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Startup Genome
Processes,
Instruments and
Metrics for Early
Stage Ecosystems
(v1.0)

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Engaging Local Partners

Steps to Building Local Partnerships

Step 1: Identify Potential Local Partners

After selecting metro cities to research, identify interviewees and potential promotional partners (not mutually exclusive) in each chosen city.

- ☐ Identify personal network connections in each city and ask them to bridge introductions.
- ☐ Conduct an online search for each city. Review articles, websites, Meetup Groups and ecosystem guides to create a contact list of the leadership of at least 15 active organizations in each metro.
- ☐ The leader chosen to contact in each organization should be based on who holds the widest view of their organization and close relationships with the startups involved. So a Program Director would be chosen over an organization's Board Chair.
- ☐ There should be one person per ecosystem leading the entire data collection process and being the single point of contact for the city.
- ☐ Active organizations found within the search are divided up into categories
 - ☐ Accelerators
 - ☐ Incubators
 - ☐ Educational Institutions
 - ☐ Venture Capital Funds
 - ☐ Individual Investors
 - ☐ Chamber of Commerce
 - ☐ Coworking Spaces
 - ☐ Startup Media Outlets
 - ☐ Meetup Groups
 - ☐ Large Repeat Events
 - ☐ SBA / SBDC Chapter
 - ☐ Local Startups
- ☐ These organizations are then put into two relationship segments
 - ☐ Interview ask only - local startups/VC Funds/Individual investors/SBA/SBDC
 - ☐ Interview and promotional partnership ask - all other organization types listed above
- ☐ Once dates of travel to each metro are chosen, research events that potential partners and the broader community are throwing to attend during trip.

- ☐ Based on the leadership, space and event research, create a document tailored for each city that gives more context.
 - ☐ Synopsis of project
 - ☐ How the region will benefit
 - ☐ Overview of research process
 - ☐ What a partnership entails
 - ☐ Current list of potential interviewees, spaces to visit, and events to attend while in town (so the recipient can identify who/what is missing from the list)

Step 2: Reach Out And Meet With Local Partners

The initial outreach into the startup ecosystems focuses on recruiting promotional partners, getting local buy-in, generating excitement, getting referrals, setting up in person interviews, and answering questions about the project.

- ☐ Send an initial tailored email to both relationship segments
 - ☐ Interview ask only - local startups/VC funds/individual investors
 - ☐ Inform them of project
 - ☐ Interview ask with date range of trip and link to schedule
 - ☐ Interview and promotional partnership ask - all other organization types
 - ☐ Inform them of project
 - ☐ Interview ask with date range of trip and link to schedule
 - ☐ Ask to partner - make inroads to other leaders the interviewer should meet with, advise on spaces to visit, review event list and offer suggestions on other events to attend and events to sponsor, and push out the startup survey to their organization's network.
 - ☐ Attach an MOU (template in MOU section) for review
 - ☐ Attach the City-Centric opening document to give more background on the project
- ☐ Email messaging varies with the quality of contact information available.
 - ☐ Interview ask only
 - ☐ Promotional partnership ask
 - ☐ Email where we have name and personal email
 - ☐ Sending to catch all email address with a lead on who to interview
 - ☐ Sending to catch all email address with no lead on who to interview
 - ☐ Contact us form

Step 3: Discuss partnership and MOU in-person with interviewees

During the trip, the interviewer should discuss the partnership with each appropriate interviewee. This in-person discussion at the end of the interview puts the potential partner at ease and allows them to bring up roadblocks that the interviewer can respond to in real time.

Step 4: Getting MOU's signed post-interview

- ☐ If the partner did not sign a hard copy before the conclusion of the interview, follow up immediately after interview with a thank you note and a reminder of the MOU.

Step 5: Following up once an MOU is signed (the partnership promotional phase)

- ☐ Send an email response immediately after they sign and send the MOU, thanking them for their partnership and requesting their logo.
- ☐ If a metro is slow to hit 50 surveys, ask for help from organizations an MOU isn't appropriate for - like VC Funds, Individual Investors, Private Foundations. Include the one page of promotional copy.

Survey Data Collection

Additional Tactics for Survey Data Collection

Event Participation and Sponsorship

When first socializing the project to partners it's an act of mutual investment in their time and effort to offer a small local event sponsorship in the area. The event sponsorship is also an avenue to garner additional survey responses.

- ❑ Each partner is approached in the initial interview and promotional partnership email ask to recommend a local event with a startup founder audience, occurring before the survey deadline.
- ❑ In this research sprint, only a few people responded with leads and the best fit was a \$350 sponsorship for Innovate413.com's Founders Meetup in Springfield, MA. The main event organizer addressed the audience about her own experience as a startup founder taking the survey and urged the group to do the same. 10-minutes were allotted at the end of the event for founders to take it in real time.
- ❑ If surveys were attributed to partners (via tracking links), sponsorship could be contingent on survey responses gathered from the event - using ipads on site.

Direct Startup Outreach

Emailing startups directly and asking them to take the survey gave the project a boost in the final days of survey collection.

- ❑ Email the startups interviewed in the qualitative collection.

Appendix and Tools

Memorandum of Understanding Template

Please see attached documents for MOU template.

Entrepreneurship Support Organizations Tools

- Ecosystem 360 Rubric

Please see Ecosystem 360 Rubric, attached

- Organization Structured Interview Guide

Please see, attached