The pod

Collaboration nation

Unleash your inner entrepreneur and come up with a winning business plan that will help save the planet in this classroom competition! As in the real business world, you need to work together in teams to come up with a winning idea and plan that triumphs on the day.

How the activity works

The aim of this activity is to work together in teams and come up with an idea for a new business. At the end of the activity, your team will have to present your proposal to an independent judge (such as the teacher) and convince them that it's a winning idea.

Collaboration Nation is designed to be a quick activity to fill a lesson, but you can run it over a longer session if you want.

Your team's first job is to decide on a leader and a name. The leader is responsible for delegation and has the final say on any decisions. After this, teams will assemble to be briefed on their task and given a set amount of time to complete it. A buzzer will sound the end of the activity, at which point all teams must present their proposals to the judge, who will decide

which idea they thought was the best. It's up to the judge whether or not to present the winning team with a prize!

Your mission

One of the hottest current trends in business is something called **collaborative consumption.** This is when people get together to share their resources, which often leads to products and services that are better for the environment, as well as cheaper and more community-oriented. One successful business built on this model is Airbnb (**www.airbnb.co.uk**).

On this website, people who have spare space in their house can offer it to travellers looking for a place to stay. The reason this idea has been received so well by the public is that it is cheaper than many hotels (in fact, the man in charge predicts it will outsell Hilton Hotels) and travellers meet new people while getting a 'real' insight into a destination. It has a positive effect on local economies, too, as visitors spend money in the area.

Here are two other businesses built on 'collaborative consumption':

▶ **Zipcar** (**www.zipcar.com**): This is a car sharing service which people can use as an alternative

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to traditional car rental or, even, as an alternative to ever buying a car. Members join the club and receive a 'Zipcard', which they activate online to reserve a car. They then use their Zipcard to open the car, which is waiting for them at an agreed time and location. It appeals to consumers because it saves on fuel, repair costs and the hassle associated with owning and renting cars.

▶ **eBay (www.ebay.co.uk):** This is one of the oldest and best-known examples of collaborative consumption. It's a site where people can auction off all manner of goods from baby clothes to furniture, electronics and more! It works so well because people like earning extra cash from products they were not using anyway.

> **Your task is to come up with a viable business idea based on collaborative consumption.**

You need to clearly show:

▶ **What 'need' it addresses** (i.e. Airbnb satisfies a need for cheaper accommodation for travellers)

▶ **Who the existing competitors are** (i.e. Airbnb competes with traditional hotels)

▶ **How it works** (e.g. if your idea relies on any technology)

▶ **Why people will like it**

▶ **How you will make the money**

▶ **Whether there are any challenges that need to be overcome** (and how you will do this)

▶ **What resources you will need to get the idea off the ground** (i.e. how many people will you need? What jobs will they do?)

Your big idea

There are plenty of websites you can visit for inspiration. For example:

▶ **www.collaborativeconsumption.com**

▶ **www.trendwatching.com**

▶ **www.psfk.com**

▶ **www.springwise.com**

▶ **http://www.shareable.net/blog/gen-y-guide-to-collaborative-consumption**

But remember: you don't always have to come up with a completely new idea to create a successful business. It may be that you spot a way to copy an existing idea, but add something different and better!

Brainstorming tips:

▶ Start by writing as many ideas down as you possibly can. The more the merrier! Remember, some of your silliest suggestions could lead to your winning idea, so don't hold back...

▶ A good place to start is thinking of all the resources we, as human beings, could possibly share.

▶ Take an example that already exists and think of how you could copy this but in a new, completely unrelated sector.

▶ Appoint a 'facilitator' to help guide the conversation and encourage everyone to have their say (this could be the team leader).

▶ Appoint someone to write everything down, so no ideas are lost.

▶ Keep track of time! Allocate a certain amount of time for brainstorming, then choose the best idea and create your business case around that one idea.

▶ Don't forget to leave some time for practising your presentation.

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Your presentation

After all your hard work, make sure you shine when you present your ides to the judge and the rest of the class. Here are some tips:

► Start by introducing yourself and your team and summing up your business pitch in one sentence.

► Think of an imaginative way to convey the main points: for example, by using visuals, PowerPoint or linking to relevant videos online. You could even incorporate role play, if you like, to set the scene!

► Take turns in presenting the information.

► Crunch the numbers: as any good business person knows, the numbers have to stack up. The more you can refer to concrete facts and figures, the better!

► Ensure you talk clearly and slowly so everyone can understand you.

► Use (appropriate!) humour.

► Keep it short and snappy.

► Close by thanking the audience for listening and invite questions.

Discovered your inner entrepreneur?

If this activity has awakened the young business person in you, there are plenty of competitions nationwide where you can develop your talents further.
Try one of these links for starters:

www.tycooninschools.com
www.young-enterprise.org.uk

If you liked this – why not try our Waste Scientists activity?

jointhepod.org