



# The C2C Barcamp

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## Documentation

### Topic: Interdisciplinary Working Groups

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## Session: Interdisciplinary working groups

Host: Dr. Oliver Mauroner, Bauhaus University, Weimar  
(Germany)



### 1. Introduction and description of topic

Dr. Oliver Mauroner is junior professor for innovation and creativity management at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, where he is teaching, amongst others, a prototype seminar, focusing on bringing students from different backgrounds and two different universities together with the aim of jointly developing prototypes and solutions. This seminar offers the students the possibility to apply their knowledge practically, to collaborate with companies and start-ups, as well as with students from other disciplines, transmits knowledge and expertise of prototype-driven innovation management as well as of project management and design processes. In this session he addressed the question: "Are interdisciplinary working groups an important precondition for the starting of a company (in the creative sector)?"

### 2. The main questions discussed in the session were:

- Should we promote interdisciplinary teams?
- How can we add missing competences (marketing, design etc.) to the team: by teaching the team or by bringing in other people (experts)?
- How should/could we promote interdisciplinary teams (formats, programs)?
- What is needed (Competences, personalities, experiences)?

- What are the "places" to meet?

**The group discussed the following theses:**

- Today, the customers' needs define which competences should be included in the entrepreneurial team/company. This opens up the scope to a very user-driven approach: work with the customer not for him/her and make the customer believe it was his/her idea.
- There should be support for interdisciplinary teams in the creative sector but there is not just one way/model how to do that. Possible models mentioned include:
  - support within the university AND AFTER
  - individual coaching to help the team members close their individual gaps
  - bring in external experts to close the skills gaps within the team
- There are a lot of obstacles within the university system with the forming of interdisciplinary contacts, such as
  - strong separation of disciplines
  - widespread fear of idea fraud
  - missing knowledge about ongoing research activities
  - poor networking culture
  - very different innovation culture of the different disciplines
- The most important preconditions are openness, trust and confidence in the success of the idea.
- A rephrasing of the question could be useful: From „How should/could we promote interdisciplinary working groups" to „What culture/value should be supported". This implies that the whole cooperation culture needs to be reworked towards more open approaches from both universities and students, but also from customers and clients, as well as from investors, business associations and so forth.

**3. Examples**

One example of how future interdisciplinary companies/working groups could look like was given by Participant Claudiu Danaila, who works for Brainstorm Crossmedia, Denmark, which is organized in a flexible manner of a group of small companies with different competences, who work together on a project-basis and are very much based on the customer's point of view („work with them not for them"). After the projects are finished, the group falls apart and the small companies form new groups to work on new projects.

**4. Concrete ideas for action were formulated:**

- Networking events organized by universities and support programs, where young or aspiring entrepreneurs can meet with other companies, future mentors and possible investors. One interesting event is arranged by the plug 'n play incubator (Silicon Valley)
- Crowdfunding as an open support system; it is a very good way to evaluate your idea and to test the market

- Lean start-up: fast feedback and iterative product releases in order to shorten the product development cycles. See Eric Ries: the Lean Start-Up ([www.theleanstartup.com](http://www.theleanstartup.com))
- The setting up of contamination labs for students from all disciplines with tutors and possible contact to investors
- Mixed incubators (such as the Milano incubator "Speed Mi Up" or the "Tallin Creative Business Incubator")
- form groups at startup weekends, barcamps, conferences etc.
- On an individual level: go to conferences, network, look out!

## 5. Summary

- interdisciplinary working groups should be promoted by individual approach (different models)
- before thinking about support programs and formats, one should think about what culture/value should be supported
- the customer is the expert and defines the competences of a working group
- Openness is the most important precondition for setting up and working with teams
- Universities have a big problem because of the lack of useful networking possibilities