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A Diagnosis and Treatment Model for Start-Ups: Doping Project

Parallel Session 4

"Innovation support services: thoughts in action"

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Developed economies have been setting up projects to plan and build Science and technology parks (STPs) since the 1970s. These parks have not only fostered economic development but also facilitated innovation at local and international levels (Muhammad Umer Wasim, 2014)ⁱ. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), there are over 400 STPs available worldwide, and their number is still growing.

STPs mostly represent a kind of university-industry-government (triple helix) relationship that fosters regional development. The Triple Helix provides a means to guide efforts, from different starting points, to achieve the common goal of knowledge-based economic and social development (Henry Etzkowitz and Marina Ranga, 2010)ⁱⁱ. Although no single global standard can be best-fit for STPs, they still play a fundamental role in promoting the establishment and improvement of new technology-based companies and knowledge transfer from universities to companies. In addition to STPs, Technology Transfer Offices established by STPs and universities help bridge the gap between research and innovation.

STP (so called as Technopark in Turkey) concept was taken on the agenda of Turkey in the mid 90's. As of 2016, we can say that Turkey is aware of the fact that innovation and entrepreneurship have become the prime drivers of economic growth. Therefore, some measures such as tenants firms' survivability, sales growth, employment growth, profit growth, export growth have outlined by the government to deepen science and technology policies in order to establish an innovation-based economy (Ömer Çağrı Özdemir, Yasin Şehitoğlu, 2013)ⁱⁱⁱ.

STPs have two main missions. First one is to provide high-quality office space (with proper infrastructure) for entrepreneurs. When space is provided, then business centres and office complexes are created. The second role of STPs is to provide value added services which can help to minimise their tenants' changing problems thanks to globalisation and dynamic economic environment. It is the most important mission that differentiates them from a standard business centre. In general, it can be said that the most value-added services are networking, training, legal advisory, business model verification and management consultancy.

Currently, STPs provide their tenants with a variety of services with the increasing awareness of innovation and entrepreneurship being the most important part of economic growth. These services include networking support, access to business opportunities, financial incentives, access to potential customers and investors and internationalisation programs. These services have positive effects on both survival and growth, but they are not sufficient. Among these value added services, providing customised programs is becoming progressively important in the STPs ecosystem.

Bilkent CYBERPARK, Turkey's first private Science and Technology Park established 2002, holds a significant position in Turkey's technology-based entrepreneurship ecosystem, with approximately 240 high-tech companies, 8 Research Centers and over 135 incubation graduates. Bilkent CYBERPARK's aim is to help new and small enterprises deal with difficulties in the early stages. For this objective, it always provides value-added services together with high-quality office space and facilities to achieve its mission which is being addressed to build a guiding environment to new and small enterprises. In addition to internationalisation and acceleration programs, in 2016, Bilkent CYBERPARK has just launched a new customised program named Doping supported by Ankara Development Agency.

This study will demonstrate a model created for Doping program to detect different needs of start-ups at various stages and support their commercialization activities. The primary purpose of the program is to identify right diagnosis tools and apply the right treatment on the way to commercialization for selected start-ups. Moreover, the project is supposed to depict the big picture and contribute to the development of start-ups as well as Turkish start-up ecosystem.



WHY and HOW WAS DOPING BUILT?

Nowadays, although the support mechanisms in the ecosystem are very active, supports for commercialization are unfortunately lacking. The goal of “**Needs Analysis and Commercialization Mentoring Project**” called **DOPING** is to set a model that will facilitate the development of entrepreneurship ecosystem in Ankara, taking advantage of significant opportunities concerning competitive capacity and reinvigorating the regional economy. Recognising that the commercialization of the products manufactured in the region will make a big contribution to the development of the region's innovativeness and entrepreneurial capacity, one-to-one mentorship and services have been included to strengthen the potential for commercialization of companies during the project, avoiding general services.

So, Bilkent CYBERPARK decided to write a project to be able to receive an acceptance from South Korea Innopolis Foundation for Training Program for Science & Technology Park Development Program (STP Program) to develop its new project idea. The project was written to identify the needs of entrepreneurs and to offer them the most appropriate solutions for commercialization. It was selected among more than 100 projects in March 2016. Primary goals of STP are sharing the know-how and experience in the development and operation of Korean Science & Technology Parks, offering customised solutions as a consulting service to countries which are currently executing STP development plans and building a social network and seeking ways to cooperate with experts representing their respective sectors.^{iv}

Besides the 14-year experience of Bilkent CYBERPARK, within the scope of the project that is used scaling and evaluation model developed by South Korea – Innopolis Foundation STP. According to results of needs analysis, the problems of commercialization of the companies are identified. Mentor are appointed based on their area of specialisation. Companies had been given the opportunity to remedy their deficiencies by taking commercialization mentorship service. After the process, each company is expected to update their commercialization route map. The model applied in South Korea Innopolis Institution was adapted to Turkey after the training and examples seen there.

This idea was transformed into a detailed business plan, and the required resources were identified to make this program actual. Finally, a detailed business plan was presented to the authorities of Ankara Development Agency, and the project was supported by Ankara Development Agency in summer 2016.



Even though it is known that commercialization treatment will not provide fast-selling, it was detected that the model could be applicable according to feedbacks from the companies and investors, and the firms could make progress in the commercialization route maps. In Turkish ecosystem, entrepreneurs have a lot of support for turning business ideas into business plans and making them actual, incorporating and starting mass production. However, the supports are not enough for commercialization of the products that are produced by entrepreneurs.

It is essential to assess how incubators for entrepreneurship development are and in the wider business world in general, and how incubators meet the needs and wishes of clients and stakeholders as well (Petra Tausl Prochazkova, 2015)⁹. Doping has been lunched to provide customised solutions to startups.

The priorities of the program are to identify the commercialization and growth obstacles faced by entrepreneurs and get rid of them with the one-to-one mentoring. Furthermore, it will provide tools to benchmark services offered and a method how to help the start-ups to survive and develop their business.

The project consists of 4 stages to be completed in 3 months: 1) selecting 15 start-ups facing problems with commercialization 2) analysing their needs with the help of questionnaires and one-to-one meetings (diagnosis) 3) making suggestions and mentoring for commercialization and providing social media consultancy and 4) coaching start-ups for investment pitching.

Briefly, at the first stage, start-ups were selected, and a questionnaire was prepared by leading experts to analyse selected start-ups' business, team, education level, product/service, experience, business activities, potential customers and economic structure. At the second stage, this questionnaire was administered, and mentors held a one-to-one meeting to assess the needs of the start-ups. Examining these data, mentors selected five startups to work further for commercialization. In the second and third months of the project, more commercialization mentoring sessions, social media consultancy and then coaching for pitching to investors were provided. Finally, an event was organised where entrepreneurs present to investors with an effective demo day.

INTRODUCING: “ DOPING”

Within the scope of **Needs Analysis and Commercialization Mentoring Project** called **DOPING** that took place in September – December 2016 period, 15 incubators located in Bilkent CYBERPARK were chosen according to following criteria;

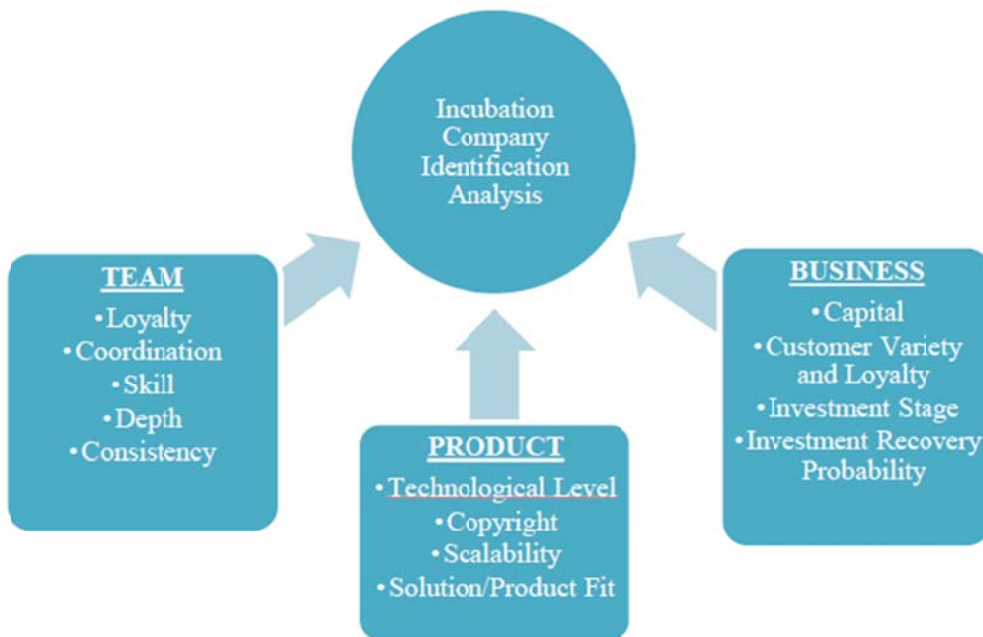
- At least 12 months have passed since the date of establishment
- All of the company partners have to be individuals
- The number of employees of the company does not exceed five persons
- Product prototype / prototype



The questions mentioned below have used for identifying the selected incubators, products, and markets:

1. What is the value proposition of your project?
2. Who is target customer of the product you developed and why should the product be bought?
3. What is your current relationship with your customers?
4. Do you already have a revenue stream from the product you developed?
5. Does your company already have financing resources? (Explain)
6. What are the education levels of team members working on the project?
7. Does your company have business partners that are benefited while continuing its activities?

8. What is the competition level of the market that you will present your product developed?
What are the competitive advantages of your product? Does your product have application areas in different sectors?
9. Is your product subject to any legal regulation? (Does the government approve and/or is there any industry standards that have to be met?)
10. Did you perform any marketing activities about your product or do you plan to perform any marketing activities about your product?
11. What is your product stage?
12. What kind of protection do you have for the product you developed? (E.g: Do you have any patents, licenses or published literature?)



For each incubation company analysed, entrepreneurial reports were created to provide a clear view of the general situation of companies.

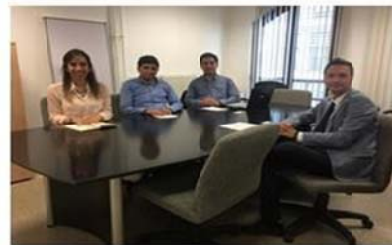
For each of 15 companies selected, one-to-one mentorship sessions have been initiated by appointing expert mentors in their field. The aim of these sessions is to provide incubation needs analysis reporting by examining incubation companies beyond their general situation.

Since the companies do not want their reports to be published, the letters are used to represent the names of them. A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O represent the names of 15 firms selected in the final report delivered to the Ankara Development Agency, and the details were shared.

According to results of the needs analysis reports, five companies that requires to "commercialization support" and can remedy their deficiencies thanks to talents of mentor were selected for the second stage among the 15 companies. Selected five companies were offered to the opportunity to present to the investors at Demo Day at the end of the program by giving one-to-one commercialization mentorship, social media situation analysis, result-oriented improvement works and presentation training. **K, L, M, N, O** letters represent the names of the five companies.

The reports of **A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J** companies that only need analysis was done and the reports of **K, L, M, N, O** companies that need analysis was done and are selected to the second stage was represented by the Agency in detail.

The report related to Company K that was applied need analysis and given commercialization mentorship was shared as "a sample" to clarify DOPING in the Appendix.

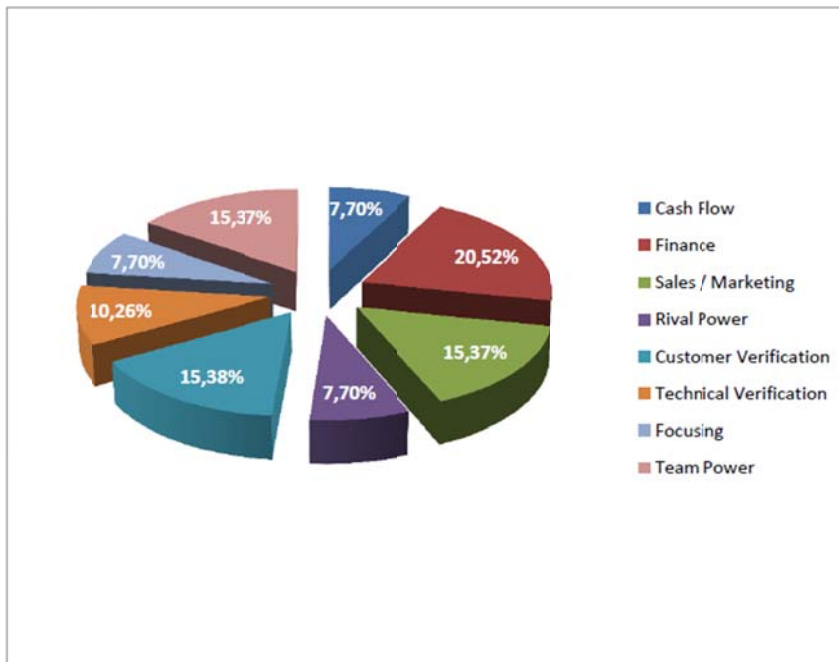


RESULTS

The results obtained within the scope of DOPING that is carried out Bilkent CYBERPARK and supported Ankara Development Agency have been collected under the five titles, and detailed evaluation of each title has been mentioned below:

1.1 Problem Determination Assessment According to Needs Analysis of Incubation Companies

Needs analysis of the selected 15 incubation companies was made by mentors within the scope of “Doping” project carried out by Bilkent CYBERPARK. In the incubation needs analysis, it has been progressed in 4 steps that are firm history review, current status review, problem determination and solution offer. During the problem resolution phase, all problems that could be experienced in each company were detected. The identified problems have been collected in 8 main titles and statistical data analysis that shows the majority / minority of the problems in percentage value has been obtained and shown below:



All identified problems that are classified under the main titles and specified in the analysis are given below;

- The presence of strong competitors for the company/product in the market,
- Lack of the main subject of the company in the market,

- Lack of innovative perspective of the company,
- The company has not focused on integrating the product into different sources,
- The company has focused on the public sector and has moved away from private sector and reduced market share in the market,
- The company has not made product pricing with the right perspective,
- Failure to provide cash flow from sales, grant support,
- Lack of product innovation,
- Financing need,
- Lack of infrastructure work,
- Inadequate market analysis,
- Lack of foreign dependence for important and critical raw materials and materials in production,
- Lack of equivalent and/or similar product of the product in market,
- Because the whole team consists of technical engineers, the weakness of company in marketing and business development activities,
- No prototype product yet,
- No intellectual property protection of the product
- Inadequate customer verification works
- Lack of focus and/or instability about which product to focus on,
- Lack of employee in the team,
- Inadequate technical verification work,
- Lack of advertising and/or promotion to promote the product and gain a place in the market,
- Keeping sales/marketing in the background,
- Inadequate mass production preparation,
- Lack of physical area for mass production phase,

As specified in the diagram above, the data provided by the mentors were evaluated, and it has been observed that the most of the problems in the companies are finance problems by the collecting of the problems identified under eight main titles. Additionally, it can be said that the companies have problems in customer verification, sales/marketing and lack of employee based on the data obtained after analysis.



1.2 Suggestions Based On Needs Analysis Results of Incubation Companies

As a result of all analyses, the problems about companies and products were detected by mentors. Solution suggestions have been presented for each problem identified. Within DOPING, the solution suggestions offered to the companies are as follows;

- Finance;
 - Investment expectation work
- Marketing;
 - Developing and improving the product within request of customer by receiving feedback from customers,

- Making detailed works on pricing and preparation of strategies,
-
- Making detailed works on pricing by analysing alternatives,
- Making customer verification works,
- Making market verification works,
- Increasing sales-oriented negotiations,
- Increasing the importance of advertising and promotions,
- Increasing the importance on cooperation
-
- Proceeding with the right steps against the competitors for sustainability of the company in the market by analysing rivals correctly,

1. Product;

Focusing on only one product

2. Business Plan;

Making necessary updates and applying them strategically in awareness of the importance of the right business plan,



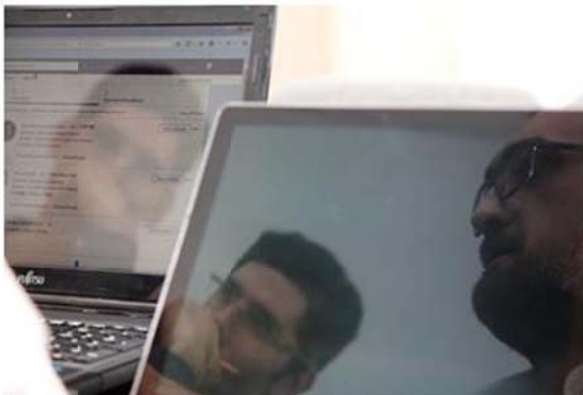
1.3 Social Media Situation Analysis and Result-Oriented Improvement Works

Within the scope of “Doping” carried out by Bilkent CYBERPARK, selected five companies for commercialization mentoring have participated in Social Media Situation Analysis and Result-Oriented Improvement Works that is performed by Solutions. These works have progressed through the following four basic steps;

- Past and current situation analysis,
- Identification of the product of the company and competitor analysis
- Problem determination, analysis of marketing and other problems,
- Solution suggestions

In the first step, the past and current situation analysis were performed by Solutions. During this analysis process, companies and their products were recognised. At the same time, information about team members, focal points of the product of the company and product sales, income and support status of the company, marketing strategies and activities, the level of social media usage on behalf of the firm and exhibitions and events were collected. In the second step, the competitor analysis was made within each detail, and the products of companies were recognised more closely. The advantages and disadvantages of each company against rivals and their products by sectors and products were analysed. Thus, how the companies and their products are placed and their target groups were detected. In the third step, as a result of all the analyses made the problems that the companies have experienced and to be experienced, marketing problems and the problems on the agenda were discussed. In the fourth step which is the last stage of the studies, solution suggestions have been prepared for any deficiencies and problems identified as the result of subjective evaluations of companies and products, and solution suggestions have been offered by "Solutionz" for companies so that companies can make right moves during the commercialization process and proceed with confident steps. Companies have continued the following works with Solutionz;

- Determine the real target group,
- Determine the target group by sector,
- Focus target group, sector group selection,
- Identification of deficiencies of marketing materials,
- Determine the content strategy for the focus target group,
- Management of sample potential institutional scenario,
 - ✓ Determine the target group via LinkedIn
 - ✓ Determine the potential decision makers at target institutional companies via LinkedIn,
 - ✓ Application on continuous communication scenario with LinkedIn
 - ✓ First contact and relationship development scenarios with LinkedIn,
 - ✓ Collecting information scenarios related to potential customers via LinkedIn,
 - ✓ Sectorial development follow-up scenarios via LinkedIn,
 - ✓ Other LinkedIn activities,
- Creation LinkedIn company account,
- Group usage via LinkedIn and potential customer finding scenarios in groups,
- Determine active communication strategies with LinkedIn during the cold sales period,
- Organisation and first preparation methods in marketing activities,
- More effective communication methods by saving time and including social media for marketing and sales to time management.



1.4 General Evaluation of Commercialization Mentorship

Within the scope of “Doping” carried out by Bilkent CYBERPARK, selected five incubation companies received one-to-one mentorship support in the commercialization field. Commercialization mentorship support was provided by appointing three mentors who were selected according to adaptation ability with company and supporting companies. The companies and products were recognised by mentors by analysing the current situation analysis. After recognising of products and companies, the problems that could be occurred for commercialization of the companies were detected. At this stage, possible problems specific to all companies were detected by making an analysis of the product of all companies, services of all companies, position and competitor analysis of the company. By way of identifying possible problems and threats, solutions that could be applied in an unexpected situation and these detected situations were determined. Together with the companies, it has primarily been progressed to determine customer needs for the products and then directed to make the market verification. Companies have been directed to make customer interviews and as a result of these interviews; with exchange of ideas about results and course of interviews, they have decided on how to follow a path., special commercialization route maps have been created which consisted of the right steps to be followed for the commercialization process for each company. Thus, they have known what the next step to develop is, and it has been provided that the companies have used their resources and time more efficiently.

To enable companies to achieve sustainability in all conditions that may experience, issues such as the solution of the cash flow by adapting to changes in the market have been discussed. The process and methods to be followed were determined by making a necessary analysis. According to demands of the products of the companies, the supply-demand equilibrium has also been provided, and the necessary strategic plans have been prepared by examining right methods for the fulfilment of demand. Innovation is incomplete without the inclusion of commercialization. ^{vi} Presentations that were prepared with the training and mentorship support provided to companies were presented to investors and audience in 2016 TechAnkara Project Market on 19 December 2016. After Demo Day, one company is selected to participate in the StartersHub Global Accelerator Program, one company is selected to participate the other Global Accelerator Program in Berlin and two companies have succeeded in attracting investors' attention and continue negotiations in these days. One of company is selected to meet with the public through Arikovani, a crowdfunding platform, and can be supported by anyone, who wishes to do so.





1.5 Incubation Services Assessment

In the interviews with the selected 15 companies, the support and services provided by TechnoPark to themselves have also been evaluated. According to results, entrepreneurial teams have explained the reasons of located in TechnoPark for three reasons;

- 1 Incentives,
- 2 Ecosystem,
- 3 Value Added Services.

Incentives that are provided by the government are indispensable to ensure the enterprises and sustainability. Beside this, a synergy that enterprises are nested with other enterprises and can make cooperate also makes a significant contribution to their development. One of the missions of the Technopark is to create this ecosystem which offers synergy to entrepreneurs. In this ecosystem, many

values added services, programs, training and mentorship are provided to entrepreneurs. Also, economic, technological and competitive conditions force many companies to become global from a local level. Technoparks and incubation centres should help entrepreneurs to get them into global markets. Techno parks are the platforms that are established to create ecosystems for the development of technology-based entrepreneurship, and this is the primary mission of techno parks. It is not enough to offer only quality office, life and residential areas to accomplish this task. Technopark administrations also work to provide all necessary value-added services to make this ecosystem smoother, more nutritious and more colourful. As Bilkent CYBERPARK, we continually improve ourselves and produce new projects to keep the ecosystem alive and strong.

Value-added services provided by STPs and incubation centres have become one of the most successful tools to guide start-ups. According to feedback received from entrepreneurs, the value added services are quite useful and practical. Even though the missing parts of commercialization are tried to be solved with training, investor interviews, accelerating programs, and potential customer interviews, specifying entrepreneur-specific needs and commercialization-oriented solution suggestions make a difference in incubation companies. The advantages which DOPING provides to entrepreneurs have been found very useful by entrepreneurs, mentors and ecosystem stakeholders.



CONCLUSION

DOPING takes (a goal based) objective oriented approach to working with companies. Each company set their own goals, and therefore the definition of 'success' varies for each company. **With this project, CYBERPARK can assess start-ups' commercialization performance, diagnose any common barriers for marketing and create a model to overcome these obstacles. Through its spill-over effect, DOPING model is considered to help foster Ankara Entrepreneurship Ecosystem and regional economy. DOPING model enables startups to benefit from mentors to convert their technological findings into a commercial product.**

No doubt, this project is created to provide a more efficient program proposal to both entrepreneurs and institutions by the needs of the entrepreneurs and by taking commercialization support unique to entrepreneurs. Even though it is known that commercialization-oriented programs will not provide fast-selling, startups have just started to think about the commercialization of their technology projects and have taken the first step to attract the investors, accelerator programs and customers (thanks to) with the crucial support of DOPING Program.

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ⁱⁱ Etzkowitz, Henry & Ranga, Marina (2010). A Triple Helix System for Knowledge-based Regional Development: From "Spheres" to "Spaces"

ⁱⁱⁱ Özdemir, Ömer Çağrı & Şehitoğlu, Yasin (2013). Assessing the Impacts of Technology Business Incubators: A Framework for Technology Development Centers in Turkey

^{iv} <https://www.innopolis.or.kr/eng/>

^v Prcohazkova, Petra Tausl (2015). Incubation Activities and Entrepreneurship: Does it Work Together?

^{vi} Jordan, James F. (2010) Innovation, Commercialization, and the Successful Startup

Appendix: Company K

The company was founded by two partners who are Electrical-Electronics Engineer

First of all, identification session that is the first leg of the program was applied to the company. Within this context, it was detected that the company has three different products and they had problems in the commercialization stage related to these products. As a result of the analysis made about the company and product, the company was chosen to the second leg of the program.

According to the result of incubation needs analysis report, the following problems related to the company was detected;

- Lack of a significant sales volume and various difficulties in the granting process,
- The company has three products developed at the same time so the focal point cannot be determined,
- Lack of human resources
- Insufficient physical place for production,
 - Lack of technical information and experience during the preparation phase for serial production,
- Lack of promotion and advertisement that bring the product specifications into the forefront from among the similar products in the market,
- Lack of product pricing, determining appropriate sales channels and after-sell services of the company,
- No IP protection for the product,

According to result of incubation needs analysis report, recommended solutions for the company are as follows;

- It's thought that the company is supported primarily for sales as well as the works that are related to put current product into final form by verifying it with feedback from the customer and carry out works to increase awareness in the market and regarding this, making positioning by doing competitive analysis especially in order to develop strategies on pricing.
- For a company on this scale, to focus on a single product and use the resources more efficient,
- To carry out works to open a production facility in OSTİM or similar place and calculate deemed cost by contacting relevant persons,
- Providing support with relevant academicians from Bilkent University on matching for consultancy and service procurement.

During the treatment phases, filament, gold sintering and three-dimensional printers that are the three products of the company have been examined, but it has been considered appropriate that the firm should focus on only three-dimensional printer due to the lack of staff.

It was determined that second company should be established after taking the public support of filament machine for other two machines, and commercialization of this product through this company. Since gold sintering machine takes a lot of time in the development phase, it has been anticipated that the machine will be developed in the medium term without spending much time.

The competence of the company and possession of the product are very high for the three-dimensional printer that has a very high potential for commercialization. Some specifications of the product are more developed than the

similar products and it also have a design certificate. Before the program, the three products were sold, and this amount can only be increased with product verification. It has been foreseen to discuss with customers for an increase of sales and determine the needs in this direction. As well as customers, competitors were contacted and information about the product specifications, clients and distributors of the competitors was obtained. Also, information about distribution ways, sales channels, profit shares, maturity periods, potential buyers, and repair and maintenance services were collected. During the program period, 25 interviews that are in the same specifications abovementioned were performed. In addition to these, presentation training was given to the company, and after this training, they had the opportunity to make a presentation to investors collectively and individually at DemoDay that has been organised in TechAnkara Project Market. Also, with the stand opened within the scope of TechAnkara Project Market, it was found opportunity to introduce to the product and contact with many potential customers and in addition to this, the product exhibited at the exhibition has been sold, and additional orders have been received.

The company continues infrastructure works to start mass production. In addition to these works, the development of several different versions has also been deemed appropriate at the same time.

Social Media Analysis

When the 3D printer market was discussed, it has been detected that there are many foreign rival company. When domestic rival firms are considered Zaxe firm has the closest product of the company's product, and it was observed that the company had one step ahead and placed as a brand in the sector because it has already gotten into the market.

The points that the company has advantage over domestic and foreign rival companies are as follows;

- Automatic calibration feature,
- Remote viewing and control,
- Polymer independent working opportunity,
- 22 cm printing area,
- Touch screen,
- Using without a supplementary software,

- Cost of consumables,
- Sale price,
- Having all spare parts,
- Easy to use of device,
- Protection against damages on the surface.

In the consultancy interview that has been made with the company, it has been detected that the product of the company is more quality, more useful and more appropriate regarding price when comparing the products of the company and the products in the same segment.

Problems that the company experienced in commercialization are explained in the mentioned items;

- The potential target groups have not yet been formed according to income targets in the short term,
- Target groups that contribute to rapid growth have not been reached,
- Not enough time and budget allocated for R&D works, company requirements and marketing activities,
- Ineffective use of social media channels,
- Having used low-budget for marketing,
- Producing incomplete content for target groups,
- Technical dimension of the product is ahead of solution value,
- Marketing materials are not developed segment-oriented

The solutions that are provided for these problems are as follows;

- Developing by narrowing down/eliminating target groups,
- Creating marketing materials;
 - o Creating marketing materials for each sector that are selected after elimination phase,
 - o Preparing marketing materials according to the problems and needs of target groups,
 - o Including as little technical information as possible when marketing materials are produced
- Staying in touch with the target group;
 - p Keeping warm relationship with the target group that has been made contact
 - o Appearing the product to customer several times through different marketing channels,
- Making Social Selling
 - p Making both marketing and selling with active use of social media.

The following works has been carried out with the company within the scope of consultancy process;

- Determine the real target group,
- Determine the target groups by sector,
- Selecting focus target groups,
- Identify the deficiencies in marketing materials,
- Define the content strategy for focus target group,
- Creating sample potential corporate customer through LinkedIn; o Making target group activity work,
 - o Determine the potential decision-makers in target corporate firms, o Always performing application on communication scenarios,
 - o Preparation of contacting, information gathering and relationship development scenarios, o Creating of methods to follow sectorial news,
- Making guidance about creating LinkedIn company account
- Setting up group and preparation channels to find potential customers on LinkedIn,
- Following of active communication strategies with LinkedIn during the cold sales period,
- Studying organisation and first training methods in marketing activities,
- Working on more efficient communication methods while saving time by including social media for marketing and sales to time management.