CHALLENGE BRIEF

Startup Program Start:up Maribor: Let’s make startups rock

How to design the program Start:up Maribor to efficiently support entrepreneurial teams in Maribor.

video: [http://youtu.be/zVtiHZgos6s](http://youtu.be/zVtiHZgos6s)

1 | Who we are

 Venture Factory is an important element of the innovation ecosystem of the University of Maribor. It operates within RAZ:UM (Research and Arts Zone at the University of Maribor) in a pillar "Entrepreneurship and innovation." Venture Factory is responsible for developing and implementing programs for promotion of entrepreneurship, consulting (potential) entrepreneurs and incubating start-up companies (spin-offs and spin-outs). For the important contribution to strengthening the role of innovative entrepreneurship, Venture Factory received a prestigious recognition from the Municipality of Maribor in 2012. It was a reward for the past ten years of good work and also an encouragement and responsibility for the future development of the city. In collaboration with the community of successful start-up entrepreneurs we are building an effective support environment for start-ups in the university city of Maribor. With our work we are contributing to achieving the future vision of development of the city of Maribor and the whole region, which we also declared in the Regional development strategy. With the program “Start:up Maribor” we want to transform the city of Maribor into an important entrepreneurial hub.

2 | Define the users, people affected by your product/service

With the program “Start:up Maribor” we want to support individuals who are starting a project of developing and marketing a new product in uncertain circumstances. This sort of project is called a start-up and can be executed in the context of a new or existing business. The key task of the entrepreneur is to find an appropriate business model, which will provide the opportunity for business to grow. The key target groups are mostly highly-educated individuals who want to create and offer products and services to satisfy the needs of users on global markets.
3 | Define the problem

Building a start-up business requires the right approach to use available resources in order to find and build the right business model. There is a lack of knowledge among entrepreneurs in the field of latest methodologies of building start-ups (The Lean Start-up and Business Model Generation), as well as a lack of personal experience with the building of start-up companies. In the initial stage, the entrepreneurs’ resources are very limited, which is why they are looking for various forms of assistance, such as: adequate space for their operation, quality consulting in the field of latest methodologies for building their company, advice from experienced entrepreneurs, seed capital, ...

By building the program Start:up Maribor, we are facing many challenges at Venture Factory: providing additional space for the activities of start-up companies; ensuring minimum financial support needed for participation on joint projects with key stakeholders in the city, which would allow the acquisition of sufficient additional resources to implement the program; the lack of communication with target groups to raise awareness of programs; low entrepreneurial activity among young talented individuals.

4 | What are the current solutions to it (if any)

In the Venture Factory, we currently have two full-time business consultants operating within the university incubator, a few enthusiastic entrepreneurs who are willing to share their experiences with others and 500 m2 of office space for the development of start-ups. We have support letters of all key institutions of the University of Maribor, RAZ:UM, Maribor Development Agency, ZAMS and bank Nova KBM. We have also obtained the honorary patronage of the President of Slovenia. Now we are faced with the challenge of operationalizing the plan in practice.

5 | The challenge

The key challenge for C:F youth is how to design the program Start:up Maribor to efficiently support entrepreneurial teams in Maribor.

More info about brief & company:
• http://youtu.be/zVtiHZgos6s