

# Barbara explains – Our new business field «Learning and meeting places»

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**As a member of the erlebnisplan Deutschland team since February 2024, Barbara Hölschen contributes her structured view of processes and developments. She is passionate about learning and meeting places, which she sees as places where people feel comfortable and can both learn intrinsically and experience something remarkable. But what exactly is a place of learning and meeting - Barbara explains:**

## **What characterises such a place?**

The question arises as to how places need to be designed so that they are perceived as unique - which places do people like to spend time in and how can they leave a lasting impression? To find this out, it is necessary to analyse and research such places intensively. This has shown that it is primarily the people who actively shape a space and make it a real 'third place'.

Ray Oldenburg, an American sociologist, describes the 'third place' as a place of social exchange that is neither home nor work. Such places are freely accessible, safe and promote encounters and dialogue. It is crucial that they are barrier-free and inclusive - places where everyone can contribute according to their own needs and interests, be it by sharing experiences or learning together.

However, the term 'third place' is also used commercially today, for example in retail shops that deliberately arouse emotions and create incentives to buy. Experience economy expert Christian Mikunda emphasises that people not only buy products, but also the emotions and experiences associated with them. This raises the question of whether this commercial approach distorts the original meaning of the 'third place' according to Oldenburg?

It is particularly important that learning and meeting places thrive on participation and co-creation. It is about dialogue and exchange with one another - not just about consumption. The central characteristics of such places are diversity, openness to change and a strong 'for one another'. This principle, which stems from democracy, plays an essential role in cooperation and collective decision-making. Such values bring places to life and enable them to develop continuously.

## **What does this mean for erlebnisplan?**

At erlebnisplan, attractions such as the Fichtenschloss in Zell am Ziller (AUT), which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, are important meeting places - especially for children and their families. Through playful learning about topics such as nature and exercise, young and old come together here. It is a perfect example of a lively 'third place'. This is exactly where erlebnisplan comes in to create unforgettable moments in special places.

Do you have any suggestions or ideas for the new business segment? Barbara Hölschen looks forward to hearing from you: [hoelschen@erlebnisplan.com](mailto:hoelschen@erlebnisplan.com) / +49 157 307 30 728