hivebrite

Case study

How SETsquared Partnership connects its university-affiliated startups with investors and opportunities
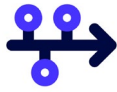
The UK-based university business incubator created its Innovation Platform on Hivebrite to connect its startups with funding and networking opportunities.

Key facts

561 users, including nearly 500 companies

65% activation rate for incubator-affiliated companies

9 sub-groups to deliver targeted content and programming

Meet the customer

SETsquared Partnership is a university business incubator that works with six universities across the UK—Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Exeter, Southampton, and Surrey. The organization supports university-connected business from inception through to exit, and connects businesses with highly acclaimed support programs to help turn ideas into thriving businesses. Since its founding in 2002, SETsquared has supported 5,000 entrepreneurs, helping them raise £3.9 billion in investment.

The community challenge

Post-2020, the world of work was changing, and SETsquared knew that online interactions and events would play a bigger role in their work moving forward. They also wanted to help foster easier connections between participating businesses and alumni. "We were the gatekeepers, to some extent," says Lydia Green, Community Manager, SETsquared Partnership. "People had to come to us to access connections. We wanted to add more value to our membership and build closer relationships with the companies in our network. "

The Hivebrite solution

SETsquared built its digital community on Hivebrite and launched in 2022.
They chose the platform in part for its user-friendliness. "What we do is quite niche, because we have so many different audiences," says Lydia. "We've got investors, we've got academics, we've got startups, we've got business support providers. We needed something that made sense for everyone."

Customization of the Hivebrite platform was also a huge draw. "It was really important to me that it was customizable and that we could design our own pages," says Lydia. "A lot of competitors we looked at were very informal looking, and clearly meant for social groups. Hivebrite allowed us to make a professional-looking, work-oriented community." The platform makes it easy for all members of its community to connect with one another. "The platform essentially democratized connections," says Lydia. "People can now go in and create a connection themselves."

The outcome

Today, SETsquared uses its community platform as a vehicle for several programs. For example, for one partner program, applicants apply for funding through the platform. The organization has also run two investor showcases in its community, where companies apply and then pitch to investors.

"I found that once there was a bit of momentum and there was content being generated consistently, the platform snowballed," says Lydia.

> "I think Hivebrite is a really intuitive platform. And the product team are so responsive. I get the impression they work really fast to bring in new features when you give them feedback. It's nice to have a bit of a working relationship with the Hivebrite team, rather than a customer-sales relationship."
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> **Lydia Green**
> Innovation Manager, SETsquared Partnership