

The Energy & Strategy Think Tank (ESTT) at WU's Institute for Strategic Management (ISM) (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/ism/energy-strategy-think-tank/>) invites applications for a master thesis.

Working Title: *Cultivating Serendipity at Incumbents*

Scope, Aims, Methods, and Initial Literature: Serendipity is about making surprising and valuable discoveries (Busch, forthcoming; Denrell, Fang, & Winter, 2003; Dew, 2009; Van Anandel, 1992). While this notion is often associated with start-ups, also incumbents increasingly trying to nurture serendipity.

Against the background of the firm and industrial specifics of regional energy providers, this thesis aims to

- Identify the main promises and downsides of promoting serendipity
- Identify best practices across and specific for functions (e.g. HR, R&D, Top Management) to promote serendipity

Insights from 1) a systematic review of the scientific literature (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009), 2) selected grey literature (Adams, Smart, & Huff, 2017), as well as 3) expert interviews (Cassell, 2009) should be combined.

Thesis Language: English

Corporate Partner: None

Expectations and Support: Constant feedback and regular meetings with faculty will facilitate a high-quality thesis with impact on management practice that is completed in a timely fashion. You will be provided with a guideline that details the supervision and writing process, expected deliverables beyond the final thesis, and grading as well as a package to kick off your thesis.

Targeted Students: Excellent and ambitious students of all MSc and MBA programs at WU Vienna University of Economics and Business are eligible and encouraged to apply. In principle, it is possible to write the thesis together with another student.

Interested? Send CV and grade certificates of all your studies to alexander.engelmann@wu.ac.at

Initial References:

- Adams, R. J., Smart, P., & Huff, A. S. 2017. Shades of Grey: Guidelines for Working with the Grey Literature in Systematic Reviews for Management and Organizational Studies. ***International Journal of Management Reviews***, 19(4): 432-454.
- Busch, C. forthcoming. Towards a Theory of Serendipity: A Systematic Review and Conceptualization. ***Journal of Management Studies***.
- Cassell, C. 2009. Interviews in Organizational Research. In D. A. Buchanan, & A. Bryman (Eds.), ***The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods***: 500-515. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Denrell, J., Fang, C., & Winter, S. G. 2003. The economics of strategic opportunity. ***Strategic Management Journal***, 24(10): 977-990.
- Denyer, D., & Tranfield, D. 2009. Producing a systematic review. In D. A. Buchanan, & A. Bryman (Eds.), ***The Sage handbook of organizational research methods***: 671-689. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dew, N. 2009. Serendipity in Entrepreneurship. ***Organization Studies***, 30(7): 735-753.
- Van Andel, P. 1992. Serendipity: "Expect also the Unexpected". ***Creativity and Innovation Management***, 1(1): 20-32.