

BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)
Case Studies and Prizes in Commercial Space (1)

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STARTUPWEEKEND SPACE: KICKSTARTING NEW SPACE VENTURES IN 60 HOURS

Abstract

Entrepreneurial environments with abundant access to mentorship, networking and financing opportunities have led to the creation of innovative and successful business ventures in many sectors. Comparable environments dedicated to the space sector are however inadequately widespread and poorly accessible. This paper introduces StartupWeekend Space, an intense three day event that occurred on the 10th to the 12th of April 2015 simultaneously in Bremen, Germany and Shanghai, China. The event provided 60 to 80 participants from all backgrounds a risk-free environment for pitching and validating their space business ideas. During the three days, teams were formed and ideas re-iterated. Mentors with significant technical, managerial, entrepreneurial and policy experience guided the participants through the iteration process. The event ended with a short five minute pitch to a panel of judges followed by a prize ceremony. A number of workshops and keynote speeches were held during the event providing participants with critical skills and motivation needed to succeed within the space sector. Statistics from the event and an analysis showcasing the differences and commonalities of key aspects at the two locations are presented. Following StartupWeekend Space, future plans are being considered including the possibility of expanding the scope and number of events, the founding of a dedicated organization and the creation of a seed accelerator to support early stage space ventures.