
“Young People make a Pitch” held for the second Time at HENSOLDT in Ulm

Winner convinced the jury with a robot assistant for the blind

Ulm, Germany, 5 March 2018 – Self-cleaning clothes which generate electricity for a smartphone, a robot that is at the same time a guide dog and a stick for people with impaired sight and a handbag that cannot be stolen. Admittedly, these do not sound like products developed by teenagers in the fifth form. But this is exactly what “Young People make a Pitch” is about – a competition for pupils and trainees, sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

The teams have to prove their merit in two phases to get into the final. The first phase consists of coming up with a good idea and developing a business plan. The second phase of the competition is a company simulation over eight periods.

“Young People make a Pitch” requires participants to ask questions concerning the future and then to look for answers to these questions. How could current and approaching challenges be solved in a better way in the future? On 5 March, the first presentation was made before a jury of experts at HENSOLDT in Ulm. Two further presentations will follow in Hamburg and Leipzig.

In the course of the year, a total of 718 teams had submitted their business plans for the “Young People make a Pitch” competition. Seven of the best 23 teams in Germany had then been invited to Ulm on 5 March where the event took place, in cooperation with Steinbeis Innovation Centre of Pforzheim University of Applied Sciences. They set out for Ulm from six towns in Baden-Württemberg, from Wasseralfingen, Bruchsal, Sachsenheim, Offenburg, Nagold and two teams from Achern, at the invitation of the “Young People make a Pitch” jury. The invitation to Ulm is the reward for those participants with the highest-rated business plans in the first competition phase.

The Member of Parliament Ronja Kemmer was also present at the event in Ulm and was very enthusiastic about the projects presented to the jury, “‘Young People make a Pitch’ is a great event to give young people the opportunity to take a close look at founding their own company. What convinced me above all was the realistic way in which the concept was implemented, directly followed by feedback for the participants. Not only are the idea, the concept and the business plan appraised by a jury, but help is also provided during the company simulation if problems occur.”

Following a highly interesting presentation of the individual ideas, the jury made up of representatives of industry, technology and university retired to consider their decision. The pitch winner on this day was Alexander Bayer from Wasseralfingen whose project particularly convinced the jury. His robot assistant “blind bot” was designed to replace the guide dog and stick for the blind by means of 3D cameras and an artificial neural network. The reward for this was 30 bonus points, which could help him to reach the final.

“Young people make a Pitch” is supported by a number of sponsors, who help the events with advertising and prizes. The main sponsor is Porsche. The event in Ulm is supported by HENSOLDT and Ulm Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI).

Comprehensive information on the nationwide competition is available at www.jugend-gruendet.de.

At HENSOLDT's Ulm location, about 2,000 employees are working on the development and production of complex security electronics, including radars, electronic protection systems and electronic components. Most of the staff are engineers and technicians, above all in the areas of communications engineering and electrical engineering.

About HENSOLDT

HENSOLDT is an independent, globally leading supplier of premium sensors for security and surveillance missions. The company has a strong position in the world market for radar, optronics and electronic protection systems. HENSOLDT comprises the security and defence electronics activities of the Airbus Group, which were spun off from the group in 2017. With a workforce of some 4,300 employees, HENSOLDT generates revenues of approximately €1 billion per year.

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Photo caption:

HENSOLDT Head of HR Peter Fieser in discussions with young candidates.

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