

“WE DEVELOP THE SKILLS OF TOMORROW”

THIERRY DUVANEL, DIRECTOR OF COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION



THIS YEAR, the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), sister to the ETH Zurich, celebrates its 50th anniversary. At the same time, Bühler is celebrating the 5th year of its EPFL Innovation Satellite, which marks our presence on this highly entrepreneurial campus. Did you know that we have a team of about 12 people on site? It's high time that we introduce you to this top academic institution and our activity there.

The EPFL has a perhaps obvious, yet invaluable benefit: it is a campus where meetings on site are never more than a 10-minute walk away. With close to 20,000 students, professors, researchers, and staff, it offers a unique body of knowledge which we tap into to fuel our innovation strategy. And we are not the only organization to do so: over 50 companies are located on site, increasing the amount of interactions and ideation between corporations.

At the heart of our presence at EPFL is the Swiss Data Science Center (SDSC). Its mission is to accelerate the adoption of data science within academia and industry. This new discipline is at the crossroads of software, data analysis, statistics, and machine learning, and the center is composed of a large multidisciplinary team of data and computer scientists. Bühler plays an important role in this sector, with six scientists based at our Innovation Satellite, working closely with the SDSC. Most of our new digital services were conceived and developed there.

Another key aspect of our presence on the campus is the Integrated Food and Nutrition Center (IFNC). Together with other corporations such as Nestlé, Firmenich, M-Industrie, or ADM, we run research and development projects, either in collaboration or bilaterally with select EPFL laboratories. On many occasions, the IFNC organizes meet-

ings with professors and researchers on site, in order to stay in close touch with the 350-plus research laboratories. At our Innovation Satellite, we also focus on developing the skill sets Bühler will need tomorrow. Our internship program hosts eight to 12 students per year. Engaged by our various business units, they produce their Master theses with us over a period of six months. The fields are diverse: from root-cause analysis to rice milling modelling to automation, all our businesses are involved. Another example of this competencies development is our pilot partnership with the EPFL Extension School, which enables everyone to hone the necessary skills for the digital age. Through this program, our employees learn at their own pace the basics of software programming and data analysis, forming the basic building blocks of digital thinking.

EPFL is known for its outstanding start-up activity. No fewer than 270 companies have spun-off since year 2000, and in 2018 alone, the start-ups on the site have raised CHF 217 million, the biggest volume pulled up in Switzerland. And let's not forget the nearby-based MassChallenge Switzerland program, which draws together over 90 start-ups each year, and also contributes to the hive of activity and innovation that Bühler's Innovation Satellite at EPFL represents.

More than ever, we need a collaborative approach to innovation. At our last Networking Days, we announced our goal to lower the energy, waste, and water in our customers' value chains by 50 percent. This is ambitious. But we believe it is possible by nurturing collaboration between all parties. Which is exactly what you can witness at EPFL, and we are always happy to introduce new partners to this ecosystem – join us!