

PRESS RELEASE – ENGLISH VERSION (TRANSLATION)

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BrainE4 in practice | Fire services and building insurance

“A workshop won’t get you there” – 205 fire brigade officers in the canton of Solothurn help shape the revision of their regulations

Cham/Solothurn, 8 October 2026. Solothurn Building Insurance (SGV) has placed the complete revision of the cantonal Command Files for the fire services on a broad footing. Instead of a traditional consultation, it invited some 600 commanders, officers and specialists to a digital leadership dialogue using BrainE4’s Idea Duel method. 205 of them took part, each conducting an average of 113 idea duels. A report ready for evaluation was available one day after the leadership dialogue closed.

The Command Files are the operating manual of Solothurn’s fire services. Following the legislative amendment of 2025, they no longer met current requirements, either in content or in form. Fire Inspector Markus Grenacher did not want the revision to reflect only the perspective of the three large fire brigades: “A traditional workshop won’t get you there. You mainly hear the loudest voices, and the quieter ones get lost.” The deciding factor in favour of BrainE4 was the Fire Service Inspectorate of the Canton of Zurich, which has had good experience with the method.

One third of officers took part

The invitations went specifically to the officers and specialists who work with the Command Files every day, including equipment managers, vehicle officers and administrators. Grenacher describes the participation rate of 34 per cent as “an excellent result in a volunteer system”. More than 90 per cent of participants have over ten years of service experience. They assessed the SGV’s proposals and introduced topics of their own, “some of which were ranked very highly”, says Rolf Vogt, Head of Procurement and Contributions at the SGV. The effort required of the SGV remained small: the preparatory strategy workshop took one hour and fifty minutes instead of the three hours scheduled.

What the rank and file want

Three findings stand out:

- **The same rules for everyone.** “The concern that small fire brigades might be disadvantaged compared with large ones was clearly dispelled,” says Grenacher. “The smaller brigades themselves firmly rejected any preferential treatment of the large ones. Everyone wants the same fair rules.”
- **A concise format, available digitally.** Officers want compact files, ideally in the form of a checklist, available digitally and on mobile devices.
- **More leeway in procurement.** On the guidelines for vehicles, the rank and file are calling for more flexibility. “That’s a valuable pointer we can now take up,” says Vogt.

The SGV presented the results at four regional briefings to a total of 75 commanders. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, right up to a spontaneous “Hats off, thank you for bringing us on board.” The findings will now be incorporated into the new Command Files; the content will be clarified first, followed by the technical implementation. Requests that conflict with current law, such as greater municipal autonomy in organising the fire service, will be placed in context and explained in the new regulations.

Markus Grenacher draws a clear conclusion: “We are very satisfied, especially with the ratio between our effort and what comes out of it. And even when critical feedback comes in: that is exactly why you ask.

Those who listen end up with better regulations.” The SGV also intends to use the method to develop its own strategy.

Andreas Seonbuchner, Founder and CEO of BrainE4: “Fire service officers know best what their regulations need to achieve. Some of the most important topics were not in any draft: they introduced them themselves and voted them to the top.”

Notes for editors

The full interview with Markus Grenacher, his deputy Daniel Schaer and Rolf Vogt, including images, is available at braine4.com/en/interview/sgvso_grenacher. For information on the project, please contact Markus Grenacher, Fire Inspector at the SGV: markus.grenacher@sgvso.ch, +41 32 627 97 00.

BrainE4 – collective intelligence from Switzerland

BrainE4 closes the gap between classic data collection and robust decision-making. The Idea Duel makes collective intelligence usable: anonymous, egalitarian, scientifically grounded and weighted according to freely selectable criteria – and, in citizen dialogues, also for representative findings on the population as a whole. The method was developed with two professors of the OST Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences in an Innosuisse project. It is used for leadership, culture, customer, member and citizen dialogues. BrainE4 is 100% Swiss Made and based in Cham (canton of Zug).

Further information:

www.braine4.com

Media contact:

Andreas Seonbuchner, Founder and CEO | contact@braine4.com | +41 79 669 87 90