

EDANZ Conference 2009

BUILDING A PROGRAMME FOR HIGH GROWTH BUSINESSES AND SECTORS AROUND THE RUGBY WORLD CUP

What is Grow Wellington's role?

Our role is to connect, inspire and facilitate.

We are very clear that our mission is the provision of intelligent support for inspirational, high growth business that will grow Wellington.

We are also very clear about how we work with high growth companies – it is all about their needs. We work hard to ensure we don't build programmes that will in any way lose sight of the fact that every business is different. Tightly defined programmes do not help business; flexible and adaptable programmes do.

So you are not going to hear about our development of a 50 page programme with minutely described steps.

What you are going to hear is how we are growing Wellington's regional economy through inspirational businesses.

How do we identify high growth businesses and sectors?

To a large extent, high growth businesses are self-selecting in terms of the personality of the key people building the business. There are, however, other criteria – the business needs to be able to scale its product or service – which inevitably this means there is a high degree of innovation or technology involved.

Our sector choice is also about scale – does this sector have the potential to generate multi-millions of export revenue?

Our work, to date, has been with businesses across a range of sectors – from the health and manufacturing sectors to food and beverage companies, film and education.

How do we know what to do for them?

This is about gap identification. What information, contacts or tools are they missing to enable to achieve their potential? What do they need to help them to grow and where can we connect or facilitate?

This work generally centres on three areas – market development, investment and skills.

When we talk about Market Development, we're focusing on growing start-up and fledgling businesses via intensive programmes such as Activate, through our business incubator, Creative HQ, or via Innovate and Accelerate, those flexible support services that connect high growth businesses with the right people, tools and knowledge.

At Grow Wellington, we believe that Investment is vital, so we're making it our business to find out where capital for growth can be sourced through ventures such as Angel HQ, which connects high net worth investors with dynamic early start businesses.

When it comes to Skills, we work closely to connect businesses with skilled professionals, promoting the region to skilled migrants and helping to introduce them to employers.

What opportunities does the Rugby World Cup offer?

You may have heard that there's a Rugby World Cup on in 2011 – and that it's being held in our backyard!

Grow Wellington's aspiration is to use the RWC to ensure our businesses are given every opportunity to meet with people who can offer them possibilities in any of the three areas I have just spoken about.

We will be working with NZTE and Investment NZ, with our universities, Crown Research Agencies, our big and small businesses to ensure that anyone of influence and ability is on our radar and that we are actively involved in ensuring they make the right sorts of connections ... connections that deliver market information, investment or skills.