Profile

ABB Ability™ Customer Experience (ACE)
Center Ladenburg
On a journey together with customers

Customers can discover digital market opportunities and co-develop custom-tailored solutions with ABB experts at the ABB Ability™ Customer Experience (ACE) Centers.
There is a growing demand for products and solutions specifically tailored to customer requirements – and ABB is no exception here. With three ABB Ability™ Customer Experience (ACE) centers worldwide, ABB has created an innovative platform that allows customers and ABB experts to start a journey together. The objective: develop digital market opportunities through collaboration.
Two gentlemen are engaged in lively discussion. Comfortable egg chairs encourage them to sink in and relax, their jackets are hanging over the chair backs and they each have a cool beverage in one hand. What looks like a casual after-work chat in a hotel lounge is a typical situation at the ABB Ability™ Customer Experience (ACE) center in Ladenburg. ABB is breaking new ground with its ACE concept – and an inspiring atmosphere is an essential part of it. Listening to customers, understanding their needs and developing custom-tailored solutions – this is what work in the ACE is all about.

Changing the quality of communication with customers
The co-creation workshops get customers involved in the process early on. This enables ABB to take customer needs and requirements into account when developing and marketing solution concepts and products. The ACE uses a combination of different approaches (design thinking, agile work, start-ups) to embed the innovative potential of creativity techniques in a structured process. Essentially, the objective is to find solutions that would not be developed solely from the supplier’s perspective. Users are the focus instead.

“We want to offer customers competent, sustainable support throughout the digital transformation. At the same time, we also work together to develop powerful solutions that deliver true and measurable added value to customers,” explains Fabian Hess, Manager of the ACE in Ladenburg. The ACE team is a ser-

“This was actually the first time in my career that I didn’t feel like I was just another prospect attending a thinly veiled sales event. The first workshop wasn’t even about the products we need. ABB simply wanted to hear what we had to say. Then we worked together to figure out the actual problem and how we could resolve it.”

Holger Schwenk, Managing Director of machine manufacturer Inotec, Moers
“The ACE is the perfect place to bring collaboration with our customers to a whole new level. Focused collaboration in the selected topic area quickly creates a familiar atmosphere – and that’s a very good basis for further cooperation. The ACE center has professional moderators to ensure participants don’t get sidetracked and that there is a result when the workshop comes to a close.”

Ulrich Aschenbroich, Business Development Manager Distribution Solution Sales Germany

Immerse yourself in digital worlds – with interactive exhibits and videos.

vice provider for the businesses and sales units within ABB. “Customers are our guests. We want them to feel welcome from the moment they arrive – similar to a good hotel.”

Workshop participants have the opportunity to go on a digital expedition in the “Digital Delta”, a showroom with interactive exhibits and installations, in the “Mixed Reality” lab or in the “Prototyping Lab”.

The workshop typically comprises four phases that build on one another. First, participants analyze the actual situation from different perspectives. Then they dive into the customer’s technological requirements and the possibilities enabled by ABB Ability™, ABB’s integrated industrial Internet platform and cloud infrastructure. Later they formulate specific challenges and develop ideas. During the last phase, the best ideas get elaborated on “concept posters” and drafted into first project outlines. As a conclusion of all preceding methods, the team selects the most promising concepts. The selected concepts form the basis for prototyping and testing the proposed solutions.
Bringing people together, strengthening partnerships
The ACE Centers have held over 130 workshops with more than 1,500 participants around the world since April 2018. Over 90 of these were in Ladenburg alone with European customers. Most of the half-day or multi-day workshops take place in Ladenburg, but they can also be held at the customer’s site on request. This year’s Hannover Fair marked the first time the ACE was represented with its own “Co-Creation Lab”. It held 17 brief workshops with customers from nine different countries and seven industry segments during the week of the event.

Depending on the addressed challenge, external partners, suppliers or representatives from start-up companies and universities can participate in the workshops alongside customers and ABB employees. “An interdisciplinary approach is key,” says Fabian Hess. Everyone in the room has a voice – that’s one of the most important principles in design thinking. A Co-Creation Workshop is a dialog based on trust, inspired by curiosity and driven by the desire to learn from one another and enjoy success together.”

“...The ACE is a great platform for collaborating with customers to develop solutions. My personal experience with co-creation and the exceptionally positive response from my contacts make it clear to me that we are also offering our customers true innovations here.”
Stefan Lau, Head of Sales LBL Energy Industries Germany

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ABB ABILITY™ CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE (ACE) CENTER LADENBURG

- **Space:**
  - 550 sqm space
  - 5 rooms for dialog and inspiration: Digital Delta, Co-Creation Lab, Mixed Reality Lab, Digital Prototyping Lab, Customer Lounge
  - 10 digital exhibits
- **Tools:** Co-Creation Workshops, based on design thinking methods
- **Customer Journey:** Discover digital market opportunities and co-develop custom-tailored solutions with customers
- **People:** Customers, partners, universities, ABB experts from all of the businesses, seven-person ACE team
“Co-creation workshops create value for both parties: Customers receive results that facilitate the profitable strategic and technological advancement of their digital solutions. And ABB receives valuable insight into the challenges customers are currently facing in the market. This helps us adapt our products, solutions and services to meet emerging challenges.”

Stefan Flöck, Lead Business Manager Motion Germany

“The ACE method helped ABB rapidly synthesize a wide range of viewpoints and demands into specific goals. This enabled us to quickly and efficiently elaborate four concepts and reach a common understanding of the partnership opportunities in e-mobility and electric infrastructure optimization. We will use follow-up workshops to cover the topic of ‘smart cities’ in more depth.”

Michael Teigeler, Managing Director of Heidelberg Energie municipal utilities