



NSF I-Corps Experience

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# Introduction

- Entrepreneurial training program
- Assess invention's market potential
- Customer discovery interviews
- Since 2011, 3000 teams have participated
- \$ 50k award for travel & stipend





## Top 20 Reasons Startups Fail

Based on an Analysis of 32  
Startups Post-Mortem

[WWW.CHUBBYBRAIN.COM](http://WWW.CHUBBYBRAIN.COM)

### Ignore Customers No Market Need



- Evaluate the market potential
- Interested in entrepreneurship
- Professional development & leadership activity
- Translating technology to societal impact

## Technical Innovation



## Conduct Interviews



## Travel



## Regional

- Four weeks (In-person)
- Application & interview
- 3 cohorts per year
- 20 interviews
- Pathway for national



## National Program

- Seven weeks (Virtual)
- Application & interview
- 12 cohorts per year
- 100 interviews
- \$ 50k in funding for travel



# Technology



- Wireless autonomous drone charger
- Prototype development
- Competitive advantage and IP disclosure

**Proposed Charging infrastructure**



**Prototype testing in the field**



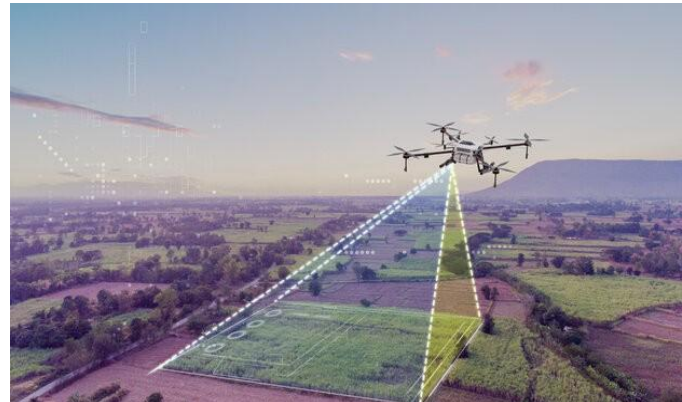


- Potential applications?
- Which market to consider?
- What is the pathway for commercialization?
- Whom to contact?

**Agriculture**



**Surveying**



**Delivery**



# Regional I-Corps @ NC State

- NC State offers a regional NSF I-Corps program
- Get invited to a networking event
- Pitch your idea and find an Industry mentor

NC STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Office of

## NC State Office of Research Commercialization

About
For Innovators
For Partners
New Ventures
Impact
Contact

### NSF I-Corps

I-Corps @ NC State offers a National Science Foundation (NSF) training program aimed at helping researchers transition their ideas and inventions into the marketplace through customer discovery and market research.





## ORCA Network Lunch



- **Entrepreneurial or Co-Entrepreneurial Lead:** Graduate Student/Postdoc
- **Industry Mentor:** Industry expert with business experience
- **Technical Lead & Principal Investigator:** Faculty member

## I-Corps Team

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Ujjwal Pratik  
**Entrepreneurial Lead**



Stephen Paul  
**Co-Entrepreneurial  
Lead**

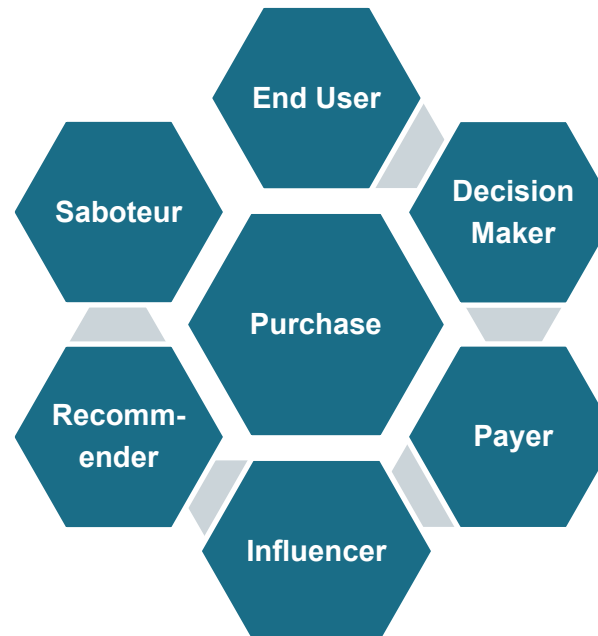
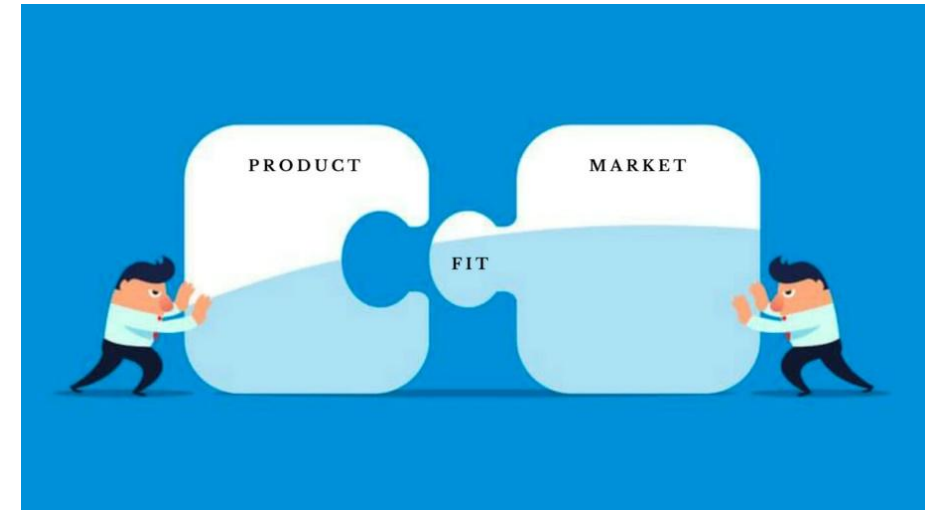


Todd Poston  
**Industry Mentor**



Dr. Zeljko Pantic  
**Technical Lead & Principal  
Investigator**

- Weekly classes @ centennial campus
- Understand Industry Map
- Hypothesis about product market fit
- How to conduct an interview?



- Do not sell or talk about your product/idea
- Ask open-ended questions
- Our purpose is to gather information
- The goal of I-Corps is to learn from your customers, not sell any products





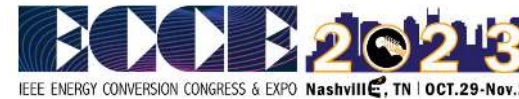
- Getting interviews is challenging
- Lots of interview request emails and reminders
- Attending trade shows and conference
- Completed 20+ Interviews



## Interview Outreach



Gmail



## Regulators



Federal Aviation  
Administration

## Drone Manufacturers & Service Companies





- Answers to hypothesis
- Gain insight into regulations and competition
- Other challenges regarding scaling and manufacturing
- Decide if you want to participate in the National I-Corps program



# National I-Corps

- Application requires
  - Executive summary
  - Team interview
- Participate in the 7-week workshop
- \$ 50k award for stipend and travel
  - Entrepreneurial Leads: \$ 15k
  - Technical Lead & Principal Investigator: \$ 10k
  - Customer discovery travel: \$ 20k
  - F&A: \$ 5k



- Decide if the opportunity is worth it.
- If yes, possible pathways after National I-Corps:



Questions?