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# Why Canada Needs More Young Entrepreneurs Now

**CAREER OPPORTUNITIES** Entrepreneurship may be the big solution to Canada's high youth unemployment rate.

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"There is an urgent need to invest in youth entrepreneurship," says Julia Deans, the CEO of Futurpreneur Canada, a national non-profit supporting entrepreneurs ages 18 to 39. "Not only is youth unemployment more than double that of older age groups, but half of the entrepreneurs who head the small and medium enterprises — which make up 98 percent of all businesses in Canada — will retire in the next decade."

You don't have to be a tech genius to launch a start-up. Ninety percent of the businesses Futurpreneur serves are mainstream ventures like restaurants, producers, and chiropractic clinics.

## The brave choice

"There are a lot of young people who are not finding jobs or are finding jobs that aren't meaningful or substantial," says Deans. "Entrepreneurship is a really brave response to that."

How can we best support young Canadian entrepreneurs? Futurpreneur consulted with 1,000 entrepreneurs, leaders, and educators to create a national action plan called "Unlocking the Power of Youth Entrepreneurship," released September 18.

## The action plan

Help young people launch and grow their businesses with mentorship, strong networks, and financing.

Encourage a culture of entrepreneurship by teaching it in schools, giving class credit for businesses and with programs that encourage university students to run businesses.

Foster competence and confidence in young people. "We need to be showing people that learning from your failures and moving beyond is perfectly fine. Too often in our country we look at failures and say, 'They're done,'" says Deans.

## Role models

The plan also calls for showcasing entrepreneurs as role models. For example, Samantha Chan, who at 26 left



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Mediaplanet caught up with the Canadian entrepreneur, philanthropist and three-season panelist on CBC's Dragons' Den, W. Brett Wilson, to ask him how important a role further education has played in his success.

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Canada's success on the entrepreneurial global stage relies heavily on its ability to engage global women in high-growth ventures.

### STARTUP SPOTLIGHT

Mediaplanet sat down with The Digital Media Zone in Toronto to talk to Klever Freire, CEO of DreamQii, about his startup that makes networked, social robots.

**MP** Why did you give up your day job?

**KF** I was working as an aircraft performance engineer when I launched

She received \$15,000 in startup loans from Futurpreneur and enjoyed the support of a mentor.

Four years later, Paintlounge has three locations in Toronto and Markham and Chan loves her work like never before. "It's so meaningful to do something that you're passionate about as opposed to what I was doing before... I'm very happy with what I'm doing."

**MP Any advice for new entrepreneurs?**  
**KF** Give it your full attention, make full use of the networks of supporters available to you, and learn how to sell yourself and your business. Incubators and innovation centres can help you make vital connections to clients and funders.

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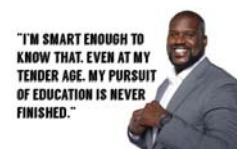
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