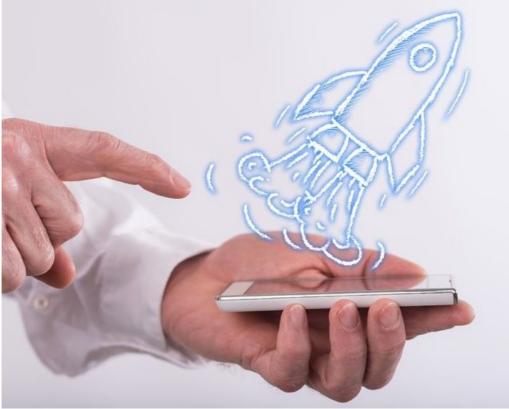# SqwidNet set to drive IoT entrepreneurship

Bringing small businesses' and entrepreneurs' ideas to life is the objective of SqwidNet's IoT Entrepreneurship Programme called (IoT)^E - IoT to the power of E. The programme is to enable entrepreneurs to enter the world of the internet of things (IoT) and become part of the broader ecosystem.

Source: thodonal © https://www.123rf.com/

According to the latest Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's (GEM) report, total early-stage entrepreneurial activity is up 4.1% from 2016. With unemployment in the country sitting at 26.7%, entrepreneurs play a crucial role in creating new employment opportunities and stimulating economic activity. That said, entrepreneurship for the sake of it is not enough. As technology evolves, the country needs a new type of thinker, who is willing to tackle business and socio-economic challenges and find solutions that can make a difference.

This is exactly what SqwidNet hopes to achieve with their IoT Entrepreneurship Programme called (IoT)^E – IoT to the power of E.

Now in its second iteration, the licensed Sigfox IoT network operator in South Africa is calling on entrepreneurs and small ICT companies to submit their applications to form part of the next intake of entrepreneurs who will be given the tools they need to make their ideas a reality.

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9 entrepreneurs pitch ideas to investors at (IoT)^E
18 Jun 2018

"The IoT ecosystem remains quite fragmented and we believe that through making it more accessible to entrepreneurs we can help in solidifying that ecosystem," says Phathizwe Malinga, acting CEO at SqwidNet.

> *"There are so many different ways in which IoT can be applied to drive business value and improve the lives of citizens, and we are encouraging entrepreneurs to bring their ideas forward so that we can assist them in bringing those ideas and solutions to life."*

Growing ideas grow into fully fledged businesses

(IoT)^E – IoT to the power of E is the entrepreneurship programme for all things IoT. The programme is being extended to be an annual, rather than quarterly programme and entrepreneurs will not only have access to technology and business mentorship, and the possibility of investment, but also an incubation programme to grow their ideas into fully fledged businesses. "We are also broadening the scope of potential participants," says Malinga. "If you are an existing ICT company with an annual turnover of less than R1-million or you just have an idea that you know can make a difference, but do not have the resources to turn it into a business, then this is the programme for you."

Remember the iconic Think Different campaign Apple ran in the late 1990s? "To quote Steve Jobs, we need 'The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently'. We need entrepreneurs who are willing to challenge the norm and tackle challenges head-on to make a difference in society," he says.

Every step of the way

Applications can be submitted online and a group of 60 entrepreneurs will be selected to go through the programme. It kicks off with a three-day workshop to teach participants more about IoT and Sigfox as a technology.

Participants will learn to build an end-to-end IoT solution where they will have the opportunity to engage with experts on device building, cloud, platform and applications. Thereafter, they will be given training from business doctors to help them start up their business. Participants will have access to their business and technology mentors twice a month to ensure they are equipped with all the tools they need to bring their ideas to life.

The programme will culminate in the opportunity for the participating entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas to a panel of potential investors. SqwidNet has endeavoured its best to empower participants with the appropriate tools through every stage of the entrepreneurship game.

"At SqwidNet we enable innovation through IoT. It is important to note that this programme is not limited to entrepreneurs with a history of working in electronics. We are looking for unique ideas that can drive meaningful impact both in business and in people's lives," says Malinga. "Applications will be assessed based on the uniqueness of the IoT device being proposed and the need for such a device in an existing market."

The deadline for applicants to submit their ideas is the end of August and successful participants will be notified by early September.

How to get involved

Entrepreneurs: If you are an entrepreneur with an engineering or ICT background with an idea, submit your CV and motivation to iotep@sqwidnet.com.

Small ICT business owner: If you are a business owner in the ICT industry with a turnover below R1m, complete the survey to enter.

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com