5 Reasons to Launch Your Startup in a University



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Time is inexorable. Pervading everything, it draws our world into the whirlpool of its motion. It seemed only yesterday that first-year students had begun their studies, and now they are facing the last stage of the defense of their thesis, and the door to the new world is opening.

How comfortable and predictable this world will be depends not only on the level of knowledge but on their ability to apply it. Other components like character, intelligence and circumstances also play an important role in shaping the trajectory of their professional life.

For this reason, graduates are eager to start their own businesses or link up with startups they feel a connection to.

Last year, startups linked with Stanford University raised $76.7 billion in VC investments. In addition, there’s a new movement for companies to start closing the skills gap by training employees in-house.

Startups can take advantage of both of these situations by linking up with a strong university and launching alongside the college. There are many benefits to developing a relationship with a well-established university, but these five reasons are linked to more growth, innovation, long-term success and overall profitability.

1. Students are willing to learn and share their experiences

The talent shortage is something all companies are dealing with. Every business needs more people who mesh with their values and are open to new experiences. When you recruit from a university, you’re looking at a pool of bright, ambitious, talented, open-minded young people their institution has already vetted. These employees tend to stay a lot longer, and they already have an excellent understanding of the company‘s values and culture. This combination means a happier team that’s excited to stay over the long-term.

University students possess an openness and willingness to share knowledge that makes them valuable employees. Today’s student becomes tomorrow’s star employee who, in turn, comes back to the university to bring your brand’s values to a new generation. This cycle of knowledge transfer is an excellent mechanism for developing mentorship skills in your team.

In my experience, all of the best students who quickly grew from junior to lead positions were always the most eager to pass on their knowledge. They’re the ones most passionate and motivated about organizing courses and company events at the university.

Companies that look for super talents and immediately set them up for success are an excellent example of this. The rates of career advancement and employee value are record-breaking.

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2. Education is an ideal environment for your brand

Associating your brand with education and progress is always beneficial from a PR standpoint. Companies that display a willingness to teach and invest in future generations earn great respect from outside observers.

Organizing master classes, individual lectures, workshops and other events at the university will always generate lots of positive media attention, so it’s a tremendous social impact investment. Plus, the time dedicated to transferring knowledge and experience (an intangible that cannot be bought) is a priceless investment.

In addition, it’s highly profitable. Cultivating student value is perfectly in line with the lean methodologies, since the value you get from the students costs virtually nothing. The existing university structure is also an ideal testing ground for hypothesis testing or castdev with minimal resource investment from your company.

3. Investing in education helps your social mission

In today’s world, we either work for a paycheck or work to change the world. In my experience, most companies are now motivated by the latter reason. Money is no longer enough for most workers, especially the younger generations.

But the world is changing anyway, regardless of our

willingness or participation. If we are not changing the world for the better, someone else is changing it in a direction that may very well not be very comfortable for us, for our present and our future. Most workers, especially the younger generation, almost never have enough money. Studying and participating in the company's up-and-coming businesses will increase the employee's rating and performance.

The most successful companies are able to help both the individual and the entire team feel connected to a higher purpose, such as teaching and developing future generations and thus developing the company in the long run.

There are several effective ways to invest in education, such as:

- Grants for student projects
- Mentorship opportunities
- Personal scholarships/sponsorships
- Courses that give top students access to paid internships
- Participation in academic competitions

It's also worth noting that solid universities attract other businesses that can become potential partners or customers. Becoming involved in university networking is helpful for the development of new collaborative relationships.

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4. It strengthens the internal

company culture

Welcoming new team members who have been trained through courses organized by the company means that the brand's values and mission will already inspire these people. Since these young people will likely be our future managers, team leads and top analysts, it's ideal for them to already feel motivated and inspired by the corporate culture.

These students are the ambassadors of the brand. I call them the "skeleton" of an organization, because they are the basis of the company and what keeps it together. When students can take company courses at the university or get involved with company projects and events, the startup can see just how well someone will fit into the company's culture.

Practice-oriented learning formats (e.g., project-based learning, flipped classrooms) are an ideal testing ground for discovering a candidate's full potential from all sides. This is something that companies cannot find through interviews and questionnaires.

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5. Students bring a non-standard approach to fresh ideas

When you don't have much experience in a subject, you don't have the constraints, rules and limitations that are often imposed on the minds of people who are considered experts. Thus, students often have the most open-minded, innovative ideas. In the framework of our Future Talents program, a student actually suggested the idea of reverse recruitment, and this is how the TalentService startup began.

Some of the biggest names in tech all got a relatively young

start in their careers:

Other tech giants like Twitter, TaskRabbit, Microsoft and Snapchat were all founded by innovative, college-aged people who wanted to change the world. The critical takeaway for businesses here is that building a collaborative relationship with a strong university lays the groundwork for generating powerful, new ideas from the younger generations.

One final tip: Remember to account for the weaknesses of the student model. It's important to be objective about this format, so that your company can be prepared for any of the disadvantages that arise.

Burnout is a serious risk that must be factored in. Students are more prone to burning out quickly, because they possess passion but not much real-world experience. Mentoring these students can also put a strain on your more experienced staff members. Be mindful of the fact that you're increasing their responsibilities and workload with mentorship duties.

Finally, not everyone is a good fit for mentorship. Remember that not all people have a solid grasp of the appropriate frameworks, responsibilities and methodologies associated with professional work. Be sure to choose carefully.

Cultivating a student population that is curious, innovative and motivated to change the world is the best investment a startup can make. When companies can come in, impart knowledge, discuss successes and failures, and give ambitious students a boost, the world will sit up and pay attention.

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