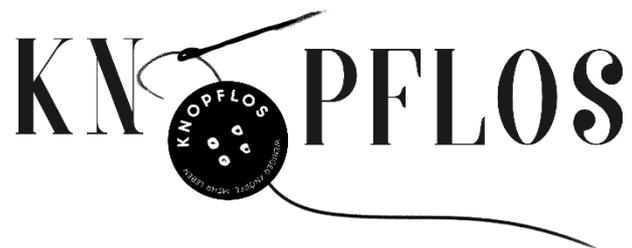




Interview: Alexandra Hoyer

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Von links: Johannes Zimmermann, Felix Enzinger, Miriam Busch, Mathias Weber, Alexandra Berger, Robin Ganzmann

You are the winners of the StartUP Factory Regensburg 2019: Could you tell us the idea of this event and the story of your group's success?

The StartUP Factory is a workshop that focuses on innovative product ideas, professional exchange and the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

For 48 hours designers, software developers, business and marketing experts come together at the TechBase Regensburg to work together in teams on their business ideas.

During a course called "Opportunity Workshop" within the study course named Digital Entrepreneurship, the idea of producing clothes without buttons came up. Within the study course our group of 4 (Mathias, Alex, Felix and Miriam) further deepened and worked out this idea. With the help of the Business Model Canvas, we also developed our business model and created a slogan. We introduced the idea to our fellow students, who become immediately enthusiastic about it. Afterwards we decided to take the idea to the StarUP Factory.

After our first pitch at the StartUP Factory, we gained two additional members. From Thursday evening to Saturday evening, we deepened our ideas again, revised our business model, designed a logo, researched our locking mechanisms, carried out surveys and designed our first prototype with a seamstress. As part of the StartUP Factory, we also had the opportunity to talk to experts and exchange ideas with them. Since then we have been in close contact with a representative of the Techniker Krankenkasse in particular. Since we had to pitch our start-up idea on Saturday evening in front of the jury and competitors, we also worked on a short business pitch.

With this pitch, we were able to convince the jury of our idea on Saturday and became the proud winners of this workshop.

You all are members of the new Master Digital Entrepreneurship course: Do you think everyone has to acquire and learn to have the entrepreneurial mindset or is it like a spirit you all naturally follow?

We think that not everyone has what it takes to be a good entrepreneur - and not everyone has to have it! Some people enjoy generating ideas, trying them out themselves, being their own bosses and taking the risk of self-employment. Some people try to avoid this kind of stress and they are very satisfied in an employee position.

In the Digital Entrepreneurship course, however, gather only young and motivated people who want to push ahead and realize themselves. Our master study course offers the ideal basis for this and motivates students to take the step to self-employment. With workshops such as the StartUP Factory, we also can get the first taste of the "entrepreneurial air" and try it out for a bit. That helps immensely.

Can you tell us something about yourself? (General information about yourself, what you did before, the interdisciplinarity of your group, such as name, where you live, hobbies or anything else)

We are a group of 6 and as you mentioned before we all are students of the new Master's course Digital Entrepreneurship at the OTH Regensburg. Our greatest asset is our interdisciplinary approach. Johannes comes

from the IT area, for example. Felix and Mathias have both already completed a banking apprenticeship. Just like Alex and Miriam, Felix has in-depth knowledge of business administration and marketing, while Mathias can contribute his knowledge from the field of international relations. Robin and Miriam both have a great love for graphics and design, with Miriam focusing more on layout and graphics, Robin more on photography and video. We all share the enthusiasm for our idea and are very creative. We are also inter-disciplinary in terms of age and gender. The age range of the founders covers everything between 23 and 28 years. We are 4 boys and 2 girls.

What do you think about your group's gender composition having two girls and four boys?

I think the composition of the sex is not really perceived as an issue in our group. What is more important is the variety of expertise from many different fields that we all bring in. There are no prejudices in our team. For example the women contribute their ideas to technical solutions just as much as the men give opinions on design topics. We all work towards a common goal and everyone contributes their share.

What is your product and the target group for it?

Unfortunately, many people in Germany suffer from motor impairments and have problems dressing and undressing independently. There are also many young people and children among them. The impairments include mental illnesses and

cognitive disorders as well as malformations, rheumatism, amputations, paralysis and others.

In Germany alone, around every 10 are severely disabled. We want to make life easier for these people and give them back a bit of freedom with our clothing.

Our clothing is based on a new and innovative fastening mechanism that works without buttons. Instead, we focus on magnets.

In order not to lose sight of the aesthetic aspect and to address young people in particular, we would like to design our clothing appropriately and fashionably and also offer it at a fair price.

Could you make a short description of your next steps as a startup?

Our next step will be to find cooperation partners and raise funds. By cooperation partners we mean not only sponsors, but also groups that can support us in our development process. These include designers or material researchers to optimize the fastening mechanisms of our clothes.

Do you get financial support from the government or elsewhere?

As the winner of the StartUP Factory, we received a subsidy for legal fees incurred in the area of trademark registration from DGO and Biopark Regensburg GmbH. Apart from that we have not yet received any guaranteed funding. However, as one of the next steps, this should change soon.

What is the most challenging part of your job at the moment?

After a victory, the euphoria is usually great, everyone is motivated and still wants to enjoy the spirit of the weekend. But the exam time and part-time jobs made it very difficult for us to carry out all the plans strictly. The semester break, in which many were on the road, did not make it easy for us either. Our biggest challenge now is to grit our teeth and carry out our tasks and plans and put them into practice.

What strategies do you see as a key for developing innovative ideas?

The key to success is of course to participate in the Master Digital Entrepreneurship course. But apart from that, it is important to break out of one's habitual thinking patterns and to question everyday things. You ask yourself where you or your environment encounters problems and how you can solve these situations. Either through new ideas or by improving the existing ones. It is also important not to reject ideas immediately because they sound too crazy or you just do not believe you can do it. One should analyse the idea and consider if there is a possibility, even if on a smaller scale.

What advice would you give to other students in order to realize their own visions?

As already mentioned, one should not give up hastily. Every startup has problems at the beginning. Especially the financing causes headaches. We also have not faced only these problems. But the OTH Regensburg always has an open ear for great ideas and can advise you in these areas.

But what is even more important is the team. Nobody can manage everything by himself or herself. You need people who pull together to make an idea become reality. Everyone must be convinced of what they want to achieve. You must be also opened to the ideas of others and not just insist on your own solution. Your product will change a lot during the development process.

It will not always be easy and you will also encounter opposition and setbacks. But the most important thing is to pursue the idea with a clear goal in mind.

Thanks for your interesting and inspiring interview and your precious time.

#Bridgelt wishes you all the best for the successful market entry



ARE YOU AN ENTREPRENEUR, DO YOU HAVE A STARTUP OR ANOTHER IDEA?

Just contact us: Info.Bridgelt@gmail.com

#Bridge! is the name of an intercultural studentgroup, working on projects for students with an entrepreneurial-mindset and creative ideas.

#Bridge! gives people the chance to meet intrapreneur and entrepreneurs, to hear their stories and have them as inspiration.

#Bridge! stands for gender equality and diversity - we connect students with entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, network and support each other - **like a bridge** - and it is very important to us to increase the proportion of women in the start-up scene.

We help you to network with like-minded people. We are happy to publishing an interview of you.