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Startup Canada: Retaining and supporting enterprising youth key to Atlantic Canada's future

National Action Plan addresses urgent needs of region's entrepreneurs

HALIFAX – November 27, 2012 – Startup Canada (www.startupcan.ca), a grassroots non-profit network committed to promoting a vibrant entrepreneurial culture, is calling on business leaders, policy makers and public institutions across Atlantic Canada to support youth entrepreneurship as a means to drive economic renewal and retain the next generation of skilled workers.

Startup Canada's call to action in Atlantic Canada is part of its national **Action Plan**, unveiled today to drive economic development, job creation and innovation across the country. The action plan is intended to make Canada one of the world's top five entrepreneurial economies, in which job creation and economic growth spring from innovative entrepreneurs powered by supportive local communities and financial networks.

The new action plan grew out of Startup Canada's 2012 national tour, the most extensive consultation process ever carried out with Canada's entrepreneurial community. The tour revealed a number of common challenges that must be addressed to create a more dynamic and successful startup environment across the country:

- Canada needs to re-discover its entrepreneurial roots and embrace entrepreneurship as central to its national culture.
- Canada needs to cultivate savvier and more visionary early-stage startups to produce more high-growth companies with global reach.
- Canadian entrepreneurship must be fuelled from the bottom up through development of vibrant local entrepreneurial communities, led by entrepreneurs (not by bureaucrats or not-for-profits, as is often the case today), as the basis of a national entrepreneurship network.

"Canada's ability to compete on a global scale can only be achieved by changing our entrepreneurial culture across the country," said **Karina LeBlanc, CEO of the Pond-Deshpande Centre** at the University of New Brunswick. "We owe it to our young Canadians to provide them with entrepreneurial learning opportunities throughout their education, both at school and through extracurricular activities."



“Atlantic Canada is a hotbed of entrepreneurs ... smart, innovative, fun and very motivated people,” said **Rivers Corbett, Founder and CEO of Relish Gourmet Burgers** in New Brunswick. “We need to support them, appreciate them, surround them with a community of people who cheer the mere fact that they want to build their businesses in Atlantic Canada. Without entrepreneurs, *nothing* happens to push our region forward.”

The Way Forward

Startup Canada’s Action Plan is comprised of three national initiatives that will be financed through sponsorship dollars and a crowd-funding campaign coast to coast:

Startup Canada Connect: A free, highly social online meeting place that will connect and support Canadian entrepreneurs with the tools and resources needed to build more successful businesses.

Startup Canada Communities: A national entrepreneurial strategy must be founded on vibrant local communities led by existing entrepreneurial champions. Building on the network created through its 40-city national tour, Startup Canada will encourage development of strong local networks that will create the conditions necessary for entrepreneurial growth and success locally and nationally.

Startup Canada Campaign: Entrepreneurs across the country have told Startup Canada they need more role models - more access to stories of successful Canadian innovators and entrepreneurs. Startup Canada will lever mainstream media, social media and key national institutions to celebrate and tell the stories of Canadian entrepreneurs, providing authentic case studies to inspire and motivate new generations of startups.

To learn more about Startup Canada’s Action Plan, please visit www.startupblueprints.ca.

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About Startup Canada

Startup Canada is an entrepreneur-led movement to enhance the nation’s competitiveness and prosperity by supporting and celebrating Canadian entrepreneurship. Startup Canada is the first



Canadian organization to harness the collective energies of entrepreneurs and enterprise support communities from coast to coast to promote a vibrant entrepreneurial culture and to create a unified brand as a rallying point for Canadians.

Startup Canada sponsors include Microsoft, Gowlings, Ernst & Young, Best Western Hotels, the Canadian Innovation Commercialization Program, Export Development Canada, Business Development Canada, RGA, Francis Moran & Associates The VideoBooth Company, Artik, Kick Ass Media, PubliAir, the Ottawa Technology Transfer Network, the Association of University Research Parks Canada, Blab Media, the Canadian Association of Business Incubation, the Evidence Network, Francis Moran & Associates, FreshBooks, Global Advantage Consulting Group, Podio, Backbone Magazine, HootSuite, ITWorld Canada, NextMTL, Paper.li and Techvibes.