

START-UP SCENE IN THE US

WITH NAIVETÉ, CHUTZPAH, PERSEVERANCE AND THE RIGHT NETWORK, ANYONE CAN BE AN ENTREPRENEUR



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As we all learned from this trip, many people in the US and especially students want to be their own boss, so the start-up scene in the US is really widespread. For success in the USA as a Swiss company, Swissnex could be your first point of contact. They have offices in San Francisco and in Boston and provide workshops and training to make your entry easier. Swissnex also arranges many networking events as “Networking is absolutely essential in the USA for getting profitable with your company”, said Dr. Felix Moesner, CEO of Swissnex Boston. “Therefore, you always have to prepare yourself for an event.”



Swissnex Boston. Photo: JW

The Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) with its Venture Café is an excellent opportunity for networking. CIC was founded in 1999 by two MIT graduates. The idea was to help start-ups focus on their business setting up and managing office space for them. There are about 800 companies in the same building at the moment. So, these companies can learn and profit from each other. “The best way to learn is to interact closely with other entrepreneurs and thereby exchange experiences because you have no teachers while entering a new territory”, said Becca Smith from CIC.

“The Venture Café aims to build and connect communities of innovation locally, nationally and internationally”



Becca Smith talking to the delegation about the idea of CIC. Photo: JW

“ANYONE CAN BE AN ENTREPRENEUR” – BETTINA HEIN, CEO OF PIXABILITY

The real case of the company Pixability shows that you can be an entrepreneur. As Bettina Hein started her company in Boston, she was located in the Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC). After growing really fast, she moved out of it and has now her own office in the city of Boston. She told us that everybody is able to be an entrepreneur. Furthermore, Bettina pointed out the following three main characteristics to be a successful entrepreneur: “naiveté, chutzpah and perseverance”. Chutzpah does not mean being unprepared, but it means saying “yes, we can” as well as entering unknown territory.



Bettina Hein, CEO of Pixability. Photo: JW

“naiveté, chutzpah and perseverance”

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The Venture Café is located in the office of CIC. In this café, there is a weekly event on Thursday evenings for the innovation community. “The Venture Café aims to build and connect communities of innovation locally, nationally and internationally”, said Becca Smith. “During this event, you have the ability to talk to a lot of people, build relationships as well as tell stories.”

We actually had the chance to join such an event. It was really interesting to see and experience this networking culture. Everybody was so open-minded as well as friendly and talked to you in a smart way. We could build some relationships which may be helpful in doing business in the future. Furthermore, we learned that it is important to step up to somebody, although we do not know this person. Openness is a key success factor in doing business in the US. ● FG