



P R E S S   R E L E A S E

## **An office landlord – yet also an accelerator:**

### **Friendsfactory by etventure provides modern office spaces while also accelerating the development of startups**

- **etventure and Friendsfactory are embarking on a joint venture and shaping tomorrow's working environment**
- **As well as offering an office solution, Friendsfactory by etventure also provides targeted community management, a practical startup-building and mentoring program, and opportunities to partner with established companies**
- **“Silicon Schwabing” – the first location opens in Munich on August 1st**

Berlin/Munich, July 20, 2016 – “Our guided community boosts your business” is the slogan for the launching of [Friendsfactory by etventure](http://www.friendsfactory.de) ([www.friendsfactory.de](http://www.friendsfactory.de)), a new joint venture between etventure, a digital consultant and company builder, and Friendsfactory AG, one of the largest office-sharing communities in Germany. The joint venture combines Friendsfactory's 12 years of experience in the office leasing business, their eight locations in Germany, and a community of 1,600 startups with etventure's expertise in developing startups and digital business models for companies.

Subsequently, the services that Friendsfactory by etventure offers are very different from those of other office landlords, particularly from providers of co-working spaces. The membership model provides each startup with a targeted program of startup-building and mentoring in order to accelerate their business within an innovative working environment. This ranges from developing business models, performing user testing and prototyping, to marketing the business idea. Using these methods and this expertise, etventure has built startups such as mobileJob, POSpulse, and 360report and was commissioned with the digitization of numerous companies such as the steel trader Klöckner, the family equity company Haniel & Cie., the financial services provider Wüstenrot & Württembergische, and Daimler Financial Services.

### **Startup building and mentoring that is similar to accelerator programs**

“Members and tenants of Friendsfactory by etventure gain access to a gigantic network consisting of companies from every sector, partners from science and research such as the Fraunhofer Institut, political players, and startups,” says Laura Kohler, managing director of the etventure subsidiary European Innovation Hub. She and Gregor Gebhardt are leading the Friendsfactory by etventure joint venture. “Startups also receive practical support for building up their businesses. This closely resembles the kind of accelerator program where startups are required to relinquish shares in the business in return. We are continuing to build on the foundation of our extensive experience, including the experience we recently gained by developing an accelerator for the EU Commission.”

In 2015 and 2016, EuropeanPioneers, an EU accelerator run by etventure, supported a total of 25 startups with funding of just under five million euros over the course of two rounds. One of the participants was the virtual reality startup Splash, which was one of the winners of the renowned SXSW Accelerator Award. Shortly after the EuropeanPioneers program had ended, Splash announced that it had received over 2.5 million dollars in a recent round of funding.

### **The first location is in Munich's "center for technology and digitization"**

The first location offering this innovative program is opening on August 1, 2016 in a building with an area of over 2,400 square meters in Munich's Parkstadt Schwabing district. The location is in the immediate vicinity of technology corporations such as Microsoft, IBM, and Amazon, as well as BMW's research and development center, and the Technical University of Munich's ZD.B center for digitization. Due to the high concentration of technology and industrial companies, this area in the north of Munich is already being called a "development center for technology and digitization," and even "Silicon Schwabing."

"Parkstadt Schwabing is the perfect location in Munich, not only for helping startups to develop but also for networking with other companies," Laura Kohler continues. "In this creative and professional environment, we also give established companies the opportunity to use new methods outside of traditional corporate structures and familiar process workflows to rapidly develop innovation projects."

### **The perfect breeding ground for innovation and tomorrow's working culture**

Gregor Gebhardt, CEO of Friendsfactory, comments on the formation of the joint venture: "Co-working is no longer a functioning working model. In a room full of other people, you can't seriously build and develop your business model. To do that, you need your own office. This is not only a matter of security and confidentiality, it's also necessary in order to work in peace and develop your own team culture."

A key ingredient for a great working culture is community. "What happens in most buildings is that random communities develop. Having coffee together or joining in with a table football tournament are things that many people see as networking. Yet these things don't actually provide your own business model with any real added value. To ensure that this added value is provided at Friendsfactory by etventure, we talk about a 'guided community,'" says Gregor Gebhardt. In addition to the company-building and mentoring program that is offered at Friendsfactory by etventure, the central community manager works towards establishing networked working conditions with contacts that provide practical assistance. As a result, quick progress can be made with issues that are essential for many companies and startups, such as recruitment, partnerships, pilot projects, sales, marketing, financing issues, and seeking out investors. "We thus create a community workspace – the perfect surroundings and a progressive working environment for startups and companies," adds Gregor Gebhardt.

Friendsfactory by etventure is planning to open additional locations in Hamburg, Stuttgart and Berlin before the end of the year. The goal is to launch 20 locations in Europe within the next three years.



The first Friendsfactory by etventure location will be opening in the center of Munich's Parkstadt Schwabing district on August 1, 2016.



Laura Kohler & Gregor Gebhardt are assuming the management of Friendsfactory by etventure (image source: etventure)

**About etventure:**

Under the guiding principle that “Only true entrepreneurs drive digital change,” the digital consultant and company builder etventure identifies, develops and tests cross-industrial digital business approaches. With its four business divisions – Startup Innovation, Corporate Innovation, Teams for Innovation and Space for Innovation – etventure has mapped the entire value chain for innovative projects. Its corporate clients include Wüstenrot & Württembergische, Deutsche Bahn, Daimler Financial Services, Franz Haniel & Cie., Viessmann, the SMS group, Putzmeister, and the steel manufacturer Klöckner. etventure was founded in 2010 by managing directors Philipp Depiereux, Philipp Herrmann and Dr. Christian Lüdtkke. The etventure team is made up of 200 digital experts and entrepreneurs, who are based at locations in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Essen, Stuttgart, London, New York, Paris and Zurich. [www.etventure.com](http://www.etventure.com).

**About Friendsfactory:**

Friendsfactory AG is the largest office-sharing community in Germany. It unites the professional business world with a creative network. Friendsfactory now leases modern offices at more than eight locations throughout Germany with the tagline “Arbeiten unter Freunden” (“Working among Friends”). The offices range in size from ten to 600 square meters. The added value for tenants consists of flexible lease contracts, an attractive price-performance ratio with an all-inclusive package, comprehensive customer

service, and a large network that now boasts 1,600 “friends.” Gregor Gebhardt, CEO of Friendsfactory, founded the company in 2004. His goal was to implement innovative real estate concepts, to establish spaces for creative ideas, and to develop a reliable extensive network for Friendsfactory’s tenants. The company headquarters is in Munich. [www.friendsfactory.de](http://www.friendsfactory.de).

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