

Smart capital in scalable startups, a profile of Peak

With #QVCS, Maddyne profiles different funds to give founders and entrepreneurs the information they need to choose the right investor. Today, we speak to Philippe v. Klitzing, Partner at Peak.

Temps de lecture : minute

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My journey into venture capital and cutting-edge technologies began back in 2014 when I joined Bpifrance, the French state-funded investment fund. It was there that I first encountered ambitious founders, driven not just by a desire to build something big, but also by a passion for pioneering new technologies with real purpose.

Inspired by these experiences, I ventured into entrepreneurship myself, launching a self-storage service in Paris. We provided on demand, hassle-free service to help organise your home. After navigating a rollercoaster of challenges and successes over a few years, we ultimately sold the business to a competitor in 2017. Following this chapter, I transitioned into consulting, which offered me a broader perspective on the industry.

In 2019, I joined my first venture capital fund, where I spent three and a half years honing my skills. I had the chance to invest and support five companies. Then, in early 2023, I took on a new challenge with Peak, where I am focused on developing the Berlin office and expanding Peak's presence across Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. I have led the investments into Enersee and Frontnow.

Which industries are you working in?

At Peak, we don't confine ourselves to specific industries. We focus on early-stage SaaS, marketplace, and platform companies - businesses that have the potential to shake up any market. With offices in Berlin, Amsterdam, and Stockholm, we're one of the few early-stage investors truly positioned to help startups scale across Europe. We understand the fragmented markets, anticipate the hurdles, and provide the go-to-market support that founders need to dominate, no matter the industry.

What do you look for in a founder?

When it comes to founders, we're looking for those who break the mold - diverse, driven individuals with a deep understanding of their business and an unwavering focus on execution. We don't limit ourselves to specific industries because we believe that exceptional teams can disrupt any market. What truly matters to us is a founder's ability to get things done and their relentless drive to push boundaries. These are the qualities that, in our experience, lead to successful, high-growth companies.

Can you talk about your current portfolio?

Since January, we've invested in over five companies, but one that really stands out is Frontnow, a GenAI software company focused on enhancing the customer experience in e-commerce. I strongly believe that they will play a role in reshaping the way we buy things online. The founding team—Marc, Bernie, and Cedric—are true visionaries. They're not only obsessed with fast execution and customer satisfaction but are also building a remarkable company culture that sets them apart.

What does the future look like?

Of course, predicting the future is a tricky business, but here's my take:

The future will be shaped by rapid technological advancements and significant shifts in the global and local economic landscape. Game-changers like AI, quantum computing, biotech, green tech, and autonomous vehicles will revolutionize industries, while the digital economy and remote work will redefine how we live and work. AI will transform the economy, not necessarily by making people lose their jobs, but by increasing productivity. In that sense, firms need to increase their investment into AI.

However, globalization might slow down, with rising inequality and aging populations challenging economic stability. The US-China rivalry, emerging markets, and climate-focused policies will shift global power dynamics, while Europe's tech regulations could either foster innovation or hinder its progress.

Culturally, we'll see increased mental health awareness, the growth of smart cities, and the influence of younger generations driving change. However, new challenges like cybersecurity threats, social unrest, and resource shortages will require innovative solutions to navigate this complex future.

What makes Peak different?

What truly sets Peak apart is that we are backed entirely by entrepreneurs who have successfully founded, scaled, and sold companies across a wide range of industries. Backed by a network of over 150 experienced entrepreneurs, we offer our portfolio companies not just capital, but a wealth of diverse expertise. This ensures that startups working with Peak gain the crucial know-how needed to scale business

models across various stages and industries. We're more than just investors - we're committed partners dedicated to helping early-stage startups thrive.

What one piece of advice would you give founders?

Start by building something that truly matters to people, even if it means starting on a smaller scale. It's tempting to chase trends or rush to grow, but when you focus on creating real value and truly getting to know your customers, growth will come naturally. Take the time to refine your idea, listen more than you speak, and let your passion for solving a real problem guide every decision you make.

Philippe v. Klitzing is a Partner at Peak.



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