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# Advice for high-tech startups

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The Okanagan is becoming a breeding ground for technology startups.

According to legal experts, a little preparation in the early stages of these businesses can go a long way.

The Okanagan Research and Innovation Centre saw the first in a series of legal roundtables held Dec. 2 with advisors from Kelowna law firm Pushor Mitchell.

Business and technology law specialist Blair Forrest noted the intellectual property of startup companies is often their key source of value.

He encouraged business owners to prepare their foundational documents early, before the property's value increases.

These documents range from outlining the business' financial structure and degrees of ownership of intellectual property, to privacy policies and registering trademarks.

Forrest pointed out this preparation in the early stages of a startup venture can save time and hundreds of thousands of dollars later on.

He gave the example of one company which faced legal wrangling after a brother-in-law loaned the company owner tools during the startup phase, and later claimed 10 per cent

ownership in the company's intellectual property.


ORIC director Martin Yuill said the partnership with Pushor Mitchell allows ORIC to provide their clients with mentoring, support and advice on legal topics.

Yuill noted that legal issues around intellectual property and financing are often encountered by early stage ventures.

He added that successful incubation of business involves giving them focused and intensive support. Yuill pointed out this support helps businesses increase their chances of future success.

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