



Consequences and impacts of the research phase
on the development of the BEST BOSS assessment
procedure and tool box



Erasmus+



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List of abbreviations

BBI	Best Boss Inventory
ERR	European Research Report
ES	European Survey
Etc.	Et cetera
FHM	Fachhochschule des Mittelstands
FPI	Freiburger Persönlichkeits-Inventar
MAI	Management Assessment Inventory
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises

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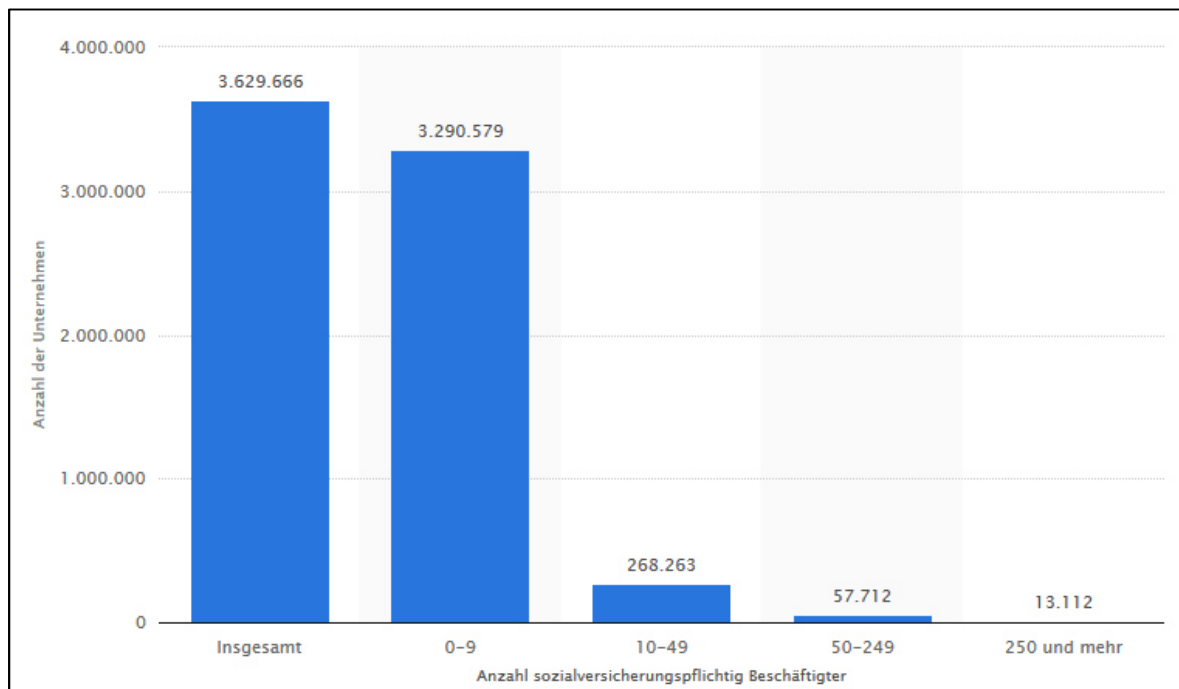
1 Introduction

The *European Research Report* gives a detailed overview referring to all relevant results out of the *European survey* which the project partnership conducted during February and May 2015. Through the research we want to establish the status quo of professional business succession models within Europe's tourism industry. Especially interesting are expectations of current business leaders: which competences, key skills and knowledge should a successful candidate for business succession have?

We have determined, that staff working in this sector, face low pay and for some, unbelievable working conditions, high staff turnover, a high share of informal employment arrangements and a **lack of tourism infrastructure**.

Further on, staff working in this sector face low pay and for some, unbelievable working conditions, high staff turnover, a high share of informal employment arrangements and a **lack of tourism infrastructure**.

Figure 1: "Companies in Germany according to their number of employees 2013 (Effective May 2015)"



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (Ed.) (2015): Unternehmensregister. Unternehmen nach Beschäftigtengrößenklassen. Wiesbaden.



As to be seen in the above graphic, it is a matter of fact that **95%** of companies **employ fewer than 10 people**¹. Especially the tourism sector exists mainly of small-sized enterprises. This was also to be seen in our research study, where nearly half of all enterprises (45,2%) employed less than 9 people². At the same time, there are **many complaints from employers** in the tourism sector - about skill gaps and shortages in staff - this **co-incides with the few opportunities available for professional training and knowledge about best directed assessment of company successors**.

Thus, the tourism industry is confronted with several challenges, not only resulting from globalisation but from interdisciplinary development in general. Our experience shows that the **vast majority of companies, operate without any HRD and Successor strategies**.

Due to these reasons, we want to have our fingers on the pulse of the time creating a tool that represents the practice and at the same time supports the companies on their struggle to find appropriate solutions to lead companies sustainably.

Following this approach we conducted the *European Survey*, giving the status quo of current company leaders. The *European Research Report* states all the results; this guideline will show its impacts on the development of the tool we were striving for.

At first, there is a summary of the most relevant of the different research results. Reflecting this basis, the background of developing the *Best Boss Assessment Procedure and Tool Box* will be presented. Like this, the impacts and effects of the research within the development of the *Tool Box* will be shown.

¹ cf. Statistisches Bundesamt (Hrsg.) (2015): Unternehmensregister. Unternehmen nach Beschäftigtengrößenklassen. Wiesbaden. In: Statista GmbH (2015): Anzahl der Unternehmen in Deutschland nach Beschäftigtengrößenklassen im Jahr 2013. Hamburg. Online available: <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1929/umfrage/unternehmen-nach-beschaefigtengroessenklassen/>.

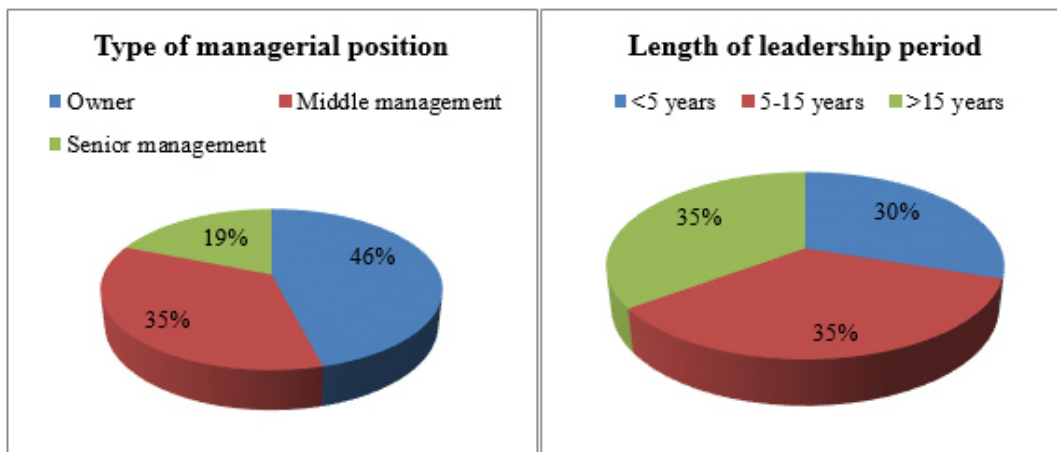
² Cf. European Research Report, p. 5

2 Most relevant information of the European Research Report for the development of the BBI

2.1 Demographic data on the entrepreneurs

As intended within the *European Survey (ES)*, the *European Research Report (ERR)* confirmed that the majority of stakeholders were owner of their own business or at least possess a position in the **senior management** (65% in total). Thereby, we were able to really acquire the expectations and thoughts of current leaders within the tourism industry reflecting on their future successor. The working experience reflects this as well: A third of all participants already worked for more than 15 years in a leading position within their company. Another third lies within 5 to 15 years in the certain company. This gives proof of the right choice of stakeholders as well as it makes sure that the results of the *European Survey* are relevant and validated.

Figure 2: "Managerial position and length of leadership period"



Source: European Research Report

Statistics give proof that we were able to capture **259 entrepreneurs** who truly represent the industry, which therefore results in significant and relevant data for further studies. All stakeholders were working in companies with less than 9 employees (45.2%); meaning they are representing typical micro-sized enterprises that are so characteristic for the tourism industry.



We want to develop a useful tool that will be manageable for exactly these stakeholders: Senior workers in top management positions, equipped with a lot of working experience within their companies. The **age is not a relevant criteria** for assessing the expectations.

It is better indeed to not having a specific age group as we got results from different facets from the population structure all over Europe.

These results show that we can offer a **representative and significant data basis** for further studies. In the following, the detailed expectations which the leaders valued will be shown.



2.2 Competence profile of management successors

To find what are the **relevant knowledge, skills and competences for successful business succession**, we considered three dimensions within the project partnership:

- **Market competences**
- **Organizational competences**
- **Leadership competences**

The result of the research is the status quo of thoughts from current leaders reflecting their expectations upon their business successors. In the further study, the most important factors have been selected to allow a certain focus onto relevant matters. Thereby, the ERR showed the following ideas of what leaders believe as mainly important characteristics:

Figure 3: "Overview of competence levels and their important factors for business successors"

	Market competence	Organizational competence	Leadership competence
General standards within the competence dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - know the industry and the company's market position - know the tendencies in their specific market - have the ability to negotiate with important stakeholders - be able to identify new market segments - Know how to design and price services in relation to competitors - develop networks/ networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working towards achieving profit - being capable of understanding and analysing the revenue/expenditure of the company - knowing how to identify and deal with internal and external risk factors of the company - knowing how to control the liquidity of the company - understanding the strategic and operational issues of the business model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having team leading skills - having planning and organizational skills - investing in development of his employees - being able to motivate the human resources to be creative and participative



Most important factors filtered in the European Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>understanding the market characteristics</i> - <i>understanding external stakeholders</i> - <i>exploring market opportunities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>running the company correctly</i> - <i>understanding the business model</i> - <i>managing and control the business development</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>being open-minded to new ideas and knowing how to assess risks</i> - <i>implementing the necessary changes</i> - <i>managing and resolving conflict with and between co-workers</i>
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Keeping these different demands in mind, we have to find a proper way to find these abilities and personality traits within the future candidates. This is the starting point for the development of the *Best Boss Assessment Procedure and Tool Box*, which will be explained in the sections further on.

3 Development of Best Boss Assessment Procedure and Tool Box

In a first step we filtered the most important factors leaders expect their business successors to have. These characteristics are one of the basics for developing the *Best Boss Assessment Procedure and Tool Box*. As we got a status quo what current leaders actually do expect from their successors, we have to search for a way how to measure and therefore capture them.

The FHM Competence Center has been developing and using several tools for measuring competences. All of them are field-tested for many years and thereby carefully proven and validated for several times. They shall be presented within this section to show the development of the *Best Boss Assessment Procedure and Tool Box* in relation to the *European Survey*.

3.1 Introduction to the development of the BBI Tools

Linked to the abilities which were proven as most important within the *European Survey*, we see a strong need for successors with foresight combined with strategic and methodological ways of thinking. These features now must be found in the prospective successor. In empirical research there is no “golden way” to get a hold of soft skills. Hard facts, such as gender, age or previous career steps are easy to be asked. Yet, candidates either do not know or are not able to assess their ability of “decision-making” or “understanding others”. For this reason, the partnership has to find a way to actually **measure competences that cannot be measured directly, but being expressed indirectly.**



The *understanding of market characteristics* on the first sight is nothing more than the result of a basic understanding of the economy and the market activities themselves. This belongs to profound professional knowledge and is all the more easily assessable.

Still, participants have to show that they are able to actually understand another's person feelings (they have to deal with stakeholders apart from their usual customers). As this is the basis for social competence and social behaviours, we have to measure the **cognitive empathy of future business successors in touristic SMEs**. "Reading" feelings in the eyes of a counterpart requires the ability to get a hold of one's own feelings. This results in the ability to sense the feelings of others and furthermore it enables to understand these feelings.

There are several research methods and empirical findings that cover such an approach. Yet, we believe that only a combined version of several tests leads to the best results with highest quality approach. The RME-test, developed by Prof Simon Baron-Cohen in 2001, is mainly used in clinical psychology and supports the idea to get the results we are looking for. It is detailed described in section 3.2 as well as in the "*Explanation to the Best Boss Inventory*" (the handbook for the BBI).

Keeping this test as a **basic tool for social competence** (and cognitive empathy in particular), we still need other tools to validate the test results. For this reason, we decided to implement **different interrogative formats** to prevent an intentional response behaviour as well as to prevent candidates from giving socially desirable responses. Therefore, the RME-test cannot be the only test, but just an additional confirmation of other formats.

The ability to "*understand market conditions*" or "*needs of stakeholders*" are two of the most important competences a business successor should possess. So, we can only find out about these competences when creating a personality assessing tool as a basis for the competence measuring system. **Competences are always linked to the personality, whereas personal behaviours influence competences as well**. We are dealing with a self-determined system, linked to each interdependently. This means, finding out about the personality traits of future successors gives insights into their competence profiles, so as these profiles equally provide information about the personality.

Once more, there are many tools and methods to measure competences. On the one hand, we rely on an empirical study, which has been the basis in psychological testing for over 40 years: the Freiburger Persönlichkeits-Inventar (FPI).



On the other hand, we use an instrument, which was developed by FHM Competence Centre to measure leadership competences of school directors: the Management Assessment Inventory (MAI). Both tests offer a different interrogative format and shall be correlated with each other to get a comprehensive insight into the participants' personalities.

Questions such as *"For me, it's easy to show my appreciation for other people."*, *"Many of my actions are based on a spur of the moment decision."* or *"I usually hear the news after everybody else."* are mainly giving information to the *perception* of the candidates as well as their way of decision-making. Whereas such statements only evoke a polar response (only "yes" or "no" are available), the participants cannot express their tendencies within the statement. Moreover, they might come to the conclusion that their behaviour is mainly dependent on the situation. To prevent this from happening, we decided to include a different interrogative format in which they can show their preferences:

"a) I make up my mind based on data and systematic analysis of the situation.

b) I form my opinion about people in organisations based on empathy, feelings and understanding of their needs and values."

This questioning format is used to actually measure the tendencies of the participants' behaviours. Like this, they can decide which statement suits them better.

This way of getting answers is further enhanced in a once more different way, as can be seen here:

"I sometimes let myself get all worked up about somebody

With the use of different interrogative formats, we believe to be able to find one golden way of measuring competences for business successors. The exact way of development of the single tools within the tool box will be explained in the following section.

3.1 Best Boss Tool 1 and 2

In the first two tools, special focus is laid on the successor's abilities of **problem solving and decision-making**, as they are verified success factors in touristic SMEs as could be seen in the ERR. They are mainly reflected within the ERR, as characteristics like *"the ability to negotiate with important stakeholders"* (market competence), *"understanding the strategic and operational issues of the business model"* (organizational competence) or *"having planning and organizational skills"* (leadership competence) are part of these abilities and thereby can be subsumed within them.



Starting point for developing these tools is the *Management Assessment Inventory (MAI)*, which has been developed by the FHM Competence Centre³. This tool has been used to measure leadership competences in the context of private and public schools' leaders. It can be modified to fit into the new context of the *Best Boss project* and therefore to measure the certain competences the business successors have to obtain reflecting upon the ES. In the following, the MAI is the basis for the first two tools the partnership has created and thereby will be explained in detail.

BBI Tool 1 and 2 are empirical instruments used for determining several personality categories.

They extract a variety of personality and behavioural traits at first. These can secondly be compared to the key success factors of SMEs acting in tourism current leaders expressed within the *European Survey*.

These tools are based upon the realisation that **references** for company successors **can directly be inferred from behavioural characteristics** of current company leaders. The comparison of the characteristics is the result of empirical determined information classes concerning successful leadership skills and abilities.

Due to this reason BBI Tools 1 and 2 are focused on specific competence- and qualification profiles. They validate the qualifications and competences the leaders revealed to be most important within the *European Survey*.

In addition to that, BBI Tools 1 and 2 should rely on **assessment approaches** that are **reflecting self-evaluation as well as external assessment** consistently. Reason for this lies in the characteristics – abilities like “*explore market opportunities*” or “*check and assess the options for horizontal, vertical and lateral cooperation*” (market competences) cannot be assessed solely by the participants themselves but also by an external view.

We think that specific personality traits and profiles imply specific key success factors of leaders' behaviours, as well as the successors' behaviours longed for in our project context.

Specialised literatures use the following **competence-profiles** (constantly recurring):

- Social competence
- Professional competence
- Leading competence
- Intercultural competence

³ cf. Fischer, N., Fischer, T. (2014): Führung und Professionalität. Wie erfolgreiche Schulleiter ticken. Shaker Verlag, Aachen.



- Communicative competence
- Methodological competence
- Personal competence
- Practical competence

On the one hand, such competence categories are relevant as they constitute leadership scopes and therefore are adequately useable for the following factors in BBI Tools 1 and 2.

On the other hand (due to previous studies) the results also consist of suitable proposals for differentiating and scaling, which enables the BBI Tools giving reason in the dimension of quantifiable competence indexes.

Although such competence spectres are important, FHM Competence Centre understands that they barely describe real processes of leadership. This leads to the characteristic of the BBI Tools 1 and 2: **approved inventories for determining personality traits** correlate methodologically with the derivation of competence profiles: The now generated indicators ensure relevant derivations representing key success factors of leaders' behaviours (in the proper sense of leadership performance).

This way, BBI Tools 1 and 2 present themselves as complex arrangement, combining individual behaviour as well as profiled characteristics. This way, we found a way to gather the three competence classes we laid focus on within the ES. Characteristic attributes of the individual leader and the successor are now focused within a comprehensive questionnaire regarding their self-perception.

Information classes belong to these characteristic attributes and can be associated with concrete competence profiles. They are a result of 8 personality traits (factor analysed) of successful leaders' behaviours.



The information classes concerning personality traits are:

Figure 4: "Information classes of personality traits"

Faktoren / Factors	Kodierung / Coding	Bezeichnung / Description
Extraversion	E	Extraversion
Denkweise	T	Thinking
Empfindung	S	Sensory Perception
Beurteilung	J	Judgement
Introversion	I	Introversion
Fühlen/Gefühl	F	Feeling
Intuition	N	Intuition
Wahrnehmung	P	Perception

The data generated within the BBI Tools 1 and 2 will be pooled within the reference data set of current existing company leaders in SMEs related to the tourism-sector. This way, **quantitative and qualitative assertions** can be ascertained concerning characteristic attributes as well as their collective representation. These results shall be used further on for finding appropriate company successors. Then again, the BBI Tool 1 and 2 can be used as an **instrument for benchmarking analysis** as well.

Generally, BBI Tool 1 and 2 evaluate leaders as certain types, as personal attitudes (e.g. Extra- or introversion) are matched with basic psychic functions. In total, 80 items are correlated within these 8 factor categories in BBI Tool 1, whereas BBI Tool 2 correlates 64 items in 8 factor categories.

This construction itself can already be used to describe **preferences in behaviour, attitudes and assessment** of people. In this setting, successors of SMEs showing distinctive abilities of analytical assessment (conscience), enormous sensible perception (resilience), clear structured thinking (continuity), personal actions (initiative) or intuitive achievements (creativity) are more likely to be adequate as company leaders, as they already possess positive attributes in decision-making- and leading-processes – essential abilities in tourism. This way, one of the ideal successors for SMEs can be found out of the spectre of possibilities more quickly.



During the test, we wanted to find out which competences the participants have highly developed. For this, in BBI Tool 1 participants had to choose which statements fit to themselves, as shown in the following example:

- I get the best ideas when talking to others.
- I arrange my tasks according to the principle “First thing’s first”.
- I try to treat all people equally, and follow equal opportunities – whether I agree with them or not.⁴

It is obvious that candidates cannot see or guess which competence is actually measured right now. Furthermore, we have chosen a **vast variety of items** to make sure that participants cannot guess what they “should” tick (avoidance of socially desirable response patterns). Like this, the 8 factors shown above are encoded.

Adequately, BBI Tool 2 basically has to measure the same factors. Yet, we want to avoid predictable answering-behaviour, therefore we decided to take a **different questioning format**. They had to evaluate which statement fits best to describe themselves (see BBI Tool 2):

- I make up my mind based on data and systematic analysis of the situation.
- I form my opinion about people in organisations based on empathy, feelings and understanding of their needs and values.⁵

These statements are used to measure certain competence fields and finally to reveal the leader’s type the participants might be. In this case, *Judgement* and *Sensory Perception* are captured and evaluated.

Different statements encode different competences. Like this, the participant gets certain scores to result in their leading behaviour. The information classes further on can be linked to the competence profiles once more. This means, that this statement is mainly linked to give proof of the participants’ social and methodological competences.


In the following, the BBI Tool 1 can be seen in their final formatting. As the BBI Tool 2 looks similar to this one, the figure of BBI Tool 1 should be taken as representative.

⁴ Excerpt from the BBI Tool 1

⁵ Excerpt from the BBI Tool 2



Figure 5: "Final formatting of BBI Tool 1"



BBI® I

Please read each of the following 80 statements carefully and quickly consider whether the statement is applicable to you. Tick the box next to the appropriate statement. Please proceed quickly without considering the statements for too long.

1. I get the best ideas when talking to others.
2. I arrange my tasks according to the principle "First things first".
3. I try to treat all people equally, and follow equal opportunities - whether I agree with them or not.
4. I organise my schedule for the day beforehand and normally follow it.
5. I usually hear the news after everybody else.
6. I often forget about or do not pay attention to things that are of little importance to me.

Source: www.bbi-t.com

3.2 Best Boss Tool 3

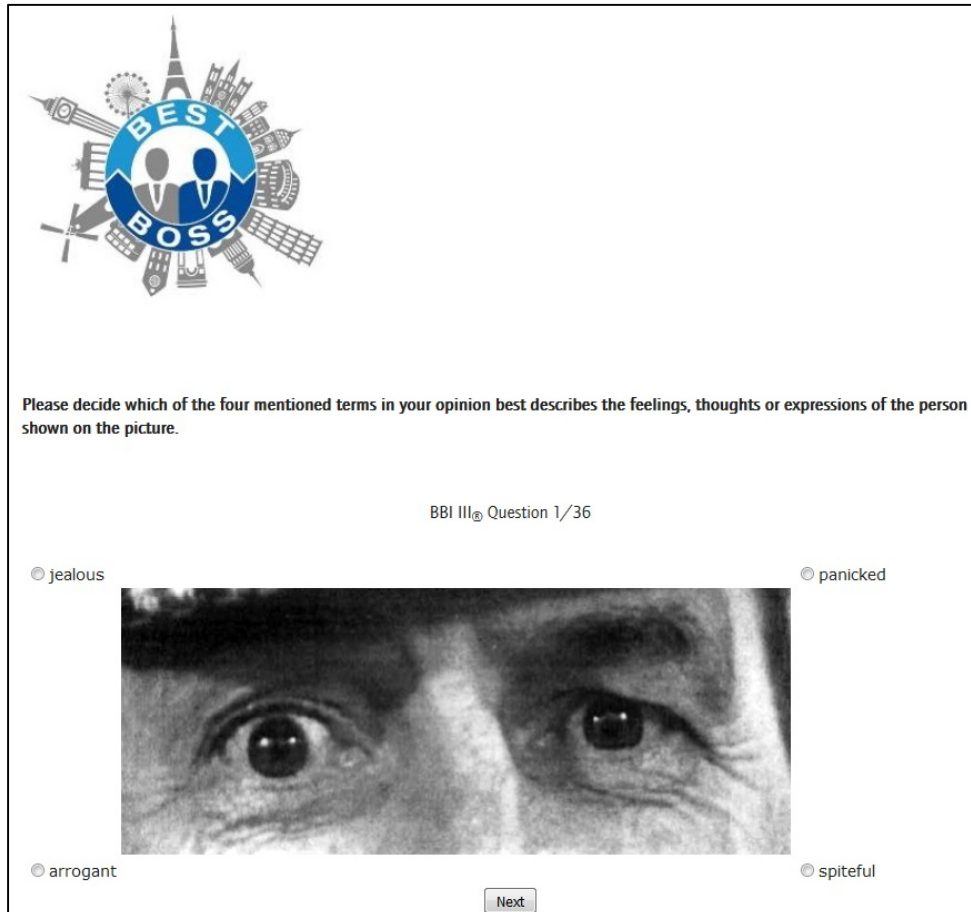
As the three competence classes within the *European Survey* show, participants are in need of highly developed social competence. We are searching for leaders that also concentrate on their employees and still handle stakeholders with appropriate care. For this reason, the **measurement of cognitive empathy** is focused in the third tool of BBI. We rely on studies that are mainly used in clinical psychology, as mentioned previously.

In this test, the participant is presented with a series of 36 biometrical photographs of the eye-region of the face, and is asked to choose which of four words best describes what the person in the photograph is thinking or feeling. This test is conceived of as a test of how well the participants can put themselves into the mind of the other person, and "tune in" to their mental state.

It shall give proof of the **ability to attribute mental states to oneself or another person**, and this ability is the main way in which people make sense of or predict another person's behaviour.

The test format looks like the following figure visualizes:


Figure 6: "Final formatting of BBI Tool 3"



Please decide which of the four mentioned terms in your opinion best describes the feelings, thoughts or expressions of the person shown on the picture.

BBI III Question 1/36

jealous panicked



arrogant spiteful

Next

Source: www.bbi-t.com

“Reading” feelings in the eyes of a counterpart requires the ability to get a hold of one’s own feelings. This results in the ability to sense the feelings of others and furthermore it enables to understand these feelings.

Cognition is inevitable for this process of understanding and enables a person **to being empathetic**. Great company successors in touristic SMEs should possess the ability of cognitive empathy to understand, motivate, coordinate and therefore *lead* individuals, teams or employees efficiently. This was also proven by the results of the ERR.

The tool itself is mainly used to validate the other tests, as all of them are correlated with each other.



3.3 Best Boss Tool 4

At the last, we wanted to get a hold of the leadership competences (the third category in the ES) in more detail. Furthermore we wanted to give proof to the validity of the first three tools, to ensure the reliability of the tools.

Starting point for the last tool is the “Freiburger Persönlichkeits-Inventar (FPI)” (Inventory of personality traits developed in Freiburg). It is one of the most famous and widely used instruments to test one’s personality. Now, it is mainly used in clinical psychology and in psychological research. So, experts of FHM Competence Centre have decided to integrate this instrument based on their empirical experiences in the whole BBI design, as it directly covers the need to assess SMEs successors in tourism.


Originally, the FPI was designed by 4 questionnaires (FPI-R, FPI-A, FPI-B and FPI-K) tested on a sample group of 2.300 study participants throughout whole Germany. After two revisions, the final version was published in 2001: Now, FPI-R covers 138 items with a representative sample group of 3.740 participants. The standards are structured according to gender and seven age groups.

Based on these remarkable pre-studies our BBI Tool 4 has 10 personality traits that were of severe importance in research and practical diagnostics. Moreover, the FHM Competence Centre considered its value based on the findings from the ES in addition to different literature and expert opinions. Its objective was getting a best pragmatic construction as possible. With 2 dimensions of personality, comparable with opinions of Hans Jürgen Eysenck, the BBI Tool 4 was completed: Extraversion and Emotionality. All of these resulting 138 items (questions) shall be answered “true” or “not true”.

An example of the developed tool is given beneath:



Figure 7: "Final formatting of BBI Tool 4"



BBI® IV

On the following pages you will find several statements concerning certain behaviours, attitudes and habits. You can either choose "true" or "false" for each statement.

Please choose the appropriate button on the right side of each statement. True is the left and false is the right button. Do not think too long about each statement, but respond quickly and spontaneously, choosing the answer that comes to your mind first. If there are statements that do not entirely fit you, please choose the one that is the closest match. Should there be an unanswered question, you will see a red hint in the left corner of this site accordingly.

Part 1/4

	true	false
1. I have read the instructions. Furthermore, I am ready to answer each sentence honestly and frankly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I like going out in the evening.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Source: www.bbi-t.com

Afterwards, all given responses are assessed according to 12 so called "factors":

1. self-contentment
2. social orientation
3. performance orientation
4. inhibition
5. impulsiveness
6. aggressiveness
7. stress (physically and psychically)
8. physical trouble
9. worries about health
10. openness
11. extraversion
12. emotional destability



This scale – these 12 factors – could be reproduced throughout all field trials, even after being completely re-analysed and re-structured in 1984. This way, the scale has been developed as a concept of self-description, which shows proven validity in all occasions.

All of these factors represent the most important abilities current leaders mentioned within the ES when expressing their expectations regarding their business successors. It reflects the three types of competence categories but lays special focus on the leadership competences.

Between these factors and the (objectively) observable behaviours, as well as sociodemographic-, professional- and clinical characteristics several correlations exist, which are important to assess our company successors in SMEs.

Nevertheless, as they are based on *self-evaluation and self-assessment*, given answers could have been influenced by perception, social desirability or tendencies in responding. Still, the FHM Competence Centre developed certain evidence for validity and significance of the BBI study results. The comparison of the representative data inquiry conducted in 2001 validated the structure of FPI-R, methodological statistics, reliability of used factors and also the standards.

The FHM Competence Center already has been using this instrument in an adapted way several times. The scale has proven its functionality and gave evidence of its reliability and validity. Today, 148 standardized items are correlated in these 12 factor categories (10x12+2x14, 11 Redundancies). With the comparative view on our ES (questionnaire “*Best Boss Pre-Inventory*”) we have 20 factors with 92 items in some item-based model of factor analytics as well.

Due to 11 redundancies, 148 items appear in this study, which can be correlated with the results of BBI Tools 1, 2 and 4, leading to the final conclusion. Stanine (an average value model coinciding gender perspectives) are the reference basis for individual cases, allowing the individual participant a first interpretation of each test.

After we have this pool of all the individual representations we can get the collective representation of our participants. This is the idea behind the concept of the BBI Tool 4.

With these self-assessments, several approaches appear for the individual, as well as the collective representation. Sociable and open-minded company successors are more likely to win over employees and other stakeholders. Adequately, company successors with high achievement- and



social orientation (especially in tourism) surely act as a role model for staff and are preferred to other competitors. This was also emphasized in the ERR.

Therefore, company leaders should present themselves as stable personalities without any psychosomatic disorders or being easily overwhelmed. This means, leaders with distinct satisfaction and motivation for their profession are emotionally stable and can react socially flexible, as they are open-minded and non-aggressive. It is obvious that this is one of the basics to be a successful company leader in tourism-related SMEs.

3.4 Correlation of Best Boss Tools

Combining all measurements and their individual correlations among each other, subtle preferences in behaviour and personality traits are identifiable (= reliability). This is intensified with the help of collective representations (generated through discrete quantity of information). Especially the leadership factors, result of personality traits, within BBI Tool 1 and 2 provide differently propositions according to current leaders' abilities in decision-making and the actual leading-process. Strengths and weaknesses of the leaders' type can be reflected when considering the basic population. Like this, they provide important information, clarifying which specific characteristics are typical for the sample group of SMEs in tourism regarding their behaviour in leadership, decision-making processes, performances and social manners.

Now, the next step is the comparison of these grouped classes of different leaders' types. Result is the clarification of currently indistinct interpretations - developing into general and individual key success factors in successors' behaviour adaptable in SMEs especially in tourism. These traits shape a specific competence-net according to the characteristics of the stratification, which is the basis for using the BBI Tool Box.

4 Conclusion

The *European Survey* has shown that business successors in general have to possess high social capability to deal with the **complexity** of companies, stakeholders and employees within the own enterprise. As social competence cannot be measured quantitatively, we had to find a different way to get a hold of these soft skills. Competences and abilities as "*resolving conflicts*", "*understanding market, company's or employees' situations*" or "*managing and control business development*" are important treats a business successor should have, so it is only logical that *intuition, sensory perception* or *judgement* have to be ascertained.



Business successors not only in tourism are facing **interpersonal and international challenges** and have to deal within Smart Economies. For this reason they should know how to manage their own knowledge as well as additional knowledge and experience gained through employees. Cooperation is not only linked to business partners, but competition and own staff as well. Aggressiveness and cognitive empathy play an important role in these frame. *Openness* and *value orientation* are also crucial factors that value the **leadership skills of potential business successors for SMEs**.

The results from the *European Survey* give a clear view of all demands and requirements current business leaders have when thinking about handing over their company. The match between successor and leader is always difficult, but when reflecting upon strengths and weaknesses of both parties, the changes during the takeover might become manageable. This is the approach of the *Best Boss Assessment Procedure and Tool Box*. The development of these tools is the result of the *European Survey* and is finalised within a **measurement tool for personality traits** and thereby **leadership skills and behaviours**.

In finding out about the personality of participants, it is also possible to find a way to get an overview of their individual competences. Using different interrogative formats a predictable response behaviour shall be prevented, as well as participants will not be able to guess the objective of certain questions or statements.

Like this, the test results will be as honest and reliable as possible. Further on, the tool is not only meant for business successors in SMEs related to tourism – due to the general structure of the test, it is also **useful and useable for different industries**. Yet, the speciality of the BBI lies in the basis of the *European Survey*. The survey provides the basis for the tool as we have an overview of all expectations and demands of current leaders in touristic SMEs. This way, results of BBI can be compared with this basis.

Combining all these factors, the partnership created a tool box consisting of four tests and reflecting the behaviour of the possible business successor. The *Best Boss Assessment Procedure and Tool Box* (simply named "*BBI Tool Box*") give a **comprehensive overview of the abilities and competences** of successors. Within the immediate assessment of the result, strengths and weaknesses of the potential business successor are presented. The current company leader and the participant as well get to know each other better and can see needs for improvement in addition to attributes both might have in common. The BBI Tool Box therefore shows the completeness of the test and the quickest possible evaluation, as the tests will be available online in a digital environment. This guarantees the immediate possibility of the performance assessment.



Partnership of Best Boss



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