

**Background:** Start Garden is a \$15 Million seed accelerator fund in Grand Rapid, Michigan. It started by allowing people with business ideas to submit them to the Start Garden website <http://startgarden.com> and have those ideas voted on by the public for one of two \$5,000 investments. For the lucky two selected each week, they had 90 days to come back and show progress in the hopes of receiving greater funding support for the venture. UM-Dearborn used this same idea in the Design Change program <http://www.umdilabs.com/designchange> and let students submit ideas. The best ideas - as voted on by both public and a panel of expert reviewers - moved on to give 5 minute business pitches at the annual Elliot Pitch Day.

**Assignment:** This is an individual assignment that introduces you to entrepreneurial ideas and how to examine those opportunities. **Visit the Start Garden and Design Change websites and get an understanding of the programs and their goals.** Review all of the “Ideas” that are posted and archived in Design Change and the “Investments” that Start Garden has made. Pick **ONE** idea from Design Change, and **TWO** of the funded Start Garden Investments. From the Following Link: ( <http://startgarden.com/the-fund/investments> ). Briefly summarize these **THREE** business ideas - a sentence or two for each is plenty. Write a **CRITICAL** assessment of each of these ideas focusing on the potential of the product/service. Using the **opportunity check list**, explain what aspects of the idea are **stronger** or **weaker** and **why!** Use examples and demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses.

**Suggestions:** Demonstrate you have looked over the sites and understand the ideas. Use an entrepreneurial mindset to give critical thought to the ideas and what impact they might have. If it helps, put yourself in the shoes of the people giving the money and will therefore have a stake in the success of the ideas.

**Other:** There are no rules for page length, size, or margins. Be concise in what you write, by thinking entrepreneurially and examining the ideas from various perspectives (empathy); explain what you see and think. Turn in one, well-organized document that clearly identifies the ideas you picked (including the investments amount from Start Garden) and your assessment of each idea.

To see a list of the Start Garden Investments visit <http://startgarden.com/the-fund/investments>

For more info on the origins of Start Garden, read:

[http://www.mlive.com/business/west-michigan/index.ssf/2012/04/rick\\_devos\\_start\\_garden.html](http://www.mlive.com/business/west-michigan/index.ssf/2012/04/rick_devos_start_garden.html)