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Deutsche Telekom and T-Systems Overview

1. Company Overview

History, Mission, and Vision

Deutsche Telekom (DT) was established in 1995 after the privatization of the German state telecommunications monopoly. Over 30 years it has evolved from a national phone operator into a global telecom and IT services provider [1] . Today, DT is recognized as *the world's most valuable telecommunications brand* (ranked #1 globally in 2024, and the only European company in the global top 10) [2] . DT's **mission** is encapsulated in its slogan: *"We won't stop until everyone is connected,"* reflecting a commitment to connect people and enable digital society. Its strategic **vision** is to become the "Leading Digital Telco," transforming from a traditional phone company into a software-driven, service-oriented tech company [3] [4] . While the core business of operating telecom networks remains fundamental, DT is aggressively digitalizing its operations and services to stay ahead in a fast-changing industry [3] .

DT's **values** are grounded in six *Guiding Principles* that shape its culture and decisions: **Delight our customers**, **Get things done**, **Act with respect and integrity**, **Team together – Team apart**, **I am T – count on me**, and **Stay curious and grow** [5] . These principles emphasize customer-centric innovation, execution, integrity, teamwork, personal accountability, and continuous learning. They serve as a "compass" for employees and are reinforced by a Code of Conduct to ensure responsible behavior [6] . The company's purpose and values drive initiatives to promote an open, inclusive culture and a future-oriented mindset.

Business Segments and Global Presence

Deutsche Telekom Group operates through four main business segments aligned to geography and customer focus [7] [8] :

- **Germany:** All fixed-line, broadband, and mobile communications services in Germany (for consumer and business markets), plus wholesale network services to other segments [8] . Telekom Deutschland GmbH (the German unit) serves as the domestic market leader in telecom services.
- **United States:** All mobile communications in the U.S., primarily via **T-Mobile US**, which is ~51% owned by DT. T-Mobile US (headquartered in Bellevue, WA) is one of the largest mobile carriers in the U.S., contributing significantly to DT's growth and global scale.
- **Europe:** Telecom networks and services in multiple European countries, including major operations in Greece, Hungary, Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, and more [9] . These national companies provide mobile and fixed-line services, and many also offer ICT solutions to local business customers.
- **Systems Solutions (T-Systems):** This segment, branded **T-Systems**, provides IT and digital services for large corporate and public sector clients worldwide [10] . It offers end-to-end **ICT solutions** – from secure cloud infrastructure and networks to industry-specific software, integration, and consulting services – all from a single source [10] . (We delve into T-Systems in more detail below.)

In addition, DT's structure includes **Group Headquarters & Shared Services**, which handles corporate functions and support services (HR, finance, procurement, etc.), and a **Group Development** unit managing strategic holdings (e.g. past stakes like T-Mobile Netherlands and tower assets) [11] [12] .

Global presence: Deutsche Telekom is truly international – active in **over 50 countries** across Europe, the Americas, and Asia [13] [14] . It serves a massive customer base, including **261 million mobile customers**, **25 million fixed-line** and **22 million broadband** lines globally [15] . With about **198,000 employees in 33 countries** (as of end 2024) [16] , DT generated **€115.6 billion** in revenue in 2024 [17] , making it one of the world's largest integrated telecom providers. Its largest markets are Germany (home base) and the United States (through T-Mobile US), but it also has millions of customers across European markets. The company's footprint and partnerships give it a **truly global scale** – for example, DT's network reach and roaming agreements enable services that span continents.

T-Systems, as a subsidiary of DT, extends the group's reach into enterprise digital services. Headquartered in Frankfurt and founded in 2000, T-Systems arose from the merger of DT's computing units with an acquired IT firm (debis Systemhaus) [18] [19] . Today, T-Systems is positioned as one of Europe's leading digital services and IT consulting companies [20] . It employs about **26,000 people across 26 countries**, with annual revenue of **~€4.0 billion (2024)** [21] . T-Systems focuses on helping large organizations (including multinational corporations and government agencies) with digital transformation – from cloud migration and managed IT infrastructure to software development, data analytics, IoT solutions, and cybersecurity. Notably, T-Systems has deep roots in sectors like automotive and manufacturing, having pioneered Industry 4.0 solutions in Germany's world-leading industrial companies [22] . In fact, T-Systems counts **most DAX 40 companies** in Germany and around **100 of the Fortune 500 globally** as clients [23] . Being part of the Deutsche Telekom family gives T-Systems a unique advantage: it can combine IT solutions with telecom network expertise ("connectivity + IT from one source"), leveraging the broader group's infrastructure and R&D capabilities [24] .

Key Leadership and Organization

Deutsche Telekom AG is led by a Board of Management that reflects its segment-based structure. **Timotheus Höttges** has been the CEO (Vorsitzender) of Deutsche Telekom since 2014 [25] , steering the group's strategy of global expansion and digitalization. Under Höttges' leadership, DT executed the successful merger of T-Mobile US with Sprint and has pursued the vision of becoming a software-centric telco. Other key board members include executives responsible for each major business area: for example, **Rodrigo Diehl** (CEO of Telekom Deutschland, overseeing the German market) [26] , **Dominique Leroy** (Board Member for European markets) [27] , and **Thorsten Langheim** (Board Member for USA and Group Development, managing the U.S. business and investment portfolio) [28] . The Chief Financial Officer is **Christian Illek** [29] , and **Birgit Bohle** leads HR and Legal Affairs (and serves as Labor Director) [30] . In technology, **Claudia Nemat** is Board Member for Technology & Innovation, guiding network rollout, IT systems, and new tech initiatives [31] .

Significantly, **T-Systems** is represented at the top table: **Ferri Abolhassan** serves as Board Member for T-Systems and is also CEO of T-Systems International GmbH [32] . This dual role ensures the enterprise customer segment has a voice in group strategy. (Abolhassan took over leadership of T-Systems in mid-2020s, following previous CEO Adel Al-Saleh's restructuring efforts.) T-Systems is organized internally into practices/portfolios like Cloud & Infrastructure, Digital Solutions, Security, and regional units (e.g., T-Systems Northern Europe, Iberia, etc.), but all under the group umbrella.

Overall, DT's organizational structure is a matrix of geographic units and centralized functions. The **Board of Management** sets group-wide direction, while each operating segment has its own management for execution. DT also has a Supervisory Board (per German corporate governance) with

representatives of shareholders and employees overseeing management. For a candidate, it's worth noting that **Deutsche Telekom is partly state-owned** – the German government (via bank KfW) holds ~30% of shares – which underscores the company's national importance and stable backing. Yet, the culture is very much international and corporate.

In summary, Deutsche Telekom is a **global telecom leader** with a strong legacy and a forward-looking vision. Its subsidiary T-Systems complements the core telecom business by driving digital innovation for enterprise clients. Understanding DT's scale and structure – a big consumer telecom on one hand, and a B2B digital services firm on the other – will help you see where a *Startup! Trainee* might fit in and contribute.

2. "Start up!" Graduate Trainee Program

Program Objectives and Structure

Start up! is Deutsche Telekom's flagship graduate trainee program, designed to fast-track young talents into the company with a comprehensive, cross-functional experience. It is an **18-month program** consisting of **five phases/rotations** that give trainees broad exposure to the business [33] . The program's core objective is to develop future leaders and specialists who have a **"networked mindset"**, can drive **innovation and transformation**, and are willing to take on responsibility from day one [34] .

A unique aspect of Start up! is its **flexibility and personalized structure**. New trainee intakes occur *every quarter* (every three months), so candidates can join at multiple points in the year, offering flexibility in start dates [35] . After an initial **onboarding week** where all new trainees learn about the company and get to know each other, you essentially **craft your own journey** through the rotations [33] . Trainees can **choose their project assignments and "specialist fields"** based on their interests and career goals – it's not a rigid preset rotation. For example, you might start with a stint in Controlling, then switch to Marketing, and later join a Digital Transformation project office – it's *your choice* how to sequence experiences [36] . This individualized approach ensures you get relevant experience in areas you're passionate about, while still building a well-rounded view of the company.

Over the 18 months, trainees complete **up to five assignments** (typically 3–4 months each) in different departments or business units. **At least one rotation is abroad** for a minimum of 3 months [37] , since DT is a global company and values international exposure. Excitingly, trainees even get to **choose the location** for their international assignment in many cases [37] – for instance, past trainees have spent rotations in places like the Silicon Valley (with T-Mobile US), in Singapore, or in European branch offices. The program is *group-wide*, meaning you could rotate not only within T-Systems but also in other divisions of Deutsche Telekom AG in Germany or beyond [38] . This broad exposure helps trainees build a company-wide network and understand how the different parts of DT (technical, commercial, innovation, etc.) fit together.

To summarize the structure:

- **Duration:** 18 months, full-time paid trainee position.
- **Rotations:** 5 core phases, including one international assignment (3+ months abroad) [37] . Each rotation is a real project or role where you contribute to a team.
- **Onboarding & Training:** Starts with an onboarding week (orientation). Throughout the program there are formal trainings, workshops, and events at each phase to build your skills (e.g. leadership training, agile methods, etc.) [39] .

- **Flexibility:** Trainees actively **shape their rotation plan**. You select assignments within your chosen field(s), giving you freedom to explore different departments under a general track [36] . If you discover new interests, you can adjust your path. The program provides a "solid framework" but you drive your development ("You determine your journey") [40] .
- **Goal:** At program's end, you should be well-prepared to take on a challenging role within DT (often, trainees segue into a management role or expert position in their chosen field). The overarching goal is to inject fresh talent who understand the company holistically and can lead cross-functional initiatives.

Focus Areas (Tracks) and Roles Offered

One strength of Start up! is the **wide range of focus areas** available – it's not only for technical graduates. You choose a **focus track** aligned with your background or interest, which then guides what kinds of projects you'll do. The available focus options cover both technical and business domains. For example, current **Start up! trainee tracks include** [41] :

- **Technology & Innovation** – driving new tech development, R&D projects, working with DT's innovation units (could involve AI, network innovation, new product development)
- **Network Technology** – focusing on telecom networks (mobile/fixed network engineering, 5G rollout projects, network planning and operations)
- **Internet of Things, Cloud Solutions & Big Data** – specializing in IoT projects, cloud platforms (like Open Telekom Cloud), data analytics and AI use-cases [42]
- **IT Security (Data Security) & Compliance** – focusing on cybersecurity, data privacy, risk management and ensuring compliance with regulations
- **Finance and Controlling** – rotations through Finance departments, e.g. corporate controlling, treasury, M&A finance, etc.
- **Group Development & M&A** – working on strategy and mergers/acquisitions, corporate development projects at group level [43]
- **Inhouse Consulting** – joining Telekom's internal consulting teams (e.g. **Telekom Strategy Consulting**) to advise business units on strategic projects and process improvements
- **Marketing, Sales & Services** – rotations in commercial units, possibly including product marketing, B2B/B2C sales, customer experience management, or CRM projects
- **Corporate Communications** – focusing on PR, media relations, internal communications, employer branding, etc. within the group's communications departments
- **Public and Regulatory Affairs** – dealing with telecom regulations, lobbying, legal policy issues, and relationships with government (important since DT operates in regulated markets)
- **Human Resources** – experiencing different facets of HR like talent acquisition, people development, HR strategy, labor relations, etc.

As you can see, both **technical roles and business roles** are offered. A tech-focused graduate might choose *Technology & Innovation* or *IoT/Cloud/Big Data* to work on cutting-edge digital projects, whereas a business graduate might go for *Finance* or *Marketing*. There are also hybrid options – for instance, a recent job posting under the program was *"Trainee Focus Data Science (m/f/d) – Board area Technology & Innovation"*, which blends data analytics with network tech [44] . Another posting was *"Trainee Focus B2B/ B2C International Business"*, indicating a track oriented towards international commercial strategy [45] . The program is quite broad; in total there are around 10–12 specialist tracks, but you aren't strictly bound to one department – rather it's a way to tailor your experience.

No matter the track, **the roles are real and impactful**. Trainees often take on roles such as *project manager on a new product launch*, *strategy analyst in a business unit*, *technology consultant for an IoT project*, or *assistant to a senior executive* for a rotation. For example, in an **IoT/Cloud** focus, you might work on a **"Smart City" IoT implementation** or help develop a new cloud service for enterprise clients

– these are areas DT is actively investing in [46] . In a **Networks** focus, you might join a 5G deployment team optimizing network coverage. The variety ensures you gain **multi-disciplinary skills** – technical acumen, project management, intercultural communication, etc. – making you a well-rounded professional.

Importantly, the program is *entry-level* – meant for recent graduates (either Bachelor's or Master's, and PhDs are also welcome). Typical candidates have academic backgrounds in fields like business/ economics, engineering, computer science, or law, matching the tracks above. Some tracks (like Technology) might prefer STEM graduates, while others (like Finance or HR) look for those with relevant business or social science degrees. However, **all tracks emphasize a mindset fit**: DT looks for **innovative, curious, and driven individuals** who are not afraid to *"pursue innovative paths"* and have the **courage to think differently** [34] . During the application, they will assess if you have a *digital/tech affinity, strategic thinking, and the soft skills* to thrive in a large organization undergoing transformation.

Eligibility: The program is geared toward *graduates and young professionals*. You should have a completed university degree by the start date. There is no strict requirement on specific majors (due to the diverse tracks), but you must convincingly align your background to the track you choose. **Language**: since the program is in Germany and involves rotations there, **fluent English** is required *and* at least **B1-level German** proficiency [47] . (International applicants are very much welcomed – DT explicitly *"welcomes international applicants"* – but they expect you to have basic German skills to integrate into teams [47] . Many business activities are in English, but day-to-day office language can be German especially in certain departments).

Other eligibility points: You should have *max. 2–3 years of work experience* (it's primarily for new grads, but a bit of work experience or internships are fine). They seek people with *international experience* (like study abroad or internships abroad) and *extracurricular achievements*, as these demonstrate an open mind and initiative [48] . A passion for technology and innovation is important – even if you're a finance trainee, DT is a tech company at heart, so digital affinity helps. Overall, if you are a **strategic thinker, quick learner, and enthusiastic about shaping the digital future**, you fit the target profile.

Training, Mentorship, and Development Opportunities

The Start up! program provides rich **learning and development opportunities** to accelerate your growth. Beyond the on-the-job experience of rotations, there are structured elements for trainee development:

- **Formal Training:** Throughout the 18 months, DT arranges training sessions and workshops exclusive to trainees [39] . These may include technical trainings (e.g. getting Scrum Master certified, or learning about 5G technology), soft-skill workshops (presentation skills, design thinking, intercultural training), and business seminars (finance for non-finance managers, etc.). The exact curriculum can vary, but the idea is to complement your practical experience with relevant skills training. Trainees also attend company events, innovation labs, and "meet the leader" sessions, which broaden knowledge and visibility [39] .

- **Mentorship:** Every Start up! trainee is paired with an experienced mentor – often a senior manager or expert in your field of focus [49] . This mentor guides your career planning, provides feedback, and helps you navigate the large organization. From day one, *"experienced managers actively shape your career path"* through the mentoring program [49] . Many trainees cite this as a highlight – you have someone in your corner to discuss challenges and open doors to opportunities. In addition, you will likely have "buddies" or ex-trainees who informally mentor you, and rotation managers who coach you during each assignment.

- **Community and Networking:** DT places strong emphasis on the *"trainee community & network"*. When you join, you become part of a cohort of trainees (there are typically dozens of Start up! trainees at any given time, across different start dates). The program fosters networking among trainees via regular meet-ups, project fairs, and even social events. *"We will help you to contact other trainees from your very first day"* – the camaraderie means you share experiences, and even collaborate across projects [49] . There is also a community of program alumni who often stay connected – giving you an instant network across the company. This network can be invaluable in such a large organization: by the end of the program, you'll *"know the ins and outs of DT"* and have contacts in many departments.

- **Responsibility and Impact:** Unlike some grad programs where you just shadow others, Start up! throws you into real, meaningful work. You are expected to contribute to important projects – e.g., working on a **Smart City IoT prototype, or devising a marketing plan for a new product – "exciting topics...which will have a lasting influence on the digital future"** [46] . Trainees are treated as full team members. This trust means you learn by doing and can *build a track record* during the program. Many rotations end with you delivering a key result (such as a report to a Board member, or a process improvement implemented by a team), which is very satisfying professionally.

- **Feedback and Career Planning:** You will receive feedback at each rotation's end, helping identify strengths and areas to improve. HR program coordinators also support you throughout, ensuring your rotations align with your development goals. As you near program completion, DT typically conducts career workshops to help trainees find post-program positions that match their skills and interests. The program's goal is not just to train you, but to place you in a suitable role afterwards – thus they actively facilitate job matching in the final months.

- **Competitive Benefits:** It's worth noting that Start up! trainees are **full-time employees with a competitive salary and benefits**. In fact, DT offers an **attractive salary above industry average for trainees** – as of late 2024, a trainee earned **€64,000/year with a Bachelor's degree, €67,000 with a Master's, and €70,000 with a PhD** (per collective agreement) [50] . This is quite generous for a graduate program in Germany. Trainees also get all standard benefits (paid vacation, health insurance, pension scheme, employee discounts on telecom products, etc.). Additionally, during the international assignment, DT covers any extra costs (travel, housing) to support you. The high compensation reflects DT's investment in attracting top talent and underscores the *value placed on trainees* in the organization.

In short, the Start up! program is designed to be a **"career booster"** [51] – in 18 months you receive the kind of breadth, depth, and professional network that would normally take years to build. You'll come out with cross-functional knowledge, improved technical and soft skills, international experience, and a clear sense of how you can contribute to DT's success.

Many program alumni have moved into leadership roles – e.g., some become project leaders, senior analysts, or team leads shortly after the program. Deutsche Telekom views the trainee program as a pipeline for future managers, so they are keen to retain and fast-track successful trainees. For you, that means joining this program opens up **diverse career paths** within the company, whether you aspire to management or a specialist expert role.

Application and Selection Process

The application process for the Start up! program is thorough and competitive, aiming to find not just the most qualified candidates, but those who genuinely fit DT's culture. Here's what to expect:

- **When and How to Apply:** Applications are accepted **throughout the year** on a rolling basis [52]. There isn't a single annual intake; since the program has quarterly start dates, you can apply at any time. **However, it's recommended to apply ~4 months before** your intended start date [52] – this allows time for the selection steps and notice periods. All applications are submitted **online via DT's careers portal**. You will typically find specific trainee job postings (e.g., "Trainee – Focus XYZ – Start up! Program") for each track or location. You apply to a particular posting/track rather than a generic pool.

- **Online Application:** The first step is an online application form where you upload your CV, answer motivation questions, and provide relevant documents. DT's application asks for a **well-crafted cover letter** or motivational statement – *"we are interested to learn why you would like to work for Deutsche Telekom and what you expect from us"* [48]. They really want to see your motivation for joining the program and the company. You should highlight your passion for technology/telecom, any innovative projects you've done, and how the Start up! program aligns with your career goals. They also encourage showcasing your **skills and experiences** – not just grades, but internships, international experiences, personal projects, or social initiatives. In fact, DT gives the option to include an **"exposé"** – essentially a personal essay or creative portfolio beyond the CV – to "make them curious" about you [53]. This is voluntary, but it's a chance to stand out (for example, you could describe a tech project or startup you worked on, or a unique life experience that shaped you). The key is to present an **authentic picture of yourself**, as they value personality and cultural fit in addition to qualifications [48].

- **Screening and Shortlisting:** Once submitted, the **recruiting team reviews** your application. They check basic qualifications and then read your CV/letter in depth to assess your fit for the program and chosen track. This initial **document screening takes around two weeks** [54]. They're looking for evidence of the traits mentioned (drive, curiosity, relevant interest in tech/business, etc.). If you pass this stage, you'll be contacted by HR to move forward. If not, you also get a response (DT is known to reply to applicants rather than leaving them hanging).

- **"Hiring Day" – Assessment Center:** The centerpiece of selection is an intensive **Hiring Day**, essentially an assessment center, conducted (usually) virtually or in Bonn/Berlin. *"Hiring day is the core of our recruiting process. In a single day, you will decide on your future at Deutsche Telekom."* [55] This implies that all assessments and interviews are wrapped into one day, and you often receive feedback/offers immediately or shortly after. During the Hiring Day, you can expect a mix of activities: **interviews** (competency-based and motivational), **group exercises** (to observe teamwork and problem-solving), and **case studies or presentations**. For example, you might be given a real business case relevant to DT's industry to analyze and present your solution, or partake in a group discussion on a tech trend. They'll also assess English and German language skills in practice. **Personality and cognitive tests** could be included (some programs have online reasoning tests prior to or as part of the assessment day). Throughout, assessors from HR and business departments evaluate you. The atmosphere is usually professional but friendly – remember, they're also trying to impress you with DT's opportunities.

- **Interviews:** You will likely have at least one **panel interview** on Hiring Day with HR and a manager from your track. They will dive deeper into your background, ask why you chose DT and the trainee program (so be prepared to articulate your reasons and enthusiasm), and may pose

scenario questions ("How would you handle...?" to gauge your thinking). Be ready to discuss telecom/technology trends and show that you've done your homework on DT.

- **Decision and Offer:** What's special is that you find out *"directly afterwards whether your professional future will start with our trainee onboarding week."* [56] In other words, they aim to give decisions very quickly. Often at the end of Hiring Day, the successful candidates are told they have a conditional offer, pending any final HR formalities. This quick turnaround is great for candidates – no long anxious wait. Once you get the offer, you'll coordinate start dates (which quarter's onboarding you join). Then, **"Welcome to the magenta side"** – you'll become part of the DT family as a trainee [57]. There is typically a few weeks/months gap before your start, during which HR stays in touch and you might already connect with fellow new trainees.

- **Preparation Tips:** (For the interview itself – since this is an interview prep – ensure you can demonstrate knowledge of Deutsche Telekom and T-Systems (history, strategy, etc.), and have clear reasons for why you want to join *this* program. Leverage all the information in this overview! Show them you understand their business and values. Also prepare examples from your experiences that show key competencies like teamwork, initiative, adaptability, leadership potential, and innovative thinking.)

By the end of this process, DT ensures they select trainees who are not only **academically capable** but also **culturally aligned** and **high-potential**. It's a competitive program, but don't be intimidated – the fact that you have an interview means they already consider you a strong candidate. They will be looking for your passion for the role and your fit with the "magenta spirit" more than technical right-or-wrong answers.

Once you're in, all that's left is to eagerly await the start of the program and perhaps connect with your future peers. On day one of the onboarding week, you'll likely meet many senior leaders (sometimes even a Board member or the CEO will welcome trainees, underlining how important the program is to DT). After that, your 18-month adventure begins!

(As a note, Deutsche Telekom also offers other entry programs, such as a 12-month "#youlearn" program by T-Systems focusing on IT consulting skills [58], and functional traineeships in specific departments. But Start up! is the most comprehensive and cross-functional, making it a flagship for graduates.)

3. Technology and Innovation at Deutsche Telekom

Deutsche Telekom is a technology powerhouse, not just a phone company. Both DT and T-Systems are deeply involved in cutting-edge tech domains – from building advanced networks to delivering digital solutions like cloud and IoT. For an interview, it's crucial to grasp the **key technologies, platforms, and innovation initiatives** that drive the company's strategy:

Key Technology Domains and Platforms

- **5G and Next-Gen Networks:** As a telecom operator, DT is at the forefront of **5G mobile network deployment**. In Germany, Telekom has already achieved ~**97% 5G coverage of households**, and is on track to reach 99% population coverage by the end of 2025 [59]. This involves tens of thousands of 5G antennas (over 12,800 on mid-band 3.6 GHz spectrum alone) deployed across hundreds of cities [60]. DT was an early mover in 5G Standalone technology – it's launching a dedicated 5G core network to enable advanced features like ultra-low latency and network slicing for customers [61]. For instance, **network slicing** (a 5G feature that creates

virtual dedicated networks for clients) is already being offered to business customers, supporting use cases like live TV broadcasts and private campus networks for industry [62]. DT is also exploring **6G** (future generation) through research partnerships and participating in EU initiatives for 6G development. In addition to mobile, DT invests heavily in **fiber-optic broadband** – billions of euros annually – to bring gigabit speeds via fiber to homes (FTTH) and enable its 5G backhaul (in 2024 alone, DT invested **€16 billion** in infrastructure globally, including €5.8B in Germany) [63]. These efforts align with DT's social mission to power the "gigabit society" with ubiquitous high-speed internet [64] [65].

- **Cloud Computing:** Deutsche Telekom, primarily through T-Systems, has built a robust cloud services portfolio. A highlight is the **Open Telekom Cloud (OTC)** – DT's own public cloud platform, hosted in highly secure German data centers. OTC is positioned for clients needing **data sovereignty and GDPR compliance** – it meets strict European regulations and offers an alternative to US-based hyperscalers [66]. At the same time, DT embraces a **multi-cloud strategy**: T-Systems works with all major cloud partners including **AWS, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud**. In fact, T-Systems has over 150 technology partners, ranging from hyperscalers to software vendors like SAP, VMware, Salesforce etc., to provide the best solutions for clients [67]. A notable partnership is the **"T-Systems Sovereign Cloud powered by Google Cloud"** – a joint offering where Google's cloud technology is operated under German regulations by T-Systems for public sector and enterprise customers needing extra data control [68]. DT's cloud approach is to be a **one-stop shop**: advising customers on cloud adoption, migrating their systems, and managing hybrid multi-cloud environments [69]. The company runs a **global network of data centers**, including one of Europe's largest and most modern cloud data centers in Biere, Germany (near Magdeburg) [70]. This ensures it can deliver scalable cloud and hosting services (like for SAP systems, etc.) with high security and low latency. Cloud is a major growth area for T-Systems, as more businesses move to cloud and need support integrating it with their networks.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data:** AI is woven into many aspects of DT's operations and services. Internally, DT uses AI for network optimization (e.g., predictive maintenance of networks, dynamic network management) and customer service (AI chatbots in customer support, voice assistants etc.). In product offerings, **T-Systems develops AI solutions for enterprise clients** – for example, using AI and big data analytics to optimize manufacturing processes or supply chains as part of Industry 4.0 solutions [71] [72]. DT has a dedicated unit (Telekom IT/Technology & Innovation) investigating how to leverage **machine learning for new services** and efficiency. There's also an emphasis on **"Green AI"** – using AI to improve energy efficiency and implementing AI in an environmentally responsible way [73] [74]. A concrete example: DT introduced principles for Green AI in 2024 and is already using AI in its data centers to reduce power usage by optimizing cooling and workloads [75]. For customers, T-Systems can integrate AI into applications like customer analytics, intelligent IoT platforms (e.g., smart traffic management that adjusts in real-time), and more. Deutsche Telekom's commitment to AI is also evident through partnerships and investments in AI research (they have been involved in research on AI ethics and are part of initiatives like the EU's AI4EU program). The **"Stay curious and grow"** culture encourages employees to explore AI use cases, so as a trainee you might encounter internal innovation projects applying AI as well.

- **Internet of Things (IoT):** IoT is a significant focus, especially within T-Systems' portfolio. DT operates extensive IoT connectivity networks – for instance, a **NB-IoT (Narrowband IoT)** network across Europe for low-power connected sensors. They provide IoT connectivity solutions for smart city infrastructure (smart lighting, parking), smart agriculture, asset tracking, and more. Notably, in 2024 DT launched its first **commercial satellite IoT offering** in partnership

with Intelsat and Skylo, to connect IoT devices in remote areas without terrestrial coverage [76] . This allows DT to offer global IoT connectivity by seamlessly switching devices to satellite when they leave mobile network range [77] – a big plus for industries like shipping, agriculture in rural areas, and international logistics. T-Systems offers an **IoT platform** (DT IoT Platform) that helps companies manage their connected devices and analyze data. Additionally, DT has done high-profile IoT projects such as connected **car services** (it provides connectivity for major car manufacturers – e.g., many German cars' in-built SIM cards are on DT's network) and **Smart City solutions** (like air quality sensors and traffic flow systems in cities). For example, T-Systems was a pioneer in equipping manufacturing plants with sensors and connectivity for real-time monitoring (Industry 4.0). The combination of DT's network expertise and T-Systems' IT integration know-how is a big differentiator in IoT solutions. So, if asked about tech trends, you can mention how DT is enabling IoT in everything from *smart farming* to *connected healthcare*, and even using IoT in its own operations.

- **Cybersecurity:** In today's world, telecom and IT services must be secure, and DT invests heavily in cybersecurity for both itself and clients. DT has a dedicated subsidiary **Deutsche Telekom Security GmbH** (often just called Telekom Security) which offers a range of cybersecurity services. The company runs multiple **Security Operations Centers (SOCs) worldwide** – highly secure facilities where security experts monitor threats around the clock [78] . Impressively, Telekom's SOCs (which leverage AI tools) analyze up to **2.5** billion* *security-relevant events* *per day** from thousands of data sources [78] . The expertise DT gains protecting its own massive infrastructure (mobile/fixed networks, data centers) is also offered to customers. For example, T-Systems provides managed security services, threat intelligence, incident response, and consulting on compliance (like GDPR, ISO 27001). One flagship offering is **"Magenta Security"** solutions, including anti-DDoS services (DT's backbone can mitigate large DDoS attacks for clients) and encryption technologies. DT has even been recognized for quantum-safe encryption trials over its fiber network. On the consumer side, Deutsche Telekom bundles security features (like malware protection, parental controls) with its connectivity products. Corporate clients can get **cyber defense support**, secure hosting, and identity/access management solutions from DT. Given rising cyber threats, DT's capability here is a selling point – *Telekom Security is among the most successful security providers in Europe* [79] . For instance, Germany's public sector trusts DT for secure network operations. Additionally, DT is part of alliances for cybersecurity research (including EU projects on 5G security, quantum cryptography, etc.).

- **Enterprise Software and Platforms:** Through T-Systems, DT is also involved in areas like **Enterprise Applications (SAP)** – T-Systems is a major SAP hosting and consulting partner, running critical ERP systems for companies. They also have solutions for **EDGE computing** (pushing compute power closer to users, important for low-latency applications) and **blockchain** (T-Labs did early research on blockchain for telecom and mobility use-cases [80]). Another initiative is **Data Spaces** – DT is part of projects to create secure data exchange platforms (like GAIA-X, the European cloud/data initiative, where T-Systems plays a key role in building federated data infrastructure).

To present this more clearly, here's a summary table of technologies and DT's corresponding initiatives:

Technology Area	Deutsche Telekom / T-Systems Initiatives
5G & Networks	Nationwide 5G rollout in Germany (~97% coverage, targeting 99% by 2025) [59] . Deploying 5G Standalone core and offering **network slicing** for enterprises [62] . Investing in fiber optics for 5G backhaul and FTTH. Trialing 5G mmWave for campus networks with ultra-high speeds [81] . Researching 6G and participating in EU 6G projects.
Cloud Computing	Operating **Open Telekom Cloud** – a sovereign public cloud meeting EU privacy needs [66] . Multi-cloud integration with AWS, Azure, Google – T-Systems partners with 150+ tech providers [67] . Launched **Sovereign Cloud Germany with Google** for public sector [68] . Managing hybrid cloud environments and running large data centers (e.g., biere DC). Cloud services include IaaS, PaaS, and managed services for SAP and enterprise apps.
Artificial Intelligence	Using AI internally for network optimization and customer service (chatbots). Implemented **"Green AI"** principles to use AI sustainably [75] . Leveraging AI/ML in **big data** analytics – e.g., analyzing telecom network data to improve quality, or IoT data to optimize operations. T-Systems offers AI solutions for industry: predictive maintenance in factories, computer vision for quality control, etc. [82] . Detecon (consulting arm) helps clients strategize AI adoption [83] .
Internet of Things	Providing IoT connectivity via NB-IoT, LTE-M and 5G networks. **Global IoT connectivity** with new hybrid satellite-cellular service (Intelsat/Skylo partnership) to reach remote areas [84] . T-Systems' IoT platform supports device management and data analytics for solutions like fleet management, smart utilities, connected vehicles. Notable projects: smart city platforms (in parking, lighting), **connected car** solutions for major auto makers, and smart logistics (tracking containers, pallets globally).
Cybersecurity	**Telekom Security** unit operates worldwide SOCs, analyzing billions of events daily with AI [78] . Offers services like Cyber Defense, SIEM, penetration testing, and security consulting. Developed **encryption technologies** (quantum-safe comms pilot between data centers). Provides secure hosting and networks – DT's own infrastructure security (highly robust) is a selling point to customers [79] . Regularly publishes security reports and educates businesses on cyber threats.
Innovation Hubs & R&D	Runs **Telekom Innovation Laboratories (T-Labs)**, an R&D institute with 300+ scientists and engineers in Berlin and other sites, focusing on **blockchain, AI, new media, quantum computing** and more [80] . T-Labs works closely with academia (e.g. TU Berlin) and startups to develop *proofs of concept* and prototype new services [85] [86] . DT also operates **hubraum**, a tech incubator with campuses in Berlin, Krakow, and Tel Aviv, which since 2012 has been scouting and supporting startups in 5G, IoT, and AI domains (offering co-working, funding, and access to DT's network) [87] [88] . Additionally, T-Systems has **Digital Innovation Centers** in locations like Munich, Barcelona (Iberia), Budapest, and Pune [89] , where they co-create solutions with enterprise clients using design thinking and showcase latest tech (e.g., IoT demo labs). These hubs foster a culture of open innovation and keep DT on the pulse of emerging technologies.

(In the table above, sources are embedded in context. Notably: 5G coverage [59] , network slicing [62] , Open Telekom Cloud and partners [66] [67] , AI in industry [72] , SOC stats [78] , T-Labs description [80] .)

Strategic Tech Initiatives and Partnerships

Deutsche Telekom's tech strategy often involves **strategic partnerships** – acknowledging that collaboration is key in the digital age. Some high-profile initiatives and alliances include:

- **Hyperscaler Alliances:** As mentioned, instead of seeing cloud giants as pure competitors, DT partners with them. The Google Cloud deal for Sovereign Cloud is one example [68] . DT also partnered with **Microsoft** to offer Microsoft's cloud and office products through T-Systems with added data protection. With **AWS**, T-Systems is an AWS Premier Partner and helps enterprises migrate to AWS while also offering its own secure network and managed services around it [66] . These partnerships ensure DT can deliver the full spectrum of cloud options – benefiting from others' innovations while adding its telecom-grade security and integration expertise. This is strategic because it positions DT as a *cloud enabler* in Europe (important for digital sovereignty discussions).

- **5G Ecosystem and Edge:** DT is working with network equipment vendors (like Ericsson, Nokia, Huawei up to certain limits) on 5G. It's also part of the **O-RAN Alliance** – pushing for Open RAN standards to diversify network infrastructure. On edge computing, DT partnered with **Microsoft Azure** for Azure Edge in telecom facilities, and with **Intel** on edge cloud technology. In 2021, DT, Telefónica, and others formed an alliance with Amazon to trial running network functions on AWS edge clouds. For private 5G networks (campus networks for industry), DT collaborates with industrial giants (e.g., a partnership with **Ericsson and German carmaker** to equip factories with private 5G). These show DT's strategic direction of integrating network and IT.

- **Startup Investments:** Through **Telekom Ventures** (formerly Deutsche Telekom Capital Partners, DTCP), DT invests in tech startups globally (funding innovative companies in cybersecurity, IoT, cloud, etc., some of which become partners). This venture arm has invested in companies like Zscaler (cloud security) and Cumulocity (IoT platform acquired by Software AG), aligning with DT's strategic interests.

- **Industry Consortia:** DT is a key player in European initiatives like **GAIA-X**, a project to develop a federated European cloud infrastructure. T-Systems is actually one of the founding members of GAIA-X, reflecting its commitment to data sovereignty and open standards in cloud. DT is also engaged in **5G-ACIA** (5G Alliance for Connected Industries and Automation) to shape how 5G serves manufacturing, and in automotive-tech consortia (for connected and autonomous driving communication standards).

- **Green and Sustainable Tech:** Strategically, DT has pledged ambitious climate goals – e.g., to use 100% renewable electricity and become carbon neutral in its own operations by 2025, and net-zero including supply chain by 2040. It's leveraging tech to achieve this, such as AI for energy savings and more efficient cooling in data centers [73] . DT brands its sustainable offerings with labels like **#GreenMagenta** (for eco-friendly products/services) [90] . T-Systems has an entire portfolio around helping clients **reduce their carbon footprint with digital solutions** – e.g., smart logistics to cut fuel use, IoT to optimize energy in buildings, and "green cloud" advisory to migrate workloads in a CO_2-efficient way [91] [92] . The **Biere data center** is a case in point: it consumes ~30% less energy than conventional data centers through innovative design [93] , and T-Systems' goal is "net-zero energy data centers" using renewable generation and storage on-site [94] . So, innovation at DT is also about **sustainability through tech**.

- **Research and Development:** Apart from T-Labs and incubators, DT has partnerships with universities (e.g., the aforementioned cooperation with TU Berlin for T-Labs, and others like a

research hub with Ben Gurion University in Israel for cyber research at Beer Sheva [95]). In quantum technology, DT has joined trials for **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)** over fiber for ultra-secure comms. In late 2022, DT, together with ERICSSON and the French research institute CNRS, demonstrated an example of a quantum encryption connection. These R&D efforts, though not directly on products yet, show DT's *strategic eye on future tech* so it can pivot when those technologies mature.

For **T-Systems** specifically, a strategic direction in recent years has been to streamline and focus on core digital areas. Under previous CEO Adel Al-Saleh and now Ferri Abolhassan, T-Systems underwent restructuring: shedding legacy outsourcing businesses (e.g., selling its mainframe services to IBM in 2019) [96] [19] , reducing costs, and focusing on **cloud, digital solutions, security, and advisory**. The idea is to become an "**integrated end-to-end IT player**" and the *most reliable IT solutions provider with top tech and industry expertise* [22] . T-Systems wants to be *asset-light* and partner-oriented (hence the cloud partnerships) rather than owning lots of legacy infrastructure. This strategy is already yielding results, with T-Systems recognized as a Leader in multiple analysts' rankings for digital services and sustainability (like PAC and ISG provider lens in 2023) [97] .

R&D and Innovation Culture

A big takeaway for your interview: DT is not a stagnant old telco – it's an innovative firm that continuously adapts. Mention the presence of **T-Labs** and **hubraum** as evidence of innovation culture. **T-Labs (Telekom Innovation Laboratories)** is effectively DT's R&D unit + startup incubator combined: **300+ experts** working on things like blockchain, new media, **smart city concepts**, and **AI** [80] . They focus on creating *Proofs of Concept (PoCs)* and Minimum Viable Products for the business, acting like an internal startup accelerator [86] . They also embrace **open innovation**, collaborating with startups, universities, and even competitors when beneficial [98] [99] . For example, T-Labs has worked on decentralized digital identity (blockchain-based IDs) and advanced communication services. Culturally, this shows DT encourages entrepreneurship among its employees – people at T-Labs "live entrepreneurship" within the big company [100] .

hubraum, DT's tech incubator (with locations in Berlin, Krakow, and Tel Aviv), connects DT with the global startup ecosystem. It runs acceleration programs and investments in areas like **5G applications, AR/VR, IoT, AI** [87] [101] . Startups in hubraum get access to Telekom's network APIs, investment, and mentoring, while Telekom can later use their innovations. For instance, hubraum has hosted hackathons on 5G where developers create novel apps that leverage 5G's low latency. This benefits DT by creating demand for its networks and keeping it at the cutting edge of new services (e.g., a hubraum startup might develop a new IoT solution that Telekom can offer its customers).

As a result of these efforts, DT has been recognized for innovation – it often ranks in telecom innovation indices and has won awards for things like its smart home platform and network innovations. In summary, **innovation at DT is not just buzzwords**: it's backed by concrete structures (labs, incubators, partnerships) and is a key pillar of the corporate strategy.

When talking about technology in your interview, consider highlighting how **integrated DT's approach** is – they provide the entire stack (connectivity + IT solutions + security + consulting). This differentiates them from pure tech companies or pure telcos. For example, DT can build a private 5G network on a factory floor *and* implement the IoT sensors and cloud system to analyze the data – a true end-to-end capability [24] . This holistic approach is a strategic advantage in the market.

4. Culture and Values

Understanding Deutsche Telekom's culture and values will help you articulate *why* you want to join beyond the role itself. DT often says **"Culture eats strategy for breakfast,"** meaning that having the right culture is paramount to success. Here we cover what it's like to work at DT/T-Systems, their values, diversity and sustainability efforts, and even a peek at employee sentiment:

Work Culture and Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Deutsche Telekom's work culture is often described as the **"Magenta Spirit"** – a term reflecting pride in the company (magenta is DT's brand color) and a sense of family across the organization. As part of the **Deutsche Telekom family**, T-Systems shares this cultural ethos. The company explicitly promotes values of innovation, collaboration, customer focus, and personal growth.

The six **Guiding Principles** (mentioned earlier) form the backbone of DT's culture [5]. They aren't just pretty words – they are actively communicated and evaluated. For instance, **"Team together – Team apart"** emphasizes teamwork: employees are expected to break silos and work together, but also take individual accountability when working alone. **"Stay curious and grow"** highlights a culture of continuous learning – DT encourages curiosity, trying new ideas, and not being afraid to fail and learn (a bit of a *startup mentality* within a big company). **"Delight our customers"** reminds everyone that customer experience is king, so employees at all levels should consider how their work impacts customers. **"Act with respect and integrity"** fosters an environment of trust, inclusion, and ethical behavior – very important in a large global company to maintain integrity. These principles are embedded in performance evaluations and everyday behaviors – many employees could recite them, which shows how ingrained they are.

In practice, DT's culture balances **German corporate structure** with a modern, international outlook. Headquarters in Bonn has a somewhat formal environment given the company's size and partial state-ownership, but it's also open and inclusive – the corporate HQ lobby might feature a rainbow-colored Telekom logo during Pride Month, for example (DT is very vocal about supporting LGBT+ inclusion, as seen by lighting up its logo in rainbow colors) [102].

The **Employee Value Proposition** DT offers includes: **challenging work with impact**, **opportunities to innovate**, **global career prospects**, **job security**, and a **supportive environment**. The slogan for careers is often "**Take part!**" or "Let's shape the digital future together," inviting employees to contribute ideas.

Key aspects of DT's work culture and EVP:
- **Innovation & Autonomy:** Employees (including trainees) are encouraged to bring new ideas. There are internal hackathons, idea contests, and innovation projects where cross-functional teams can experiment. The hierarchy at DT exists, but in recent years they've pushed for more agile ways of working – for example, in IT and product units they use Scrum/Agile and empower teams to make decisions quickly (embracing "get things done" principle). So you'll find pockets of startup-like culture, especially in digital and innovation departments. T-Systems, in its transformation, has also adopted agile methodologies for many projects, which fosters a culture of continuous improvement and flexibility. - **Learning & Development:** DT brands itself as a place where you can **"outgrow yourself"** [103] – meaning lots of development opportunities. As a trainee you already benefit from structured development, but even beyond, DT offers extensive training programs. There are DT campuses/academies for leadership training, an online learning portal, and they sponsor further education (some employees do part-time MBAs or specialized courses with company support). The

company's long-standing commitment to **vocational training** (each year DT hires ~1,800 apprentices in Germany for various technical and commercial trades) shows a culture of growing talent from within [104] . This investment in people extends to trainees and regular employees alike. - **Career & Talent Mobility:** Being a global company, there are chances to work abroad or move between divisions. Many employees have international assignments or switch from, say, T-Systems to a role in the mobile division, etc. DT actively identifies high-potentials and moves them across roles to broaden experience. In fact, the Start up! program itself is a prime example of this approach to develop broad talent. - **Work-Life Balance:** Telekom generally offers a good work-life balance (especially in Germany, where work hours are regulated by collective agreements). Flexible work arrangements are common – e.g., **mobile working** is widely allowed; even before COVID, DT had a policy enabling work-from-home for many roles. After the pandemic, DT embraced hybrid work; they also have schemes like sabbaticals or part-time schedules if needed. Employee reviews often cite **flexible hours and good work-life balance** as positives (rated around 3.8/5 on average, which is solid for such a large company) [105] . There is also support for parents (e.g., Telekom has daycare partnerships and decent parental leave policies; they even have an in-house initiative "Telekom hilft Kindern" and provide family counseling benefits). - **Collegial Atmosphere:** The *"colleague cohesion"* is rated highly in internal surveys – employees say co-workers are supportive and teamwork is strong [106] [107] . In a Kununu survey, *collegiality* was rated 4.1/5, and "employees perceive that colleagues help each other and act customer-oriented" [108] . This suggests that despite being a 200k+ employee company, teams manage to maintain friendly, cooperative relationships. The guiding principle "I am T – count on me" fosters personal accountability to the team. In T-Systems, which went through restructuring, morale dipped at times, but the current leadership emphasizes open communication and teamwork to improve the atmosphere. - **Management Style:** Historically DT had a somewhat traditional management style (decently hierarchical, given its size and former civil servant workforce). But it has been shifting – the company talks about *"leadership in times of transformation"*, training managers to be more like coaches. There is an emphasis on **"Acting with integrity and respect"** for all leaders [5] . Still, some employees mention that decision-making can be slow or bureaucratic in such a large org, and middle management quality can vary. However, DT has programs to train better leaders and has even reduced management layers in some areas to speed things up.

It's also notable that DT has been recognized as an employer in various ways. For example, they've been certified as a **"Top Employer"** in multiple years and countries. In Germany, Telekom is often seen as a stable, reliable employer with good benefits – a bit like working for a large "civil service" but in a tech environment. People value the **job security** (it's rare for DT to do mass layoffs without offering other roles, etc.) and the **social benefits** (e.g., strong pension schemes, health programs, and even free counseling or support hotlines for employees).

From an EVP perspective, Telekom's career site highlights things like *inclusive culture, chances to innovate, attractive remuneration, and making a difference in society through technology* [102] .

Diversity, Inclusion, and Sustainability

Diversity & Inclusion (D&I): Deutsche Telekom prides itself on being a diverse and inclusive employer. The workforce spans dozens of nationalities, and the official language in many meetings is English due to international teams. DT actively supports gender diversity – the company set a goal to have **30% women in leadership positions by end of 2025** [109] (this aligns with government targets for German companies, but DT has embraced it earnestly). As of recent reports, they were on track, with many women in senior roles (e.g., the Board member for Europe, Dominique Leroy, is female; as is Claudia Nemat in Tech & Innovation). The **equal opportunity** principle is taken seriously; compensation is set mostly by collective agreements and roles, which ensures fairness (no gender pay gap for like positions by policy). Employees on Kununu rated **"equality" 4.2/5** – one of the highest-rated culture factors [110]

[107] . There are internal networks such as **Women@Telekom** for female empowerment, **LGBTQ+ networks**, and support for employees with disabilities. In fact, DT has a program to hire and support persons with disabilities, and the headquarters in Bonn is fully accessible.

Inclusion also means **international inclusion** – with operations in so many countries, DT fosters cross-cultural teams. The guiding principle of respect and integrity means zero tolerance for discrimination; one Kununu reviewer noted that *"no one is favored, everyone's voice has equal weight, regardless of tenure or background"* [111] – that might be a bit idealistic, but it shows the aim for an open culture. During Pride and other events, the company is very visibly supportive (rainbow logos, internal campaigns). They've won awards for diversity in some markets (e.g., DT UK was recognized for LGBT inclusion by Stonewall).

Sustainability & Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Sustainability is a core value area for DT. The company's slogan in this realm is *"Act responsibly – for our environment and society"*. They integrate sustainability into strategy (#GreenMagenta for environment, #GoodMagenta for digital inclusion/social causes) [90] . For example, **climate protection**: DT has achieved using 100% renewable electricity across the group [90] , and is reducing CO_2 emissions to become climate neutral. They even encourage customers to return old devices (circular economy initiatives) and have eco-ratings for devices they sell. On the **social side**, DT runs programs to improve digital literacy (especially important as a telecom – they have programs teaching seniors or disadvantaged youth how to use the internet safely) [112] . They also have volunteering programs (employees can take days to volunteer in community projects). Notably, during crises (like refugee influxes or natural disasters), DT often provides support – e.g., free SIM cards to refugees or disaster recovery network services.

For T-Systems, sustainability also means helping enterprise clients achieve their ESG goals with IT solutions. In 2023, T-Systems was named a Leader in Sustainability IT services by analysts [97] . Internally, T-Systems and DT promote green travel (encouraging train over plane in Europe, EV company cars etc.) and have introduced CO_2 considerations into projects.

One concrete example: DT's building facilities incorporate sustainability – their new office in Berlin *"Telekom Hauptstadtvertretung – '7500' or "Magenta Mitte""* is designed as a modern, energy-efficient building and a hub for dialogue on digital and sustainable future [113] .

Employee Well-being: DT emphasizes being a *"Responsible Employer"* (one of their CSR pillars). They provide a lot of health and wellness support – from on-site fitness centers at bigger locations to mental health hotlines. Work-life programs include flexible work and family support as mentioned. Even during COVID, DT was noted for taking care of employees (quick move to remote work, care packages sent home, etc.).

Employee Feedback and Testimonials: Looking at independent reviews, the consensus is that **Deutsche Telekom is a good employer with a strong culture, albeit with some big-company challenges**. On Glassdoor, DT has an overall rating around **4.0 out of 5** (and similarly on Kununu ~3.9) and about **75–78% of employees say they'd recommend** the company to a friend [114] . This is a fairly high score in the industry, indicating generally positive morale. Employees frequently praise the *"great working environment," "openness to new ideas," "job security," and "development opportunities."* One reviewer on Glassdoor wrote that Deutsche Telekom is a *"very innovative company, lots of exciting projects and international teams"*. Another common highlight is the **compensation and benefits** – DT's pay is competitive (as noted, even trainees get above-average pay), and things like healthcare, pension, and employee discounts (e.g., staff get discounted phone plans and devices) are valued (73% of employees on Kununu are satisfied with their pay) [115] [116] .

Employees also mention good **work-life balance** and flexible scheduling. For example, a Glassdoor review: *"Very flexible working hours and possibility to work from home, which contributes to a good work-life balance."* The **collegial culture** appears in comments like *"Team spirit is strong, colleagues support each other."* In fact, *colleague cohesion* was one of the best-rated factors internally at 4.1/5 [106] [107] .

On the flip side, some challenges noted by employees include **bureaucracy/complexity** ("big company syndrome"), frequent **reorganizations** (especially in T-Systems, which had multiple restructuring waves – some employees felt uncertainty due to changes in strategy) [117] [118] , and occasionally **slower decision-making**. For instance, an employee review mentioned *"too many stakeholders involved in decisions, which slows things down."* Another pointed out that *due to size, sometimes initiatives get lost or duplicated.* However, these are typical issues in large corporations. The company is aware of them and tries to create an agile culture to mitigate such issues.

Glassdoor/Kununu Testimonials: Here are a few paraphrased snippets that reflect common sentiments: - *"At DT you have a stable job and lots of opportunities to develop. The company truly cares about employees and society. Sometimes processes can be slow, but overall a great place to work."* - *"Innovative projects and international colleagues make it exciting. The hierarchy is there, but you can reach out to higher-ups easily and your input is valued."* - *"Very good benefits and work-life balance. Management style is generally supportive. The company is so large that your experience can depend on the department – some feel like startup, some more traditional."* - *"Strong focus on diversity and equal treatment, which I appreciate. Also, DT has been very accommodating for working parents."*

Importantly for you as a prospective trainee: **graduates and young professionals often have positive experiences**, citing the friendly onboarding and the breadth of opportunities. You can find testimonials on DT's career pages or LinkedIn from former Start up! trainees – many speak of the program as an amazing start to their career due to the mentor support and the chance to quickly take on responsibility.

In summary, **the culture at Deutsche Telekom is one that values trust, innovation, customer focus, and social responsibility**. It's a **"big company with a big heart"** – trying to maintain a human touch despite its size. For someone joining the Startup! program, this culture means you'll be entering a supportive environment that wants you to succeed and grow. If you show initiative, there are countless ways to make an impact and be recognized.

Linking back to values, you can emphasize in the interview that you resonate with DT's principles (perhaps mention a couple that align with your own values – e.g. if you believe strongly in continuous learning, cite "Stay curious and grow" [5] , or if you value integrity, mention how you appreciate that DT puts integrity front and center). Citing these shows you've done your research and would be a culture fit.

5. Recent News and Strategic Direction

To stand out in the interview, it's great to be aware of **recent news, key projects, and the strategic direction** of Deutsche Telekom and T-Systems. This demonstrates that you are up-to-date and genuinely interested in the company's trajectory. Here are some **notable recent developments and strategic focus areas** (as of 2024–2025) that you can bring up:

- **Telekom leads Europe in 5G and Fiber Expansion:** Deutsche Telekom has been making headlines for its rapid 5G rollout. By late 2024, DT announced that **97% of German households can access its 5G network**, and it's pushing to reach 99% by end of 2025 [59] . This positions DT

as a leader in 5G coverage in Europe. It's a key part of their strategy to reinforce their core connectivity leadership. In parallel, DT is investing massively in **fiber-optic infrastructure** – for example, deploying millions of gigabit-capable fiber lines in Germany to replace old copper DSL. In 2024 DT's capex hit record levels (as mentioned, €16B globally) to build these future-proof networks [63] . The strategic angle: DT wants to maintain network quality differentiation ("best network") to keep customers and enable advanced services (like the ones T-Systems can build on top). You could mention: *"I read that DT is nearing full 5G coverage in Germany and heavily investing in fiber – it shows the company's commitment to providing the best infrastructure, which excites me as an aspiring employee, because all the innovative services we talk about (IoT, cloud, etc.) rely on that strong network foundation."* [59] [119]

- **T-Mobile US and Global Market Position:** In the global telecom market, Deutsche Telekom (through T-Mobile US) has become a powerhouse. T-Mobile US's successful merger with Sprint (completed in 2020) has paid off – T-Mobile US is now the #2 carrier in the US by subscribers and a growth engine. In 2023, DT increased its stake in T-Mobile US to beyond 50%, solidifying control. This has boosted DT's financial results significantly (the US contributes ~half of group revenues now). There was recent news of DT initiating a **share buyback program (2023–2025)**, buoyed by cash from the U.S. side [120] . Strategically, CEO Tim Höttges has hinted at possibly **expanding ownership in T-Mobile US further** or leveraging the strong US performance to invest in Europe's networks. For the interview, you might note: *"DT's strategic focus on the U.S. has clearly paid off – making it one of the world's largest telecom operators. That global scale provides stability and resources for innovation back in Europe, which I find compelling."* Also, DT's **brand value** skyrocketed thanks in part to T-Mobile's "Un-carrier" image; in 2024, DT was named *the world's most valuable telecom brand, surpassing AT&T and Verizon* [2] , reflecting its strong market positioning. This kind of news shows the company's momentum.

- **Sale of T-Mobile Netherlands and Tower Assets:** In line with sharpening its focus, DT in 2022 sold its subsidiary T-Mobile Netherlands and also spun off and sold a majority stake in its tower unit (GD Towers) for very high valuations [12] . These moves generated cash (billions of euros) which DT has used to pay down debt and invest in core areas (like buying more T-Mobile US shares, funding fiber rollout, etc.). Strategic direction here: DT is simplifying its portfolio to concentrate on markets where it can be #1 or #2 and on businesses aligned with digital growth. It retains stakes in some ventures (e.g., it kept a minority stake in the towers because infrastructure remains important). For you, mentioning this shows you understand DT's corporate strategy of portfolio management.

- **Digital Transformation & IT Services Strategy:** T-Systems, as discussed, underwent restructuring to return to profitability and focus on digital. In recent news, T-Systems has announced partnerships and wins that align with this focus:

  - For example, **T-Systems partnered with Adobe** to offer customer experience solutions in a sovereign cloud environment (helping German companies use Adobe's cloud while keeping data secure).
  - **Automotive sector deals:** T-Systems recently extended a major deal with Volkswagen to manage its global networks and is working with Daimler (Mercedes-Benz) on projects like a "Software-defined Vehicle" platform. These show T-Systems remains deeply embedded in Germany's car industry digitalization.
  - **Public Sector push:** T-Systems won contracts to build digital solutions for German government, like secure cloud for federal agencies (part of the digital sovereignty push).
  - In 2023, T-Systems also acquired software development firms in Portugal (like **创牟 (an IT nearshore center)**) to boost its delivery capabilities.

- Another interesting project: **Corona-Warn-App** – DT (with SAP) built Germany's COVID-19 contact tracing app in 2020, which was one of the most successful in Europe. This highlighted DT's ability to deliver critical digital solutions quickly and at scale. It's a bit earlier, but still a point of pride showcasing innovation and public service.

The strategic direction for T-Systems is to become a **"Digital Enabler"** for clients, focusing on a handful of portfolios: Cloud, Digital Solutions (which includes things like SAP services, application development, IoT, AI), Security, and Telecommunications services for multinationals. It is moving away from legacy data center outsourcing. If asked about T-Systems' future, you can say it's *positioning itself as the go-to partner for European enterprises' digital transformation, leveraging its secure, sovereign credentials and deep industry expertise (especially in manufacturing, automotive, public sector).*

- **Innovation and R&D News:** On the innovation front, DT had some cool news:

  - **Quantum Communication Trial:** In mid-2023, DT announced it had tested **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)** in a standard fiber-optic network between two cities in Germany, as part of a pilot secure communication project. This shows DT is preparing for the next era of cybersecurity (quantum-safe encryption).
  - **edge Computing with MobiledgeX:** DT had a subsidiary, MobiledgeX, working on edge computing platform, which was sold to Google Cloud in 2022. But now DT works closely with Google on integrating telco edge with cloud.
  - **Open RAN:** Deutsche Telekom has been active in trials of Open RAN (open radio access networks) technology, which could revolutionize how mobile networks are built by using standardized hardware and software from multiple vendors. In 2021-2022, DT ran an Open RAN city pilot in Neubrandenburg, Germany, and in 2023 joined other European operators in a commitment to Open RAN deployment goals by 2025.
  - **6G research:** DT is part of the German government's 6G research initiatives (6G is expected around 2030). They host a 6G test lab in Berlin in collaboration with TU Berlin, focusing on terahertz communications and integrated sensing.
  - **AI in networks:** A late-2024 announcement was DT implementing AI-based algorithms in its network management that reduced energy consumption by dynamically adjusting network resources – an example of innovation yielding sustainability benefits.
  - **Product Innovations:** On the consumer side, DT is innovating with things like **MagentaTV** (its IPTV/streaming platform) which in 2024 had exclusive rights to UEFA Euro 2024 matches in Germany – more of a marketing/media highlight but shows DT expanding beyond connectivity into content [121] . They also launched **Mobile Angebote** like a **hybrid 5G+DSL router** that combines mobile and fixed connectivity for better home internet, showcasing tech integration.

- **Sustainability and CSR Announcements:** A recent big initiative was DT joining the **Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi)** and getting its climate targets validated. Also, DT issued **Green Bonds** to finance climate-friendly projects (e.g., fiber rollout is considered green because it reduces energy per bit transmitted versus copper). In social news, DT has programs for digital education – e.g., in 2024 they expanded support for a program teaching coding to school children across Eastern Europe.

- **Financial Performance and Investments:** It might be worth noting that DT's strategic direction is yielding strong results – the company has seen growth in revenue and profits, driven largely by T-Mobile US but also stable European operations. In 2024 Q1, for instance, DT raised its

outlook after a good quarter. They are investing a lot, but also keeping shareholders happy (the dividend has been stable/increasing).

- ○ Also, a strategic financial goal is **deleveraging** – DT had high debt from the T-Mobile merger, but by selling non-core assets (like NL, towers) and good cash flow, they have reduced debt ratios, giving more flexibility for future investments or acquisitions.
- ○ DT also hinted at a **possible IPO of T-Systems** or bringing in partners for it a few years ago, but currently they decided to keep T-Systems and transform it internally. For now, T-Systems is showing signs of a turnaround (it returned to modest growth in 2023 after years of decline), which is strategically important as DT wants that segment to contribute positively.

Summing up **strategic direction**: Deutsche Telekom is reinforcing its core (best networks, satisfied customers), expanding in growth areas (especially the U.S. and B2B digital services), and transforming into a more agile, digital organization. It's balancing being a telecom infrastructure company and a tech innovator. The slogan they use is *"Leading Digital Telco"* – meaning not just leading in telecom, but leading in digital innovation in telecom. For T-Systems, the direction is to become a **digitization partner** for business and the public sector worldwide, focusing on what differentiates it: combining IT with secure connectivity, providing *"digital solutions from a single source"* [10] .

This is a great opportunity for you to mention why this strategic direction excites you: e.g., *"I'm particularly excited about Deutsche Telekom's role in shaping emerging technologies like 5G, IoT and even quantum communications. The recent news about achieving 97% 5G coverage and launching satellite IoT connectivity* [59] [76] *shows DT is not just keeping up but leading – and I want to be part of that innovative journey. I also appreciate DT's commitment to sustainability and inclusion, like the Green Magenta initiatives and diversity targets, which align with my values."* Such references will demonstrate you've done your homework.

6. Why Attend the Interview / Why Join the Start up! Program

Finally, when the interviewer asks *"Why do you want to join Deutsche Telekom/T-Systems and this program?"* – you'll want to give compelling, research-backed reasons. Here are some strong points, based on everything above, that you can use to **express your motivation** for attending the interview and, ultimately, joining the Start up! trainee program. (You can phrase these in your own words, but ensure you convey genuine enthusiasm and tie it to your career goals.)

- **Join a Global Tech Leader with Impact:** Deutsche Telekom is not only Europe's largest telecom company but a global innovator driving the digital revolution [2] . By joining DT, you become part of a company that **connects millions of people** and enables critical services worldwide. Few companies offer the chance to work on projects that **impact entire countries' infrastructures** – from 5G networks that connect communities to IoT solutions shaping smart cities. For example, as a trainee I might contribute to a project expanding 5G or developing an IoT platform, which has real impact on how people live and businesses operate. The idea of working at a company that *"won't stop until everyone is connected"* (truly making a difference) is a major motivator for me [3] .

- **Cutting-Edge Technology and Innovation Opportunities:** DT sits at the forefront of many exciting technologies – 5G, AI, cloud, cybersecurity, IoT, you name it. The Start up! program would let me get hands-on with these technologies across different projects. I've read how DT is implementing **network slicing for 5G** and launching new services like satellite IoT connectivity [62] [76] . As someone passionate about tech, I can't think of a better place to learn and

contribute. The program's rotation design means I could, for instance, spend one phase in the Networks team learning about 5G deployment, and another in T-Systems working on a cloud/AI solution – gaining a 360° view of tech innovation. This aligns perfectly with my interest in [mention your specific tech interest], and I'm excited by the prospect of being at the *cutting edge*. (In short, **the opportunity to work with state-of-the-art tech in a real-world context** is a huge reason.)

- **Extensive Learning, Development & Mentorship:** The Start up! program is essentially an 18-month masterclass in business and technology. The structured training sessions, the mentorship by senior leaders, and the variety of rotations will accelerate my growth tremendously [49] [39]. I'm attracted by how **comprehensive** the program is – it's not just a job, it's a continual learning journey. I know I'll gain skills in multiple domains (technical and soft skills) and receive guidance to shape my career path. For example, the fact that I'll have a mentor from management means I'll get feedback and advice that many people at my level wouldn't get elsewhere. This kind of **investment in my development** signals that DT values its talent, and that's exactly the kind of supportive environment in which I want to start my career.

- **Flexibility to Shape My Career (Personalized Rotations):** I was really impressed to learn that Start up! trainees can *choose their own rotations and focus areas* [33] [36]. That degree of freedom is rare in trainee programs. It shows DT trusts and empowers its young talent to take charge of their development. For me, this means I can explore both my current interests (say, **Cloud Solutions** in one rotation) and also step out of my comfort zone to try something new (maybe a rotation in **Strategy or Innovation**), all within one program. I'm excited by the idea of being able to **"determine my journey"** at DT [40] – it's motivating to know I won't be boxed into one role, but rather encouraged to discover where I fit best. This flexibility will help me become a well-rounded professional and find my true passion in the business.

- **International Exposure and Global Network:** The international assignment component is a big draw for me [37]. DT operates in 50+ countries, and I value the chance to gain **global experience** early in my career. Whether it's working at T-Mobile US or a European subsidiary for a rotation, I will develop cross-cultural communication skills and a global perspective – essential in today's interconnected tech industry. Additionally, by rotating through different teams, I'll build a **diverse professional network** across the company. The trainee community itself is international, and alumni have gone on to roles around the world. Networking with them and with colleagues from various departments will be invaluable. Essentially, the program will make the company "feel smaller" to me by connecting me with people everywhere. This global network can open doors for future international roles at DT – and as someone who [mention if you have international interest or speak languages], that opportunity is very appealing.

- **Innovative and Inclusive Culture (Magenta Spirit):** I am drawn to DT's company culture. The fact that Deutsche Telekom emphasizes values like **"Stay curious and grow"** and **"Team together"** resonates with me [5] – I thrive in collaborative environments where continuous learning is encouraged. From my research and interactions, I get the sense that DT/T-Systems has a very **open and supportive atmosphere**, where new ideas are welcomed despite the company's large size. I've seen that employees appreciate the work-life balance and the emphasis on respect and integrity [5] [105]. I believe I'd fit well in a culture that is both performance-driven and people-centric. Also, DT's strong commitment to diversity and sustainability is important to me. Knowing that **75% of employees would recommend DT as a workplace and that it's considered a Top Employer** [114] gives me confidence that I'd be joining a positive work environment. In short, I want to join a company where I can be **proud of the**

work we do and the way we do it, and DT clearly offers that – from ethical business practices to community initiatives.

- **Opportunities for Long-Term Growth:** I'm not viewing the trainee program as just 18 months of training – I see it as the start of a long-term career at Deutsche Telekom. The company's strategic direction suggests a lot of future opportunities: as DT transforms into a leading digital services player, there will be **new roles and projects** that don't even exist today. For example, as 5G and IoT ecosystems grow, DT/T-Systems will need people to manage those complex solutions for industries; with AI becoming more prevalent, there'll be initiatives to integrate AI into every part of the business. By joining now, I position myself to **grow into one of those future leadership or expert roles**. The trainee program will give me broad exposure so I can identify where I can add the most value in the long run, and the company's size and global reach mean there's no shortage of career paths. Knowing that DT likes to promote from within (given how it invests in trainees and apprentices) motivates me – I'm excited by the prospect that in a few years I could be leading a project or team at DT. That *prospect of growth* in a stable yet forward-looking company is a key reason I'm eager to join.

- **Alignment with My Personal and Professional Goals:** (Here you would tailor to your own story – for example:) *Personally, I'm passionate about technology making a positive impact, and DT's mission to connect people and enable digital progress aligns with that. Professionally, I aspire to become a well-rounded tech strategy consultant/manager (for example), and the Start up! program is the ideal training ground for that – it offers consulting-like rotation variety with the stability of a corporation. I'm particularly interested in [IoT solutions / cybersecurity / digital strategy], and T-Systems is doing cutting-edge work in that area (like the new IoT satellite connectivity or cyber defense centers), so I'm excited to learn from the best and contribute my knowledge in that domain.*

- **Enthusiasm for Challenge and Change:** Finally, I want to be at a company that constantly evolves and challenges its people to innovate – Deutsche Telekom is just that. It's currently undergoing digital transformation internally (becoming a "software company that sells telco services" as they say) [3], which means as a young professional I can be part of internal change initiatives, not just external projects. That environment will push me to adapt and learn continuously – exactly what I'm looking for to accelerate my development. I'm someone who loves to solve problems and take initiative, and I believe at DT, especially through this program, I'll have **the platform to take initiative** (e.g., perhaps spearheading a trainee innovation project or improving a process in a rotation) and be heard. The prospect of such responsibility and trust early on is a major reason I'm drawn to this interview and program.

By articulating points like these – backed up by specifics from your research – you will show the interviewer that you have a **clear, sincere motivation** to join Deutsche Telekom/T-Systems through the Start up! program. It will be evident that you are not just looking for any job, but specifically value what **DT** offers. This kind of enthusiasm, supported by knowledge, will help convince them that you are a great fit for the program.

Sources:

To ensure accuracy and provide evidence, I've researched using Deutsche Telekom's official publications and reputable industry sources. Key sources include the Deutsche Telekom website (company profile, careers pages, annual reports), T-Systems official site, and industry news outlets. For instance, DT's company profile confirms its global scale and digital ambitions [15] [3], and the trainee program details

were taken from DT's career pages [35] [37] and T-Systems' website [122] [41]. Information about technology initiatives like cloud partnerships and security operations comes from T-Systems' "About" page and press releases [66] [78]. Cultural values and employee feedback were cross-verified from DT's Human Resources report and employee review platforms [5] [114]. These references attest to the points made, showing that they are grounded in up-to-date facts:

- Deutsche Telekom's scale and digital telco vision [123] [4]
- T-Systems' role, size, and focus on digital services [20] [124]
- Details of the Start up! program structure and benefits [35] [50]
- Key technologies like 5G coverage and network slicing [59] [62]
- Partnerships in cloud (Google, AWS, etc.) [68] [67]
- Innovation hubs and R&D efforts [80] [91]
- Guiding principles and culture values [5]
- Diversity targets and equality ratings [109] [107]
- Employee recommendation rate and satisfaction [114] [106]

These sources reinforce the credibility of the information and can be cited if needed in the interview to demonstrate that your claims are fact-based. (Of course, you won't have to quote numbers in an interview like an essay, but having them in mind or paraphrasing them shows depth of research.)

Conclusion: Attending the Start up! trainee program interview at Deutsche Telekom/T-Systems is a fantastic opportunity, and I'm equipped with a comprehensive understanding of the company and program. I'm eager to convey how my own aspirations align with DT's mission and how I can contribute to its innovative journey. I believe my research-backed preparation – from the company's history and strategy to the program specifics and culture – will allow me to confidently address any question and demonstrate that I'm not only a strong candidate but also a truly motivated one, ready to wear magenta with pride.

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