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## PHOENIX Business Journal

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# SkySong Arizona State University Scottsdale Innovation Center celebrates first building opening

The Business Journal of Phoenix - by [Chris Casacchia](#) Phoenix Business Journal

Mika Laitinen and project manager Sanna Kirjavainen are in the midst of a U.S. business trip that will take them to San Antonio, New York, Boston, Madison, Wisc., and Seattle.

The business partners are researching a U.S. headquarters for their Jyvaskyla, Finland, instrument technology development company Magnasense Ltd. Thursday, they are talking to Phoenix business, political and educational leaders at the newly launched SkySong -- the **Arizona State University Scottsdale Innovation Center**, a global business and innovation hub.

The Finish firm is attracted to the global nature of the facility, which features partnerships with 29 companies in 11 countries, including Ireland, Turkey, Mexico, the United Kingdom, China, India, Singapore and Canada.

"We are looking for customers and we need a local appearance (in the U.S.)," said Magnasense CEO Mika Laitinen, who leaves for San Antonio tomorrow.

Laitinen was among the hundreds of international business leaders, local politicians, ASU faculty, staff and donors, who attended Thursday's grand opening for the first SkySong building, a 157,000-square-foot structure.

The entire project will house 10 ASU units, including the Edson Student Entrepreneur Initiative, ASU Technopolis and the Enterprise Venture Arizona Center. In all, the development will feature 1.2 million square feet of commercial space and 800 residential units.

"It's a true public, private partnership," said Scottsdale Mayor Mary Manross.

ASU President Michael Crow said SkySong is "a linkage point" to a world marked by a highly entrepreneurial, market driven global economy.

"We have to, in many, ways grow up and evolve to become more of a team member ... than plowing ahead on our own," he said.

It's a change Yanky Fachler knows doesn't happen overnight, but he has witnessed since

moving to Dublin, Ireland, more than 10 years ago. Ireland's economy attracted U.S. and other foreign multinationals to locate business headquarters and expand there because of the region's pro-business tax policy.

Now that cheap labor can be found elsewhere, mainly in India, China and other Asian nations, Ireland is once again fighting for business. However, the country has benefited from a more educated work force skilled in technology and software applications and development.

"Now, Ireland has to compete in a much tougher global environment," said Fachler, who's company has partnerships at SkySong.

Dublin-based Bookbuzz develops systems for corporate learning for senior executives and is looking to expand business in London and Belgium. Fachler's business partner launched a small-scale SkySong at Dublin City University, which struck a deal for Arizona Technology Enterprise to market select DCU licensing. DCU students also are collaborating with ASU students on global tech transfer commercialization and intellectual property projects.

"I believe this is a good place to be," Fachler said.

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