The 4 c's needed to build a strong startup community

Sociology, Community

You may have startup activities in your city, but building a startup community is hard, intentional work. Once created, startup communities help spur entrepreneurs to build new businesses, connect investors to new opportunities, bring members into the community to support startups and celebrate the success as entrepreneurs excel.

Entrepreneurship is a special kind of sport and startup communities provide the network to make your city innovative, vibrant, and a hot bed for employment. Startup activities are a great start, but a real community will define your long-term prosperity.

The first rule, without question: The community must be entrepreneur led. As a long-time business builder and startup leader, I became interested in building our Denver startup community. I had been in the trenches, and I wanted to help other entrepreneurs succeed. The throes of startup life are best understood by those who live it. There is a natural sense of belonging between those who blaze the trail of creating something from nothing. This shared experience lays the groundwork for a community to come together when all programming, activities, and resources are built with the entrepreneur in mind.

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However, for a community to grow and thrive, you have to be intentional. Recognizing strengths and weaknesses of the city, identifying resources available to grow companies and identifying partners who can contribute to the greater good is often challenging. Balancing self-interest with

collaboration creates magical results, but it takes work, strongleadershipand a vision for what the community can be.

Here are the four C's needed to make your startup community thrive.

1. Celebrate

In 2012, we started with the vision to " celebrate everything entrepreneurial" in Denver. Startups require hard, often thankless work and by creating a community wide-event to celebrate entrepreneurs, we were able to turn up the volume on startups and spotlight founders who were putting in the hours and work to build great companies. So

2. Connect

Thecommunicationbetween the stakeholders, job seekers and innovators in a startup community is critical, yet often hard to coordinate. For Denver, we partnered with BuiltIn to launch BuiltIn Colorado to connect entrepreneurs to resources across the community, fill jobs and publish milestones so community members have a pulse on the velocity of startup activity in Denver.

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Connecting outside of events makes interactions seamless and amplifies the impact of the community on the city.

3. Convene

Startup activities and events need a place to live to be sustainable, especially resources for small business and the underserved. In Denver, the

City of Denver, Downtown Denver Partnership and

ColoradoTechnologyAssociation partnered to build The Commons on Champa

– Denver's public campus for entrepreneurship. This space is open to the

community to host events, meetings and activities that promote and connect

the Denver startup community. All events are free to the community, easily

accessible, and programmed across a wide range of topics. Investing in

community space is critical and provides a hub for the community to unite.

4. Collaborate

A startup community is just that, a community. There is not a mayor or

president of the community, but instead a wide-array of volunteer leaders

with aligned interests and passions to support entrepreneurs in building

startups. Not everything always goes perfect and a strong ethos of

generosity will help bring the community together when things do not go as

planned. In Denver, we collaborate at every turn and work to propel the

startup community forward with entrepreneurs and their needs at the center

of the value and resources being created.

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Every startup community is different, with a different set of opportunities

and challenges to work through. With intentional activities and a focus on the

long game, great startup communities can be built anywhere.