PRESS RELEASE /

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ME310 Post-Graduation programme

SONAE DEVELOPS INNOVATION PROJECTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PORTO DESIGN FACTORY AND STANFORD UNIVERSITY

An open innovation initiative led by Sonae has allowed to create prototypes of an urban bike for Berg Cycles and a household appliances and electronics remote management device for Worten.

Integrated in the ME310 Product Innovation programme of Stanford University (USA), Sonae challenged students of the Porto Design Factory – Polytechnic Institute of Porto, the Swinburne University (Australia) and the Modena and Reggio Emilia University (Italy) to present innovative solutions. There were specific challenges put forward by Berg Cycles and Worten, the outdoor/cycling and household appliances and consumer electronics brands of Sonae. This initiative fits into the open innovation policy implemented at Sonae, which looks to foster knowledge through collaboration and cooperation with academic and scientific communities.

As a result, the participants developed prototypes of an urban bike for Berg Cycles and a remote monitoring, management and maintenance device for electronic equipment for Worten, which were introduced in the United States and in Portugal.

Nuno Lopes Gama, Head of Innovation & Future Tech at Sonae, says: “Sonae invests in an open innovation strategy that fosters collaboration with academic and scientific institutions with the purpose of sharing and promoting knowledge. Our association with the ME310 Stanford programme is naturally integrated in this policy, allowing Sonae to work and cooperate with multinational teams in order to anticipate and fulfil consumers’ current and future needs”.

Sonae is a multinational company managing a diversified portfolio of businesses in retail, financial services, technology, shopping centres and telecommunications. Present in over 70 countries, it reached a turnover of more than 5 billion euros by the end of 2015.
Find out more at www.sonae.pt

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Throughout seven months, Berg Cycles and Worten professional experts supervised the projects and interacted with the students who participated in ME310, contributing to the breakthrough of innovative solutions.

Monitor, manage and control electronic equipment

Addressing Worten's challenge, the Porto Design Factory and the Modena and Reggio Emilia University students worked on an innovative solution to provide Worten with a better and more modern customer support experience by developing a platform that controls and monitors several equipment and also their consumption - App Wsempre.

With this solution, available online on any device (smartphone or tablet, for example), Worten customers can now find all useful information about their equipment (notifications of possible malfunctions or other situations) and analyse consumption through Smart Plug, a smart plug to which the appliance is connected. Consumers can also use the SOS button to contact a technician and use the augmented reality glasses to allow the technician to see exactly what the situation is at home, aiding in the consequent assistance and maintenance.

A bicycle adapted to urban life

The growing use of bicycles for urban commuting is creating new functionality paradigms regarding this type of vehicles, for which traditional models simply can't provide a solution.

In that sense, Berg Cycles collaborated with students from the Porto Design Factory and the Swinburne University to develop an innovative means of transport that would improve how people move around in urban environments. As a result, the team developed a new bike with a new design, which provides greater accessibility and comfort and is more adapted to urban commuting.

Photos: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hanm4t780ge27gz/AABHo9WLYo8yTPkj6hTFKC7Oa?dl=0