

The Melting Pot's timeline

Years	2003-5	2005-7	2008-11	2012-15	2016...
Stage	<i>EXPLORATION</i>	<i>PRE START-UP</i>	<i>START-UP & EMERGING (trading)</i>	<i>CONSOLODATION & INNOVATION</i>	<i>DIVERSIFICATION, INNOVATION + EXPANSION</i>
Core themes of business priorities	Sensing and articulating core ideas, needs and opportunities. 'Soft' research. Taking steps and making commitments...	Building momentum and a business case. 'Hard' research: market research, business model, securing resources and premises, design & fit out the space	Setting up initial systems, attracting early clients, piloting methodologies for community building and impact assessment	Maturing our team, reputation, business relationships, processes & systems; expanding markets; innovating new services; increasing spheres of influence; and sensing possibilities...	Securing appropriate resources for expansion activities that build on a solid platform
Milestones		<p>Sept 05: Constituted as non-profit distributing Company Limited by Guarantee</p> <p>100 people volunteer over 10 days to fit out the space prior to opening</p> <p>8:30am, 1 Oct 05: Open for business!</p>	<p>Survive the economic recession (upon start-up) and help others to do so!</p> <p>Secure grant investments to build the first staff team allowing us to build the organisation's capacity and capability</p> <p>Build up initial base of clients and our core services</p> <p>First major build and then overhaul of our website</p>	<p>Secure investments for pioneering our Social Innovation Incubation programme</p> <p>Conduct national research for the Scottish Government : The conditions for social innovation to flourish</p> <p>Annual 'Social Entrepreneurs' Chat Show' - filmed live</p> <p>Sharing our learning so far and learning from others at international platforms : Business Incubation (NIBA) in USA, Coworking in Europe, tour of relevant organisations in NZ</p> <p>Complete re-refurbishment of our Coworking space, and develop business model (increased services & reduced costs to customers)</p> <p>Become a registered charity (Sept 15)</p>	<p>In-depth, long term business planning and expansion of staff team</p> <p>Another new website on a new platform...</p> <p>Codifying our processes and systems, defining best practice</p> <p>Design and facilitate a 6 month co-design process to create an effective ecosystem of support for social innovation in Northern Ireland</p> <p>Launch of the Next Big Social Thing : showcase of services and products delivered by leaders of our incubation programme</p> <p>Expand pro-bono partnerships and position in the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem</p> <p>Launch of the Coworking Accelerator Network, and consultation service</p>
Impact		Significant social capital leveraged and generated as a huge volunteer engagement programme opens Scotland's first Coworking Hub	New relationships, connections and social capital is built between members of our community. Evaluation & case studies demonstrate increased motivation, well being, peer support & new business; reduced isolation & costs	Significant volunteer engagement in refurbishment. Leverage networks and business relationships to build and fund a practical programme of support for start-up social entrepreneurs. Demonstrated impact within the first 2 years : their income and staff size tripled and no of volunteers engaged grew by 450%	Expanded our Incubation programme, to support 30 (not 10) social innovators across broader spectrum of start-up stage. Expanded our TMPEvents programme, and engaged new partners in pro-bono co-delivery
People	Claire Carpenter and a few 'positive reflectors' to bounce the core ideas off	A core group of volunteers are united into our first Board and a 'development team' to create the business plan. Other people engage for specific tasks, expertise and to provide investment	Transition from mostly volunteers / freelancers to first staff team which is partially resourced through grants, aided by several volunteers and consultants. Establish expanded Board of Directors	An energetic and changing team as staff are recruited through employability/ graduate/ EU programmes and given the opportunity to flourish in their 'first proper job'	Mature and expanded staff team and Board of Directors
Innovation		Our unique business model could provide clients with a low-cost, groundbreaking new service to our primary audience.. Nobody knew about 'coworking', and the concept of 'hotdesking' was relatively new and considered only for big corporates. Bring this concept and services to the Social Innovation / Third sector was hugely innovative, and influential & impact cannot be underestimated	All our operating procedures & processes were built up from scratch, creating a practical model from the ground up. Build a business base in our core areas: coworking and venue hire. Establishing solid governance base.	Our Incubation programme is repeatedly delivered through crowd-funding, and is based on 'all the things we didn't know in our own start-up (of a social enterprise) and wish we did!	Leveraging our experience and processes, and working in partnership with locally based leaders to develop the Coworking Accelerator Network; a form of expansion and replication of our business model (but without 'empire building'!)