



SCTE Training Bursary

By Ian Wheelock, Engineering Fellow – CTO Team, Commscope

Ian Wheelock, recipient of the SCTE's first training bursary, chronicles his experiences on The Cable Center's IA Intrapreneurship Academy programme.

Thanks to the generosity of the SCTE and The Cable Center in Denver, USA, I received an SCTE training bursary to attend and participate in Class 7 of The Cable Center's new future-focused leadership programme and Intrapreneurship Academy (IA) this year.

Lots of people have great innovative ideas within companies, but often these ideas fail due to lack of preparation and fundamental misunderstandings of the requirements and business impact of ideas as well as presentation of these ideas in a credible, informed way to decision-makers. The IA programme teaches people the key elements needed to frame and deliver innovative ideas and concepts into realistic proposals that they can get their companies to support.

The 8-week long programme kicked off on **18 February 2020** for two days in The Cable Center in Denver, Colorado (USA). The fourteen other people who took the class mostly came from cable operators, such as Comcast, Charter and LGI. The programme was mostly online, but the two days in Denver worked really well, giving everyone the chance to get to know each other and the programme delivery team, as well as address the material.

We also got a chance to visit the extensive cable history Breen Technical Archives in The Cable Center, which was a fun detour, especially when I saw some equipment I had worked upon over the years. This tour also helped us come up with our name for Class 7, the "Coffee Can Cavaliers!"



A tour of The Cable Center's cable history Technical Archives



Assorted Com21 legacy and DOCSIS cable equipment in The Cable Center's Breen Technical Archives



Class 7 of IA - the 'Coffee Can Cavaliers'



Class 6 of IA



Ian Wheelock,
Commscope

One of the key steps on those days was to establish a solid rapport with your selected sponsor, who would be available to help when required over the course duration. The next seven weeks relied on plenty of Zoom meetings, lots of Slack messaging and weekly reading lists and assignments to be delivered. These weeks also

overlapped with the rapidly developing COVID-19 pandemic, bringing a lot of fear and worry, as well as major changes in day-to-day activities. Having to cope with kids at home due to no school, or travel restrictions on movements, helped to load up the stress. In some ways, the weekly Zoom meetings offered a bit of a diversion to COVID-19 and helped bring focus to completing the programme.

As the weeks went by, the level of information supplied really helped get people into the innovation mindset, and what it takes to understand how to shape and present an idea. Everyone was asked, before the programme Kickoff, to identify a problem statement and matching innovative solution that would be developed through the lens of the 8-week programme, with the closing Capstone event being the opportunity to deliver the Innovation Business Plan to the broader group.

The programme is really well structured, providing the knowledge to understand how to use the weekly exercises, ranging from “jobs to be done” to business models and the “elevator pitch”, which all come together to form a complete plan. The Capstone closing event was originally due to take place in person at The Cable Center in Denver, but due to the COVID-19 and company travel restrictions, this had to be held online over two days from **7 April 2020**.

SCTE training bursary in 2020

The SCTE offered a new training bursary in 2020 for its members, in conjunction with The Cable Center in the USA, for the new future-focused leadership programme and Intrapreneurship Academy (IA). This eight-week life skills programme is specifically aimed at rising stars in the cable industry and will educate and empower industry ‘up-and-comers’ to be more entrepreneurial within the workplace and become ‘intrapreneurs’ (envisioning and effecting innovation in their organisation’s corporate structure).

This award included travel to The Cable Center’s headquarters in Denver (USA) for the initial week’s session followed by online self-study (with chat groups) and a final trip to Denver for graduation. Classes may be delivered virtually depending upon ongoing COVID restrictions. Bursary candidates were expected to actively blog about their experiences during the course and include a report for SCTE’s Broadband Journal and The Cable Center. The Cable Center underwrote the cost of the course and SCTE paid for travel and accommodation in the USA.

SCTE members had to submit 300 words on why they would benefit from this training bursary to the SCTE office.

For further information, see
www.intrapreneurshipacademy.org

The Intrapreneurship Academy was a really great experience and I would recommend the programme. It has given me a new perspective on what innovation is within a company and how to act upon it and try to get results. I would like to thank Robyn Bolton (IA Dean) and Janice Silver for their dedication to the programme as well as the SCTE and The Cable Center for affording me this opportunity!