US-company, the biggest in Infineon's history, they help to facilitate the integration of new employees and the creation of a shared leadership culture.

The Leadership Principles have become an integral part of the Infineon culture and provide a shared language and understanding of what leadership means at Infineon.

They inspire and support various diagnostic procedures and training opportunities and are being rapidly incorporated into existing management tools.

Also, they form a basis for discussion in a number of organizational settings such as workshops or leadership team developments, encouraging employees to work together to identify good practices and areas offering scope for improvement. HR Business Partners were trained in the use of the Leadership Principles and the Leadership Profile so they can act as facilitators and integrate them into existing development offers at Infineon. This also means they can continue to provide sustainable support in the future.

The new Infineon Leadership Principles underpin Infineon's commitment to continuously improving leadership qualities in the company. One example is the "Leadership Dialog" – an established format in which employees provide their managers with feedback. Leadership excellence is one of the key pillars of future success; and Leadership Dialogs are an integral part of a feedback culture enabling high-quality leadership and effective teamwork.

Integrating the Leadership Principles into the Leadership Dialog creates another important opportunity for employees to reflect on their performance. The Principles will provide a basis for employees to reflect more effectively on the leadership qualities they have experienced and the behaviors they would like to see, paving the way for concrete improvement suggestions around each principle.

85%

Of the participants state that overall, they are satisfied with the NEON Leadership Profile.

NEON Project success

Looking at the NEON project, approximately 420 leaders received feedback from over 3000 of their direct reports through the Leadership Questionnaire. Infineon had set the goal to have 80% of the target group for the roll-out complete the questionnaire.

The goal was exceeded with a participation rate of over 90%, allowing leaders to receive in depth feedback on their behavior and as a result better enhance their individual leadership skills. Leaders were regularly encouraged to discuss their Leadership Profile with their supervisors, leading to something of a bottom-up push, which potentially explains this stellar result.

The use of the Digital Coach App was also tracked, although no specific goal was set. Over 70% of the target group logged into the App and used it multiple times a week to train and reflect on their leadership behavior during the first weeks of the program. Although research results have shown that new behaviors become routine after about six weeks, even a year later, the App is still in use.

85%

Of the participants say that the NEON Leadership Profile helped in identifying strengths and areas for improvement regarding the Leadership Principles.

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“The balance between my strength and development areas - clear guidance for both.”

“The transfer from the profile to the routines is very easy. The routines are helping me a lot and I'm working with them constantly. The voluntary commitment through the app makes me do something and gives me motivation. Otherwise, I probably wouldn't do that.”

“I think the app is very intuitive. The routines are nicely written and lower the inhibition a lot: you think, oh, I can do that. You don't have such a paralyzing awe of it.”

“The link between the Leadership Principles and results of the Questionnaire are made explicit and transparent in the Leadership Profile.”

“The personal feedback from the team was a very helpful perspective to think about my leadership style.”



Conclusion

The NEON project was a first in many regards: For TUM School of Management's Executive Education Center, it was the first fully online customized company program and the first where the Leadership Questionnaire and particularly the Leadership Profile were modified to such an extent. It was also one of the largest single programs by participant numbers. For Infineon, it was the first initiative in many years which aimed to provide an identical and simultaneous experience for top managers worldwide. It was also the first large-scale collaboration of TUM and Infineon in the area of HR.

Infineon and TUM successfully developed and executed an innovative program utilizing the benefits of mobile learning and educational technology in line with the strategic objectives of the new Leadership Principles. Recognizing the value of the program's impact on the company culture, both are considering a proposal to make the program available to the next levels of the company's hierarchy. This would expand the cohort to over 1000 participants at once, a challenge in and of itself. The success of the project has cemented the strong partnership between TUM and Infineon providing a foundation to master future challenges together.



Leadership is similar to sport. The Leadership Principles are our overarching target. We all have areas of preference, of natural strengths and naturally also development areas. The NEON Questionnaire helps us identify strengths and development areas, and the NEON Coach supports us in training our leadership muscles, like a fitness test and apps help us get better in sports.“

Corinna Wolf,
Senior Director Human Resources



