

# OVERCOMING BUSINESS CHALLENGES

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## SBDC Team Launches Mantis on Growth Path

*Cal Poly CIE SBDC and Mantis Composites*



# ABOUT THE CAL POLY CIE SBDC

The Cal Poly CIE SBDC offers a wide variety of services for both start-ups and established companies. Our services include no-charge expert counseling, low-cost training, information resources, events, and seminars. All counseling services are confidential and free of charge. Our Business Advisors assist their clients with a wide range

of services, including: business planning; marketing strategies and planning; sales; access to capital, including bank finance, SBA loans, and asset financing; venture funding; government contracting; strategic technology acquisition and practical, hands-on application; financial projections and budgeting; and operating challenges.



The SBDC helps entrepreneurs launch new businesses, and small business owners survive and thrive in SLO County. To take advantage of our no cost, expert business services, visit [SBDC.CALPOLY.EDU](http://SBDC.CALPOLY.EDU).

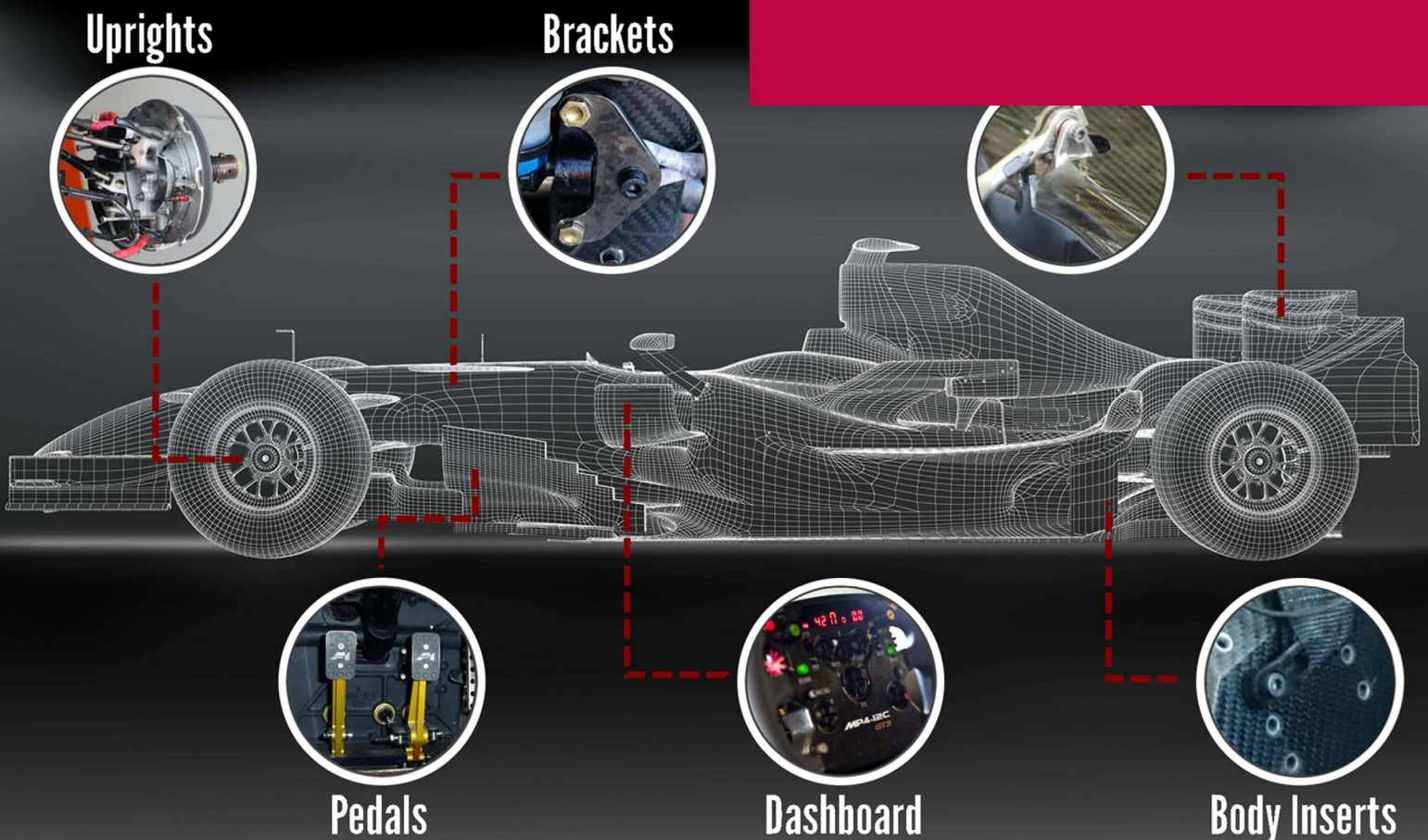


# ABOUT MANTIS COMPOSITES

Mantis Composites was founded in 2015 to make the fastest machines in the world go even faster. Using an in-house developed carbon fiber 3D printing system, Mantis Composites makes the lightest aerospace and automotive parts in the world, allowing satellites, aircraft, and cars to operate faster on less fuel than ever before.

The SBDC provided critical resources to start and grow our business, allowing us to fill in key business knowledge gaps in an engineering-dominated team.

-Ryan Dunn, Mantis Composites, Co-Founder and CEO



# THE CHALLENGE

By June 2015, Mantis Composites knew they were onto something. Their technology provided an alternative to otherwise expensive and time-consuming carbon fiber layup processes that can only produce basic shells. As college students, the Mantis team utilized Cal Poly's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship resources: the Hatchery, the Accelerator, and the two-year Incubator Program.

With an unprecedented suite of technologies, Mantis was producing complex shapes with focused strength in high stress areas — the aerospace and automotive industry was taking notice. The challenge for Mantis was the leadership team was dominated by engineers who were new to business planning and strategy and scaling a company.



**“By providing support for common business challenges, the SBDC allowed a team of founders with domain expertise to acquire the knowledge to start and run a business.”**

**-Ryan Dunn, Mantis Composites,  
Co-Founder and CEO**

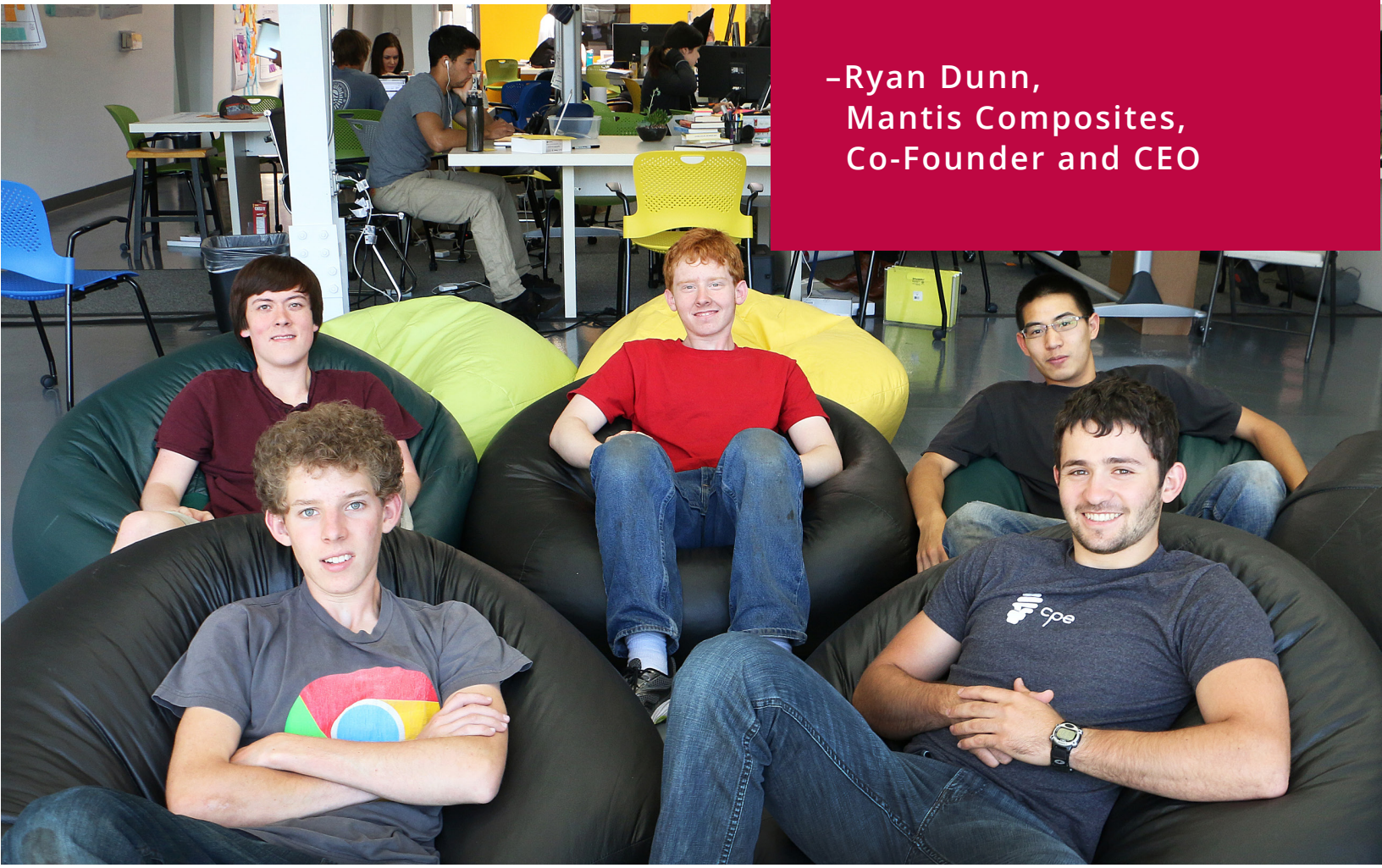


# THE SOLUTION

Being novices to scaling and growing a carbon fiber manufacturing company, Ryan Dunn reached out to CIE Economic Director, Judy Mahan, for guidance. Judy immediately connected Ryan with an SBDC consultant team that were veterans in Engineering, Funding Assistance, Financial Projections and Business Planning.

“Being able to receive expert coaching across all the cornerstones of our business, with one team and at no cost was invaluable.”

–Ryan Dunn,  
Mantis Composites,  
Co-Founder and CEO





# RESULTS

The guidance that Ryan and his team received from the Cal Poly CIE SBDC allowed them to secure \$780K in capital funding and scale the company, including creating 11 new jobs. Today, Mantis has

a strong presence in the regional aerospace industry, shipping high-tech products around the globe, all of which are manufactured here on the Central Coast.



**“Managing the intersection between customers, operations, and the laws of physics is one of the riskiest (and scariest) parts of building a technology company.**

**The SBDC brings unrivaled support to the customer and operations areas that are often the weakest for founders of technical companies.”**

**-Ryan Dunn, Mantis Composites, Co-Founder and CEO**