

AMBITION WITHOUT ACCESS

What Six Weeks in Business Launchpad Taught Me About Leadership, Impact, and What Actually Matters

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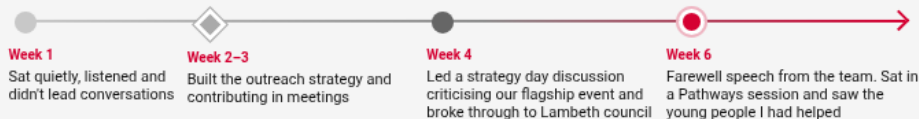


STARTING POINT

The Project

- Business Launchpad: youth enterprise charity in South London helping 18–30 year olds from low-income backgrounds start businesses and find employment
- My role: design and lead outreach across Lambeth to connect young people not in education, employment, or training to the charity's flagship programme
- I chose this because I wanted to work somewhere I could see the direct impact of what I was doing

Six weeks in action



Leadership is Forgiveness

- I made some mistakes once given responsibility. Not once was I punished; they were pointed out so I could learn.
- I didn't get to extend this to someone else during my six weeks, but it's the first principle I'll carry into leadership roles

A leader who forgives them creates a team that improves, not one that is scared to try new things.



Leadership is Caring Enough

- A young person on the phone was making excuses not to apply.
- I could have said 'next time.' Instead I pushed them to apply
- I called them later to tell them they were accepted

I saw them on my final day. A great leader cares enough about one person to make sure they get there.



At the Pathways session, I watched young people arrive with the same uncertainty I had felt six weeks earlier, but express their ideas with ambition and excitement.

Then I recognised the names on the lanyards. The people in the room were not just statistics: they were the reason the outreach mattered.

Every strategy decision and awkward conversation had helped create a route into that room.

What I Didn't Know Before

- The barriers young people face are more common than university students realise. Housing instability, young pregnancies, mental health challenges, no qualifications, no backup plan.
- Some have never had a single person tell them their idea is worth pursuing.

What Changed

FOR THE ORGANISATION

- The outreach strategy, council pipeline, and partner referrals I built helped the team get closer to funder recruitment targets for the first time.

FOR ME

- I came in targeting corporate finance. I am leaving knowing I want to lead something where I can see the impact on real people.

ADVICE TO DAY-1 SELF

Do not wait to feel qualified before you care.

The people in that room have been doing this for years and they still don't have all the answers. Your perspective matters more than you think.

