University of Cincinnati

Revolution UC

Project Proposal

Shyamal Ruparel
6-30-2013

1 T<small>ABLE OF</small> C<small>ONTENTS</small>

2   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This proposal provides the reasoning and information needed to launch a nontechnical hackathon that encourages participants to utilize lean startup methodology to improve the University of Cincinnati.

The purpose of this document is threefold:

1. To provide context and reasoning that explains the benefit of a nontechnical hackathon.
2. To outline the logistical details required to execute said event.
3. To identify key partners necessary to make this event a success.

The project outline provides background information that explains my experiences within the hackathon. Furthermore it gives examples of solutions to problems on campus generated by other schools that undergo similar processes.

The logistics of this event are heavily inspired by the model used by Startup Weekend & Kauffman Foundation. The event is designed to encourage momentum and foster innovation in participants.

Finally, the key partners section of the document identifies segments of the University of Cincinnati that if engaged will significantly improve the quality of output from the event.

3 PROJECT OUTLINE

3.1 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

In the past two years I've spent an increasingly larger time in the Cincinnati Startup Community. The Cincinnati Startup Community is an incredibly passionate, driven group of individuals. In the summer of 2012 Cincinnati hosted its second startup weekend. This was my first exposure to a hackathon type event.

A hackathon (also known as an apps challenge, hack day, hackfest or codefest) is an intensive marathon competition of brainstorming and computer programming that draws together the talent and creativity of software developers and designers. Startup weekend, being a more specialized hackathon, specifically consists of a 54-hour event in which developers, business managers, startup enthusiasts, marketing gurus, graphic artists and more pitch ideas for new startup companies, form teams around those ideas, and work to develop a working prototype, demo and/or presentation for the end of a weekend. In the past year I've attended 6 Startup Weekends throughout Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Texas.

I've gained a greater appreciations for the virtues of interdisciplinary collaboration. I've worked with people from multiple disciplines including Computer Science, Design, Entrepreneurship, Business, Government, and Journalism. These people have become subject matter experts in a wide array of fields including Music, Gaming, Sustainability, Yoga, Traffic Citations, Medicine, and Hardware Engineering. I've been given opportunities to experiment with multiple datasets and attempt to find valuable ways to utilize that information.

Adam Lupe of Technori eloquently describes the experience:

"There's nothing like 48 hours of obsessing over one project to get it up and off the ground, giving you a good sense of whether or not it's something you want to continue. Second, you get immediate, constructive feedback on how well you handle teamwork (and at least a couple ideas for how to handle it better). In two days you have to connect with teammates, come to a consensus on a vision, assign tasks, and make sure you're not overlapping your efforts or leaving critical pieces untouched. Then you have to show everyone in the room how well you handled yourselves in your final presentation of your work. It's everything that's good about immersive learning experiences, without the fear of getting fired or irrevocably messing up."

In January of 2013, I moved to Dallas, Texas for my final co-op rotation. As I began to engage with the startup community in Dallas one of the first events I was invited to participate in was the TEDActive Hackathon at Southern Methodist University (SMU). SMU had recently partnered with TED to host an annual TEDActive Takeover. A requirement of that partnership was hosting a hackathon. The event tasked participants to find an issues on SMU's campus and design an app to solve it. Leveraging my experiences as a member of the University of Cincinnati Undergraduate Student Government I created a mobile app, Pony Goggles that utilized Augment Reality to allow visitors to SMU's campus take a virtual tour of the campus. Pony Goggles ended up winning the event and I plan on polishing and launching the application for UC once I return to campus in the fall.

Other student applications that are continuing to be worked on after the event included applications to manage and track parking, serve as a mobile food ordering system and create conversation about the increased incidence of violence at SMU's campus. Impressed by the diversity of the applications presented, I came away with a desire to merge the spirit of entrepreneurship at an event like a startup weekend with the passion to improve the University of Cincinnati that is constantly presented by my student peers.

3.2 PROJECT PROPOSAL

At the four week mark of fall semester, UC should hold its first civic, nontechnical hackathon with the specific goals of connecting students, administration, faculty and alumni and members of the general Cincinnati Community with the common goal of improving the University of Cincinnati experience. This event would be inspired and based on the schedule and structure of a Startup Weekend. Information about the original unaltered concept can be found at: startupweekend.org/organizer/resources

Beginning with open mic pitches on Friday, attendees bring their best ideas and inspire others to join their team. Over Saturday and Sunday teams focus on customer (I.E. The University of Cincinnati Community) development, validating their ideas, practicing LEAN Startup Methodologies and building a minimal viable product. On Sunday evening teams demo their prototypes and receive valuable feedback from a panel of experts.

3.3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

3.3.1 Improve the UC Community
Provide participants an opportunity to create something that has the potential to make a positive impact on campus.

3.3.2 Education
To learn through the act of creating, prototyping and iterating.

3.3.3 Networking
Connect students, alumni, administration and the general Cincinnati community.

3.3.4 Leave your comfort zone.
Provide participants with a weekend to work with other members of multiple disciplines backgrounds.

4 LOGISTICS

4.1 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

4.1.1 Friday
- 6:30pm Registration Starts
- 7:00pm Dinner & Networking
- 7:20pm Welcome, Speakers & Rules
- 7:30pm Startup 101
- 8:00pm Pitches Start
- 9:30pm Attendees vote for the top ideas
- 9:45pm Teams start forming and discussing ideas
- 10:30pm Start to formalize teams and take an inventory of skills. Be honest, and direct about what resources and skills are needed for the weekend. You may stay and work as late as the venue will allow

4.1.2 Saturday
- 9:00am Arrive, simple breakfast & coffee
- 9:30am Teams formed and setting up workspace for the weekend
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 1:00pm Call for needs & skills
- 2:00pm Coaches help teams one-on-one.
- 6:30pm Dinner
- 7:30pm Mid weekend check-in, status reports, call for help
- 10:00pm Finished for the day. Participants may stay and work as late as the venue will allow

4.1.3 Sunday
- 9:00am Arrive, simple breakfast & coffee
- 10:00am Call for help
- 12:00pm Lunch
- 12:30pm Coaches arrive
- 3:00pm Gut check. Start prepping for presentations
- 4:00pm Dinner
- 5:00pm FINAL PRESENTATIONS
- 7:30pm Judging & awards
- 8:30pm Wrapup
- 9:00pm Go home!

4.2 RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

- Attendees shall have exactly one minute to pitch an idea. They shall not be allowed visual aids during this session
- Only ideas with no previous work will be allowed to be pitched and worked on during the weekend.
- Final Presentations will be graded based on Feasibility, Community Validation and Execution.
- Feasibility
  - Is this idea achievable?
  - What is your core value proposition?
  - What are your key activities?
  - How do you engage the community?
  - What is your roll-out strategy?
- Community Validation
  - Do you have support from members of the UC Community?
  - Will your idea make an impact at UC?
  - Are you solving a real problem?
  - Have you shown that your idea has evolved based on feedback?
- Execution
  - What has your team built, created or programmed this weekend?
  - Show the judges a tangible vision of what final version of your idea would be.
  - Prove the strengths and skills of your team.
- Final Presentations will be 5 minutes with 3 minutes for Q&A from the judges

4.3 FORMING A TEAM

During pitches each idea will be written on a large sheet of paper. Participants will be given 3 votes each and voting will occur after pitching. The top third of ideas will be selected to form teams. The participants that ideas are selected will then be given the opportunity to recruit team mates.

Teams will be encouraged to have diverse skillsets, backgrounds and connections.

4.4 COACHES

4.4.1   Coaching Criteria
Coaches should be available for one-on-one advice for teams throughout the weekend. Coaches can double as judges provided they spend an equal amount of time with each team.

Coaches are experts in the UC Community. They should be focused on enabling teams to execute on their visions. They should push teams outside of their comfort zones and ensure that teams assume nothing.

Coaches are not the decision makers of the teams, nor do they tell them right vs. wrong.

4.4.2   Suggested Coaches
- Members of the Cincinnati Startup Community
- Alumni of various student groups.
- Current Administration
- Leadership in UC Forward
- Leadership from SALD
- Entrepreneurship and/or marketing faculty

4.4.3   Confirmed Coaches
- Jerry Tsai (Former SG president/VP of Acceptd)
- Lane Hart (Former SG President/IBM)

4.5 JUDGES

4.5.1   Judging Criteria
The event will have 5 judges to evaluate final presentations on Sunday. They will be able to provide additional, valuable feedback to teams. After final presentations they should be given privacy to deliberate and be able to come to a consensus on a top three. Before the reveal the winners they should provide basic yet positive feedback to all teams.

4.5.2   Suggested Judges
- Member of the Cincinnati Startup Community
- UC Administration
- UC Forward
- Marketing or entrepreneurship professor
- Santa Ono
- Debra Merchant
- Nicole Mayo
- Previous student body president or vice president

4.5.3   Confirmed Judges
- Jerry Tsai (Former SG president/VP of Acceptd)

4.6 SPEAKERS

4.6.1 Speaking Criteria

Speakers will only occur during meal times to minimize the distraction for teams. They should provide general advice towards creating initiates, the importance of teamwork and working towards improving the University. Speakers will only occur on Saturday.

4.6.2 Suggested Speakers

- Previous executive members of Student Government
- Current UC administration.
- Members of SALD
- UC Faculty
- Members of the Startup Community

4.6.3 Confirmed Speakers

- Chris Ridenour (CTO Lisnr/Former Technology Director CEAS Tribunal) – Startup 101

5 EVENT PLANNING

5.1 DATE

The event would occur about a month into fall semester. This should give students enough time to settle into life at UC, yet occur slightly before the onslaught of pre-existing programming. If the event is successful it could be repeated the same time frame spring semester.

After further research October 4-6th seems to meet the criteria outlined above. As of this time it should be considered the tentative date.

5.2 VENUE

Either the Neioff studio or the 8th floor freshman engineering center would provide the optimal places for participants to work. They are large enough to fit a large number of people. It's also close to UC so students would be able to solicit feedback as they need it. It'll provide a great spacious place for participants to work and collaborate.

For the presentations and initial pitches I'd suggested either 645/545 Baldwin or the Main Street Cinema for providing optimal seating and projector access.

5.3 FOOD

The event should be able to provide 7 high energy meals, plus drinks and snacks over the course of the weekend.

5.4 BUDGET

- Food – Pizza, Breakfast food, Sandwich Trays, Wraps, and Appetizers and Snacks
- Drinks – Water, Coffee, Energy Drinks
- SWAG – T-Shirts
- Supplies – name-tags, markers, dry-erasers, paper, post-it notes, sketch-pads, tape, plates, napkins, utensils, etc.
- Marketing Materials – Printing Flyers.
- Prizes

Pricing TBD

5.5 SPONSORSHIPS

To keep the event free for students, the project will need to find sponsorships. Student Government, The President's Office and members of the Cincinnati Startup community will all be approached in trying to find sponsorships. This is also a route that will be taken to obtain prizes for the event and ensure judges, coaches and/or speakers.

6 MANAGING THE EVENT

6.1 ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

6.1.1 Role

Organizers should be able to ensure that all attendees have a rich, positive experience. They should be able to address attendees and manage all key process (Icebreaker, Voting & Team-Forming etc.) To be able to run this event it is encouraged that all organizers have attended a hackathon or startup weekend prior to the formation of this committee.

6.1.2 Committee Members
- Shyamal Ruparel
- Tom Meyer

6.2 FRIDAY

- Registration Table.
  - o Provide Nametags
- Guarantee enough seating
- Have Dinner available.
- Encourage mixing and mingling.
- Provide 30 and 10 minute warnings to start the event
- Encourage social media to promote the event

6.3 SATURDAY

- Send out email to all attendees providing all material presented the previous night including judging criteria.
- Forward schedule to attendees.
- Provide background information regarding speakers, coaches, and judges.
- Facilitate Coach sign-up sheet.

6.4 SUNDAY

- Reiterate judging criteria
- Obtain Prizes
- Ensure teams have done a full dry-run of the presentations
- Have a full Tech Check at least 2 hours prior to presentation.
- Brief on Presentation format (5 minutes, 3 minute Q&A)

7 MARKETING

7.1 MESSAGING

Messaging for the event should be able to provide a clear vision of the project proposal of the event. It should also be able to communicate the objectives and benefits of the event as well as information regarding prizes.

This also includes creating a brand to represent the event.

7.2 PROMOTION

A successful event will need to reach out to insure a healthy mix of attendees consisting of multiple skillsets, backgrounds and connections. The event messaging should indicate that it will be open to anyone that is a member of the UC community not just students.

The event should also have a good videographer. Should be able to produce of story of the event and prove without a doubt the benefit of this type of programming. This will be useable for future events.

8 KEY PARTNERSHIPS

8.1 STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Student government at a minimum will be approached to secure funding for the event. Support from SG will also provide publicity and will encourage student leaders to come and participate in the event. As SG contains individuals whose primary role involves representing and improving specific focus areas in the University, participation for SG membership would provide knowledgeable and passionate people who could take full advantage of the event.

8.2 PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Support from the president's office insures a high profile event. It also works as the avenue to encourage other members of UC Administration to become involved in the event.

8.3 UC FORWARD

My experience with Livewell has shown me the benefit of multidisciplinary collaboration. As an objective of the event is to insure multidisciplinary collaboration partnering with UC forward will enable refinement of the event and ensure usage of the Neioff studio. Ideally UC Forward should be able to use this event as a platform to encourage students to participate in future classes.

8.4 SALD

SALD will be able to provide feedback throughout multiple areas of campus life.

8.5 CINCINNATI STARTUP COMMUNITY

The Startup community provides insight into the lean startup methodology that the event aims to emulate. Specifically it provides knowledge regarding the process of creating a minimal viable produce, the benefits of conducting market research and obtaining customer validation. It also teaches efficient public speaking skills and provides a great opportunity for students to create and pitch ideas to members of the Cincinnati community.

9 REFERENCES

Lupu, A. (n.d.). *Just the Beginning: Lessons From a Hackathon.* Retrieved from TechNori:
http://technori.com/2012/05/1808-just-the-beginning-lessons-from-a-hackathon/

Startup Weekend. (n.d.). *Organizer's Guide*. Retrieved from Startup Weekend:
http://startupweekend.org/organizer/resources/