

BRITISH AIRWAYS

# business life

WHERE NEXT?

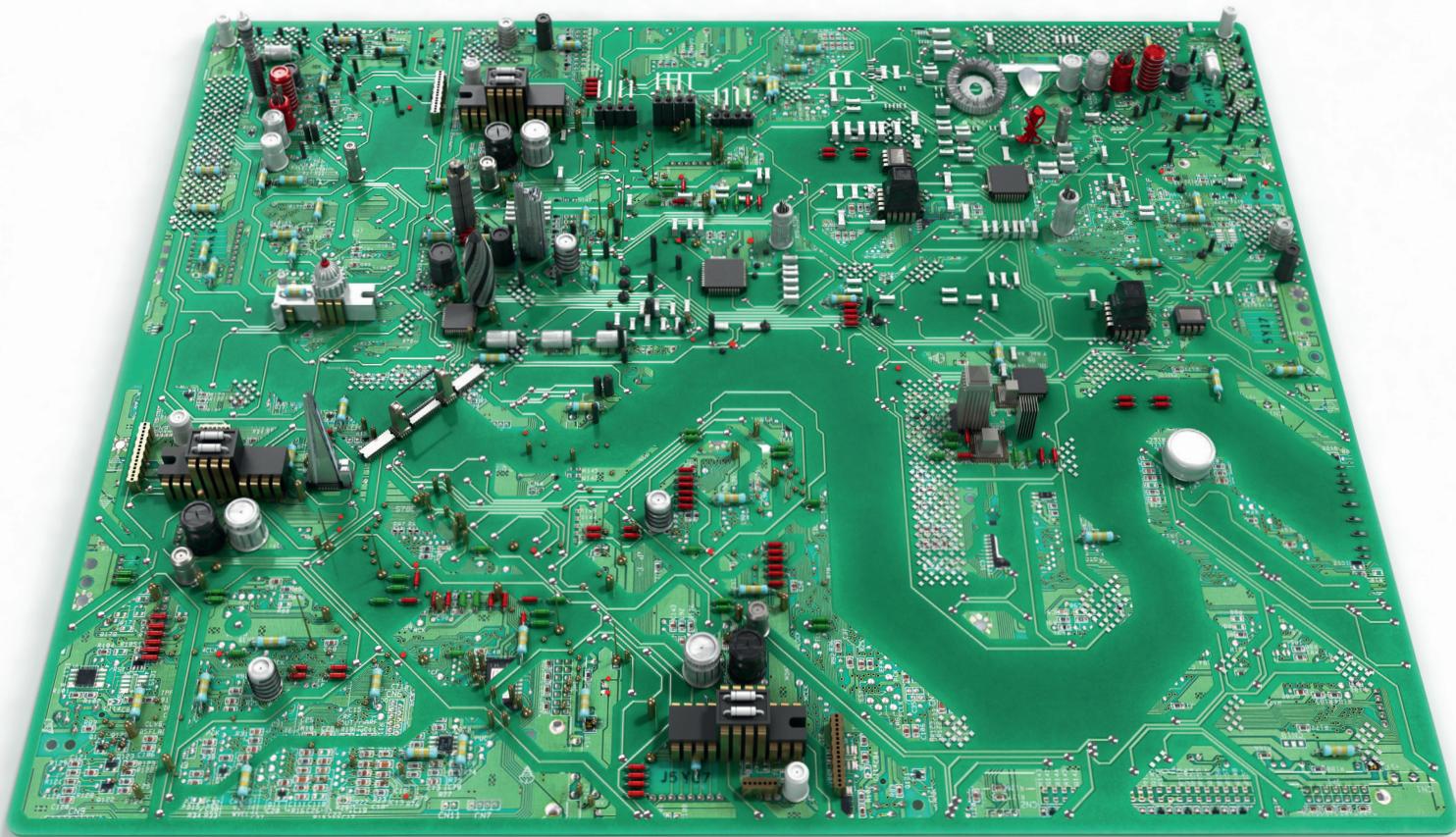
TRENDS  
TALENT  
TECH  
THOUGHTS  
TRAVEL

December 2014 / January 2015

CITIES

## LONDON GETS SMART

HOW TECHNOLOGY WILL  
CHANGE THE FACE OF THE UK CAPITAL



*And the big news in ecommerce is, er, shops, says Ben Hammersley*

*Why office chats are in. And why demographics are out*

*Julie Meyer checks out Berlin's thriving startup scene*

*Plus: high-flying Helsinki, hydrogen-powered planes and lots of gadgets*

TOTAL  
READING TIME  
**65**  
MINS

These days, when someone asks me where I live, I tell them it's seat 2B on a British Airways flight en route to a city in Europe or Africa. Along with Amit Pau, the managing director of my firm, I'm building EntrepreneurCountry Global to help non-technology mid to large enterprises to embrace their digital future.

Crisscrossing the continents gives me time in the skies to reflect on my meetings with both corporate execs and startup guys. And each month on these pages I hope to piece together a mosaic of what I've seen and learnt.

Recently I was in Berlin to speak at Tech Open Air, a three-day interdisciplinary 'unconference' now in its fifth year, and it seemed like everyone I met had worked at Rocket Internet. Led by Oliver Samwer, Rocket has been hailed as many things: the European answer to Alibaba and Amazon, a massive VC investor, a builder of businesses. But the real contribution that Rocket has made to the European internet landscape is that it has educated a generation of young people – literally 20,000 or so – to launch and run internet businesses.

Franziska v. Hardenberg, founder and



## THE LIST

### NETWORKING

Judith Perle on how to make the most of your contacts.

#### 1. NURTURE YOUR NETWORK

Even superficial relationships are based on trust, which takes time to build. Stay in touch with people and rekindle relationships that have fallen by the wayside. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone to someone you haven't seen for years.

#### 2. GET OUT AND ABOUT

Attend professional meetings,

events and conferences regularly and make new contacts. Talking to people you don't know is generally more difficult than talking to people you do know but it's also ultimately more rewarding as it expands your network and raises your profile.

#### 3. BE INTERESTED (AND INTERESTING)

People love talking about themselves, and asking a few well-chosen questions has the psychological effect of making you seem more interesting.



## GERMAN BYTES

*Berlin is home to a host of bright, dynamic startups, but are they missing a trick? asks Julie Meyer*



4  
MINS

CEO of Bloomy Days, is one of these Rocket alumni. Bloomy Days delivers fresh cut flowers in surprise arrangements anywhere in Germany. On the face of it, you could think of it as yet another ecommerce player in the online flower market. I did. And then I met Franziska.

She started off the meeting by saying that she had re-engineered the entire flower industry's supply chain across Europe. Well, of course she had! Chop chop. I was starting to wake up. Then she said that the only way the business model would work was on a subscription basis. So as a result she had great cashflow. She's eliminated the idea of 'old flowers' being delivered, and got rid of those awful bouquets, too. The latest idea is to give the tools to offline stores to make them part of the Bloomy

2  
MINS

Make an effort to build rapport and never try to sell yourself.

#### 4. MAKE TIME TO NETWORK

Don't just network when you're in a fix – make it a habit to build a rich and diverse resource you can call on when in need.

#### 5. GIVE RATHER THAN TAKE

One-sided relationships where they give and you take will turn sour. Flip the coin and find things you can give – information, an introduction – that are easy (for you) yet valuable (to them).

# <#X#> TALENT

Days revolution. Watch out, world, this woman is on a roll!

Franzy epitomises to me the new Berlin. It's bold, ambitious and really starting to like its place in the world. Entrepreneurs from around the European continent are settling there and it has an air of Zeitgeist about it. There are a whole host of new venture funds and individuals who have created this new Berlin.

Christian Thaler-Wolski, formerly of Wellington Partners, now setting up his own Berlin-based fund, is one of them. He's totally focused on backing entrepreneurs from central and eastern Europe as he was born in what was East Germany. These eastern European entrepreneurs are the ones to watch these days due to their unbelievable ambition and drive.

Stefan Heilmann of IEG Banking is another star in the Berlin constellation. He's been banking the big deals for 15 years, and at a recent 'David & Goliath Must Dance' dinner that he and I hosted together, he had just completed yet another deal. Christian Macht, head of Rakuten Germany, attended as did Nicole Junkerman, who has sold her business to Len Blavatnik, a Ukrainian oligarch.

But Berlin also has another face, and that's the one that appears to be deeply uncomfortable with what is coming out of Silicon Valley. It's tried to shut down Uber. Amazon is tangling with a large Berlin-based union. Mathias Döpfner, the chief executive of Springer, Germany's largest publishing house, said he was "afraid of Google". Germany's privacy approach, which is at odds with Silicon Valley's freewheeling use of data, scored a victory of sorts when it influenced the European Commission's view that Google must allow people to

## The new Berlin is bold, ambitious and really starting to like its place in the world

remove personal information from the web. It shows the deep dilemma that Germany, as epitomised by Berlin, has regarding the American internet empire.

More so than London, Berlin's emergence as a tech centre indicates that Europeans are trying to create a unique internet identity and framework for the digital world. The big US internet platform firms, Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google, use our consumer data in their business models, creating multi-billion dollar market capitalisations. So the judo move would be to outdo them on business model – not try to thwart their efforts at their own game. What Germany should do, and Berlin-based startups should take the lead, is showcase to the world that they have a better approach to consumer data: namely that they will recognise the economic value of it in the transaction. This could be done through cashback deals and other innovative ways of recognising that consumers' data belongs to them. Any services derived from it should give an economic value to them.

This is what I was missing in Berlin. I don't doubt that these great entrepreneurs will be successful, but will they create an alternative system where value accrues to



Blue sky thinking  
Tech Open Air  
venue TrepTowers.  
Left: Oliver Samwer  
of Rocket Internet

the old economy in Germany? What about the nine-tenths of the German iceberg that are manufacturing, engineering and energy? How will it engage with digital applications and services?

No one I met seemed interested in engaging with what I'm convinced is going to be the hard work of the next ten years in Germany and across the Continent – getting the digital Davids and the non-tech traditional Goliaths, whether they be banks, insurance companies, retailers or media firms, to build collaborative models that create value for Germany and Europe. Most European venture funds are simply looking for which US tech platform firm they can sell their startup to.

Rocket Internet should be commended for outstanding execution in the business to consumer space but, in my opinion, the real game is about helping Deutsche Bank, Metro, Allianz and others access net new digital revenues. ■

### HOW TO GET THERE

British Airways flies to Berlin up to six times a day from London Heathrow. Join the Executive Club and earn from 1,158 Avios\* when you fly return to Berlin. Visit ba.com

#### 6. CONNECT PEOPLE

Introduce people in your network with shared interests. The more you develop a reputation as someone who knows interesting people, and is willing to share contacts, the more people will want to be linked to you, and the more effective your network becomes.

#### 7. VALUE ACQUAINTANCES

Friends often don't have access to new information. So don't disregard 'mere' acquaintances on the fringes

of your network who can often point out opportunities that you hadn't heard about on the grapevine.

#### 8. APPRECIATE THE ICEBERG

Most people's networks are largely invisible to all but their closest friends. Remove your blinkers and connect with lots of different people. You can never, ever predict who knows who, and who could introduce you to someone who could move your career in a new direction.

#### 9. NETWORK INTERNALLY

Don't stay stuck behind your desk, working diligently but anonymously. Make a point of chatting to people internally – in the lift, at the water cooler – and blow your own trumpet discreetly. By letting people know what you're up to, when your name comes up, you'll always have an advocate.

#### 10. PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

If you feel uncomfortable chatting to strangers, practise in an unthreatening

environment: at the post office or the supermarket checkout. After a while, you'll be able to start a conversation with almost anybody, anywhere. The only way to hone your networking skills and to reap the benefits is to get out and do it. ■

Judith Perle specialises in teaching people about networking. She is co-author of *The Network Effect* ([thenetworkeffect.co.uk](http://thenetworkeffect.co.uk))