



## Irene Kuron OPUS 1 GmbH



<b>Sector</b>	Organisation development, change management and training
<b>Region</b>	North-Rhine-Westphalia

**Nomination as an Ambassador**

Irene Kuron has been owned her own business for 18 years. In this time she has of course faced challenges and was inspired to apply to become a European Female Entrepreneurship Ambassador in order to help others with her own experience. The inspiration to start her own business came from her wish to be her own boss. Women are often said to shy away from risk and Irene indeed started a “typically female” business from her home. She had from her previous career a good network which she could draw on during the start up phase and was lucky enough to have a range of exciting and challenging projects from the outset. And she had a friend who had taken the step into starting a business a few years earlier and at that time was so well established that she had more projects than she could take care of. A co-operation started which resulted in the joint founding of a company. In 1995 Irene became the sole director of the company and a period of restructuring took place, entering new fields including a European project for female entrepreneurs. In the year 2000 her daughter was born. During her pregnancy, Irene experienced difficulties in explaining to clients – women often more so than men – that she would not be leaving her job for three years. In fact Irene was off for only three weeks with her husband taking paternity leave. Irene still spent as much time as possible with the family by taking them on business trips with her. Although this is not a standard solution for women business owners, it does show that with flexibility and the willingness to be creative it is possible to do both. Her daughter today attends a school which ensures tuition until 3.30 every day, and growing up with a business-woman mum means her daughter is happy to go into the office where she has her own working space and gets to know the office as working environment.

**About the company**

OPUS 1 GmbH offers training and seminars in the main areas of organisation development, change management and start-up, looking at the whole systemic organisation. They develop concepts looking at critical aspects within organisations and implement concepts with the client. The process ends with a critical evaluation. OPUS 1 GmbH operates in networked structures which allow it to draw not only on its own experience but also on the experience of its partners in drawing up solutions for its clients.

**Raising awareness**

Irene is passionate about young people knowing more about business and entrepreneurship as a career choice alternative to school-study-job in a large company-management path. To this end, Irene supports two federal initiatives: JUNIOR, in which she created a summer business camp ([www. IW-junior.de](http://www.IW-junior.de)) and “Jugend gründet” (Youth start-ups). She supported the implementation of the project and is also a member of the jury ([www.jugend-gruendet.de](http://www.jugend-gruendet.de)). In both projects she sees that too few girls take part and makes a decided effort to try and increase this number. For women returning to work, Irene ran a EU-project which helped more than 50 women to start their own business.

**Further information** Find out more about Irene’s work on [www.opus1-europe.de](http://www.opus1-europe.de)

Ambassador code: NRW-03