

STARTfighter, the first ecosystem driven accelerator program for startups in the Netherlands, launched in Twente.



Photo credits: Eric Brinkhorst

After more than 1 year of preparations, driven by entrepreneurs and organizations from Twente, STARTfighter Twente was launched during the Young Technology Award on December 8th. The mayor of Enschede, the city that hosts both the University of Twente and Saxion University for Applied Sciences, Onno van Veldhuizen, received the STARTfighter wing and became a 'Wingman' of the first ecosystem driven Startup accelerator in the Netherlands.

STARTfighter chose this event as the take-off moment, because the Young Technology Award plays an important role in helping (tech) startups from the region to grow. All attendees were, in one way or another, part of the business ecosystem in Twente and therefore the event provided an excellent place to launch STARTfighter Twente.

Kees Eijkel, director of Kennispark Twente, got the buzz going in his opening speech. He's proud of the fact that, from within the ecosystem, this initiative was launched to help start-ups to grow.

In a presentation by 'Wingmen' Jaap Beernink and Edwin Vlieg the audience was presented with the concept behind STARTfighter. All co-founders behind STARTfighter know each other from Startup Weekend and agreed that start-ups could be coached better. The idea was born to help entrepreneurs from the early idea of creating a company to supersonic growth; a safe and proven 'Take-off Strip' for start-ups.

STARTfighter – the Wingman for your Startup, is the first community driven accelerator in the Netherlands. It makes use of the ecosystem that's already in place. In every region, like Twente, there are many business events, knowledge is available, there are many coaching programs, investors et cetera, et cetera. STARTfighter connects those initiatives. The experienced STARTfighter wingmen (and women) select and funnel these initiatives and connect them with the individual entrepreneurs to provide them with high quality and relevant input for the phase their companies are in. "We've seen that in many cases great ideas or entrepreneurs never start or reach their true potential. The community behind

STARTfighter wants to prevent this, we want to be the Wingmen for Start-ups everywhere as long as there's a realistic ambition to operate on national, or better yet, an international level.”

During the event the Mayor of Enschede, Onno van Veldhuizen, received the STARTfighter wings from Wingman Christian Fictoor and became a part of the STARTfighter community. The six finalists also received STARTfighter wings from Wingwoman Nancy Trip, the director of Powered by Twente Innovation Events.

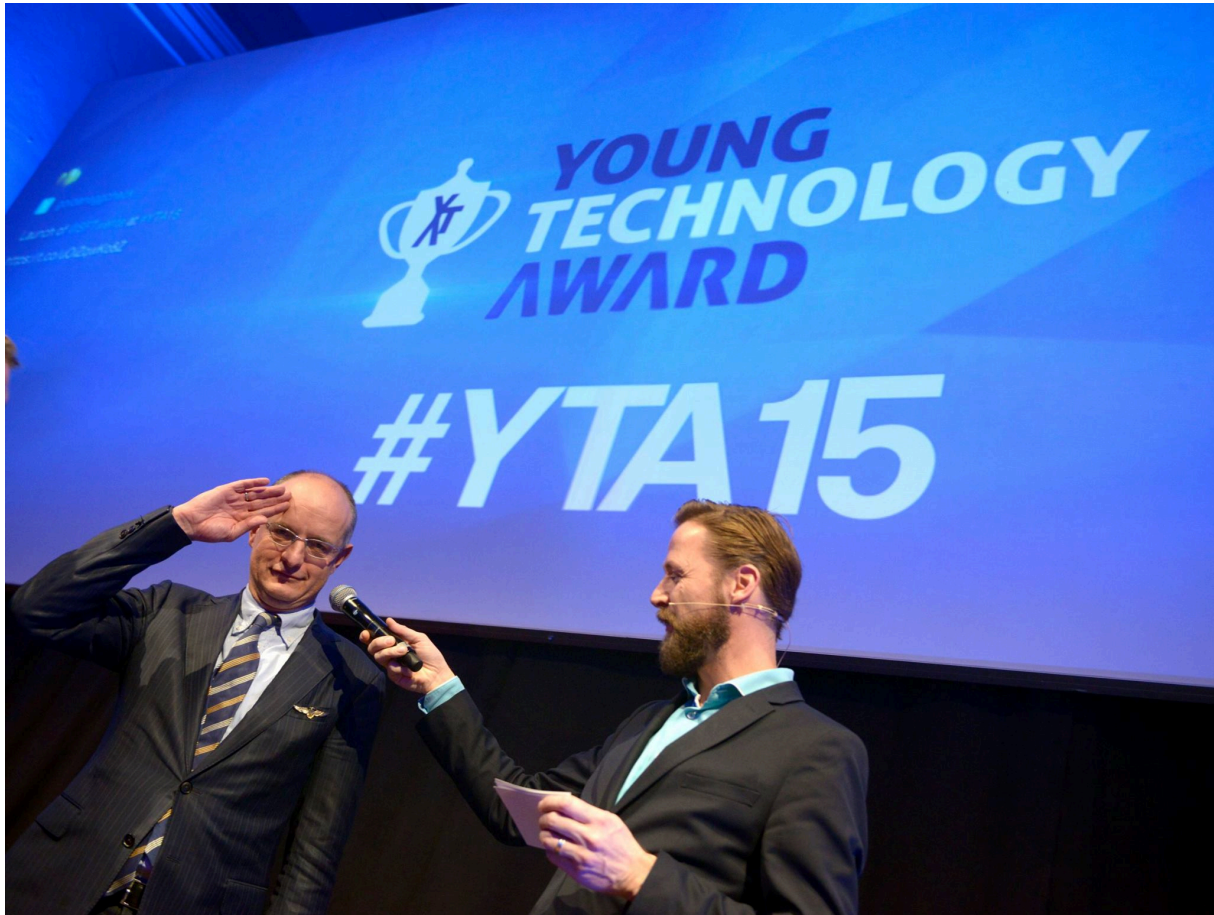


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Because STARTfighter is community driven, people that are part of the business ecosystem in Twente are invited to connect with us through the website <http://www.startfighter.com>. This is also an open invitation for a brainstorm that we will organize in January or early February to plot the course together. More information about this brainstorm will be posted on our website and social channels: <http://www.twitter.com/sftwente> and <https://www.facebook.com/StartfighterTwente/>