Connecting the ecosystem with passion: Porsche Digital Lab at Startupnight 2019

13/09/2019 It is one of Europe's largest and most important events in the startup ecosystem — or as the Startupnight itself claims: "The only night you need!"

As part of the Volkswagen Group, the Porsche Digital Lab Berlin joined the seventh and so far biggest Startupnight in Berlin last Friday. With more than 275 international startups, clustered in five focus areas — Next Gigabit Society, Connected World, Smart Data Economy, Future Mobility, Food Tech and The Next Next — and around 5,000 participants, the Startupnight 2019 offered a valuable exchange and networking platform for founders, investors, and corporates from Berlin and all around the world. Of course, we, the Porsche Digital Lab, participated proactively!

Our value: embracing diversity, complementing collaboration and driving innovation

Our main focus at Startupnight was driving innovation — and what's a better location than Volkswagen's Group Forum DRIVE. With a rich program ranging from informative panels and interactive workshops to an exhibition and startup pitches, we were also part of the discussion. Our Director Anja Hendel joined a panel with Aletta von Hardenberg from Charta der Vielfalt and Jennifer Geffers from Volkswagen Ideation:Hub to discuss the question "Are diverse teams smarter?" Debating about the meaning of diversity, team constellations and challenges in diverse collaboration, they came to the overall conclusion that being diverse itself is not enough — everyone, be it employees, teams or organizations, should embrace it, be proud of it and support it!

The next one to be on stage was our colleague — Blockchain and AI expert Claudio Weck, who shared his experiences from the collaboration of startups and corporates. A big topic during this panel was time: He claimed that a startup's success depends on sensing the right moment when there's a real need for a new product or service in the market. In general, time is a big challenge in startup and corporate collaboration as young, small companies can act naturally faster and more agile than larger corporates. At the same time, they complement each other: Corporates have the infrastructure and frameworks for new emerging technologies while startups have the ability to build great innovative products in a short matter of time. The latter are more agile and better at handling the speed at which technology evolves.

At the brand stage — WE space, our IoT Product Owner Patricia Rennert, showed how the Porsche Digital Lab drives change and presented some of our current projects, amongst others a voice assistant

for a more elaborate and convenient way to detect failures in a noisy production environment.

A glance behind the scenes: bringing Startupnight to life together

The Startupnight is one of the very few events where different entities of the Volkswagen Group work together — to gather the whole ecosystem of founders, startups, corporates, and investors. Since April, more than 30 volunteers from 12 different entities collaborated to set up this great evening at the DRIVE. Volkswagen Group Forum. From our end, Konstantin is a member of the Startupnight Committee and looked after the content of the event at DRIVE. I, Alice, am a former tech startup founder, and brought a lot of experience with me when I joined the Startup Management team, which is responsible for managing the selection process. Due to my startup background, this task came along with lots of empathy and passion for me.

How did that work? Out of more than 180 applications of startups that wanted to partner with Volkswagen Group, we chose 37 startups to be part of the Startupnight at DRIVE. Volkswagen Group Forum. To give the startups best visibility during the event, we organized one minute pitches on the main stage for 19 of the young companies. We encouraged our colleagues from different business units and tech experts to exchange with the startups and discover new collaboration opportunities.

Contributing to the ecosystem: visibility is key for young startups

Since the Porsche Digital Lab is dedicated to driving digital transformation, we know that this requires a lot of exchange, external inspiration, and connections to innovative technology companies, start-ups, and institutions. And if you've ever founded an initiative, organized an event or built-up a company, you know that self-presentation and networking opportunities are key. Therefore, being part of the organizational team of the Startupnight 2019, we made this our priority and did our best to promote the young startups.

It was not only a great success for us but huge fun and an awesome night with many promising connections. As Porsche Digital Lab, we work like a startup — and we love to work with new startups, engage collaboration and drive innovation!

With some new contacts in our phones, we will continue the dialogue and are looking forward to the next opportunities.

Image Sublines

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Title: Startupnight 2019, Berlin, 2019, Porsche AG
Subline: Andy Grau at the Porsche NEXT OI Finals 2019

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Title: Startupnight 2019, Berlin, 2019, Porsche AG
Subline: Claudio Weck on a panel about startup and corporate collaboration

Path: media/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Startupnight 2019, Berlin, 2019, Porsche AG
Subline: Patricia Rennert about the Triple A project and much more

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Subline: The whole Volkswagen Group team at Startupnight 2019

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