



# bernecapitalarea

MAGAZINE ON BUSINESS, SCIENCE AND LIVING IN THE CANTON OF BERN, SWITZERLAND

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Dear reader,

Medical technology and biotechnology play a key role in the future of the Canton of Bern as a business location. The ability to innovate is crucially important for the companies and institutions based here. As the Canton of Bern Minister of Economic Affairs, I am therefore fully committed to providing an innovation-friendly environment.

The Canton of Bern is implementing three large flagship projects on the Biel/Bienne–Bern–Thun axis. The Switzerland Innovation Park is taking shape in Biel/Bienne; sitem-insel, the Swiss Institute for Translational and Entrepreneurial Medicine is now operational in Bern; and in Thun preparations for another pioneering project are underway with the expansion of the Empa site.

All three projects relate to the medical technology industry, whether in the form of additive manufacturing (3D printing) of implants at Empa in Thun, developing high-tech medical and dental technology components at the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne, or the clinical application of innovative products at sitem-insel in Bern.

I will do everything in my power to enable these flagship projects to achieve maximum impact so that the entire canton will benefit from them.

In this issue of bernecapitalarea you'll read about how entrepreneur Simon Michel rates Bern as a medtech location and you'll find out more about the inner workings of sitem-insel AG in Bern.

Yours truly,

Christoph Ammann,  
Member of the Government of the Canton of Bern  
and Canton of Bern Minister of Economic Affairs

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# “We find our best capital here”

## A conversation with Simon Michel, CEO, Ypsomed AG

Ypsomed AG improves the quality of life of diabetics with product innovations from Burgdorf and is expanding its headquarters in the Canton of Bern. CEO Simon Michel explains.

**You recently started producing a new insulin pump in Burgdorf. What added value does this world innovation bring your customers?**

“Our insulin pump massively increases the quality of life of people with diabetes. It enables them to stabilize their blood sugar levels better and it simplifies their daily routine because it is small and easy to use. But we aren't resting on our laurels with this new product: we are continuing to develop it with a view to automating insulin administration even further in the future.”

**Ypsomed has been doing business successfully in Burgdorf for the past 30 years. How does this benefit the region as a whole?**

“Ypsomed is one of the largest employers in the region. We offer our employees a wide range of training and professional development programs, a subsidized crèche with guaranteed places, free gym membership, flexible retirement up to age 70, and lots more besides. In the 2016/17 financial year from April to March we created more than 100 jobs in Switzerland alone, more than half of which are in Burgdorf. We also expanded our offering for apprentices: we are currently training around 60 young people in 11 different professions. What's more, Ypsomed's increasing financial success is also attractive to the region from the point of view of tax revenues.”

**“Our insulin pump massively increases quality of life.”**

**You are planning to invest more than CHF 100 million in expanding your Swiss manufacturing facilities by 2019. Other companies are moving their facilities abroad because of the strong Swiss franc but Ypsomed is remaining loyal to its bases in Switzerland. Why is that?**

“There are various factors that played a decisive role in our decision to set up here. We have infrastructure and capacity in Burgdorf and Solothurn which we want to expand between now and 2019 and exploit to the full. For instance, we are planning to expand both our mold production capacity and our labs so that we are less dependent on suppliers. We are also creating office jobs for more than 100 additional specialists. We can produce extremely efficiently and with a high degree of automation at both sites and we have a highly competent workforce.”

**How will the Canton of Bern as an R&D center benefit from your company's growth trajectory?**

“We already employ more than 100 engineers in Burgdorf and we will be adding at least another 50 people to our team over the next few years. We will also be investing in digitizing our products as well as in additional process automation. So our collaboration with universities and universities of applied sciences is set to become even more important.”

**Why is the Canton of Bern so attractive to your employees as a place to live and work?**

“The excellent quality of life here – such as the wide-ranging cultural life and our proximity to nature – are important criteria for our staff. Most settle with their families within easy reach of our sites, which also indirectly results in a low turnover rate. Our net staff turnover is currently at less than four percent! The fact that public transport is easy to access is also relevant.”

### About the company

Burgdorf-based **Ypsomed Holding AG** is the world's leading developer and manufacturer of injection and infusion systems for self-administration of liquid medications. Formed in 2003 as an offshoot of the former Disetronic Group, the company has a global network of manufacturing sites, subsidiaries and distributors. Ypsomed employs around 1,300 people worldwide and posted sales of CHF 337 million and an operating result of over CHF 44 million in 2015/16. The company is listed on the Swiss stock exchange.



"I consider it a privilege to be able to work with so many talented people and to achieve our shared vision: making self-medication the most natural thing in the world!" Simon Michel

**How does the strong, long-established medtech environment that exists in the Canton of Bern impact on your business?**

"Quite significantly. Our biggest capital – qualified, motivated staff – has always been readily available in sufficient numbers in the Bern region. It is our high-skilled people who are the driving force behind our development!"

**Information**

[www.ypsomed.com](http://www.ypsomed.com)

**About the person**

**Simon Michel**, who hails from Burgdorf, took over as CEO of the Ypsomed Group in 2014. He has a first degree in economics and a master's in media and communication management from the University of St. Gallen and worked for Orange Communications AG before joining his father's business in 2006. In his free time Simon Michel likes to take overseas adventure holidays with his wife and two sons or play winter sports such as skiing in the Bernese Oberland.

# “Our invention is a milestone for kidney patients”

## Calciscon AG supports people with renal insufficiency

The startup Calciscon AG has launched a groundbreaking biotech innovation for kidney patients and moved to new premises in the Canton of Bern in February. CEO Dr. Andreas Pasch reveals more.

### Why is the innovative new blood test you developed being seen as a milestone by many kidney patients?

“One of the most common complications in impaired or loss of renal function is calcification of the blood vessels, a condition that can often have a fatal outcome. A problem for people with renal insufficiency is that the calcium phosphate they take ends up not in the bones but lining the blood vessels. The bones become thinner while the vessels become calcified. I tackled this medical challenge in 2011, when I was doing some research work at Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen (RWTH Aachen University): working with a group of scientists, I developed a unique lab test that can determine calcification propensity in blood. For kidney patients, our invention means that any calcification propensity can be identified more quickly and their doctor can start personalized treatment based on this diagnosis. We expect the innovative T50 test we have launched to enable renal-insufficiency patients to benefit from a much-improved quality of life and life expectancy.”

**“Our invention can give millions of patients across the globe a better and longer life.”**

### How has your startup progressed since it was established in 2013?

“The results of the clinical tests, the scientific data and the practical experience gained by our first major customer – Inselspital in Bern – are very good. We have also obtained the relevant ISO and CE certifications for our T50 test. The various awards we have received since starting out bear testimony to the fact that our blood test is also acknowledged as groundbreaking by the industry. In Switzerland, for example, we received funding from Venture Kick and the W. A. de Vigier Foundation and won the Heuberger Young Entrepreneur Award. And in 2014, 2015, and 2016 we were voted as one of the top 100 Swiss startups. This February we expanded into new premises at INNOCAMPUS in Biel/Bienne, giving us more space for research, development and manufacturing.”

### How do you rate your chances of becoming market leader in diagnostic tests for early identification of calcification risks in the future?

“Five percent of the world’s population suffer from kidney disease, so the market for our innovation is huge. My vision is for our blood test to become a standard part of medical screenings worldwide in the future, as well as in the treatment of other patient groups at risk of calcification such as diabetes, cardiac infarction, or stroke patients. Looking ahead, we would like to expand our portfolio with therapeutics but it takes a long time for a new process or innovative medicinal product to become widely accepted, so it is important for any company founder or inventor to have perseverance and a high frustration threshold.”

### About the company

The Bern-based startup **Calciscon AG** has invented and commercialized the world’s first laboratory test for measuring calcification propensity in blood. Thanks to the new blood test, patients at risk of calcification can be identified and treated early, reducing cardiovascular problems and improving life expectancy, particularly for kidney disease patients. Founded in 2013, the startup was based at the Institute for Clinical Chemistry at Inselspital in Bern from 2014 to January 2017. Calciscon’s research, development and manufacturing activities have been based at INNOCAMPUS in Biel/Bienne since February 2017.



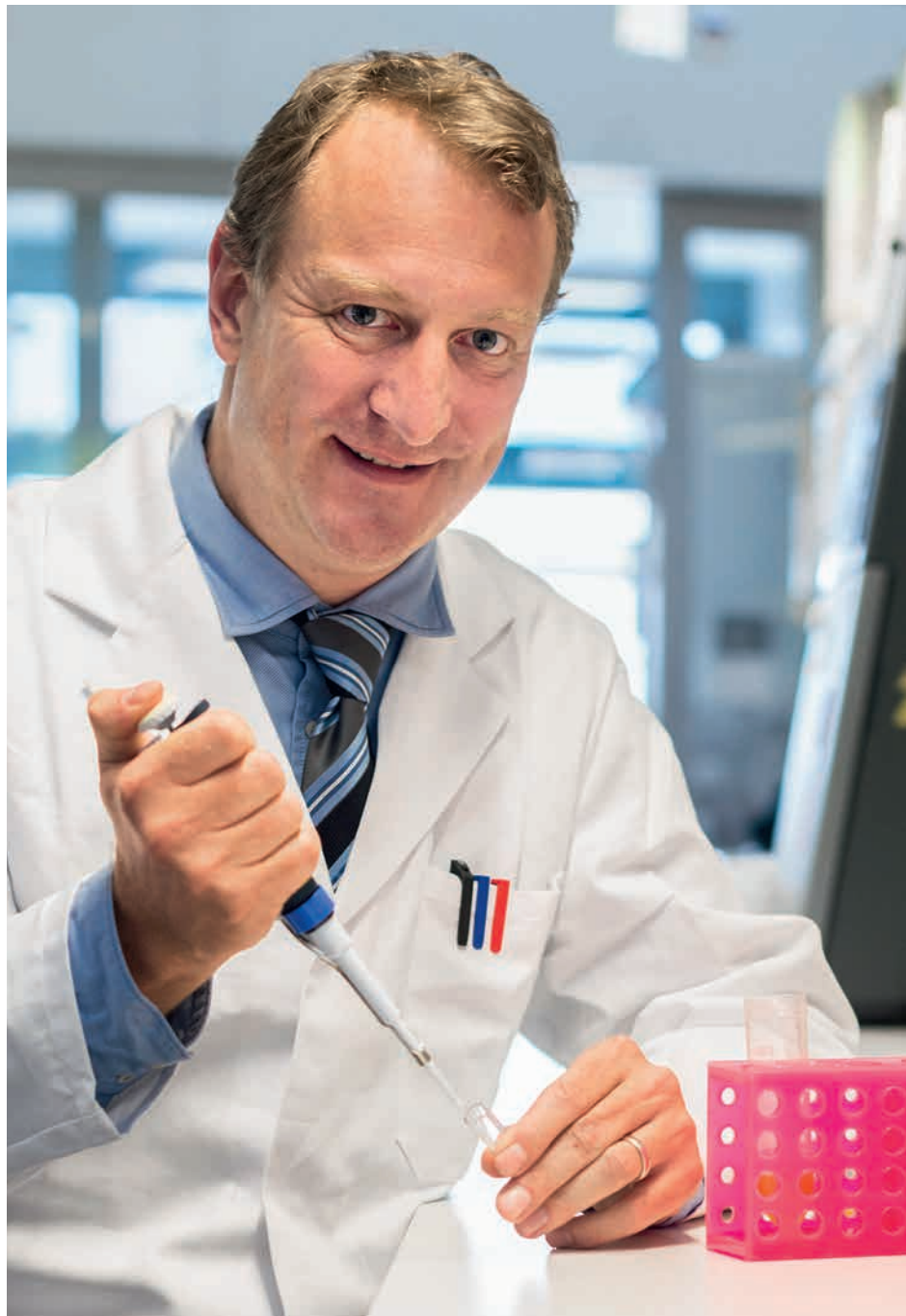
Getting a startup established in the market also involves a lot of work applying for funding and securing investors prepared to commit on a long-term basis and, of course, dealing with a huge amount of red tape, such as regulatory systems, licensing procedures, and patents. If we continue to meet these challenges successfully going forward, our company could easily have a workforce of a hundred in a few years' time rather than the three we have today – and, most importantly, our invention could be giving millions of patients across the globe a better and longer life."

#### Information

[www.calciscon.com](http://www.calciscon.com)

#### About the person

**Dr. Andreas Pasch** trained as a bank clerk at Deutsche Bank and a paramedic with the German Red Cross. He has degrees in law and medicine and has a doctorate in Molecular Pathology from Tübingen University Hospital. Latterly Pasch was a senior nephrologist at Inselspital Bern before switching full-time to his startup Calciscon AG in early 2016. Pasch, who lives in Bern, likes to spend his leisure time with his family or reading a good book.



"Our test produces a very accurate functional overall picture of calcification propensity in blood, enabling the patient's treatment to be tailored very precisely and effectively."  
Dr. Andreas Pasch

# “Industry and academic research go hand in hand here”

**SWAN Isotopen AG at SWAN House at Bern's Inselspital**

SWAN Isotopen AG CEO Dr. Konrade von Bremen explains how the company is breaking new ground in tumor diagnosis and treatment in an interdisciplinary cooperation at the Inselspital campus in Bern.



Interdisciplinary team: Associate Professor Saverio Braccini of the Albert Einstein Center for Fundamental Physics and the University of Bern high-energy physics laboratory, Professor Dr. Andreas Türler, head of the University of Bern radiochemistry lab and laboratory head at the Paul Scherrer Institute, Dr. Konrade von Bremen, CEO of SWAN Isotopen AG, and Dr. Christian Schweinsberg, COO.





**You moved into the new SWAN House at the Inselspital campus in January 2012. What exactly happens inside this high-tech building?**

“Following a complicated setup and validation phase, SWAN Isotopen AG has been operating in the Swiss market as a fully accredited radiopharmaceutical company since the summer of 2013. The centerpiece of our production facilities, the cyclotron, is in the basement of SWAN House. Weighing in at 20 tonnes, this particle accelerator is surrounded by concrete walls more than 2 m thick. We use it to produce radioisotopes, the source material for radiopharmaceuticals. The two upper floors house Inselspital’s state-of-the-art palliative care and nuclear medicine wards.”

**How does the use of radioisotopes benefit cancer treatment?**

“Radioisotopes are radioactive variants of normal chemical elements. Within a few hours they break down into nonradioactive substances, and in doing so they emit elementary particles that enable us to visualize tumors. Here at SWAN, radioisotopes are converted into sugar-based radiopharmaceuticals using a highly complex synthesis process. These radiopharmaceuticals are injected into the patient after undergoing strict quality controls. Because the tumor needs energy to grow, it absorbs the sugar and therefore the radioisotopes, revealing its location and extent in the PET CT, a high-tech molecular imaging process. The PET CT can reveal even very small metastases, enabling the oncologist to assess whether the operation, chemotherapy, or radiotherapy was successful and to adapt future treatment to the outcome. What this means for the patient is that they receive treatment tailored specifically to them and their disease.”

**About the company**

**SWAN Isotopen AG** runs one of Europe’s most modern commercial radioisotope production facilities on the Bern Inselspital campus. Founded in 2007 by the Inselspital foundation together with private strategic shareholders, the company produces and sells radiopharmaceuticals for molecular diagnostics and develops new diagnostic products in close collaboration with radiochemistry and high-energy physics research groups at the University of Bern. SWAN Isotopen AG’s products are used in tumor diagnosis and for monitoring the progress of treatment.



"At night our facilities are used for production, and during the day researchers from the University of Bern carry out experiments here."  
Dr. Konrade von Bremen

#### About the person

**Dr. Konrade von Bremen**, CEO of SWAN Isotopen AG since 2008, has played a key role in developing and building the SWAN Group. After qualifying as a Swiss Medical Association certified specialist in internal medicine and completing a Master's in Health Economy and Management at the University of Lausanne, Dr. von Bremen worked as Deputy Medical Director of the Lausanne University Clinic and as Medical Director Neurology at the medtech group Medtronic before taking over program management for design and medical and economic feasibility of isotope production and proton therapy at Inselspital in 2006.

**The first product you launched was the glucose derivative Flu-SWAN in 2012. Have you and your team created other radiopharmaceuticals since then?**

"In November 2016 we obtained market authorization from Swissmedic for another product, F Cholin for PET diagnosis of prostate cancer. Other radiopharmaceuticals are in the pipeline for applications such as early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease."

**"Translation and Entrepreneurship in Medicine is what we do every day."**

**Flu-SWAN has a very short half-life. How do you manage to time its production to coincide with the treatment and ensure short delivery times?**

"At SWAN House, production takes place mainly at night, so that the products can get to where they are needed in the hospi-

tal in plenty of time first thing in the morning. While the quality controls are taking place, Flu-SWAN is being packed ready for transportation and is delivered to the customer by the quickest route. We are one of the few companies in Switzerland – and in fact the only one in the Espace Mittelland area – offering a transport service for radioactive materials in our own specially designed vehicles."

**How does SWAN House benefit your business?**

"This innovative, high-tech research and production environment at the heart of the Inselspital campus delivers synergies that we can systematically exploit. We all benefit from the highly complex, net-

worked diversity and infrastructure that is perfectly geared to our needs. In our interdisciplinary team, we work closely together with high-energy physicists and radiochemists at the University of Bern who work in their own labs right next to our production facilities. Far from being mere theory, translation and entrepreneurship in medicine is what we do every day at SWAN House!"

#### Information

[www.swantec.ch](http://www.swantec.ch)



# Operation “The Future of Health Care”

## The Living Lab in Biel/Bienne

The Institute for Medical Informatics (IMI) at the Bern University of Applied Sciences in Biel/Bienne is developing solutions to facilitate the process adaptations that health care services urgently need. Prof. Dr. Jürgen Holm reveals how.

“The Living Lab is a platform where students, researchers, and project partners can come together to work on groundbreaking ICT processes designed to benefit people and health care services in Switzerland,” head of department Jürgen Holm explains. At the Bern University of Applied Sciences Höhweg site in Biel/Bienne, Medical Informatics students are learning how to design, test, and improve ICT applications and build prototypes, at the same time gaining a greater understanding of the connections within Swiss

health care services and the various players involved in them. The setting for this research environment, which extends across four floors, is extremely realistic right down to the last detail. All the units in the laboratory, such as the pharmacy, the GP’s practice, the operating theater, the intensive care unit and the insurance department, and even the two-room apartment on the top floor housing a fictitious elderly couple, Mr and Mrs Brönnimann-Bertholet, are fitted with software and networked. The projects range from a “smart wardrobe” that selects appropriate clothing for the weather for Kurt Brönnimann, who suffers from mild dementia, to a carpeted floor containing sensors that trigger an alarm if Mr or Mrs Brönnimann-Bertholet fall at home.

**“We build bridges between medicine and ICT.”**

### About the person

**Prof. Dr. Jürgen Holm** is head of the Medical Informatics Department and Professor of Medical Informatics at BFH-TI in Biel/Bienne. Holm studied biology in Heidelberg, obtained his doctorate at ETH Zurich in 1995 and set up Bitplane AG (3D and 4D image processing) and Qualidoc AG (clinical information systems) before working as an ICT consultant in health care and as a lecturer and project manager at BFH-TI. The father of two adult children lives with his wife in Olten. His hobbies are travel photography, swimming, walking and skiing.



In the two-room apartment in the Living Lab, the students test innovations in medical technology for the fictitious elderly couple Mr and Mrs Brönnimann-Bertholet, such as a “smart wardrobe” that helps people suffering from mild dementia to decide what clothes to wear.



"In our Living Lab, we can test and develop user cases and medical informatics applications in a realistic environment." Jürgen Holm

### Practicable, groundbreaking solutions

"Medical informatics doesn't mean sitting at the computer programming all day long," Holm stresses. "Creativity and interdisciplinarity are key here." Holm and his team are particularly keen to produce solutions that will help society look after and care for the elderly in the future. "As the number of chronically sick and very elderly patients increases, it is becoming more and more important to adapt our health care processes. We have a lot of experience in developing practical solutions and have close relationships with service providers and partners in the industry, so we

are able to offer our research partners extensive support in all areas from process analysis, conception, design, and implementation to practical testing," Jürgen Holm explains. The many different activities being carried out in this lab, the first of its kind anywhere in Europe, include projects funded by CTI and the EU as well as industry-funded research for IT manufacturers in the health care sector and for institutions such as hospitals, the Swiss digital health coordinating body eHealth Suisse, and public authorities. The interdisciplinary team is made up of nine lecturers and other academics who are experts in medicine, medical infor-





#### About the Living Lab

**The Living Lab** at the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH-TI) Institute for Medical Informatics (IMI) in Biel/Bienne is a unique laboratory environment that recreates the key components of health care services. ICT applications for medical and personal use are developed and tested there. At the Höhweg site, different units such as the hospital, the GP's practice and the pharmacy communicate with each other via the eHealth platforms. The Living Lab is used by the students of the Medical Informatics course – the only one of its kind in Switzerland – as a center for research and training.

matics, business administration and statistics. “For the IT applications, we also work closely with the IT institutes at the University of Applied Sciences,” Holm says.

Demand for graduates of the Medical Informatics course, which was only launched in 2011, is huge. “We were the first Medical Informatics Institute in Switzerland, and as such we are building bridges at the interface between medicine and ICT,” Holm explains. “In our Living Lab we teach our students not only to understand the individual disciplines in health

care but we also draw their attention to the core themes of patient safety, efficiency and quality. We are committed to using new technologies to make the hospital of the future a transparent, professional, and cost-effective institution, particularly from the patient's point of view and in the patient's interest.”

#### Information

[www.ti.bfh.ch](http://www.ti.bfh.ch)

# Expanding and strengthening Bern as a medical hub

## Sitem-insel AG under the microscope

The Swiss Institute for Translational and Entrepreneurial Medicine in Bern is growing and thriving. From 2019 onwards, all the players involved will be working together in the new sitem-insel building on the Insel Campus.

Translational medicine is playing an ever more important role in focusing attention on the need to translate new findings and products into clinical applications. Despite the wealth of new findings from research and development, only a relatively small number of truly innovative products that can benefit patients have so far made it to market. Sitem-insel Ltd was formed in November 2014 and has been operational since January this year. Its founding shareholders include CSL Behring AG, the University of Bern and the Bern University of Applied Sciences. Sitem-insel AG does not focus on individual disciplines or products but seeks to overcome the weaknesses in the translational process with its three pillars: professionalizing the translational process by providing specialist training; promoting cooperation

**“Bern is home to world-class medicine in academic, practical and research disciplines.”**

between industry, nonclinical research departments, and university hospitals by providing infrastructure and personnel; and optimizing administrative and regulatory effort and driving forward innovations on their path from the laboratory bench to commercialization through its Translation Promoting Services.

The first students and their projects will be incorporated into the teaching environment in April 2017. Translational projects such as the introduction of a 7-tesla MRI

in collaboration with Siemens and the acquisition and testing of highly specialized metabolomics analyzers from Waters are already underway, and a Swiss cell therapy platform is currently being set up by stakeholders from both the private industrial sector and universities. Projects will be run at Inselspital and University of Bern premises to begin with, but from 2019 onwards all the players involved will be brought together in a new building conveniently situated in Health City on the Insel campus. The spatial structure and use of the new four-story building have been designed around the concept of open communication, an essential element in the translational process, which will involve representatives of industry, fundamental research, hospitals and authorities.

### Public-private partnership

Sitem-insel chose Bern as its base because of its outstanding credentials as a hub for translational medicine. Inselspital in Bern is a highly regarded center of excellence in clinical research that has treated the highest number of patients of any hospital in Switzerland since it merged with

the hospital network Spital Netz Bern. In addition, Bern is home to world-class teaching, application, and research in many medical disciplines as well as various institutions associated with translational medicine, such as the ARTORG Center for Biomedical Engineering Research at the University of Bern, the Institute for Surgical Technology and Biomechanics, and the University of Bern's National Centers of Competence, “Transcure” and “RNA and Disease.” Located as it is at the heart of the Medtech Cluster, an area where more and more pharmaceutical companies are establishing branches and head offices, the Swiss capital city acts as a bridge with excellent opportunities for cooperation at the language boundary between the Lake Geneva (French-speaking) and Basel/Zurich (German-speaking) areas.

In order for innovation to lead to economic returns and value creation, the knowledge network must be optimally linked to the entrepreneurial network. This is the fundamental principle behind the establishment of sitem-insel as a public-private partnership, funded in its initial years by the federal government and the canton, industry, and various foundations and expected to become self-funding in the medium term.

### Information

[www.sitem-insel.ch](http://www.sitem-insel.ch)

### About the company

**Sitem-insel AG** has been developing a national center of excellence in Bern since 2014 with the aim of professionalizing and accelerating the transfer of innovations from fundamental research and industrial development into medical practice. The Swiss Institute for Translational and Entrepreneurial Medicine (sitem-insel) is a non-profit, independent public company initiated by the Bern Economic Development Agency together with the industrial sector, the University of Bern, the Bern University of Applied Sciences, and Inselspital, and aims to be completely self-funding in the medium term.





The competition to design the new sitem-insel building on the Insel Campus, which is scheduled for completion in 2019, was won by Bern-based architects' practice Büro B. It is hoped that its close proximity to Inselspital will lead to reciprocal cross-pollination between industry, business and applied medicine.



#### About the person

**Felix Frey** is CEO and cofounder of sitem-insel AG and has been involved in translational research since 1971. Frey qualified in internal medicine and nephrology at Inselspital and the University of California in San Francisco. As a professor at the University of Bern, he headed various Inselspital departments and held the position of Vice Chancellor, Research. A former member of the Swiss National Science Foundation Research Council, Felix Frey has also served as a scientific expert on the Swiss Federal Drug Commission.

### Sitem-insel's mission: To improve the general environment for translational medicine in Switzerland

#### Strategy

##### sitem Swiss School

Specialist degree programs taught by lecturers from industry and academia

##### sitem Enabling Facilities

Specialist R&D workshop, labs and translational facilities for joint use by industry and academia

##### sitem Promoting Services

Services that promote innovation and optimize the administrative and regulatory effort from lab bench to commercialization

# “Flying from Bern Airport is quick and easy”

## Bern Airport connects the capital region to the world

Attractive destinations, short distances, low-cost parking, fast check-in times, and good traffic links make Bern Airport a popular departure point for business and leisure travelers.

“Around 200,000 passengers use our airport every year, including a number of many business travelers. What’s more, visitors can access several tourist areas in the Bernese Oberland within just one hour’s drive,” airport CEO Mathias Gantenbein tells us. Together with its partner companies, Bern Airport generates about 480 full-time jobs and around CHF 174 million in added value, making it a powerful driving force for economic and tourism development in the wider Bern-Espace Mittelland region. The capital city’s airport handles all scheduled, charter, and general aviation segments. A key area is business air travel. “Business travelers particularly appreciate the short check-in times at our airport – just 20 minutes for scheduled flights – as well as the low-cost parking and easy access by car or public transport. The ability to fly from and to Bern is also an important location advantage for companies based here,” Mathias Gantenbein adds. “We offer conveniently timed connecting flights to many of Europe’s major business centers, and in the terminal passengers can enjoy a range of catering facilities and free Wi-Fi. In addition, we recently introduced free, downloadable travel guides for many of our destinations on our website and you can now book our small airport lounge conveniently with just a few clicks of the mouse.”

**“Around  
200,000  
passengers use  
Bern Airport  
every year.”**

### About Bern Airport

**Bern Airport AG** operates Bern Airport as an independent public limited company and federal concessionaire. Bern Airport was founded in 1929 and is therefore one of the oldest aviation facilities in Switzerland. It serves the Swiss Mittelland, the Bernese Oberland and Upper Valais with around 55,000 flight movements and some 200,000 passengers per year. In 2016 the 86-strong workforce at Bern Airport AG achieved turnover of approximately CHF 14 million.







Easy and efficient: the check-in time for scheduled flights at Bern Airport is just 20 minutes. There are flights to around 25 European destinations from Bern Airport.

### Attractive for business and leisure travel

Bern Airport has been constantly optimizing its offering in recent years. Its partners SkyWork Airlines, Helvetic Airways, Germania Flug, and Etihad Regional offer around 25 connections to numerous popular destinations. There are two daily flights to Munich, for example; in summer there are also flights to Jersey, Usedom and Cyprus, and flights to the holiday island of Mallorca operate all year round. "Our flights to pulsating cities like Berlin, Hamburg, London, Munich, or Vienna are extremely popular with both business and leisure travelers. But you can also fly quickly and conveniently to beach resort destinations like the Balearics, the Greek islands, and now also the North Sea island of Sylt from Bern," the airport CEO tells us. "What's more, with SkyWork Airlines and Air-France/KLM our customers can fly anywhere in the world via Amsterdam."

### Information

[www.flughafenbern.ch](http://www.flughafenbern.ch)



New destinations from Bern since 2016: Larnaca (Cyprus) with Helvetic Airways, Calvi (Corsica) with Germania Flug, and Jersey, Usedom, and Sylt with SkyWork Airlines throughout the summer season.



### About the person

**Dr. Mathias Gantenbein** has been CEO of Bern Airport AG since November 2015. Before that he was head of the Federal Travel Center at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and department head of special aviation financing at the Federal Office for Civil Aviation. Gantenbein, who hails from Bern, studied business administration, economics and law at the University of Bern and wrote his dissertation on the economic significance of airports. The father of two started his career in aviation with Air Engadina where he worked as a student, and has a private pilot's license.



# On top of the world with a 360° view

Schilthornbahn AG delivers breathtaking highlights on the Schilthorn

The Mürren-Schilthorn holiday region is an exciting year-round destination. CEO Christoph Egger tells us why, and what attractions Schilthornbahn AG has in store for its guests in both summer and winter.

“Steep slopes, long descents, modern transport facilities, cozy restaurants and hotels, and a breathtaking panorama – everyone who comes here takes away unforgettable memories at any time of the year, whether they are sports or leisure fans and whether they are seeking peace and quiet or adventure,” says Christoph Egger, CEO of Schilthornbahn AG. The Bernese Oberland’s highest altitude resort is famous the world over, not least for the Inferno Race, a downhill skiing event established in 1928 by a group of English skiing pioneers, which today attracts almost 1,900 participants. Then there’s the Inferno Triathlon, another major sporting event that takes place in the Schilthorn area every

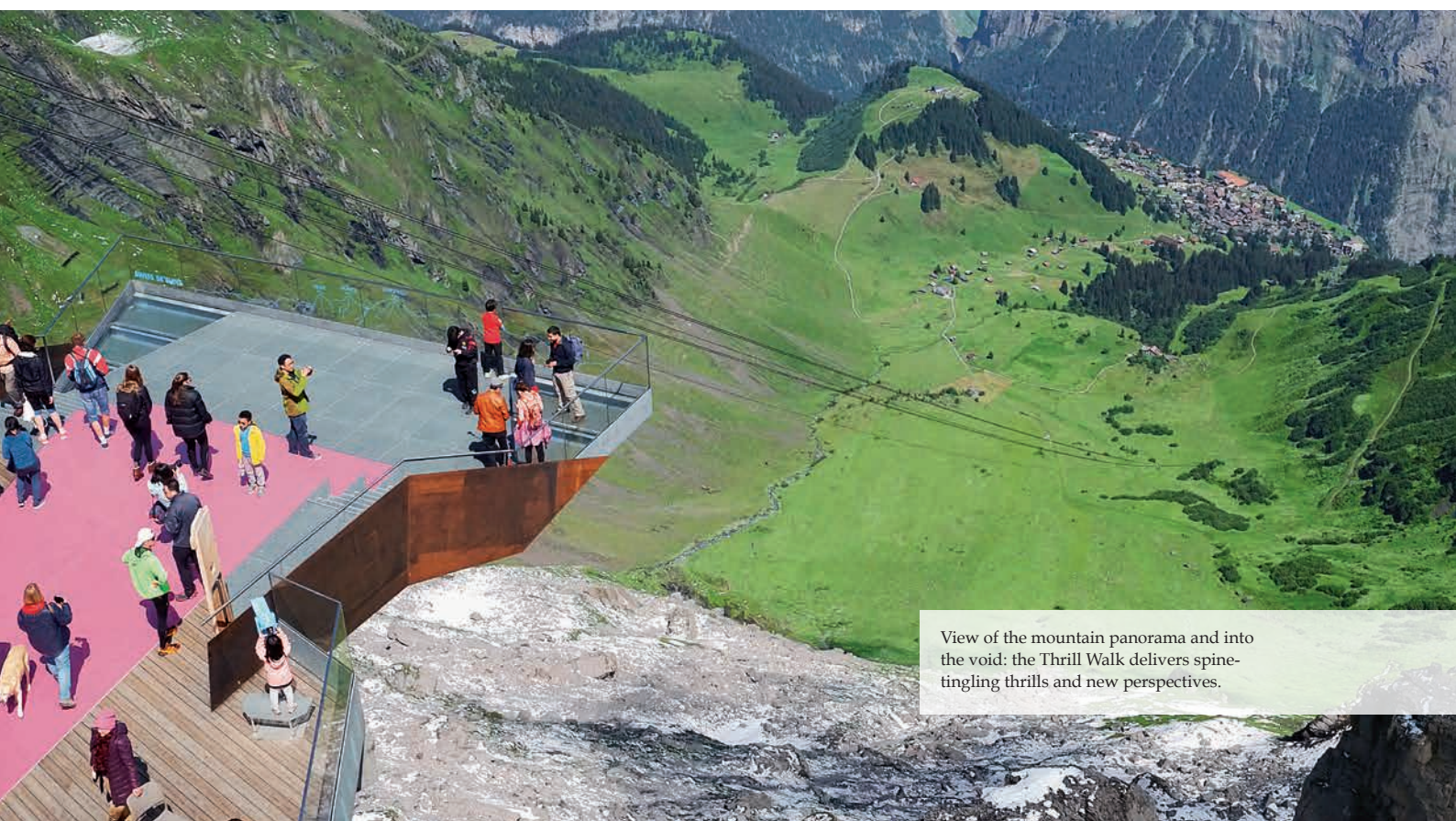
**“The Schilthorn-Mürren region offers unforgettable experiences at any time of the year.”**

August. These are just two examples of the many experiences, ranging from deep relaxation to adrenalin surge, that give the Schilthorn its well-deserved reputation as a superlative year-round travel destination.

The car-free mountain village of Mürren perched high above Lauterbrunnen Valley is ideal for a quiet holiday away from the hustle and bustle, with hotels such as Schilthornbahn AG’s Hotel Alpenruh (see the competition on page 22). In summer, visitors can discover the area’s diverse flora, with more than 150 different Alpine flower species including gentian, Alpine rose, and edelweiss, on the new Flower Trail.

## About the Thrill Walk

Opened in July 2016, the **Thrill Walk** is Schilthornbahn AG’s new cliff pathway near the Schilthorn Birg station. This extreme mountain experience at the dizzying height of 2,677 m starts at the Skyline Walk viewing platform and clings to the vertical rock face for 200 meters, ending below the Birg cable car station. Extra spine-tingling thrills are provided by the glass panels and cattle grid style metalwork making up the path floor at various points, and a rope bridge and a crawl-through tunnel. The Thrill Walk is suitable for all ages and is open all year round. Admission is free.



View of the mountain panorama and into the void: the Thrill Walk delivers spine-tingling thrills and new perspectives.



A breathtaking mountain destination between the upper Lauterbrunnen Valley and the upper Kiental Valley: at 2,970 m, the Schilthorn is the highest peak in the Bernese Pre-Alps. The aerial cableway bridges a height difference of 1,039 m in the section between Mürren and Birg alone.



### **From the valley to 2,970 m in 32 min**

Nestling between the upper Lauterbrunnen Valley and the upper Kiental Valley, the Schilthorn (2,970 m) is the highest peak in the Bernese Pre-Alps. Since 1967 visitors have been whisked to the summit on the Schilthornbahn, a succession of interconnecting cableways. "Our aerial cableway takes visitors from the Stechelberg valley station to the Skyline View platform on the summit of the Schilthorn in just 32 minutes. The large viewing terrace affords

the best view of the Eiger, the Mönch, the Jungfrau, and more than 200 other mountain peaks," Egger explains. Following the 2014 launch of the Skyline View, another highlight – the Thrill Walk cliff pathway by Birg station – was opened in July 2016 (see box).

### **Adventure for all at 007 World**

The Schilthorn attracted international attention in the winter of 1968/69 as a shooting location for the 007 film "On Her Majesty's

Secret Service." The revolving restaurant served as the headquarters of the evil Blofeld and was named Piz Gloria after the fictional peak in the James Bond novel. "In 2013 we opened Bond World 007, an interactive Bond experience that even makes the perfect bad weather attraction," Christoph Egger tells us. "Among other things, it features an in-house cinema and an exhibition in the summit building. A particularly popular attraction is the helicopter simulation, in which visitors sit





#### About the Schilthornbahn

Since it was established in 1962, **Schilthornbahn AG** has ranked among the top 5 most successful mountain railway companies in Switzerland and is one of the Canton of Bern's biggest tourism businesses, with revenues of CHF 26.7 million in 2015 and a workforce of 180 people. The company's cableways carried more than 4 million passengers in 2015, and in the same year Schilthornbahn AG had a record summer season for the third time in a row, with passenger numbers up by 17.7 percent.

in the original chassis of a decommissioned Air Glaciers Alouette III and experience the approach to Piz Gloria."

#### Schilthorn Piz Gloria 50th anniversary

The list of exciting attractions on the Schilthorn has grown even longer since the summer of 2015. The 007 Walk of Fame, stretching from the Schilthorn panorama terrace to the Piz Gloria View viewing platform and back along the summit ridge,

is lined with a series of elegant steel columns, each featuring a protagonist from the film, a signature, a hand print, a fist impression, and a personal message. To mark the 50th anniversary of the Schilthorn Piz Gloria this year, Schilthornbahn AG will be presenting a revamped and even more attractive Stechelberg–Mürren–Schilthorn axis. Among other things the entrance area, lobby and bar in the Hotel Alpenruh have been remodeled, the Piz Gloria revolving restaurant and the take-

away in the summit building have been renovated, and a new souvenir shop has been opened.

#### Information

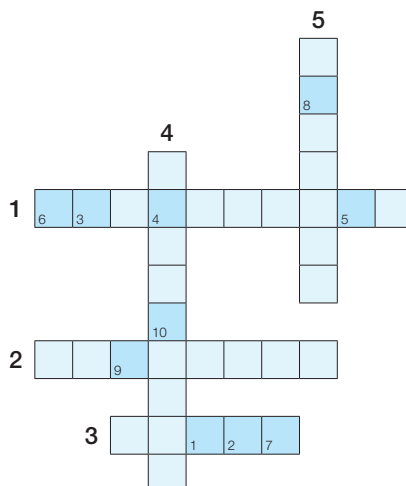
[www.schilthorn.ch](http://www.schilthorn.ch)

# Win an experience weekend

A warm welcome awaits you at Hotel Alpenruh: [www.alpenruh-muerren.ch](http://www.alpenruh-muerren.ch)



Take part in our prize draw and win a night for two at the three-star Hotel Alpenruh\*\*\* in the car-free village of Mürren at the heart of the fascinating Alpine world of the Bernese Oberland. The prize is a one-night weekend break in a double room with en suite shower/WC, plus breakfast either at the hotel or at 2,970 m in the 360° Piz Gloria restaurant on the Schilthorn and including a return cable car trip to the top of the Schilthorn from Stechelberg via Mürren.



1. Cliff trail at 2,677 m
2. Headquarters of Ypsomed Holding AG
3. Surname of CEO of Calcsicon AG
4. Medical Informatics lab at BFH-TI in Biel/Bienne
5. First name of Dr. von Bremen

Answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The winner will be drawn by lots and notified in writing. Employees of the Bern Economic Development Agency are excluded from entering the competition. The judges' decision is final. There is no cash alternative to the prize.

Tear out this page and send it to this address by August 31, 2017.

Bern Economic Development Agency, Münsterplatz 3, CH-3011 Bern, or enter the competition via [www.berninvest.be.ch/chance](http://www.berninvest.be.ch/chance).

**Congratulations to Chantal Piaget of Bévillard, the winner of our competition in *bernecapitalarea* 2/2016.**

## New call center in the Canton of Bern

**Competence Call Center Switzerland GmbH** moved into its second Swiss site in Nidaugasse in Biel/Bienne in June 2016 with a staff of 50. During the first 12 months the company will be increasing the team to 150, with plans to create a further 100 jobs in the medium term.

Among the reasons for choosing Biel/Bienne were the active support it received from the Biel/Bienne and Bern Economic Development Agencies, along with the fact that the second-largest city in the Canton of Bern is bilingual – a clear benefit when it comes to recruiting staff and servicing the market.

The CCC Group is a full-service provider delivering high-quality customer service solutions in more than 28 languages at 17 locations in 8 countries. Founded in Vienna in 1998, CCC has more than 5,500 employees across Europe supporting its clients in all professional customer communication channels.



### Information

[www.yourccc.com](http://www.yourccc.com)



# Committed to bringing businesses to Bern

## An interview with Denis Grisel, Director of Bern Economic Development Agency

Denis Grisel has headed the Bern Economic Development Agency for more than 20 years and has made it into what it is today: an effective, reliable and expert partner to businesses.

### Can you describe some of BEDA's most important achievements over the years?

"A good 20 years ago we realized that there was very little information being shared between businesses within their sectors. When the Canton of Bern introduced its cluster policy in 1998, businesses, universities and public authorities immediately started networking and connecting much more effectively. This is a driving force for innovation and a strong argument in acquisition. Innovative companies like to go where there are other innovative companies. In terms of acquisition, we realized that the Canton of Bern on its own was too small to be able to promote itself properly as a business location at the international level. So in order to build a more effective presence in our target markets, in 2010 Bern got together with the cantons in Western Switzerland to form a new location promotion entity, the Greater Geneva Bern area."

### And what do you see as its greatest challenges?

"First and foremost, promoting a location means being able to offer solutions, not only for foreign companies but also, importantly, for local ones – the latter being something that is often overlooked from the outside. We have limited resources at our disposal and we want to make sure we use them as effectively as we can. This means not being overambitious and nurturing our most important 'capital', our personal contacts. For example, if Bernese companies want to expand and look for new locations, the quality of the contacts we have – with the company concerned, with government, with local councils, and so on – is key. Thanks to our excellent network, we have been able to find the right solution in the Canton of Bern for companies like Allgoa, Galexis, Güdel, Georg Fischer (GF+), and Rolex. Those are real highlights for us."

### And what are your highlights in the area of acquisition?

"If we are able to persuade companies like CSL Behring, eBay, Pepsico, 3M, Harting, GF, Walgreens, Festo, and PaxVax, if they have confidence in us and invest here, then those are highlights for the whole of the Canton of Bern as a business location. This year we will be opening the new International School Bern campus, which will be another important step towards internationalizing the Canton."

### What makes the Canton of Bern stand out as a business location?

"The Canton of Bern has so many location benefits going for it. We have supported innovative, groundbreaking projects like the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne and sitem-insel AG, and Empa

in Thun will be another feather in the cap of this important innovation infrastructure. The Canton's universities of applied sciences work directly with companies on projects. We have an excellent education system and outstanding infrastructure. The Canton of Bern is competitive and well equipped for the future."

### Where do you see opportunities and risks in terms of promoting the Canton of Bern as a business location going forward?

"As an economic-development agency, we have to proactively pave the way for a dynamic economy. We have to continue to dismantle administrative hurdles in permit procedures and make sure we remain as attractive as possible in terms of taxation and the availability of industrial land and real estate. International competition among business locations is constantly increasing, so it would be wrong not to pursue acquisition actively. In our promotional activities we target companies that could fill gaps in our local value creation chains, thus contributing to the competitiveness and innovative strength of the Bernese economy."

**Denis Grisel (64)** has been Director of the Bern Economic Development Agency (BEDA) since 1996. He hails from West Switzerland and has a degree in Economic Science from the University of Neuchâtel. He has been deputy managing director of beco Berner Wirtschaft since 2004. Denis Grisel is handing over the reins of BEDA to his successor, Sebastian Friess, on 1 June 2017.



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