

## Entrepreneurial ID «venture leaders» 2009



### Pascal von Rickenbach

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**StreamForge:** StreamForge offers radio stations a fully-hosted streaming service for their internet programs which is able to serve millions of parallel listeners with high-fidelity, rock-solid streams at low cost.

www.streamforge.net

Industry: IT, Media



### *The venture leader*

Pascal von Rickenbach is a co-founders of StreamForge. After studying Architecture for a year at ETH he changed to the department of Computer Science and received his master's degree in 2004 with a minor in Business Management. He then joined the Distributed Computing Group (DCG) at ETH as a PhD student. During his time at DCG he investigated various aspects of distributed communication systems before taking a leading role in the Dozer project. In this joint venture with a spin-off from EPFL a solution for long-term environmental monitoring was developed. The scope of this project went far beyond an academic prototype and its results are now sold as a commercial product. Encouraged from this success, Pascal decided to take the leap and become an entrepreneur. So he joined forces with Remo Meier, the inventor of the StreamForge technology, and Nicolas Burri and founded StreamForge GmbH.

### *The Company / project*

Internet radio is one of the fast growing applications which became possible with the wide availability of broadband internet connections for end users. Today, more than 25 million people listen to web radio each day and listener numbers are constantly growing. This huge market faces one significant problem: costs. Using established solutions each listener downloads the whole audio stream from a server of the radio station. As a consequence the radio station itself or an external streaming provider has to maintain large amounts of computation power and bandwidth in order to be able to serve all interested listeners at peak hours. Both servers and internet bandwidth are expensive and thus the operation of a successful online radio quickly becomes a financial burden for the radio station.

At StreamForge we have developed a new streaming solution enabling us to drastically reduce the streaming costs of web radio stations. We can therefore offer broadcasters a cheaper streaming service without impairing the quality of service. This is possible due to our custom developed peer-to-peer streaming technology. We involve the audience in the distribution process of the radio program they are currently listening. As a consequence, less infrastructure suffices to broadcast a radio program over the web and we share the resulting cost savings with our customers.

StreamForge GmbH was only incorporated in February 2009. but our product has been under development for three years as part of the PhD thesis of Remo Meier at ETH Zurich. It is therefore ready to launch and as a first step we were able to win SRG SSR idée suisse as a public testing partner.

The core team behind StreamForge currently consists of Nicolas Burri, Remo Meier, and Pascal von Rickenbach. However, this team is surrounded by several advisors from the business world as well as academia. So far, StreamForge is completely financed by private means and grants from foundations. To achieve our goal of reaching a 15% share of the audio delivery market over the internet in five years we are looking for partners in the media business as well as potential investors.