

# Alumni newsletter 1/2025

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## 1. Greetings from the Chairperson

Dear fellow Alumni,

In this time, I want to highlight the importance of intelligent optimism in our community. This is not about blind hope or naive positivity, but a mindset that recognizes the complexities of our world while focusing on solutions and progress. Looking ahead with a realistic perspective and having the confidence to think big and make things happen. I believe this mindset has always been deeply embedded in our community and values.

Our alumni association continues to provide opportunities to learn, connect, and contribute. We have an exciting lineup of activities ahead, from insightful excursions, fun get-togethers, to the much anticipated Prodeko Seminar, with a highly topical theme on business and geopolitics. Next year also marks a major milestone, our 60th anniversary, a celebration of our legacy and the future of our community, to which preparations already begin.

Let's approach this year with intelligent optimism, grounded in reality, and backed by action. I look forward to engaging with all of you.

Best regards,  
Joona Soratie, Chairperson 2025

## 2. Intro of 2025 Board

**Alina Heikkinen**

Hi, I'm Alina, a second-year Prodeko student, and this year I'm serving on the Alumni board as Prodeko's Vice Chair. I'm really excited about everything ahead in this role!

**Angelica Mendez**

Hi all, I am Angie Mendez and this is my second year on the board, I am mainly interested in building and promoting the international community of Prodeko students and alumni. I am a fuksi '19 for my Master's degree. During my studies, I tutored international students and participated in the Pitkä excursion to Latin America, which was close to my home in Mexico. I work in analytics for digital commerce. Outside of work, I enjoy running, cycling, traveling, dog sitting, and cooking new food.

**Jaakko Rouste**

Hello, alumni! I'm Jaakko, a fresher '21, and now for the fourth year I'm involved in the society's activities – this time in the President's shoes! At the moment, I'm fully immersed in the society's affairs, but luckily there's plenty of free time for sports, culture, and friends. I'm excited to be involved in the activities as an alumnus next year!

**Joona Soratie**

I'm excited to step into the role of chairperson this year after serving as treasurer last year. I am this year coordinating the Prodeko Seminar together with the guild and organizing team. Professionally, I work as an operations and IT consultant. During my studies, I was actively involved in Prodeko mentoring activities, Prodeko Ventures, and ESTIEM. Outside of work, you'll most likely find me outdoors either running, biking, hiking, or alpine skiing

**Mailiina Turanlahti**

Hello dear fellow Alumni! I'm coming back to the Alumni board after a 11-year-long break, and my role this year is Vice Chair and responsible for Prodeko Ventures collaboration. I studied in the early 2000s, and then, I enjoyed multiple aspects of the Prodeko community, ranging from Minister of Studies and Halloped to Juomanlaskija and Song Master. Currently I work as Head of Scandinavia Region at Business Finland, helping Finnish companies in their international growth, with my team. When I'm not on the plane or in one of the Scandinavian capitals, I'm most likely playing piano, renovating my house, learning new Street Workout skills or scuba diving.

**Mikael Huhtamäki**

I've been to many Alumni excursions over the years and look forward to arranging some. I was an active participant at Prodeko activities in the 1990s with a special focus in Teekkarispeksi. Currently I work as a project manager at Aalto to boost the creative sectors. Ask me about vintage rock concerts.

**Riku Österman**

Hello everyone! I am fresher '89 and PhD '22 at Tuta. This is my fourth year at Alumni board, the previous rounds going back to 2000, 2001 and 2024. Last year I organized the Prodeko leadership summit a.k.a. Alumni Puolipitkä to Turku. For work, I do strategy consulting at NormannPartners, and also freelance consulting around data. Besides work I dabble with a cappella singing, saxophones, and orienteering.

### **Santeri Hietanen**

Hi everyone! I joined the alumni board this year and will act as the treasurer. During my studies I was active in the Prodeko board and ESTIEM. I currently work in business development in the healthcare sector. In my free time I enjoy cooking and doing all kinds of outdoor sports from football to skiing and kayaking.

## **3. Preliminary event calendar 2025**

- **Wappuchampagnes - 1.5.**
- **Prodeko Seminar + spring meeting - 16.5.**
- **Prodeko hiking OR PoRlympics - June**
- **Place Y - September**
- **Diskonttaus - October**
- **Annual meeting - November**
- **Pig party - November**

## **4. Prodeko Seminar - Save the date 16.5.2025**

This year, for the eighth time, the seminar that brings together the Prodeko community will return to Otaniemi with the theme "Business and Geopolitics". The event brings together key players from many industries, entrepreneurship, research and education, as well as students, to discuss topical issues. The seminar will be held on Friday, May 16th from 1:00 PM onwards. You don't want to miss this!

To keep this tradition strong for years to come, we rely on community support. The seminar is funded through ticket sales and company sponsorships, and we are currently looking for company partners to help financially sustain the seminar. For more details on sponsorship opportunities, please contact Joona at [joona@soratie.fi](mailto:joona@soratie.fi).

## **5. Upcoming events**

### **Maki.vc excursion 12.3.2025**

Date & time: 12.3.2025, 17.30-20.00

Location: Lapinlahdenkatu 16, Building 5, 3rd Floor

Quota: 20 people

Host: Pirkka Palomäki

Registration: <https://ilmo.prodeko.org/en/event/2025-3-12-alumni-maki.vc-xq>

Join us for an exiting event at the Maki.vc office to learn more about seed stage Venture Capital and examples of companies Maki has invested in.

Maki Ventures Oy (Maki.vc) is a registered Alternative Investment Fund Manager (AIFM), manages three funds, has 260M Eur under management and has invested in 57 companies globally.

The company was founded by Prodeko alumni to fuel the most lunatic visions, to back the most audacious founding teams, and to defend disputed ideas. Maki funds pre-seed and seed stage startups with far-fetched ideas that might shake and shape the world, but have likely been overlooked by the industry.

### **Helen heat pump plant excursion 2.4.2025**

Date & time: 2.4.2025, 17.30-20.00

Location: Katri Valan lämpöpumppulaitos, Vilhonvuorenkatu 9

Quota: 20 people

Host: CEO Olli Sirkka

Registration: <https://ilmo.prodeko.org/en/event/2025-4-2-alumni-helen-xq>

The event kicks off with a visit to the Katri Vala Caves, home to the world's largest heat pump plant, showcasing cutting-edge district heating solutions. Next, we dive into the energy transformation story at Hanasaari Power Plant, where we'll learn how Helen is evolving from coal-based energy production to becoming a leader in clean flexibility and energy trading. The evening concludes with an engaging discussion and Q&A session.

### **HJK Women excursion + Bring your family to the game 24.5.2025**

Date & time: 24.5.2025, 15.00-16.00 + HJK vs. JyPK starting at 16:00

Location: Bolt Arena

Quota: 30 people + Family members to the game

Hosts: Sammeli Sammalkorpi & Jussi Raita

Registration: <https://ilmo.prodeko.org/en/event/2025-5-24-alumni-hjk-naiset-xq>

Join us for an engaging Saturday where sports and business come together! From 15:00 to 16:00, Prodeko alumnus Sammeli Sammalkorpi will share insights from his latest venture into the football business and explore the dynamics shaping today's sports markets.

Following the session, the excitement continues as HJK Women face off against JYPK in their home game. Bring your family along to the game part and enjoy an afternoon of great football and community spirit.

## 6. Past events:

### **Prodeko Ventures Afterwork**

Thank you to Prodeko Ventures for arranging and Maki.vc for sponsoring this event. The event went well and brought together Prodeko Ventures, alumni and Prodeko students.

## 7. Greetings from Department

2024 was a great year for the department. We have had a very good number of publications in the world's leading journals. Our faculty members have been in the media quite a bit (both Finnish and international media). We further strengthened our community with students and alumni, e.g. through the Prodeko seminar and the Prodeko Fund. We are pioneering lifelong education concepts, such as the First time manager course. And we are collaborating with companies on a number of research projects.

Our financial situation is a bit tight. To give you an idea, in 2024 we delivered over 33.000 credits, which is almost 50% more than in 2018. At the same time, the funding we receive from the Ministry of Education has declined by over 10%. Class sizes have increased, smaller courses discontinued, and we have become very efficient. But as you know, public finances are what they are, so we don't expect to get more money for education. But there are great opportunities for funding for research.

Our strength as a department has always been to do research that has high practical relevance for companies, and that is done in collaboration with companies. We want to do more of that. Topics we are studying include (to name a few): AI in organizations, the future of work, leadership, corporate venturing, productivity and the organization of business and supply chains. Please be in touch if you are interested in collaborating on any of these topics!

Another way to contribute is by donating to the Prodeko Fund. A few weeks ago we had a thank you event for the 37 founding donors of the fund at Dipoli, with an after-party in Teekkarikylä. We have already raised altogether over half a million! Thanks to all contributors! Two things the fund has supported so far are our community (e.g., Eero Eloranta's IEM history books and supporting student tickets for the Prodeko seminar) and preserving Esa Saarinen's legacy. We have an all-star team of practical philosophers at our department (Esa Saarinen, Frank Martela, Lauri Järvilehto), and we are now working on making their insights accessible to as many as possible.

More information about the Prodeko Fund:

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/give-for-the-future/the-prodeko-fund-of-industrial-engineering-and-management>. You can donate directly on the website. Anyone donating at least 10.000 EUR will be listed as major donor (please be in touch directly with me: [jens.schmidt@aalto.fi](mailto:jens.schmidt@aalto.fi)). Aalto University has a campaign to raise 30mio. EUR by the end of 2026. Donations to the Prodeko Fund count towards this goal.

I'd also like to invite you to the next Aalto Alumni Strategy circle after-work event on Wed March 12th 17.00-19.30 on the the topic of Patents, intellectual property and competitive advantage:  
<https://www.aalto.fi/en/events/aalto-alumni-strategy-circle-after-work-patents-intellectual-property-and-competitive-advantage>.

## 8. Greeting from the Guild

The year has kicked off in a lively manner in the guild! The leadership has changed, and all sectors are running at full speed. The PitkäXQ team is gearing up for its fundraising process, while the Prodeko60 preparatory committee is carrying out its own fundraising efforts and planning next year's celebrations and special events!

Other key themes for the year include a long-term focus on well-being. Building on ten successful years of well-being coaching, we are now further developing the program. At the same time, we are strengthening our connections within Otaniemi, emphasizing collaboration with other guilds and student organizations. Guild members are also being encouraged to take an active role in shaping the guild's future. And of course, it's almost time to start planning for Wappu!

Bringing you the latest guild updates,  
Jaakko :)

## 9. aTalent updates

### **aTalent's year 2024 turned profitable**

aTalent's 20th anniversary year took place in a still-challenging market. The economic situation in Finland is not particularly rosy, and companies are, in the big picture, still investing very cautiously—though there are, of course, exceptions. Over the past few years, aTalent has adapted its operations to the market conditions, and as a result, 2024 ultimately turned a profit of approximately +€100K (figures still unaudited). We completed around 430 assignments for our clients, with total revenue reaching approximately €4.9M. However, a more accurate picture of our business volume is reflected in our adjusted revenue (total revenue minus the wages of temporary employees), which stood at around €3.7M.

Unemployment among highly educated professionals is at historically high levels, which, combined with low recruitment activity from companies, impacts aTalent in two ways. On one hand, companies are finding it easier to attract candidates through their own channels, reducing demand for our services. On the other hand, now is an exceptional time to leverage our channels and networks to find top-tier talent—many highly skilled individuals are either available or open to new opportunities. For companies with the ability to invest, this is the perfect moment to bring in the best talent—hiring becomes significantly more challenging in an economic upswing. Additionally, many firms are struggling with overwhelming numbers of applicants and choose to outsource their recruitment processes to ensure high-quality hiring.

The professionals we recruit for our clients now have, on average, around 10 years of work experience post-graduation. This highlights aTalent's evolution beyond student-level recruitment, with our primary focus now on high-level expert and managerial hires in commercial, technical, and technology-related roles.

At the turn of the year, we also approved a new strategy. Our strategic roadmap extends to 2030, with a key focus on improving resilience and profitability. Additionally, we aim to enter the executive search market, where we see an opportunity to provide a modern, more effective, and cost-efficient alternative to traditional headhunting firms. While we have already successfully conducted executive searches, we will now build this area more systematically. Furthermore, we plan to expand our HR-as-a-Service offering, which has delivered strong results and excellent client references over recent years. We are also evaluating the future of our flexible workforce solutions, as freelance, interim, and consulting-based work arrangements are becoming increasingly relevant in white-collar professions.

On behalf of the entire aTalent team: Happy New Year to all Prodeko alumni! Feel free to reach out if we can support you with recruitment or HR-related matters.

Niklas Huotari  
CEO

## 10. Prodeko Ventures

Prodeko Ventures (PV) has kicked off the new year with strong momentum. We started the year with our highly energizing annual tradition—PV After Work drinks and mingling at Teatteri. The event brought together over 60 venture-minded alumni, PV investors, and students, with a record attendance of more than a dozen portfolio companies. It was inspiring to hear about the progress and achievements of these companies. A big thank you to [Maki.vc](#) for sponsoring the champagne and snacks!

PV's investment pace has remained active. In Q4 2024 and early 2025, PV has invested in three new startups—welcome [Plug](#), [AddNow](#) and [Adeu](#) to the PV portfolio! Additionally, PV participated in supporting the third fund of Wave Ventures.

As always, new investment opportunities are constantly being evaluated by the PV Board. If you have a start-up that meets the PV investment criteria, please reach out to Ilona Sippola (see the criteria and contact details on the [PV web-site](#)). We look forward to hearing from you!

## 11. Alumni data update

Hey alumni! Please update your contact information to [matrikkeli](#)—takes only a few minutes! Especially if you have founded or co-founded a company, please add the company to your

work experience and tap on the “I am a founding member”. This way Prodeko and the Department will be able to keep track of Prodeko founded companies. Thank you!