

NEW PIONEERS

Regional Test Case Documentation

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Reporting Period 6



PP 1, CWE



Boris Kaiser

kaiser@cwe-chemnitz.de

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0. Abstract

As a potential founder, how can you learn a little more about the stumbling blocks you may encounter on the way to your own business, but also about how incredible spinning ideas, trying things out and taking risks can be? We first thought of workshops on the fringes of cultural festivals. Then we thought: Oh no, would we attend those ourselves? Probably not. And then we thought: Podcasts with those who had the courage to start up, that sounds like a plan. And so we started to implement it.

1. Introduction

The number of successful start-ups in the region has been declining for years, especially in the area of small and micro-enterprises, or fewer companies were founded than were abandoned in the same period. The motivation to start a business could therefore use a new impetus. In order to add something to the classic offer of workshops, mentoring and start-up hubs, we saw the need and the necessity to integrate another, new, creative format into this range.

2. Objective

Our basic assumption for the setup of NEW PIONEERS was that people sometimes carry an inner feeling or a diffuse feeling and intentions with them that definitely have the potential to start a business or become self-employed. Often, however, they are not fully aware of the potential or they lack certain knowledge and structure to turn a diffuse idea, a hobby or a creative flash thought into something more. We believed that especially visiting art and cultural festivals is an inspiring moment in everyday life where you open up to your own inner creative ideas. We wanted to make use of these moments and create an offer that would provide new stimuli for further thinking about one's own (potential) founding ideas on the festival site itself. Our first idea was to offer workshops on topics such as business plan, financing, marketing, law, etc. But the longer we thought about it, the more distant the idea seemed. Even as visitors, we wouldn't really have gone for such an offer. After one or two thought twists, we considered the idea of podcasts with founders to be much more relevant. And we set out to start our own first podcast series to try and increase the appetite for start-ups and entrepreneurship in the region.

3. Applied approach

We assumed that people attending cultural and creative festivals are opening up in such inspiring environments and thus get connected to their inner self, their dreams and motivations much more than on a "regular" day. So from the very beginning of thinking about the content of this action we thought of connecting the offers to an art festival venue at their respective event schedule. The concept of the idea changed from workshops to podcasts as described. So although we kept the basic set-up of an offer in the context of an arts or cultural festival, we of course had to make crucial readjustments. First, we had to find a space on the POCHEN Festival site (see Results paragraph) that was within walking

distance for festival-goers and yet acoustically suitable for podcast recording (i.e. not too much ambient sound and background noise). The decision for the coffee roastery was good in terms of the presence of a live audience, but the background noise was a challenge for the technicians, which could only be solved in post-production by filtering.

The contact to the festival organizers was possible without any problems, as we know each other very well from other project contexts. So we were able to advertise the live recordings with flyers and posters in the box office area as well as in other places on the festival grounds.

We approached the guests for the first episodes directly from our personal networks. We see this point as absolutely uncritical for getting guests on a permanent basis, essential for the live concept and the production in one piece was only the scheduling of all guests on one day in a certain order.

4. Results

We have rethought the NEW PIONEERS podcast series from the ground up. There were no predecessors we could build on. Of course, the topic of podcasts is not new, so for the start we concentrated on addressing and inviting a variety of female actors. Three companies (plus one in the follow-up) offered to do the first episodes. We produced the first recordings on the sidelines of the only 2020 cultural festival (pandemically) in the region, the POCHEN FESTIVAL which took place from Oct. 22nd to Nov. 1st. Even though we changed the concept from Workshops to Podcasts, we still considered the inspirational atmosphere and the possible emotional activation of festival visitors valuable for the opportunity to connect their own dreams or ideas for potential businesses with our offer. So we promoted the live recordings with posters on location and then recorded with live audiences who were also allowed to ask questions (spoiler: but didn't - maybe too shy).

In addition to the recordings, we documented the conversations photographically and wrote company and personal portraits as texts. Everything was published together on a website, for which the podcast recordings themselves were also hosted on their own streaming platform in order to make them accessible on the well-known channels of podcast distribution such as Spotify, Deezer, Apple Music etc.

5. Goal Achievement and Lessons Learned

Due to delays caused by other tasks in our company, the episodes and the website did not go live until December 2021. So we don't yet have much user data for the website and streaming views. We have already received feedback during the production process and during requests from other companies for the podcast series that this format can be a really interesting building block (also for the corporate communication of the podcast guests) in the marketing mix. In addition, through the connections between the guests (also among themselves) and the listeners, a community idea and feeling is growing, the further benefits of which we cannot yet quantify, but we can guess.

As of today, we cannot refer to how this format affects start-up intentions or actual start-ups in the region. We haven't thought of a potential measurement method (except counting new startups and qualifying potential influence of our podcast series) but will do so in the future as a direct influence would probably need months if not years to really be measurable.

But the sympathy factor is there, and we have resolved to continue this series in any case beyond the InduCCI project period. For other partners who are thinking about implementing a podcast series, we already recommend thinking in terms of seasons and pre-producing a larger volume of episodes before the first publication. In this way, you can avoid getting into a publication slump, as we are currently doing, and the lack of regularity of new episodes leading to question marks among listeners. But we have clearly identified the problem for ourselves and are already working on continuing episodes or seasons.

6. Outlook, Sustainability and Transferability

We assume that a format like this could of course be produced and published in other regions as well. We see no limits regarding the potential environment of the shows but would recommend to stick to the idea, to record and with that promote the idea live at festival sites, so having a few good cultural festivals a year would be kind of a necessity.

The production costs per episode were around 1.000 EUR (for renting the space, recording equipment plus technical support, that we needed (can be spared if any own resources and knowledge are at hand). We also invested in professional post-production in a studio, mainly to set a quality level, gain expertise in post-productions techniques and for recording a professional intro-tune with voice over. This also counted with additional 600,- EUR per episode. But those costs can significantly be lowered if a permanent podcast recording equipment is used and post-production is standardized. The recording time for one episode was around an hour, post-production is expected to have a factor 1.5 or 2 of the recording time. But we recorded 3 episodes in a row and also post-production was effectively quicker due to professionals at work.

We plan to continue the series with at least 20 episodes per year. In addition, we want to remain true to the original intention and record individual episodes live at festivals with an audience, in order to make the format better known and not just rely on digital distribution.

7. Annexes

Pictures from the live recording of the first three episodes, live at the coffee roastery “Kaffeerösterei Bohnenmeister”, in the framework program of the art festival POCHEN.

Credit: Johannes Richter

Project Website: www.newpioneers.de (all podcasts are up now and also get published to platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music and Deezer (f.e.)



