

Innovation at Work - Alcatel-Lucent's WebTV Transcript Episode 4/2009 - Entrepreneurial Boot Camps

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

For them - it's the big day. They're on the home stretch of the 'Défi Entreprendre', the French version of the Entrepreneurial Boot Camps created by Alcatel-Lucent in Belgium in 2006. Launched six months earlier, the second season has selected five innovative ideas from five teams.

Today's the final presentation of the projects in front of a jury.

Jean-Luc BEYLAT

Jury Member and President, Alcatel-Lucent Bell Labs France

First, it's an important day for the teams because they are working since two months very intensively, night and day. For these people it's the final day and they are ready now to deliver the presentation and to motivate people. Also, for Alcatel-Lucent it's important because we have this evening to select one project that could create a new market tomorrow for Alcatel-Lucent.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

The competition is a kind of laboratory where hot talent can be quickly spotted within Alcatel-Lucent and potentially steer the company in a new direction.

Wesley COLE

Director of Innovation, Alcatel-Lucent Ventures

There are many different ways to bring a new product to the market at Alcatel-Lucent. And the unique aspect of the Boot Camp is that it provides a forum for cross-disciplinary teams to come together that might not otherwise work together.

Olivier LECLERC

Director Entrepreneurial Initiatives, Alcatel-Lucent

Actually this is just to provide an accelerated means for those people having new kind of innovation, technical innovation basically at the beginning to really address the market as fast as possible.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

But before getting there, the participants first need to take a specialized training course - let's go back a few weeks.

We're in Paris - at ESCP-Europe - one of the most prestigious management schools in France.

All the participants of the Entrepreneurial Boot Camps have attended an MBA-like crash course. Whether they work in marketing, engineering or in law - all of them have had to step into the shoes of an entrepreneur.

In just three sessions, professor Jacqueline Fendt teaches them how to create a business model, do a market study, convince investors and find customers for their project.

Jacqueline FENDT

[TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH]

You don't need to go into detail there...

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

Pretty intense...

Luc DAANS

Project « The Internet of Energy »

We all have a daily job so this is on top. And it's our energy and our wish to make it happen that overcomes the difficulty of having both jobs at the same time - but it's challenging.

Jacqueline FENDT

And that in fact a kind of entrepreneurial test, you know. Will they stand it or will they abandon? So it's like a sort of prize, an entry prize into the entrepreneurial world.

Jacqueline FENDT

[TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH]

Every interaction, each situation, every opportunity you have to learn is vital. A true entrepreneur craves feedback.

Jacqueline FENDT

We really believe in this kind of process because it unleashes a potential of innovation within an organization.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

Now - back to the grand final

The teams' efforts come down to the presentation of their business plan. They've got 15 minutes to convince the jury and then answer to their questions. No stone is left unturned...

Wesley COLE

Jury Member, Director of Innovation, Alcatel-Lucent Ventures

Is there something you need about cross network communication that you could provide?

Jean SCHMIDT

Jury Member, Venture Capitalist, Sofinnova

Can you not do something, which is better, and which would improve lives, something which would be monetized in a better way?

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

The jury is made up of members of Alcatel-Lucent's Innovation Board as well as actual Investors. They represent investment funds that specialize in the telecommunications markets.

François-René LETOURNEUR

Jury Member, Venture Capitalist « I-Source »

Should Alcatel-Lucent decide to either spin off or create a specific venture for this company we would definitely be in contact with them to know how the project is building, bring our point of view, refine the project and definitely adding value to it.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

This man knows the drill. Frédéric Wauquiez has come today to encourage his colleagues. A few months ago, he was in their shoes. The project his team were representing won the last season of Défi Entreprendre. Their aim is to create the first commercial wireless base station to use renewable energies - wind, solar or fuel cells. A world first Lab and Pilot station has been operational since spring 2009, and the complete services range is ready for large scale deployment.

Frédéric WAUQUIEZ

Project « Alternative Energy Program »

... we are in very strong talks with a lot of customers. And so what we are doing right now is really gathering the team so that we are able to answer these very strong customer demands.

We certainly could not be where we are today without the Entrepreneurial Boot Camp. The Boot Camp has been something tremendous in bringing us visibility, both internally and externally and also helping us to build a very strong business case to help gather the resources that are needed.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

Suspense - the jury is deliberating...

All the projects are innovative... new applications for Internet or radio networks, energy management solutions, revolutions in advertising or new ways to shop... the choice is hard.

Jean-Luc BEYLAT

The winner is ... Contact Me My Way!

Paul LABROGERE

Project "Contact Me My Way"

I met so many interesting people and being a part of this adventure of course changes you. I feel like I am a member of a community of entrepreneurs.

Olivier LECLERC

We've got one winner, one best award. Of course these teams should have a future within Alcatel-Lucent or around Alcatel-Lucent. But all four projects that are remaining also find a way of being valorized in Alcatel-Lucent.

Hugh SCHOFIELD (voice over)

The third season of Défi Entreprenre has already been launched in France. At the same time the Boot Camps are continuing in Belgium and last June they began in North America. In 2010, these competitions could be launched in India or China. The quest for innovation continues on all fronts.