

innovation
2009 | THE YEAR OF INNOVATION



START UP STORIES
On the Job with KC Innovators

*A proposal for a TV/web pilot series introducing
KC area innovators*



Start Up Stories: *On the Job with KC Innovators*

(A Kansas City Public Television / Kansas City Area Development Council Joint Proposal)

While our KC region will always compete aggressively for the next major employer, we know that economic growth for a city must come from many places.

The fact is, whether a company has been around for 100 years ... or 100 days, innovation is the *silent engine* powering the Kansas City economy. Especially during these times of economic recession, we look to the next generation of *innovators and entrepreneurs* to help lead our region back to financial health.

Companies relocate and established firms expand, but so often the future seeds of success are quietly planted right here in our own back yard ... hidden pathways to a powerful source of job creation and rising standards of living.

While the work of a few our region's foundational and most successful innovators is widely understood and celebrated, most of them, especially the up and comers, work in obscurity. The nature of their enterprises and their catalytic effects on the region are largely unrecognized by the public and many civic and business leaders.

Kansas City Public Television (KCPT) is teaming up with the Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC) to pilot a television concept called *Start Up Stories: On the Job with KC Innovators*. This program will answer several questions:

- Who are these men and women who are identifying opportunities, bringing people together and creating wealth where none existed before?
- How does their passion fuel success?
- How much of their success is due to hard work, unique foresight or even quirky personality traits?
- Perhaps most importantly, what can the policy and lending communities do to increase their success rates in the Kansas City area today?

Start Up Stories will:

- Celebrate and amplify the work of true KC innovators
- Provide a public platform to express their needs
- Inspire more people to act on innovative ideas
- Advocate for the importance of innovation and support networks

A pilot set of five 30-minute television programs will feature both early- and second-stage entrepreneurs, and will contain the following elements:



6 to 10-Minute Mini-Documentary (shown in pieces)

KCPT will pre-produce a series of mini-documentaries, or vignettes, featuring the founders or CEOs of locally-based entrepreneurial success stories. Each story will be shot in multiple locations to illustrate the social, physical and personal aspects of starting a business, including the places and people that played a role; the business owner's passion for their product/service; financing challenges; building teams and talent; researching and overcoming the competition and the day-to-day rollercoaster of emotions.

We will tap into our many entrepreneurial resource organizations across the region to mine for potential candidates and the most relevant stories. The *KC Innovation Advisory Council* will be made up of regional experts on innovation who are already deeply rooted in KC's entrepreneurial growth industry.

Possible Advisory Council members include key representatives from The Kauffman Foundation; the UMKC Bloch School of Business; KU; KTEC; ECJC and other important organizations that comprise the area's support system for innovation.

Boardroom Commentary

A panel of three experts on innovation, company formation and entrepreneurship provide in-and-out reaction to three-minute segments of the mini documentary. One person acts as the host, and sets up what the viewers are about to see. He/she leads the discussion and draws out overarching themes, the latest research findings, and tips.

The mood is irreverent, yet supportive and mentoring in nature. Think *Car Talk* meets *Sports Center*.

The Roundup

The final 2- to 3-minute long element in each show features the host drawing the program together with high-level observations, conclusions and patterns identified by the latest research. The host will also direct viewers to credible sources of information relating to the program's subjects and findings. The roundup will then move in to provide viewers with valuable insight into the nature of entrepreneurship.

Pilot Format

- A five-episode series of stories about passionate individuals that will attract and hold a large audience
- Programs will be broadcast on KCPT during primetime, then repeated on the weekend for a secondary audience
- Broadcast would likely draw 30,000 to 35,000 viewers per episode, delivering a total estimated audience of 300,000
- Case studies featuring local entrepreneurship and innovation in action will be available for use by local universities, libraries and schools



Initial Goals of 5-Episode Pilot

- Measure public interest in the topic over the course of a five-week run
- Prove the concept and allow for improvements as necessary
- Develop an ongoing series for regional (and potentially national) distribution through local corporate underwriting support

Criteria for Selecting the Subjects

- Compelling human-interest stories full of passion
- Diversity of subjects (by industry, ethnicity, gender, personal background)
- Stories that reveal essential aspects of the entrepreneurial experience
- Selected by a neutral third-party advisory council

Marketing and Promotion

- Closely integrate with the *KC Year of Innovation '09* effort which is increasing public understanding and appreciation of the vital role that entrepreneurs play in the economy
- Determine lead sponsor and other subsequent funding to create ongoing series throughout year
- Use footage to develop viral video elements and features for online use, training, workshops, other appropriate events

Outcomes

- Inspire more people, by example, to take the entrepreneurial plunge in our KC region
- Provide entrepreneurs a platform to articulate their needs to the business and policy communities
- Publicly celebrate local innovation and entrepreneurship, and create a permanent video document of their accomplishments
- Increase public understanding and appreciation of the vital role that entrepreneurs and innovation play in the economy
- Further develop Kansas City as a model for innovative ideas, entrepreneurial success and a sustainable, stable family-oriented lifestyle and culture
- Enhance the standing in the local entrepreneurial community of the financial supporters of *Start Up Stories*, KCADC, and KCPT.

To discuss *Start Up Stories*:

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