Pioneers Success Story: Craftworks and the Art of Rapid Prototyping

Craftworks lands 3 major corporate deals through

Pioneers Hackathons

Vienna, 12.11.2017 - The story of how a series of hackathons with Pioneers Discover paved the way to success for digital transformation startup Craftworks. Rapid prototyping is a perfect match for last week's Industry 4.0 Hackathon winners' flexible approach to finding product-market fit.

Talking to startup founders on a daily basis, one gets used to hearing about how their product is the way, the truth and the light - give or take the occasional pivot. Talking to Craftworks is a somewhat different experience. Because three years into the startup's story, they don't have a definitive product at all.

But that's absolutely fine. It's policy, actually. And what Craftworks does already have is a string of promising, profitable projects going on with major corporate partners. And most of those came from taking part in hackathons organised by our consultancy arm, in which the Vienna quartet have time and again been recognised for rapid prototyping in the strictest sense of the word.

Having joined the ÖBB (Austrian Railways) Open Innovation Challenge Workshop in December 2016, Craftworks' took part in their first hackathon at the ANDRITZ Hackathon in January. They came away from that with third place for the pulp mill machine learning model they developed, and then followed this up with victory in the Alpine Tourism Hack, thanks to the chatbot they created. In June, they took part in the Porsche Holding Hackathon in Salzburg, and then, just last week, emerged victorious in Linz after building our partner KEBA a mobile app for machine diagnostics and problem-solving.

More importantly than winning prizes, though, is the connections and business leads Craftworks have made after proving themselves in the pressured environment of these events. It's no coincidence whatsoever that they now count ANDRITZ, Porsche and ÖBB among their biggest corporate clients. And following the Industry 4.0 Hackathon, there's every chance KEBA could join that list in the near future.

But while hackathons invariably give worthy startups a stage, they still have to perform. And one reason Craftworks do this so well, reckons Partnership Manager and Co-Founder Michael Hettegger, is that the rapid prototyping a hackathon requires is really the company's 'consultancy' business model in microcosm.

-Continued-

Speaking of investors, Craftworks don't actually have any. And we mean that as a complement: the four co-founders have used their own money and brainpower to build up an operation that's winning business as well as hackathons. Consultancy is working well right now, but when they really find a winning idea, they'll move swiftly.

"We want to use the money we're making now to finance building products. We don't want to use investor money to build a product that might solve a problem, or might get used. By consulting, we will already know what the problems are. That's the idea."

And on the subject of efficiency, this is where the four graduate software developers (and now self-made machine learning experts) consistently wow the corporates. 48 hours isn't a long time to come up with an all-new solution to a corporate challenge, after all. And the fact that Craftworks doesn't have a fixation on an existing product helps them do that.

"We can build something from scratch, really trying to understand the problem and find the best solution. In Linz we built a mobile app, and while it might not be fancy innovative like Blockchain or something like that, it solves the problem 100%. And I think that's what really matters to the companies sponsoring a hackathon.

"We've only done Pioneers hackathons, come to think of it. We like that they are really competitive with a really high quality of startups compared to 'weekend hackathons'. Everybody is really engaged and we want that. Like Pioneers Discover is always saying to us, it's not about beer and pizza, it's about solving an issue and providing a good solution.

Craftworks' success thus far, and especially the way they've gotten it, gives SaaS or digitalization founders in particular something new to think about when considering how they build their startup's business model. Whichever way you choose to go, though, one thing's abundantly clear: taking part in hackathons is good for business!

- Ends -

Media Contact:

For further information please contact: press@pioneers.io. For more news from the world of Pioneers, visit our blog (http://pioneers.io/blog) or follow us on social media:

@pioneers.io	Pioneers.io	pioneersfestival	@pioneers

Note to the Editors:

About Pioneers:

Pioneers establishes and facilitates direct, meaningful business relationships between leading tech innovators, including startups, corporate executives, and investors. Established in 2009 in Vienna, Pioneers helps redefine industries by creating various platforms to help develop future technologies and introduce cutting-edge solutions. Pioneers Discover, its consultancy services arm that was founded in 2013 shapes the future of corporates and the public sector by introducing them entrepreneurial tools, methods, and innovation driven corporate culture. Its investment arm Pioneers Ventures, which was founded in 2015, advances the growth of early-stage startups.