

CUE Grand Finale 2008

The winners of this year's Entrepreneurs' Challenge have been announced

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Summary

A novel antenna that is 100 times smaller than anything on the market today. Technology that will revolutionise power conversion through intelligent control. A device that automates the detection of tuberculosis in sputum, eliminating human error and speeding up the process for millions of people worldwide.

Microantenna, PowerSi Technologies and AutoTB are winning companies in this year's Entrepreneurs' Challenge. They were awarded £10k each at the CUE Grand Finale which took place on 11 June.

The Grand Finale

£30,000 of prize money was awarded to the most promising Cambridge start-ups. This included an Angel Prize for the company with the most compelling pitch delivered on the night to an elite panel of Cambridge Angels at the heart of the Cambridge entrepreneurial scene comprising:

- Hermann Hauser, serial entrepreneur and co-founder of Amadeus Capital Partners
- Ewan Kirk, former Partner in charge of the Goldman Sachs Quantitative Strategies Group in Europe
- Jonathan Milner, CEO of Abcam
- Adrian Critchlow, serial entrepreneur and co-Founder and Director of AlertMe
- Andy Richards, serial biotech entrepreneur
- and David Cleevely, founder and former Chairman of Analysis

The ceremony was held in the historically charged Chamber of the Cambridge Union Society, where amongst others the late Ronald Reagan, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama have spoken.

Before the winners were announced, selected finalists had a chance to present their business to the audience and the panel. The panel then withdrew to deliberate on which team would win the Angel Prize of an additional £5k. David Cleevely, who chaired the panel, said that he believed this year's entries were of the highest quality he had seen.

The winners

Microantenna

Team members: Dhiraj Sinha, Richard Marchant, Karthik Tadinada, Iskandar Samad

Public Summary: Microantenna has developed a disruptive antenna which can transmit and receive radio waves over a very broad frequency range in the radio frequency spectrum. The device of micrometric dimensions is smaller than the smallest antenna currently available in the market by a factor of 100. It can also be integrated with semiconductor components on a chip which has not been possible so far. Its low power consumption, high sensitivity and its compatibility with existing fabrication processes make it a strong candidate for the market.

Prizes: The ARM “Hippo” Prize was awarded to Microantenna. “Hippo” is ARM’s in-house phrase for High-potential. Interestingly, Microantenna aims to use the same business model as ARM. Microantenna will license the IP for their miniature antenna in the same way as ARM does for their microprocessor to over 200 companies worldwide.

Microantenna also impressed the judges with a compelling and passionately delivered pitch and walked away with the Angel Prize.



From left: Jonathan Milner, Hermann Hauser, Andy Richards, Adrian Critchlow, David Cleevly, Ewan Kirk with the Microantenna team, Dhiraj Sinha, Richard Marchant and Karthik Tadinada



PowerSi Technologies

Team members: Zhihan Wang, Yalan Wang, Patrick Palmer

Public Summary: PowerSi Technologies has developed and patented a technology that will revolutionise energy conversion through the intelligent control of power semiconductor devices. Our Active Voltage Controller, the most intelligent controller today, will reduce the total cost of a conversion system by 40%, improve the efficiency by 10% and enhance reliability. Our entry market is renewable energy applications, including wind power, solar energy and hybrid vehicles. The total available market of controllers in these three sectors is worth \$1.3bn in 2008, of which we will take 20% within 5 years.

Prizes: PowerSi Technologies won the 3i Prize for Entrepreneurship, presented by Laurence Garrett, Partner at 3i and long-term supporter of CUE. Laurence was a competition judge, a member of the CUE board and a sponsor.

The CUE Cleantech Award was presented to PowerSi Technologies by competition judge Hugh Purser. PowerSi Technologies was also selected by Innovator Capital to pitch at CleanEquity Monaco, an investor summit next March.

AutoTB

Team members: Kelly Karns, Christopher Rumball, Adnan Iqbal, Milena Lazarevska, Mathieu Michalet

Public Summary: More than one-third of the world's population is infected with tuberculosis, a disease that kills over 2 million people annually. Improved diagnostics are desperately needed to combat this growing epidemic. AutoTB plans to create a device to automate sputum microscopy, which will decrease analysis time, increase sensitivity and eliminate the human error present in current procedures, while integrating into the existing infrastructure and remaining inexpensive and accessible to developing countries. The medical and economic benefits of this device will provide a competitive advantage over existing technologies and make it very marketable to non-governmental organizations for both rural and urban clinics in developing countries. Furthermore, due to the inexpensive nature of the device, users will purchase replacement devices rather than pursue maintenance options, providing long-term sustainability for AutoTB's sales and profits.

Prizes: The Filemot-Cambridge IP joint prize was awarded to AutoTB. This prize included a free IP landscape

mapping provided by Cambridge IP, a company started by CUE alumnus Ilian Iliev, and the associated legal interpretation by Barbara Cookson, a Patent Attorney at Filemot Technology Law.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership Social Innovation Award was also won by AutoTB who received their prize from Cathy Taylor, Enetrprise Development Manager at GCP.

Runners-up

Runners-up in the competition were GreenPB, a new and cleaner way to recycle lead from batteries, Rescent, technology to create longer-lasting scent and Terranova, that uses a multi-dimensional computer model to improve the yield and quality of grapes for vineyards.

About CUE

CUE was founded in 1999. Nine years on, it has grown to be the most successful student-run business creation competition in the world, having produced companies now valued collectively at over £42m.

CUE exists to promote and nurture entrepreneurship in Cambridge and beyond and does so through the Entrepreneurs' Challenge, a competition in three phases. The competition, together with business training events, information evenings and networking opportunities, takes students and staff from idea to business in under a year.

The competition has a history of creating world-class high technology companies. Light Blue Optics, a company producing miniature laser-based projectors and winner of the competition in 2004 has recently opened its first US office, having secured \$26m of venture capital funding. Last year's winning team, Cambridge Temperature Concepts, is about to launch its product, a minute temperature sensor that accurately detects ovulation, later this year.

This year

This year, we have innovated. We have a new and distinct brand identity, new speed networking sessions that encourage cross-disciplinary team formation, new pitching masterclasses to train teams to sell their ideas effectively and new intellectual property workshops to inform people about protecting their ideas. We are now planning a new software competition.

Our new competition, the £100 Challenge, attracted 336 entries and involved the greatest number of distinct entrants in our history. Each year our £1k Challenge entries are of an increasingly higher quality – and this year we awarded 11 prizes rather than the usual 10. A record 15 teams were selected as finalists in the £5k Challenge and three teams won £10k each at our Grand Finale.

For further information, please get in touch with:
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