

GREEN BUSINESS



BUSINESS SUCCESS THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY

AS AL Gore said in his speech at the TED 2016 seminar in Vancouver: “climate change is the biggest business opportunity in world history”.

Even so, a lot of great ideas never make it to market, or when they do they don't reach the critical mass necessary to be impactful. The world needs help embracing a more sustainable way of life, and one bright idea can make a big difference.

More and more initiatives are being rolled out to help green entrepreneurs. But in this field, there is one international competition that stands out: the Postcode Lottery Green Challenge. In the past decade, the competition has helped over 20 green startups to grow and to further develop their product or service and bring it to market.

GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Activists open our eyes to the detrimental impact our lifestyle has on the environment, and, in turn, governments do their part by passing new laws and regulations.

Social entrepreneurs can make a difference by actually developing new technologies and offering viable alternatives. Their passion for a greener world provides the necessary solutions to all of us.

Social entrepreneurship, therefore, is crucial if we are to significantly alter our lifestyle. Many people might think that doing good and commercial business are irreconcilable, but in fact an important path to lasting change can be created where these two meet.

Jeroen Gerlag explains how green startup competitions are playing a vital role in the fight against climate change

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AN ACCELERATOR FOR GREEN STARTUPS

The Dutch Postcode Lottery is the organiser of the Green Challenge competition, and startups from around the world can take part and compete for the first prize of €500,000 (£422,000). The competition aims to select plans that are ready to speed up the transition towards a low carbon economy.

The answers to the environmental issues of our time are already here. But it takes entrepreneurs to present us with these sustainable solutions, and to take them out into the world. The competition stands out for its substantial prize money, its focus on both sustainability and social entrepreneurship, and its international appeal.

Sir Richard Branson has been involved in the competition since the beginning. After serving on the jury in 2007, he returned in 2013 as chair of the jury. On his work for the competition, Branson stated: “The Postcode Lottery Green Challenge calls on entrepreneurs to find solutions to climate change, one of the most urgent issues we face today. I encourage everybody around the world with a great green idea to enter this prestigious contest. One smart, creative idea can make a huge difference.”

UK-BASED WINNERS

In 2014, Arthur Kay won the Postcode Lottery Green Challenge with his London based company Bio-bean. Bio-bean uses a patented process to upcycle waste coffee grounds into two advanced biofuel products, namely biodiesel and biomass pellets,



WANTED

ENTREPRENEURS TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

The annual global search for startups that combat climate change has started again. Until 1 June 2017, green startups can submit their business plans on www.greenchallenge.info. By participating, they are eligible to win €500,000 (£422,000). The Postcode Lottery Green Challenge is looking for:

- Green and innovative entrepreneurs with a proven business plan to tackle climate change;
- A product or service that helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- A product or service that is developed enough to be executed and brought to market within two years.

Are you or do you know a startup that is fighting climate change? Sign up at www.greenchallenge.info

used for powering buildings and transport systems.

So the waste grounds of the coffee that fuels City workers (and many others too, as Bio-bean is rapidly expanding) gets a second life as biofuels and biomass pellets. The pellets are sold to companies, hospitals and supermarket chains to heat their buildings, as a carbon-neutral alternative to imported biomass pellets, the vast majority of which come from Eastern Europe and North America.

In 2009, UK-based The Power Collective won. The firm developed the RidgeBlade, a low-cost rooftop wind turbine that captures wind power in low-wind conditions. Its visual unobtrusiveness makes it suitable for city housing as well as environmentally sensitive locations like national parks. The Power Collective has patented its technology – but not without a relatively serious patent claim right after the competition – and received governmental approval for its product. The next step is getting the product made and to install it on roofs around the world.

OTHER COMPETITIONS IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- The Green Alley Award, with a strong focus on a circular economy. A prize of €30,000 in cash and/or mentorship.
- G-Startup Worldwide, a global startup competition held around the world to find the most innovative, early stage firms. An investment prize of between €50,000 and €250,000.
- Cleantech Open: an accelerator for cleantech startups.