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An Inside Look At The SXSW Accelerator With Chris Valentine

by [Frank Gruber](#) on November 24, 2010



Last year in partnership with the SXSW Accelerator, we hosted a large [Tech Cocktail SXSW](#) mixer event which featured over thirty early-stage startups. The event was a huge success and one of the companies, [GameSalad](#) even got an angel investment check on the spot. The event kicked off the two-day 2010 SXSW Accelerator program where LA-based [Mobile Roadie](#) took home the top prize.

This year we are excited to be working with SXSW again as we will be hosting another [Tech Cocktail SXSW](#) event on the evening of Sunday, March 13th (so mark you calendars and save the date) and [RSVP today](#). The event details are still being worked out but we plan to showcase a number of

startups and some of the latest tech innovations. Some interesting statistics from the last few years about the companies that have been involved in the SXSW Accelerator program:

- 41% of the companies received funding which totaled \$85 Million since participating in the SXSW Accelerator
- 14% of the companies have been acquired since participating in the SXSW Accelerator

Though funding is not the ultimate measure of success, it helps validate that participants are attracting some attention and are high quality. But let's not get ahead of ourselves, it's only November and the application process is still underway for the third annual [2011 SXSW Accelerator](#) program. This year the SXSW Accelerator will shape up similar to last year but with a few new surprises. It will take place March 14 – 16 at SXSW 2011 in Austin, Texas. New for 2011, the Music-Related Technology category competition will take place on Wednesday, March 16 during the Music Conference.

I got a chance to talk with SXSW Accelerator Director [Chris Valentine](#) and asked him a few questions about the program this year.



Tech Cocktail (TC): What are you excited about this year?

Chris Valentine (CV): I am most excited about the growth that has occurred within the SXSW Accelerator event. There is increased excitement this year as more companies are applying and I'm feeding off that energy. Being able to look back at the last few years at how we are making an impact with the past company success also makes me excited to see our program is helping to make a difference.

TC: What is new this year?

CV: This year we've added a day focused on music related technology. This was based off our observations and the convergence of the music and technology industries. So in creating the extra day of product launches it enables us to create a cross between the two industries. We've opened up Interactive and Music badges to help facilitate participation by the two groups at the Accelerator event. We've also added two new categories, News and Health technology. In the News technology category we're excited to have partnered with the Knight Foundation.

TC: Why is the Tech Cocktail partnership and mixer event important to the SXSW Accelerator?

CV: The partnership with Tech Cocktail is essential to us. One of the things we wanted to extend was the business programming into evening. Tech Cocktail allows the companies that are participating to meet face to face with angel, investors, companies, fans, etc. It allows folks to talk on a different level. Another form to participate with the audience.

Thanks Chris, we are also excited to be working with SXSW again and look forward to another great week of startup events and festivities. [Enter your startup or product](#) and be part of the [2011 SXSW Accelerator](#) competition. The **deadline is December 10th**. [Register](#) to attend SXSW and be a part of the action. See you in Austin in March!

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