

BUSINESS-INCUBATOR.COM TO GIVE BIRTH TO UK ?.COMS?

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Cisco, Exodus, Oracle and Sun launch joint initiative to help internet start-ups in the UK

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At today's .com Your Business event, leading e-business companies, Oracle, Sun Microsystems, Cisco and Exodus, announced a £5 million investment in business-incubator.com, a joint initiative to help budding UK ?.coms? test their ideas before trading in the global marketplace.

business-incubator.com will offer start-ups a stable, managed 'greenhouse' environment for a three month period at a reduced price. The solution, made up of a defined list of hardware, database software, network infrastructure and web hosting facilities, will be leased to start-ups for £15,000 for a three month period. The business-incubator.com package also includes specific consultancy services, providing experts to advise on server workload, backing-up your data and creating and managing your information.

As British companies realise the opportunities presented by the internet, they must also address the major barriers to entry of technical infrastructure, funding and building a global customer base. business-incubator.com minimises the technical barriers by offering a secure, reduced-risk environment at a significantly reduced price to develop and test e-commerce applications for three months before launching a full e-business.

Aimed at entrepreneurs who have conducted the initial research for an e-business idea, produced a business plan and set realistic targets for delivery of the business plan, business-incubator.com allows start-ups to set the operational wheels in motion through a ready built web environment that is fast becoming the de facto standard for internet based e-businesses, market research indicates that: 80% of internet traffic runs on Sun Microsystems; 69% of the world's e-commerce sites run on Oracle technology; 80% of internet traffic runs over Cisco Systems equipment.

Included in business-incubator.com are access to

- Sun EnterpriseTM servers - a robust and scalable server plus consultancy
- Oracle 8i database - development tools and consultancy
- Cisco Systems - computer network infrastructure enabling secure connectivity via

routers and switches

- Exodus - hosting the server, protecting the business and its customers with a security firewall, making sure it's on duty day and night

business-incubator.com can also put start-ups in touch with the venture capital community and with organisations such as PricewaterhouseCoopers (which runs its Companies With Extraordinary Potential programme) and Ideas Hub. Ideas Hub offers a greenhouse development environment and venture capital fund for new internet businesses providing a unique combination of seed funding with industry expertise, services, resources and an industry network critical to nurturing the success of an internet start-up.

Companies who want to use business-incubator.com as a testbed for their ideas will need to go through an application process, detailing their business proposal to advisors from each of the four business-incubator.com companies. Applications will be reviewed on the strength and viability of each individual idea. If accepted, the applicants will develop the launch plan with business-incubator.com representatives within two weeks of acceptance. The elements of the business-incubator.com package are then used to action the launch plan, simulating the real life e-business experience but minimising the risks and uncertainty normally associated with internet start-ups.

Once the three month trial period is over, the formal relationship with business-incubator.com ends. However, if the new business wishes to continue the web environment created by business-incubator.com then each of the four companies will meet with the entrepreneur to discuss this and offer further help.

Philip Letts, CEO, beenz.com commented, "We started up early in 1999 with a single idea - Customer Loyalty on the net - and we've taken off in a really big way. Without the people behind business-incubator.com we wouldn't have got started so quickly, we wouldn't have had the industrial strength web-ready network infrastructure, nor the right environment to launch on the web and be taken seriously as a new and exciting start-up with a unique and clever idea.

Now, look at us - we're successful. We're global, not just in the UK or Europe. beenz.com is growing every day and making headlines in all our key worldwide markets!"

Philip Crawford, senior vice president at Oracle UK said, "We want to see UK companies become serious contenders globally. The only way this will happen is if we invest now in the businesses of tomorrow.

business-incubator.com is the catalyst to turn great ideas into successful

?.com? companies, bringing much needed direction to Britain?s online economy. Oracle, Sun, Cisco and Exodus have built solid business foundations on the internet. The experience and expertise we offer will benefit all business-incubator.com participants, not only in technology terms, but also in managing their online venture from conception to fruition."

Shanker Trivedi, VP for Sun Microsystems UK and Ireland said, "There has been an incredible number of reports and plenty of talk about UK companies lagging behind their US counterparts when it comes to embracing the net economy. We think it is about time the talking stopped and successful ?.com? companies started to offer practical help to start-up e-businesses. business-incubator.com is a very practical resource to help e-business start-ups be successful."

"Exodus is extremely pleased to be closely involved in business-incubator.com. At the heart of the web are three things. Time to market, brand and performance. business-incubator.com will help deliver time to market and performance for young, entrepreneurial companies. Exodus is at the heart of this programme and following the initial term with business-incubator.com, companies involved can build on this learning period to take advantage of Exodus? Rapid Deployment Programme," said Peter Smith, vice president of sales, Exodus Communications, EMEA.

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