

1 of 1 DOCUMENT

Dowd's Cloud

July 24, 2012 Tuesday 2:38 PM EST

BLOG: Dowd's Cloud: Memphis Startup Weekend enriches entrepreneurial ecosystem

BYLINE: James Dowd**LENGTH:** 425 words

July 24--Wow.

Three little letters combining to create one big word -- Wow.

And it's a word that I think perfectly captures this past weekend's efforts of the Memphis Startup Weekend coordinators, sponsors and participants.

Three little letters for three big days -- Friday, Saturday and Sunday -- of entrepreneurial experimentation in Shelby County. This was a tremendous undertaking by Amanda Lewis, Chris Przybyszewski and James Ruffer and a host of dedicated volunteers, sponsors and mentors. Nearly four dozen folks showed up for the intensive startup experience, which resulted in 17 initial pitches and ultimately seven teams working to create a company in 54 hours.

It was a remarkable endeavor.

I was privileged to serve as one of four judges at the wrap up on Sunday when representatives from each of the seven teams pitched ideas for a potential startup. Some were more developed than others, all need further refining, but the explosion of innovative idea and the passionate pursuit of entrepreneurship by all involved were inspiring.

At the end, the judges were forced to narrow the field and three very worthy companies came out on top.

They were:

1. CoachSpeak (A social network similar to LinkedIn, for sports professionals): Presenter -- Derek Chapman:
2. CaptaVita (A web-based service that acts like a digital time capsule for users): Presenter -- Ethan van Drimmelen
3. Buyers Unite (A new take on the Groupon model, it forms a buyers group first rather than first getting a daily deal and then looking for buy-in): Presenter -- Joe Kennedy.

All three teams won \$1,000 from the University of Memphis FedEx Institute of Technology, nine hours of legal counsel from **Butler Snow** and nine hours of accounting help from Collins, Thomas, and Associates PC.

CoachSpeak is also going to receive strategic planning help from Southern Growth Studios.

Baby Jack's provided the food and Lab Four provided the space.

And Kyle Sanders from Nibletz [<http://startupmemphis.com/2012/07/24/memphis-startup-weekend-enriches-entrepreneurial-ecosystem/kyle@nibletz.com>] provided online coverage of the event.

I was impressed and encouraged by the presentations and the professionalism of the participants. This was a solid endeavor that certainly will boost the Bluff City's reputation as a hotbed for entrepreneurship.

And if you missed Startup Weekend, make sure to get involved next time. After the success of this one, plans are already under way for a solid repeat.

Full details, visit memphis.startupweekend.org [<http://memphis.startupweekend.org/>].

LOAD-DATE: July 24, 2012**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Web Blog

JOURNAL-CODE: MP-114551

Copyright 2012 Newstex LLC
All Rights Reserved