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## COMOX VALLEY SESSIONS

### ROUND 1 | October 18-19, 2017 | North Island College, Courtenay

#### **Day 1 | Presentation & Discussion**

##### **Tech Talk CV | October 18, 2017 | 2-4pm**

Join Graham Truax, Executive in Residence with Innovation Island, for an informative [rollercoaster] discussion about the tech sector; how it's wired, where it's going, what's happening within our region, and where we can all play a role. Bring your tin-foil hats, blockchain ledger and get ready for some fun Q&A!

#### **Day 2 | Rethink Series - Sessions 1+2**

##### **Refresh Your Minimum Viable Product | October 19, 2017 | 9am-12pm**

*Level-up Your Business Model and Tweak Your Positioning Statement*

Positioning is the most discussed but least understood component of marketing. When done right it manifests the heart and soul of your organization and sets the strategy for success. The MVP methodology is a product development discipline that helps to shape what will resonate with early-adopter customers who will champion your efforts far more than you may expect! In today's marketplace it is simply not enough to have a great positioning statement, MVP, dedicated team or large market opportunity – you also need a disruptive business model. Learn how these components come together in one canvas.

##### **Customer Discovery | October 19, 2017 | 1-4pm**

*Identify new markets, buyer types, value propositions and understand the rules of TALC*

Knowing your market and buyer type [better & deeper] changes how you evaluate customer needs and helps to better position your product; often resulting in dramatically different sales and marketing strategies. Many new products & services focus prematurely on the “mainstream” market opportunity; the Technology Adoption Life Cycle (TALC) explains the demographic and psychological characteristics of the all-important early adopters. Work with the Value Proposition Canvas is to better understand the customer pains and gains of your product/service. Use the four-step Customer Development framework to discover and validate product-market fit.

## **ROUND 2 | November 22-23, 2017 | North Island College, Courtenay**

### **Day 1 | Information Session**

#### **Funding Sources for Startups | November 22, 2017 | 2-4pm**

There are many funding and support programs that can help startup entrepreneurs and small and medium businesses grow and scale. This informative session will review the programs and funding sources that innovative startups can tap into and what is required to access these initiatives.

### **Day 2 | Rethink Series - Sessions 3+4**

#### **Challenge Your SWOT | November 23, 2017 | 9am-12pm**

*Learn from, embrace or usurp the competitive landscape*

Understanding both your personal and business Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) can provide a full picture of your Product, Brand, Team or Company ~ and actionable strategies for driving your business forward! Employee simple Competitive Intelligence techniques to support strategic decisions and increase competitiveness. The practice of CI can inform your MVP, customer development process and overall marketing plan.

#### **Pivot or Persevere | November 23, 2017 | 1:30-4:30pm**

*The fine art of enduring and the hard thing about hard things*

Almost all Startups pivot on some part of their business model after founding. Pivots are why Startups must be agile and lean but they don't necessarily mean a change in vision or mission. Ask most entrepreneurs who have decided to pivot and they will tell you that they wish they had made the decision sooner! In considering to pivot or persevere it is important to ask Why? Learn the basics of Root Cause and Decision Analysis to separate the status quo from often superior alternative courses of action.

## **ROUND 3 | January 17-18, 2018 | North Island College, Courtenay**

### **Day 1 | Workshop**

#### **The Relationship Business | January 17, 2018 | 2-4pm**

*Expand your network and increase serendipity*

Business is about people. Embrace the differences and **similarities** between customers, partners, employee, investor and supplier relationships. Make healthy interpersonal communication your secret sauce! Strengthen your emotional intelligence, build, foster or repair key relationships and be stronger/faster/better as a result. Add a little introversion to your extroversion and a little extroversion to your introversion!

### **Day 2 | Rethink Series - Sessions 5+6**

#### **Team Building | January 18, 2018 | 9am-12pm**

*Strategic partnering, joint ventures and creative collaborations*

In today's distributed world of dynamic business models, API's, open-source, creative-commons and social networking the road to Startup or SMB success can be complex. Learn where and when to use EOI's, LOI's or MOU's and how best to respond to RFP's, RFQ's or perhaps even early-stage M&A scenarios! Understand the basics of negotiating a definitive agreement and be aware of legal considerations, ownership of work-product and intellectual property. Live and foster the Team acronym ~ Together Everyone Achieves More!

#### **The Pros & Cons of Bootstrapping | January 18, 2018 | 1-4pm**

*Evaluate various financing instruments and leverage the crowd*

Many tech-based Startups and SMB's self-fund product development and launch by bootstrapping or early-revenue generation. All good! However, for growth requirements under the rapidly moving and competitive landscape of SaaS and Freemium pricing models Angel or Venture financing may need to be considered. Product and/or equity Crowdfunding alternatives will also be explored. Learn the importance of timing, key metrics and how to make a bigger pie!

## **ROUND 4 | February 21-22, 2018 | North Island College, Courtenay**

### **Day 1 | Information Session**

#### **Startup 101: Crash Course | February 21, 2018 | 2-4pm**

For founders and CEO's of early-stage ventures (or those who want to be) who need straight-shooting insight on what's required to turn IDEAS into a thriving TECH COMPANY. Startup 101 will provide best practices and valuable resources that you can use immediately!

### **Day 2 | Rethink Series - Sessions 7+8**

#### **Are You Ready to Scale? | February 22, 2018 | 9am-12pm**

*Set SMART goals and build a solid corporate foundation for next-stage growth*

Congratulations, you've nailed your MVP, done a few Pivots, have defined your customer development process, built an awesome Team and have achieved recurring revenues ~ what's next? Perhaps you have accomplished these milestones by bootstrapping or early-stage finance? Is your house in order to scale beyond this? Perhaps institutional financing is now a serious consideration? Make sure the foundation is in place to weigh your best options.

#### **How to Pitch and Present | February 22, 2018 | 1-4pm**

*Pitching is essentially sales. It's more art than science*

Even with the best team, technology and resources your products or ideas will not sell themselves. Learn about the importance of Positioning to manifest the heart and soul of your venture and to inform the bigger picture. Master your Elevator pitch, understand the rules of the game (business baseball) and learn how to project a fearless reality distortion field. Use simple time-tested structures to build a killer pitch deck and if circumstances are right use the reverse pitch!

