20 Builders, 72 Hours, Five New Products Built on a Train from New York City to San Francisco

Rocket Mixer's Coast-to-Coast Startup Lab challenges builders to create working products during a 72-hour train journey from NYC to SF Tech Week.

SAN FRANCISCO , NY, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- 20 Builders. 72 Hours. One Train From New York to San Francisco.

> We wanted to create a different kind of building experience—one where people rely on their skills, creativity, and each other, not necessarily on AI."
>
> *Andrea Garau, Rocket Mixer founder*

Rocket Mixer launches the Coast-to-Coast Startup Lab, a three-day startup-building journey culminating in San Francisco Tech Week

NEW YORK, NY — September 2026 — What happens when you put a group of builders on a train from New York to San Francisco, give them a problem they have never seen before, and ask them to build a working product before they arrive?

That is the idea behind The Coast-to-Coast Startup Lab, created by Andrea Garau, founder of Rocket Mixer®, for San Francisco Tech Week.

On October 3, 2026, 15–20 developers, product people, marketers, and experienced builders will meet at Penn Station in New York. They will form teams, receive their challenge, and board an Amtrak train bound for San Francisco.

Then they start building.

Over the next 72+ hours and more than 2,000 miles, the teams will brainstorm, design, develop, test, and refine their products while traveling across the country. There are no pre-formed teams, and no additional build time after arriving in San Francisco.

The goal: five teams, five working products, built entirely during the journey.

The teams will arrive in San Francisco on October 6 and present their products the following day, October 7, during Demo Day as part of the SF Tech Week ecosystem.

A Different Kind of Startup Challenge

The Coast-to-Coast Startup Lab removes much of the infrastructure normally surrounding startup building.

Instead of an office, teams have a train. Instead of weeks or months, they have roughly three days. And instead of knowing their teammates in advance, they meet shortly before departure and decide who they want to build with.

The participants come from technical and non-technical backgrounds, including developers, product managers, marketers, and experienced builders. The group includes people connected to universities such as Cornell, Columbia, Harvard, NYU, Fordham, Penn, and Stevens.

The project brings together two major startup ecosystems: New York, with its deep connection to business and capital, and San Francisco, at the heart of the technology ecosystem.

Rather than simply flying between the two cities for a startup event, the participants will spend three days crossing the country together — and building products along the way.

The Journey Becomes the Story
Rocket Mixer is documenting the experience as a documentary-style series, capturing the people and the process behind the products: team formation, brainstorming, disagreements, breakthroughs, setbacks, late-night building sessions, and the final pitches in San Francisco.

The project is an experiment in what happens when the usual startup infrastructure is stripped away and people are given limited time, limited space, and one another.

Demo Day in San Francisco
After completing the journey, the teams will present their products to founders, investors, operators, and members of the technology community during Demo Day on October 7 in San Francisco.

The event will also give the participating builders an opportunity to connect with investors, founders, and technology companies as they continue developing their ideas beyond the train journey.

The Coast-to-Coast Startup Lab is organized by Andrea Garau, founder of Rocket Mixer®, a startup community connecting founders, entrepreneurs, operators, and investors through curated experiences across New York City and San Francisco.

During the most recent NY Tech Week, a16z (Andreessen Horowitz, one of the world's leading venture capital firms) highlighted Rocket Mixer's events among the "serious rooms to be in," alongside events hosted by major technology and business organizations including IBM, NVIDIA,

PwC, and Deel.

20 builders. 72+ hours. 2,000+ miles. Five teams. One train.

Five products that did not exist when the train left New York.

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