

# Startup of the Year Tomorrow



# Interview with Jakob Berndt

## 1. Why did you establish Tomorrow?

We established Tomorrow in 2018 with the motivation to use money as a lever for positive change. We, these are my two co-founders Inas and Michael and me. There were sustainable banking providers before Tomorrow, but it was and still is a niche topic and not very user-friendly. At Tomorrow, we rethink sustainable banking and combine sustainability with state-of-the-art technology to offer Tomorrow customers the convenience of modern banking - without compromising on their values.



2. You talk about money as part of the climate problem. What are you doing differently than other banks to do something about climate change?

At Tomorrow, our customers' money protects the planet and fights for a fairer world: for example, it supports the rebuilding of ecosystems, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and affordable housing. This is the core difference between us and most other banks, as they invest in industries that are anything but sustainable: Armaments, factory farming or coal power.

3. What role do ESG standards play for you?

A big one! For us, sustainability definitely means not only taking active action against the climate crisis, but also standing up for a fairer world. Besides environmental sustainability - i.e., the "E" in ESG - it is also the social factors that contribute to a future worth living for all of us. Only if we recognise the triad of environmental, social and governance factors of companies on people and the planet, we will be able to properly address their impact.

For example, a particular issue close to our hearts is the topic of "climate justice" - while the global North is responsible for the majority of emissions, it is the people in the global South who are most affected by the impacts.

4. Positive change is one of your core themes. You combine sustainability with new technologies. Tell us something about this.

While our customers contribute to a better future with their money, we offer them all the convenience of digital, mobile banking. Using the Tomorrow app, our customers can easily organise their finances, manage their current account and investments from anywhere. We have a great team that constantly develops the app according to the latest developments and designs in such a way that it offers real added value for our customers.

5. That means that banking is also purely digital for you? How do you reach your target groups?

Exactly, the core of our product is the Tomorrow app. In the app, the clear focus is on banking features - if you want to make a quick transfer, you don't usually want to have the latest developments in EU taxonomy explained to you first. And if they do, they need an understandable and accessible summary and not a big speech with a lot of explaining to do. That is why all our communication channels are tailored to the needs of the respective target group:

- An important communication channel for us is social media, especially Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok. This is where we

provide insights behind the scenes, give tips and suggestions for dealing with one's own finances and educate people about the importance of sustainability. If you're looking for a raised finger, pessimism and dull advertising phrases on our profiles, you won't find them. We offer colourful memes, honest insights and constructive solutions.

- We also answer questions from the community in meet-ups, exchange ideas with followers on social media in the comment columns and DMs, and find exciting ideas in our forum.
- For those who want to dig a little deeper, our magazine contains numerous articles on important topics related to finance, sustainability and investing. What do I actually have to consider when filing a tax return? What are capital-forming payments? And what is this much-discussed EU taxonomy all about?
- If clients want to contact us, they can do so from their daily life via chat, phone or email.

What all channels have in common is that we focus on honest, transparent and hopeful content that meets our customers in their everyday lives and offers added value.

6. Community building certainly plays a big role in this...

Absolutely! We see ourselves as a participative company and we are in close contact with our community. In order to give our community a part in Tomorrow's economic success, we have given our customers the opportunity to become micro-investors within the framework of three "crowdinvestings". Since last autumn, the crowd has been Tomorrow's largest shareholder and has just elected a representative to sit on our most important supervisory body, the Advisory Board.

7. Partnerships can also be real levers, especially for young companies. How do you deal with cooperations?

We see ourselves as a zebra. This is the name given to social enterprises that - unlike the so-called "unicorns" - are not solely focused on growth and profit, but address a socio-political problem and try to solve it by means of an innovative business model. Zebras focus on sustainable growth, on cooperation instead of confrontation and are strong in the herd, not as lone fighters.

To answer the question concretely: We have a partnership relation with many other sustainable companies. Some of them are also reflected in business relationships, such as partners in our "Benefits Programme", and with others we exchange views on challenges, opportunities and ways in which we can,

for example, convince even more people or brands of sustainable business practices and also become even more sustainable ourselves.

8. What role does interdisciplinary exchange play in this for you?

One of our values at Tomorrow is "We dare to think big", and I believe we can only do that if we also look beyond our own horizons and work in an interdisciplinary way.

9. You also support climate protection projects in cooperation with climate partners. How does the partnership work exactly?

ClimatePartner is our partner for climate protection projects. Currently, for example, we are working closely with ClimatePartner on the project to renaturalise the Spekboom in the Eastern Cape, which we are financing solely with our community. ClimatePartner takes care of the selection of the project developer, the set-up of the project, the certification and auditing and also the reporting and monitoring of the project implementation. In addition, ClimatePartner also supports us in calculating our carbon footprint as a company.

10. The climate protection projects are worldwide. What about your internationality - do you have efforts to make Tomorrow known internationally as well, and to inspire even more people for positive change?

In the long term, we want to internationalise, there is no doubt about that. We also see great demand for digital, sustainable banking solutions outside Germany. Tomorrow is already the leading player in this field in Europe, and we want to express this role even more in the future. But currently we have clearly set our course for profitability. Therefore, geographic expansion is not an option, at least not for this year.

# PRESS CONTACT

For questions about the German Brand Award or the German Design Council please do not hesitate to contact us.

Alexandra Sender  
Vice President Communications and Marketing  
+49 (0)69 - 24 74 48 699  
[presse@gdc.de](mailto:presse@gdc.de)  
[alexandra.sender@gdc.de](mailto:alexandra.sender@gdc.de)

