

IDEA Camp Catches the WaVE with Web Entrepreneurs

There was a new look with new energy at STAR TEC's most recent IDEA Camp, offered in collaboration with [Tampa Bay WaVE](#). Held at Collaborative Labs at St. Petersburg College, the daylong event was targeted to early-stage web innovators who were interested in refining their business model, gaining real-time feedback on their concept and developing an effective 90-second pitch for prospects, investors, business partners and other key audiences.

“We were pleased that STAR TEC was adding a topical focus to IDEA Camp where the participants could be paired up and coached by the area's most experienced entrepreneurs in their field,” says Linda Olson, CEO of [WOMbeat!](#) and founder of Tampa Bay WaVE. “Some clusters of startups like web-based ventures have unique challenges to get their ideas built and launched. Our WaVE members have all been through that before, many of them as recently as in the last year or two, so they could provide practical, real-world advice to help these ambitious entrepreneurs build their ventures faster, smarter and cheaper with industry best practices and personal lessons learned.”

Thirteen web-based entrepreneurs representing 11 business concepts were selected to attend, hearing presentations by Ian Ippolito of [yWorker.com](#), speaking on “Defining Your Technology” and Ricardo Laso of [SiteWit.com](#) on “Lessons Learned in Developing the Perfect Pitch,” and participating in an interactive workshop on identifying target markets presented by Andrea Henning of [St. Petersburg College Collaborative Labs](#). After coaching and pitch rehearsal, participants made poster presentations and pitches to STAR TEC and community business advisors.

Entrepreneurs who participated in the event were Jeffrey Baird, **Vabblor**; Kathryn DeLaurentis and Sravan Elineni, **Global MindSeed**; Neil Diola, **Gahoom**; Tony Duda, [TalentSprocket](#); Joe Falanga, [Military Parts](#); Larry Freid, **Home Operations Center**; RJ Garbowicz, and Brenden Rehman, **Webtalk**; Henry Lee, **ToeTapz**; Mary Maloney, **Nobby Software**; Peter Moolhuizen, **Vidtrain** and Lynn Scheer, **Where's The Kipster?**

“I would recommend that anyone with an idea, prototype or even working product participate in this event,” says Tony Duda of TalentSprocket, a Software as a Service firm now in Beta stage that serves as a “recruiter in a box.” He adds, “When you spend a lot of time with your team and internal advisors you start to limit your thinking and become convinced of the merit of your ideas. You really need an outside perspective to validate your ideas and make sure you are on the right track – and IDEA Camp provides that opportunity.”

IDEA Camp advisors, all seasoned business people and Tampa Bay WaVE members, served as coaches and mentors during the program. They included Linda Olson of Tampa Bay WaVE and WOMbeat!; Brian Burrige of [commendablekids.com](#); Chad Jaquays, [crowdsavings.com](#); Peter McIntyre, [referralclick.com](#); Hoang Nguyen, [courselogic.com](#); Lance Raab, [JazzMedia LLC](#); Steve Ressler, [govloop.com](#) and Steve Tingiris, [enthussem.com](#).

“I think IDEA Camp participants received a tremendous amount of value from their experience and I enjoyed seeing how they became clearer and more confident during the day in painting a more attractive picture of their venture,” says Raab, who has started and sold two technology companies and now runs his web venture company, JazzMedia. “I really enjoy working with start-ups, particularly web ventures, and wanted to help the entrepreneurs based on my experiences of being in the technology business the past 24 years.”

STAR TEC plans to conduct another IDEA Camp later in 2011, again focusing on a particular market segment that is yet to be announced.