



VEIKKAUS

Veikkaus to hold an Innovation Challenge Week to find startups and begin collaboration – focus on esports

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At Veikkaus headquarters, May will mean focusing intensively on esports. Veikkaus and Avanto Ventures are jointly organizing an Innovation Challenge Week, during which 8–10 startup companies will explore what new esports solutions they could generate in cooperation with Veikkaus.

The Challenge Week will be held at Veikkaus' head offices in Pohjois-Haaga, Helsinki from May 20-24. The Week is essentially a competition aimed at identifying opportunities for collaboration and shared growth opportunities between Veikkaus and startups. The winner will receive a follow-up contract valued at 30,000 euros for further development of the winning idea.

– We want to find the best ideas in the world, as well as the best partners with whom to bring those ideas to life. We believe that such a partner could well be found in the esports and startup world. At the same time, we can offer startups an opportunity to bring their ideas to market, states VP of Business Development and Innovation at Veikkaus, **Heidi Ioannidou**.

Startups can apply to the Challenge Week [here](#). Both Finnish and international startups are welcome to apply.

The aim of the Challenge Week is not to create actual games, but rather services or solutions related to esports.

– This could mean, for example, an esports product, service, or platform. The goal is to produce innovative solutions for esports players, teams, or fans, Ioannidou specifies.

The Veikkaus Innovation Challenge Week will feature engaging speakers, and Veikkaus mentors will be available to assist startups in their design processes. The Week will culminate in a pitching event during which startups will be given two

minutes in which to present their ideas.

Esports to kick off series of innovation weeks

The Innovation Challenge Week in May will be the first in a series of similar weeks which will focus on a variety of subjects. The esports challenge will kick off this new approach.

– Esports is immensely popular at the moment. It is the fifth most popular game in pre-match betting and the fourth most popular in live betting at Veikkaus, Ioannidou explains the choice of focus.

As early as 2014, Veikkaus was one of the first gaming companies to offer esports betting. Now the company is looking to esports to learn new kinds of lessons.

– We believe that the world of esports can generate ideas that Veikkaus can benefit from in its own business. We want to learn from the world of players in order to be able to provide the best possible gaming experiences, Ioannidou says.

Veikkaus is the largest gaming sector employer in Finland, and wants to be a pioneer in the gaming sector. It holds the exclusive right to organize gambling operations in Finland, but competition in the digital world is international.

Veikkaus needs to develop its operations, innovate new activities, and research and develop new opportunities.

– We want to be successful in an ever-changing world. Our goal is to be an international pioneer in the gaming sector, and for this reason we need to do something differently from everyone else. We will venture into developing ideas that no-one else has yet developed, Ioannidou envisions.

Veikkaus Innovation Challenge Week

- Startups can apply to the Innovation Challenge Week until **April 23, 2019** [here](#).
- Selected startups will be chosen by **May 3, 2019**.
- Veikkaus Innovation Challenge Week will be held at Veikkaus' head offices in Helsinki from **May 20–24, 2019**.
- The winner of the Innovation Week will receive 30,000 euros for further development of the winning idea.
- Veikkaus specialists will work together with startups during the Challenge Week.

Veikkaus and esports

- Esports betting has been part of Veikkaus' portfolio since 2014.
- Veikkaus was among the first five companies worldwide to offer legal esports betting.
- In 2015, Veikkaus organized its own #oletvoittaja StarCraft II tournament, which was won by Joonas "Serral" Sotola.
- The first esports broadcast on VeikkausTV took place on September 5, 2015, after which esports has continued to feature regularly on the service.
- Veikkaus' esports betting selection consists of fourteen games, the most popular of which is Counter-Strike: Global Offensive.
- In 2018, Veikkaus offered over 13,000 esports matches as betting options. Esports was the fifth most popular game in pre-match betting and the fourth most popular in live betting.

For further information, please contact: Veikkaus' media service, tel. +358 9 4370 7000,
tiedotus@veikkaus.fi

Veikkaus
Aku Korhosen tie 2
00440 HELSINKI
[09 437 01](tel:0943701)
<https://www.veikkaus.fi/yritys>

Veikkaus is a Finnish gaming company with a special mission. We want people to play our games safely and with moderation. Almost all adult Finns play our games; we have over two million loyal customers. Thanks to the players, over one billion euros a year are accumulated for the common good. The gaming revenue is used to offer people chances for better lives.

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