50 Startups, 5 days, 1 Bootcamp at MIT to Change the World

Cambridge, MA – August 28, 2014 – MIT has just concluded an experiment in blended learning which could reshape existing educational paradigms. The program brought together students from around the world. First, they took an online course in entrepreneurship, and then immersed themselves on campus – to learn how to create a startup.

MIT brought 47 out of 54,856 students enrolled in the _MITx on edX_ course "15.390x Entrepreneurship 101: Who is Your Customer?" to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for the inaugural _MITx_ Global Entrepreneurship Bootcamp from August 18-22, 2014. The bootcamp was an experiment by MIT to help edX students further their online education in Cambridge, MA to learn from not only MIT professors but also likeminded people from around the world.

"You take a course. You learn the material. Then, you come here and you participate in the magical experience, and you get value out of it. I'm over the moon to see that we can actually share this experience [with people] who might not have that opportunity," says Sanjay Sarma, Director of the Office of Digital Learning at MIT.

All told, 47 people from 22 countries, including a medical doctor, a technical director of Halo 4, and an Olympian, reported for bootcamp. Their educational backgrounds ranged from a man who never went to college to a Harvard Law graduate. Half of the inaugural Bootcamp class met each other over Facebook before the bootcamp started and launched an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for the bootcamp. One bootcamp participant even sold his car so he wouldn't miss the opportunity. For three students MIT awarded full scholarships that covered the tuition, travel and accommodations.

"It was an incredibly creative and a remarkable experience not just for the students but for all of us involved at _MITx_ and edX," said Anant Agarwal, CEO of edX. "We had an amazing group of students. They were extraordinarily inspiring. They are what make us want to get up in the morning and do what we're doing."

After taking the 15.390x online course taught by Bill Aulet, managing director of the Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship, the bootcamp participants were challenged to start a company in a week at MIT. On August 22, 2014, nine teams pitched their startup ideas before a panel of judges. UpLook, a startup to turn fashion blogs into retail outlets, won first place; followed by ONBO, a personal consulting startup; then Elio, a startup to sell data collected by drones to Brazilian farmers. Right after the bootcamp ended, two teams indicated that they would continue working on their startups that were incubated at the bootcamp.

"You can run an online course and get 55,000 people. In a relatively short period of time, bring them to have a face-to-face meeting, and then energy is unleashed," says Bill Aulet, managing director of the Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship.

"To me, it's the meritocracy. It's not who you know because anybody can get onto a MOOC. It's what you know and how bad do you want that."

About MITx
MITx is a bold MIT educational initiative with the power to transform residential education, to provide MIT courses to the world, and to enable unprecedented insights into the science of learning. The *MITx* program supports MIT's exploration of teaching approaches enabled by digital technologies, both on the MIT campus and through courses on the edX platform. With *MITx*, MIT is furthering MIT's tradition of innovation, and leading and reinventing education.

About edX
EdX is a nonprofit, open source enterprise offering online courses from more than 50 member institutions, comprised of both leading global universities and a diverse group of prominent organizations around the world. Founded by Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, edX is focused on transforming online and on-campus learning through groundbreaking methodologies, game-like experiences and cutting-edge research on an open source platform. Based in Cambridge, MA, USA, edX is focused on people, not profit.

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