



## Microsofts second startup class taking off

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Seven startups presented their business ideas around smart home, social recruiting, e-payment, and flat sharing at the Demo Night of the Microsoft Ventures Accelerator. Applications for class 3 are open now.  
Microsofts second startup class taking off Berlin, December 5, 2014. Seven startups working on their business ideas at the Microsoft Ventures Accelerator in Berlin for four months presented the results of their efforts to more than 250 investors, mentors and Berlins startup scene at the Demo Night on Thursday. The successful graduating class consisting of the startups brightup, firstbird, Flowtap, Kelsen, payever, Wunderflats, and videopath represents an excellent cross-section of the topics that are important to the digital world: machine learning, mobility, the Internet of Things, social and smart networks for the homes of the future. Christian P. Illek, Chairman of the Management Board, Microsoft Germany, emphasized the significance of startups for the innovation hub Germany in his keynote address at the opening of the Demo Night: "They all have one thing in common: the courage to change. I hope to see this courage more frequently in Germany in the future."  
"For the second time already, we have successfully enabled startups to run their business", said Marius Sewing, CEO-in-Residence, Microsoft Ventures Accelerator Berlin. "In recent months, our startups have gone through an intensive process. They have passed through all stages of key entrepreneurial interest like market entry, business strategy and intelligent, cloud-based infrastructure. In addition, we have connected our startups with investors, mentors, partners, and customers from our global ecosystem so that they are ideally geared for building their business."  
For the head of Microsoft in Germany, Christian P. Illek, startups are "major drivers of the German economy. They challenge established business models and ensure innovative momentum for the digital transformation of society".  
"Despite the ongoing debates about reducing bureaucracy, tax incentives, and financial support, a very lively startup scene has emerged in Berlin. You are part of it!", Illek welcomed the startups in his keynote address. In view of a lack of entrepreneurial spirit in Germany, the startups of the Ventures Accelerator especially prove "courage to change", said Illek: "They have the courage to do things differently and pursue new ways. They have the courage to challenge old business models which is essential for Germany as an innovation hub."  
Innovate locally, scale globally: startups developing business models for the digital world  
A year ago, Microsoft initiated the Microsoft Ventures Accelerator in Berlin to support young entrepreneurs in their startup phase. During their four-month stay, the startups are individually assisted by 30 mentors consisting of prominent representatives of industry, startup scene and IT professionals, and advised and coached in the fields of technology, design, business development, marketing, and HR.  
The technological platform the startups ultimately use does not play a role. In line with the slogan "innovate locally, scale globally", it is essential that the applications and ideas of the startups are based on a viable business model for the digital world. And, participants in the Accelerator program do not have to transfer shares in their business to Microsoft.  
The startups of the second startup class at a glance  
At the start of the second startup class, Microsoft together with a panel of experts consisting of representatives from High-Tech Gründerfonds, Wellington Partners, hub:raum, and Rheingau Founders selected the following companies from more than 500 applicants from 65 countries:  
brightup from Hamburg develops solutions for smart home technologies.  
firstbird from Baden in Austria presents a web-based recommendation tool for recruiting of new staff.  
The Vienna-based company Flowtap combines machine learning with mobile technologies to provide sales teams in the field with better corporate data on the customers site.  
Kelsen computes answers to legal questions in real time by combining big data and machine learning technologies. Kelsen learns from existing cases and human curation to provide automated, reliable solutions over time.  
payever provides a solution simplifying acceptance of all popular payment methods in online shops, on Facebook, or by email to reach more customers.  
Wunderflats from Berlin steps up to launch an international marketplace for providing temporary furnished accommodation in cooperation with universities around the globe.  
videopath develops an intelligent video player and associated authoring tools enabling companies and providers of video tutorials to effortlessly create and publish interactive videos and analyze user behavior.  
1st batch startups: 100 percent received funding  
The young history of the Microsoft Ventures Accelerator is an international success story. Currently, there are seven Accelerators worldwide, in Bangalore, Berlin, London, Paris, Beijing, Seattle, and Tel Aviv. Since its foundation in 2012, more than 240 startups have successfully completed the program. 80 percent of these startups received follow-up funding of \$1.9 million on average within the first year.  
Applications for the third startup class open now  
From today until February 1, 2015, startups may apply for participation in the third startup class on the Microsoft Venture Accelerator website.  
For more information and images of the startups and the demo night please visit: <http://1drv.ms/1vUTGd>  
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