



Create Your Own Startup by Just Going Up the Stairs

Scenario Description and Roadmap

Context of the story

Participants are aspiring entrepreneurs who have entered a prestigious startup accelerator, located in a building where each floor (depending on the situation room or corridor) represents a stage of building a successful startup. Their mission is to climb the building floor-by-floor by solving challenges related to developing a business idea, market research, business model creation, branding, and finally pitching to investors. Only by successfully completing the challenges at each level can they advance to the next floor and eventually secure the funding needed to "escape" the entrepreneurial maze and launch their startup dream.



Global explanation

Participants work in teams, which have no more than 3 participants each, moving through several floors (phases), each designed to represent a critical milestone in the entrepreneurial journey.

Each floor is themed according to a key startup development stage: brainstorming innovative ideas, conducting market research, structuring a business model, creating branding and marketing strategies, and perfecting the investor pitch.

At every level, participants encounter interactive puzzles, hands-on tasks, and decision-making scenarios that simulate real-world startup challenges. They must use their creativity, problem-solving skills, adaptability, and collaboration to successfully complete the tasks and unlock access to the next floor. Progressing through these phases prepares teams to consolidate their work into a final pitch presented to a panel of "Boss Investors" (the trainers or game masters).

Success is determined not only by escaping the challenge but by demonstrating a thorough understanding of entrepreneurial processes, teamwork dynamics, and persuasive communication.



Roadmap

Phase A - Idea Generation

Step A.1 - Teams are presented with random prompts, ideas (presented in Annex No. 1) drawn from categories such as industry trends, emerging technologies, or pressing social issues. They must use these prompts as inspiration to brainstorm an innovative startup idea. Brainstorming will be facilitated and guided by provided list of startup ideas, which will make process faster (Annex No. 1). Teams discuss various options, collaborate creatively, and select one promising startup concept to develop throughout the Escape Room.

Step A.2 - Teams encounter a locked "Creativity Box". To unlock it, they must solve a thematic riddle related to entrepreneurship or innovation.

Steps for using the Creativity Box:

Step A.2.1: Teams receive a riddle (e.g., "What starts as a dream, grows with a plan, and survives with a team?") that hints toward the concept of a startup.

Step A.2.2: Upon solving the riddle correctly, teams receive a code or key to open the Creativity Box. If there is no box, Game Master just provide all the materials from Creativity box for the team.

Step A.2.3: Inside the Creativity Box, there are envelopes or sections containing various creative aids: brainstorming prompts, example startup scenarios and innovation cards. Possible materials are presented in Annex No. 4.



Step A.2.4: Teams must select one item from each category and use it to enhance, refine, or rethink their initial idea. During this part the educational aspect of creativity will be emphasised.

Step A.2.5: Teams document their refined startup idea, making sure to integrate elements they discovered in the Creativity Box. This part will be looked over by the Game Master, who will guide the teams.

After the “Creativity Box” task teams prepare to move on to the Market Research phase.

Phase B - Market Research

Step B.1 - Around the room are hidden "customer profiles", which include detailed personas representing potential target audiences (possible profiles presented in Annex No. 3). Teams must find these profiles and decode them to gather valuable insights on customer demographics, needs, and preferences. Having all the information, teams will be able to make the right selections for their startup concepts.

Step B.2 - Using the information from the customer profiles, teams align their startup idea with the most suitable customer segment. They adjust and refine their startup concept based on real-world, ensuring their idea meets an actual need rather than just being creative (main focus guide to create real life ideas, not the ones which have no actual reasoning). This will be validated by the Game Master, who will be looking over all the process.



Phase C - Business Model Development

Step C.1 – After completing previous steps, teams are presented with puzzle pieces by the Game Master representing different components of a startup: problem, solution, customer segment, value proposition, and revenue streams. They must correctly match these components to form a coherent startup model. All the possible puzzle pieces are presented in Annex No. 6.

Step C.2 - Upon successfully matching the component and getting validation from Game Master, teams unlock a "Business Canvas" template from a locked folder. This template will have key sections like: Problem, Customer Segment, Unique Value Proposition, Solution, Revenue Streams, Cost Structure, Channels, Key Activities, Key Resources, Key Partners. Teams then complete this one-page plan, summarising their startup's structure and strategy in a clear, concise format. This business model will guide their branding and pitching tasks later.

Phase D - Branding and Marketing

Step D.1 - With their business model in hand, teams move to branding. They must create a startup name, slogan, and basic logo design using the provided creative materials (blank pieces of paper, markers and other creative materials). Creativity, clarity, and alignment with the startup's mission are key.

Step D.2 - Teams face a marketing-themed crossword (Presented in Annex No. 5). Solving the crossword (with clues related to branding principles and marketing



terminology) gives them access to additional branding templates and promotional tools that they can use to polish their brand identity.

Phase D - Final Pitch

Step E.1 - Each team prepares and delivers from 60 seconds to 3 minutes pitch to the "Boss Investors" (trainers or Game master acting as venture capitalists). They must clearly explain the problem they solve, their innovative solution, their target market, and why their startup will succeed.

Step E.2 - The investors evaluate the pitches based on creativity, feasibility, presentation skills, and how well the business model matches customer needs. They provide feedback, and "fund" (declare winners) based on overall performance and entrepreneurial spirit.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Project code: 2023-2-LT02-KA220-YOU-0001831156

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons. Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>