

Youth Entrepreneurship: Advantages of Working with Business Incubator

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Becoming an entrepreneur is always a tough decision to make. Every young entrepreneur faces many challenges during their entrepreneurial journey. Many entrepreneurs lose the ability to adjudicate the right or wrong during hard times. They start making mistakes. Eventually, many young entrepreneurs fail to become successful entrepreneurs. However, a Business Incubator can play a significant role to support the young entrepreneurs to sustain, grow and succeed.

Simply, Business means managing some operations with the purpose of earning money as profit through selling products or services. Thousands of individuals or partners are doing businesses successfully around the world without any help of Business Incubators. For this, a question comes to a young entrepreneur's mind that if majority of the businesspersons can do businesses independently then why s/he should work with a Business Incubator. This is a small endeavour to find the answer.

Throughout the entrepreneurial journey, every entrepreneur go through different circumstances. Firstly, in many cases, the entrepreneurs do not have that much confidence about the ideas. Every Business Incubator maintains a standard procedure to select incubatee companies. This competitive and challenging selection process boosts entrepreneurial confidence of the initiators. Secondly, at present, it becomes tough to become an entrepreneur and survive in the extremely competitive market. One should not consider this competition as adverse situation rather they should concentrate on maintaining the quality of the products or services that they are offering. However, the competition in every business sector is increasing; simultaneously the size of the market is growing too. Moreover, new sectors like IT, ride sharing, ecommerce, etc. are emerging rapidly where there are massive scopes to contribute. Thirdly, in Bangladesh, majority of the start-ups work alone. Every entrepreneur needs to take many important decisions regarding the start-ups. These decisions determine the fate of the sustainability or success of the start-ups. The key difficulty of working alone is taking the right decision at the right time. Business incubators share all these issues repeatedly with the incubatees so that they can understand any circumstance well and react accordingly.

There is a proverb that knowledge is power. Whatever a person does, proper knowledge related to the work creates a good opportunity to complete the task accurately. Nowadays, it is necessary to have adequate knowledge about the business model, products or services, marketing, human resources, finance, etc., so that the young entrepreneurs can understand and operate the start-ups successfully. Selection process to graduation, through organising different

programmes, Business Incubators work uninterruptedly to enrich entrepreneurial and business knowledge of the incubatees.

During selection process to enrol into a business incubator, the entrepreneurs enrich their entrepreneurial knowledge through participation in different grooming programmes like idea development workshop, business plan development workshop or boot camp, etc. Pre-incubation process helps the entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into proper business plans. Business Incubator also helps the entrepreneurs to know the procedure how to establish a business including legal issues. In the incubation process, the incubators provide many effective business development trainings about Human Resource Management, Financial Efficiency Improvement, Effective Marketing Strategies, Business Extension, etc. After the incubation period, the alumni can benefit through using the same network. Therefore, Business Incubator is such a place where the incubatees can acquire necessary business knowledge to run their ventures smoothly.

It is very common that the young entrepreneurs dream about a nice and well-decorated office for their start-ups and spend a good portion of the initial capital unnecessarily to manage this. Thus, a good amount of money becomes useless without generating revenue for the start-ups. Initially, the entrepreneurs should concentrate more on generating additional revenue that will strengthen their business opportunities, as well as ensure sustainability. Considering this, majority of the Business Incubators offer a small office space to the entrepreneurs from where they can operate their ventures nicely. In most cases, the Business Incubators provide computer equipment, internet, printing, photocopy, land line, utilities and other necessary stationeries, etc. with the office space. All these facilities cover maximum office requirement of a start-up. The most vital thing of this office package is that all these facilities are available at a very low cost which creates enormous opportunity for the entrepreneurs to invest more on generating revenue.

Another very important thing the entrepreneurs always should keep in mind that this office packages are valid for a short period of time by which they have to work hard to establish their businesses so that they can take the challenge to operate the start-ups outside independently.

One of the biggest challenges for the start-ups is to manage funding for both initiation and growth. Many of the start-ups manage initial funding through bootstrapping. In many cases, the sourced fund is too small for the entrepreneurs to even properly operate essential regular activities. So, the entrepreneurs have to struggle a lot to face any unexpected or unavoidable hostile situation. Sometimes, entrepreneurs immediately start their ventures based on the verbal sanctions of funding from extremely close and reliable sources but later the sources fail to fund and consequently the entrepreneurs to lose control of the circumstances. Every entrepreneur needs fund to expand the businesses. To manage funding from the banks is tough and day by day, it is going to be worse as the banks are mostly interested to lend money to the solvent and growing businesses. Business Incubators not only provide seed fund but also work hard to manage further funding for the incubatees from the banks, angel investors and venture capitalists, etc.

In the early stages of childhood, parents start teaching how to walk, talk and pronounce the alphabets, numbers, etc. When a child starts to go to school, teachers start teaching how to read and show the right path of success. A Business Incubator plays similar role to the young entrepreneurs by teaching them all pertinent issues about businesses. Not everyone is good at every side of a business like managing human resources, ensuring the quality of products or

services, developing marketing strategies, sourcing fund or managing operations, etc. In every Business Incubator, there is a pool of mentors from different professions like academician, technical person, business leader, expert, etc. who guide the incubatees toward success. So, the entrepreneurs can easily find the better strategies to operate the startups effectively. If any incubatee team does mistakes, the mentors can suggest best possible solution to make recovery. Therefore, the mentors never let the young entrepreneurs fall down during their entrepreneurial journey. In addition to this, a great pool of mentors from different backgrounds boost the confidence of the young entrepreneurs as they know that during struggling period, there are some people behind the entrepreneurs to show them the way to success.

Nowadays, the success of the businesses is very much dependent on proper communication and strong network. Business communication is all about sharing information among people inside and outside the organisation. As a business initiator or owner, the young entrepreneur needs to be able to clearly communicate their vision and goals, build relationships with customers and potential partners and interact with internal team. So, the initiators must have proper communication knowledge for internal as well as external purposes. In addition to these, for marketing purposes, the business owners need to have proper knowledge to develop different marketing tools. Currently, Internet has created a great opportunity for businesses to connect with maximum potential customers with less effort and minimum time through social media. Promotional activities through social media can affect businesses in both ways. An effective message can create large business opportunity; on the other hand, a wrong message can create many obstacles. Excluding these, there are so many other options by which usually the start-ups do marketing, like word to mouth, various campaigns, distributing leaflets, etc. As new entrepreneurs, many of them do a common mistake by adding some unnecessary information or few unrealistic features about services or quality to attract the customers that later affect the businesses negatively. To avoid any communicational and promotional errors, the Business Incubators organise different business communication sessions. Besides these, Business Incubators help the incubatees to build a very strong network with the customers, business leaders, experts, academicians, bankers, investors, etc. so that the young entrepreneurs can properly utilise these resources to achieve their business goals. Additionally, the alumni of any business incubator are very cordial to extend their hands to create a hustle free entrepreneurial journey for the younger entrant through providing valuable and effective tips.

In the end, the young entrepreneurs can consider a Business Incubator as their knowledge house from where they can get all pertinent knowledge to operate their ventures. A Business Incubator provides all necessary services to the start-ups to survive and grow and shares a complete pathway to make entrepreneurial excellence. Therefore, it is conceivable that it is better to work with a Business Incubator than working alone, especially in this very competitive and rapid moving business world.

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