

Shabnam Azimi supports young people through business@school

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Summary:

- Shabnam Azimi is a specialist in Financial Crime Management in the Compliance, Tax- and Operational Risk Management division within the private and Small Business Customers segment and has been part of Commerzbank since 2014.
- Since 2024 she has been volunteering as a coach for the educational initiative business@school, supporting pupils as they develop their own business ideas.
- What matters most to her are the pupils' personal development and helping them build economic skills.

Shabnam, what motivated you to get involved in business@school? During my studies I had the opportunity to work together with companies on new business models as part of various projects. These experiences left a lasting impression on me, and I now want to pass them on.

I'm particularly motivated by the idea of making pupils aware of economic topics and their own strengths at an early stage. What excites me about this voluntary role is witnessing the pupils' development: how they come up with ideas, take on responsibility, ask questions and become increasingly confident.

How do you support the pupils in concrete terms? I accompany, advise and coach the teams throughout their entire project. At the beginning, it's about getting to know each other, dealing with organisational matters and choosing an industry or business idea.

Later on, the young people work intensively on market analyses and business models. I support them with subject-related questions, research and analysis, as well as with preparing their presentations. In doing so, I provide structured feedback and act as a sparring partner.

Which aspects of your day-to-day work help you in this role? Even though my current role is not directly linked to my voluntary work in terms of content, I can draw on many skills from my professional life: analytical thinking, structured working and communicating in a way that is tailored to the audience.

In my own studies I also focused intensively on market analyses, business models and corporate management. This now helps me to explain economic interrelationships in an accessible way and to support the young people in their projects.

How much time do you invest in your voluntary work? That depends on the individual school. Some schools prefer weekly meetings, while others opt for a rhythm of every two weeks. In addition, there is time needed for preparation and follow up, reviewing presentations and giving feedback.

On average, I invest around one to three hours per week in my voluntary work.

Which positive experiences have particularly stayed with you? I'm especially impressed by how

committed and interested the pupils are. They prepare well, take feedback on board and continuously develop their ideas.

It's wonderful to see how they become more open and self confident over the course of the project, learn to work as a team and discover their own strengths. At the same time, through their interactions with company representatives they gain valuable insights into the world of work.

I would encourage anyone who is interested in volunteering with business@school to simply give it a try. Especially at the beginning, it can be helpful to start out together with an experienced coach. That way, you can benefit from existing experience, ask questions and grow into the role step by step.

Why is voluntary engagement important for our society in your view? Volunteering brings people together and builds trust. People with different backgrounds connect, discover new perspectives and experience that they can achieve something together.

This, in my opinion, is an important contribution to strengthening democracy: anyone who gets involved takes on responsibility and experiences their own impact. And they learn to tolerate differing opinions and develop solutions together. This strengthens social cohesion – and thus a vibrant democracy.

Thank you very much for the conversation, Shabnam.

About business@school

Business@school is the educational initiative of the management consultancy Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and gives pupils practical insights into business and enterprise. Over the course of a school year, the young people analyse companies, explore economic interrelationships and develop their own business ideas. They are supported by teachers and by volunteer coaches from companies. These coaches contribute their professional and practical experience, offer feedback and accompany the teams as sparring partners. Commerzbank has been involved as a partner of the initiative since 2010. Each year, around 1,000 pupils across Europe take part in the programme.

"You have to become active yourself as someone affected"

09/08/2026 - Christoph Küsell volunteers to support people with the muscle disease FSHD. His own experiences as someone affected help him to provide guidance to others.

With heart for care – guidance in special life situations

08/18/2026 - Jürgen Frank, Technical Product Manager at Commerzbank, volunteers in the internal employee network "Netzwerk Pflege", supporting colleagues in care situations.

Volunteering in Fire and Disaster Protection

07/20/2026 - Joan Leonie Nitsche, an IT specialist at Commerzbank, volunteers in disaster control, medical services and the fire brigade.

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