

## **SPARKS University: Europe's First Agency Based University for Brand and Communication Talent bridges the gap between academic learning and industry demands.**

**A new European university focused on the future in branding and communication is set to launch: SPARKS University of Applied Sciences, founded by entrepreneur and industry expert Dr. Kai Fehse and backed by partners such as HORNBAACH and the Serviceplan Group, will open its doors at the beginning of September 2026. Three bachelor's degree programs in creative studies in English will be offered to students from all over Europe.**

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As rapid changes in AI are reshaping and connecting the job markets everywhere faster than most academic programs can adapt, the path from education to employment in the marketing industry becomes increasingly unpredictable. Therefore, connecting academic learning with real-life industry experience already while studying is crucial to preparing young talent for careers in the evolving market of branding and communication.

To address this growing gap, SPARKS University of Applied Sciences is launching as a bridge connecting academic training, the changing demands of the job market while also boosting international exchange across borders.

Opening in September for the winter semester, the new university calls for applications from all over the continent. It's designed to combine classic studies with hands-on industry experience. As Europe's first university based in a creative agency environment, teaching is primarily delivered virtually, with seminar content delivered by AI avatars, complemented by regular in-person sessions. For a steady direct line to world class creativity, onsite seminars take place regularly at the SPARKS campus - embedded within the House of Communication in Munich, headquarter of Serviceplan Group, Europe's largest independent agency group.

The university will offer three bachelor's degree programs: Design & Arts, Copy & Story, and Media & Data. All programs are currently undergoing accreditation with the Bavarian State Ministry of Science and the Arts and the German Council of Science and Humanities. State recognition is expected by summer 2026, just in time for the first class.

"SPARKS University is a boutique university for the industry, open for everyone eligible for university admission, cooler than traditional universities and more rigorous than creative academies. We want to inspire young people to enjoy critical thinking while also teaching them how to engage in the creative process, supported by professors from academia and professionals from the communications industry," explains Kai Fehse, initiator and managing director of SPARKS University.



The university's concept and curriculum has been developed by a founding team of academics and industry professionals, including Sabine Gwinner (Global Head of Creative Operations, Serviceplan Group), Prof. Richard Jung (Professor of Communication Design and ADC board member), Dr. Dr. Fabian Simmank (human biologist and economist), and Dr. Kiri Trier (CMO and innovation researcher).

Partner companies such as the Serviceplan Group and DIY store chain HORNBACH enable their employees to pursue dual bachelor's degrees or further education at SPARKS University. The partner network is currently being expanded to include additional corporations and media organizations.

Karsten Kühn, Board Member for Marketing & Employees at HORNBACH, comments: "For us as a brand, the professional education and training of young talent is a key success factor. SPARKS University combines academic quality with real-world relevance, exactly what companies need to prepare for the demands of modern brand management."

Florian Haller, CEO of the Serviceplan Group, adds: "Being a founding partner of SPARKS University is a topic very close to my heart. Education is a key lever for developing young talent, innovative, practical, and enriched by our in-house expertise, for example in AI and creative disciplines. Excellent communication emerges where curiosity, knowledge, and application come together. That is why our House of Communication is the ideal campus for SPARKS."