

# **Best Practices in Science Based Incubation**

## **Combining Technological Entrepreneurship with Creativity and Culture**

**Liverpool 17th-19th November 2010**

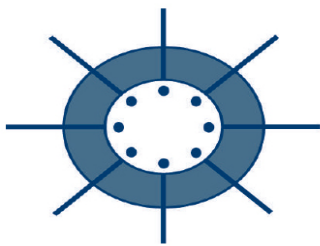
An Event Organized by:

# **THE TECHNOPOLICY NETWORK**

Global Community for Regional Innovation Policy

*Provides forums for international knowledge exchange and collaboration between experts and practitioners of science based business incubation and regional development*

In Collaboration with:



**LIVERPOOL  
SCIENCE PARK**

*Supporting the growth of a commercial community focused on knowledge and innovation, through office space, networks and business development advice*

By:

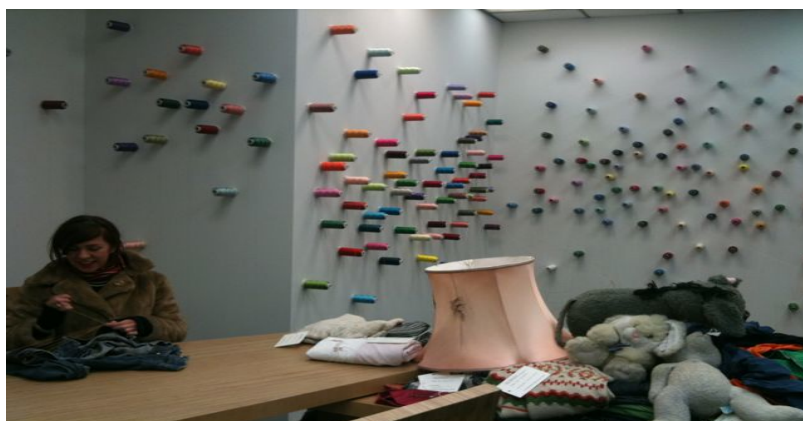
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## **Innovation Tour: The Art and Science of Business Development**

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Best Practices in Science Based Incubation Conference, opened with a visit to the Liverpool Science Park, a 36, 000 sq ft centre of versatile office space opened in 2006, home to over 70 knowledge based companies. The park provides accommodation, business support services and access to technical expertise to innovation-based businesses breaking out onto an international stage. The centre is a hub of knowledge exchange, which for growing companies, helps to refine value propositions, optimize costs and forge prosperous industry connections. It is no surprise companies of various size, specialities and regional origins are attracted to such a unique option for business development. Chloe Young, Business Development Director for the Technology Science Park spoke of the expansion plans to include another 40, 000 sq ft. The Soft Landing Centre is comprised of free office facilities dedicated to attracting companies to test the swelling digital media and life sciences markets in the North West region. The Soft Landing Centre hosts a variety of events, provides ad hoc advisory services and links local university personnel to the board. However, a common challenge remains: that of managing the relationship between entrepreneurs and university experts, ensuring optimal engagement and the leveraging of local resources. The risky, extensive real estate development and private investments are testament to the public faith in such centres to making a lasting economic impact.

Another major component in the international dialogue about regional business development is the role of arts and culture in stimulating growth. Liverpool's Biennial festival features 60 international artists displaying their work in 5 museums across the city, and explored the themes of urbanization, trade, and the emotional impact of art and design. In a variety of mixed media forms (painting, sculpture, performance, video), this year's exhibition demonstrated how an environment impacts collaborative learning, our sense of meaningful productivity and cultural identity in a globalized economy. Below are some of the highlights which may resonate with some of the concerns and concepts of incubators from around the world.



*Mingwei, Taiwanese artist explores the notion of problem-solving through time and experience exchange. A visitor brings in an item which needs mending, and tells a story in a kind of barter payment.*



*The Marxist Lounge exhibits the many interpretations and practical impacts of a powerful idea. Visitors are invited into the lounge space to relax with one of the many books on display*



*Indian Artist N.S. Harsha demonstrates how we are all part of the global community by sandwiching our faces between the reflections of multicultural mosaic. Entitled "Star Gazers 2010"*



*"Souvenir Palace" explores how everyday objects become brands of national identity. South African artist, Meschac Gaba questions what we consider to be part of our heritage and what we trade on the international stage as symbolic of our competency*

For more information: [www.liverpoolsciencepark.co.uk](http://www.liverpoolsciencepark.co.uk) and [www.biennial.com](http://www.biennial.com)

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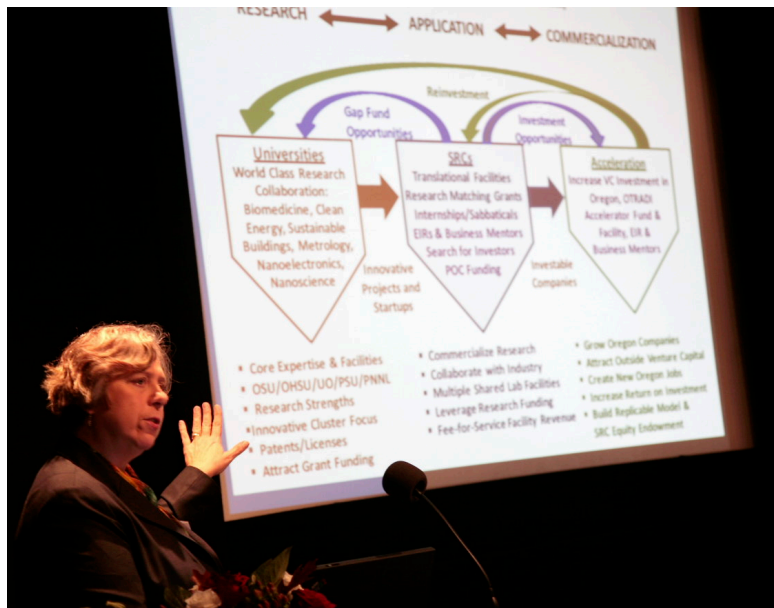
## **Day One Summary: “Don’t Do It Yourself!”**

*Quote by Joke Van Antwerpen on inspiring creativity and collaboration in incubation*

Day one of the program, entitled *Stimulating Technological Entrepreneurship in Combination with Creativity & Culture* dove into a broad range of topics exploring how commercial knowledge, creative design and collaboration combine to transform economies and as well as the incubation industry itself. Peter Harman from UKBI began today’s thought-provoking talks by asking “Can the business incubator be the *superman* to lift us out of the black hole of the global recession?” and “How do we do *much* more with *much* less?”. How can incubators and science parks spur on the economic renaissance of areas like Liverpool with the, now research study confirmed, growth in taxes, high-value job creation and industrial diversity? The answers included: sweating existing assets, learning quickly from failures and staying connected with alumni who can in turn, give back to the incubation communities. Collaboration was the theme of the morning. The establishment of mechanisms to connect networks is becoming the critical next challenge: across incubators, between public and private organizations, across creative and scientific industries, between investors and entrepreneurs.

Dinah Adkins, Conference Chair and President Emerita of NBIA, USA touted recent research that corroborates the hypothesis that *what gets measured gets managed*: incubators that collect data and have articulated specific goals, perform better in meeting these targets, turning restrained budgets into more impactful outcomes. Patricia Beckmann taught us how the Bioscience Accelerator Concept is empowering start-ups to test their ideas in the early, proof of concept stages by supporting them with experienced, in-house management teams. De-risking the science by removing the capital constraints and bringing together partnerships between various stakeholders is an essential part of her successful model in Oregon; entrepreneurs, universities, government, venture capitalists, incumbent industry players are brought together under one dedicated platform which is transforming the mindset of incubators into real ROI-driven businesses. The discussion ended on the note that creativity and commercialisation need not be mutually exclusive but rather incubators need to start empowering portfolio firms with venture capital and design expertise. This allows for rapid growth within the businesses and strengthens the value-added proposition of the incubator itself.





*Patricia Beckmann of the Bioscience Accelerator in Oregon*

Never-before-seen collaborations are also occurring in The Netherlands and China, under the projects of Dutch Design, Fashion and Architecture directed by Christine de Baan, a 4 year experimental program which unites ministries of foreign affairs, culture and economic development. This is a multi-disciplinary, multi-year project with the goals of idea cultivation and intellectual exchange, international network building, enterprise support and collaboration: mixing topical themes with local demand. But Frank Zwetsloot of Science Alliance asks “Can science-based and arts-based entrepreneurs can really collaborate?” Jeff Becker, who runs a pioneering American arts Incubator in Kansas City, stood up to champion the creative inventions that blossom out of cross-disciplinary collaboration.

In the afternoon program, Frank Salzgeber opened his discussion of the European Space Agency Business Incubation Centres (ESA BIC) with the inspirational quote “a society that stops exploring stops progressing”. The Technopolicy conference offers the attendees just this opportunity: to explore, both international success stories of business incubation and the network benefits experienced in the relationship forged during these types of assemblies. Mr. Salzgeber ended the presentation encouraging us to find the space we need, reserve your place and use innovative systems integration and brilliant marketing tactics to get innovative ideas off the ground.

After breakout sessions on the industrial design, digital media and green tech sectors, the conference convened to discuss adding commercial and marketing talent to client companies. After a lively debate, it seems incubation is itself a very creativity-dependent endeavour, involving listening carefully to the needs of the entrepreneurs, empowering them with the right skills and network opportunities and seeing them through to external market independence. Incubators can provide the frameworks, the infrastructure and an inspiring culture of collaboration to match their often technologically-oriented inventors with other functional experts, to meet and expand market demands.



*An international collection of business incubation experts and practitioners*

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