

## Korn Ferry Board Breakfast

*Preparatory discussion grid*

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- Topic:** How can modern governance boost competitiveness?
- To:**
- **Ms. Monika Rühl**  
Chairwoman of the Executive Board of economiesuisse
  - **Ms. Barbara Kux**  
Member of the Board of Directors at Engie, Firmenich, Henkel and Pargesa Holding
- Re:** Korn Ferry Board Breakfast
- Date / Time:** **June 14<sup>th</sup> 2018**, 07:30 – 10:00 am  
45-minute panel discussion,  
followed by Q&A-session and networking
- Host & Moderator:** [Stefan Steger](#),  
Managing Director Korn Ferry Switzerland
- Language:** English
- New Venue:** Clouds, Maagplatz 5, CH-8005 Zurich  
[www.clouds.ch](http://www.clouds.ch)

Board Breakfasts exclusively cater to board members and selected c-suite executives, providing attendees with unique insights into topics that influence board organization and effectiveness. The Korn Ferry Board Breakfast was launched in 2010 and takes place in Zurich three times a year.

## Welcome

### *Introducing Panelists*

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Ms. **Monika Rühl** has been the Chairwoman of the Executive Board of economiesuisse since 2014. She started her career in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) where she worked i. a. for the Swiss mission to the United Nations in New York. She then became personal assistant to Federal Councillor Joseph Deiss, first in the FDFA and then in the Federal Department of Economic Affairs. She was appointed head of the Bilateral Economic Relations Division of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) in 2006. From 2011 to 2014, she was Secretary General of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research. Ms. Rühl completed her studies (French and Italian) at the University of Zurich.

Ms. **Barbara Kux** is a Member of the Board of Directors at Engie, Henkel, Pargesa Holding and Vice Chairman of Firmenich. In October 2016 she was appointed to the High Level Decarbonisation Pathways Panel. She is a Member of the Advisory Council of INSEAD. From 2008 until 2013 she was a Member of the Managing Board of Siemens, as the first woman in the 160 year history of the company. She had started her professional career in 1984 as a Management Consultant at McKinsey before joining the management at ABB, one of her clients. After helping to establish the company as the leader in power plant construction, she led Nestlé in the emerging markets of Central and Eastern Europe. After her studies in Switzerland and as an AFS scholar in the USA, Ms. Kux earned her MBA with distinction from INSEAD Fontainebleau.

## Discussion Grid

How can modern governance boost competitiveness?

### 1. Introduction

Competitiveness is linked to various prerequisites which jointly translate into a more or less competitive position of an organisation or a country. Location, people and their cultural traits and a healthy political environment are amongst them. All of these elements find an expression in governance principles and standards. We will explore how well Switzerland is prepared for future competition as a business location and a home of important and world-leading companies when it comes to the country's governance standards.

### 2. Discussion Grid

<p><b>1. Definition and personal perspective on competitiveness.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On the basis of your broad experience how do you today define the competitiveness of a company? (Barbara Kux)</i></li> <li>• <i>How do you personally look at the competitiveness of a business location (Monika Rühl), what are the highest level building blocks and is governance one of them?</i></li> <li>• <i>What was or is your most important contribution to the competitiveness of the companies where you worked / work with?</i></li> <li>• <i>How is the subject of competitiveness discussed on a political level? Do politics and business associations have governance on their agenda?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Building blocks of competitiveness / governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What are the prerequisites for a business location to ensure that companies can succeed globally?</i></li> <li>• <i>Switzerland is considered a champion when it comes to innovation. Switzerland occupies top positions in all relevant rankings. Is there a correlation between elements of governance (i.e. the contribution of the non execs) and innovative capabilities of a company?</i></li> <li>• <i>Political stability is often highlighted as an essential locational advantage. Others are legal stability and the reliability of corporate taxation. Can Switzerland claim these benefits in</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>the future? In which countries and regions will Switzerland get competition?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Switzerland is a leading export country. How does this manifest itself on boards: is global orientation appropriately represented? Do you see relevant comparative differences to e.g. Germany?</i></li> <li>• <i>What's your view on Anglo Saxon board standards and governance principles in light of Brexit and the changes in the US?</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Status and challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How can modern governance practically contribute to the competitiveness of a company?</i></li> <li>• <i>How can the individual board members contribute / how might their contribution be different from the past?</i></li> <li>• <i>Should governance be more present in the political debate or rather the opposite?</i></li> <li>• <i>How could Germany run into scandals like VW / Diesel and never - ending issues at Deutsche Bank – what's missing?</i></li> <li>• <i>What could be specific improvement angles for Switzerland?</i></li> <li>• <i>Switzerland is neither a member of the EU nor a member of the G-20. How can it be ensured that Switzerland is not at a disadvantage when it comes to international competition?</i></li> <li>• <i>In part, protectionist tendencies can be recognized in the global economy. How should Switzerland behave as a business location? Can Switzerland even get a hearing?</i></li> <li>• <i>What can a board do when markets can only be dealt with under difficult conditions? Keyword China.</i></li> <li>• <i>In part, a sell-out of Swiss technology is feared. Various traditional companies have changed hands. What can a board do to protect its technology?</i></li> <li>• <i>On the political side: are there any chances for Swiss technology to stay in the country? Are sales prohibitions to foreign investors, e.g. Chinese companies, in a liberal state like Switzerland an option?</i></li> <li>• <i>In your experience: How have boards responded to foreign attacks on key technologies?</i></li> </ul>

### **3. Foresight**

- What can Switzerland do to maintain its competitiveness? Which frame conditions must be fulfilled? Where do you see the biggest dangers at the political level that could affect competitiveness?
- What assignments do the boards have to ensure their competitiveness? In which area do you see the greatest need for action?

## Reading Material

*The following links and articles may be helpful in preparation*

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### **The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018**

Ten years on from the global financial crisis, the prospects for a sustained economic recovery remain at risk due to a widespread failure on the part of leaders and policy-makers to put in place reforms necessary to underpin competitiveness and bring about much-needed increases in productivity, according to data from the World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018*.

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2017-2018>

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### **The Company Board: Advantage Global Competitiveness**

In my more than three decades of corporate experience, I ran companies and ran management of companies to understand and discuss the most relevant aspects of growth drivers. The most important truth of successful companies is how competent their boards have been and stood the times. Along with the decision-making acumen of the board of directors, their competencies and varied competencies that they bring on table is of prime significance. Their deep involvement, rapport with the teams or management and the chairman's stance on the board are the most decisive parameters of the board's success that will provide the company a distinctive competitive advantage.

<https://www.businesstoday.in/opinion/columns/the-company-board-advantage-global-competitiveness/story/237148.html>

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### **Top Challenges Facing Boards in 2018**

2017 has certainly been an action-packed year in the world of corporate governance. Shareholders flexed their voting power muscle, while company reputations were colored by various cyber breaches or reputational crises. With new issues on the horizon—think CEO pay ratio, ESG, and digital transformation—2018 is shaping up to be an equally demanding year for corporate boards.

<https://boardroomresources.com/episode/top-challenges-facing-boards-in-2018/>

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At Korn Ferry, we design, build, attract and ignite talent. Since our inception, clients have trusted us to help recruit world-class leadership. Today, we are a single source for leadership and talent consulting services to empower businesses and leaders to reach their goals. Our solutions range from executive recruitment and leadership development programs, to enterprise learning, succession planning and recruitment process outsourcing (RPO). Visit [www.kornferry.com](http://www.kornferry.com) for more information on Korn Ferry, and [www.kornferryinstitute.com](http://www.kornferryinstitute.com) for thought leadership, intellectual property and research.