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Interview with the Founders of PlanetPoints

(First-generation junior entrepreneurs from the HHL DIGITAL SPACE)

PlanetPoints: Maurice Weber, 24, maurice@planetpoints.de and Leander Burgmer, 23, leander@planetpoints.de, from Cologne

Question: What is your business idea?
Maurice: Our idea is to create an opportunity for users to offset the CO2 content of their everyday shipping within just a few seconds.

Question: Who needs your product?
Leander: We are working on a solution for people from generations Y and Z. We, our friends and acquaintances, are a part of it and we will feel the immediate consequences of global warming. Therefore, we wanted to create solution for us and them. Our target group also includes young families who care about the future of their children, people who worry about the state of our planet and want to look after and protect it as well as people who want to understand how their purchases influence their carbon footprint.

Maurice: Generally, we would like to work with shops who care about sustainability. We want to offer them solution to communicate that idea to the outside world and become the link between the target group described and retailers.

Question: Where did you get the idea?
Leander: We initially entered the HHL DIGITAL SPACE with a different idea. Originally, we wanted to create a loyalty scheme for sustainable consumption but we soon realized that, for now, we need to focus on one aspect of sustainability. That is the only way for us to create a strong impact. Now, we are dedicating ourselves to CO2 offset during the everyday offline shopping process which is where we identified a gap and a demand. There are two other compensation solutions. However, these previous offers are addressed to smaller target groups and the offset is often connected to high entry barriers. Right now, CO2 offset still means quite a bit of effort for consumers. This is what we would like to change with PlanetPoints.

Question: Why did you apply for the HHL DIGITAL SPACE program?

Leander: Maurice learned about the program as an HHL student. As we had already been working on the original idea for a few months, we decided to apply. Maurice and I met in school and therefore we knew that we would work well together in a program like this.

Question: What did you particularly enjoy? How did you benefit from the program?
Maurice: I found it absolutely helpful to learn how to approach the topic of startups in a structured way. We were virtually forced to dissect the problem first. This is very helpful to people who tend to start off directly with finding a solution instead of understanding the problem first.
Before the program, we were operating in a very solution-oriented manner but we had not fully understood the problem yet.

Leander: To me, it was quite valuable to find myself in a safe environment for the initial contact with a venture capitalist, for instance, without having to prove myself.

Question: What is next for your business idea?
Leander: Sooner or later, we will need to bring another IT specialist on board. We also have to find a partner who will integrate our service into their sales process. From there, we will learn a lot more and grow together.

Maurice: We are currently focusing on extending our concept and we will soon start the review with a partner. If anyone has any tips for us or is interested in the project, just email us!

Question: To whom would you recommend the program?
Leander: I would recommend it to all people with an idea for a startup who can think in an agile way and are not too proud to scrap or redesign their own ideas.

Maurice: To anyone who wants to make progress but is also prepared to walk the extra mile to develop a basic understanding of the problem, the market and the consumer. If you are able to answer in a short and concise way which problem your business will solve, you have come to the right place at HHL's incubator to obtain the necessary insight.