



Press release / Berlin, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## **Knowledge that makes an impact: The Günter Thiele Foundation and the Academic Society showcase how to advance communication excellence**

**How can strategic communication actively shape the transformation of business and society? This question was at the heart of the anniversary symposium “Corporate Communication Excellence in the Stakeholder Economy”, hosted by the Günter Thiele Foundation for Communication & Management and the Academic Society for Corporate Management & Communication in Berlin on Thursday, 20 November 2025.**

Around 90 leaders from academia and business gathered to explore excellence, purpose, and responsibility in corporate communication – and to discuss how research and professionalization are shaping the discipline’s future.

“Communication increasingly determines how effectively and credibly companies operate in a complex environment. It builds trust, provides orientation, and enables transformation – both inside and outside the organization,” said Prof. Dr. Christof E. Ehrhart, Chairman of the Günter Thiele Foundation.

During the CEO Talk, Dr. Stefan Hartung, Chairman of the Board of Management of Robert Bosch GmbH, emphasized in conversation with Gerald Braunberger (Publisher, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung) that communication has become a core task of corporate leadership:

“Today, companies are more at the center of societal expectations than ever before. Our impact extends far beyond products and markets. Communication plays a crucial mediating role: it shapes identity, explains positions, and makes clear how business contributes to society.”

The subsequent panel discussion featured Wolf-Dieter Adlhoch (CEO, Dussmann Group), Susanne Marell (Executive Board Member for Communication & Sustainability, Schwarz Group), as well as Prof. Dr. Jörg Rocholl (ESMT Berlin) and Prof. Dr. Ansgar Zerfaß (University of Leipzig). The discussion highlighted that excellence in communication today relies on collaborative research and the systematic transfer of knowledge.

Wolf-Dieter Adlhoch: “Everything starts with communication. It creates orientation – internally and externally. Anyone who wants to act effectively needs dialogue to navigate complexity.”

Prof. Dr. Ansgar Zerfaß added: “For 15 years, the Academic Society has brought together research and practice. This collaboration has shaped the profession and will continue to be essential in redefining the contribution of corporate communication to value creation. Our research projects stand out in both professional discourse and the international academic community. This is how impactful knowledge is created, benefiting companies and society alike.”

The symposium continued on Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, with sessions on artificial intelligence in corporate communication, sustainability in financial communication, corporate history and brand management, and a preview of the Communication Management Radar 2026.

## Connecting Research and Practice Across Europe

Founded in 2015, the **Günter Thiele Foundation for Communication & Management** promotes research, teaching, and talent development in the field of communication management. It supports research projects, scholarships, and its initiatives include the **Academic Society** ([www.akademische-gesellschaft.com](http://www.akademische-gesellschaft.com)), the **Center for Research in Financial Communication** ([www.financialcommunication.org](http://www.financialcommunication.org)), and the **Center for History & Corporate Communication** ([www.historycomms.de](http://www.historycomms.de)).

Celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the **Academic Society for Corporate Management & Communication** unites over 50 companies and five leading universities in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Its mission: to drive research, foster innovation, and strengthen knowledge transfer among academia and practice, and promote dialogue within a network of thought leaders – shaping corporate communication with academic excellence and global visibility.

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