# Collaboration is key to navigating the current economic storm – but it needs to go deeper and wider than ever before

If there's one theme that has managed to persist throughout all the upheaval we've seen in recent years it's collaboration; in the business sense of the word, which itself has boomed thanks to shifting workforces, as well as the collaboration between neighbours, communities, industries, and countries.

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At the heart of this global, collaborative effort has been the acceleration of digital services and the data they rely on, both of which are underpinned by cloud computing.

As we head into 2023, cloud computing's impact on collaboration and connection is set to get deeper and wider. Working together in the cloud to achieve shared goals is not only going to become key to startups navigating current market conditions, but it's going to require these businesses to think more laterally about where these opportunities lie.

# Stronger together

A major factor in cloud computing's impact on collaboration in recent years has been due to its growing affordability coupled with accessibility. Today, startups no longer have to accept the high prices, limited use cases, and the _data sovereignty issues_ that come from partnering with an exclusive group of US cloud providers. Competition has seen a number of players emerge across Europe that offer a wider range of affordable offerings, and which are better suited to the more nuanced needs of today's global entrepreneurs and collaborators. And Europe's leading cloud provider is OVHcloud.

Founded in 1999 by Polish entrepreneur, Octave Klaba, OVHcloud was built with collaboration at its core, before collaboration as we know it today truly emerged. Not only does its suite of secure, trusted products adapt and respond to the specific needs of its customers – from web hosting to public, hosted private, bare metal cloud services and more – but it's been designed to cover every stage of a company's journey. Companies can collaborate with OVHcloud's experts, to scale and grow on-demand, without sacrificing data sovereignty and by adding (and only paying for) the most relevant tools that match their ambitions. Working together to achieve the shared goals of growth and impact.

# Collaboration gets deeper

Achieving such a shared goal in 2022 and beyond, however, requires this collaboration to go deeper. Incumbent companies that have scaled while the market was at a high, have a responsibility to support up-and-coming companies, now it's in a low, in order to both strengthen the wider ecosystem but also help fuel the innovation we need to emerge from this turbulence stronger.

Since 2015, OVHcloud has been championing and supporting startups in this way through its OVHcloud Startup Program. A trusted cloud is key to building innovative next-level technologies, so OVHcloud offers founders from a selected group of startups up to €100,000 of free tech credits to use on OVHcloud products as well as 20 hours of customer specific support.

Since its inception, the initiative has awarded cloud credit to more than 2,800 startups driving innovations in MedTech, AI, FinTech, AR, VR and more, selected from more than 9,000 applicants.

The most recent cohort featured a company called _AlgoDX_ which uses artificial intelligence, machine learning and predictive analytics to determine a patient's chances of developing disease. Another cohort member is _YepicAI_ – a pioneer

in text-to-video algorithms and machine learning models that allow businesses to turn text scripts into professional videos. Both firms use vast data sets, the kinds of which can quickly outgrow the majority of cloud offerings, and which can certainly create a significant economic barrier to growth without the support and collaboration of other, more established entities.

To complement this, OVHcloud runs a series of virtual and physical events throughout the year in which applicants can not only pitch their startups for the program, but can network and collaborate with key stakeholders, from potential partners and customers to investors.

Which leads to another critical collaboration trend that's set to dominate further in 2023 – the trend of collaborative connection.

# Collaborative connections

Within the OVHcloud Startup Program, collaborative connections are facilitated via the OVHcloud Startup Program Showcase events which are part of a wider _collaboration_ between the cloud giant and Empact Ventures.

Since 2020, Empact Ventures and OVHcloud have co-designed events across the UK, Ireland, and Europe through its Super Connect Series – an initiative focused on facilitating collaboration between tech startups and scale-ups with both larger companies (corporates, brands, SMEs) as well as funding providers (investors, grant and loan providers), based on mutual interest.

In 2023, OVHcloud and Empact Ventures are hosting the next stage of events in this series in which startups focused on AI machine learning, deep tech, AR, VR, sustainability and green- and clean-tech will be given the opportunity to pitch their ideas and meet like-minded peers. In addition to global virtual events, they will also be able to meet in-person at local Showcase events during the year. The final global virtual Showcase event in May will also host the culmination of the annual OVHcloud Startup Program Pitch Contest where €5k in prize money will be awarded to the winner.

Plus, for the first time in 2023, OVHcloud will be taking the theme of collaboration and their responsibility to startups and scaleups even further with the launch of a new in-house accelerator program. To be officially announced at the May event, this accelerator will enable OVHcloud to support the best startups and scaleups within the program along their whole development journey, in addition to the credits, connections, mentoring and collaboration it already provides.

# The long-term impact of collaboration

Such collaborative efforts don't just directly help startups in the short-term, either. They can help drive indirect market benefits in the long-term too.

In the wake of economic uncertainty, the total cost of cloud has become a key factor in the conversation around valuations. So much so, a company's use of cloud and the costs associated with it are now largely considered a critical KPI for VCs. Collaboration-focused cloud partners that allow companies to transparently and simply monitor usage can help them better understand their cloud costs and the implications thereof, thus, potentially helping them achieve higher valuations, raise funding and create more confidence across the industry.

Such collaborative partners can also help companies respond immediately to changing cloud demands, and customise their public and private options for more sustainable infrastructure as they grow. This helps them keep operational expenses under control, which can then prevent the need to make cuts elsewhere, including layoffs. Not only does this benefit the business, it can keep employment levels – and all the economic benefits that come with it – high.

# Collaboration by association

There are also the ways in which collaboration-focused companies like OVHcloud and the startups they support are working together to achieve often loftier, indirect shared goals.

Since launch, OVHcloud has been deliberately structured to bring more sustainability to its processes. Firstly, it owns the whole value chain. It builds its own machines and this means it's able to collaborate with like-minded, sustainability-focused manufacturers, all the while having greater insight into where its components come from.

Secondly, it takes all of its machines and servers through the various stages of reuse. Each one is checked at various points throughout their lifecycle and can

then be resold in a different class at lower costs.

This, in turn, helps its customers, and the startups and scale-ups it supports and collaborates with to become more sustainable by association. Today, OVHcloud has more than 400,000 servers housed within 33 sustainable data centres across four continents. By taking an integrated approach, OVHcloud has supported 1.6M customers in more than 140 countries to become more sustainable. That's 1.6M customers working together to make a wider, more impactful difference than they could on their own.

Over the past two years, we've never been so far apart physically yet so connected digitally. A trend in which cloud computing has played a significant role. Going forward, cloud providers, the companies they empower and the collaboration they enable are only set to become even more critical.

Philip Marais is the Global Startup Program leader at *OVHcloud*.

You can learn more about the OVHcloud Startup Program and apply *here*.

Ready to Pitch to Global Funders & Decision-makers? Submit an Expression of Interest to pitch in the upcoming OVHcloud Startup Program Showcase events powered by Empact Ventures *here.*

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