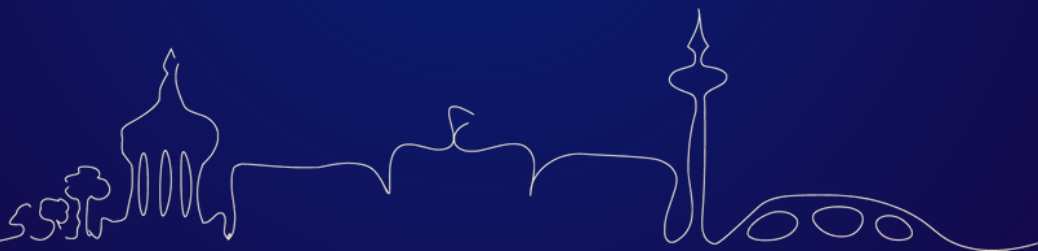


Q-SUMMIT 2026

CONFERENCE GUIDE



UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM
09TH - 10TH APRIL



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PREFACE

Dear Guests,

Welcome to Q-Summit 2026! This conference marks our 9th Summit, showcasing a whole new level of event. We are pleased to welcome more partners than ever before, present exceptional side events and for the first time present to you a live podcast on stage! But above all, we are excited to have you with us as a participant, cultivate a unique community, and foster meaningful connections that extend beyond just two days!

For the next 48 hours, we aim to bring student innovations to life providing a platform for sharing ideas, gaining insights, and getting feedback from peers, experienced founders, and speakers. Throughout the conference, our workshops, speeddatings, and campfire sessions are designed to inspire and connect young talents with aspiring companies.

Additionally, this year we're excited to introduce several amazing side events like our Creandum Family Night, doinstruct x HV, comstruct and the STYX x D11Z investor brunch happening all around town.

We are also turning our attention to our three Hot Topics this year. AI, building in Europe and Capital meets innovation.

Lastly, we are immensely grateful for the incredible support of our partners, alumni, advisors, and university supporters. We couldn't have come this far without your contribution. Thank you for making it all possible!

We now encourage everyone to step outside, participate actively, share experiences, and engage in meaningful dialogue. Our goal is for you to leave Q-Summit feeling inspired, motivated, and equipped with the tools to bring your own ideas to life.

Let's create two days we won't forget.
Q-Summit is here to inspire!

Max Schleich
*Chairman of the Executive Board
of Q-Summit 2026*





Shaping Tomorrow with AI

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming the way startups are built, scaled, and sustained. From data-driven decision-making to personalized customer experiences, AI empowers entrepreneurs to innovate faster and operate more efficiently. At the same time, it raises important questions about ethics, transparency, and the future of work. This hot topic explores how founders can leverage AI as a strategic tool while remaining responsible and human-centered.

By combining technological potential with entrepreneurial vision, startups have the unique opportunity to shape a future where AI not only drives growth, but also creates meaningful and sustainable impact across industries and societies.



Europe's Edge-Founders without borders

Europe's startup ecosystem is becoming increasingly interconnected, enabling founders to think and act beyond national boundaries. With access to diverse markets, talent pools, and funding opportunities, entrepreneurs can build scalable ventures that address global challenges from a European perspective. Cross-border collaboration fosters innovation, resilience, and cultural exchange, strengthening Europe's competitive edge in the global startup landscape. This hot topic highlights how founders can leverage Europe's unique diversity while navigating regulatory differences and market fragmentation. By embracing a borderless mindset, entrepreneurs are empowered to create impactful businesses that unite ideas, people, and opportunities across the continent.



Capital Meets Innovation

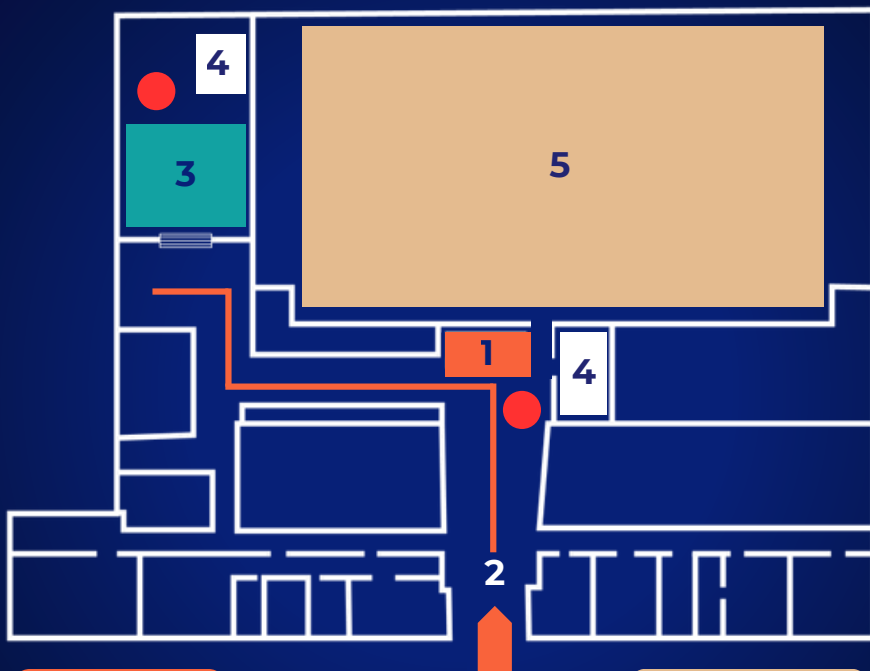
An today's fast-evolving entrepreneurial landscape, the intersection of capital and innovation drives transformative growth. Startups with groundbreaking ideas need more than funding—they require strategic investors who understand the vision, embrace risk, and fuel scalable impact. This session explores how venture capital, private equity, and alternative funding models are reshaping innovation ecosystems. We'll highlight success stories where smart capital catalyzed breakthrough technologies, and discuss emerging trends in investment that empower founders to turn bold ideas into market-leading solutions. The right capital not only funds innovation—it shapes the future of industries and transforms ideas into lasting impact.

This year's conference dives into the forces shaping the future of entrepreneurship. **Shaping Tomorrow with AI** explores how artificial intelligence is redefining business models, decision-making, and innovation. **Europe's Edge - Founders Without Borders** highlights the cross-border mindset, collaboration, and resilience driving Europe's most dynamic startups. **Capital Meets Innovation** examines how strategic investment accelerates transformative ideas, turning bold concepts into market-leading solutions. Together, these themes showcase the synergy between technology, talent, and capital, offering a roadmap for founders and investors navigating the next era of global innovation.



AREA PLAN

GROUND FLOOR



1 INFOPOINT

2 PATH TO MAINSTAGE

3 HAYS FORUM/COWORKING AREA

4 RESTROOMS

5 INNOVILLAGE

MEETING POINT



GROUND FLOOR

Campushop

INFOPOINT

PATH TO MAINSTAGE

HAYS FORUM/COWORKING AREA

RESTROOMS

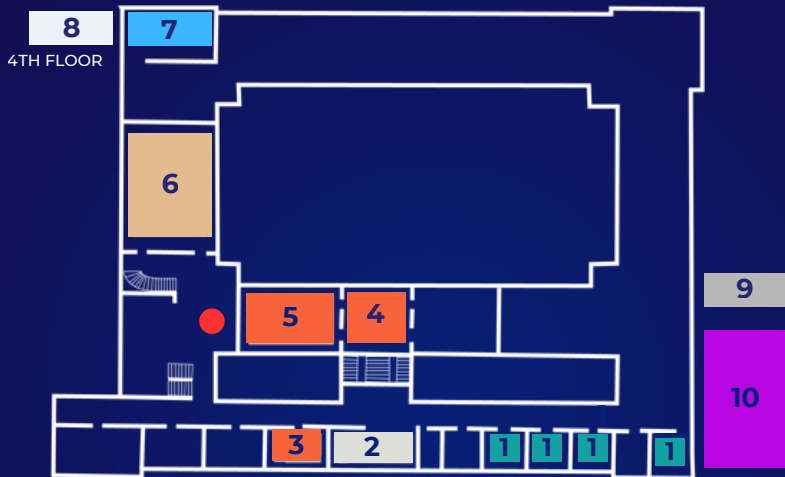
Schneckenhof

INNOVILLAGE



AREA PLAN

FIRST FLOOR



1 WORKSHOPS

2 STUDENT SPEEDDATING

3 WAITING AREA

4/5 CHECK-IN/COAT CHECK

6 MAINSTAGE

7 CAMPFIRE SESSIONS/
RECRUITING ROOMS

8 PARTNER LOUNGE &
CALL ROOM

9 QUBE

10 HACKING HALL

MEETING POINT



FIRST FLOOR

O126, O129,
O131, O133

WORKSHOPS

O138

STUDENT SPEEDDATING

O142

WAITING AREA

SN163

CHECK-IN/COAT CHECK

SO108

MAINSTAGE

SO133, SO322,
SO422

RECRUITING ROOMS

SO115, (SO133)

CAMPFIRE SESSIONS

SO322, SO418,
(SO422)

PARTNER LOUNGE & CALL ROOM

EO382

QUBE

Aula

HACKING HALL



NETWORKING (invite only)

QUBE - THE PITCHING AREA

THURSDAY, 09.04.

TIME

3:30 pm

-

5:15 pm

Qube is a unique event designed specifically for investors interested in discovering promising business ideas and meeting with young founders.

Here's how Qube works:

15 startups will have 5 minutes to captivate 30 of the industry's top-tier VCs and angel investors with their groundbreaking visions

Investor Speeddatings

Post-pitch, investors can approach relevant startups, delving into deeper one-on-one discussions in extended speeddating sessions in order to explore potential business partnerships in greater detail.

FEMALE EVENT

FRIDAY, 10.04.

TIME

12:45 pm

-

2:45 pm

Female Matchworking - Matcha, Cake and Networking

Kick off the second day of the conference with a Networking Brunch designed for female students and young professionals! We are thrilled to host a panel discussion followed by a Q&A session featuring [Birgit Handl](#), an impact investor at [Aurum Impact](#) focused on scaling technology-driven sustainability solutions, and [Florentine Eitelbach](#), the Co-Founder and CPO of AI pioneer [inca](#). This is a wonderful opportunity to gain valuable career insights and advice from industry leaders while connecting with like-minded individuals over cake and matcha. Join us for the perfect start to your morning in a relaxed and inspiring atmosphere!



HACKATHON

Code. Create. Conquer. 24h Q-Hackathon

WHEN

Wednesday,
12:00 pm -
Thursday,
12:00 pm

The Hackathon is the **largest** side event of the Q Summit, bringing together ambitious students, startups and industry leaders.

In a fast-paced, collaborative setting, participants come together to build **innovative solutions** and tackle **real-world challenges**.

Here's how it works:

150 selected participants team up in groups of five to take on one of five real-world challenges provided by our **challenge partners**.

Each challenge is worked on by six teams. Therefore they can use the tools offered by our infrastructure partners.

After 24 hours of **intense hacking** the teams present their solutions. The winning team from each challenge advances to the final **pitch battle** in front of **500 people**.

In the end the best idea and pitch win exciting **prizes worth 20k!**

WHERE

Aula (10)

exeta

ISTARI.AI

PIC
NiC

Clover

Spherecast



PANELS

Building Global Champions: The European way to scale

Moderator



Felix Lingenfelder

Chief of Staff at Isar
Aerospace



Frederic Kost

Investment Manager at HV
Capital



Reginald Bien-Aimé

CEO of ArtisticLab Ltd

THURSDAY, 11:45AM-12:25PM

Building global champions in Europe requires a distinctive approach shaped by diversity and opportunity. Damian Boeselager, Frederic Kost, and Felix Lingenfelder discuss how European founders can scale beyond home markets while leveraging regional strengths.

The panel explores the European playbook: navigating cross-border regulations, building trust across cultures, and using local ecosystems to fuel growth. They show how fragmented markets and differing policies can become advantages when approached strategically.

From fintech to climate tech and digital platforms, the conversation offers insights on turning local success into global impact. Expect reflections on ambition, resilience, and the mindset needed to build companies that can compete on the world stage—showing why Europe can produce the next generation of global champions.

PANELS

Backing the Unbackable: When Investors Believe Before the Market Does



Clara Leise

Vice President at Creandum



Nico Schenck

Head of Germany at Klarna

THURSDAY, 2:55PM-3:35PM

Backing the unbackable means seeing potential where others see only risk. In this panel, Clara Leise from Creandum and Nico Schenck from Klarna explore what it takes for investors to believe in companies long before the market catches on. Using Klarna—one of Creandum's standout portfolio companies—as a case study, the conversation highlights how conviction, timing, and deep founder trust shape early-stage investment decisions.

The panel dives into the mindset behind bold bets: how to identify outlier founders, evaluate unconventional ideas, and stay committed through uncertainty. It also reflects on the relationship between investors and operators, and how early support can influence long-term success. Expect honest insights into risk-taking, pattern-breaking, and the art of backing companies that initially seem “unbackable,” but ultimately redefine entire industries.

PANELS

Building, Backing & Breaking AI

Moderator



Vadym Kuzmenko

Legal Engineer at Legora



Lea Frank

Founder of anybill



Victor Huerbe

Principal at Cherry Ventures



Reginald Bien-Aimé

CEO of ArtisticLab Ltd

FRIDAY, 2:35PM-3:15PM

Building, backing, and breaking AI—this panel brings together diverse perspectives from across the AI ecosystem. With operators from Legora and anybill alongside investors from Cherry Ventures, the discussion explores what it really takes to create and scale AI-driven companies today. From early product decisions and technical challenges to funding strategies and market timing, the panel sheds light on both the opportunities and the pitfalls founders face. Just as importantly, it dives into “breaking” AI - examining failure modes, limitations, and the lessons learned when things don’t go as planned. Expect candid insights on what works, what doesn’t, and where the next wave of innovation is headed. Whether you’re a founder, builder, or investor, this conversation offers a grounded look at the realities behind the AI hype.

PANELS

From Shelf to Street: What It Really Takes to Build a Consumer Brand People Love



David Baumgartner
Founder of Dean & David



Tonalli Arreola
Co-Founder of LAP Coffee



Philipp Stahr
Co-Founder of Wholey

Moderator



Sophie Kaitlin Drescher
Founder & Media Moderator
Known as Austria's youngest presenter

FRIDAY, 12:20PM-1:00PM

Building a consumer brand that people genuinely connect with goes far beyond creating a great product. It requires vision, authenticity, and a deep understanding of the audience. This panel brings together the founders of Dean and David, Lap Coffee, and Wholey to share their experiences of turning ideas into brands that customers embrace. They discuss the challenges of scaling, navigating competition, and maintaining brand integrity while growing. From product development to marketing and distribution, these leaders reveal the strategies, lessons, and real-world insights that make a brand not just visible on the shelf, but loved on the street.

FIRESIDECHATS

Creator Economy



Niklas Schwab
Hedgefonds Henning



Rebekka Bogner
Host

**FRIDAY,
4:05PM-4:35PM**

Founder Of The Future



Saga Vigre Bohinen
Lovable



Clara Leise
Host

**Thursday,
3:50PM-4:20PM**



1st Live Podcast

Trial & Error

The weekly podcast by founders for founders



Jan Thomas

CEO of Startup Insider



Fredrik Harkort

CEO & Founder of
ForFounders

**FRIDAY,
1:10PM-1:55PM**

This podcast will be in German!



PITCHBATTLES

Join our most popular main stage events - the Pitch Battles!

During the **Hackathon Pitch Battle** on Thursday, you can watch four teams pitch their solutions to the challenges our partners have proposed.

At the **Startup Pitch Battle** on Friday, five promising startups will pitch their business models and growth strategies to a renowned jury. Each pitch will last for 4 minutes, followed by another 4 minutes for the jury to ask further questions.

Make sure not to miss this whirlwind of an event!

HACKATHON PITCH BATTLE

THURSDAY, 5:15PM-6:45PM

this year's jury



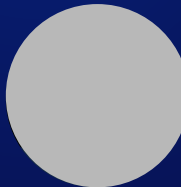
Julian Wiedenhaus
CEO and Co-Founder
of Plancraft



Niklas Breuer
Manager III, Knowledge
Engineering – AGI at
Amazon



Michael Dietz
Customer Engineering
Manager at Google



TBD



Sara Schneider
Fund Operations at
LEA Partners

winning prize:

9.000€+



STARTUP PITCH BATTLE

FRIDAY, 5:30PM-7:00PM

this year's jury



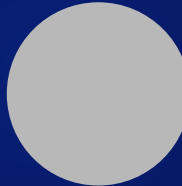
Max Bergmann
Investment Manager
HTGF



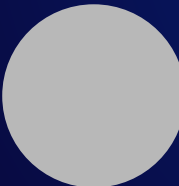
Saga Vigre Bohinen
Community
Lovable



Urs Steurer
Co-Founder
Agnosphere



TBD



TBD

winning prizes worth:

25.000€+



Florentine Eitelbach
Keynote Speakerin
Co-Founder inca



THURSDAY, 09.04.



10:15AM-10:45AM

Axel Täubert

Head of Start-ups Northern Europe

Axel Täubert, Head of Startups for Northern Europe, drives growth and innovation across the region's startup ecosystem. He supports founders in scaling early-stage companies, from fundraising to market expansion, combining strategic insight with hands-on experience. Bridging investors, operators, and policymakers, Axel helps create an environment where bold ideas can thrive. Passionate about technology and entrepreneurship, he is dedicated to empowering the next generation of startups to achieve impact across Northern Europe and beyond.



11:00PM-11:30PM

Leon Hergert

Founder & CEO at Spherecast

TBD



12:40PM-13:10PM

Christian W. Röhl

Chief Economist at Scalable Capital

Christian W. Röhl is Chief Economist at Scalable Capital, guiding the firm and its clients through complex market dynamics. He analyzes macroeconomic trends and translates data into actionable insights for investment strategy and portfolio management. With a focus on combining rigorous research with practical applications, Christian helps shape informed decision-making, empowering investors and supporting Scalable Capital in navigating changing markets while driving long-term financial success.



THURSDAY, 09.04.



2:10PM-2:40PM

Julian Wiedenhaus

CEO and Co-Founder of Plancraft

Julian Wiedenhaus is CEO and Co-Founder of Plancraft, leading the company in developing innovative solutions for business planning and decision-making. He drives strategy, product development, and growth while fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration. With a strong entrepreneurial mindset, Julian empowers teams to turn complex challenges into scalable solutions. Passionate about technology and business, he is dedicated to helping organizations plan smarter and achieve sustainable success.



4:30PM-5:00PM

Eva Spannagl

Startups Lead for DACH

Eva Spannagl is Startup Lead for DACH at OpenAI, supporting founders and startups across Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. She helps companies leverage AI technologies to innovate, scale, and solve complex challenges. With a focus on strategic guidance and ecosystem building, Eva bridges AI expertise with practical application, empowering startups to unlock new opportunities. Passionate about technology and entrepreneurship, she drives adoption and growth of AI across the DACH region.



FRIDAY, 10.04.



11:00AM-11:30AM

Michael Fritz

Co-Founder of Viva con Agua

Michael Fritz is Co-Founder of Viva con Agua, a global initiative dedicated to ensuring access to clean drinking water and sanitation. He drives the organization's mission, combining social impact with innovative fundraising and community engagement. Passionate about sustainability and social entrepreneurship, Michael fosters collaboration across communities, partners, and volunteers, inspiring collective action. Through his leadership, Viva con Agua continues to create tangible change and raise awareness for water-related challenges worldwide.



11:40AM-12:10PM

Mark Orlic

Author of Geisterfahrer

Mark Orlic is a former PwC professional and the author of Geisterfahrer. Drawing on his experience in consulting and business, he explores critical insights and unconventional perspectives in his writing. Mark combines analytical expertise with storytelling to challenge assumptions and inspire readers to think differently about business, society, and personal decision-making. His work reflects a commitment to clarity, curiosity, and questioning established norms.



4:45PM-5:15PM

Daniel Jung

Founder of Daniel Jung Media GmbH

Daniel Jung is a renowned educator and content creator, best known for his YouTube channel focused on mathematics education. Through clear, engaging, and concise videos, he helps students around the world understand complex math concepts and improve their problem-solving skills. Passionate about making learning accessible, Daniel combines creativity with educational expertise to inspire curiosity and confidence in learners of all ages, bridging the gap between traditional teaching and digital learning.



EVENING EVENTS

THURSDAY, 9TH APRIL

SECRET GARDEN PARTY

Enjoy a delicious Lillet or Aperol while chatting with partners, speakers and students.

FRIDAY, 10TH APRIL
AFTERPARTY

Let's end the Q-Summit 2026 with our legendary Afterparty. Grab a drink, feel the beats and dance the night away!



OUR PARTNERS

PLATINUM PARTNERS



PERI is a global leader in formwork, scaffolding, and 3D construction printing solutions, delivering innovative technology and close customer support for the construction industry for over 55 years.



Dronivo delivers mission-ready unmanned systems, counter-UAS technologies, and full-lifecycle support for defense, public safety, and industry.



Acting Ahead rather than just thinking ahead – the companies of Schwarz Group.



KPMG, a leading German audit and advisory firm, supports high-growth start-ups and investors through KPMG Venture Services from foundation to exit or IPO.

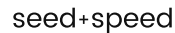


OUR PARTNERS

GOLD PARTNERS



SILVER PARTNERS





STARTER PARTNERS



KNOWLEDGE PARTNER



OUR PARTNERS

MEDIA PARTNERS

STARTUPS
MAGAZINE

MANNHEIMER
MORGEN

i/vc

SWR ➔

**Startup
Insider**

Startbase

GT:>-
GermanTechJobs.de

NXTGN

brand eins

NETWORKING AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

EWOR

genesisis

FOM CIBC
CIBC Center for Innovation, Business
Development & Entrepreneurship
for University of Applied Sciences

**STARTUP
CONTACTS**
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SensAbility
The WHU Impact Summit

CyberLab

AKB
MANNHEIM

baby vc

YFN

IdeaLab!
WHU FOUNDERS' CONFERENCE

FUTURE FOUNDERS INITIATIVE

ZM | ZUKUNFTS
WIESEN
SUMMIT

Legmon

SIGMA SQUARED

CDTM CENTER FOR
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
AND MANAGEMENT

CAMPUS FOUNDERS

MAFINEX
NEXT MANNHEIM

PionierGarage

enactus.
Mannheim

**START
GLOBAL**

**START
MUNICH**

ac.E

TUM.ai
STUDENT INITIATIVE

thinc!

F ounders Club
rankfurt

GEC GOETHE
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
CONFERENCE

RHIVE

MAFO
Mannheim Forum

**ENTREPRENEURS
CLUB COLOGNE**

Integra



OUR PARTNERS

EVENT PARTNERS



MOBILITY PARTNERS



OUR CORETEAM



OUR TEAM



THANK-Q!

FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE YEAR FULL OF HARD
WORK, TEAM EFFORT, EXPERIENCES, FRIENDSHIPS
AND LET'S NOT FORGET - FUN!