More than a Curriculum: How Do We Determine the “Real” Entrepreneurship Programs?


In almost every aspect of life, college campuses are microcosms of the real world, especially when it applies to startups. Classroom presentations are traded in for pitches to VC’s and thesis papers are exchanged for detailed business plans. By now, a number of startup leaders and experts have determined that universities are one of the best places to launch a business; the combination of a highly motivated generation and the “fail proof” model of creating a startup in college seem to be the major factors pushing this trend.

The Kauffman Foundation reported that 253 schools taught entrepreneurship in the 1980’s compared to more than 2,000 universities today. This rise in entrepreneurship curricula shows an effort from universities to match the demand of students who want to enhance their knowledge of the inter-workings of any startup – design, business, engineering, marketing (the list goes on and on).

So how do we truly determine the “real” college entrepreneurship programs from just the schools that just offer curricula?

- **It’s All About The Method:** Whether it’s through theory, case studies or hands-on learning, the teaching approach divides the average programs from the crème de la crème.

- **The Uniqueness Factor:** Most universities have their own accelerators, but some of standout colleges have incubators specific to certain industries such as

**Upcoming Events**

**Tech Cocktail Events**
- Apr 24, 2014 - Tech Cocktail’s San Francisco Mixer & Startup Showcase [http://tech.co/event /tech-cocktails-san-francisco-mixer-startup-showcase-3]
- Apr 30, 2014 - Tech Cocktail Sessions DC featuring SpaceX’s Steve Davis [http://tech.co/event /tech-cocktail-sessions-dc-2]
- May 1, 2014 - Tech Cocktail’s Miami Sessions with Open English Founder & CEO Andrés Moreno [http://tech.co/event /tech-cocktails-miami-sessions]

**Industry Events**
- Apr 22, 2014 - SharePoint Technology Conference [http://tech.co/event /sharepoint-technology-conference]
- Apr 23, 2014 - Arts Lab
Ultimately, the approach matters, but there isn’t a set formula.

Despite the differences, I did find at least one commonality among most college entrepreneurship programs: teach students how to have, improve and maintain their entrepreneurial mindset.

Don’t believe me? According to Mashable, more than 90 percent of startups won’t succeed (and the number is probably higher for college students), but instilling the entrepreneurial mindset proves to have some credibility in the long run—here’s why:

- Students will have the skills to start another company (if the first one doesn’t make it).
- They can become intrapreneurs at larger corporations or help a small business improve their strategy in marketing, social media, business or sales.
- Students can use it to move their venture forward as well as embody and understand the entrepreneurial spirit.

Universities can only do so much to teach entrepreneurship and offer resources, which means it’s up to the students to apply what they have learned to their business. This leads me to my final question of can entrepreneurship be taught?

Even in academia, the positions on this question vary, but there’s some validity to each side:

- **People are/aren’t born entrepreneurs**: some argue that people are born with certain skills to become entrepreneurs — can you really teach someone to be a visionary? Or is it innate?
- **Students are figuring it out on their own**: Some of the most successful entrepreneurs haven’t finished college – they saw an opportunity and figured out how to market, fund and grow their startup without college guidance.
- **Anything can be taught**: To use a sports analogy, most coaches claim you can’t teach speed, hustle or height. People are born with certain advantages, but it is possible to improve an athlete’s speed through training and flexibility... so is there potential to both teach creativity and even train someone’s mind?

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**About the Author Amanda Quick**

Amanda Quick is an aspiring tech/startup reporter and founder of The Next Zuck, a site and web show that highlights student-run startups, college entrepreneurs, accelerators, events and more. Amanda is currently a senior at Syracuse University studying Broadcast & Digital Journalism with minors in Marketing and Chinese Studies. She has interned at Brand-Yourself, NBC Sports, The Times Leader Newspaper, Fleishman Hillard in Hong Kong and the 2012 Olympic games in London. She plans to enroll in the Information Management Graduate Program at Syracuse University’s iSchool next year to continue to combine her passion of journalism and technology. When she’s not reporting, she is spending time with friends and family, traveling, or reading tech news. To learn more about Amanda, you
Brighten App Shows Some Promise: Why Apps Like Secret Might Not Be the Answer

Sex sells... and so does drama and gossip. For decades, this model has successfully worked for TV, commercials and advertisements, and it might be having the same effect for startups, especially new apps.

It’s Not a Secret Anymore

In the past few weeks, one of the hot topics in the tech world has been anonymous apps – and there’s specifically been a lot of chatter about the Secret App (https://www.secret.ly/). To give you the quick version, the app allows users to post comments anonymously, which can then be shared with friends and/or the public; the text on the main page of the Secret site currently says, “Share with your friends secretly. Speak freely.”

Sounds fun, right?

Well, don’t get too excited. I’m not here necessarily to praise anonymous apps like these, but instead I’ll offer you a new perspective on why apps like Secret might not be the answer:

- **It’s Just a Fad**: Like bell-bottom pants or MySpace, trends come and go. Things are considered “cool”...until we get hooked on something else.
- **It’s Destructive**: Leaking company secrets, ratting out friends, admitting to substance abuse...This is not helping us (or society) in any way. Do I even have to
The Story: What is Brighten?

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to interview student-run startups at Bucknell University (http://www.bucknell.edu/) in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. I spoke with Austin Kevitch, one of the co-Founders of Brighten (http://www.brighten.in/), who is a senior at Bucknell and member of the Kairos Society.

Kevitch injured his back playing football for Bucknell during his junior year, but instead of being stuck on the sidelines, Kevitch decided to take a “leap of faith” and studied abroad in South Africa for six months.

However, it was the people Kevitch met in Cape Town that made his trip worthwhile. Kevitch and his friends met Oliver, a student from the University of Pennsylvania (http://www.upenn.edu/), who he describes as “one of the most adventurous people he’s ever met;” ultimately, his passion for life and adventure was infectious. However, the friendship wouldn’t last long — Oliver died in a climbing accident during the program’s Spring Break.

After looking at the comments on Oliver’s Facebook wall, Kevitch quickly noticed that his friend had touched many lives. Kevitch wanted to mirror the way people celebrated Oliver’s life into something everyone could experience. Here’s what he did:

- He created a social experiment by making a compliment box at his college house. He left sticky notes and a pen by the box and encouraged his friends to write compliments, inside jokes and anything positive they could think of about someone else living in the house or on campus. Students would come from all over Bucknell’s campus to write and receive compliments — it was pretty much a hit!
- He took his idea online, which he believed would allow people to appreciate their friends by writing positive/uplifting comments.
- Kevitch also made the focus less about self-promotion and negativity. He said he created Brighten because a number of anonymous social networks allow harassment and bullying, and he wanted to create an app that would promote a positive culture.

According to the Brighten page, “anonymity can be used for good.” Here’s more on how Brighten works:

- “Brighten lets you post anonymously to your friends. Only your gender will be shown. Each commenter has a color (so you know if it’s the same person commenting once).”
- Users can follow their friends to see what people are saying about them — users can also like and comment on these posts.
- Users can send “Brightens” to anyone in their phone contacts — people receive an SMS text, but it will still be anonymous.

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So Is Brighten Better?

As a society, we’re always chasing what’s “trendy” and “hot.” But what are the long-term effects of apps like Secret? Will they prove to be more than just novelties?

If you’re still unsure, here’s my take: Your life isn’t a reality show or a teen drama that should play out over an app or online. Instead of posting anonymous and nasty comments about each other, our neighbors and corporate drama, shouldn’t we post comments to Brighten someone’s day?

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