

Stoke Report
8/1/2016-8/1/2017

Membership

In total, we have had 56 member companies at Stoke throughout the past year. Currently, we have 36 member companies officing at Stoke. These member companies are a diverse group of businesses with focus ranging from marketing and insurance, to creating social platforms, web and app development, IT support, and more. While we are not exclusive to tech companies, we have an emphasis on recruiting and supporting tech startups and also provide opportunities for tech education and community building.

Graduation

Over the past year, we have had 20 members graduate out of Stoke. Two of those members have gone on to launch exciting businesses in Denton, and others have graduated to take great jobs at Denton Startups. Jacob Scott Moses joined Stoke on August 1, 2016 and was a member for a few months. He recently opened Blue Bag Grocery which is a bodega grocery serving those who work and live in downtown Denton. Aaron Powell was also a member and just launched his cargo bike business called Urban Tribe Cargo Bicycles.

<http://www.dentonrc.com/news/news/2017/08/04/downtown-denton-see-new-micro-grocery-store>

<http://www.dentonrc.com/business/business/2017/07/28/denton-resident-starts-cargo-bike-company>

Step Aument and Dave Sims were also members at Stoke and were hired as Chief Technology Officers with Ready Rosie and Kubos respectively. These are just a few of the success stories of Stoke graduates.

Jobs

There are currently 51 jobs that are housed out of Stoke. 8 of those jobs have been added since May due to member companies growing. There are a few jobs in particular that have been created that I believe are worth elaborating on.

Terry Thomas moved to Denton a few years ago from California at which time he changed careers to become a web developer. He attended a coding bootcamp in Dallas and became a Stoke member on day 1. He picked up a couple of freelancing web development projects and worked on continuing his education through tutorials and lessons while at Stoke. He attended Stoke events, participated in member activities, and engaged with the tech community to continue to make connections and continue his technical education. During our Free Fridays coworking Step, the CTO from Ready Rosie was working at Stoke. Terry and Step got into a long conversation that resulted in Terry being hired onto the development team of Ready Rosie. Terry continues to work from Stoke since they have a strong remote culture within their company.

A number of the new jobs created happened after Upventur moved to Denton in May. They have already added 4 interns and plan to continue to grow. Two of their interns in particular have a pretty great story. They are UNT students who had won free coworking passes and were working at Stoke exploring a business idea. Through being at Stoke they met Upventur and were hired as marketing interns and have been working for them for the last few months. This is giving these UNT students valuable experience in a startup organization. Not only are they earning money, but they are learning the ins and outs of what being an entrepreneur is like, and experiencing the highs and lows of working for a startup.

The last job that I'd like to elaborate on is another Stoke member that has been a part of our community since day 1. They moved into their office on August 1, 2016 and have experienced tremendous business growth in their first couple of years in business. In addition to both of the founders full time jobs, in May they were able to hire a third developer to help them continue to grow their business and allow them to take on more projects.

Mentorship

We have recruited almost 30 mentors that volunteer their time to help entrepreneurs problem solve and provide expert advice and guidance. One individual who has been a member since March has been using Stoke not only as a location to work remotely, but also as the place to get his own tech startup off the ground. He has a co-founder and they have been working on some of the details of their business and have been having meetings with Stoke mentors to gain clarity on legal questions and to get guidance on raising capital from angel investors and venture capitalists. A couple of weeks ago, the two cofounders had a lunch meeting with a member and mentor, Alex Hargis, who specializes in marketing. These three met and through the course of one lunch meeting they named and started the branding concepts for their business which gave the co-founders the boost of energy and excitement that they needed to tackle some of their next big hurdles.

Collaborations

Having a diverse group of entrepreneurs and companies working at Stoke means that there is a lot of opportunity for collaborations. One of our members, Shepherd Dog, has been able to quote on 5 different projects due to referrals from relationships at Stoke. Two member companies, Level Ten and Blue Steele Solutions, worked together to develop wordpress plugins.

Programs

Through our programming we are helping to build the startup community of Denton. Our Lunch & Learns provide general education that any entrepreneur would need to know including small business taxes, SEO, cyber security and more. We also launched the Ambassador Program in June which are a group of a dozen students and professionals that are passionate about entrepreneurship, Stoke, our mission, and connecting people. The ambassadors are working on projects that will help extend Stoke's reach and expand our program offerings while growing and connecting the startup community.