

Meet Kertos, your partner for compliance

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Dr. Kilian Schmidt, cofounder and CEO of Kertos about making compliance accessible, working with fast-growing startups and setting new standards across Europe.

Temps de lecture : minute

16 October 2024

What was the catalyst for launching Kertos?

During my work as a legal counsel at companies like Home24 and TIER Mobility, I noticed a significant gap in the technology available for legal and compliance operations. This issue became even more evident while advising fast-growing startups, where data protection was often a challenging and time-consuming task. It's like a Sisyphean task, you start at one end and by the time you are done, you need to start all over again... The never-ending infinite compliance loop begins.

Together with Johannes Hussak, who has a background in data-driven innovation, and Alexander Prams, who led several AI projects in the past, we recognised an opportunity to change this. We launched Kertos to simplify compliance, making it a truly effortless and integral part of business operations.

Tell us about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you

reach customers and so on?

Kertos is all about transforming compliance from a manual headache into an automated and hassle-free part of doing business. Why should companies spend countless hours on regulatory tasks when they could focus on building awesome products and acquiring new clients instead?

Rather than wrestling with complicated procedures and piecing together different tools, we offer a smarter approach. We seamlessly integrate with existing systems to simplify compliance workflows, turning complex processes into a streamlined, ongoing practice. We create visibility and connect what is already there instead of juggling multiple tools or struggling with manual procedures. Companies can rely on our automation solution to keep them compliant with minimal effort.

Our ideal customers include fast-growing startups, tech firms, and companies in regulated industries (such as Fintech, Healthtech and Insurtech) that need a highly intelligent approach to stay compliant in their rapidly evolving regulatory landscapes. Next to accelerating consumer products that need to manage millions of customer data, we help them stay ahead of regulations and free up resources to focus on what really matters: growth.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

Since launching in 2022, we've quickly gained momentum, raising funding from multiple venture capital funds and a total of €2.2M in grants by the European Union and German government focusing on our AI developments.

Our no-code platform does more than just keeping companies compliant; it transforms compliance into something effortless, and that resonates

with our prospects. Getting recognised, such as recently as one of BCG's "10 Startups to Watch in 2024", shows that we're not just part of the compliance conversation; we're setting the pace.

With 100+ customers and still counting we quickly made an impact and are here to stay. One KPI we are specifically proud of is: we've only offboarded one customer in the last two and a half years and that was due to a closing business.

Tell us about the working culture at Kertos

We've got a "make-it-happen-approach", and we mean it. At our core, we want to build a truly excellent product. Being "product first" isn't just a mantra - it's how we operate. We've got a powerhouse development team leading the charge (65% of our workforce), making sure our customers get the absolute best product the SaaS landscape has to offer. That mentality has fueled our more than 3x growth within the first six months this year and keeps us driving forward.

How are you funded?

Since early 2022 we are supported by 10x Founders, xDeck and Superlyst VC as well as a dozen amazing business angels. In late 2022 we closed our Seed Round with our newest lead, Redstone Ventures, with additions from PiLabs and Seed+Speed. A great commitment was given by all existing investors who went super pro rata in that round. Funding enables us to continuously innovate and expand our platform, delivering the most advanced compliance automation technology to our customers. Next to the mentioned public grants of significant volumes we have all it takes to build the leading compliance platform in Europe!

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

Going on a funding journey is a true rollercoaster ride! The biggest challenge was and is building the best team to succeed. Starting with the founder team and continuing with every single member of our team you need a lot of stamina to push things through. If you get this right, stick to your (hopefully good) principles and leave little room for compromises, you can overcome that challenge too. Just never give up and hold yourself accountable at any time.

How does Kertos answer an unmet need?

Kertos addresses a significant gap in the compliance and data protection space: the need for a solution that doesn't just check boxes but actually makes compliance effortless. Many businesses struggle with privacy and information security matters because they're time-consuming, complex, and require specialised (and expensive) knowledge. Traditional approaches often involve juggling multiple tools and manual processes, which can be overwhelming, especially for companies with no expertise in privacy or information security regulations.

What's in store for the future?

We're on track to become the #1 compliance automation solution in Europe. Thanks to our use of AI, we can push the boundaries of what compliance technology can do and we are setting new standards in the industry.

But it's not just about the tech—we also want to change the way companies think about compliance. We're focused on educating businesses about what's truly possible with automation, showing them

how to take the pain out of compliance and turn it into a seamless, stress-free part of their operations.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

The highs are higher, and the lows are lower. Being a founder is a true roller-coaster ride you need to be prepared for. That means 100% commitment and persistence. I've seen too many founders trying one sidekick after another and failing repeatedly. If I hadn't quit my job and worked 120% on my venture dream, I would have never succeeded. Do not spend too much time on the initial plan but just get started. It is 100% certain your model will change, and the product adopted. You might end with a completely different business model than initially thought and guess what - It might be the most successful thing you have ever done.

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

I am not a huge fan of strict rules but sticking strongly to principles. Being a founder means long hours and intense pressure. Create headspace and find time to reset. That means to me: I do sports almost every day and take my running shoes wherever I go. It's that time of the day where I can relax the most and my thoughts can get creative.

Dr. Kilian Schmidt is the Co-Founder and CEO of [Kertos](#).



MADDYNEWS UK

The newsletter you need for all the latest from the startup ecosystem

JE M'INSCRIS

Article écrit par Dr. Kilian Schmidt