

# Your Handout

**Dear Participants,**

This is your handout for our workshop.

It was great, that you could join me!

In this Handout you will find all the slides from - for reference, marking, or printing.

At the very end, you will also find further links and QR codes and my contact details.

I wish you the all the best for your future career!

Yours Bastian



# Working and Workplace Culture in Germany

## What You Need to Know

### We will start at 2:20 PM

**BERUFS  
OPTIMIERER**  
AUTHENTISCH. ERFOLGREICH. SEIN.

## Bastian Hughes

- Career Coach and Trainer
- Previously worked as a Recruiter / HR professional
- Host of the career podcast “Berufsoptimierer”

- Systemic Coach
- Diploma in Business Administration
- Office Administrator

### Three Passions

- People and their stories
- Outdoor sports
- Photography



# About Berufsoptimierer

## Our Vision:

To create a world where people can develop professionally and succeed in what they enjoy most with the effect that it will also improve their personal life significantly. Do what makes you happy in order to succeed on all levels.

## Our Mission:

Transparency.

## How?

### Podcast



### Application check



### Online Training



### Coaching





What was your  
biggest surprise  
or 'culture shock  
moment' in  
Germany"

**What are you hoping  
to gain from today's  
webinar?**

# Common challenges when entering the job market

Language barrier

Lack of practical experience

Little or no professional network

Limited knowledge of application standards

Visa issues and bureaucratic uncertainties

Mismatch between qualifications and available job opportunities



# Meet Tsovinar

## From international student to SAP Champion

- Originally from Armenia – came to Germany to study Media Informatics at RWTH Aachen
- Faced challenges: new culture, new language, no network
- First job search was tough – wrong assumptions, many rejections
- Landed her role at SAP in 2014 and became a recognized community leader

*“When I first arrived in Germany, I had no idea how to present myself to a company. You have to be visible. Doors open for those who dare to knock.”*



Plan your career in Germany and prepare effectively for entering the job market.

1. Arrival

3. Positioning

4. Visibility

2. Culture

## 2. Culture

What this is about:

**Understand what is considered professional in Germany.**  
**How expectations around communication, feedback and behavior may differ**  
**from what you're used to.**



*“In my first job I was the only international and the only woman. I often felt I was doing something wrong – but it was just a culture gap.”*

**Tsovinar**

A woman with dark, curly hair and a yellow, ribbed turtleneck sweater is shown from the chest up. She is looking slightly to her left with a thoughtful expression, her right hand resting near her waist. The background is a solid light purple.

# Solo Task

*5 Minutes*



**Your country**

💡 Think of something that is characteristic of how people in your country interact with each other.

# Group Exercise

*10 Minutes*

Discuss in pairs:

Now let's do the same for Germany.

What do you think is considered typically German in the workplace or university?



# Core elements of German workplace culture

**Punctuality**  
professionalism and respect

Except for the Deutsche Bahn ;-)

**Direct communication**  
Not rude, just efficient

**Hierarchy matters**  
Even in “flat” companies

**Structure over spontaneity**  
Ideas need planning

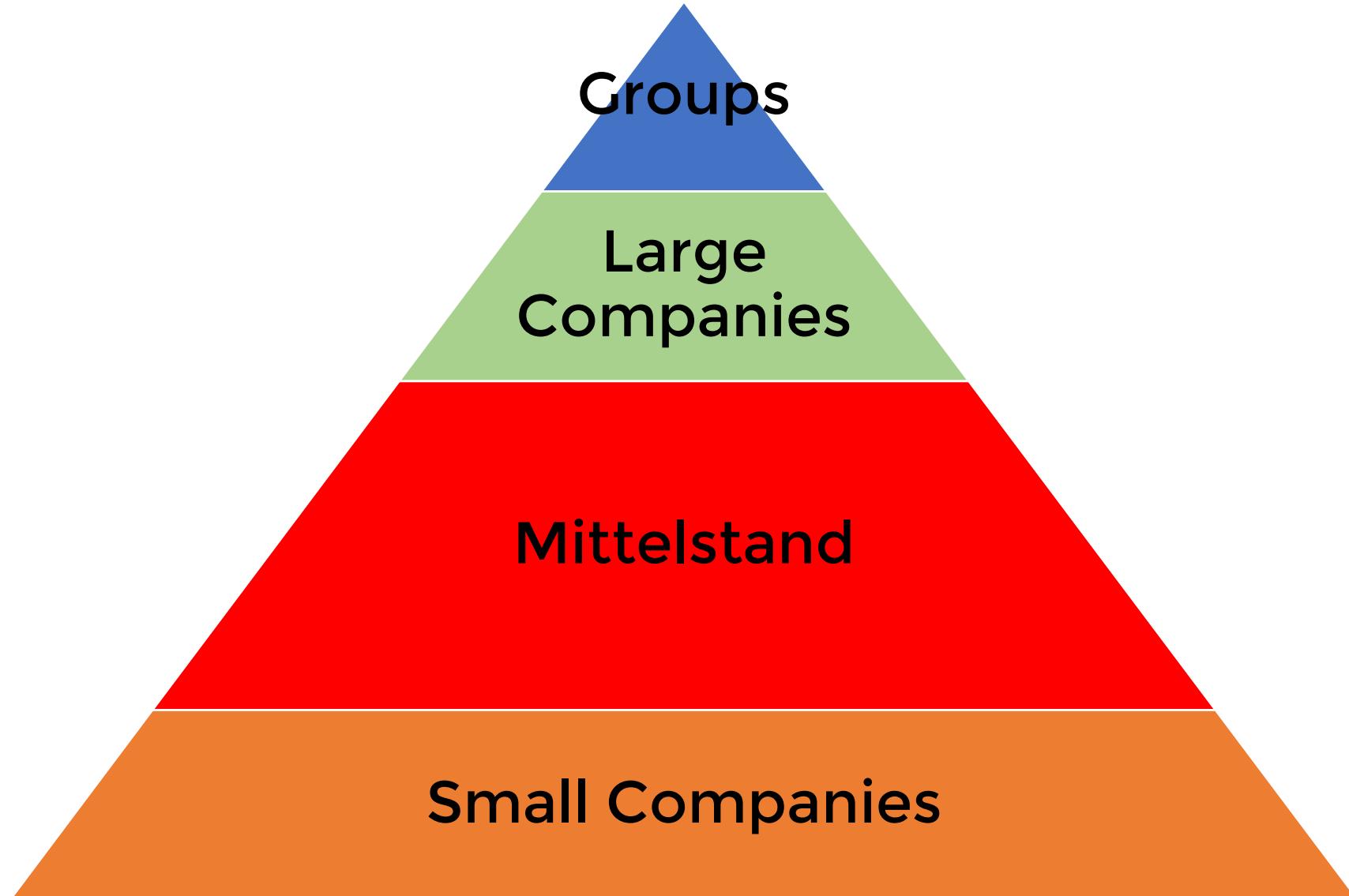
**Emotional self-control**  
Even in conflict

**Meetings: follow agenda**  
decisions = consensus (but slow)

# 3. Positioning

What this is about:

**Learn how the German job market is structured and what types of employers exist – so you can target your applications more effectively.**



# German Job Market Structure

Company Size	Examples	Share of All Companies	Share of Employees	Share of Revenue	Potential
<b>DAX &amp; Global Corporates</b>	Volkswagen, Siemens, Deutsche Telekom, SAP	< 0.1%	Top 10 employers: 150,000-680,000 employees each	Approx. 70-80% of total revenue	<b>Very high</b> - international teams, English-speaking roles, formal recruiting
<b>Large Companies(&gt; 1000 employees)</b>	e.g. Lufthansa Technik, Deutsche Bahn, regional market leaders	~0.5 %	Around 1/3 of all employees	Large share of remaining revenue	<b>High</b> - structured HR, regional opportunities, professional processes
<b>SMEs (Small &amp; Medium Enterprises)</b>	Family businesses, "Hidden Champions" in engineering or manufacturing	<b>~99.3 %</b>	~53 % of all employees (38+ million people)	~28 % of total revenue (€2.8T of €10T)	<b>Very high</b> - easier access via networking, less formal but more personal recruiting
<b>Public Sector / NGOs</b>	Universities, municipal offices, non-profits	a few %	varies	varies	<b>Medium to high</b> - clear paths, structured entry, language requirements



*“I started applying to small companies because I thought they would be easier to get into - but they didn’t have the infrastructure for international people.*

*Bigger companies were actually more open - I just didn’t know that at the beginning.”*

**Tsovinar**

# Career & Recruiting in Different Company Types

Company Type	Recruiting Style	Career Development	Language	Application Tips
<b>Global Players</b> (e.g. SAP, Siemens)	Structured, online platforms, long and fixed processes, talent pools	Clear paths, often with trainee/intern programs	English often possible	Strong CV, formal tone, tailored cover letter
<b>Large National Companies</b> (e.g. Deutsche Bahn)	Structured, mix of online + regional fairs	Many internal mobility options	Usually German required	Standard CV formats, reference to company values
<b>SMEs / Mittelstand</b> (Hidden Champions)	Personal, fast, high chances via networks	Quick access to responsibility, often informal	German usually expected	Direct approach, use alumni or regional links
<b>Public Sector / NGOs</b>	Formalized, fixed deadlines, online portals	Stable, rule-based progression	German usually mandatory	Follow job posting rules strictly, include all documents



**Many people only apply to what's visible - the well-known global companies.**

**But the best opportunities are often hidden below the surface - at less visible, smaller employers.**

# 4. Visibility

What this is about:

**Discover how to make your strengths visible – through smart networking, personal positioning and understanding the power of referrals in Germany.**

# Why does visibility matter?



## Did you know?

**Only 17%** of international MINT students build direct employer contact during studies

**60%** say language barriers made their job search harder

**68%** lack practical experience in Germany

Sources: ingenieur.de, SVR study on the integration of international graduates in the German labor market (svr-migration.de)

# How to strengthen your visibility & impact

Lack of contacts

**Use alumni, events, and university support**

No German work experience

**Get internships, student jobs, volunteering**

Language barrier

**Show willingness to learn, start improving**

No idea how to apply

**Use Career Services, practice, ask for help**

Feeling “too different”

**Turn it into a unique selling point**





*“Networking was the one thing that helped me succeed - in every aspect. I contacted alumni on LinkedIn and just asked: Can I ask you 3 questions?” That’s how I got my interview at SAP - not because of a job ad, but through a connection.”*

*You don’t need to be loud - but you need to be clear.”*

**Tsovinar**

# Group Exercise

10 Minutes

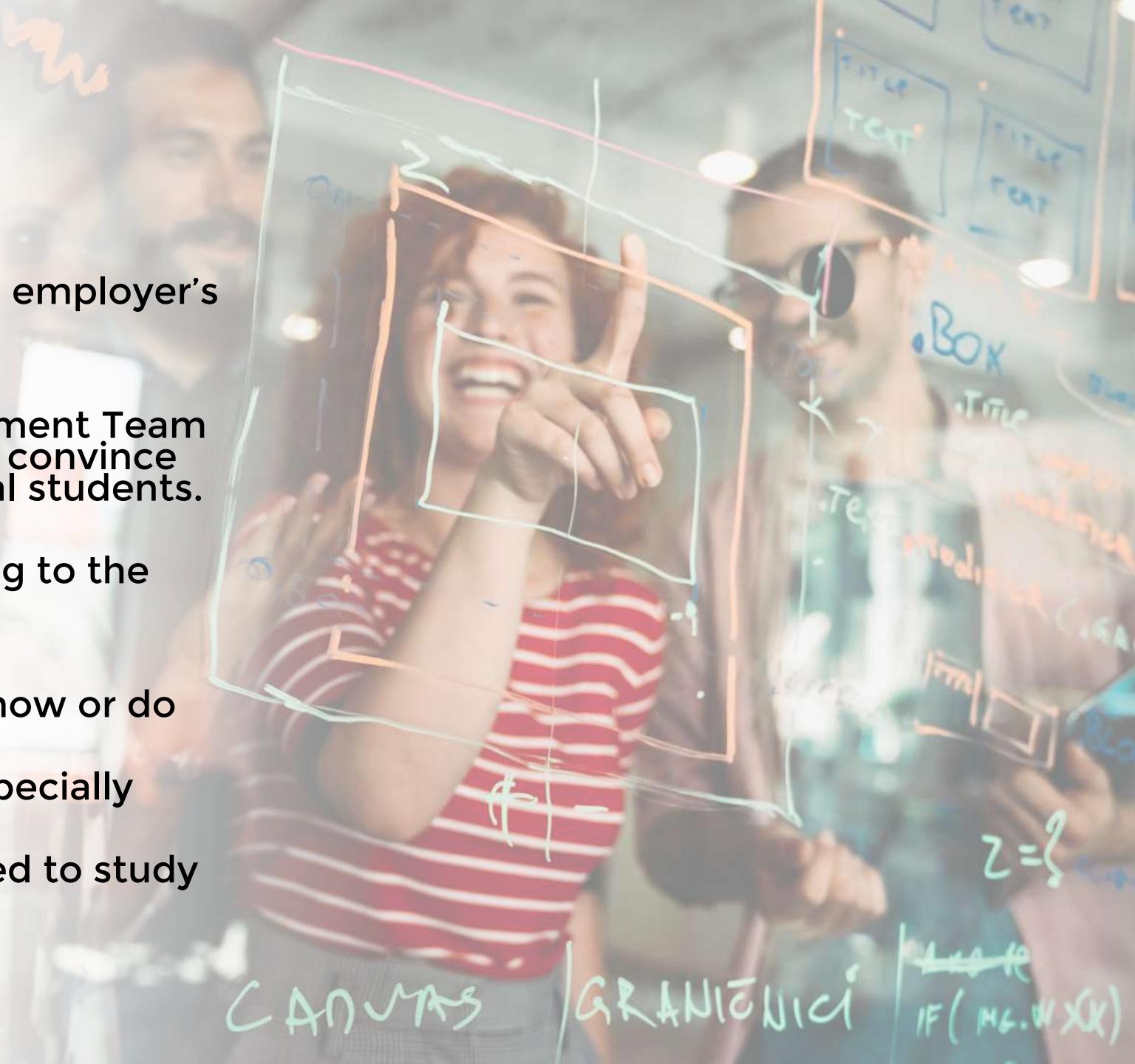
Discuss in groups:

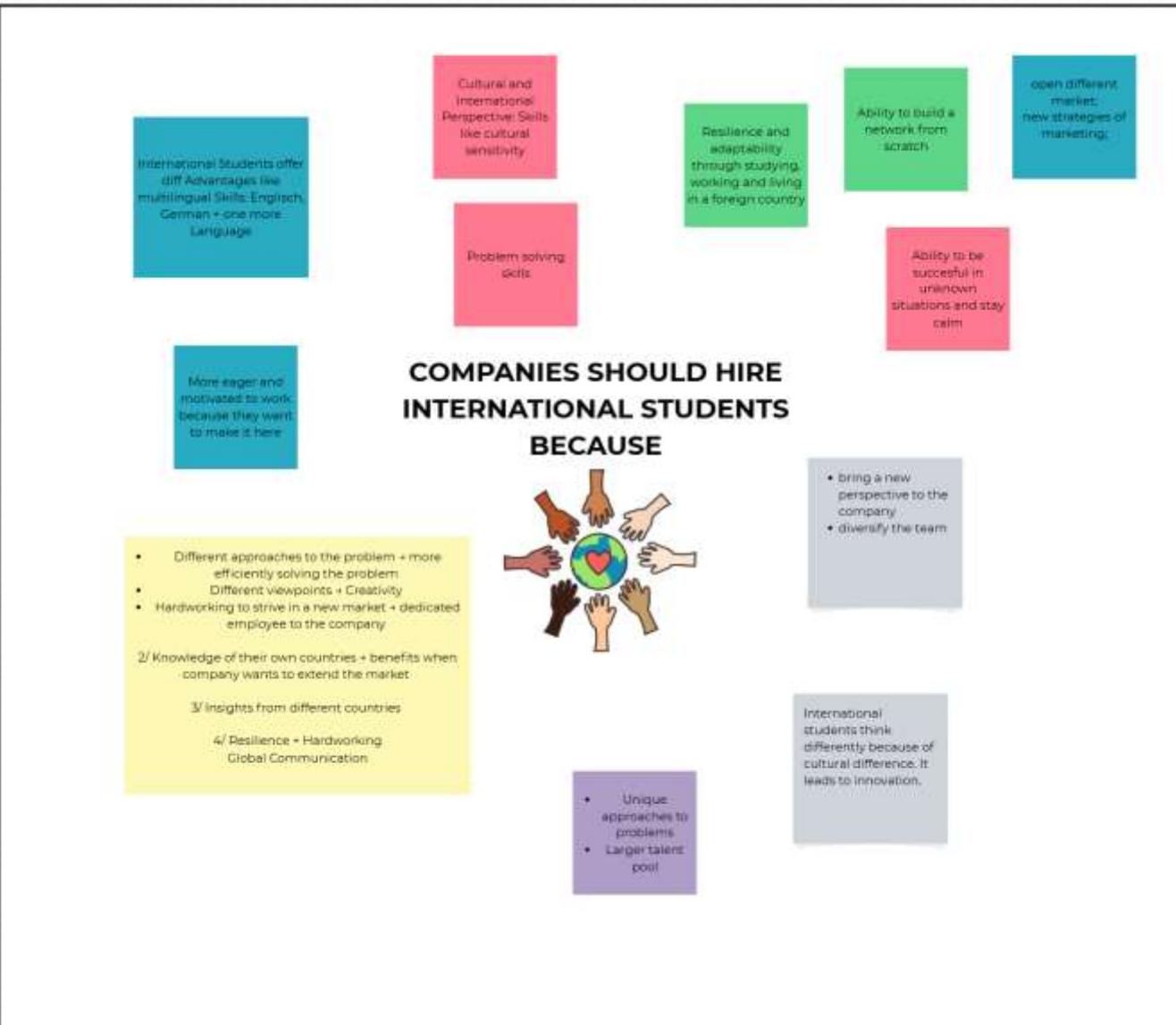
What makes you valuable – from an employer's view?

Imagine you are part of the Recruitment Team of a German company. You want to convince your team to hire more international students. What arguments would you use?

What do international students bring to the table?

- What do international students know or do that locals might not?
- What skills or perspectives are especially helpful for companies today?
- What personal qualities are needed to study successfully in a foreign country?







*“I’m still learning every day – but I now know how to use my background as a strength.*

*International students don’t need to adapt completely – they need to connect authentically.”*

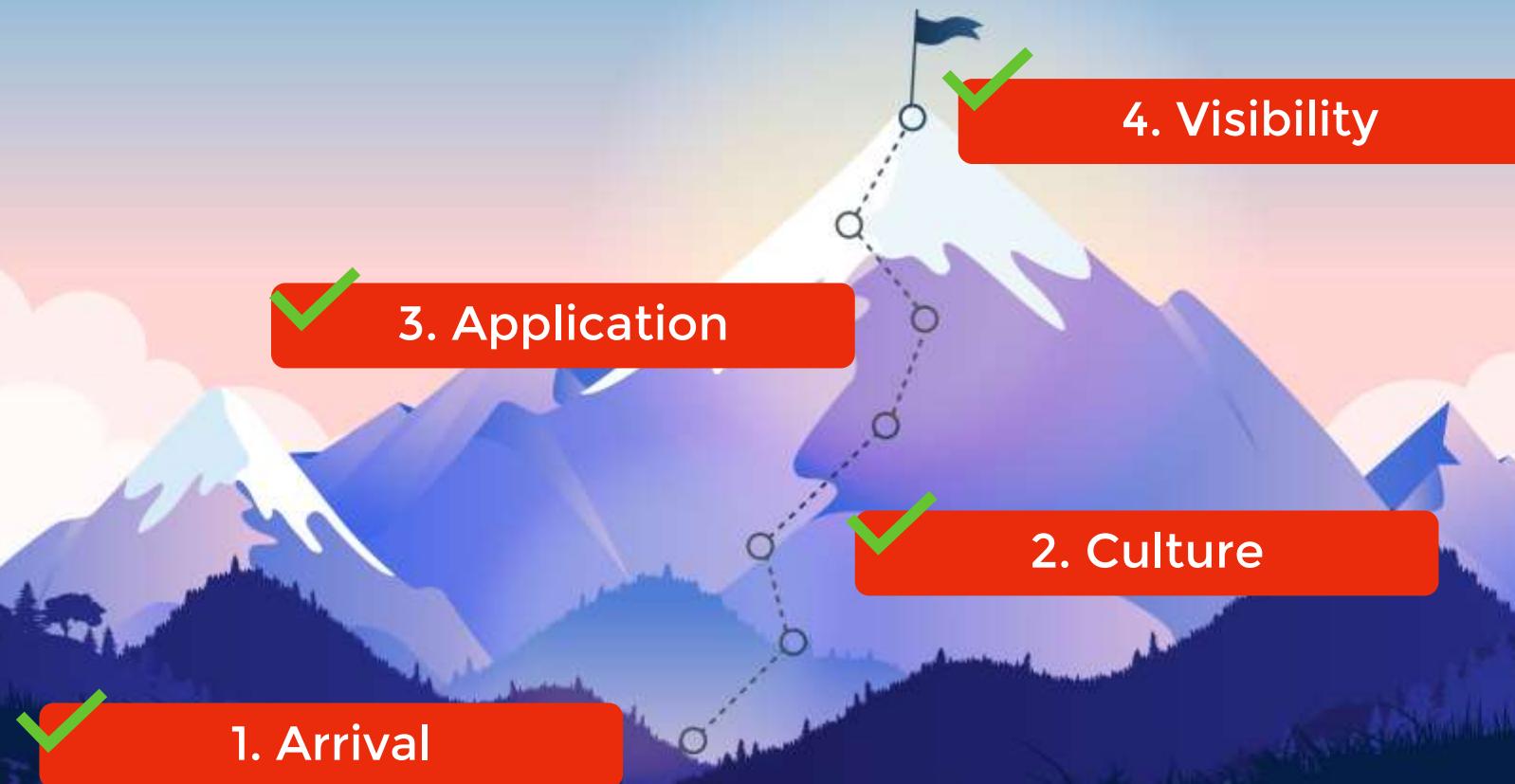
**Tsovinar**

# Tools and Channels for Visibility

Channel / Tool	Why it works	Tip
<b>LinkedIn</b>	Professional visibility, job search, alumni	Use filters to find alumni or target companies
<b>XING (in Germany)</b>	Especially relevant in DACH region and SME	Build a basic profile in German
<b>Career Services</b>	Events, fairs, connections to recruiters	Use every contact point at your university
<b>Referral Strategy</b>	Boosts trust and speeds up process	Ask alumni from your home country living in Germany
<b>Volunteering / Events</b>	Creates presence, shows initiative	Helps you build soft-entry relationships

*Germany has a referral culture (Vitamin B) - that doesn't exist in every country, but it's real here.*

Plan your career in Germany and prepare effectively for entering the job market.



- 1. How are you?  
(Scale 1-10)**
- 2. Your biggest take  
away today**

# Thank you!

## Let's stay in touch

You have a question? Please contact me at any time!



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Scan this QR Code if you want to listen to this episode:

**Title: Working in Germany - focus on this (#280)**

