



AGILE
COMMERCIALIZATION



AGILE COMMERCIALIZATION

Stop trying, start doing!



OIA // OULU
INNOVATION
ALLIANCE

OULU | BusinessOulu

Oulu Capital
of Northern
Scandinavia



*Oulu region is growing
Agile Commercialization
ecosystem is the
springboard to
international growth for
Oulu region's companies.
The ecosystem aims
to profile the region as
one where, by 2025,
education is focused on
entrepreneurship and
business skills, sales
excellence is the key
factor of success and
startups are supported by
first-class development
programs.*

Read more at
ouluinnovationalliance.fi

Oulu population:

202 000

people

38.2

average age

2 690 €

R&D expenditure per capita

500

startups

18 500

high-tech jobs

25,000

university students

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INTRODUCTION

The Oulu Innovation Alliance agile commercialization ecosystem is, essentially, what you make it. Co-creation is one key factor in everything Oulu Innovation Alliance does, and for the agile commercialization ecosystem it is the main focus – what we can do together is the key. Various actors in Oulu ranging from companies and public organizations to individuals offer the events, programs and services in our ecosystem. Everything the ecosystem has to offer forms a wide selection of commercialization activities in different phases of personal and business development.

While the agile commercialization ecosystem is officially coordinated by the Oulu University of Applied Sciences, it is also fueled by over 20 000 university students and numerous key collaborators.

How does the future of the Oulu agile commercialization ecosystem look? Let us take you to 2025 – firstly, we will have the most pro-entrepreneurship education compared to the rest of Northern Europe, as entrepreneurship and business excellence will be at the core of studies. By then, Oulu will be at the top of the list as Finland's best in sales know-how and have the most diverse variety of startup development programs, making us the best place for high-tech startups in the North. Also, we aspire for Oulu to be known as the bravest startup city in Finland. We aim to become an even more connected, creative and co-working community and dynamic growth environment.

We have ambitious goals, but the very best community and ecosystem for achieving them. Sound good? Join us for the ride.

© Pekka Kallasaari



“The core mission of the Oulu University of Applied Sciences is to develop and reform the region’s business sector. Through commercialization, the cutting-edge know-how of the Oulu University of Applied Sciences and Oulu Innovation Alliance ecosystem actors can be distributed for the benefit of companies.”

JOUKO PAASO

Rector of Oulu University of Applied Sciences

TELLUS INNOVATION ARENA

An inspiring and functional open space in the heart of the University of Oulu.

Tellus Innovation Arena is a space for making connections, co-working, creating new projects and businesses and innovating, as the name suggests. In addition to attracting students, researchers, entrepreneurs and other individuals to spend time and widen their networks, Tellus Innovation Arena brings together organizations and educational institutions both nationally and internationally.

Tellus has been a spirited source of inspiration for various entrepreneurship related events in the Oulu entrepreneurship ecosystem, boosting our commercialization actions greatly.

» www.oulu.fi/tellusarena



Tellus

UNIVERSITY
OF OULU

© Ville Pohjonen



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STARTUP WEEKEND

54 hours of intense startup creation.

The international event concept Startup Weekend was piloted in Oulu in spring 2016, and the following event was already organized during the fall of that year. The event is an intense bootcamp-style event that provides an opportunity for building skills,

growing amazing networks, and launching innovative startups. The event gained popularity in Oulu from the very first pilot, and it has been sold out ever since.

» www.oulu.up.co

“As mayor of Oulu, I think that entrepreneurship is more than just an engine economic growth, it is also a factor that makes communities more energetic and inclusive”.

PÄIVI LAAJALA
Mayor of Oulu



© Lasse Lehto



© Lasse Lehto



© Lasse Lehto

AVANTO ACCELERATOR

Crystallizing ideas into businesses

Avanto Accelerator was created to specifically aid in the acceleration of university-based business ideas, and was first piloted in the fall of 2015. The amount of participants has been rising ever since the program was piloted, and the program has been developed continually to serve an even larger volume of potential participants, such as existing companies.

The Avanto program has been able to reach students and other participants from various fields of study and differing backgrounds, and multiple businesses have sprung out from Avanto since the program first began. The dynamic Avanto program has been a significant addition to the entrepreneurship opportunities available for university students and the entire Oulu entrepreneurship ecosystem.

» www.avantoaccelerator.com

“In OSAO, training programs are organized continually in different fields and they can be tailored company-specifically. Oulu Vocational College is a versatile apprenticeship provider for companies in the Northern part of Finland. Our values, creativity and courage, are tightly connected to Oulu Innovation Alliance.”

JARMO PALONIEMI

Rector of Oulu Vocational College.



© Jouni Ylisuutari





KICKSTART

A tri-faculty business idea competition for taking the first step toward entrepreneurship.

The Kickstart tri-faculty competition is a unique concept of Oulu Innovation Alliance, as it brings together the students of the Oulu University of Applied Sciences, the University of Oulu and Oulu Vocational College to go up against each other in the same business idea contest. Kickstart not only brings attention to the business ideas of students and awareness to entrepreneurship education, but also gets the student population excited about entrepreneurships.

The competition takes in ideas at their earliest stage, and offers teams valuable feedback and noteworthy advice from local business experts on their business ideas in addition to the benefit of teams gaining general experience on new business creation.

» www.kickstartoulu.fi

“The Kickstart business idea competition serves the purpose of lowering the mental threshold that a student might face when desiring to try their wings as an entrepreneur.”

ASMO SALORANTA

former Kickstart final judge, local serial entrepreneur and author



© Mikka Niemelä



© Sini Kekäläinen



© Sini Kekäläinen

VENTURING RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Commercializing research one event at a time.

The agile commercialization of research is at the core of the Venturing Research Challenge concept developed jointly by our two universities. The event brings together ingenious research and student teams with bright ideas on potential commercial purposes, which needless to say is a fruitful collaboration resulting in cutting-edge business ideas backed up by accomplished research.

VRC is a natural rallying point between the agile commercialization ecosystem and other Oulu Innovation Alliance ecosystems, and has attracted interest both on a national and international level. Venturing Research Challenge organized during spring 2018 served as an indication of how well the VRC concept brings different ecosystems together, as a successful event was carried out in cooperation with the Natural Resources Institute Finland.

» www.venturingresearchchallenge.com

“The agile commercialization ecosystem of Oulu Innovation Alliance is vital in unleashing the innovation capacity of University of Oulu to build a better future for all of us - brilliant people and groundbreaking research results change the world through markets!”

ARTO MAANINEN
Vice Rector of University of Oulu





OAMK LABS

An innovative and entrepreneurial learning environment.

Oamk LABS is an internationally acknowledged learning environment with a focus on developing entrepreneurial skills, action and innovation. Essentially, it is a pre-incubator and incubator program, during which students gain new competences through innovative methods and create new businesses and solutions in interdisciplinary teams.

Oamk LABS as a model of education has attracted interest widely and enabled various new possibilities for cooperation. Additionally, it has brought attention to the widespread know-how and expertise we have in Oulu.

» www.oamklabs.fi



© Paula Ylipulli



© Paula Ylipulli

FACES OF THE ECOSYSTEM

Anne Sorvari has walked the walk when it comes to the Oulu entrepreneurship ecosystem - from business student to Oulu Entrepreneurship Society president, from developer of the Avanto Accelerator program to innovator of remarkable events and concepts - the list goes on.

Entrepreneurship in itself is not what drew Anne into the entrepreneurial scene, but instead the people that make up the community here in Oulu. According to Anne, people within our entrepreneurship community are open, helpful and eager to welcome new people into the community.

Anne's passion is traveling and meeting new people in new places, which has enabled her to spread her entrepreneurial networks to various parts of the world. This has allowed her to bring back awesome concepts and ideas to Oulu in addition to coming up with completely new ones. An example of this is the Startup Weekend event from Techstars, which thanks to Anne has been organized in Oulu five times already with great success!

“When Oulu plays to its strengths as a tight-knit collaborative entrepreneurship ecosystem, we can and will show the world that Oulu is a great place to start up.”

ANNE SORVARI

Entrepreneurial developer, entrepreneurship community builder, trailblazer

Anne is at her best when creating new approaches to tackling commercialization, and after having invented both Venturing Research Challenge to help commercialize research and Community Building Workshop to develop our entrepreneurship community further, it is time for Anne to move on to new challenges and leave room for newcomers to keep developing our ecosystem from where Anne has left off. Currently Anne is employed by the University of Oulu and is building a new concept for enhancing university student employment - see the pattern here?

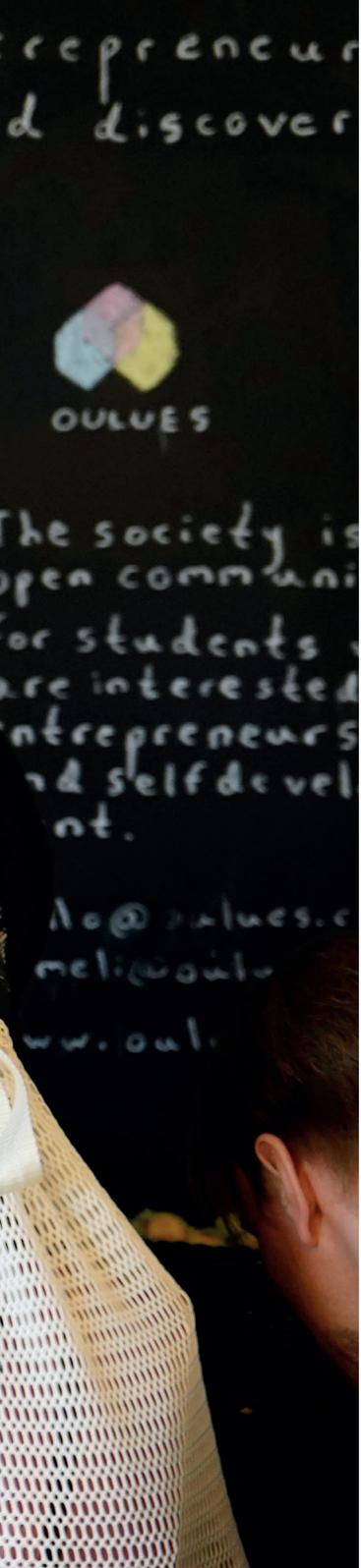


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unity and co-working space to...
siness and in life.

THE WRAP-UP

– WHAT IS GOING ON IN OULU?





An all-time record in the amount of established companies, a multiplied number of participants in over one hundred events organized during 2017. No wonder we have been asked the question in the headline – and we have been asked that many, many times.

In the past couple of years, Oulu has re-created itself. The new Oulu is an attractive startup hub, without a doubt a unique Arctic innovation center and a suitably strange environment to do things differently. The agile commercialization ecosystem of Oulu Innovation Alliance consists of a huge number of enthusiastic people pushing entrepreneurship and business development forward to ever-higher goals.

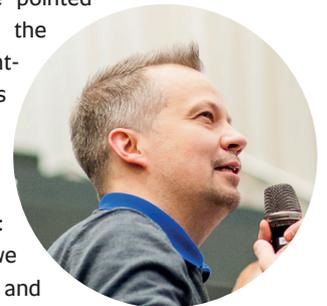
Our friends and colleagues in Finland and elsewhere have given us feedback regarding our progress. And indeed, the feedback has been encouraging. For instance, the Nordic Council of Ministers presented our ecosystem as a case study in their Arctic Business Analysis and a research team from MIT approached us with an overwhelming interest to dig deeper into our rather exceptional platform for business creation.

So, a lot of things are happening in Oulu.

The typical follow-up question is much more difficult for us to answer: why are these things happening in Oulu?

Let me do my best to answer that question. Firstly, we had to do something when local production patterns took a massive hit due to the rapid decline of the mobile phone industry in Finland and especially in Oulu. We understood that here in Oulu we have to save ourselves and we have to do it together. This leads to a second explanation: co-operation. We work together, we talk together and we have fun together, while remaining open to any new talent to join us. Our ecosystem is not a club nor a secret society. Moreover, as this publication shows, top-level management supports our work.

Finally, it should be pointed out that among the innovative, bright-minded individuals in our ecosystem working together for the better future, one factor is common: in our ecosystem we have stopped trying and started DOING!



SAMI NIEMELÄ

*Network Director
Oulu Innovation Alliance / Agile Commercialization*

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