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Assignment: Event #1

Course:

Instructor:

Institution:

Event: Startup Week Las Vegas, September 17, 2025

Talks Attended:

Fueling the Future: Deep Tech & the NSF Regional Innovation Engine Opportunity

The Path to Profitability: How Operational Excellence Fuels Funding and Sustainable Growth

Assignment Details:

Write up a few paragraphs **about what you learned**. Please don't summarize.  I want to know what you took away from the event.  Include a picture of the event if possible.

Fueling the Future: Deep Tech & the NSF Regional Innovation Engine Opportunity

Notes: company name waver last year college of engineer. Free tree frogs building 10000 gallon yields. Water. Funding from futures engine direct to UNLV catalyst engine competition. Roseman campus. Zero labs. Million revenue first year.  
  
Priorities for utility water needs. Private foundations. Challenges priorities unique. Technologies utilized pilot funds support solutions that are from local start ups. Water business is slow and risk averse. Secort is sector is actually asking for well defined milestones and sector needs.  
  
Customer service failures able to support that project.  
  
Federal grants available. Deep tech. Private sector not tech risk. Private. Sbir sba funding. Doe . Multiple phases disable analysis. Prototype and. National science foundation. High likely hood of usefulness SBIR . Research is commercially viable. Deep tech. 1 stem students commercializing. 2. Over time culture changes. 3. Maybe start some companies.  
  
Icore exits. Load balancing  
  
Milestones. Deep tech. Must guild of is echo chamber hype. Reality when customers begin to value. Paid transactions validate. Companies why does the company need to be built here. Ecosystem supporters why project satisfy those to answers.  
  
Start up venture. Findable deals in the ecosystem. Good deals always find money. Eco system lots of money. Number of fundable deals.  
  
Battleborn growth escalator. Money is federal. Ssbc small state business credit. Fund named 1864. Deep tech research at UNLV.1  
  
Trains angel conference accredited investors into angel investors. Angel conference 1864 is a seed fund. Angel does Nevada deals only.  
  
Unicorn yield. Top 5.  
  
Sloan. Becoming ian lp. Founders. Investors want to invest in deals. Founders have targeted. Invest in your deals. Find what they invest in. If no one is investing. Look in the mirror. Gatekeepers. They are looking to invest.  
  
Richard Sloan waver student. Unlv platform. Stepup startup Alejandro. Job posting.  
  
Rebel venture fund very small. Grants. NSF. National. Rpe. Foia. Arpa.e.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
Commercializing deep technologies such as AI, advanced materials, biotechnology, and clean energy requires more than breakthrough ideas. It takes coordinated support, access to capital, and strong regional infrastructure. The NSF Regional Innovation Engine is designed to help regions like Nevada build these ecosystems by transforming cutting-edge research into real world impact.  
This session brings together leaders in research, innovation, and regional development to show how Nevada businesses and researchers can participate in the NSF Engine ecosystem. You will learn what qualifies as deep tech, how the Engine supports commercialization, and how our panelists are laying the groundwork for regional collaboration.  
Discussion Highlights:  
  
What the NSF Regional Innovation Engine means for Nevada startups  
How to access non-dilutive and catalytic capital in deep tech  
Building university, industry, and government collaborations  
Practical steps for engaging with NSF Engine initiatives.

Notes:  
  
fractional CFO quantify svb . Dry powder. Dried. Up . Priorities changed afterward. For us shift from growth at all costs to profitability.  
  
Contribution margin. . From comparison of gross margin breakdown. . Unit economics. Unit economics .  
  
Metrics.  
  
Profitability hack.  
  
Pricing.  
  
Profitability mindset.  
  
Pricing raise until 20 percent say no. Unit economics.  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
Learn about defining operational excellence in the context of profitability, building a profitability roadmap, operational excellence as a fundraising magnet, and case studies on profitable startups and their funding success. Having helped founders raise over $40 million, Shondra understands the evolving demands of today's investment landscape. Investors are prioritizing business fundamentals, with a clear path to profitability being a top criterion.