

International Symposium 2008

Creative Construct: Building for Culture and Creativity

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www.symposium2008.ca

It is a challenge to find businesses that will support the MG financially. The creative/new media projects are perceived as being too risky for investment. In addition, there is a tension between control of the creators and the venture capitalists. Investors will want more control (example, in the selection of project teams) and will want a share of the equity, or the intellectual property. However, the centre could not survive with only government funding. It is not just a case of needing a sponsor. The business community is seeing that the models of innovation can help their business. The relationship is beginning to grow, and this is seen as an important next step.

The MG acts as place of expertise, and a way of passing specialized expertise on to new innovators. It is very important for the creative industries to have a place where they can escape corporate entities or influence.

3. Notable examples and links to websites

MIT FAB LAB - www.fab.cba.mit.edu/about

Media Guild website - www.mediaguild.com

4. Interesting questions and/or comments from the audience

Q: What is a digital hub? Is it a cluster? Is there something different about it being a digital hub that makes it different from being a ceramics hub?

A: This is the first time we've started to describe ourselves as a digital hub. Why is a hub different than a cluster? The hub is the centre of the cluster - there must be a centre on which to focus.

Q: What is the master-apprentice ratio within the hub?

A: Almost 1 to 1. 30 hours a year, top consultants to do this for free.

Q: Do you use the masters to do workshops?

A: No, the internal staff does it for legal and compensatory reasons.

Q: Can you talk about scale that works best?

A: Scale – can only talk about what MG has done – the scale works really well. Wouldn't want to go bigger or smaller at this point. Open plan system works well for them – The space is not too loud, there is interruption, but it's not too large, or unmanageable.

Q: Was it a conscious decision to have an incubation cycle of 1 year? How does this quick pace work, are you moving to long term?

A: 1 year – Initially we went for a certain kind of funding - pre-C funding. This is funding for things that are falling through the cracks. We are trying to pick up ideas that no one else is picking up, to get them to the business plan prototype stage, and then they have to move on to develop the idea in a more classic incubator. Also, there is pressure for competition. Since then to look out for economic sustainability, we have had to consider taking in C level projects, as it is extremely difficult to get funding for pre-C ideas.

Q: What is the smallest scale of team? What happens in the final stages, documentation and marketing?

A: The smallest team is 2, biggest is 5. They are not companies/incorporated at this stage. In principal they can be a company if they want to. At the end of the year if it looks as though a project team can carry on, the project will continue under the contract they originally signed, if funding can be found, etc. The MG will do their best to look after them at this point. If they end up making the project and it makes a lot of money, the team can buy the MG out as soon as they're able to afford it.

Note taker: Allison Collins