

Frank Thelen

Frank Thelen is a European serial founder, tech investor and TV personality based in Bonn, Germany. Since 1994, he has started and run technology- and design-driven businesses. In his role as the Founder and CEO of venture capitalist e42, he focuses on seed and early-stage investments. His track record of founding disruptive companies now spans two decades, whereby his products have reached 200+ million consumers in 60+ countries, gathering prestigious awards along the way, such as the Innovate4Society award, presented to him by Angela Merkel. In 2014, Frank joined Sony Pictures prime-time TV show “Shark Tank”, broadcasted in Germany on VOX as “Die Höhle der Löwen”.

Founder

1994 - 2004

Softer Solutions: Frank founded his first company Softer Solutions at the age of 18 in 1994. The company provided an innovative framework to produce high-end multimedia CD-ROMs, as a faster and more flexible alternative to the popular Macromedia Director.

Create Media: In 1996, Softer Solutions merged with Pro PC and published several Multimedia CD-ROMs under the Create Media brand. Create Media also created and ran some of the first major websites in Germany, including hallo.de and bilder.de.

Twisd AG: In 1997, Frank received 1.4 million DM venture capital to create and sell a Linux-based router (LIC: LAN Internet Connect) to connect local networks with the internet. LIC was one of the first devices to introduce management via web interface and was based upon a highly-customized Linux Kernel optimized for security. Twisd also developed one of the first web application frameworks (APL) as a Zen C++ module. The company prepared for IPO in 1999 but went bankrupt with the dot.com bubble burst.

2004 - 2011

ip.labs: Founded in 2004, ip.labs develops and licenses an online photo service platform (IPS) to create and order photo products such as prints, greeting cards and books from digital photos. ip.labs became the worldwide leader in this market and was acquired by the Fujifilm Group in 2008.

2011 - 2015

doo: Founded in 2011, doo received \$10m in funding, with Lars Hinrichs and Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Hermann Simon as board members. The initial product “the document app” received renowned awards, including being selected as “App of the Year” by Apple. It was one of the first AI-centered

document management systems and offered native apps with real-time cloud sync. However, after two years in the market, the consumer traction did not meet the expectations of the management and investors. Frank was forced to pivot from a large platform vision to a one-purpose app that generated revenue, namely Scanbot.

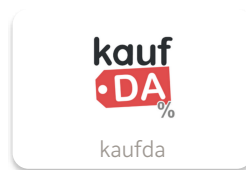
Scanbot: Scanbot launched in 2014 and is today the leading document scanner app for iOS and Android. The Scanbot team has developed proprietary technology, e.g. to detect documents on all surfaces, recognize document types and smart filters to enhance the scan quality. Apple has awarded Scanbot “Best of 2014”, “Best of 2015” and “Editors’ Choice” awards.

2016

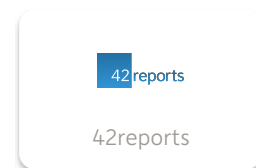
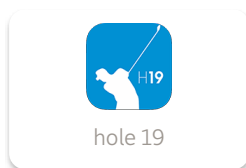
In 2016, Frank resigned as the CEO of Scanbot to focus on his CEO role at e42.

Investor

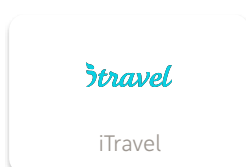
2010



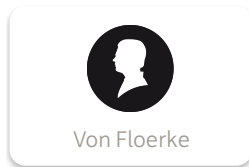
2012



2014



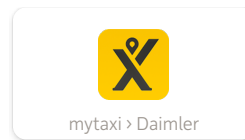
2015



2016



Exits



TV Personality

2014

In 2014, Frank joined the Sony Pictures prime-time TV show “Shark Tank”, broadcasted in Germany on VOX as “Die Höhle der Löwen”. The international show is broadcasted as “Shark Tank” in the US and “Dragons’ Den” in the UK and has become one of the most successful TV shows. In the first season, Frank is investing with Vural Öger, Jochen Schweizer, Judith Williams and Lencke Steiner.

2015

The second season of “Die Höhle der Löwen” achieved even better ratings than the first, winning the German “Deutsche Fernsehpreis 2016” award for the best factual entertainment show. The

show was also nominated for the “Grimme” award and the award of the German TV Academy in the entertainment category, as well as winning the “Ernst-Schneider-Preis” for innovation and economy in a TV entertainment show.

2016

Frank will return as a jury member in the third season of “Die Höhle der Löwen”, which is aiming to become even larger this year with a refreshed jury and more startups. Frank continues his engagements as a testimonial and mentor, which will be announced soon. Furthermore, Frank has also appeared in “Hart aber Aber Fair”, “Markus Lanz” and many other TV shows.

TV Awards & Honors

- 2011** Recognized as a Hidden Champion by Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Hermann Simon.
- 2012** Dr. Angela Merkel presented Frank with the 'Innovate 4 Society' award from Microsoft.
- 2013** Apple selects doo as “App of the year”
- 2014** Scanbot is TNW’s App of the Year
- 2014** Apple selects Scanbot as “Best of 2014”
- 2015** Grimme Preis nomination for “Die Höhle der Löwe, 2nd season”
- 2015** Ernst-Schneider-Preis for “Die Höhle der Löwe, 2nd season”
- 2015** Scanbot is nominated as “Editors’ Choice” by Apple
- 2016** Deutscher Fernsehpreis “Best Factual Entertainment”

Testimonial

- 2014** Microsoft - „Make it Happen“
- 2014** o2/Telefonica- #meinbusiness
- 2015** Deutsche Telekom - Top Apps
- 2015** Microsoft - „Make it Happen“
- 2015** Chivas Regal - The Venture
- 2016** Jimdo - Build your new site!
- 2016** Chivas Regal - The Venture
- 2016** Liechtenstein - Impuls Liechtenstein

Keynote Speaker

Frank performs keynotes at leading global tech events like F.ounders, The Next Web, European Pirate Summit, IdeaLab!, Pioneers Festival and the Startup Camp. Furthermore he speaks at schools to promote “starting a company” as a vivid alternative to “corporate hell”.