

Chemistry Goes Digital: Startups Corporates Sciences

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The "Chemistry Goes Digital" event on November, 26th 2018 in Berlin was co-hosted by the Smart Data Forum, the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence, the Chemical Invention Factory, and the German Startups Association.

The focus of the event was to create an inventory of the chemical industry when it comes to digitalization: We wanted to find out where we are now, what external service providers do we already have for what kind of digital challenges, where are white spots, and what are "must-haves", in order to successfully create the digital transformation.

FIRST TIME IN HISTORY

It was the first time in the history of the chemical industry, that chemistry and tech startups, corporates, scientists, and other experts, came together to work closely side by side in order to identify challenges, business potentials, but also threats that can and will emerge due to digitalization.

It was an experiment. It succeeded.

WORKSHOP STREAMS

Utilizing five different workshop streams, experts representing the chemical industry from the supply chain, procurement, R&D, marketing & sales, and manufacturing sectors, worked alongside participants with corresponding backgrounds in other industries.

It became very clear that it is crucial to define an overall data flow strategy within companies through which added value can be (theoretically) generated, thereby allowing data flow from the lab to the production, procurement, etc. – and BACK.

COLLABORATION

The collaboration with external partners, such as startups, universities, and or database providers, must be an important part of this strategy, in order to secure access to their innovations. An easy plug-in but also carve-out system is necessary to allow an adaptable data flow and uses, thereof. This could even be applied to create swarm intelligence.

The opportunities of digitalization seem to be infinite for an industry which has not been disrupted so far – but so are the threats.

Using all available data points, it is conclusive that digitalization will have a significant impact on the chemical industry in the future.

MEGATREND: DIGITALIZATION

There is great risk involved when a corporate leader chooses to dismiss this highly-substantiated megatrend, either by their missing out on profitable income streams, or even endangering the future of their company.

Triggered by digitalization, knowledge increases exponentially and so does competition. Therefore education, training, and sensitization of the employee in digital competencies will be crucial for a whole industry, as well as the need for rigorous execution of digital strategies.

In light of this, it becomes existential for every single employee to support his/her company within this transformational process.

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The following summary and graphic records are offered to assist the workshop participants in the recapitulation of the panel and workshop discussions during the event, and provide them with impulses, as well as support, in finding first partners for their digital journey.

It is noteworthy to realize that although every big chemical corporation is capable of solving every single digital challenge known so far on their own, they cannot succeed in addressing them all at the same time. Moreover, they will be unable to independently address all the challenges and opportunities that are just evolving with an exponential speed.

And therefore, this collaborative "Chemistry Goes Digital" event was created.

May it make waves!

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