

# Module 12 – Setting up an Accelerator Program



Global Greenchem  
Innovation & Network Program



**Green Chemistry Toolkit**



Center for Green Chemistry &  
Green Engineering at Yale

# Module Goals



- **Overview of the Accelerator Guidebook**
  - Strategy, timeline, recruitment, and operations
  - Align with global sustainability and local market needs
- **Global Alignment**
  - Provide a consistent approach across countries while allowing flexibility
  - Living document, continuously evolving with program feedback



# Designing the Accelerator



- **Key Elements of a Successful Accelerator**

- Mentorship, training, funding, networking
- Balance technical support with business development

- **Cohort-Based Model**

- Peer learning, community building, structured support
- In-person, collaborative environment
- Needs assessments to guide curriculum modifications



# Developing a Program Timeline



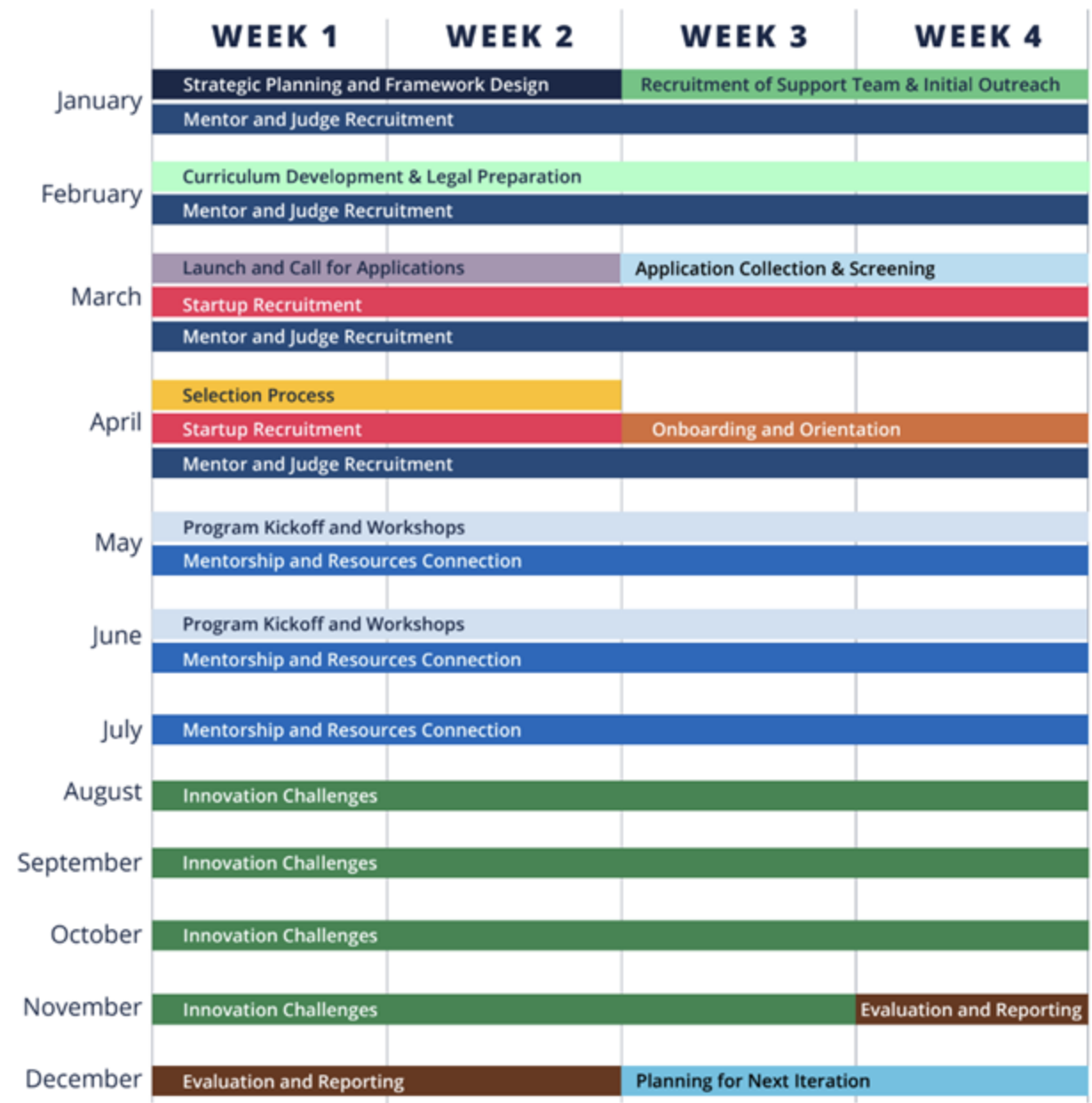
- **Phases of the Accelerator Program:**

- Pre-accelerator (January to April)
- Accelerator (April to July)
- Post-accelerator (August to December)

- **Key Milestones**

- Startup recruitment, mentor engagement, progress reviews
- Track and adjust goals as needed throughout the program





# Startup Recruitment Strategies



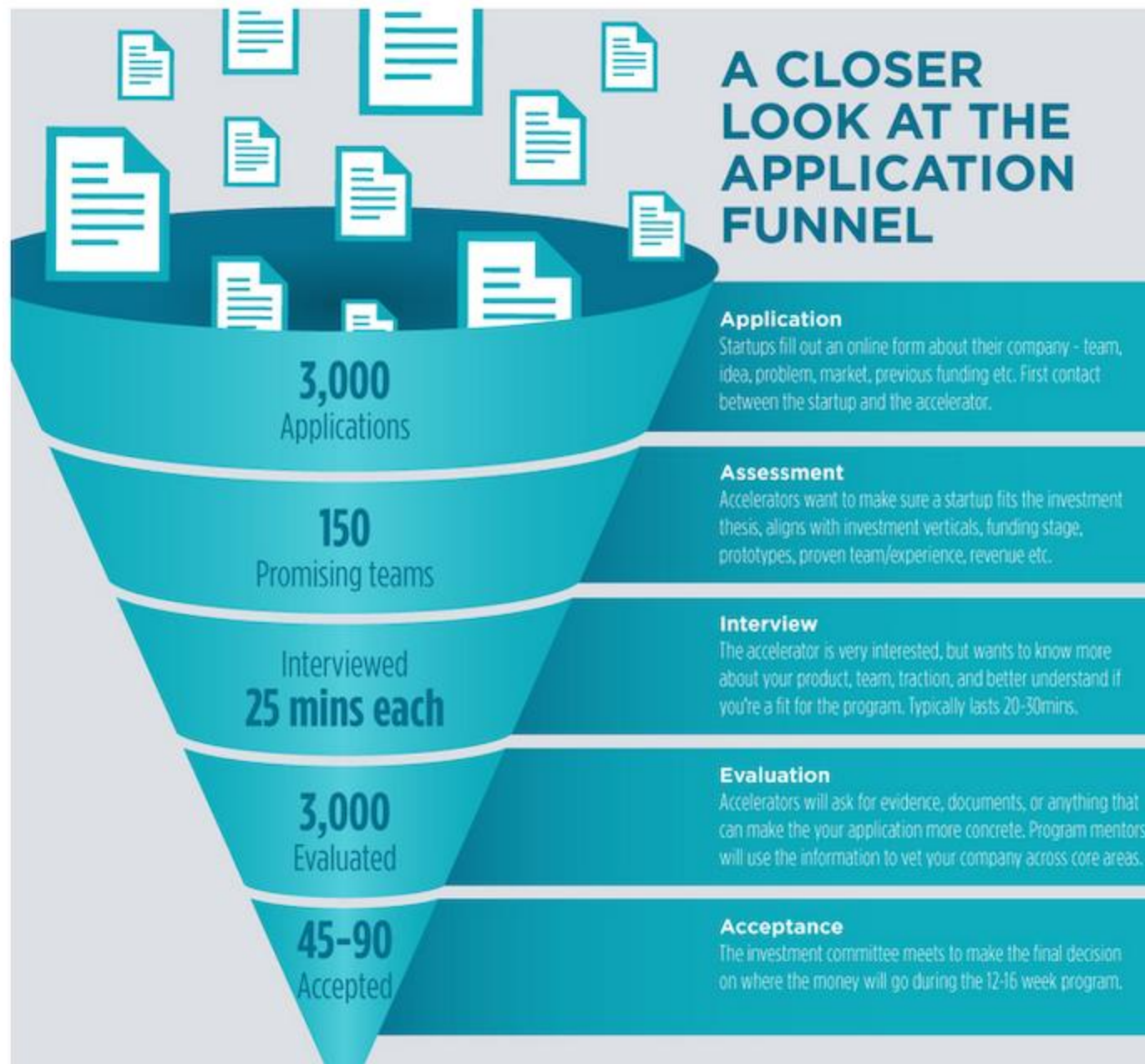
- **Outreach and Marketing**

- Universities, scientific journals, industry conferences, networking events
- Targeted social media campaigns

- **Streamlining the Application Process**

- User friendly instructions, online submissions
- Interviews, pitch videos, scoring evaluations
- Low barrier to entry for initial submission





# Standardized Scorecard



- **Standardized Scorecard**

- Score multiple times
- Application, Midway through Curriculum, After Demo Day
- Also: one, two, three years in the future!

- **Develop a line chart**

- Where do they grow faster? Slower?
- Adjust curriculum to help next cohort!

- **Compare and contrast between mentors and other accelerators**







Criteria	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
<b>Problem and Market Need</b>	Vague problem; limited market understanding	Clear problem; some market understanding	Well-defined problem; strong market insight
<b>Solution and Innovation</b>	Basic solution; minimal innovation	Sound solution; moderate innovation	Cutting-edge solution; high innovation
<b>Environmental Impact</b>	Minimal impact	Moderate impact	Significant impact
<b>Market and Investment Potential</b>	Small market; high competition	Niche market; moderate competition	Large market; low competition
<b>Business Model and Revenue Strategy</b>	Unclear business model; no revenue strategy	Basic business model; some revenue strategy	Robust business model; strong revenue strategy
<b>Team and Expertise</b>	Limited experience; weak team	Some relevant experience; capable team	Strong experience; highly skilled team
<b>Scalability</b>	Low scalability potential	Moderate scalability potential	High scalability potential
<b>Intellectual Property</b>	No IP protection	Some IP protection	Strong IP protection
<b>Financial Projections</b>	Unrealistic or missing projections	Basic projections	Detailed and realistic projections
<b>Presentation and Clarity</b>	Poor presentation; unclear message	Average presentation; somewhat clear message	Excellent presentation; very clear message
<b>Diversity</b>	Homogeneous team; no diversity initiatives	Some team diversity; basic initiatives	Highly diverse team; strong initiatives
<b>Persistent Organic Pollutant Reduction</b>	No POP or Mercury reduction	Moderate POP or Mercury reduction	Significant POP or Mercury reduction





## Short Answer Questions

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Describe your business in 10 words or less

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List three key milestones for the next 12 months in 100 words or less

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Describe your company's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion in 100 words or less

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Describe how the local community receives value, jobs, and capacity in 100 words or less





# Actors and Factors in a Startup Ecosystem (Feld, 2022)



# Building a Network of Partners



- **Identifying Key Partners**

- Map stakeholders in the local, national, and regional ecosystems
- Prioritize relationships based on alignment, influence, and potential for mutual value creation
- Develop a targeted engagement plan for each high-priority stakeholder group or organization
- Formalize partnerships with MOUs or agreements

- **Create an Advisory Board**

- Regular engagement: Meetings, workshops, mentoring
- Leverage advisors for strategic program development

- **Leveraging Partnerships for Success**

- Enhance impact through co-developed programs
- Build long-term collaborations for sustained accelerator success



# Developing the Curriculum



- **Curriculum Design**

- Green chemistry, market analysis, operational execution, and pilot projects
- Hands-on activities and real-world case studies

- **Incorporating Expert Input from Mentors**

- Guest lecturers from industry leaders, academic advisors, business support
- Reflect latest industry trends and participant feedback

- **Flexibility and Customization**

- Adapt curriculum based on cohort needs and feedback



# Marketing and Promotion



- **Branding and Identity**

- Develop a consistent identity and voice reflecting program values
- Logo, website, social media presence

- **Content, Events, Webinars**

- Attract startups, mentors, partners
- Digital marketing, event promotion, media coverage
- Leverage existing networks for broader outreach

- **Highlighting Success Stories**

- Showcase partners and mentors in case studies, testimonials, media features



# Operations, Execution, Logistics



- **Setting Up Operations**

- Office space, collaboration tools, project management
- Create and implement standard operating procedures

- **Staffing and Management**

- Program managers, administrative support, marketing, technical advisors

- **Day-to-Day Operations**

- Scheduling workshops, mentorship sessions, progress reviews
- Meet with startups, engage mentors, scan news from partners



# Supporting Startups in the Accelerator



- **Regular Check-ins**

- Assess milestones, challenges, mentor engagement
- Standardized templates for capturing metrics and updates

- **Access to Resources**

- Technical experts, service providers, templates, and learning
- Provide office hours and help desk support

- **Peer Learning and Collaboration**

- Organize peer feedback sessions and joint projects
- Facilitate co-working spaces and social events for collaboration





# Matching Mentors and Startups



- **Creating Profiles for a Briefing Books**

- Mentor profiles: Expertise, experience, mentorship style
- Startup profiles: Team background, technology, stage, goals

- **Facilitating Mentor-Startup Matching Event**

- Provide guidelines for effective mentor-mentee interactions

- **Monitoring Mentorship Engagements**

- Regular check-ins: Assess relationship health and value
- Support: Training and resources for mentors and startups



# Graduation, Demo Day, Follow-on Support



- **Demo Day - the startup's big moment!**

- Present startups to investors, partners, media
- Highlight innovations, reinforce the accelerator's impact

- **Program Reflection and Feedback**

- Conduct debriefs to capture startup insights
- Post-program survey to capture feedback

- **Next Steps and Follow-On Support**

- Guide startups on post-program strategy and resources
- Connect with alumni network, investment readiness programs



# Funding for the Accelerator



- **Securing Funding**

- Government grants, industry sponsorships, venture capital
- Focus on long-term sustainability and program growth

- **Build a strong reputation as a key ecosystem component**

- Comprehensive budget: Operations, events, startup support
- Transparency in financial operations for accountability
- Public reports, events, create value through events, thought leadership



# Recruiting Quality Mentors and Judges



- **“Mentors”**: professional, committed supporter of the Accelerator
  - Some will be Judges but not all!
- **Leveraging Local and Global Networks**
  - Build list of potential mentors, ranking by relevance and accessibility
  - Share opportunities in university, corporate, and government networks
- **Managing the Mentor and Judge Selection Process**
  - Ask candidates about their background, motivation, and references
- **Setting Mentors and Judges up for Success**
  - Teach mentors about the mission, values, curriculum, and startup profiles
  - Provide training on effective mentoring and judging, including unconscious bias





## Different Types of Mentors





## Leveraging Mentorship:

Utilizing mentors' networks and expertise in building investor relationships

## Feedback Loop:

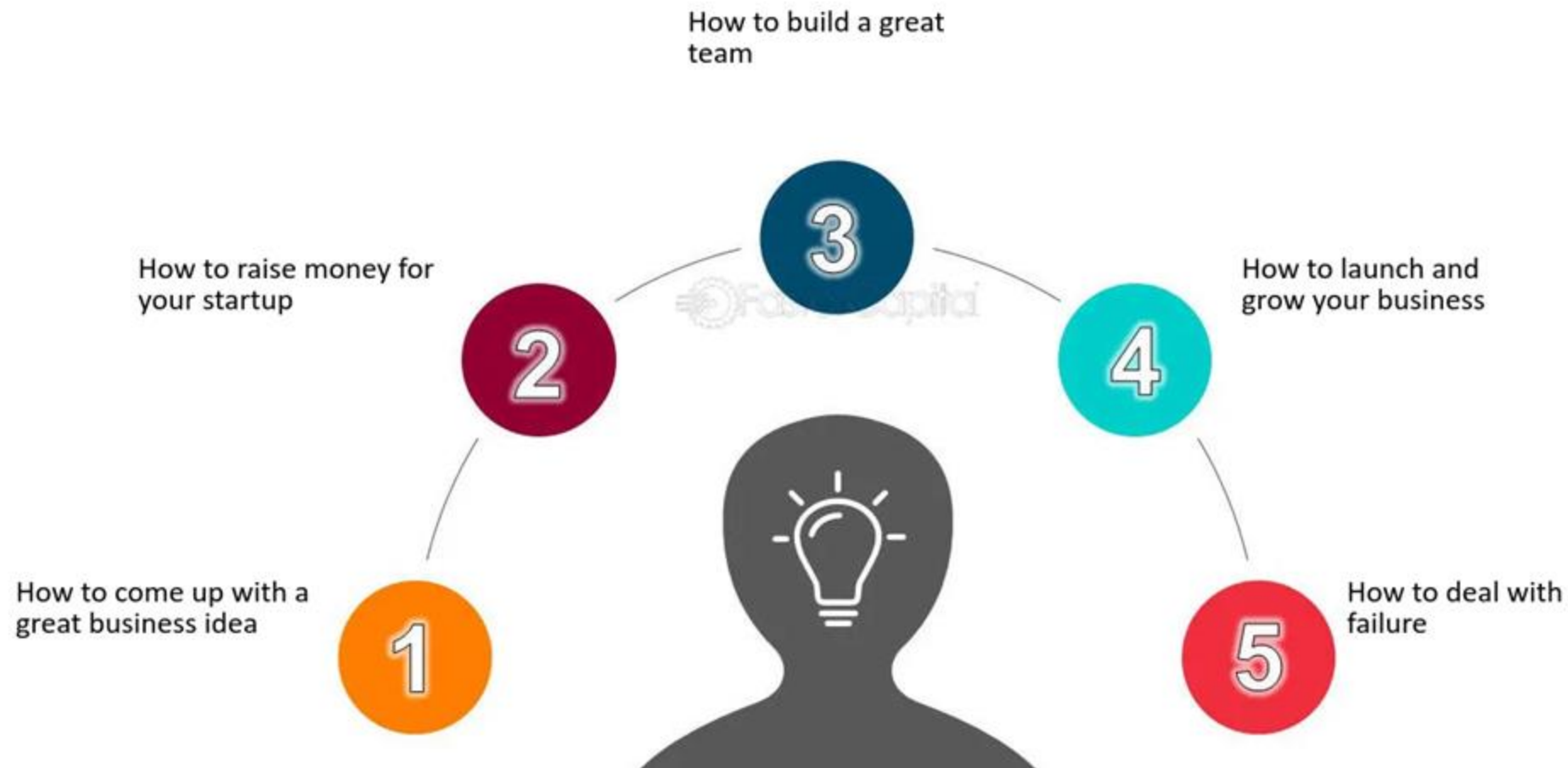
Final pitch rehearsal, business plan refinement, and pilot project overview preparation

## Long-term :

Understanding the ongoing value of mentor relationships beyond initial investor engagement



# Topics Mentor's will discuss with Startups



# Keeping Mentors Engaged



- **Establishing Clear Roles and Responsibilities with Commitment Letter**
- **Creating a Supportive and Accountable Culture**
  - Encourage mentors to be responsive, candid and caring in startup interactions
  - Check in regularly with mentors, judges and startups to address any concerns
- **Fostering Community and Peer Learning:**
  - Convene mentors regularly to share experiences, challenges and best practices
  - Celebrate mentor and judge contributions through recognition and perks
- **Evaluating and Iterating on Mentor and Judge Engagement:**
  - Ask startups for feedback on their mentors
  - Refine mentor selection and training processes





# Keeping Mentors Engaged



- **Commitment Letter establishes clear roles and responsibilities**
- **Creating a Supportive and Accountable Culture**
- **Encourage mentors to be responsive, candid and caring to startups**
- **Check in regularly with mentors, judges and startups to address concerns**





While the engagement level varies across these roles, each contributes significantly to the growth and success of our Accelerator and its participants.

### ENGAGEMENT

Friends:

- Support through advocacy and networking.
- Participate in occasional strategic discussions and events.

Mentors:

- Regular interactions with program participants for guidance and support.
- Share insights and experiences to aid development and innovation.

Judges:

- Evaluate and provide feedback on program presentations and initiatives.
- Contribute to the decision-making process in various program stages.

Each role is crucial to our ecosystem, providing varying degrees of involvement and influence.

### COMPENSATION

The compensation structure for each role varies and is designed to align with the level of commitment and the nature of the contribution. Note that you can commit to being a Mentor and a Judge

Role	Compensation Stipend	Commitment	Selection
Friend	\$0	2-4 hours / quarter	
Mentor	\$1000	5-10 hours / month	
Judge	\$1000	5-10 hours / month	

Table 1. Available commitment opportunities for Green Chemistry Accelerator program for [Country] in [Year]. Please note that one can be both a mentor and a judge.

Title	Current Hourly Rate

Table 2. This table provides a space for you to provide your Current Hourly Rate so that we can estimate in-kind contributions for reporting purposes to the United Nations for your participation in the Green Chemistry Accelerator program for [Country] in [Year].

### ACCEPTANCE

To accept a position in the Green Chemistry Accelerator program for [Country] in [Year] program please do the following:

- 1 - Select the appropriate role(s) in Table 1 above by placing an X in the appropriate box(s).
- 2 - Please fill in your title and current hourly rate in Table 2 above so we can estimate your in-kind contribution to the United Nations for your participation.
- 3 - Sign this letter and return it back to us within 5 business days.

[ Signature] \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature Date] \_\_\_\_\_



# Industry Engagement Strategies



- **Mapping the Industry Landscape and Needs**

- Identify industry sectors and companies that could benefit
- Analyze strategic priorities and sustainability commitments of target companies

- **Developing a Value Proposition and Engagement Model**

- Create a industry slide deck - "why, what, how" of getting engaged
- Define a tiered engagement letter with clear roles, offerings and expectations



# Industry Engagement Strategies



- **Cultivating Long-Term Corporate Partnerships**

- Establish multi-year partnerships for startup sourcing, piloting and investment
- Align activities and startup metrics with corporates' core business metrics

- **Showcasing Industry Collaboration and Impact**

- Develop a joint marketing and comms plan with corporate partners about the accelerator collaboration
- Produce case studies and testimonials to demonstrate value creation



# Engaging Industry Partners In Hackathon (“Innovation Challenge”)



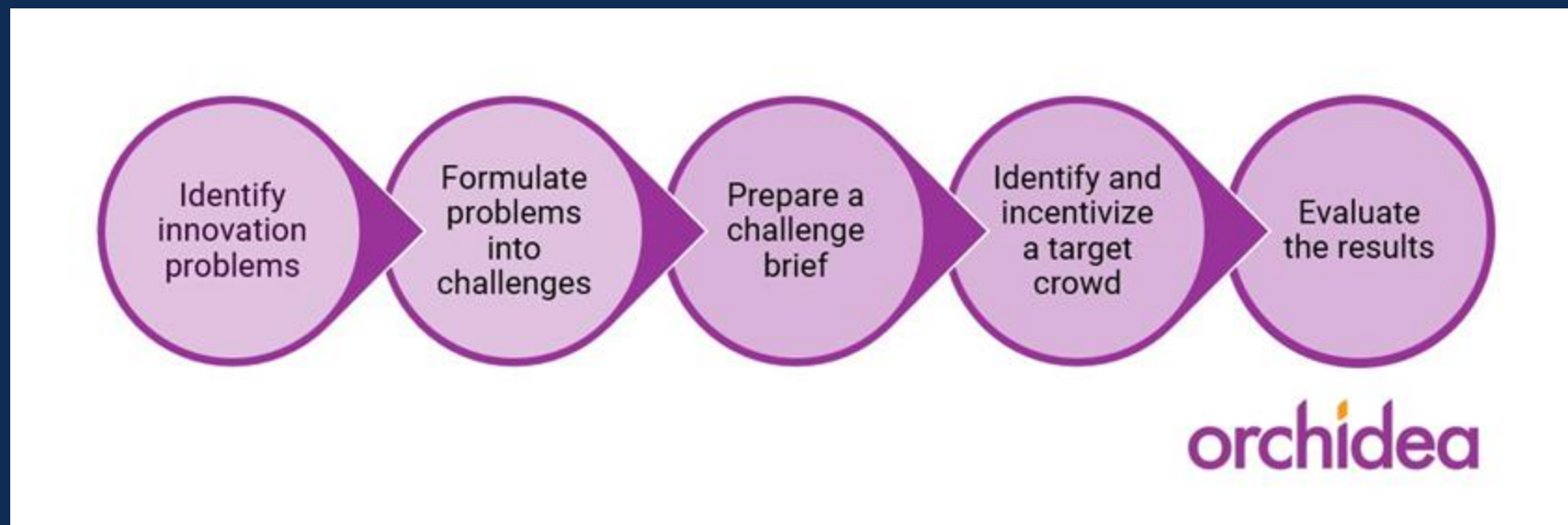
- **Educating Corporates on the Accelerator's Challenge-Based Model**
  - Highlight benefits of hackathon and accelerator for faster, lower-cost innovation
  - Provide tools and templates for corporates to scope and define challenges
- **Facilitating an Industry Challenge Definition Workshop**
  - Convene corporate stakeholders to brainstorm and prioritize challenge statements
  - Ensure challenges are specific and measurable yet allow room for creative solutions



# Refining and Validating Industry Challenges with Stakeholders



- Engage mentors, experts, and alumni for feedback on novelty, relevance and feasibility
- Iterate with corporates to finalize a set of industry challenges for the cohort
- Feature corporate sponsors and quotes in marketing channels



# Designing a Structured Industry-Startup Engagement



- Map out key moments in accelerator timeline for industry-startup interaction, eg kickoff, mid-point, demo day
- Plan a mix of group and 1:1 meetings for corporates to learn about and advise startups (eg office hours, showcases, speed dating)
- Provide clear guidance and workflows to corporates and startups on how to effectively engage and troubleshoot



# Enabling Industry-Startup Pilot and Partnership Opportunities



- Let corporates define parameters and process for startup pilot projects
- Teach startups best practices for scoping and executing successful pilots
- Host industry/startup collaboration on pilot design and project planning to build knowledge, leveraging accelerator tools, and create templates





# Preparing Startups for Effective Industry Collaboration



- Coach startups on how to communicate and negotiate with corporates
- Help startups develop a strategy and collateral (eg email, slide decks, MOU)
- Conduct workshops and practice runs for startups to practice their corporate pitch and anticipate common questions



# Marketing and Promotion Principles



- **Defining the Target Audience and Value Proposition**

- Identify key stakeholders critical to the accelerator's success
- Create value propositions for each group: "what's in it for them" to engage

- **Building a Consistent and Authentic Brand Voice**

- Establish brand “personality traits” to reflect accelerator's identity and values
- Encourage accelerator staff to use brand voice and style guide in communications



# Marketing and Promotion Principles



- **Leveraging the Power of Stories and Social Proof**

- Identify compelling stories from alumni, mentors, and partners
- Share these stories through a variety of formats (eg articles, videos, podcasts)
- Use Case studies from trusted voices to build credibility and attract partners

- **Maintaining a Lean and Iterative Marketing Approach**

- Use an agile, data-driven approach to rapidly test messaging, formats, and course-correct
- Engage staff, startups, and partners to create of marketing content and campaigns



# Creating a Marketing Strategy and Action Plan



- **Setting Marketing Goals and Metrics**

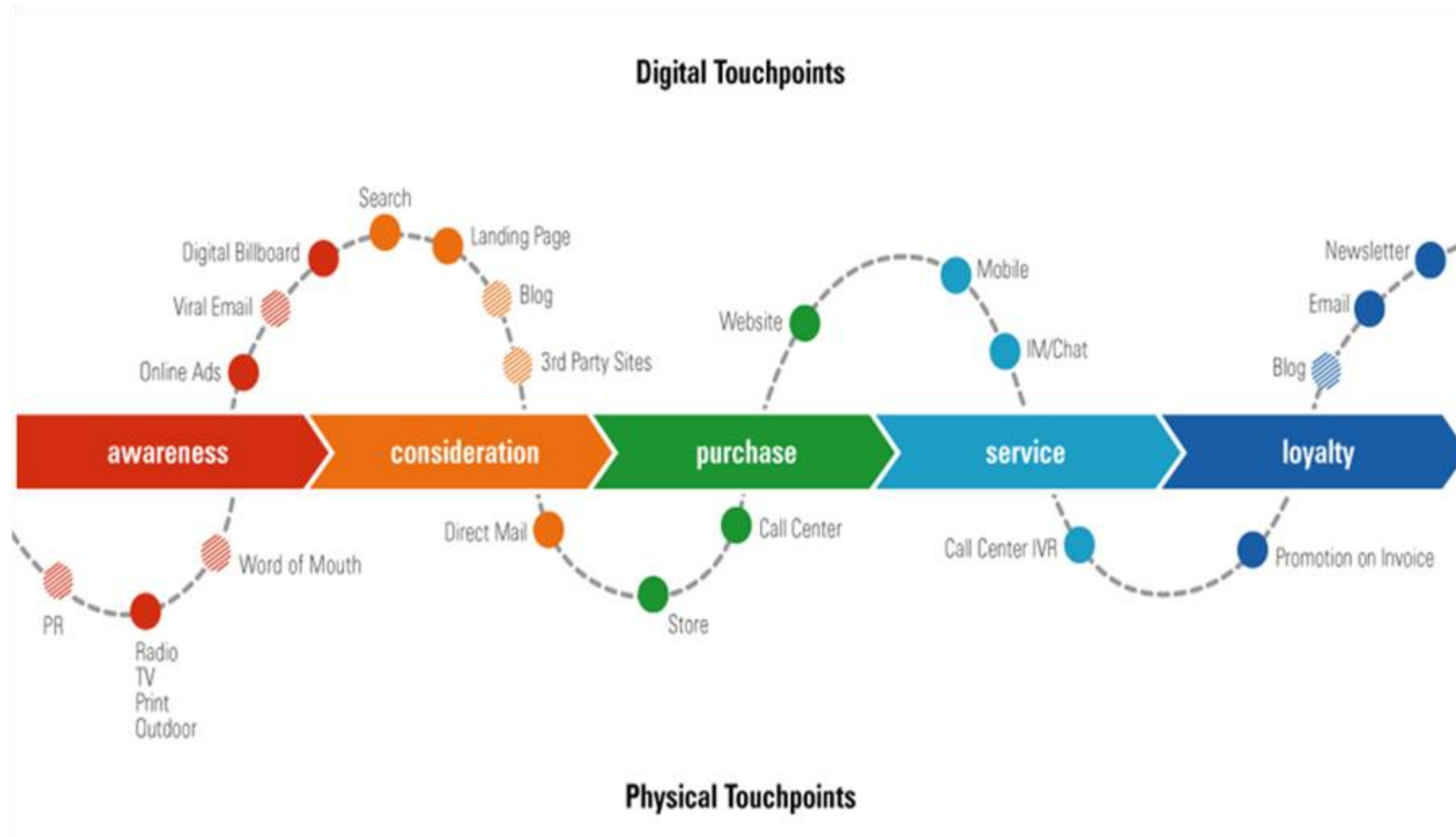
- Identify the marketing objectives to support accelerator's goals
- Select outcome metrics objectives (eg reach, engagement, conversions)
- Set achievable targets for metrics based on benchmarks and timeline

- **Mapping the Stakeholder Journey and Channels**

- Develop journey maps for stakeholders to identify path to engagement



# Stakeholder Engagement Journey



# Creating a Marketing Strategy and Action Plan



- **Developing Content and Campaigns Aligned to Objectives**

- Ideate themes and topics to resonate with stakeholders towards outcomes
- Prioritize campaigns on a marketing calendar aligned with the accelerator timeline
- Assign roles for content campaign creation, distribution, and measurement

- **Monitoring, Analyzing and Optimizing Performance**

- Establish a rhythm for marketing reporting to review against goals and metrics
- Identify insights, learnings and recommendations from data and socialize findings



# Marketing Channels and Partnerships



- **Optimizing the Accelerator's Owned Media Channels**

- Keep website updated, engaging, mobile-friendly and search-optimized
- Send regular email newsletter with segmentation to key stakeholders
- Post frequently and consistently on the accelerator's social media

- **Pursuing Earned Media Opportunities**

- Cultivate relationships local key journalists and publications
- Develop newsworthy stories to position the accelerator as an expert voice
- Conduct outreach and interviews for accelerator coverage and credibility



# Marketing Channels and Partnerships



- **Partnering with Relevant Organizations and Events**

- Identify aligned organizations and propose marketing partnerships for cross-promotion and content sharing

- **Empowering Alumni, Mentors and Partners as Ambassadors**

- Equip accelerator alumni, mentors and partners with a one pager on key messages, content, and calls-to-action
- Create ambassadors to share accelerator's updates with their networks





# Ecosystem Engagement Strategies



- Multi-stakeholder Convenings to regularly engage key stakeholders
  - Dialogues
  - Working groups
  - Meetups
- Policy Engagement to support economic growth and pollution reduction
  - Identify policy and resource barriers inhibiting Green Chemistry innovation and commercialization
  - Educate policymakers and funders on the accelerator's observations and recommendations



# Practical Tips



**These tips might be useful:**

- Design your Accelerator's market map, value proposition, and operational plan...just like a startup!
- Use Gantt charts to map out program phases and key milestones
- Implement targeted outreach to recruit diverse startups
- Develop a structured mentor engagement plan with clear expectations
- Regularly update curriculum based on industry trends and feedback



# Practical Tips



**These tips might be useful:**

- Select mentors based on specific industry expertise as well as general experts in business, marketing, and legal
- Develop industry-specific engagement plans with clear mutual benefits
- Craft a brand narrative that aligns with the accelerator's mission
- Leverage success stories, industry quotes, and thought leadership in marketing to attract high-quality applicants



# Discussion Questions



**To finalize this session, these discussion questions are useful to reflect on the concepts you have seen.**

- How can goals be ambitious and realistic for the accelerator?
- What are the essential components of an accelerator program timeline?
- How can accelerators attract high-potential startups from diverse regions?
- What is the role of mentors in the success of an accelerator program?
- How can accelerators ensure their programs stay relevant?



# Discussion Questions



**To finalize this session, these discussion questions are useful to reflect on the concepts you have seen.**

- What criteria could help select mentors and judges?
- How can accelerators effectively engage industry partners?
- What strategies ensure a consistent and authentic brand voice?
- How can mentor and judge engagement be measured and improved?
- What role does marketing play in attracting startups to the accelerator?





Yale School of  
the Environment



Center for Green Chemistry &  
Green Engineering at Yale

Advance Science

Catalyze  
Implementation

Prepare the next  
generation

Raise Awareness

# Thank You!

For questions, please reach out:

✉ [greenchemistry@yale.edu](mailto:greenchemistry@yale.edu)

<https://www.globalgreenchem.com>

📄 <https://www.chemistryforsustainability.org>

<https://greenchemistry.yale.edu/>



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