Growth Academy

'Discovering the startup world'

Startup Commons

Entrepreneurship-led innovation is a positive and powerful driver to push societies forward. Startups focus this drive and energy to create and validate new innovations to find solutions for problems at various scale.

Startup Commons Global focuses on scaling entrepreneurship and innovation by working with higher education institutions and governments on local and national levels to empower and enable startup ecosystems development with training, knowledge & resources, consulting and a digital infrastructure platform to connect, measure & monitor ecosystem activities.

Why?

- There is a growing need to holistically understand the full journey of startups' development along with the service ecosystems that support this journey by connecting methods, tools and knowledge from the different stages in a systematic manner.

- Dynamic startup ecosystems breed new startups that create 2/3 of new jobs, attract international talent and foreign direct investments.

- Network connectivity within and between the ecosystems is the single most important contributor to growth.

Growth Academy

The training curriculum's target is to increase the volume of entrepreneurship and likelihood of startup success. It focuses on the acquisition of knowledge about the startups' development journey to remove or reduce the highest "universal risks", as well as to educate about optimal methods and structures for startups that are both strong and flexible to sustain failures at various levels. Most importantly, the goal is to provide reasoning and to connect with other sources and data that support the knowledge and views provided.

Module I
STARTUP JOURNEY

Module I B
Startup Advisory &
Ecosystem Training

Module II
FORMATION

Module III
VALIDATION

Module IV
SCALING

FORMATION

Mission > Vision > Strategy

- Co-founder team formation
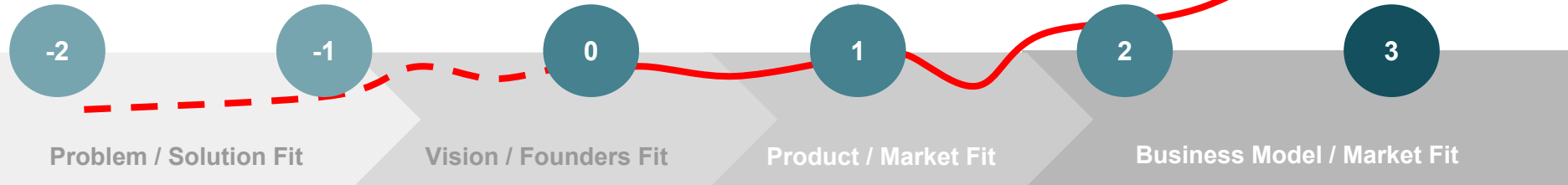- What, to whom? & Why and how?

VALIDATION

Lean Startup

Minimum Viable Product

Validate / Iterate (or pivot)

GROWTH

Scale Up

Establish & Strengthen

-2 **-1** **0** **1** **2** **3**

Problem / Solution Fit   Vision / Founders Fit   Product / Market Fit   Business Model / Market Fit

Ideating

Entrepreneurial ambition and/or potential scalable product or service idea for a big enough target market. Initial idea on how it would create value. One person or a vague team; no confirmed commitment or no right balance of skills in the team structure yet.

Concepting

Defining mission and vision with initial strategy and key milestones for next few years on how to get there. Two or three entrepreneurial core co-founders with complementary skills and ownership plan. Maybe additional team members for specific roles also with ownership.

Committing

Committed, skills balanced co-founding team with shared vision, values and attitude. Able to develop the initial product or service version, with committed resources, or already have initial product or service in place. Co-founders shareholder agreement (SHA) signed, including milestones, with shareholders time & money commitments, for next three years with proper vesting terms.

Validating

Iterating and testing assumptions for validated solution to demonstrate initial user growth and/or revenue. Initial Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) identified. Can start to attract additional resources (money or work equity) via investments or loans for equity, interest or revenue share from future revenues.

Scaling

Focus on KPI based measurable growth in users, customers and revenues and/or market traction & market share in a big or fast growing target market. Can and want to grow fast. Consider or have attracted significant funding or would be able to do so if wanted. Hiring, improving quality and implementing processes

Establishing

Achieved great growth, that can be expected to continue. Easily attract financial and people resources. Depending on vision, mission and commitments, will continue to grow and often tries to culturally continue "like a startup". Founders and/or investors make exit(s) or continue with the company.

Startup Development Phases - From idea to business and team to organization.

The **Startup Development Phases document** is a free-to-share communication tool to better understand the startup journey, identify key stages and to help develop startups from "idea to business" and from "founding team to organization" in a balanced and understandable manner.

Growth Academy's training curriculum takes a deep dive to discover the startup world through the startup development phases framework.

The first two modules (I & IB) focus on describing the holistic big picture about the startups, their related items and their journey as a whole, and the following three modules focus on each of the key parts of this journey, from formation to validation and to scaling.

Startup Ecosystem Phases

With this holistic approach, Growth Academy focuses on building a 360 degree understanding about startups and their journey through various perspectives and connects all relevant and familiar startup related topics with links to keywords, resources and tools for further self learning and to turn theory into action.

About

- The normal length of each training module is about three (3) hours, including actual training presentation & Q&A
- Each module and training is designed and presented in a way that modules can be used independently or combined depending on the budgets, target audience and stage of a startup. The contents of the associated services will be provided by the organizer in question
- Trainings can be video recorded and publishing rights granted for further internal/external use

- Training materials can be distributed to the audience and publishing rights granted for further distribution
- A separate workshop can be combined with each of the workshops to initiate taking the theories into action.
- These training modules and workshops can also be adjusted to focus on some of the subtopics in more detail or for other variations, depending on the needs and available budgets.
- For events, selected subtopics or higher level outlines can be delivered as speaker topics

Startup Advisor & Ecosystem Training

- A parallel educators/advisors (for teachers, mentors, advisors, etc.) training module is available for Module I (I B)
- For the other three modules, the same base material is used as for the broader audience, but the perspective of the training, discussion and Q&A is specific to the educators/advisors' point of view and background information. It will delve on the best ways and strategies to motivate, advise, teach or mentor talent and startups in overall and specific stages and topics.

In addition, beyond the Module I B a separate two (2) hour training session can be combined as well for internal training and Q&A for teachers, advisors or mentors, specifically for advisory and support strategies' methods.

Pricing

full package: 16 500 EUR

- Four modules of 3h trainings for selected target audience
- Four 2h advisory training extras
- Rights to distribute and reuse training materials for participants
- Rights to publish full training materials in own media channels
- Training sessions can be video recorded for further training use
- Free version updates of training presentation materials for the next 24 months

single module: 2 400 EUR

- One 3h training OR 2h advisory training extras
- Rights to distribute and reuse training materials for participants
- Rights to publish specific module training materials in own media channels
- Training session can be video recorded for further training use

Events, customized versions and extended workshops

- Up to 1h sessions/speeches free (depending on travels/availability)
- Other needs? - ask for details & pricing

Module I
STARTUP JOURNEY

Topics

- General presentation about startup development phases: from formation, to validation, to scaling. Key points from each of the stages from various perspectives (entrepreneur, team member, mentor, investor etc.)
- Key terminology: idea & innovation, entrepreneurship & startups
- Key success & failure factors

- Investors, valuation, advisors & mentors How startup stages help in building a venture
- How do investors and others view startups
- How is value built and measured in various phases
- Basic methods & tools
- Additional tools & resources for self learning

Training target

To give an overview of startups, startup development phases and startup ecosystems as the "factory" (or funnel). Communicate from various stakeholders' perspective for a holistic view: entrepreneurs', team members' (team build vs. joining a team), investors', governments', and operative support organizations'. To help shine a light on what are the most important activities to focus on from each of these perspectives at each of the development phases.

Target audience

Anyone who is interested in gaining understanding about startups and the journey it takes from idea to success and what are the typical failures and pitfalls in between. Specifically suited for those preparing to go into this journey, either by starting a venture or joining a venture already in progress, but also valuable for those working with with startups or startup related projects and activities, as well as for those looking to potentially start investing in startups as a new business angel, a crowdfunding investor or in the form of work investing (sweat equity).

Module I B
STARTUP ADVISORY
& ECOSYSTEM TRAINING

Topics

- General presentation about startup development phases (from formation, to validation to scaling) specifically from the supporters role perspective.
- Key terminology: idea & innovation, entrepreneurship & startups
- Innovation megatrends
- Why startups?
- Startup as a category

- Understanding & mapping startup ecosystems
- Public-private partnerships
- Developing startup ecosystems
- Maturity levels and measures for startup ecosystems
- Measuring and Collecting valuable data
- Use of startup data

Training target & audience

This extra module is targeted specifically for those that are working closely or associated with new entrepreneurship and startups, in a direct operative support function or as part of a wider role within the startup or innovation ecosystem —from teachers, advisors and mentors and other supporting roles to economic development agents designing funding instruments or related policies, attracting foreign direct investments or developing and managing support organizations or activities. The purpose of this training is to understand innovation and startups in a global and local context, along with targets, methods and models for startup services and broader ecosystem development.

Module II
FORMATION

Topics

- Focus on the formation phase, which is the most crucial phase for co-founding team building
- Preparing for the journey: what things to focus on and why?
- Value of ideas & how to innovate more systematically
- Building BIG visions
- Measuring potential
- Success & failure factors
- Mission, Vision & Strategy
- Co-founder team building

- Idea / team fit
- Shareholder agreement (SHA)
- Confirming team commitment
- Problem / solution fit
- Market timing and journey
- Planning in short & long term
- Evaluating opportunities
- Funding options and strategies at this stage
- Additional tools & resources for self learning

Training target

To help understand how to effectively build teams and what tools to use. How and where to identify potential team members and how to communicate to work on building the shared mission and vision. How to find best potential markets to go after and ideas to work with. Aim at BIG visions and help align interest. Finding personal motivations and drivers and ultimately confirming the commitment to capture the initial value with a shareholders agreement (SHA).

Target audience

Anyone who is interested in gaining understanding about startups and the journey it takes from idea to success and what are the typical failures and pitfalls in between. Specifically suited for those preparing to go into this journey, either by starting a venture or joining a venture already in progress, but also valuable for those working with with startups or startup related projects and activities, as well as for those looking to potentially start investing in startups as a new business angel, a crowdfunding investor or in the form of work investing (sweat equity).

Module III
VALIDATION

Topics

- Focus on product/service build and validation phase, which is the most crucial phase for future revenue and profitability generation
- What things to focus on and why?
- Defining a product and MVP
- Defining initial business model

- Customer development and future prioritization
- Extended team building and funding options
- Validation metrics
- Methods & tools
- Additional tools & resources for self learning

Training target

To understand the importance of validation, the methods that can be used, and how to build the right KPI's. What is the change in mindset that needs to happen between the previous stage and this phase? Understanding the benefit of MVP thinking, prioritization framework and tools that can be used for these. While the focus here is on validating the product/service, this is also part of validating the team's commitments. Finding enough customers to be able to validate is enough. Learning to learn. Focus on passing through this phase fast. Understanding the funding opportunities before and after launch.

Target audience

Anyone who is interested in gaining understanding about startups and the journey it takes from idea to success and what are the typical failures and pitfalls in between. Specifically suited for those entering or currently at validation stages, either as a team member or working with a startup venture at the stage of building and validating their product or service. Also valuable for those working with startups or startup related projects and activities, as well as for those looking to potentially start investing in startups, as a new business angel, a crowdfunding investor or in the form of work investing (sweat equity). Suitable also for bigger companies and R&D teams looking to connect with startups at the validation phase.

Module IV
GROWTH

Topics

- Focus on scaling phase, which is the most crucial phase for getting serious about building a real and scalable business
- What things to focus on and why?
- Business planning
- Go to market strategies
- Born global & internationalization

- Scaling metrics (KPI's)
- Recruiting
- Building processes
- Funding options
- Working with big companies
- Methods & tools
- Additional tools & resources for self learning

Training target

To understand the methods for growing an organization, learning to build processes, validating them and building teams. To delegate and get past managing to make it possible to scale. How to adjust KPI's. What is the change in mindset that needs to happen between the previous stage and this phase. Strategies of cost effective internationalization. Benefits of working with big customers. Setting yourself for exit.

Target audience

Anyone who is interested in gaining understanding about startups and the journey it takes from idea to success and what are the typical failures and pitfalls in between. Specifically suited for those entering or currently at scaling stages, either as a team member or someone working with a startup venture at this stage. Also valuable for those working with startups or startup related projects and activities, specially those related with internationalization, foreign direct investments, venture capital, or bigger companies looking to connect with startups at this stage, etc. Also for those looking to potentially start investing in startups, as a new business angel, a crowdfunding investor or in the form of work investing (sweat equity).

Background

Training modules are based on the startup development phases framework by international serial entrepreneur

Valto Loikkanen

provided by Startup Commons.

Trainer

Valto Loikkanen
International Serial Entrepreneur
Startup Ecosystem Developer

As an Entrepreneur

- 20+ years as **international Serial Entrepreneur** (US, EU, Asia) & **Portfolio Entrepreneur**, with personal hard earned **success** & **failures** (currently 10 companies)
- 20 years **experience in developing digital tools** to support various business processes
- 8 years of **developing equity crowdfunding** and **other digital investment market solutions** globally
- 8 years for **Startup Ecosystem development** combined with online support **tools, platforms & metrics**

As a Business Advisor

- 10+ years of startup mentoring
  - **2000+ one to one mentoring sessions** and workshops
  - **1000+ entrepreneurs and hundreds of startups** around the world at various development stages and industries
- 10+ years **developing Startup Support services**, with **entrepreneurial mind and lean methodology**
- 8 years of "living lab" **development for Startup Ecosystems**
- 4 years in **European Commission Horizon 2020 Advisory**:
  - Access to Risk Finance,
  - Spreading Excellence & Widening participation
  - International Cooperation

Knowledge

The knowledge shared via these trainings is based on more than twenty years of international serial entrepreneurship experience with success and failures in various business verticals, combined with more than ten years of parallel experience on startup advisory with over a thousand new entrepreneurs and developing support services, funding instruments and related policies in a local, regional and global context.

Method

By combining and refining personal learnings & experiences from past and current times, together with deep global research and discussions on related methodologies, studies, and statistics, as well as learnings from various respected international serial entrepreneurs and experts in specific methodologies, we have identified and validated most relevant patterns, factors and commonalities for building startup success by design. From bottom up, top down, side to side and in the middle perspectives. All of this while taking into account and recognizing regional, historical and cultural factors that have an impact on success factors in different regions.

Approach

The approach and process to document this knowledge is based on visualizing the top level process from nothing to success from the startup journey's perspective (i.e. not in terms of funding rounds), and on communicating the most relevant items and clearly specifying all related key terminology in order to connect innovation and organizational growth processes with a focus on universal key factors. From this holistic viewpoint we then further develop it by breaking it up into logical sub-segments and processes, each with their own clear start and finish points that help connect and outline all relevant knowledge and concepts.

Expertise

- Startup Commons have assisted national and local governments in the US, EU and Asia on policy making and developing solutions, services and instruments to nurture and grow a thriving startup culture and develop startup ecosystems with various maturity levels and population numbers in a globally connected world.

- In addition to the past six years of intense startup ecosystem research and development, the team's expertise is based on decades of personal serial entrepreneurship experiences, combined with experience in working within and with public sector organizations for startup advisory and support service development.

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about this material

- This document is part of our Startup Ecosystem Development series of tools and documentation
- Check out some related tools and documents via:
  - Startup Commons Knowledge Center
- Request for proposal for our training or workshops with full access to our full knowledge center
  - additional tools and documentation
  - full set of our training materials
  - full list of 100+ key metrics for measuring startups and startup ecosystem in sync with this material
  - constantly updated with global learnings & benchmarking

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