



Marketing gets respect with green tech at incubator C4Cube



September 27, 3:20 PM [Reno Marketing for Renewable Energies Examiner](#)
David Roberts



Norm Smith (back), C4Cube Exec. Director, teams with the experts.

In the last tech business cycle at century's turn, Rodney Dangerfield was the poster boy for marketing. Not any more. In the period, say 1996-2001, investors threw funds at almost any Internet business with a loosely substantiated Business Plan. Marketing got very little respect, even drew disdain from many venture capitalists in Silicon Valley. Millions were invested in the novelty of the idea, the notion of being "first to market" or shallow revenue models that promised huge, early returns. Back then, insufficient attention was paid to professional marketing and something called "proof of demand." Not any more.

Angels, VC's and incubators have always held smart people, but in today's start-up climate of sparse funding, they are much wiser and think bigger. In assessing the commercial prospects of an idea, then and now, the one constant is that management pedigree is still the best indicator of success. However many now consider marketing the second most important criteria, ahead of financial and legal issues. At a recent 4 day boot camp for entrepreneurs in Reno, sponsored by incubator firm [C4Cube](#) two guest speakers (Rudi Weidemann and Jim Holmes) made the same observation about the elevated importance of marketing.

Incubators are a lesser known, broader focused entity in the start-up world, whose function is nurturing promising innovators to success. Norm Smith, Executive Director of C4Cube in Reno, described their mission as, "assembling a community of business resources. The success of C4Cube is the success of our graduates, with the end goal of creating jobs for northern Nevada. Smith further noted that with all the natural energy

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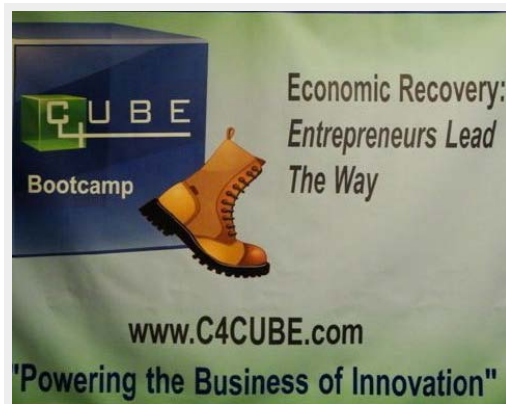
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resources in Nevada (wind, solar and geothermal), C4Cube is especially suited to launching new green tech enterprises.

At C4Cube's "boot camp" entitled "Economic Recovery - Entrepreneurs Lead the Way," Reno Mayor Bob Cashell kicked off the event with an acknowledgment that "innovators create the jobs in this country, especially in Nevada." And he encouraged new business owners to "never take 'no' for an answer." The agenda of the 4-day event was a condensation of the ongoing mentoring Clients would find at C4Cube. Expert speakers covered topics such as:

- refining the idea,
- defining your market -- and demonstrating demand,
- converting the idea to a business, writing a Business Plan,
- intellectual property protection,
- knowing helpful local resources,
- recruiting talent,
- accounting and monetization,
- honing an "elevator pitch,"
- knowing what investors want and, lastly,
- preparing your pitch to investors

One attendee who plans to start a biofuel business (Kenny Dargert) was awakened to the value of networking and particularly recalled advice for "discipline and focus" touted by several of the speakers.

When Ky Good, Managing Director, was asked his take on the importance of marketing, he said "it's a key part of the hands-on mentoring and education of our Clients." And asked if they "walk the talk" in marketing their own organization, he said, yes, but that "networking is the primary vehicle for bringing value and awareness to Clients and to what we do." He also stated that C4 employs traditional tactics such as press releases to local media, airing a PSA radio spot, plus being interviewed on Reno radio shows hosted by John Sanchez and Ross and Monica.




Ky Good, C4Cube Managing Director, addresses attendees

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