



Second Open Bosch Award goes to Poka and NextNav

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Awarded startups develop solutions that empower factory workers and save lives

- ▶ Open Bosch Award honors outstanding open innovation projects
- ▶ Bosch CDO and CTO Dr. Michael Bolle: „Collaboration between Bosch and startup companies is a win-win situation for everyone involved”
- ▶ Several hundred partnerships between startups and Bosch in 2020

Berlin, Germany – Bosch recognizes Poka Inc. and Bosch Power Tools as well as NextNav LLC and Bosch Sensortec with the “Open Bosch Award” for best startup collaboration. The mutual benefit, best practice character and business impact of Bosch’s partnerships with these two companies were exceptional. Poka, a Canadian startup, provides a mobile application for factory workers, empowering them to learn continuously, solve problems and share knowledge in real-time directly from the production floor. The technology developed by NextNav from California enables the three-dimensional location and positioning of mobile phones, autonomous vehicles and IoT devices. “Bosch has a long history of partnering with external startups,” emphasizes Dr. Michael Bolle, Chief Digital and Technology Officer at Bosch. “Innovation through collaboration is not only our history, it is also our future.”

Partnerships are a win-win situation for everyone involved

Recent research involving 340 international companies shows that partnerships with startups are expected to impact their total revenues by up to 19 percent in the three years following the start of the collaboration.¹ Especially in the high-tech industry, innovation through collaboration is key to sustained corporate success, as another [report](#) called “Status of Open Innovation in Europe” by Mind the Bridge and Nesta indicates. For this reason, Bosch is currently running several hundred startup collaborations across all of its business areas, with the majority focusing on the mobility sector.

¹ Report “The age of collaboration II” by matchmaker ventures and Arthur D. Little

The ability to rapidly and continuously innovate is a core competency of Bosch. In a technology-fueled world with accelerating innovation cycles, Bosch is fusing ideas and competencies beyond company borders to best serve its customers. Startups play an important role as they are also often first-movers, taking high risks and being equipped with significant resources. At the same time, leading startups can benefit from Bosch assets and competencies, e.g. industrialization, market access or branding.

The combination of a startup and the industrial power of Bosch results in a benefit for all parties involved: customer, startup and Bosch. A partnership can create new challenges as well: Sometimes startups pivot and sometimes Bosch innovation projects change their direction. “All things considered, a great collaboration between Bosch and startup companies is a win-win situation for everyone involved,” says Bolle.

Poka: Connecting Workers to Drive Performance

One of the awardees is Poka, a Canadian startup based in Quebec, which won together with a team from the Bosch Power Tools business division. Poka has designed an app especially for manufacturers. It supports on-the-floor training, knowledge building, and communication with all relevant colleagues – not only at one’s own respective plant, but all over the world. Over the course of a six-month pilot, a Bosch Power Tools plant in Malaysia used Poka to streamline collaboration around production issues, including support for photo and video content. The team reported an impressive eight percent direct productivity improvement and is now in the process of rolling out the solution to all plants globally in the division.

“Poka has quickly become part of the plant’s daily operations and is helping to capture best practices in a centralized, easy-to-access knowledge base,” explains Arne Smolarz, Head of Manufacturing IT at Bosch Power Tools. Reflecting on the success of the partnership with Bosch, Alexander Leclerc, CEO from Poka says: “Poka was designed specifically to address the challenges and needs of large global manufacturers – many of whom are clients of Bosch. Our partnership with Bosch gives us tremendous credibility within our target markets.”

NextNav: Invented for Life

Another Open Bosch Award goes to NextNav and Bosch Sensortec. The team has been collaborating since 2013. It has developed an innovative solution: a platform that localizes smartphones vertically and indoors by applying [barometric pressure sensors](#) in the phones and NextNav’s MBS (Metropolitan Beacon System) technology. This makes it possible for rescue forces to identify the precise altitude or height position of people in buildings making an emergency call and to find them more quickly.

According to a recent [report](#) by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), wireless providers will soon be required to meet an increasingly stringent series of vertical location accuracy benchmarks. NextNav and Bosch Sensortec successfully worked together to ensure the technology was consistent with guidance from the FCC. By 2021, the 25 largest cities in the US will benefit from their technical cooperation and later European cities as well, as NextNav is expanding its operations. “The long-term collaboration between Bosch Sensortec and NextNav is a great example of what is possible together: Making use of pressure sensor technology in smartphones, we offer an IoT service which can ultimately help to save thousands of lives,”² says Dr. Peter Weigand, Vice President Marketing at Bosch Sensortec. Dr. Arun Raghupathy, NextNav’s Vice President of Engineering adds: “High quality sensors are important to determine altitude precisely. We are very pleased with our collaboration with Bosch, whose market-leading expertise in sensing solutions has been essential to providing floor-level altitude information to smartphones.”

About the award

The Open Bosch Award values the importance of open innovation through close collaboration between startups and Bosch. The award is organized by Robert Bosch Venture Capital GmbH (RBVC). RBVC invests in startups and connects them to the Bosch group. To support early engagement RBVC established a venture client unit called “Open Bosch” that systematically enables partnerships.

Press photos: #2949726, #2949727, #2949728, #2943923, #2943922

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² Page 26, item 55 of FCC FACT SHEET - Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements, Fifth Report and Order and Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking - PS Docket No. 07-114

About RBVC GmbH

Robert Bosch Venture Capital GmbH (RBVC) is the corporate venture capital company of the Bosch Group, a leading global supplier of technology and services. RBVC invests worldwide in innovative start-up companies at all stages of their development. Its investment activities focus on technology companies working in areas of business of current and future relevance for Bosch, above all, automation and electrification, energy efficiency, enabling technologies, and healthcare systems. RBVC also invests in services and business models that are relevant to the above-mentioned areas of business.

Additional information is available at: www.rbvc.com

The Bosch Group is a leading global supplier of technology and services. It employs roughly 403,000 associates worldwide (as of December 31, 2019). According to preliminary figures, the company generated sales of 77.9 billion euros in 2019. Its operations are divided into four business sectors: Mobility Solutions, Industrial Technology, Consumer Goods, and Energy and Building Technology. As a leading IoT company, Bosch offers innovative solutions for smart homes, smart cities, connected mobility, and connected manufacturing. It uses its expertise in sensor technology, software, and services, as well as its own IoT cloud, to offer its customers connected, cross-domain solutions from a single source. The Bosch Group's strategic objective is to deliver innovations for a connected life. Bosch improves quality of life worldwide with products and services that are innovative and spark enthusiasm. In short, Bosch creates technology that is "Invented for life." The Bosch Group comprises Robert Bosch GmbH and its roughly 440 subsidiary and regional companies in 60 countries. Including sales and service partners, Bosch's global manufacturing, engineering, and sales network covers nearly every country in the world. The basis for the company's future growth is its innovative strength. At 125 locations across the globe, Bosch employs some 72,000 associates in research and development.

Additional information is available online at www.bosch.com, www.iot.bosch.com, www.bosch-press.com, www.twitter.com/BoschPresse.

About Poka Inc.

Poka provides a performance support application designed to give factory workers real-time access to work instructions, troubleshooting solutions and on-the-job training. The company's platform connects workers to digital manufacturing operations, and enables a culture of continuous improvement.

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About NextNav LLC

NextNav's Metropolitan Beacon System (MBS)-based services enable mobile phones, autonomous vehicles and IoT devices to reliably provide position, navigation and timing services (PNT). They also serve as a backup to GPS in indoor and urban metropolitan environments. Delivered over a managed terrestrial network with carrier-grade dependability and metropolitan-wide coverage, NextNav's services are designed for public safety applications, E911, PNT services for critical infrastructure, as well as a multitude of consumer, IoT and commercial applications that require reliable 3D geolocation and timing services indoors and in urban areas.

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