

Option 1: Potential location pop-up

Definition



During the SYU trajectory, youngsters will work on their business idea. Normally, in this phase, the youngsters already have an idea of the needs of the community and their business idea. One crucial factor will be deciding on the location of the pop-up. Sometimes the enterprises can be mobile, such as a food truck, sometimes the enterprises can be solely online, such as a web shop, or sometimes there are possibilities to open up the pop-ups inside the HUBs. If the youngsters want to open up a physical store (or restaurant or ...), following this module can help them to decide which property to pick.

Preparation

Before choosing a location, it is important to inventory all the vacant properties that can accommodate the pop-up. It is best to make a **spreadsheet** containing information about all the vacant commercial buildings.

There are many possible ways to search for vacant commercial properties:

- On a regional level: there are organizations that can help you to search for a commercial property. For the city of Ghent, for example, you can contact “Ondersteuningspunt Ondernemers Gent”. They facilitate the match between supply and demand regarding commercial real estate. They can also help you to look for commercial properties specifically for short terms, which is ideal for opening up a pop-up. Often the local chamber of commerce or local small business groups can also help.
- Contact commercial real estate agencies in the neighbourhood, check online real estate listings and search for rental signs in the area.
- Try to spot vacant commercial properties and try to find out who the owner is. Ask people from the community or entrepreneurs if they know if anyone would be willing to rent out commercial properties to participants of the SYU project.

For each vacant commercial building, you can list the address, the name of the owner and if possible how to reach them, the rent, benefits of the property, disadvantages of the property, acreage of the property and so on. If you contact the owner or the real estate agency: ask whether they would be willing to rent to participants of the Speed You Up project because the lease would be short term.

Execution

At the start of the execution phase, you have a spreadsheet containing information about all the commercial properties that are or will become vacant. Properties of owners or agencies who are not willing to rent out to participants of the SYU project can be removed from the spreadsheet.

Subsequently, it is best to hold a **brainstorm** between the group members. Try to answer at least these questions:

- What should the property definitely have?

- What would be nice to have?
- What should the property absolutely not have?
- How much are we able to pay?

Based on the answers, a shortlist can be created from the spreadsheet of commercial properties that are potentially ideal to opening up the pop-up. It can be interesting to create a map, either on paper or online, that shows all the different locations. Once you have the shortlist and the map, it is advisable to do a **more thorough research of the potential locations**. It is best to make some card for each of the commercial properties that are still on the shortlist containing more information about different topics. Try to give each location a score (between 0 and 10) for each topic. Information about each topic can be collected during desk research or by visiting the potential locations.

Possible interesting topics could be:

- **Demographic:** Who are your customers? How close are they to your location? Does your business serve customers locally? Do your customers live nearby? Or do they work nearby? Would your customers be willing to travel to this location? How often are your desired customers in the area?
- **Foot traffic:** Try to monitor the traffic for a period of time (during different times of the day and different times of the week). Are there a lot of people passing by?
- **Parking:** Is there a parking lot reserved for potential customers? Are there many vacant parking spaces in the street or is parking space scarce? Are there parking meters?
- **Accessibility:** Can you drive there by car or is it in a pedestrian zone? Is it easily accessible by public transport?
- **Competition:** Is there any competition nearby? Preferably, you do not want any competition nearby but sometimes that can also be a good thing (it often depends on the product). For example: car dealerships are often next to each other because customers want to compare. Sometimes the lack of competition can indicate that there are just no customers for your product in that area.

It is best to review all the information as a group. Try to see the advantages / disadvantages of each location in relation with the rental price. Is there any particular location that has the preference of all the group members or the highest general score of all the locations? Can some of the locations be eliminated?

If more than one location is still an option, it can be advisable to host a **focus group** for the people from the community. Introduce the project and the business idea. Subsequently the different locations can be presented. The focus group participants can be given a little bit more information about each location. What are the benefits or the disadvantages? The rental price? What information has been collected for each location? The different locations can be shown on a map. At the end of the focus group, respondents are each handed one sticker (or more if you have many potential locations) and are asked to put the sticker on the location they would prefer.

At the end, youngsters can present (either with a presentation or a collage) the location they have chosen to other groups or to their teacher/coach.

Possible variations and tips:



- Opening up a pop-up can often be challenging and difficult. There are legal provisions. Be sure to check with local organizations to see what is possible.
- <https://www.bizlocator.be/> can be a useful website when looking for commercial real estate in Belgium. You can search also specifically for ‘temporary for rent’ which is ideal when looking for locations to open up a pop-up.

Material:



- PC/laptop for making the spreadsheet
- Materials for the map when using an offline map
- Stickers if a focus group is organized

Timeframe:



Timeframe largely depends on the number of vacant commercial properties in the community, how large the community is, how easy it is to collect all the information, how detailed each card of each potential location will be and if a focus group will be organised or not.

Generally speaking, preparation should be doable in a day. Execution will easily take a few days or even more.

Do the youngsters have to be in group or can this method be conducted alone:



Preferably in group but it can be done alone.

Some tasks can be divided between the group members such as making an inventory or collecting information about the potential location: for example one potential location can be given to one group member to be researched more in depth.

Brainstorms should be held with the whole group.

Sources and more information:



There are many interesting articles regarding choosing a good location for a business.

Some examples:

Factors to consider when choosing a business location <https://businesstown.com/factors-consider-choosing-business-location/>

How to choose small business location factors analysis

<https://smallbusiness.patriotsoftware.com/how-to-choose-small-business-location-factors-analysis/>

Six factors consider when choosing location your business

<https://www.virgin.com/entrepreneur/six-factors-consider-when-choosing-location-your-business>

On YouTube, there are a few captivating videos about this topic:

How to choose a location for a store or restaurant?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1dg_KAy3tI

Why do competitors open their stores next to one another?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlLgxeNBK_8