

The Business Breeder

Incubator and Accelerator benefit the entrepreneur

“If a small business owner just made one-hundredth of those mistakes and errors committed by great men of history, in ancient times, in mediaeval times, and some say even in this day and age, they would never come out of bankruptcy and prison alive. If bankers towards their clients, doctors towards their patients, husbands towards their wives, parents towards their children, engine drivers towards their passengers, were behaving ‘statesmanlike’, the end of humanity would already be far behind us, thousands of years ago.” (Erich Kaestner)

Bridging entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs, thoughts and action, knowledge and innovation, academia and practice, predecessors and successors, administration and politics is part of enterprise development. There are two consecutive tools called incubator and accelerator.

To start with: What are the benefits for a company? Simply put: We talk money. What is? What could be? In other words, a business breeder: incubating to let your business baby be born, accelerating to let the business grow.

Taking into account that growth may vary like staying alive, more revenue and profit, better products and services, higher market share and new markets, going international, being more innovative and unique and much more.

Let’s put it like that: Incubating and accelerating is breeding and raising a new venture or spin-off. And it is rejuvenating an established business, the fountain of youth. What could be better than to have young professionals on board guided by experienced academics and entrepreneurs, mentors and practitioners? Top notch students, entrepreneurially educated and behaved, hungry, enthusiastic, willing to work, ready for impact.

Real case example

To incorporate my personal experience, I was entrepreneur running an industrial production 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year - nonstop. Necessity driven we needed controls to be understood by intuition and to be operated by non-experts. Frankly speaking, software suited for mentally low-key and training-neutral employees. The existing expert systems did not match with our remote location and the available employees on site.

We developed high speed controls, a disruptive innovation for the own factory. The cleaning lady was able to run industrial facilities. From the beginning, we had a spin-off in mind.

Yet - no time, no money, no staff. Quick and easy, we stated the case to a top business school. A professor prepared a living case study with core and sub-questions. 20 Executive Master Students worked in 5 groups on the same topic resulting in 5 different proposals. The presentation day was ahead. I arrived on the evening before to read the 5 books all night. All top notch. I commented to the best project leader “if you propose such a good checklist and handbook you have to put it to action by yourself”. He said “I am available”. I said “You are in”.

We received fast track assistance for the spin-off to incubate and accelerate the launch of the new company. And we even recruited the executive.

An incubator and accelerator consist of opportunity driven closed networks with secrets.

Living Case Study

A company wants a solution to a problem. Stating the problem confidentially, the professor transfers the problem into a confidential curriculum and questionnaire for a number of selected students working in competitive groups. They come for a company visit with a Q&A session. In a timely manner, the company receives several reports with a variety of solutions. The presentation sums up and can even be used for the charter of the implementation in the company.

For the students it's a great hands-on learning experience. For the company it's the up to date knowledge transfer to act. And maybe it's recruiting as well. A win – win.

Incubation Week

A company wants to go internationally, in ASEAN or abroad? Who, What, Why, When, Where?

A Thai company has a product, service or idea. International students come to Thailand for an intensive week. They present their proposals to the Thai company. The students launch the business in their home countries. The Thai company being a stakeholder in a variety of configurations, e.g. employer, contracting party, shareholder.

Vice versa, the “Incubation Week Abroad” takes foreign-going Thai students to come back with products, services or simply ideas for new businesses in Thailand.

The majority of Thai entrepreneurs are doing business within the local Thai market. With the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) international orientation and market expansion plans will be an important task for many business owners besides being prepared for more competitive markets.

Table Proportion of Firms with International Customers in ASEAN 6 + East Asian Countries, 2013

	Country	No customers outside country	1-25% of customers outside country	25-75% of customers outside country	75-100% of customers outside country
ASEAN 6	Indonesia	98.8	0.8	0.4	0.0
	Malaysia	73.4	24.1	1.4	1.1
	Philippines	65.9	22.1	5.3	6.7
	Singapore	15.2	48.8	21.7	14.3
	Thailand	93.0	5.3	1.2	0.5
	Vietnam	73.4	24.1	1.8	0.7
East Asian Countries	China	81.8	17.4	0.5	0.3
	Japan	52.5	40.2	5.5	1.8
	Korea	57.9	33.0	5.8	3.3
	Taiwan	45.8	34.2	9.7	10.3

Source: GEM 2013 Thailand and Global Adult Population Survey.

Financial points to ponder

A success model is a partnership of the executive students together with an entity of the university and the established company, both providing shared seed money accelerating co-finance. Reducing risks, banks and financial services invest in professional tested business launches.

Seeking sponsorship opportunities, the incubator creates benefits in return as well as a themed incubator for a CSR project, a social enterprise or a culture & arts venture.

Entrepreneurship and Intrapreneurship

Thinking and acting entrepreneurially can be taught developing a creative mind-set, behaviour and conduct, do's and don'ts, skills to act. In addition to academia, a practical approach to entrepreneurship education is a staircase of three stepping stones of incubation:

- Entrepreneurial Creativity and Idea Generation with a Rocket Pitch in the beginning and a Team Pitch to go to the next level.
- The development of the Business Plan is accompanied by a Mentor Pitch in the beginning and a venture Pitch which leads to the third level.
- Launching Business

The benefits for the companies depend on their part of participation, e.g. as guest speakers, mentors, financial investors, strategic partners, sponsors or supporters. Getting to know the business launch and the student in practice, it serves input for the participating company and is an opportunity to become partner in the business or recruit intrapreneurs without examined loss.

Business Plan Competition

Is a business plan competition an incubator? Too narrowly considered. To incorporate my story: We won business plan competitions. And the winner is ... great attention followed by "the loneliness of the long distance runner". Incubating and accelerating is accompanying on the timeline. Bridging all stakeholders. It is not a snapshot. It is a boon companion and comrade in misfortune.

In brief

The Incubator and Accelerator promote equally future businesses, early stage businesses and established businesses for an incremental and disruptive prosper. Opportunity driven it serves as fast track assistance, necessity driven as search and rescue. A multidimensional approach, bridging enterprising academic and professional practitioners. If it didn't exist, we'd have to invent.

"If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"

Not me! Because I have no time. Because I have no one to do it. Because I have no money for this. Because I need to play golf. Because of my family, my friends, my company. Because yes, but. Because, because, because, ... - all the reasons that we nailed on the plank before our eyes – because this is the end of entrepreneurship if these reasons show cause.