

“What’s great about young ETH entrepreneurs is the sheer enthusiasm and confidence with which they tackle new issues”



Kornel Wassmer, Managing Director Banking at Adnovum. The Swiss software company supports visionary young entrepreneurs at ETH via the Pioneer Fellowship programme.

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Kornel Wassmer is still shaped by the “let’s do it” mentality from his time at ETH Zurich – an attitude that pays off in his current position as Managing Director Banking at Adnovum. In this interview, he describes what the “ETH feeling” is for him and explains why Adnovum supports the university.

You studied Computer Science at ETH Zurich. What part of your studies still sticks with you today?

KORNEL WASSMER – Not to be afraid of technical problems. Good IT solutions often contain surprising potential – but IT is just a set of skills in the end, not a magic wand. Also the “let’s do it” mentality, from the analysis stage to the final piece of software. And I still have the great contacts that I made during my time at ETH, who continue to inspire me to this day.

What’s an ETH secret that only few are aware of?

Not a secret, more like a related thought – there’s another important building by Gottfried Semper where you can experience the high end side of life.

What's your favourite place at ETH?

I fondly recall my time in the lecture halls. It might sound banal, but for me they capture that "ETH feeling".

Is there a special ETH moment that you like to think back on?

The moment when I first held my diploma in my hands. It was a very emotional moment for me: "I did it!" and could now conquer the working world.

Today you're Managing Director Banking at Adnovum. How did you end up in this position?

Software is important in all areas of life. It presents new challenges every day, even outside of IT. Studying at ETH taught me how to embrace new things with open arms. I got used to tackling increasingly bigger jobs and challenges, and this also honed my ability to think and act on a bigger scale.

Why is Adnovum supporting young entrepreneurs at ETH?

We benefited from the Swiss educational system and want to give something back. It's also important to Adnovum to invest in Switzerland as a place to work and as a hub for innovation so that young engineers have promising career development prospects.

What do you find most impressive about the entrepreneurs?

What's great about young ETH entrepreneurs is the sheer enthusiasm, dedication and confidence with which they tackle new issues, even outside of their fields. I'm particularly impressed by how enthusiastically they approach others and tell their stories in order to drive their projects forward.

A lot of ETH graduates work at your company. What sets them apart, in your view?

Their solid grasp of fundamentals, combined with their "let's get it done" attitude, and also their high quality standards. This enables them to quickly and skillfully apply new topics, concepts and tools.

What advice would you give to current ETH students?

Take advantage of everything ETH has to offer while you're there! Stay alert, expand your horizons and learn as much as possible, including outside of your field. Seek out contact with others and build your network. In the end, a lot hinges on social engineering, or cooperation between people – especially in technical professions.

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