



Little Kanga jumps on board to grow Innovation Space



Overview

Innovation Space opened two years ago, as a result of a University of Portsmouth initiative to create a shared office space for start-ups and those small businesses which had outgrown the kitchen table; yet were not entirely self-sufficient. Ones which would benefit from collaboration and not working in total isolation.

From five businesses it's grown to more than 50 working out of the Hampshire Terrace site in Portsmouth. Ranging from full-time desk membership to using a hot desk quota or taking private offices.

As well as a registered business mail address, wifi and student discounts (as Innovation Space is

part of the University), they find help and support from within their community, something vital when it comes to motivation during early days when a start-up is at the highest risk of failure.

University resources include access to bid funding (which may be applicable), staff expertise and a pool of student workers, therefore Innovation Space adds value in ways which go well beyond 'recruit a student on a placement'.

What exists here will inspire a future generation of graduates, but opening that gateway and making connections has taken time and is a challenge which required professional marketing expertise.

Building the links to experts

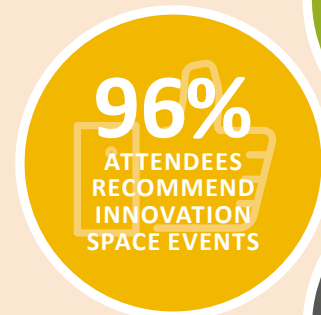
The University can undertake many things for businesses which benefit the local (and regional) economy, but key to blending talent and resources is to have certain conversations at the appropriate time.

Operations manager at Innovation Space, Andy Mew, introduced Wednesday early evening one-hour learning support sessions – covering everything from writing a business plan, developing a marketing strategy, cashflow, budgeting and forecasting, HR guidance, copyright/trademarks, PR and social media – topics which are relevant, but Andy added the personal touch, a speaker with time to provide bespoke answers to even the most simple of questions.

This is part of the University's wider commitment to supporting regional start-ups and ties in with the work of its Business School.

Building upon these popular and successful sessions, Andy brought in Little Kanga sales and marketing consultancy for the next stage.

Outcomes and KPI's



Implementing a cohesive message

In the past year, Becky Lodge, founder of Little Kanga, a Venus Awards' finalist (Portsmouth New Business of the Year 2016) and an Innovation Space resident, has worked on a rolling 12-month plan to bring that community vibe which exists within the walls to the Innovation Space website and beyond.

Harnessing her sales and marketing expertise, she encouraged Innovation Space to implement a cohesive message across all digital platforms, its printed material and social media commentary/postings.

Becky is behind the successful drive to put Innovation Space users in touch with potential supply chains and has encouraged them to build links through not only workshops, but also a wider range of free seminars and events which draw start-ups together in the city.

Becky's sales strategy has involved **'ask, build and collaborate'** – which could be dubbed her own ABC mantra for Innovation Space. In time, the people she has helped may choose to view it as **'acquire buyers and consolidate'**.

Succeeding through take up

Innovation Space's sales, marketing and promotional strategies are now tied together, which means the centre is converting leads into new community members.

Andy continued: "What we did in the past was ad hoc, but this is a much better campaign and has been well received. It's a case of Innovation Space and our member businesses learning from Becky.

" We like working with Becky because she brings knowledge which empowers businesses to tackle crucial areas by themselves – costs, ROI, assessing successes and failures, sales and marketing – and they have made it part of their day-to-day routine. Consequently they're much stronger, they understand why they are doing certain things and then seeing results."

Looking ahead

In 2017, Innovation Space wants to increase longer term tenant members. The University is opening a second business centre, Cellblock Studios in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, and, as it owns the Technopole, wishes to bring these various centres together by acting as a facilitator. A Future Technology centre with a manufacturing bias (3D printing and prototypes for example) is also planned.

Andy concluded: "We want to retain more of our graduates in this city. If there are opportunities, graduates will stay, as seen in other major university cities in England, therefore we need to find out what they want and where we can help them.

" We've gone from one business space to what will be four in three years. Some start-ups need space to work, some are market disruptors, others are creatives. We will continue to use the strength of the University to bring them together and I am thoroughly proud of what we have achieved."

What we did

A planned cohesive marketing strategy including buyer personas

A successful sales strategy resulting in 500% uplift in sales

Defined strategy and implementation campaign for social media

Measurable advertising options to measure ROI

Full scoping and writing of a clear sales process and sales management process

What clients say about Little Kanga

" Thank you for your great workshop on Twitter, you have changed my life!"

Fiona Willis, Link – Ages

" Becky gave us some great marketing advice and once we've implemented the ideas discussed, the return on investment will easily cover the cost of the meeting."

Jason Meads, Creative Element

Jump to it

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