

# INDUSTRY INSIGHT 1: ACCELERATORS IN HONG KONG



Startups can receive \$30,000-\$120,000 through these accelerator programmes.

## 8 Accelerators to watch out for in 2018

*Hong Kong Business* reached out to industry experts to round up the most promising accelerators in the city.

When an entrepreneur has an idea for a new business, there are special programmes that offer mentorship and funding to jumpstart their venture. Accelerator programmes are offered for a certain period, with varying areas of focus, and

investment/equity stake. Increasingly, this new trend is emerging in the business ecosystem. Straight from leading venture capital firms, here are eight of the most promising accelerators in the city. They are arranged in no particular order.



### • SUPERCHARGER

**Duration:** 12 weeks  
**Areas of focus:** FinTech  
**Investment/equity stake:** None

Leveraging on Hong Kong's traditional strength as Asia's finance and technology gateway, SuperCharger's accelerator programme aims to shape the future of finance in Hong Kong and beyond. The programme alumni have since raised a combined US\$370m in funding. The startups are enriched by the support and mentorship of more than 150 individuals, including seasoned VCs, industry experts, government officials, and local entrepreneurs. Notable cohort participants include trade finance platform Fundpark which provides invoice and purchase order financing for SMEs and financial rewards platform Gini.

### • FINTECH INNOVATION LAB

**Duration:** 12 weeks, 10 startups per batch  
**Areas of focus:** fintech, insurtech, wealth management (wealthtech), regulatory requirements (regtech), and cybersecurity, amongst others.  
**Investment/equity stake:** No equity is taken or investment made in the start-ups



Powered by Accenture, Fintech Innovation Lab features seasoned industry participants including Bank of America Merrill Lynch, CBA, Credit Suisse, Societe Generale and Sun Life Financial. The lab brings together the fintech ecosystem, reshaping start-up businesses and strengthening the entrepreneurial environment in Asia-Pacific. Some notable alumni from the programme include e-wallet operator TNG FinTech Group which raised US\$115m in September 2017 to snag the largest series A fundraising round in Hong Kong.

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## • AMPLIFI PAPERCLIP

**Duration:** 3 months for accelerator, 1 year for incubator programme  
**Areas of focus:** e-commerce, supply chain and logistics  
**Investment/equity stake:** 1.5% advisory equity for each startup

Amplifi is a SaaS (software as a service) dedicated accelerator company headquartered in Mumbai, India partnering with Paperclip which brands itself as a startup campus in Hong Kong. The partnership offers startups who pass the screening with readily available co-working spaces for the duration of the programme. The team has both acceleration and incubation programmes dedicated to bringing B2B SaaS ideas into fruition. Notable alumni include Gweek which uses speech intelligence analytics to glean effective communication patterns and trends in public speech.

## • HYPE ASIA

**Duration:** 3-6 months  
**Areas of focus:** C2C / B2C marketplaces, Fintech, platform tech, ICO startups.  
**Investment/equity stake:** HYPE takes on a single digit percentage stake for seed stage companies with different structures on a case by case basis. For growth stage companies in their Series A or B, the team operates a “build, operate and transfer” model to provide startups with a soft landing into new markets by acting as their lead operators.



HYPE is a team of venture builders who help startups expand their business across Asia to fuel their global aspirations. The founders - Henek, Robert and Patrick were part of the leadership team that landed Airbnb to Asia in 2012. HYPE has aided Singaporean online marketplace Carousell land in Hong Kong successfully and led the South Korean expansion of edtech startup Snapask.

## • BRINC

**Duration:**  
1. Connected Hardware (Hong Kong)  
4-month program with 1 month in Hong Kong and the rest in your market  
2. Drones & Robotics (Hong Kong & Barcelona) - 4-months  
**Areas of focus:** Connected Hardware; Drones & Robotics  
**Investment/equity stake:** Connected Hardware - Hong Kong \$100,000 for 8-13%; Drones & Robotics - Hong Kong & Barcelona \$70,000 for 8-13%



The Brinc team has helped bring thousands hardware products to market including wearable metronome Soundbrenner which has achieved over 15x valuation growth and medication tracking system PillDrill which is now distributed in one of the largest pharmaceutical chains in the US.

## • DBS ACCELERATOR



**Duration:** open year-round  
**Areas of focus:** compliance monitoring, credit digitisation, customer engagement, and cybersecurity  
**Investment/equity stake:** Nest Ventures signs an option agreement to possibly invest in the company. DBS does not take a fixed equity percentage upfront, but will work with startups to come to an agreed upon valuation.

Powered by Nest Ventures, DBS Accelerator calls on startups with new technologies around the world to help evolve financial services. From customer experience, to credit and loans, to risk and security, DBS Accelerator aims to push the financial services industry in Hong Kong forward and spark change. Startups who pass the screening can get access to the programme's co-working space in Wan Chai which was formerly a bank vault.

## • BETATRON



**Duration:** 4 months  
**Areas of focus:** Pre-series A startups  
**Investment/equity stake:** US\$30,000 investment (average equity stake: 3-8%)

Betatron is a network of seasoned investors, entrepreneurs, startups and mentors focused on empowering founders by providing extensive support from market validation, marketing support, business model refinement, product development and media exposure amongst others. Founded by Venture Capital firms like Mindworks and Cocoon Ignite Ventures and startup investors, Betatron's founding partners have collectively invested over US\$300M in over 100 startups. Notable Betatron alumni include smart locker operator Pakpobox, which raised US\$1.2M, increased their revenue by 9x, and have expanded into 5 new countries since graduation from the programme.

## • Zeroth.ai

**Duration:** 3 months  
**Areas of focus:** AI tech particularly cybersecurity, voice and speech (natural language processing), agtech, medtech, logistics, robotics  
**Investment/equity stake:** US\$120,000 Investment in exchange for 11-12% equity



Zeroth's name is derived from the initial element in zero-based numbering which perhaps best reflects its status as the first AI and machine learning dedicated accelerator programme in Asia. The team decided to focus on nurturing AI talent not only because of its disruptive capacity but also because it is potentially acquisitive. Their notable local alumni include Emotics which uses webcam data and machine learning to provide data-driven insights into employee engagement and Fano Labs which develops speech and NLP technologies to help enterprises improve their customer services.