

# 10 STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS IN EARLY STAGE MARKETS

## 1 CREATE A SPACE LITERALLY AND METAPHORICALLY

The community needs places where it can come together. The space doesn't need to be fancy, but power, good internet access and the right atmosphere and energy is essential.

## 2 CREATE A BIG TENT. INCLUDE EVERYONE.

Ecosystems need a certain critical mass to really take off. Don't just focus on technologists; include everyone who wants to do interesting things with technology.

## 3 MOBILIZE CONTRIBUTORS

Building an ecosystem is a team sport; build a community-focused team and create ways to get as many other talented and experienced people involved as possible.

## 4 BE ALL OF "GLADWELL'S FEW"

Ecosystem building requires the three types of people Malcolm Gladwell identifies as necessary for creating social phenomenon: connectors (people with lots of connections); mavens (people with important information); and salespeople (people who are great at selling).

## 5 CREATE ROADMAPS & PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Design programs that make it easy for aspiring entrepreneurs to imagine how they could create and fund their startup dreams.

## 6 EMBODY THE ETHOS

Culture matters. Model the openness, collaboration, experimentation and acceptance of failure that an innovation ecosystem needs.

## 7 BRING ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER. FILL THE GAPS.

An ecosystem requires many different things to succeed: funding; mentorship; services; talent and more. Ecosystem builders need to proactively pull all these pieces together.

## 8 WORK ON THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT.

Technology doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's important to work on digital literacy, laws governing technology, startups and investing and other factors that impact the development of local innovation ecosystems.

## 9 BUILD A WARCHEST. ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY

Money is essential for growing an ecosystem. Multi-year unrestricted funding is ideal. Develop plans so that you don't depend on grants.

## 10 ARTICULATE A VISION. PROMOTE IT.

Ecosystem builders need to inspire people by painting a picture of what the community could achieve together.

## 11 \*BONUS\* PACE THE WORK

Ecosystems aren't built overnight. Ecosystem builders need to understand where the community is at and what are going to be the most useful things to move it to the next level.

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