

uSTART – UTT’s Business Incubator /Accelerator

The Road to Entrepreneurship

THE UNIVERSITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (UTT), amidst COVID-19, continues to be a pioneer, embracing its role of being the first entrepreneurial university in the Caribbean. The University has made bold moves by focusing on programmes which create and innovate – evidenced in the projects developed by students.

In 2014, the University launched uSTART – the first ever university-originated business incubator in Trinidad and Tobago. The business incubator works in tandem with the University’s Academics, where business incubation is introduced in classroom teaching. uSTART has since moved beyond the collection and evaluation of innovative ideas, into startup projects. Alumni and some currently enrolled students are now owners of viable businesses from the fields of fashion; animation; information technology,



The Coded Arts Team (l to r) : Andy Berahazar Jr., Chairman; Caiphus Moore; Brian Perry, Managing Director; Joel Salazar; Alex Jadoo; Tyrell Duranty and Darnel Bruce.

agriculture, engineering, manufacturing and health. The uSTART entrepreneurs within these sectors have benefitted from services which include: mentoring, workshops, networking and seed - financing.

CODED ARTS LTD is an interactive media company in Trinidad founded by Mr. Andy Berahazar Jr. and Mr. Brian Perry, both former students of UTT. uSTART provided the physical space,

access to computer systems and mentoring which were critical during the company’s infancy stage. Coded Arts is now focused on developing itself and members in game development, virtual reality, software development, 3Dmodelling outsourcing and animation. Its vision is to be a leader in the Caribbean region and a major player in the Latin American Region. Coded Arts has partnered and engaged in contracts locally, regionally and

internationally.

JAMILIA ALEXANDER, founder of Vice Versa Fashion Company, another graduate of the University is the owner of a successful business in the fashion industry. Ms. Alexander is a trailblazer in the fashion industry, having worked with dozens of fashion brands and spearheading international trade missions in Tokyo and London. uSTART provided the physical space, networking, mentoring and workshops, which assisted her in shaping her company and allowed her to pivot given changes in the environment.

Ms. Alexander, named a 40-under-40 Influencer by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, recognised a gap in the fashion industry and subsequently launched Uppoint, a cloud-based platform that digitises all primary and support value chain activities for the Fashion Industry. Uppoint is creating waves in the Caribbean and has



Jamilia Alexander, founder of Vice Versa Fashion Company and Uppoint.

partnered with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) to provide digitised value chain support to twenty-four (24) brands in the region.

It is clear to see how uSTART, the business accelerator programme at UTT, continues to lead the way as an engine of innovation and enterprise, fostering an ecosystem that supports entrepreneurial mindsets of both students and staff of UTT. It is a bonus feature of which the University is extremely proud.



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