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SPRIND SYMPOSIUM SCIENCEPRENEURSHIP: "TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS FOR MORE SCIENCEPRENEURSHIP AND DEEP TECH INNOVATIONS"

There is no shortage of academic and scientific talent. Yet a lot of start-ups complain about not being able to find the right people. In this panel of the SPRIND Symposium, the experts share their own experiences in setting up diverse talent development systems to establish talent pipelines from academia to industry. They discuss new approaches to recruit talent and agree that communication skills and soft skills are becoming increasingly important for STEM professionals.

Panelists: Thane Campbell (Deep Science Venture, UK), Lisa Ericsson (KTH Innovation, SE), Alessandro Grillini (Global Call Venture – Breakthrough of the Year in the category Science Start-ups 2023, NL), Juliana Lim (SGInnovate, SG), and moderator Aidan McCullan (The Innovation Show, IE).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Use data to connect talents and ventures.** Researchers with several skills sets are best prepared to engage in entrepreneurial activities. These additional skill sets can be taught and learned, but it is still a challenge to connect the talents with the right companies. Data-driven approaches can help to establish a talent pipeline from the early days of academia. "Data can help in finding exactly the type of talent for a certain field or position", says Juliana Lim. Well-funded mission-driven PhD programs can lead the talents in the right direction.

2. **Entrepreneurial training must extend beyond conventional STEM skills.** The experts emphasise the refinement of soft skills and suggest using an 'M-shaped' approach in talent recruiting which involves delving into multiple areas to acquire a comprehensive and well-rounded skill set, ultimately increasing the potential in the long run. As Thane Campbell describes it: "People have developed different strategies because of the shape of their background and sometimes that mix of strategies leads to a much stronger company in the end".

3. **Improve intersectoral communication.** Talents from academia communicate differently than industry representatives, investors, or policy makers. That leads to a communication gap between the sectors. "Our innovation ecosystems are at a loss when we have trained our best scientists to communicate wrong to the people that can get their technology into the world", Thane Campbell says. New talent development systems need to bridge that gap, in a timely manner.

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