

## PARTICIPATION RAISED TO A PRINCIPLE BARCAMP: A COMPARATIVELY NEW EVENT FORMAT

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### 1. The event format „barcamp“: originally developed in the inter- net scene, meanwhile arrived in the middle of society

The emergence of the event format „Barcamp“ is attributed to the Internet pioneer Tim O'Reilly, who in 2003 began to invite selected developers, journalists, programmers, start-up entrepreneurs, and thought leaders from the Internet scene to his farm in the San Francisco Bay Area to discuss the future of the Internet and related information and communication technologies with them in a completely open manner. There was no predetermined agenda. Instead, everyone was able to spontaneously present their ideas, projects, and visions for discussion, and the participants then distributed themselves among the various sessions offered in a completely informal manner, depending on their interests. The event was organized like a tent camp: People constantly squatted together, discussed together, ate together, sat around the campfire in the evenings, also spent the night together there, on O'Reilly's property, and spent some highly inspiring, creative, participatory hours together (cf. Hellmann 2012).

In 2005, this event form emancipated itself from its inventor, was opened up and democratized for everyone, and from then on spread worldwide. As early as 2006, the first barcamps were also held in Germany (cf. Hellmann 2007). Since then, barcamps have become a permanent fixture on the Internet scene.

But as if that were not enough, in recent years barcamps have also attracted a great deal of attention and recognition far away from the Internet scene, as the following graphic shows (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Selection of theme camp logos from recent years.



Source: Own representation

In the meantime, it can even be said that barcamps have arrived in the middle of society. However, it is still a form of event that is particularly related to the discursive-creative culture of the Internet and its pioneers. Innovations and phenomena of the Web 2.0 era such as co-creation, crowdsourcing, interactive value, open innovation, peer production, prosuming, sharing economy, swarm intelligence, user-generated content, wealth of networks, wikinomics or wisdom of the crowd are all components of a successful barcamp and give this event form a noticeably unconventional touch. Not without reason are barcamps also called „unconferences“. The octologue of the barcamp culture is the main reason for this unconventional character.

### 2. The octologue of the barcamp culture: What is it all about?

The specific participation culture of barcamps is expressed in eight rules, the octologue of barcamp culture, as it were, whose strict observance is crucial for the successful implementation of a barcamp. The eight rules are:

- Rule 1: Talk about the barcamp.
- Rule 2: Blog about the barcamp.
- Rule 3: If you want to present, briefly introduce yourself and your topic and write both on a presentation card (all cards are then attached to a single session board).
- Rule 4: Introduce yourself with only three keywords (make yourself known, but don't take yourself too seriously).

- Rule 5: There are as many presentations at the same time as there are presentation rooms.
- Rule 6: There are no pre-arranged presentations and no „tourists“ (who only listen and contribute nothing). In short: „No spectators, only participants!“
- Rule 7: Presentations last as long as they need to – or until they overlap with the following presentation slot.
- Rule 8: It would be good if you would hold your own session right at your first Barcamp participation (dare, even if it is hard at first).

If one then examines the canon of values that provides the general framework for all barcamps, several interconnected guiding ideas are worth mentioning, such as diversity, egalitarianism, informality, inclusivity, creativity, participation and self-organization (cf. Eberhardt/Hellmann 2015).

- *Creativity*: Barcamps are designed to enable and promote creativity. Inhibition thresholds of what can be said are lowered as much as possible in order to be able to present the most diverse ideas and perspectives.
- *Diversity*: in order to generate a creative-participative atmosphere, a certain diversity of participants is needed. It must be ensured that the widespread tendency toward conformity and mutual adaptation does not come into play too much. The different evaluation of ideas and projects requires different skills and perspectives.
- *Egalitarianism*: Interaction during a bar camp should be as ahierarchical as possible; differences in rank are temporarily suspended; participants meet at eye level. Basically, everyone can say anything and talk to anyone. There is a consistent use of „duzen“ means addressing informally with a direct „du“.
- *Informality*: Barcamps favor a very personal, direct tone, a direct approach to each other and talking to each other, in order to promote the flow of impressions and ideas, but also criticism and problem awareness, which are indispensable for creativity and joint learning. Thus, barcamps are sometimes referred to as ongoing „coffee breaks,“ „field camps,“ or „class reunions.“
- *Inclusivity*: Furthermore, it is important for the implementation of barcamps that in principle everyone has access, everyone may feel invited, and that it is as low-threshold an offer as possible for active participation.
- *Participation*: A guiding principle of barcamps is „No spectators, only participants!“ In principle,

everyone can participate, and this always implies active engagement, if possible through own statements, contributions, sessions.

- *Self-organization*: At the beginning of barcamps it is always pointed out: „You are the barcamp!“ The framework is provided, but the content and sessions have to be contributed by the participants right at the beginning or during a barcamp, so they are not pre-determined or agreed upon by the barcamp organizers.

Furthermore, it can be assumed that in addition to the original barcamps, which are open to all possible topics, i.e. do not impose any thematic restrictions, there are now also theme camps, which have a much narrower focus and are often related to specific professions, political initiatives or leisure activities, as well as corporate camps, which are held in-house by individual organizations (companies, associations, etc.). Incidentally, more than 150 barcamps took place in German-speaking countries alone in 2014.

Enough of the preface: Let's move on to the planning and implementation of barcamps.

### 3. From the idea to the infrastructure: The strategic planning and conception of a barcamp

When the organization of barcamps is presented in more detail in the following, we primarily refer to general barcamps that are usually related to a specific region, such as Barcamp Berlin, Barcamp Hamburg, Barcamp Cologne or Barcamp Stuttgart, as well as themed camps such as CommunityCampBerlin, CSRCamp, GrillCamp, TourismusCamp, UXCamp, WIMACamp, or YarnCamp, where bar campers gather around a common, pre-defined professional or leisure-oriented theme.

#### 3.1 Always at eye level

Barcamps mostly arise from the desire to meet on a common topic at eye level, self-determined and participatory, to create a day independently and together and to share knowledge with each other. The barcamp belongs, so to speak, to the participants on site: they are the barcamp. This applies cum grano salis to open barcamps, to theme camps and to corporate camps alike.

Self-organization is, so to speak, the quintessence of this event format. Everything that is offered and discussed at a barcamp in terms of content is generated exclusively by the participants themselves. The organizers are usually completely uninvolved. With the planning and execution, one virtually only puts up the tents – only the participants fill it with life.

This principle determines the organizational framework for barcamps and their actual implementation. Initiators and organizers should therefore be willing to delegate as much responsibility and control as possible. Only then will a barcamp be successful. The time and logistical processes in the preparation should not be underestimated. On the day of the event itself, barcamps are characterized by spontaneity and a certain shirt-sleeve attitude, but the organization in advance requires a high degree of commitment and professionalism. A suitable location has to be found early on; strategic partners and sponsors have to be found; visitors have to be acquired; trades and service providers have to be coordinated; operational processes on site have to be secured; communication channels have to be established; and a communication strategy has to be developed. One quickly makes the experience that the organization of a barcamp from the idea to the successful event can take a year or even longer. Moreover, established barcamps often require a constant organizational effort throughout the year, especially in terms of partner and participant management. Maintaining a certain relaxedness and looseness in the spirit of the barcamp throughout this time and not allowing the barcamp to become over-organized is another challenge.

In order to facilitate the understanding of this, we will go into the most important factors that work in the background of the barcamp organization and are decisive for a successful barcamp in the sense of a „manual“ in a very concrete and practice-oriented way. We would also like to give some tips that seem banal at first glance, which seem self-evident and are easily forgotten for that very reason.

### 3.2 Choice of topics and team recruitment

At the beginning of a barcamp planning it should always be clarified which content-related goals you want to pursue with the barcamp; whether you want to organize it regionally; whether there is an overriding theme; which target group you want to address and how many participants you can expect.

Furthermore, put together a good team and give your barcamp a face. Involve your network, your community at an early stage. It is ideal if your team consists of experienced barcamp organizers, barcamp enthusiasts and, in the case of theme camps, also of experts. In this way, you ensure that the event not only says Barcamp on it, but is actually a Barcamp in it, and you also cover the professional expertise of the topic. This is particularly important in order to make the expected quality of the content clear to potential participants. Especially in subject areas in which no barcamps have taken place so far, this is extremely important for the credibility of this still quite young event form. The existing willingness to help organize barcamps is often overlooked and rarely exploited. Pay attention to flat organizational structures and clear responsibilities, to the „open sourcing“ character of the organizational processes, and act as transparently as possible in all your decisions.

### 3.3 Scheduling

When finding dates, keep an eye on the event calendar; pay attention to which other barcamps are planned. It would be a pity if barcamps with similar topics cannibalize each other. A very good overview can be obtained from the online barcamp list for Germany, Austria and Switzerland, where all classic open barcamps and theme camps are listed (<http://www.barcamp-liste.de>).

If barcamps traditionally took place on weekends, this principle is no longer necessarily adhered to. One of the reasons for this is that theme camps very often have a direct professional connection. The decision „weekday or weekend“ therefore also depends on the topic you want to offer. However, don't invest too much time and energy in the search for a perfect date: experience shows that there is no such thing. It is much more important that the date is announced early so that there is still enough time for participant management and sponsor acquisition.

### 3.4 Barcamp Logo

The distinctive Barcamp logo has long since become the trademark for this event format, with a high degree of recognition and identification – the family crest of the Barcamp family, so to speak. The base of the logo is always a flame, symbolizing enthusiasm and passion. This basic logo is adapted for the own barcamp, in the choice of colors and by enriching it

with graphic elements, which for example iconize the location or the theme of the barcamp, as you can see in figure 1.

The lettering of the barcamp is set in Century Gothic and often contains the name of the barcamp as well as the location and date.

### 3.5 Website & development of relevant communication channels

Even though barcamps have now found their way into public institutions, companies and associations, they were originally an invention of the Internet scene with its special culture. In the meantime, this culture has long since spread beyond the Internet and is shaping our social, political and economic lives and the way we communicate with each other....

Digital media and related technologies are nevertheless very popular among bar campers, and it should be a matter of course for the organizers to set up their own website for their planned bar camp and to set up and permanently maintain the appropriate social media channels for it, through which the participants can exchange and network, also in order to involve important multipliers (Rule 1: Talk about the bar camp!). On Twitter (<https://twitter.com/BarcampListe>) as well as on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/lists/10150834708924305>) there are directories where you can be listed as an organizer of a barcamp and thus achieve networking with other barcamps. This communication is supported by the choice of a suitable „hashtag“, which facilitates the search within the respective network, especially on Twitter, and the accompanying monitoring for such keyworded terms.

Also, consider building your own community for your barcamp. For example, „tixxt“ (<https://www.tixxt.com>), a German enterprise social network that has successfully accompanied and supported barcamps for years, is a good place to start. Furthermore, develop general information about your barcamp for further communication measures towards participants and partners. Describe the event format and the benefits for partners and sponsors. Experience has shown that long-term intensive education is essential for the implementation of barcamps in an environment that has no previous experience with this event format.

### 3.6 Participant acquisition and number of participants

Every planned barcamp anticipates that there is a community that wants to meet and exchange ideas regionally or topic-related. In this respect, every barcamp finds its participants – but not by itself. Start approaching potential participants in good time, directly via your viral network, with the help of multipliers and inclined media partnerships. Also think about the planned size of your camp. After all, above a certain number of participants, it becomes very difficult to guarantee central elements of a bar camp such as the introduction round and the session pitch on site. From 300 participants on, you reach a limit of feasibility. But a high number of participants is no criterion for a successful barcamp: Sometimes less is more! We would like to remind you of the Barcamp Berlin 3 in 2008, when more than 700 participants came on the first day and the limit of what is reasonable was exceeded by far. On the other hand, we recommend much smaller barcamps, as they allow for a more intensive exchange.

### 3.7 Registration, ticketing and participation fee

For registration and ticketing, if you do not have your own registration and ticketing system, you can use professional services such as XING Events or Eventbrite, which have already gained experience with the event format and can be easily integrated into your own website via an iframe.

This raises the question of charging a participation fee, which is a sensitive topic in the barcamp scene, as it is a guiding principle of the barcamp philosophy that access to a barcamp should be as low as possible, and the amount of the participation fee regulates this.

In the meantime, we belong to those who advocate a reasonable participation fee for a target group-specific approach to participants, especially for theme camps, for refinancing the expenses of a barcamp and for regulating the so-called „no-show“ rate. Which amount is to be regarded as appropriate depends largely on the calculation of the general conditions, on the expected amount of raised sponsorship money and for which target group the barcamp is actually organized.

As barcamp evangelists, we wish that all barcamps were still open to all participants free of charge.

However, this is no longer in line with the development of the format in recent years, nor with the expectations of many bar campers. It is more essential to keep the central elements, the rules of barcamps, in order to preserve the innovative power of this format.

### 3.8 Acquiring Sponsors and Topic Partnerships

The planning and implementation of barcamps themselves, the set-up of the infrastructure, the catering and the logistics must be financially and organizationally secured through sponsorships and donations in kind, in addition to a possible participation fee, in order to be able to offer the participants a professional event environment. The special event format and the professional framework of the organization create an atmosphere in which partners, sponsors and participants can feel as comfortable as possible and successfully engage.

These benefits include above all

- the perception of the sponsors before, during and after the event through the integration in all communication channels,
- the intensive exchange with the participants on site
- media presence in the new and established media as part of public relations work,
- insider information on current trends,
- contacts with potential future employees for their own company, and
- An active social commitment.

Sponsoring at a barcamp also requires sponsors to be willing to engage in the culture of this special event format and dialogue with participants at eye level. An own session is explicitly desired, pure product presentation is not. It is the task of the organization to raise awareness of this and, together with the partner, to find ways in which the partners and sponsors can ideally get involved in the environment of the bar camp. Financial sponsoring is certainly in the foreground. In addition, a barcamp offers many other opportunities to present oneself in a creative environment free of conventions, be it as a location sponsor, as a host of the evening event, with suitable giveaways, or by making one's products and services available as part of an in-kind sponsorship. Many participants at barcamps are well-connected influencers and multipliers with great reach, from which partners and sponsors can benefit directly through ongoing reporting.

### 3.9 Location

The venue of a barcamp contributes significantly to the success of a barcamp and is one of the first decisions to make. For example, look around in the social environment of your barcamp for suitable premises; often you can find suitable location partners there who are willing to host your barcamp.

The location should have several, differently sized, acoustically separated rooms for the parallel sessions as well as one or more common areas (atrium, cafeteria, etc.) for spontaneous gatherings, joint discussions and communal meals. Last but not least, the morning introduction round, the subsequent session pitch and the evening feedback round will take place there.

The necessary size of the location naturally corresponds to the number of participants. Furthermore, please make sure that your entire barcamp is barrier-free accessible and that there are enough toilets.

### 3.10 Technical Infrastructure

If you ask the participants of barcamps what is the most important thing for them regarding the infrastructure of a barcamp, most of them say: „A functioning WLAN“, which should hardly be surprising considering the history of this event format and the high online affinity of many participants. After all, at a barcamp there is usually continuous blogging, tweeting and sharing on Facebook. Furthermore, photos are constantly being taken and posted in real time on Instagram, flickr and other suitable platforms. An appropriately fast, secure and resilient technical infrastructure should be provided for this. Ensure a stable WLAN and offer a „Twitter wall“ (<http://www.monitoring-matcher.de/2014/11/7-kostenlose-twitterwalls/>), then you have almost won as an organization team.

Also have projectors, adapters and the usual presentation materials available – if not in all rooms, at least in most. Microphones and a sound system will make it much easier for you to present to more than 50 participants.

### 3.11 Wardrobe

When making your preparations, plan to offer a staffed checkroom. Of course, you can also leave this to the self-organization of the participants. However, it relaxes the participants immensely if they know that

their clothes and often also their luggage are safely stored in a central location. The checkroom does not necessarily have to be manned the entire time; checkroom hours and a telephone number for emergencies have certainly proven their worth.

### 3.12 Childcare

Children are welcome at barcamps! Nevertheless, it should be asked in advance, for example during registration, whether children are expected and whether childcare is desired for the youngest Barcamp participants. This way, parent couples and single parents can also attend the barcamp and be sure that their offspring is in good hands during this time.

### 3.13 Catering

In order for the participants to be able to fully concentrate on the barcamp content, full catering has become standard at most barcamps. Starting with a small breakfast, followed by lunch, then a coffee break and finally dinner, the catering should be as uncomplicated as possible. Self-service and do-it-yourself are expressly permitted and desired.

Assuming a certain variety, with consideration for special diets, everyone eats the same thing, without distinctions or table arrangements. Try to offer beverages throughout the day, and feel free to provide plenty of fruit. The catering budget can be relieved on a regular basis through cooperation with in-kind sponsors.

### 3.14 Documentation

Budget for a photographer and, if necessary, a film crew. Even if the participants post numerous photos and videos on the web during and after the Barcamp, you as the organizer should also have the Barcamp accompanied by professionals in picture and sound. A picture says more than a thousand words, pays directly to the awareness of your Barcamp and supports you directly in the results of this Barcamp and the announcement of the next.

### 3.15 Reporting and securing results

Ongoing reporting before, during and after a barcamp is a central element of this event format (Rule 2:

Blog about the barcamp!). It illustrates the open and transparent character, which is focused on sharing experiences and knowledge, and corresponds to the participants' self-image of being responsible not only for the results of the barcamp, but also for documenting them.

The pre-arranging of the barcamp as well as the ongoing reporting are mainly done in real time via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Regularly, the official hashtags of a barcamp make it into the trending charts of microblogging services. Photos are mainly published on Facebook, Instagram and Flickr.

It makes sense to accompany and secure the securing of results, i.e. the collection, processing, analysis, interpretation and archiving of discussed content during and between sessions with professional social media monitoring. Monitoring services such as Brandwatch, Ubermetrics, SocialHub, 247GRAD CONNECT, Meltwater or Fanpage Karma provide the necessary services and are always open to cooperation.

This implies that you as an organizer operate your own community and social media management, which takes care of your own channels and platforms, but also tracks and moderates external reporting.

After the event, the reports, recaps, wrap-ups and presentation documents on the barcamp and the sessions should be compiled and made available to the public in a central location – regularly the event website – and thus also to all those who could not be at the barcamp themselves. The more naturally the spirit of a barcamp is anchored in the participants, and the more online-savvy the participants are, the easier and more extensively this rule is followed. If one removes oneself from this group with special theme camps or even corporate camps, it is even more the responsibility of the hosts and organizers to ensure the documentation of the results, especially via the direct motivation of the session providers.

### 3.16 Achievement of goals and follow ups

Even if a large part of the goals pursued with barcamps can already be explained by the event format itself, its canon of values and its specific culture of participation, initiators and organizers are nevertheless advised to measure and reflect on their own goals and expectations and those of the bar campers. For example, two of the largest barcamps, Barcamp Hamburg and CommunityCampBerlin, were

accompanied by monitoring in 2013, which provided important insights into the participant structure and clarified what satisfaction and loyalty values the participants gave to the respective barcamps attended. Such an evaluation supports the WrapUp process and the agreement of Follow Ups, which already leads directly into the preparation of the upcoming Barcamp.

#### 4. „Here we go!“ The operational implementation and moderation of a barcamp.

While the planning of a barcamp is largely oriented to and adapted from the classic fields of event planning such as topic identification, conception, program, financing, marketing, logistics, the actual execution of a barcamp is fundamentally different from classic event formats. To put it succinctly: Barcamps create energy, conferences absorb energy. To illustrate this, let's briefly go through those elements that make barcamps so special in the process. In doing so, we will look at a typical two-day barcamp.

##### 4.1 The „Warm up“ before the „Frequency Day

The kick-off of a barcamp, the so-called „warm up“, usually takes place the evening before outside the actual barcamp location. The purpose of the meeting is a first informal networking as well as the offer to Barcamp newcomers to familiarize them with the new unfamiliar format for the first time in a „Newbie Session“. This reduces uncertainties and prejudices and facilitates the start of the actual first Barcamp day, the „frequency day“, on which the vast majority of participants arrive.

##### 4.2 Accreditation and badges

The „frequency day“ often starts at 09:00 the same way as other events: with accreditation and check-room drop-off. The participants receive their name badges and are familiarized with the conditions on site.

While in the early years of barcamp culture it was still state of the art to write one's name on a self-adhesive name badge oneself, the badges are now regularly created in advance of the event and, in addition to

the name, also contain a range of additional information, for example the name of the Twitter account, hashtags about one's own person, names of the employer or institution for which the participant is attending the barcamp, as well as further information about the profiles in social networks. This information is already requested when registering for the barcamp. The back of the badge in turn offers space for sponsor logos or the illustration of the barcamp rules.

##### 4.3 Breakfast together

Already at breakfast, the first coffee, tea or juice, you realize: Barcamps are very informal and lively. You quickly get a sense of being part of a movement, a class meeting, a larger whole. Friends, colleagues and acquaintances meet. So the common breakfast becomes an optimal start into the barcamp day. Why not make the sandwiches together? Again – everything is possible!

##### 4.4 Joint welcome

At around 10:00 a.m., the organization team officially welcomes all participants. The typical characteristics of a barcamp are briefly explained, especially the distinct participation culture and the self-organization of the sessions, true to the barcamp philosophy „No spectators, only participants“ (Rule 8: If it's your first time at a barcamp, you have to present – Ok, you don't really have to, but you should try to present together with someone or at least actively ask questions and be an interactive participant).

Although usually more than half of the participants have already attended barcamps and are familiar with the regulations so far, this renewed understanding of the common principles of barcamp culture should be given high importance. Furthermore, it is part of the self-image of barcamps to thank the partners and sponsors, without whom the barcamp would often not exist.

##### 4.5 Joint round of introductions

The subsequent round of introductions is a first unique selling point of barcamps. All participants introduce themselves personally with their name as well as three very individual keywords, the so-called „hashtags“ (for example „Frank Feldmann from Berlin from Feldmann & Hellmann Barcamp Organization, and my three

hashtags are #BarcampOrganisator, #Corporate-Camps" and #irgendwasisimmer) and thus briefly inform about their name, their background, their professional situation, their interests or hobbies.

This introduction ritual is performed by a moderator experienced in Barcamps and is not subject to any content restrictions. However, the number of three keywords should not be exceeded, otherwise there will not be enough time. Therefore, it has proven very useful if the moderator does not give the microphone out of his hand.

This round of introductions alone can take up to an hour, depending on the number of participants, but it is essential for barcamps. The ice is broken immediately, and it's often very humorous. Later on, it is easier to match the faces to the names and session offers and to identify first common interests. In addition, the naturalness of barcamps, that all participants act at eye level, can be experienced directly.

#### 4.6 The session pitch

Immediately after the round of introductions, the session pitch takes place, again led by the moderator: This is the actual heart of every barcamp. Here, it is not the moderator's task to stimulate, evaluate or comment on session proposals in terms of content. Rather, he or she supports those who propose individual sessions and repeatedly encourages all participants to offer sessions themselves. After all, it is entirely up to the initiative of the participants and the competition of their ideas to decide which agenda will be created on the first day of the Barcamp, i.e. which sessions or topics will be offered and how many will attend them.

For this purpose, the session providers write their topic on a session card and present it briefly and concisely in the pitch (Rule 3: If you want to present, write your name and topic in one of the session slots). The moderator then asks the plenary about the interest in the offered session. The immediate feedback from the round is then a good indicator of approximately how many participants the session provider can expect and in which room, depending on size, his or her session should therefore take place.

This second round can also take up to half an hour, depending on the number of offers.

Both rounds –for the joint introduction and the session pitch – are fixed barcamp rituals and demonstrate right at the beginning central values of barcamps such as diversity, inclusivity, informality, creativity and

self-organization. It is not at all uncommon to publicly ask in advance of the barcamp which session you might want to pitch or which session the barcampers would like to see. This helps to better orient oneself in the preparation for the barcamp and catalyzes both session providers and demanders. Of course, the organizers have to communicate clearly that these pre-registrations are only a declaration of intent and have to be pitched on the day itself, just like spontaneously registered sessions.

#### 4.7 The session board

After the pitch of one's own session, a card with this session proposal is written on it and attached to a prepared session board. The session providers themselves decide which time they would like to occupy in the day's schedule and which room – under the impression of feedback from the plenary – might be best suited for it. In doing so, the session board becomes a motif that visualizes the character of a barcamp like no other.

Before the start of a barcamp, the rooms were entered on the session board with the names of the respective sponsors, and the possible time slots for the sessions were marked, mostly in hourly intervals. Gradually, the board fills up with the session topics and the agenda completes itself on its own through the initiative of the participants. Later, the participants distribute themselves among the sessions that take place in parallel or one after the other, depending on their interests.

The principle applies that as many sessions are offered as rooms are available (Rule 5: There are as many parallel sessions as the venue allows). However, if all rooms are occupied, session providers may spontaneously give smaller sessions in the common area or, weather permitting, move to the outdoor area of the venue. From now on, the session board is the central contact point for all barcampers. In parallel, the session plan should also be made available online.

#### 4.8 Session topics and sessions

Session topics can be anything that promotes dialog and knowledge transfer among the participants. This can be an inquiry, an impulse lecture, a product presentation, a problem report, a pure discussion round or a workshop, in each case with extensive discussion during and after the presentations.

There are no limits to the creativity of the participants, only in the form of time windows: A session lasts a maximum of 60 minutes when the next session starts. However, a time window of 45 minutes should be planned, since the room often has to be changed between sessions and the session provider should be given a few minutes to prepare. It has proven to be useful if an acoustic signal heralds the last 15 minutes of a session and sets the mood for the change.

The doors of the session rooms are always open, at least figuratively. The Open Space „law of two feet“ applies: If individual participants notice that they are in the wrong session and want to attend a parallel session, it is perfectly legitimate to leave the room and by no means a sign of rudeness, nor is looking at the smartphone or tablet. After all, barcamps are still part of Internet culture, and it is a direct part of the success of barcamps that there is real-time reporting during and about the respective barcamp.

#### 4.9 The feedback session

The last session is usually followed by the feedback round in the main meeting room, where participants can sum up the event and give concrete hints and suggestions for improvement about what they particularly liked or what should be changed. This direct feedback between the participants among themselves and the organizers closes the bracket around a Barcamp day and enables all participants to adjust even better to the wishes and expectations of the Barcampers for the second Barcamp day or subsequent Barcamps.

#### 4.10 The „Get together“

After the feedback round, a joint „get together“ often brings the first Barcamp day to a close, ideally right at the location of the Barcamp, because too many participants often get lost during the transfer to another location.

Since networking is a central element of barcamps, the evening event should also be given enough time. In the evening, people process the impressions of the intensive day, exchange ideas, deepen new and old contacts and often plan the next day and their own session with other bar campers. At the „get together“, food and drinks are offered once again, and it is not uncommon for the organizers themselves to be behind the bar.

#### 4.11 The „Quality Sunday“

On a two-day barcamp day – in the past, barcamps were always held on two-day weekends, but this is no longer generally the case in view of the increasing professional relevance – the „Quality Sunday“ follows, on which topics from the first day are explored in greater depth and new session topics are added.

Since most of the participants already know each other from the previous day, there is no need for another round of introductions – but there is no need for a session pitch. This ritual is therefore repeated on the second day, and often barcamp novices feel encouraged to offer their own sessions.

The second day is also concluded with a joint feedback session, and it is not uncommon for the organizers of a barcamp to be encouraged to prepare and hold this barcamp again the following year.

By the way, it is a nice tradition of many barcamps that after the feedback round, the participants clean up together and the barcamp ends the way it started: as a collaboratively designed process.

#### 4.12 Summary

In summary, the flow of a two-day barcamp can be described as follows:

##### Day 1 („The Frequency Day“):

08.30	Door opening
09.00	Breakfast
09.45	Opening introductions Session pitch
11.00	Start of the sessions of 45 minutes each (15 minutes break in between)
13.00	Lunch
14.00	Continuation of the 45-minute sessions (15-minute break)
18.00	Feedback round
19.00	Get together (including dinner)
22.00	Lights out

##### Day 2 („The Quality Sunday“):

09.00	Door opening
09.15	Breakfast
10.00	Session Pitch
11.00	Start of the sessions of 45 minutes each (15 minutes break in between)
13.00	Noon
14.00	Continuation of the 45-minute sessions (15-minute break)
16.00	Feedback round
17.00	The Barcamp is over...

Introduction round, session pitch and feedback round are the essential elements of a bar camp on the event days. They clarify the culture of this special event format and set it apart from other event forms. Regardless of whether it is a multi-day or one-day barcamp, whether it is an open barcamp, theme camp or corporate camp: these three components of barcamps cannot and must not be dispensed with if you want to organize an authentic barcamp.

## 5. Outlook into the present and the future

Since the first German barcamp in 2006 in Berlin, barcamps have lost none of their innovative power. However, they have gained a lot of interest. Within a very short time, barcamps have proven themselves as an independent event format and have therefore become firmly established. In the meantime, they have also partially emancipated themselves from the masterminds and initiators of the first barcamp generation. In our estimation, this development process is irreversible. More and more barcamps and especially topic-specific barcamps will be offered and held.

Barcamps are symptoms of a general social change in society, towards a share economy, in which content and knowledge are increasingly not only consumed, but shared and passed on. They embody the desire for leaner, faster, more flexible processes and now also accompany the digital transformation of the economy and society offline: consumer worlds are changing, working worlds are changing. Last but not least, demographic change demands contemporary innovation and knowledge management and exchange at eye level, for C2C, for B2C and for B2B.

### 5.1 Corporate Camps for and in companies

Companies in particular are under pressure to embrace and drive these changes internally in order to keep up with the times. And barcamps can help in this regard, as one tool among others to further develop one's own corporate culture in the face of constantly changing conditions. It is no coincidence that companies such as Bosch and Deutsche Telekom (<http://www.klenkhorsch.de/blog-detailseite/interview-stephan-grabmeier-ueber-interne-telekom-bar-camps.html>) organize internal bar camps, so-called

corporate camps, on all kinds of issues within the company, but they are still the exception.

While these early corporate camps focused primarily on technology topics from the Enterprise 2.0 environment, such as the use of social software for project coordination, knowledge management and internal and external communication, all kinds of corporate topics, including non-technical ones, are now discussed in corporate camps. The same applies here: Employees are at the center of a corporate camp. Just like at a regular bar camp, they determine the content and pitch the sessions, regardless of hierarchy, according to the motto: Always at eye level!

While the basic philosophy and rules of barcamps also apply to corporate camps, and the essential barcamp elements such as dialogue at eye level, open session pitch and self-documentation are adopted in the implementation, they differ from other bar and theme camps in their objectives and organization. This is because the process is not aimed at a broad public, but at the inside, at the company. It is, after all, an internal company measure and concept; planning and implementation therefore take place in-house, but can be supported externally by experienced barcamp organizers if required. Moreover, it is particularly important for corporate camps to have a well-coordinated team on site from the very beginning that knows and masters the format, can moderate the barcamp and help to secure the results. These can then nevertheless be shared publicly if this is part of the corporate strategy and is desired.

### 5.2 Opportunities and benefits of corporate camps

The opportunities and benefits of corporate camps are manifold. For companies, holding a corporate camp is a credible and cost-effective way to position themselves as an employer. Through the open dialogue, one presents oneself as an attractive and creative employer, it is a very modern HR measure and the use of an innovative event format. Corporate camps offer the opportunity to discuss the issues within the company through sessions of the management „top down“ and in parallel through sessions of the employees „bottom up“ to stimulate a competition of ideas. At the end of a barcamp, the goal is to share a wide variety of perspectives with each other. In addition, the open format stimulates idea management that leads to concrete results on the day itself. Likewise, corporate camps offer the ideal format to

engage in dialogue and communicate creatively with internal and external stakeholders at eye level.

The communication of any company, of any brand, always integrates a wide variety of perspectives, both internal and external. Corporate Camps help to get a better overview of the plurality of perspectives involved in real time. Furthermore, Corporate Camps help to discover and creatively discuss discrepancies between self-perception and perception by others.

The most important topics for organizing a corporate camp include (without claiming any value): employer branding; training and induction for employees; image, reputation, brand, corporate culture; networking and open exchange with internal and external stakeholders; cultivating corporate culture; quality and idea management; recruiting; thinking outside the box: Creativity Factory; and Knowledge Transfer.

### 5.3 Barcamps in the environment of classic events

Given the high level of satisfaction with the event format, barcamps can be seen as almost ideal interactive meeting places for the respective scenes. It is not clear that barcamps function and can be used exclusively in the prevailing form, i.e., as an independent event format, organized and designed specifically for members of an already highly networked Internet or professional scene. Rather, it is obvious that barcamps can also be offered in modular form in combination with much more conventional event formats such as congresses or trade fairs, and that in such a context they can trigger equally creative-innovative impulses. By supplementing conventional event formats with elements of barcamps, new potentials can be tapped. By breaking through familiar procedures and creatively integrating the interactive approaches of barcamps into the event, the interest of the participants and their motivation for active participation are promoted. In this way, moments of surprise can be created and established standards can be overcome.

We can only encourage you to get involved with barcamps. It is a testament to your optimism and foresight if this step is dared. We promise you new experiences, a new way of dealing with each other, learning effects and possibly even prejudice corrections. In a blog parade on the topic of „Your first Barcamp“ (<http://cortextdigital.de/2013/09/blogparade-dein-erstes-barcamp>), more than 80 posts were published in which bar campers give the impressions of their first

bar camp. There is no better reference to conclude this post.

### Literature

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