The Chair of Logistics & Supply Chain Management is offering the following

Project Study

in cooperation with a global supplier of tooling, engineered components and advanced materials:

Improving Strategic Sales Forecasts & Inventory Performance
by Integrating Internal and External Data

About the client:
The NASDAQ-listed company with a European research & production facility in Fürth, Bavaria, provides a broad range of applications tools, materials and processes to manufacturers in aerospace, automotives, earthworks, energy etc. The firm generates sales in equal thirds from North America, Western Europe and Asia. The company operates in more than 55 countries.

Problem situation:
Forecasting sales in Greater China is getting increasingly challenging. Reasons range from short times series of historic sales to the generally low quality of available (external) data. Moreover, foreign companies are plagued by uncertainties (e.g., due to ad-hoc local regulations). Consequently, this could lead to wrong forecasts and follow-up decisions. Hence, one of the issues financial managers are focusing on are inventory performance factors (which provide manifold benchmark analysis opportunities). Some indicators seem to be more robust when it comes to predicting overall inventory performance than others.

The Asian regional head quarter seeks to improve strategic sales forecast & inventory performance (from a top management perspective) by integrating various internal and external information. Interesting results are expected to be obtained by combining primary data and secondary data. The thesis can build on data provided to the project group (by company and Thomson ONE/ Datastream), and on methodologies from research works published in first-class international journals.

Key project tasks:
The project team is expected:
- to perform an analysis on empirical literature related to sales & inventory performance,
- to explore factors that explain past & future firms’ sales and inventory performance,
- to develop regression models for evaluating the direction and magnitude of these factors,
- to compare the inventory performance of the company with that of selected industries and countries (e.g., U.S.A., Germany, Mainland China, Taiwan) and to test significances,
- to identify possible reasons for different inventory performance measures,
- to prepare presentations and final reports.

The project team will be coached and supervised by Dr. Martin Stößlein. Kick-off and regular milestone meetings are held via telephone/video conference. Due to the confidential and sensitive nature of the project information, each participant is required to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements.

Requirements:
The empirically-driven project study particularly fits TUM-BWL students with a major in Supply Chain Management or Finance, and with an interest in Asian Management. Fluent Mandarin language ability is a plus. Knowledge in econometric analysis (multiple regression) and SPSS (or similar) is helpful but not required and can be gained during the work. The thesis should be written in English.

Begin: December 2012
Advisor: Dr. Martin Stößlein

For further information please see me in room 1547. Any interested student, please send your application (including motivation letter, curriculum vitae and transcripts of records) by email to:

martin.stoesslein@tum.de