

Press Info

Caffeine Valley.

It's not just gold that rules the world.

Woodside is just like it sounds: a forest area west of Palo Alto, somewhere in the middle of nowhere. Green, undisturbed. And in the middle lies “Bucks of Woodside,” a log cabin, strategically positioned between a café and a restaurant. It was founded in 1991 by Jamie MacNiven, who is still the boss today. Entering the shop, a thousand curiosities and toys hang on the ceiling. It reminds me of the toy landscapes you know from Google and other such companies, and how they promote their teams' innovative enthusiasm – but those are on tables and on the floor. Linger on the walls, which also have their attractions. This is why “Bucks” has legendary status in Silicon Valley. Here hang the abandoned business devotional items: a forgotten letter addressed to Microsoft legend Steve Balmer, a wood-framed unopened package of Microsoft Windows 1.0, and a license plate with the inscription “Google” – accompanied by the frustrated comment “I was too stupid to buy myself shares from Google. Instead, I bought this license plate.”

Quite curious for the fact that global brands were founded here: Netscape, PayPal, Hotmail, and Tesla all learned to walk fueled by the caffeine from “Bucks” – founders and financiers given a roof, under which to negotiate financing and write economic history. Even today, this is a popular meeting place for investors and nerds, for money and thinking. I ask the waitress if one can catch an interesting tip or two here – which company, the next Google or Facebook, will soon shoot through the ceiling. With a smirking smile, she replied that some of her colleagues would drive Porsches. Is it true? Oracle founder Larry Ellison lives around the corner and comes in often. He is known to pay double the bill. While 20 percent is the usual tip here, he gives 100 percent.

The “Red Rock Café” in Mountain View has a similar cult status as “Bucks” – as the name indicates, it is a red space, which is said to have given the green light to financing and profitability for many emerging companies. The café, though, is the exact opposite in its essence: it is the only “non-profit café” in the area. The second floor offers a little more privacy, which is necessary when exchanging sensitive company information.

And confidentiality is necessary in the cafés of the techies. The “Creamery” in San Francisco is proof – it’s another shop on the scene in the caffeine acquisition area of successful companies like Adobe, Dropbox, airbnb, and Pinterest. Supposedly, in 2012, a guest speaking too loudly in the “Creamery” made Microsoft’s purchase of Yammer – the “business Facebook” – public even before the companies had communicated this news. The sentence, in turn, was snatched up by Sarah Taylor, who tweeted it on Twitter.

And why all this in coffee houses and not in important hamburger chains? Science has long ago discovered: caffeine allows the brain to distinguish the important from the unimportant. And that’s exactly what’s going on here – in Silicon Valley.

About Gerriet Danz

Gerriet Danz has been one of the most recognized experts on innovation and creativity for over two decades. The lectures of this passionate lateral-thinker, multiple startup founder, and best-selling author (CAMPUS/Random House) are as inspiring and unusual as the mix of his experiences. He worked initially as creative director of the international advertising agency BBDO, supporting global players in the development of innovations. His second career led to television: Gerriet Danz developed new TV formats, and even moderated the knowledge game-show classic: JEOPARDY. Motivating, humorous, and practical, he describes in his appearances how companies can create the perfect innovation climate and overcome creativity barriers. “One of the best in his field!” writes *Computer Week*; “It’s hailing ideas...” says *GQ*. And *Der Spiegel* asked him, “...what really matters.” Gerriet Danz is a visiting lecturer at the Steinbeis Hochschule Berlin, advises the European Patent Office in The Hague, among others, is a member of the German Speakers Association as well as of GSF Global Speakers Federation Toronto, and is a winner of the CONGA Award in the “Speakers & Coaches” category.

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