

# PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING SUCCESS

The “cry of happiness” of Zalando’s slogan is ringing in all our ears – and the sensational rise of the online retailer is happening before our eyes. This success was made possible by the partnership with ProSiebenSat.1 and the accompanying TV presence. Now the next idea is ready for its breakthrough. At the first **SEVENTENTURES PITCH DAY** in London, with which our Venture arm presented itself to the international start-up scene, the online language school BUSUU won first prize: Advertising time worth EUR 4 million!

Do you speak **BUSUU**? Hardly likely, because Busuu has almost died out. In Cameroon, only eight people still speak Busuu. In future, perhaps the number will rise: “Of course we also offer a course in Busuu,” explains Bernhard Niesner (34) in beautiful Viennese German. “We love all languages – but Busuu is particularly close to our hearts.” This is now also true for the team from **SEVENTENTURES**, the Venture arm of ProSiebenSat.1. There are apparently employees who can order in Busuu – although that was not the main purpose of the first SevenVentures Pitch Day in London in October 2012. “It made us known on the international start-up scene at one stroke,” says Dr. Hari Sven Krishnan, Managing Director of SevenVentures. “We think beyond the borders of Germany.”

## REWARDING INVESTMENTS

**The success continues. ProSiebenSat.1’s ventures business made the greatest contribution to the growth of the Digital & Adjacent segment in 2012.**

The principle: Selected start-ups receive advertising time on our TV stations. In return, SevenVentures, the Venture arm of ProSiebenSat.1, takes a share in revenues and/or the company. In a nutshell, SevenVentures bundles companies that have reached a certain market maturity and fit strategically into the portfolio of the TV Group. Inhouse specialists in campaign development for the No. 1 medium of TV are available in the SugarRay creative agency and the Booming digital agency.

## STRONG PORTFOLIO

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... **partnerships** and strategic participations were held by SevenVentures in companies from various sectors in 2012.

Winner of the first SevenVentures Pitch Day: Bernhard Niesner (right) and his language-learning community busuu.com; here with employees at the London office.

That is appropriate for the first winner of SevenVentures Pitch Day: busuu.com. The start-up company from Niesner and his Liechtenstein partner Adrian Hilti (38) is now the world's largest social network for online language learning – with currently 28 million members. Every day, another 40,000 on average sign up. "In more and more countries, language skills are a prerequisite for upward mobility. The market for language teaching is becoming ever more important," says Niesner. "But since the introduction of the CD-ROM, there has been barely any innovation." He and Hilti have changed this. Their brilliant idea: Whoever registers at busuu.com is student and teacher at the same time. On one hand, they learn a new language with modern, interactive learning units and mobile apps. On the other hand, busuu.com members are available as tutors for their own native language – as a contact for other members to speak to. "The visit abroad is virtually built-in," Bernhard Niesner explains the busuu.com principle: Whether with video chats or by the correction of each other's exercises. Fun rather than force, and getting closer is allowed: "Sure, friendships have been made this way," reports Niesner.

Because they want the growth to continue consistently, the first SevenVentures Pitch Day came at just the right time for the busuu.com bosses. In total, seven young company founders presented their business ideas to a top-class jury in London – and to the public, who were there in the hall and joining via an internet live stream. In the end, the result was surprisingly conclusive – among the experts as well as the more than 13,000 internet users who voted on Facebook. Busuu.com won the jury and the public award! The language-learning community can now present itself to the viewers of the ProSiebenSat.1 station group with advertising power worth EUR 4 million. This is an enormous strategic advantage, because experience shows that Europe's gates are open to anyone who becomes known in the German-speaking region. Busuu.com also benefits from a consulting package worth EUR 60,000 provided by renowned agencies including the online marketing specialists of the Boomingagency, another ProSiebenSat.1 subsidiary. "Of course we celebrated on Pitch Day," says Bernhard Niesner – and sounds like he is in seventh heaven. "We have now reached a size from which we can grow further with TV advertising – because we can reach brand new target groups."

SevenVentures Managing Director Dr. Hari Sven Krishnan has no doubts about that. "Our motto is: You have ideas – we have the power to implement them. We combine promising business models with the opportunities that only Germany's strongest TV network can provide." The sensational rise of Zalando has demonstrated how well that works. The model: SevenVentures provides advertising presence and in return receives company shares ("Media for Equity") or a share in revenues ("Media for Revenue Share"). "Pitch Day helps us to present ourselves internationally and find new potential partnerships. And on the side, we can learn a new language," says Dr. Krishnan. "Fwə mé ífù", he adds in almost perfect Busuu: "I would like a beer."

New growth ahead:  
Bernhard Niesner expects the  
TV presence at ProSiebenSat.1  
to provide a major boost for  
his online language school.

