

**Kasvu Open is Finland's largest company-oriented business coaching programme offering free of charge sparring to any SME willing to grow.**

Kasvu Open was originally developed by Central Finland Chamber of Commerce together with University of Jyväskylä. Today, Kasvu Open is run by Kasvu Open Ltd, Chamber of Commerce being of the partners.

Kasvu Open's origin lies in discontent with public business development services which are often too generic to meet individual companies' development needs.

Kasvu Open offers free of charge business coaching to all companies willing to grow despite their line of business, size or age. Business coaches are professionals from different sectors and they work pro bono.

Every eager-to-grow company joining Kasvu Open growth programme has an opportunity to present their own ideas, test them, receive feedback, polish their plans and try to solve problems together with the business experts. Every participating company gets at least 45 minutes free sparring, and the most potential companies for growth are selected to continue on suitable growth path and the best ones finally to Kasvu Open finals.

Companies find out about the programme through existing networks or different social media channels. Business experts join in through existing networks.

Main stakeholders and beneficiaries are Finnish SMEs. In the long run, the practice benefits the whole company development field by changing it to more company-oriented.

Also several CCI companies have already participated in Kasvu Open process.

## **Resources needed**

It takes 650 000-800 000 euros to run the Kasvu Open organisation and 600 000 euros for organising 30 Growth Paths.

Over 1000 business experts' pro bono working hours equals 5400 man-hours per year.

Kasvu Open has 15 national and ca 200 regional partners enabling the programme.

## **Evidence of success**

Over 1700 companies have been coached since 2011, and 95% of them recommend the programme. Of business coaches and experts 99% recommend the task to other experts.

Kasvu Open is flexible company-oriented model for business development, grown from regional pilot to nation-wide concept.

Companies have found new customers, received new funding, found professional board members and potential work force, reached publicity, new networks and trust and confidence in their own business-making.

## **Difficulties encountered**

Finding potential eager-to-grow companies was challenging at the beginning, entrepreneurs were sceptic about sparring being free of charge.

Free of charge is the strength of this concept, but it is also a weakness, as it might create a credibility problem.

## **Potential for learning or transfer**

Facilitators must have an existing network of experienced entrepreneurs that are spontaneously interested in becoming volunteer trainers.

It is essential to have enough workforce from the very beginning.

Everything comes down to individuals who are enthusiastic, committed, talented, altruistic, have faith in the matter and trust one another.

The process is long and requires commitment; even large companies invest hundreds of man-hours to the project.

The core team has to have devotion and burning desire to their cause.

### **Main institution**

Kasvu Open Ltd

### **Location**

Länsi-Suomi, Finland (Suomi)

### **Start Date**

January 2014

### **End Date**

Ongoing

[Further information](#)