

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/key-performance-indicators>

Chris Redlitz, co-founder of The Last Mile, discusses the key performance indicators his program needed to meet to effectively bring entrepreneurial skills to prison inmates in California. Redlitz focuses on the need to resonate with participants, the importance of engaging volunteers and partners, and gaining a commitment of support from society.



Transcript

So we started the program, but we have to have, as you learn and talk about startups, what are our KPIs, how do we judge the success of this program? And the first thing that we had to understand and appreciate was does it resonate with the men in prison? Is this something they want to learn and can they really absorb the applications that we are presenting to them because they have no internet access? They have no access to technology.. And will the correctional system adopt what we're trying to do and be open enough to understand what we're trying to accomplish? We didn't ask to do a program, we asked to do a program that we thought would be disruptive and beneficial and create a pipeline for people like Ray to have a better life.. That myth that we were doing things that they weren't used to.. One of the things that we asked to do was allow the men to participate in social media.. We wanted them to have a voice, to get a response, which all of us take for granted today.. These men had never experienced it before.. We also wanted them to really understand how to build a business plan and how to get the confidence that they can enter a job, either create their own or enter a job and feel confident like they belonged.. So when we started to see things that really resonated and get comments from the men that really were profound.. One of the men on our program, Lauri Houston, said, when that door closes to our class for our two hour session, I forget that I am in prison.. They also have to do things that again are difficult for us to do, but even more difficult for them because many of them have never done this process, they've never gone through a collaborative environment and they've never presented to anyone before..

In our first session, we had a man named Eric Philips, who in the first session had a difficult time stringing two sentences together.. And he went on and struggled for the first month.. So many of you may not be old enough to remember the movie, but if you remember My Fair Lady, Henry Higgins is teaching how to go from a Cockney accent to a proper British accent.. So that night, I walked in class singing 'the rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain.' And they thought I was out of my mind, but we had Phil start to sing his presentation.. And when it came to demo day, he was flawless.. And some of the people at San Quentin came up to me and said either Phil has been reincarnated or he has a twin brother, but that's a type of response that we needed to see that it really resonated.. The second one was engagement.. Beverly and I can do this ourselves to some degree, but we really need volunteers and people from the outside to bring their expertise in as well.. So as we would in business, we try to find those key influencers in the market that would really help us to teach, but also to share the message.. So we invited entrepreneurs in, some from our portfolio and some from the outside..

And we also have a reading curriculum and the first author we invited in was Guy Kawasaki.. Guy came in, not only did he come in, he donated the books and he was phenomenal.. He said it was his most captured audience he has ever been in front of.. So Guy has been here before, so you can appreciate his sense of humor.. But from then, we got Brian Solace who many of you know, he is well known in the social media area for his writings.. John Ham, who wrote a book on leadership, Andy Smith and Stanford's own professor Jennifer Ocker, who wrote Dragon Fly Effect as well participated.. So that type of participation was great, business leaders, MC Hammer you saw in the video, a well-known VC Josh Kopelman and some of the up and coming entrepreneurs in the valley, Brian Wong who was in the 30 under-30 Forbes list.. Patrick Collison who has a company called Stripe who you may know.. They all came in and donated their time.. Then we realized that this is a program that we could scale with the right type of involvement and people volunteering..

The third and most important part was, are we going to get businesses and people to support people like Ray after they graduate and after they serve their time? That means that businesses have to step out to something that they're not

necessarily comfortable with.. But believe it or not, we have many businesses now that have reached out to us and said we'll participate.. Sachi Doctor from Rally is here with us today, and Rally was one of the first companies to raise their hand and say, we'll participate.. We actually have one of the guys who was in the video, Kenyatta Leal who actually closed the video, already has a job waiting for him and he is still incarcerated.. He was that impressive that Duncan Logan from RocketSpace said, I'm going to sign this guy today because I know he's going to have multiple offers when he comes out.. What we're trying to do really is show that these men have skills and opportunities that they can actually add value.. I was with the CEO of Rally yesterday, Tom Serres, and he said to me 'what's the deal with Ray?' And I looked him like 'oh, what did he do?' He said "he's smiling every day.. He's infectious with his enthusiasm.. He's added value already to our company." So this is not a one way street, it's a mutual benefit which is - really makes us feel great that we can start adding that value...