



SFI Knowledge Catalyst — Connect with Students Impact Story

Realizing Double Profit

Bekim Hotnjani was looking for a practical approach to his Master's thesis. Never in his wildest dreams would he have imagined that the biggest Swiss bank would put his thesis into practice.

Challenge

"We had a notion of the influence of tax aspects on client asset allocations. However, we needed scientific proof to base future decisions for clients in Switzerland and Germany on hard facts," say Antonio Manzini and Marco Prioni, UBS Investment Management. Their team had no spare capacity to focus on the required analysis, the data concerned was too sensitive to let external consultants produce it, and the team wanted to access the most up-to-date knowledge and techniques from academia. For Bekim Hotnjani this was the perfect opportunity to write a Master's thesis with a practical approach to business.

Solution

Through the SFI Knowledge Catalyst, a unique collaboration was established to meet the needs of all parties involved — the Master's student, corporate partner, and the supervising professor. After six months of working on the analysis, Hotnjani remembers the weekly meetings with project leaders as his biggest highlight. "Wealth Management had not been on my radar before. But I learnt so much and have now found a business area that captures my full interest."

Results

It proved possible to translate the results of Hotnjani's Master's thesis directly into practice and they will be used for the next annual Swiss investors' benchmark review. In addition, both the team at UBS and Bekim Hotnjani made a double profit from the project: after working with Hotnjani for six months, UBS decided to hire the graduate student as a full-time employee. "This," Manzini states, "is head hunting on a completely new level."



"Cooperation with the SFI Knowledge Catalyst is head hunting on a completely new level."

Dr. Antonio Manzini, UBS Wealth Management & Swiss Bank.

SFI Knowledge Catalyst

The Knowledge Catalyst is a three-way project between a Master's or PhD student, a corporate partner, and a supervising SFI professor. Students are selected to conduct research projects for companies while being supervised by a dedicated member of SFI's academic faculty.

Contact

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