

News

Swiss Life Asset Managers honours the best theses on financial topics

8 November 2018

Yesterday evening, Swiss Life Asset Managers, in conjunction with Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and media partner *Finanz und Wirtschaft*, awarded the Swiss Life Thesis Award for the best Master's and Bachelor's theses in the financial field for the fifth time in succession.

A total of twenty-eight Bachelor's and Master's theses on a wide range of topics were submitted from universities across Switzerland, all of them with one thing in common: they centred on issues from the world of finance. Four theses were judged by the expert jury to be excellent and received the coveted award for this yesterday evening at the Swiss Life head office in Zurich. As well as the award itself, the winners received a financial prize for their outstanding performance.

At the awards ceremony, Stefan Mächler, Chief Investment Officer of the Swiss Life Group, praised the strong practical orientation of the theses: "The students have put existing models to the test, developed new approaches and examined factors affecting competition that could influence the financial world of tomorrow." Professor Christoph Lengwiler, jury member and lecturer at the Institute for Financial Services in Zug (IFZ), part of Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, agrees that critical scrutiny and thinking outside the box are essential skills in times of high competitive pressure and competitive markets: "The requirements placed on staff in the world of finance are increasing continuously and changing rapidly. A careful examination of financial issues is therefore important to withstand the competition. I am therefore delighted to see students pursuing innovative and forward-looking research and we are pleased to reward this courage." The

award is also intended to serve as an incentive to future graduates in the financial sector to attempt to tackle complex issues."

Review of the award winners

Gabriela Leupp, from Eglisau, who is a graduate of Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, pursued the goal in her Master's thesis of developing a set of tools for banks to enable them to assess risks/creditworthiness better when granting loans to general contractors. She analysed the construction project and risk management of general contractors in eight case studies and derived concrete recommendations for credit assessment and monitoring. She was awarded the **Swiss Life Thesis Award in the Master's category**, worth CHF 5000. The jury's verdict: "The thesis is very well structured and delivers new insights for banks for the credit assessment and monitoring of general contractors."

Raziye Tairi, from Seewen, who is a graduate of Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, analysed the impact of micro-blogs on share market forecasting, in particular the inclusion of Twitter in the development of trading strategies. She collected over 150 000 Twitter micro-blogs containing the stock symbol over a period of ten weeks for this study. The jury's verdict: "The thesis is well structured and easy to follow, and affords valuable insights into a field that has so far received little research attention." The jury acknowledged these results with an **Honourable Mention in the Master's category**, worth CHF 2500.

Laurent Itin, from Zurich, who is a graduate of Kalaidos University of Applied Sciences Switzerland, conducted an analysis of the use of big data at SME retail banks in German-speaking Switzerland. By means of a qualitative-empirical study carried out with 14 representatives of ten SME retail banks in German-speaking Switzerland and a structured content analysis, he drew up recommendations for action for an IT service provider in the banking sector that are based on concrete big data scenarios. The jury's verdict: "For his systematic approach and the clear recommendations for

action resulting from this, the author is awarded the **Swiss Life Thesis Award in the Bachelor's category**, worth CHF 5000.”

Philip Brand, from St. Barthélemy, who is a graduate of the School of Management and Engineering Vaud, conducted a comprehensive environmental and business analysis for a small garage business and developed three scenarios for succession planning. The core element of his thesis comprised a company valuation with various commonly used valuation methods. The jury's verdict: “This is a very comprehensive, well-structured and immaculate Bachelor's thesis that addresses a practical problem and generates great benefits for the business owner. The author is therefore awarded an **Honourable Mention in the Bachelor's category**, worth CHF 2500.”

The prizewinners' institutions receive CHF 1500 for the bestowal of the Swiss Life Thesis Awards, and CHF 1000 for the Honourable Mention.

About the Swiss Life Thesis Award

The Swiss Life Thesis Award, presented in cooperation with the Institute for Financial Services Zug (IFZ), part of Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, and the business paper *Finanz und Wirtschaft*, provides a platform for innovative and practice-oriented research work at Swiss institutes of higher education. The best theses in the fields of financial investments, financial markets,

financial services companies, financial instruments and corporate finance are singled out for awards each year.

Swiss Life Thesis Award jury members

Philippe Béguelin, Head of Markets Department, *Finanz und Wirtschaft*

Peter Kuster, Head of Editing and Proofreading, Swiss National Bank

Professor Christoph Lengwiler, lecturer at the Institute of Financial Services Zug (IFZ), part of Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts

Dr Annelis Lüscher Hämmerli, Chief Risk Officer, Swiss Life Asset Managers

Dr Hansruedi Scherer, Partner and Member of the Executive Committee, PPCmetrics, Zurich



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Swiss Life Asset Managers

Swiss Life Asset Managers has over 160 years of experience in managing the assets of the Swiss Life Group. This insurance background has exerted a key influence on the investment philosophy of Swiss Life Asset Managers, which is governed by such principles as value preservation, the generation of consistent and sustainable performance and a responsible approach to risks. This tried and tested approach means that Swiss Life Asset Managers is also available to third-party customers in Switzerland, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the UK. As at 30 June 2018, Swiss Life Asset Managers managed a total volume of CHF 225.1 billion in assets for the Swiss Life Group, including over CHF 64 billion for third-party asset management. Swiss Life Asset Managers is also Europe's leading real estate manager,¹ with CHF 54.4 billion of a total volume of CHF 225.1 billion in assets under management invested in real estate. In addition, Swiss Life Asset Managers has real estate under administration of CHF 29.2 billion through its subsidiaries Livit and Corpus Sireo. Total real estate under management at the end of June 2018 thus stood at CHF 83.6 billion. Swiss Life Asset Managers has over 1600 employees in Europe.

¹ PropertyEU, Top 100 Investors, October 2015, 2016 and 2017