

Press Release

Winners of the W.A. de Vigier Award

Wearable Muscles, Saving Billions in Healthcare Costs and a Drone Revolution

Solothurn, May 30, 2018 **Today, five Swiss startups were awarded the W.A. de Vigier Award, each endowed with CHF 100,000. The prize winners' ideas improve the lives of the hearing impaired and those with mobility impairments, pave the way for the safe introduction of drones into air traffic, bring cables to the market that are unparalleled in their longevity and flexibility, and determine if medications will be effective or not before they are prescribed.**

"These young entrepreneurs give me hope for the future. They find solutions for environmental problems, therapies for diseases, alternative energy sources and drive us forward as a society. Startup promotion means spreading hope and making money doing it", says Regula Buob, Managing Director of W.A. de Vigier Foundation.

Jury Places Importance on the CEO's Personality

From over 220 submitted projects, the jury picked their Top 16 in February. The 16 were assessed and presented their ideas to the Foundation Board, who then chose the Top 10. In addition to groundbreaking products, the personality of the CEO played an important role in the run for the W.A. de Vigier Award. „Not only do we want to support groundbreaking products but we also aim to invest in outstanding people, who will shape the next generation of Swiss entrepreneurs“, explains Buob. The Top 16 undergo an assessment and take a close look at their own leadership style during a confidential validation session. This element of the selection process makes the W.A. de Vigier Foundation one of the few startup sponsors that systematically include the human factor.

These Are the Five Winners (in alphabetical order)

AUDATIC GmbH from Zurich (ZH) - Better Performance of Hearing Aids in Noisy Environments

Hearing aids often let their wearers down in noisy situations. AUDATIC uses the latest artificial intelligence methods to filter out background noise and significantly enhance the listening experience. Whether in a restaurant, on the road or at a business meeting - thanks to AUDATIC's technology, hearing-aid users can once again participate in conversations with more joy and self-confidence.

inVoli from Renens (VD) - Safe Integration of Drones Into Our Skies

Collisions between drones and aircrafts are becoming increasingly dangerous. inVoli provides the infrastructure for secure integration of unmanned aerial vehicles into existing air traffic. The technology of inVoli will make air traffic data openly accessible and can equip participants as well as the flying objects with the necessary instruments to make the sky safer and more efficient.

MyoSwiss AG from Zurich (ZH) - Wearable Muscles For People With Mobility Impairments

MyoSwiss develops the Myosuit: A clothing layer of wearable muscles that supports daily life activity. The solution combines robotics and functional textiles in a convenient product that weighs less than five kilograms. Novel algorithms coupled with sensing and actuating technology control the assistive forces applied throughout the user's movements.

nanoleq GmbH from Zurich (ZH) - A New Generation of Cables

Cables are vulnerable. This a problem, especially with medical devices or factory robots. nanoleq has developed a fundamentally new kind of cable technology. Under mechanical stress, the Zurich Startup's FlexOne cable has up to a hundred times longer service life than a standard cable while retaining its high flexibility. Nanoleq's target markets are in med tech, high-end audio applications and robotics.

SUN bioscience from Lausanne (VD) - 3D Cell Cultures For More Effective Treatment Decisions

SUN bioscience launches a platform for standardized organoid 3D cell cultures that allows patient-specific testing for the direct efficacy of treatments. Today's methods based on biomarkers are often insufficiently reliable. SUN bioscience's solution optimizes medication decisions and thus avoids ineffective therapies. This leads to billions of dollars in healthcare savings.

Startups in the Top 10 (in alphabetical order)

ACUBE Technology AG from Nidau (BE) - Access by Smartphone Instead of Tickets and Badges

Handling tickets, badges and garage door remote controls is a nuisance, both for users and for technical service providers. ACUBE uses the smartphone for easier access and automatic payment. Thanks to the combination of a patented proximity positioning system with a mobile app, misplaced tickets and embarrassing arm-stretching maneuvers in front of the parking garage barrier will soon be a thing of the past.

AgroSustain GmbH (VD) - Organic Fungicides for Sustainable Agriculture

Producers of agricultural goods are under pressure. To avoid crop and storage losses, chemical fungicides are used regardless of their negative impact on biodiversity and our health. AgroSustain develops ecological products for the prevention and treatment of a wide range of pathogens. These products are of interest to storage companies, the timber industry, gardeners and farmers.

hemotune AG from Zurich (ZH) - Revolutionary Blood Purification in Sepsis

Hemotune's procedure can remove toxins from the blood that are usually hard to access. Specially developed magnetic nanoparticles bind to the toxins and can subsequently be separated magnetically. The dialysis machine is equipped with an additional device in which these nanoparticles are mixed with the blood and removed together with the toxins. The first application is being developed for the removal of endotoxins in acute sepsis.

Sensoryx AG from Zurich (ZH) – A More Immersive Experience in the Virtual World

Previously, users had to hold disruptive controls in their hands instead of interacting directly with the virtual world. VRfree is a mobile 3D tracking system that fully maps hands and fingers in cyberspace, allowing you to have literally tangible experiences in the virtual world. This solution combines different sensor types and provides realistic, real time mobile motion detection.

Touchless Automation GmbH from Biel (BE) - Contactless Handling of Microcomponents

Touchless Automation offers innovative solutions for every industry that processes microcomponents. As soon as the sensitive microcomponents are touched, there is a risk of scratching, soiling or other damage. The solution offered by the Biel based startup can move components of all materials - completely contact-free.

"In Switzerland, 43,000 new companies were founded last year. At the W.A. de Vigier Foundation we are excited to take a closer look at a fraction of the best companies. Choosing the Top 10 and the five winners is a true privilege and at the same time almost impossible, because there are simply more than just ten on the Olympus!", says Alain Nicod, board member of W.A. de Vigier Foundation.

About the W.A. de Vigier Award

The W.A. de Vigier Award is the oldest and highest endowed prize for startups in Switzerland, giving away five awards of CHF 100,000.00 each. In 28 years the foundation has distributed over CHF 10 million of seed money. The results are about 80 flourishing startups, successful IPOs, multiple company exits and above all, many newly created jobs.

The following aspects are relevant for the evaluation of the projects: The entrepreneurial personality, the degree of innovation, the value for society as a whole, the technical and financial viability, market prospects and the potential for job creation.

Application for the W.A. de Vigier Award 2019

From October 1st 2018 until January 7th 2019 startups can apply for the W.A. de Vigier Award 2019. The intended audience are young entrepreneurs domiciled in Switzerland, who are usually younger than 45 and whose role in their company is the realisation and marketing of an innovative, future-oriented product or service.

Images

Pictures will be available on May 31, 2018 on www.devigier.ch/media

Contact details for questions

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