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InCube

Think inside the box

InCube, a creative competition for entrepreneurially-minded students, takes place September 26 - 30, 2019. For four days, 5 students live in a large glass cube and work intensively on a given problem. The expectations are high: During the course of a weekend they should form the foundation for the next startup “made in Switzerland”.

The participants stay at their location to recognise their problem and solve it from Friday until Monday evening, when the finale will take place. At the end of the given time, they need to present a product which matches the boundaries of the competition. In total, there are five teams that are competing against each other, each with their own problem statement and at a different location. InCube is organised by the ETH Entrepreneur Club, a student association and non-profit organisation at ETH Zürich. The Club’s goal for this event is to show young people the career option as entrepreneurs as an attractive alternative to the classic career path following their studies.

Life in a glasshouse

An important factor of InCube is that the teams are not working behind closed doors, but out in the public in various different cities. After the first successful event in 2017 with three teams in Zurich, there will be now five different projects running simultaneously this year in Zurich, Lausanne, Singapore and Boston. The public can therefore experience firsthand what is happening during the weekend. “Living in the cube is an extraordinary experience. The cube’s position in the heart of the city has helped us a lot. The contact with potential future customers has encouraged us to leave our comfort zone,” says Sebastian Pinegger, participant in 2017 and lead organiser 2018 and 2019.

As last year, the participants underwent a rigorous selection process. From countless applications, the most promising 30 were chosen. Prioritised were those that could integrate the best to this experiment and have relevant background knowledge.

The pressure is on

After communication of the now still secret challenges, the participants will only have four days until the final presentation on Monday evening. This means that within just a couple of hours, the students need to become a functioning team. In order to prepare the participants for the challenge, they will spend the weekend before in the mountains. They will learn the most important concepts of the event, which should facilitate the creative process. Amongst other things, they will learn how to efficiently produce a prototype or how to sell a specific product. The students are encouraged to continue working on their projects after InCube and will be supported to do so from all sides.

“The goal of the weekend is to give an initial push”, says Lea Stöckli, president of the ETH Entrepreneur Club. “Of course it is a very ambitious goal to expect them to reinvent the wheel

within a weekend. But based on the promising results of Incube 2017 and 2018, we can expect exciting new projects.” In 2018, the winning team developed a system for autonomous navigation for blind people.

Create jobs and drive innovation

It is well-known, that supporting Startups drives local innovation and ultimately creates jobs. Large technology giants such as Facebook or Google were founded by small teams and now dominate the market. Every day, one is surrounded by Startups that succeeded on an international level, which often started with just an idea and some ambitious dreams. The members of the ETH Entrepreneur Club are sure that with the help of such an event, young people can be encouraged to take a risk and start their own business. Who knows, perhaps they will follow in the footsteps of those large technology companies.

more information:

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ETH Entrepreneur Club

The ETH Entrepreneur Club is a student association at ETH Zürich, founded in 2011 with the goal to foster entrepreneurship among students. Today, the non-profit club consists of over 30 volunteer students in the core team. Besides organising several events, the club runs a coworking space for early-stage startups.

www.entrepreneur-club.org