



# STARTUP PANORAMA

EDITION 7.0

DUBAI AS A NETWORKING HUB FOR ENTREPRENEURS

دبي للمشاريع الناشئة

DUBAI STARTUP HUB

AN INITIATIVE OF DUBAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

# NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES IN DUBAI

## PLATFORMS AND SPACES



## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



## GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS



## EVENTS





**1050+**

people have attended Dubai Startup Hub's events in 2019

**ANNUAL NETWORKING SERIES  
750+ ATTENDEES**

Takes place annually for 10 weeks during Q3 and Q4

Topics included:  
Fintech, Education, Data Science, How To Successfully Scale A Business

**MEMBERS BREAKFASTS  
130+ ATTENDEES**

Run monthly throughout the summer

Bringing the Dubai Startup Hub community together

**CO-FOUNDER DUBAI NETWORKING  
100+ ATTENDEES**

Aimed to support young businesses find a co-founder

Subject matter experts included HR and legal on hand to guide entrepreneurs in finding a co-founder

**MARKETACCESS 60+ ATTENDEES**

Opportunity to network with leading Dubai corporations

[dubaichamber.com/dubaistartuphub](http://dubaichamber.com/dubaistartuphub)  
@DubaiStartupHub



**1000+**

people have attended Dtec events in 2019

**DTEC FORUM**

Managed in partnership with Entrepreneur Middle East

Topics included:  
Driving Your Business Strategy With Comms And PR; Building A Global Brand In The Digital Age

**LEARNING EVENTS**

London Business School Entrepreneurs Journey; Dtec Emirati Tech Bootcamp, in partnership with Dubai Startup Hub

**NETWORKING AND SOCIAL EVENTS**

Barbecues, meetups, social events

**HACKATHONS AND COMPETITIONS**

UAE segment of 48 hour Angelhack global hackathon series

**ROADSHOWS**

Roadshow to India in partnership with Dubai Startup Hub, showcasing the UAE startup ecosystem

[dtec.ae](http://dtec.ae)  
@dtec\_dso



**5000+**

people attended Astrolabs events in 2019

**NETWORKING AND LEARNING EVENTS, TALKS AND WORKSHOPS**

Topics included:  
Playing The Sales Game, Empower Your Life Workshop; Visual Search – Searching Everything

**ASTROLABS DIGITAL & TECH MEETUP GROUP**

Free meetups

**ASTROLABS CODE LABS MEETUP GROUP**

Free for anyone who wants to learn how to code in Dubai.

**15,000+ MEMBERS** are part of Astrolabs' meetup groups

[astrolabs.com](http://astrolabs.com)  
@AstroLabsME



**2500+**

people attended TiE events in 2019

**TIE DUBAI SUMMIT 2019  
600+ ATTENDEES**

Two-day event featuring keynotes, mentorship, pitches, master classes and panel discussions.

**TIE HUSTLE**

Bridging the gap between knowledge transfers and access within the ecosystem

**PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

Topics included: Rise Of Social Commerce, Navigating the Maze of Online Payments

**TIE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM  
800+ MENTORSHIP HOURS**

**TIE MAJLIS, MEMBERS BREAKFASTS, RAMADAN NETWORKING IFTARS**

[dubai.tie.org](http://dubai.tie.org)  
@TiEDubai



**750+**

event hours took place at in5 in 2019

**ADVISORY SESSIONS**

Opportunity to meet advisors and get fundamental support in the format of one-on-one advisory.

Topics covered included:  
Pricing Advisory; Legal Advisory; Technology Solutions Advisory

**542+ HOURS**

in advisory sessions

**TALKS**

Topics included: Azure Governance by Microsoft; Sustainability: Is it possible for an emerging brand to function ethically?

**NETWORKING**

Meylas AI Comedy Networking & Open Mic Night, Kubernetes meetup

**STARTUP PITCH DAYS**

Pitch day with Venture Catalysts; Pitch day with Eureeca; 176 Startup Battle

[infive.ae](http://infive.ae)  
@in5dubai

## NETWORKING IMPACT

From ambition in fresh graduates aspiring to become entrepreneurs, experienced professionals looking to make the leap to startup life, to founders with businesses at various stages who are members of co-working spaces, incubators and accelerators across the UAE - networking events in Dubai bring together a diverse community to **make valuable new connections and expand their circle of contacts.**

With no shortage of networking events, meet-ups and trade shows on offer in the emirate, especially when it comes to the tech and startup world, it's easy to walk away just collecting business cards or having repeated your sales pitch for the hundredth time. But as we draw to the end of the year, it's worth looking back on events that have truly made a difference and hear from entrepreneurs about what made these networking opportunities stand out from the rest.

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP ADVOCACY

For Saad Ansari, [Dubai Startup Hub](#) has delivered networking with a difference.

The founder and CEO of [Xpence](#), whose startup set out to innovate for financial inclusion to solve the problem of setting up a bank account for startups in the UAE, said he sees a "big difference" between the Dubai Chamber-lead initiative's networking sessions over other events.



Saad Ansari, founder and CEO of Xpence

**"I don't really go to that many other events because the thing with Dubai Startup Hub is that it has a certain gravitas because it is backed by a public sector organization and they are always listening to feedback we share or issues we're having so that they can actually action it,"** he explained.

Ansari, whose startup placed third at this year's edition of Dubai Chamber's [Smartpreneur Competition](#), added that he has witnessed first-hand how conversations at networking roundtables with Dubai Startup Hub have often led to smaller private feedback groups and [entrepreneurship advocacy](#) white papers that address ecosystem challenges like opening bank accounts or fundraising gaps for startups in the UAE.



Mayed Almulla

### NETWORKING SERIES

Meanwhile, Dubai Startup Hub's [Networking Series](#) helped 25-year-old Mayed Almulla make a tough decision.

The aspiring Emirati entrepreneur, who has been on the fence about founding his own startup and been considering getting a full-time job instead said hearing stories of other founders during the 10-week series has inspired him to take the plunge.

"I've been really unsure of whether to start something or work somewhere and listening to so many people tell their stories has been useful," Almulla said. "I've realized that I won't know till I start and that it's tough but also not as scary as I first thought."

Encouraged by the stories, Almulla participated in Dubai Startup Hub's Emirati bootcamp training in partnership with Dubai Technology and Entrepreneurship Centre (DTEC) that he went on to win for his idea, Junkyard, that helps sell goods for real estate tenants vacating homes. "I'm still in contact with a lot of the people I met at the events," he added. "I really enjoyed meeting them and learnt a lot from their experiences."

Xpence's Ansari added that he ended up becoming really good friends with fellow entrepreneur Moidu Chandanam, whom he met through Dubai Startup Hub's events.

**In fact, Ansari is now also on the advisory board of Chandanam's startup Fleetroot.**

"Entrepreneurship can be quite a lonely path and while we all have friends, they might not always understand your struggles as a startup," Ansari said. "Someone might tell you they're going on holiday or that they just got their paycheck while you've been working on your idea for two years without a salary, so it always helps to share struggles with fellow founders."

In addition, Ansari shared, he's also been able to recruit new talent through the events. "I ended up meeting another founder at one of the events and she later reached out to me because she was looking for a career change."

**CO-FOUNDER DUBAI**

Samer Al-Nimr, founder of [Deliver2Mum](#), an e-commerce site that delivers baby products directly to mums across the UAE, said he was positively inundated with the applications he received through Dubai Startup Hub's [Cofounder Dubai](#) program. The matchmaking program is designed to connect existing startup businesses to aspiring Co-founders, to further improve the success rate of locally based startups and bring innovative ventures to the city.

"The program made my life a lot easier by scoping talent, screening applications and shortlisting top-notch candidates," Al-Nimr said. "Deliver2Mum had the highest number of applications. They were the cream of the crop so it was really hard to select. The other positive was that the process really helped me articulate my requirements as well as practice my pitch every time I spoke to a potential cofounder."

Deliver2Mum was also among the startups exhibiting as part of Dubai Startup Hub's stand at GITEX Technology Week this year, gaining an opportunity to network at



Samer Al-Nimr, founder of Deliver2Mum

the event that hosted over 4,800 companies from 140 countries, 750 startups, and 1,500 investors, corporate buyers, accelerators and incubators.

Al-Nimr added that while networking events are great places to make new connections, what makes Dubai Startup Hub's initiatives stand out is "continuity".

**"There are lots of events out there, but then it's up to you to take the initiative and followup [after],"** he said. "But with Dubai Startup Hub, it's felt like I have a cheerleader, and people to help and provide a long-term support system. It's like they're in the background but available for us if needed. It's not just a one-off."