

MetroHartford Alliance Project

"I have worked with many consulting teams over the years and our engagement with Jumpstart ranks among my better experiences ... we were well served using them to move our initiative forward."

- JOHN SHEMO
VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, METROHARTFORD ALLIANCE

Hartford, Connecticut

Background

The Hartford region is comprised of two counties (Hartford and Tolland) and 39 towns in North Central Connecticut. The region is home to 11 colleges and universities, a thriving insurance and financial services industry, many large and well-established businesses and a plethora of organizations and programs designed to assist entrepreneurs.

The MetroHartford Alliance is charged with ensuring this region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, talent and capital. The Alliance engaged JumpStart to assess their entrepreneurial ecosystem, identify the strengths, as well as the gaps, and develop a plan for how the organization could best deploy \$1 million to pursue its three primary goals:

- Business growth
- Talent retention
- Job creation

Implementation

JumpStart conducted primary research through in-person interviews with more than 40 individuals at more than 30 organizations throughout the Hartford region. JumpStart also surveyed a 100 person cross-section of the community, gathering opinions about local access to capital, the region's ability to attract and retain talent and the overall quality of support resources in the community.

After combining this primary research with secondary research, including economic development and industry/ innovation reports, the full picture emerged. **There were great entrepreneurial support programs being offered in the Hartford region, but they were severely fragmented. As a result, local service providers were not well-connected to each other, nor the entrepreneurs and small business owners they were attempting to serve.**

Because the Hartford region already had such solid programs and people, **JumpStart's plan for the region focused heavily on community alignment.** Implementation began with a series of community meetings examined the research, analyzed the implications and aligned the group around a common set of goals. Chief amongst these goals was the development of a cohesive shared message to spread through the Hartford region.

Outcomes

JumpStart ultimately recommended three core strategies to address critical opportunities identified during the research process;

- A strong collaborative marketing plan to increase awareness and participation in the ecosystem.
- An interactive portal with virtual and physical touch points to serve the needs and tell the story of the Hartford region's entrepreneurial community.
- A grant fund to encourage and incentivize the development of innovative ideas and increase overall deal flow.

The Alliance began implementing JumpStart's recommendations by convening a coalition tasked with examining and addressing pressing entrepreneurial issues in the community with a collective voice.

Next, the group created a centralized web portal to connect regional entrepreneurs with available resources and act as a central hub for telling stories and sharing positive outcomes. This idea eventually grew to become **Innovation Destination: Hartford, a website serving and showcasing North Central Connecticut's entrepreneurial community.**

Future plans for the MetroHartford Alliance and its partners include an expansion of the region's entrepreneurial mentoring program, both to expand their current work with startups and also to begin serving "second-stage" companies that are ready to grow and hire aggressively in the Hartford area.

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Growing **BUSINESSES**
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FLIGHT NIGHT

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Hosted by reSET, **Flight Night** provides an open forum for **startups to pitch their businesses** in front of an audience of community members, investors, business experts and mentors.
Thursday, March 24, 5:30 – 8:00 pm at
The Business Factory, 1429 Park Street, Hartford.
[Join the event!](#)

Innovation Destination: Hartford is designed to showcase and serve the Greater Hartford region's **entrepreneurial community**. Here you'll be able to check out new **Connecticut-area startups**, entrepreneurs, events and the various players that make up our entrepreneurial community. You'll find the **resources** you'll need to **start and grow your business** and discover why the Hartford region is a great place to live, work and **make an impact!**

SO YOU WANT TO OWN YOUR OWN RESTAURANT?

Join us for Innovation Destination Hartford's free event: So You Want to Own Your Own Restaurant? Events in our new quarterly series, **RISKS AND REWARDS** will showcase prominent innovators and entrepreneurs from around the Greater Hartford region. Attendees will have an opportunity to interact with them and hear about their experiences firsthand. Our first event, So You Want to Own Your Own Restaurant? will feature entrepreneurs from the restaurant, catering, and food truck industries who will share stories about the challenges of making their visions a reality – and the merits of building successful [...]

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