

# EXCURSION BERLIN

07.05.2019 - 09.05.2019



## AT THE CENTER OF THE GERMAN START-UP HUB



# PROGRAM

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

**14:00**                      **Finance Elements GmbH**

Address:     Scharfe Lanke 109-131, 13595 Berlin

Contact:     Ms. Melina Bosse                      (Human Ressources)

Wednesday, May 8, 2019

**15:00**                      **Qunomedical GmbH**

Address:     Chausseestraße 8, 10115 Berlin / Aufgang A, 3.OG.

Contact:     Ms. Luise Wurlitzer                      (Product Manager)

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Thursday, May 9, 2019

**10:00**                      **AWIN**

Address:     Eichhornstraße 3, 10785 Berlin

Contact:     Ms. Sabrina Brinck                      (Senior Talent Acquisition Partner)

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**12:30**

**Konfid.io**

Address: Schlüterstraße 55, Berlin 10629

Contact: Mr. Andrei Safronau (Marketing Specialist)

**15:00**

**CrossEngage**

Address: Bertha-Benz-Str. 5, 10557 Berlin

Contact: Mr. Michael Lippert (Senior Marketing Manager)

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# STUDENT REPORTS

## **Mardia**

Finance Elements GmbH introduced us the digitisation of analogue information, targeted data-linking, the visualization and profitable use thereof in all areas of business. They actually focused on digital transformation. The most interesting things to me of FEG are their control centre of the Common Sense Universe. Their current satellites are Common Sense Consulting, Common Sense Services, Common Sense Projects and Common Sense Intelligence.

Qunomedical GmbH is the most appealing company to me because their concept is partly new and unique. They open the doors to the highest quality information, doctors, clinics and care—worldwide. They allow patients to compare hospitals and medical specialists from all over the world on a level playing field, and confidently choose the right professionals for their individual needs.

Konfidio is a blockchain company which gave us a brief description about what actually the blockchain and Bitcoin is. Konfidio develops and creates world class blockchain solutions for enterprises and new ventures, with a focus on problems blockchain solves today.

Awin is a global affiliate marketing network. They have 200,000+ active affiliates, spanning a range of sectors as well as promotional types including cashback, content and shopping comparison, to find the right partners for your affiliate programme. Awin follows compliance and motivation theories. The Awin Report 2019 builds a comprehensive representation of an industry that celebrates its fundamental diversity and its ability to always adapt to the fast-changing world of digital advertising.

CrossEngage combines a real-time customer data platform with cross-channel campaign management in one single flexible SaaS approach. I think the most attention-grabbing for the client is their event management. For example, CrossEngage will be present as both exhibitor and speaker at the e-commerce event of this year in their upcoming event.

Berlin is a city of start-ups and it was a very good opportunity to see this by visiting all these companies. It was very interesting to get acquainted with various business models, to see how the companies work and hear their success stories, how they turned from small companies into big ones, operating worldwide, having numbers of international employees and many offices around the world.

## **Christopher**

This report will outline the most important aspects of the excursion to various companies of the Berlin start up industry. Naturally it is very important to mention that the information described here are of subjective nature. Personal views and opinions about the learning progress are described from personal memory.

Firstly, I want to emphasize that the main objective of getting familiar with the digital start up scene in Berlin was achieved during the entire excursion. As a matter of fact, the visited businesses were examined by the students to learn about markets and how they function. In my opinion, it is of great importance to deal with trends and signals in future markets. Digitalisation and globalisation will play an important role in the future. The management of companies is increasingly changing from high to flat hierarchies. Specific information can be exchanged faster than ever and distributed worldwide. Consequently, employees and employers will face new challenges in the future.

At the young start up business group "Finance Elements Group", which focuses on financial and operative consulting of medium sized (or larger) companies, a special focus on agility and flexibility can be seen. The corporate structure of the FEG holding represents a network of smaller firms with special core competencies around the digitalisation and presentation of business information. As a matter of fact, the separation into small independent sections, resulting in a wide range of services/products of the business enables the enterprise to react quickly to changes and to demand. The flexibility is supported by the young average age of the employees and their different backgrounds. Nevertheless, from the personal interviews and presentations it became quickly clear that only a small part of the firm actually has the expertise and experience to generate revenues with the existing products and services. According to the FEG marketing department, one of the most important services is the development of cost reduction plans in leasing contracts of their customers. In my eyes this demands a high degree of expertise and experience. Finally, it may be said that the FEG group has many different innovative ideas and plans for the future. In order to execute these disruptive business ideas, modern infrastructure within the enterprise is prepared. This may lead to a successful progress on the market.

According to many studies, which try to explain how future enterprises will be like, digitalisation and globalisation play important roles. The existence of self-driving cars, autonomously working machines and the internet of things are evidence enough for the dominance of high technologized components in our society. Globalisation and the high degree of technology open up new fields for disruptive business ideas.

Qunomedical, a young company which established a network of doctors and hospitals around the world, takes advantage of the new technology to provide transparent information about surgeries and treatments demanded by patients all over the world. In the personal conversation with the CEO and founder, Dr. Sophie Chung, it became clear how urgent the need for a

digitalized tool on the health care market is. Even though this tool demands a high degree of trust, Qunomedical managed to successfully enter the European health care market. Customers on this market consider healthcare something a website cannot offer. But the best offer and service for a specific patient does not always wait in the next village. Therefore, Qunomedical found trustworthy doctors and clinics around the globe to guarantee a safe and qualitative treatment. As a matter of fact, Qunomedical's system is based on ratings and valuations of former patients. This makes the website especially authentic and trustworthy. Additionally, to generate even more trust of patients Qunomedical gathered a team of multicultural and multilingual team members. This enables the company to offer high class customer service in many different target markets.

To summarize, the excursion to Berlin was successful in every aspect. Students received the chance to get insight into young businesses and how they function. Furthermore, personal interviews with experts were done to receive even more detailed information. Lastly, the visited enterprises got the opportunity of getting to know students from the Hochschule Stralsund.

## **Eileen**

For our Excursion during the Blockweek, Prof. Noack took a small group of students to Berlin to visit different Companies and Start-Ups to get a closer look of what they are doing.

We visited five different companies and each of them kindly showed us what is going on behind closed doors. They held presentations and displayed us what their work is all about. We received a lot of information each time, especially about the marketing tasks of the companies. The people who showed us around always were very kind and open and did not hesitate to answer all our questions properly.

For me personally I really enjoyed how open-minded and courteous the companies were. They showed how exciting it is to work for a new and young start-up company and how diversified it can be from a normal 9-5 office job. As already mentioned, the marketing aspect of the companies were our focus during the excursion. We learned about different tools and strategies used in a marketing office and how important advertisement, especially for small start-ups, is.

I, for myself, learned that it is important to stand behind and defend your project and work hard if you want to be successful and get what you wanted to achieve. Currently I am thinking of applying for an internship at one of those companies or similar firms for my working semester. I would like to experience the work life of those companies myself and get a closer look. The excursion taught me a lot and was very informative. I would like to get on another excursion like that soon.

## **Isabel**

In this final report about the Excursion from the Hochschule Stralsund to Berlin from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of May, my personal and most important aspects and impressions of the five visited companies are presented.

First of all, it can be said that in every company we visited, we were given a very friendly welcome and were able to gain an individual impression of their often dynamic working environment. Since start-ups often start with only a few employees in the team, it becomes clear that all members had to work very closely together on a flat hierarchy. This vibrant work culture often requires high input and multi-tasking skills from each member.

In my view, the start-up "Qunomedical" of the CEO and founder Dr. Med. Sophie Chung had gone the most impressive way. The young company has managed to build a network of doctors and hospitals around the world,



using the new technology to provide transparent information about surgeries and treatments and the doctor treating them. The team is multilingual and brings together diverse talents from marketing specialists, programmers, designers to health consultants and lawyers. The lively discussion with the lawyer and with the CEO quickly made it clear how urgent the need for transparency and health care assessments is and how this can be solved for the patient through globalisation and digitisation. Their most difficult task is to win the trust of patients that their partner doctors and hospitals are the absolute best. With an astonishing 24-hour customer service, multilingual staff and the accuracy of information from attending medical experts, the team is committed to providing patients with the care and quality of treatment they need worldwide. One sentence of the CEO Dr. Med. Sophie Chung has particularly caught my attention when it comes to setting up a start-up. She said "Be and expert in what you do!" and I believe we have also experienced this in the other start-ups that every CEO or COO was a real expert in their area even before he/she dared to set up a start-up and that this also made an essential contribution to success.

In sum, I gained a very authentic insight of working in a start-up. Additionally, through the openness of the questions and the willingness to discuss of the founders we could learn a lot about the long way of setting a start-up and the different theories of the future in different markets through digitization. Thereby, identifying trends and signals in future markets are of great importance.

## **Annelie**

Berlin, a city that is not only big and crowded, but that is one of the most culturally diverse, dynamic and digital cities in Germany. For those reasons Berlin is quite attractive to a lot of firms, them being huge influential companies that have determined the market for quite a while or start-ups that are just kicking off. The metropolis is offering companies such a nice platform to grow since its infrastructure offers excellent accessibility and the city additionally is home to many science and research institutions and also the heart of Germanys politic and economy. Furthermore, Berlin is offering companies a highly qualified and multi- cultural workforce and cosmopolitanism which is an essential to develop new trends.

To examine whether all those arguments are true and to get a picture of the economic site of the city ourselves we went on a three-day excursion to Berlin at the beginning of May with the main focus on getting a better insight on enterprises working in and dealing with the areas of e- health, AI, blockchain and e- marketing. Therefore, we`ve visited five companies that couldn`t have been any more diverse in the way they are working, the topics they are working on and what they have accomplished so far.

Most interesting for me was to first of all see how the different companies and especially start- ups are operating, to see how each firm is working on building and maintaining a certain team spirit within the company that shall get everyone on board with the main goals so that each team member can identify with the enterprise and perfectly represent it at all occasions was really fascinating to me. Another thing that I did really appreciate was that the whole trip was so perfectly organised and that at each meeting people were welcoming us in the nicest way, explaining to us how their business works in perfectly structured presentations, taking their time answering all the question we have been asking them and making sure to clearly get across their message. It was particularly exciting to meet some of

the masterminds behind those young and dynamic companies and to chat with them about how to found an enterprise and how to then make sure that it is going to persist on the market. There are a lot of things which these companies make possible that no one else has ever thought of doing, for example Qunomedical GmbH, a company offering people all around the world great access to a huge variety of medical treatments to fulfil everyone`s demands. It was nice to see how passionate the people we met are towards the company they founded or working in.

What I`ve learned during the excursion is that it is extremely important to be passionate about your idea and company since that`s what keeps you moving forward. You have to believe in yourself first before you can convince others of your idea as well. I have additionally realised that the foundation of a company has to be extremely well prepared i.e. you have to know the market you are willing to enter and your potential customer group. Therefore, confidence and preparation are the key to successfully building up and leading an enterprise.

I furthermore enjoyed that every firm put a focus on marketing in particular in addition to their presentation since I find it really interesting to find out how each firm is trying to present their products and ideas to stakeholders in the most efficient way possible and what marketing tools they prefer using to do so, especially since marketing nowadays covers way more areas than it did a few years ago including social media and affiliate marketing.

Our visit at AWIN, a firm specialised on affiliate marketing, for instance was extremely helpful to get to know the concept of affiliate marketing even better and find out about why they are so convinced of it as the best marketing strategy. Cross Engage furthermore showed us how important it is to build up valuable customer relationships, since each and every customer is part of a company`s success.

All in all, I must admit that it was a great experience to meet all these amazing and inspiring people and to see how passionate they all are about the things they are working on. I am really thankful that we had the opportunity to get an insight of each firm's product(s), working conditions, working methods and even their visions for the future.

## **Tilo**

During the excursion in Berlin I gratefully gained insights in how the start-up scene in Berlin is about to try becoming one of the next major players in the tech industry. I haven't only learned about their impact in today's business world, their respective market niches or unique selling propositions, their approach to building a brand as quickly as possible, but also how starting a career with one of these young enterprises might be.

This excursion as part of the module "Company Roundtable" proved to be one of the most valuable courses you can actually take at Hochschule Stralsund as students really can look into young enterprises' operations. That is a great example of which a university of applied sciences truly connects sciences and practice.

Before we all headed off to Berlin in order to meet with the above presented companies I haven't expected to gain such precious first-hand insights. Even respective board members or founders themselves have consented to present their businesses and agree to take part in a Q&A session, which is what I enjoyed very much.

I am very pleased that I have chosen this elective as part of my studies.

It all started with the visit of the HQ of Finance Elements Group. The so-called FEG campus is situated right at the Marina Lanke Werft Bank- a lovely job location waterside. FEG's HR Manager took us by the hand and showed us around the campus. Here, employees apparently do not only enjoy a huge

work-life balance (SUP boards at free disposal for sessions on the water in between, personal cook (Chef) to the staff, snacks and drinks all day long, light-flooded working spaces all over), but can decide on their working hours flexibly. These benefits appear to be in accord with the CEO's vision to digitize and flexible the industry. As the founder has worked in the leasing industry for many years, he has encountered many deficits regarding its efficiency. The management of enterprises' IT infrastructure alone, reportedly, has enormous cost-saving opportunities, which the company offers to clients as one of the major services on a commission basis. Among others the company develops tools that visualizes finance and sales parameters. Quite some acquisition effort is needed to develop the business though, one employee said. Another contributor we have talked to mentioned the fast growth the company is experiencing currently. Finance Elements Group has set up the business one year ago and already has about 60 employees. One of the consultants reported the company wants to break the 100-employees-barrier still in 2019.

The next company we have visited is AWIN, a subsidiary of Axel Springer SE. The head quarter is located at Potsdamer Platz, the heart of Berlin's newly developed business district, in the Atrium Tower with lots of natural light and modern spaces and furnishings. We have participated in a little presentation given by the COO of the company, Mr. Adam Ross. After an introduction of his professional career, he has guided through a presentation introducing the company, their organizational structure, and their stakes in the global (affiliate) marketing industry. The speaker pointed towards the huge impact of social media in today's marketing industry. Besides, he said that budgeting marketing funds has never been more transparent as with affiliate marketing companies get instant feedback on the success. The remuneration is always depending on success. With regard to newspaper advertising or non-tracked marketing he said that it is about to slowly and painfully die. AWIN appears to be another dynamic company in the Berlin tech industry, but, probably due to the connection to the mother company Axel Springer SE, yet a little more mature than start-up businesses in their early phase.

At Konfidio we talked to the CEO and co-founder of Konfidio (former COO of Deutsche Bank) Dr. Mervin Maistry. He doubtlessly made the presentation of his company and the underlying technology behind it the most interesting one among the week's company visits. Maybe the technology itself is why I found it so enjoyable. According to Mr. Maistry, blockchain technology can become a fundamental game changer as it supports decentralized services. The technology has the potential to become an integral part of contractual agreements. The history of a blockchain cannot be changed anymore and is said to be a large step towards full transparency of information. What I found remarkable is the fact that Mr. Harishomo Yamamoto has described the concept of blockchain in the 90s already. For the reason that the technology itself is very interesting as many industries can benefit from it, I would have loved to listen to the speakers a little longer. Another company presentation was waiting already.

CrossEngage started presenting itself by showing the recent major commercial explaining the service. The concept and unique selling point of the company is the provision of locally and temporarily relevant information to potential customers. Push-notifications will be sent to customers just-in-time. Even if the legal barriers to track customer's positions have reportedly been connected with much effort, and still are, I think that the technology that CrossEngage uses can really become a globally successful one. The rapid growth can be realized when looking at their number of employees. The company managed to double its staff in the past year. What I find impressive is the renowned clients the company currently has: hello fresh, DB Vertrieb, friendsurance, Hertha BSC Berlin.

Quomedical presented itself as pioneers of the E-health scene. The company aims at becoming the market leader in Europe first. Expansions might be necessary on a long-term basis. The founder of the company itself has given the presentation amongst others. What I found really inspiring was the

way she very confidently provided us why the company is a game changer of today's medically non-digitized world.

## **Jonas**

Finding a place or city for your business can be an awfully hard choice, considering all the elements you have to predict. Most certainly you want it to be place which attracts many talented workers and is a hot zone for new developments. We wanted to understand why businesses are attracted to the city of Berlin in Germany. Our Professor suggested four fields we should investigate to learn more about the driving factors of Blockchain, AI, E-health and E-marketing development in Berlin.

After some research we decided on 5 companies we wanted to spend a visit to and thankfully all of these invited us to an insight of their everyday business and a glimpse behind the decision-making processes in these companies.

First stop was a beautiful campus just at the outskirts of the city, home to the Finance Elements GmbH a young Start-Up devoted to optimizing leasing contracts and using AI like technology to visualize the situation of a business. However, I personally have to say as shiny and new the campus was, during the presentations one got the feeling the people in the business had a hard time explaining their business model or just were not able to speak about certain details. Nonetheless, we were able to ask about their drive to come to Berlin and have their headquarters here. The answer is one we would continue to hear throughout the excursion when asking the other businesses.

Qunomedical GmbH is the name of the Start-Up we visited on the next day. We had only heard that their business is in the e-health sector bringing patients, clinics and surgeons into direct contact. Honesty at first this sounded a bit bureaucratic and when entering the company seeing almost 20 people

talking on the phone gave that impression. Yet during the presentation on how Qunomedical was founded and when in direct contact to Sophie the founder of the business I was really excited. One could basically feel how this business was something no one has ever thought of and that there is still so much that needs to be done. To fulfil Qunomedical's ultimate goal to provide health care customized and transparent for everyone around the world.

This high we felt during and after our visit to Qunomedical was quickly suppressed on the next morning, when we arrived at AWIN. The global number one in affiliate marketing, a form of performance-based marketing where AWIN makes its profit by sales they generate for their customers. The presentation on how they work was interesting, but somehow gave the feeling it was more about inspiring us to work for AWIN rather than giving us deep insights on their business model. Lastly it was clear this business just exists for profit not for creating something new which could aid society.

Therefore, our visit to Konfid.io UG was probably the most thrilling experience. Understanding the principle of a blockchain was a bit hard at the beginning and to comprehend they can also be used for other purposes than transactions took a little while. But once we meet the founder of Konfid.io I was amazed. He had worked for global companies i.e. Deutsche Bank and decided Blockchain can be the future for his business and with some luck for mankind. His company focuses on the development of multiple Blockchain solutions, their main product is a Contract-Blockchain where buyers and suppliers conduct transparent business secured by a Blockchain. I was very impressed and glad we were able to visit Konfid.io.

Our last visit and a company focusing on direct and geo-localized marketing. They make offers to you as a customer based on your actions and habits. CrossEngage is the fitting title to the company. I personally was not amused by their self-presentation because their business focuses on spying on



people and analysing their actions in order to make profit. For me personally not a fair way to conduct business.

To conclude our visit to Berlin I have to say the visits to the actual Start-Ups and meeting their visionaries was a great experience. Also the more profit oriented marketing companies were thrilling to see, for me not the core of why I wanted to see Berlin companies. In a way the excursion opened my mind for new possibilities and I am very happy about that.

## **Tristan**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May

On the way to the Finance Elements Group I got a little confused as my Phone's battery died as I got out of my car to walk to the campus. Luckily my orientation was on point that day and I remembered how the cards looked like. As I looked into a tiny alley, I've seen an FEG logo at a house. Being 1 hour early I disturbed the lunch break, but still felt very welcome due to the one young employee's friendliness. I got shown their very modern hall and was flashed. The architecture was so simple and clean but cosy at the same time. Looking outside the window there was a lot of green and we were directly at the water.

As the presentation started my attention was gained instantly. I really liked their way of giving us an insight into their work life and informed us great about the company. I honestly thought about starting my future working life there.

I thought a lot about the working atmosphere that day. I was surprised that a small start-up has such a cool working place and I think I learned that the atmosphere is a huge factor for motivated and happy employees.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May

I went to Berlin way too early because I got confused (again) with the email sent by our prof. No doubt the information about the time plan was given clearly but the mess in my head made me stand in front of Konfid.io's doors at 11am. Luckily I was not the only one.

I spent my time waiting till the meeting with Qunomedical started. This start-up was located in a crowded street with a very odd-looking house. As we got into the office, the look did not change. Everything was very barren inside. But the presentation room was pretty comfy and as the presentation started all of these bad feelings were gone. It was very interesting and the people there were really friendly. I was fascinated by this start-up being that globally successful but located in a tiny workspace in the middle of Berlin. Still I felt like I learned that you can be successful with everything if you are convinced of your idea and really good or at least the only one doing that today.

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May

Thus, everything was interesting till this point I was happy that the last day began. Berlin is simply too big for me. At times I feel like I really like the flair of that city but as soon as I have to search a parking lot, I feel pressure. Pressure of the very strict time table and pressure from the crushing size of the city.

We started off at AWIN. The building was quite impressive but as we got out of the elevator my mood changed. Everything felt too stuffy for me. The presentation was not interesting at all even though I find online advertisement and stuff like YouTube's ad sense very interesting thus I am a video creator on that platform myself.

At konfid.io I was kind of frightened by the Russian worker. Not to be racist or something! The whole architecture and mood reminded me of

Russian mafia. But as soon as the Syrian looking man (was he the CEO?) started talking to us the whole working atmosphere improved. He really grabbed my attention and I could feel that he was living for his job. Still I didn't really learn anything about blockchain or bitcoin that day. This whole digital stuff is still a bit foreign to me.

Our last meeting was with CrossEngage. Wow what an office! Once again, I was fascinated by the design of the office, the chill out area and so on. Also, their area of activity was pretty interesting for me. Even though I am a bit sceptic about them using my data to provide it to companies trying to sell me things at the right time, but it is also very new, interesting and fascinating! I would really try that out to be honest even though I'm concerned about my privacy at the same time.

I feel like I've learned that even in these modern times where pretty much all markets are engaged there are still some spaces to create new, yet unseen markets. It only needs a good idea, a lot of planning, manpower or at least fighting spirit of an individual.

I'm very happy to have made that experience!

## **Linda**

During the excursion to Berlin I got the chance to get an insight into the working atmosphere and structure of diverse start-ups. The most remarkable thing in my point of view was the enthusiasm that the founder of the e-health company Qunomedical showed while talking about her vision and the concept of the start-up. With her expertise, an innovative idea to build a global digital health platform and a starting budget, Dr. Sophie Chung has accomplished to make me interested in the sector of e-health. I am convinced that the start-up will grow in the near future as the data base grows and the clients report about their satisfaction with the company's services.

The start-up CrossEngage on the other hand had the less convincing concept to me, personally. I am of the opinion that people should put more emphasis on data protection in general. The firm's strategy to develop an algorithm which allows the user to address their customer "at the right place, to the right time" is based on a lot of personal information about the client. The fact that Information about one's geographical locations or shopping preferences, for example, are stored and analysed by a computer is to me an inversion in privacy. In general, people don't read the small print during the instalment of an application and with one click they agree that their personal data can be used for the creation of a vast data base. Overall, the concept has been proven to be successful in the United states, as Michael Lippert stated, I doubt that the concept will be successful on the German market.

During the time we spent at the start-up I noticed, that even with a concept which sounds easy to implement on first glance, building up a data base is way more time intense then I thought. The concept of the FEG, for example, to display and optimise a company's leasing contracts in a simplified way sounds easier that it actually is in reality. I realized that in a world where everything changes in the blink of an eye it becomes more important to structure and summarize things in order to not lose sight of the important things. The company has realized this issue and has created a unique tool to make this simplification, which is highly valued by companies, available to their clients. The campus in general was really impressive and the working atmosphere, which was appealing, differed a lot compared to a big company.

Even though, I have never had much interest in the technology of blockchain and actually felt quite lost during the beginning of the presentation at Konfid.io UG, the discussion with the founder at the end of the presentation was really interesting and showed off that the technology should be known by everybody working in the field of economy since it might be the future development.

## Pierina

The excursion was very interesting. The start-up's we visited gave me the feeling a great impression on how the world is developing regarding digitalization. For example, topics such as Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Transformation and Blockchain are being discussed very often in big companies since each year since these are topics on trend

The visit I enjoyed the most was at Qunomedical. I think services they give to the customer is great especially because is their focus is on building trust with their customer. It is an opportunity for the patient to get a transparent treatment and price. Is the first company worldwide providing with data any other company or clinic is doing. The fact that medical information, prices, where to do the treatment could be found on the web page or in an app was amazing. And by calling them the patient is able to receive medical information. It made me thought how fast the world is developing since years ago this wouldn't have been possible at all. And now by connecting the information comes to you in seconds.

I think that by only being in the market for 2 years their performance is amazing. The CEO was very smart and the way she answered the questions were right on point.

The second visit I found as well very interesting was CrossEngage. Although the only point I was not very satisfied is by the fact that they require personal data which I would like to be known by the different companies. Although the information will arrive at the right time and that the right place. The fact that they provide information in real time to the customer instead of sending promotional emails, which sometimes are a bit annoying, made me to like them a lot.

Konfidio and AWIN were good as well. But between these two, Konfidio was much more interesting since it is a trending topic, although my knowledge about Blockchain was not that high to understand the first 2 speakers. The third speaker was more clear and I finally understood what was it about. I do believe as them that in the future Blockchain will become part of our daily vocabulary.

In Finance Elements even though the presentation was held in German I was able to understand that the different hubs combine consulting and intelligent services with research and development in a completely new way. I found very innovative what they were doing

## **Kilian**

Ever wondered what the start-up scene in Berlin or how potential future workplaces for young people could look like?

From May 7th to 9th 13 students, including me, were offered the opportunity to discover various companies of Berlins start-up scene, which was a great opportunity to become some impressions of how topics like digitalisation and globalisation can be tackled by new business strategies. The theory of how markets and management work takes on a whole new meaning when you look at the truly current and successful approaches of visionary minds and start-up founders on the ground.

We arrived at our Airbnb on Tuesday and got right into our agendas first visit, namely the Finance Elements Group, whose headquarter is located a bit off the road with a fantastic panorama on the Havel.

The start-up focuses on consulting services for mostly medium sized companies to maximize a company's asset efficiency. The group which was founded 2014 currently employs about 60 people with rising tendency, offering a very interesting and flexible corporate culture due to many young people working there. The novelty of the company can be seen not only in the design of the campus but also in the working atmosphere. When we got introduced to their concepts and workflow I had the feeling that individual competences could be well lived out in this company and are also desired due to the cross-industry services offered by the FEG Holding. These services are offered by a network of small firms specialized on mostly digitalization and business information topics. Nevertheless, does the FEG group focus on making leasing contracts more cost efficient and clearer, which requires a broad knowledge of the industry whereas this knowledge is buried by a small part of the firm. It can be said, that the FEG group had quite impressed me with their innovative ideas and is prepared for the fast changing business environment.

The vision "Industry 4.0" proclaimed by the Federal Government is gaining more and more market penetration. Rarely in economic history have work processes and value chains changed as radically as through digitalisation. Since not only data can be exchanged faster and faster worldwide, but also passenger transport is becoming more efficient and frequented, new service options are opening up here as well.

Quonomedical is a start-up using these possibilities by offering a worldwide network of doctors and hospitals. During our visit, Dr. Sophie Chung, the CEO and founder made clear that a massive change of how healthcare works nowadays is from great importance. Their tool, which allows a user to search for a treatment or surgery needed in the large network of hospitals requires a large amount of trust by a person which reaches to Quonomedical in their most vulnerable moment. This trust issue is solved pretty successfully by setting their priority to „patients first“ which implicates a very high level of transparency including rating of the clinics and doctors,

which leads to very much trust through the patients communicating indirectly through the voting system. Further Qunomedical offers have a very diversified team of employees from all over the world which is able to react appropriate to their customer's misgivings or troubles. Due to the unique combination of transparency, a list of all available clinics and a reliable feedback system Qunomedical is very successful and can tackle many different markets.

Summarizing the excursion to Berlin it is to say, that it was an important insight into the development in the modern, fast changing business environment for all of us studying international management. The possibility to ask questions or just listen to people which founded a company based on just an idea was very inspiring. For us as students it was especially interesting to talk to an employee at the FEG Holding which was studying at the Hochschule Stralsund and started working there. Since start-ups naturally also depend on young and creative minds, it was of course also a good opportunity for the companies to get to know future employees and make first contacts. All in all, a successful excursion!

## **Lisa**

As part of the "Company Roundtable" module, an excursion led to the never-stagnant city of Berlin. The perfect city for start-ups and young entrepreneurs who want to achieve something. The Start Up scene is in a constant state of change and to survive you have to show some know how. This became particularly clear to me during the visits to our pre-selected companies.

After the uncomplicated journey by train and bus, on Monday, I arrived in Berlin Spandau to the FEG Campus. The first thing that inspired me was of course the absolutely fantastic location, which reminded me more of a holiday than of work. Finance Elements GmbH was characterised by a young, very open-minded team. After a very friendly introduction it quickly became clear



how welcome we were. After all, we had the advantage of being the very first group to visit the FEG Campus. In the presentations that followed, we explained in detail which tasks the individual companies that had developed over time were taking on and which formed the FEG Group. The breaks (and sweets) made sure that the 2-3 hours stay was not unpleasant. It is a pity that the announced meeting with the CEO unfortunately did not take place. Which I don't quite understand, because every now and then he was with us during the breaks.

The next presentation of Quonomedical GmbH took place the following day in Berlin Mitte. Like the day before, we met a young, ambitious team behind their work. Maybe due to the topic, it was easier for me to see through and understand the whole concept. Our questions were answered well and (I hope) honestly. You didn't get the feeling that something was being glossed over. The following conversation with the CEO was the best part for me. You got an insight into how the idea came about and who was behind the whole concept. There I realized why this start-up was so successful. Sophie Chung was a trained doctor who used to live in New York. She brought with her the necessary know-how and knowledge about her industry. Which, as she also emphasized, are absolute prerequisites for a successful vision.

On the third day, Thursday, the last three companies awaited us. Which was somewhat unfortunate but not planned. Two companies per day would have been ideal, as the concentration became increasingly worse.

The start was made by AWIN, which has long since ceased to be a start-up, but is one of the largest affiliate marketing networks. This already became clear when entering the modern and "upscale" building. The whole environment seemed more professional. Inside there were already tables with prepared folders waiting for us and goodies. Unfortunately, the lecture was partly difficult for me to follow. On the one hand our speaker apologized in advance for his "bad mood", which didn't make the whole thing any better. In

addition, some important areas were explained in my opinion too little and others, difficult to understand, too detailed. The fact that AWIN belongs to Axel Springer left a negative impression on me. However, this is a personal preference. The same goes for the way how tracking has been dealt with. Privacy is clearly a sensitive topic at the moment, but I would have liked more openness and honesty on the subject.

The following section dealt with Konfid.io. With the controversial topic of blockchain they want to revolutionize the economy and offer a foundation stone for simplified contract and investment opportunities. For a layman like me, the first lectures were somewhat difficult. Despite a previous introduction to the basics of the Blockchain system, it was difficult to understand the processes behind it and the concept exactly. In spite of all this, they were always concerned about our well-being, which I have received very positively. However, I'm not really sure whether the little survey, I was answering before was considered. I had at least, unfortunately, rather less the feeling. The final part of Dr. Mervyn G. Maistry was crucial for me to understand the vision behind the project. His somewhat non-standard view of the banking system today was both refreshing and interesting. Not everyone's cup of tea, though.

Last but not least we went to CrossEngage. An online marketing company with special reference to the targeting system already mentioned by AWIN. This time however again in Start Up Form and no less cordial than the previous one. The presentation was clear and simple and communicated exactly what it was all about. Unfortunately, the topic of data protection was addressed to me again too daringly and/or the questions to it that were answered. Also, a discourse and discussion arose rather less, as in the companies before it. However, I think that this was due to the advanced time and the 3rd presentation of the day.

On the whole, the excursion was more than successful for me and gave me some exciting insights into different areas, which I probably would not have had the opportunity to do. As already mentioned, time management could have been better. However, this problem was not due to the organisation and was simply bad luck.

## **Leon**

This report highlights the most important points of the excursion to Berlin. We visited various companies in Berlin and gained an impression of them. It should be mentioned that this report is based on personal experience and memories.

During the intensive three days, we dealt exclusively with digital start-ups. The companies were rather of young age, but already expanding fast. Each company presented itself with a clear expertise and a interested in their guest, us.

The first start-up we visited is called "Finance Elements Group". The company has seven subsidiaries, and a unique business model. Which makes it a clear pioneer in the industry. Although the area of business is consulting, there is not a second company working with the same approach in Europe. In principle, the company provides an overview of a company's leased products and contracts and tries to reduce the costs efficiently. All contracts are put in one system, which makes it easy to access. The team consists of experienced employees in the leasing business and many young graduates, and is therefore dynamic and flexible as well as open for fresh, new solutions. The company is structured like a campus and all subsidiaries are located in one place, making a very pleasant working atmosphere.

The second company Qunomedical convinced us with its innovative solution for better health care. The company wants to revolutionize the medical market and could bring long-term strong improvements for the average health.

The company works with an online platform. There is a bright overview of hospitals and doctors which work together with Quenomedical. Customer can find a doctor for a needed surgery in some different countries with different prices. The doctors can be rated, but only former customer have the opportunity to do that, which makes the rating real transparent.

In summary, the excursion to Berlin was a very important and educational experience for me personally. One has a better picture of future trends and developments and has received good impressions of how a company is structured. The companies reacted very open to the questions asked by the students and left a positive impression overall.