LAB 1

ATTRACT
THE CREATIVE
CLASS

HOW MIGHT WE DESIGN OUR COMMUNITIES TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN THE CREATIVE CLASS?

Feed ATL's hunger for brains.

In today's fluid driven economy, people in fields like technology, design, architecture, marketing, arts and entertainment can help make a city more innovative and competitive. Some call these people the Creative Class. Others call them creators and innovators. We simply like to call them talented. And one of the biggest questions facing Atlanta's future is how do we attract and retain more talented people?

Take tech companies for example. They attract a diverse group of young, well-educated people adept at creative problem solving. These people typically care a great deal about quality of life. They want to bike and walk where possible, they want good restaurants, good schools for their kids and a rich arts and culture scene. All these things in turn help generate growth in the area. And it's a positive cycle too, because people like this make the city more attractive to potential employers. So more innovative companies start moving in, and then they attract more talented people and so on.

If you're reading this right now, odds are you're the kind of person we're talking about. Smart, and aware. Interested in things like sustainability, accessible transportation, and urban agriculture. It's probably fair to say you're concerned with the future of Atlanta. Well, here's the good news: This is your chance to tell us what you would do. Because the more ideas we get, the better our chances of getting some really influential people on board to actually implement them.

So imagine if a company like Facebook, Amazon or Pixar was considering putting their HQ in Atlanta. What would you tell the city to do to make it more attractive to these kinds of companies? Now, Atlanta already has a lot going for it. We've got great weather and easy access to the world's busiest airport. We have top-notch universities and excellent hospitals. A

big handful of Fortune 500 companies. The CDC. Affordable housing and a low cost of living. An excellent food scene. The BeltLine is actually being built, and street cars and bike lanes are under way in a few pockets of the city.

But what do we have to do to take it to the next level? Think big picture, because it's not just about transportation (even though that's a biggie in our car-loving city). It's also about housing, and education. It's about the fact that we have a handful of business districts as opposed to one central. The issues and challenges we face are numerous and multifaceted. There is no magic bullet. No easy answer.

So go nuts and tell us everything that's on your mind, big or small, academic or absurd. Pretend you had no boundaries, and the ears of people who can actually make a difference. What would you do to attract and retain the kind of talented people that will help Atlanta become a more innovative, more progressive, more livable city?

This is your chance to do more than just imagine what Atlanta could become. This is your chance to actually do something about it.

Go to www.colabsummit.com/ideastring and lend us your brain to help Atlanta get more brains.

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LAB 2

AMPLIFY ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSETS

HOW MIGHT WE BETTER CELEBRATE AND AMPLIFY OUR ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSETS?

Let's put Atlanta on the map as a great arts and culture town.

Imagine you fly into Miami, get in a cab, and the driver knows you're there for Art Basel. Or you fly into New York, and the cabbie knows you're in town to see the Guggenheim and a Broadway show. Atlanta has a rich, vibrant arts scene, but still, all we're known for is traffic and heat. So how do we make the arts a bigger part of our identity? How can we as a city become known for arts and culture?

If you're reading this right now, you probably care about Atlanta. You know it's a great city, and you believe it's got the potential to take things to the next level. To one day be the kind of place that's known for all the great arts, entertainment and culture available. This is your chance to help make that happen.

Atlanta has always faced some challenges in the arts arena. Namely, how do we boost participation, attendance and support of the arts within the greater Atlanta area? And second, how do we elevate perception, and get the word out to the world at large in a real, believable way that doesn't involve a hollow-sounding ad campaign?

The good news is that we have plenty to work with. Atlanta has a tremendous amount going for it in the arts and culture arena. We've got great weather, affordable housing, a diverse population, a handful of great universities and a wonderful collection of neighborhoods, each with its own unique character. Add to that a multitude of festivals throughout the year. All these factors and more contribute to a thriving arts scene that occupies a broad spectrum. Everything from independent galleries, small concert venues, outdoor murals and improv, to theater, ballet, symphony and visual arts, it all has a home here.

Solutions could run the gamut. And they're more likely to be found in things we do as a city, not things we say. So imagine unexpected partnerships and events between corporate sponsors and grassroots arts organizations. What could we do to expose kids to arts and culture beyond the usual museum field trips? What would a centralized arts district look like? What kinds of festivals or signature events could Atlanta become known for? How do we make both locals and tourists aware of all the arts and culture options available to them?

Think about all the different ways Atlanta can beef up its arts scene both locally and nationally. Pretend money is no object, and you have the attention of dedicated, resourceful people who can really make some interesting things happen. Generate as many ideas as possible. Don't be afraid of ideas that seem far-fetched or unconventional. The more the better, and think across a broad spectrum of disciplines. Because this is your chance to do some wonderful things for your city.

So please take action. Give us your wildest, most constructive, innovative thoughts. Go tocolabsummit.com/ideastring and tell us how Atlanta can amplify its arts and culture, and one day be known for something big, meaningful and beautiful.

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LAB 3
FOSTER PUBLIC/PRIVATE COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

HOW MIGHT WE FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS AMONG BUSINESS, UNIVERSITIES AND GOVERNMENTS TO SPARK INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

Atlanta has all the makings for a successful world class innovation hub.

The Atlanta metro area headquarters the 3rd highest concentration of Fortune 500 global companies, industry leaders such as Coca Cola, Home Depot, Newell Rubbermaid, UPS and Cox Enterprises. 192 of the nation's fastest growing private enterprises also call Atlanta home. We house vast creative talent, including Turner Broadcasting, Tyler Perry Productions and So-So Def Recordings. Our own InterContinentalExchange is even poised to buy the New York Stock Exchange by the end of this year.

Opportunity lives here.

Our young talent knows it: we lead the nation in recruiting and retaining college educated young professionals. We continually grow our support structures, for example –the Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC) located at Georgia Tech is considered one of the top 10 incubators in the world. From a transportation and logistics standpoint, we are the hub of the southeast and boast the world's busiest passenger airport. Not only do goods flow through the heart of our city – so do ideas. Atlanta is ranked among the top U.S. cities in nearly every major measure or consideration for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Yet in addition to these achievements, we also face challenges that can best be solved by partnerships between government, companies and universities. But forging these partnerships presents its own challenges.

Silos in authority, ownership, resources, and even competitive advantages create barriers to partnership and innovation. Instead of sharing ideas that can lead to breakthrough solutions, we often hoard them. Competitive spirits combined with established structures block collaborations that could bolster our region. And despite our notable successes, when we limit collaboration, our most ambitious opportunities remain unrealized.

Imagine the impact of business, government and universities communicating, innovating, and collaborating seamlessly. Picture our collective success when we begin to collaborate with common goals, sharing more information and resources. Atlanta is home to thousands of entrepreneurs, yet we still condemn failure instead of supporting risk-taking. How do we change our culture to celebrate a "try, fail, try again" approach? Atlanta is home to 1,000 startups each year, yet Georgia remains adverse to government seed funding. How do we generate more engagement with our government?

Atlanta is home to world-class educational, research and nonprofit organizations. How do we close the gaps between research and local industry needs?

Answers to these challenges will come from creating connections. Some of Atlanta's best collaborative efforts such as Emory and Georgia Tech's bioscience community, and Junior Achievement's Discovery Center had a simple beginning: a thought on how to solve a problem, a thought that was shared across organizations and sectors in simple conversations. A thought that brought together business, education and government to create a new realm of opportunity for Atlanta.

If we foster greater partnerships between all three sectors – businesses, universities and governments -- we will forge a greater legacy for our city. Knowing what we are capable of in

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LAB 4

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT THE REGION

HOW MIGHT WE MAKE OUR CITIES AND OUR REGION SMARTER, MORE EFFICIENT, MORE CONNECTED AND MORE COLLABORATIVE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY?

Solve Atlanta's challenges with technology.

More than 5000 years ago, mankind invented the nail -- one of the earliest technologies to solve problems and make life easier. Today, we hardly think of things as simple as a nail as technology, but the innovation that inspired it and its sheer utility show how the world can be changed with even the simplest of tools.

The rate at which technology changes is amazing. Every day we create new tools, we know more, and we have new abilities for making our lives better. The question we must answer is how can we pull together all of these tools, all of this knowledge, and all of our abilities to solve the problems facing our cities and counties?

The development of the internet and phone applications have revolutionized how people engage. With a device the size of a deck of cards we can, right now, see and talk to someone on the other side of the region, or planet. We can tell companies and governments, and many of their customers and constituents, what we think about a product or action in less than a minute and less than 140 characters. And we can engage with each other in forums and chat rooms and conversations that no longer require us all to be in the same place at the same time.

We know that innovation comes from all over and that the volume and complexity of the challenges we face frequently require more than one person or organization committed to make a difference. We have proven that we are a community of innovators and collaborators, invested in and ready to invest more in new ways of thinking and collaborating.

Can you imagine being able to plan a trip with every option for your journey included in real-time? Or knowing the answer to "What did you do in school today?" without having to probe after the "nothing much" answer given at the bus stop? Or having access to the same information that our region's leaders do on hot topics like school and voter redistricting without having to go through the filter of a bureaucrat or a news report?

Transportation. Water. Education. Health. Public Safety. Arts and Culture. Entertainment. There are so many opportunities to harness the best of the Atlanta region to solve the challenges we face and elevate the assets we are so lucky to have. We have tools like "SeeClickFix" that enable us to report non-emergency problems like potholes to the City of Atlanta, URUUT for crowdfunding community projects, and Atlanta.

OneBusAway.org to plan our transit trips. What else do we need? What have you seen that made you think "there has to be a better way" or "technology should be able to help us do this"? What ideas do you have to make life in our region even better? You could, after all, be the one who inspires, or even invents, the next nail.

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LAB 5

INCREASE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

HOW MIGHT WE RAISE METRO ATLANTA'S CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE TO 90%?

Raise Metro Atlanta's current High School graduation rate to 90%.

Georgia is in the midst of a dropout crisis. With a high school graduation rate of 69 percent, our education system is failing far too many of our children. The consequences to individual children, their families and communities, and to Atlanta constitute a modern social crisis. Improving our high school graduation rate is crucial to developing a sustained higher quality of life throughout our region. How can we raise our high school graduation rate in metro-Atlanta from less than 70 percent to more than 90 percent?

Parents, educators and policy makers widely accept that every child deserves a high-quality education. Unfortunately our state – the economic engine of the southeast and a birthplace of civil rights movement – does not currently do enough to uphold this social contract.

Georgia currently ranks 44th out of 50 states in high school graduation rate. Every day 87 kids drop out of high school in our state. One in three schools in our state are considered dropout factories where less than 60 percent of incoming freshman graduate.

Dropping out isn't just a decision. It's the culmination of a slow process of disengagement caused by a complex and personal set of circumstances unique to each student.

The most commonly cited factors that lead to students dropping out include: academic difficulty, inconsistent attendance, poor transition from school to school, and complicated life factors beyond children's control. However, it is critical that we examine the root causes of this crisis. There are structural causes such as substandard teacher preparation, fluctuating educational policy and the mixed record of programs targeting our most vulnerable students. These issues compound the educational manifestations of poverty and resurging segregation in our school systems.

The current demographics of school systems around Atlanta do not mirror the city as a whole. Our public schools are effectively segregated by race and income, and many wealthier residents opt out of the public school system altogether.

Race and poverty are not destiny, but certain population segments do dramatically underperform in Atlanta's school system when it comes to graduation rates. Only 40 percent of black males in Georgia schools receive their diplomas in four years compared to 65 percent of white teens. In a city home to two global icons and Nobel Laureates of Peace and champions of justice, Dr. Martin Luther King and President Jimmy Carter, this is unacceptable.

Key challenges and opportunities
- Improve the recruitment & training of teachers on a state-wide level.
- Explore policies that minimize the effects of poverty on academic outcomes.
- Identify strategies that enhance student engagement.
- Create high expectations and high standards for all students & educators.
- Focus our region's leaders on improving high school graduation rates.
- Attract more high-income parents to send their kids to public schools.

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LAB 6

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN EDUCATION

HOW MIGHT COMMUNITIES RALLY AROUND OUR STUDENTS TO HELP DEVELOP THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS?

Atlanta needs a new generation of leaders.

It takes a village to raise a child. But effective leadership to preserve a village. The challenges we face are greater than ever, and a leadership deficit leaves our future in question. How might the Atlanta community more effectively engage with our schools and students to improve education and generate the next generation of leaders to sustain and advance the proverbial village.

69% of Americans think we have a leadership crisis in our country. 70% believe that our nation will decline without a new generation of leaders. Leadership has been a central foundation of society for thousands of years. While effective leadership has allowed our country and communities to prosper for generations, today, it is often noted that leadership, or the lack thereof, is the weak link in our government, businesses, organizations, schools and families.

Current student achievement and preparation gaps, exacerbated by changing demographics and an increase in low-income families, threaten U.S. productivity and competitiveness. By 2020, if current trends continue, the job qualifications gap in Georgia alone will be in the hundreds of thousands due to failure of our students to gain the education and skills they need to succeed in the modern economy.

The education challenges we face today far exceed the capacity of schools and educators to solve on their own. Nevertheless, there is hope. 81% of Americans believe that the problems we face today can be solved by effective leadership.

The three most cited ways that people learn to lead are from (1) experience (2) examples and (3) books and school. No matter how exceptional our teachers are at teaching our students leadership qualities, without real experience and relevant real world examples, our students will not learn to effectively innovate, solve problems, or set and achieve relevant goals.

Children rely on others' opinions to create value judgments that ultimately define their actions and motivations. But as modernity has weakened community and family influence, students are increasingly looking to their peers for guidance. Getting back on the right path is essential, and collaboration among entire communities, schools, and most importantly, students, is more important than ever.

Key challenges and opportunity
- Addressing wide achievement gaps and dropout rates
- Increasing student motivation, and fostering a culture of achievement
- Creating new relationships with local businesses, nonprofits, and other community resources to enhance education.
- Engaging non-parental residents to get involved with our students and schools
- Equipping our students with the unique skills and talents required to flourish in the modern economy.
- Identifying and celebrating the next generation leaders.
- Empowering our students to lead today.

An empowered army of student leaders supported and celebrated by the community at large, and prepared to face and solve the challenges the future beholds. Share your ideas on how to get our community more involved with education and supporting students in Metro Atlanta in order to help provide the infrastructure, knowledge, resources, and opportunities necessary to groom the next generation of leaders. Our future depends on it.

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