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Maximising the potential of hackathon ideas

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Picture from TAMK conference. Experts ideation about what happens to good ideas after hackathon.

Hackathons are a wonderful platform for individuals and teams to bring their innovative ideas to life in a short period of time. However, the question remains, what happens to these ideas after the hackathon ends? In this blog post, we'll explore ways to ensure that the energy and effort put into the ideation process contributes to making an impact and helps the initial ideas to grow and become stronger.

After our own hackathon at TAMK, Sprint Innovation Festival in November 2022, we wanted to find answers to the question of what happens to the good ideas after a hackathon? We asked this from a bunch of experts who have various experiences about participating, facilitating and organising these kinds of learning sessions. The answers brought us new ideas we hadn't discovered yet.

Scene 1: Ideas generated at hackathons can be forwarded to potential funders for investment or used as case studies in various courses. They can also be categorised into themes and forwarded to R&D teams for future projects. It's important to find the right organisation or individual to take the idea forward and build a team around it. Third-party follow-up, such as from TAMK, can also help in reviewing and planning the next steps.

Scene 2: To maximise the potential of hackathon ideas, it's important to have a follow-up process with milestones in place to track progress. Additionally, combining potential ideas can create a stronger solution. A model for copyrights and a contract between students and companies can help to ensure that the ideas are protected and can be developed further. Resources such as consultants or experts can be used to take the idea to the next level. Regular follow-up events, such as after 2-3 months, can help support teams in building a minimum viable product (MVP) or prototype.

What we do now: Empowered by this good session we moved to plan a follow-up gathering. The idea is to invite the idea owners to discuss, reflect and create a roadmap for the future. We feel the idea owners need to be within like-minded individuals who want to learn by doing and are willing to invest time and effort for making something new to grow. This coached gathering will be organised at Tampere Startup House, Platform6 during spring 2023.

Conclusion: Hackathons are a great platform for innovation and ideas, but it's important to ensure that the energy and effort put into the ideation process contributes to making a real impact. By taking the right steps, such as finding the right organisation or individual to take the idea forward, creating a follow-up process with milestones, and combining potential ideas, we can maximise the potential of hackathon ideas and bring them to life.

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