

NZST Class 3 Overview

Overview: We visited the Cambridge Innovation Centre, where Naomi shared the company background, service offerings, strengths, weaknesses and growth strategy, and were given a tour of two floors of the facilities. With Scott Stern, we discussed the importance of establishing an Entrepreneurial Identity and the impact of an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, using Clover and Avatech as case studies.

The Cambridge Innovation Centre (CIC) is 7 floors of co-working space in Kendall Square, that is home to over 450 start-ups (the largest density in the world).

- Established as a for-profit in 1999 by an MIT Sloan graduate and his wife, the CIC has hosted hundreds (possibly thousands) of companies, including Apple, Google and Facebook when they first opened their Boston locations.
- Companies are typically in the software or life sciences industries, staying there for an average of 2.5-3 years, with some anchor tenants occupying a space for 16 years.
- CIC has made community building a major objective in its mission, facilitating over a dozen events per week, and doing little things like making specific snacks only available on certain floors.
- CIC is currently in three other locations, St. Louis, Miami and Rotterdam, and uses a fairly simple metric when choosing a new location:
 - Money – are there nearby investors or financiers, or is it easy for them to get to that location (non-stop flights)?
 - Ideas – is it near to a school or schools?
 - Talent – is the pool potential tenants high quality with good ideas?

Choosing an Entrepreneurial Identity and an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem are among the first and most important phases of creating a start-up, and there are a number of questions and considerations that must be addressed in order to identify either.

- Identity – What are you trying to do? What are your capabilities? Who are you trying to hire or who are your first employees? What kinds of talent do you need? What is your position? What capital investments do you need to make?
- Ecosystem – Are your co-founders/first employees O.K. with moving to a new location (eg Silicon Valley)? What is the cost of hiring staff in each location? What is the legal infrastructure at each location (e.g. less supportive in Boston)? Where do you have stronger connections and a stronger network? What are the industry differences between locations? Where is the talent more highly concentrated (e.g. Boston vs Denver)?

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