Session 9: How to Network

LiAn Pan & Alessandra Springmann
AITI Entrepreneurship Component
Entrepreneurship Component

- **Understand the Basics**
  - JOURNEY: How do startups get established and grow?

- **Prepare Your Mind**
  - PSYCHOLOGY: What should be my attitude?
  - ETHICS: How will I honor my values?

- **Define Your Value**
  - PROBLEM: What problem am I solving?
  - MODEL: How will my startup make money?
  - POSITIONING: How can I compete?

- **Build An Organization**
  - TEAMS: How do I choose my co-founders?
  - RECRUITING: How can I attract talent?
  - LEADERSHIP: How can I motivate my team?

- **Build Your Product**
  - TECHNICAL CURRICULUM

- **Sell Your Product**
  - MARKETING: Who exactly is my target customer?
  - SALES: How can I get customers to buy my product?

- **Build Relationships**
  - MENTORS: How do I find advisors who can help?
  - FUNDING: How can I raise money to get started?
  - PARTNERS: How can I negotiate the best partnerships?
Agenda

• How to network for a job
  – MIT Sloan-style!
• How to network for you
First things

- What are you trying to accomplish?
- Do you have business cards?
- Do you follow up via email and phone?

- Okay!
How to network for a job

• Aggressive!
• Talk about something that’s not the job
• “What do you want from a candidate?”
• List 2 or 3 matching attributes of yours
  – Give examples
• Observe person’s reactions
• Ask for more names.
• Offer to follow-up. Then do it.
Example
How to network for you

• Remember, you are not desperate.
• You have an attractive, unique idea.
• You are experienced, confident, and will have numerous other opportunities in your future.
Most important things

• Listen.

• Be sincere.

• “How can I help this person?”
Why network?

• Find people who you can help
• Find people who can help you
• Mentors, clients, referrals, employees...
  – Maybe you need a good lawyer
  – Maybe you need to hire a programmer
  – Maybe you need to find a contractor
  – Want to find someone who’s good!
Networking takes time

• A network is an investment
  – Effort
  – Time

• It will pay off in the long run
How to build your networks

• Professors, instructors at university
  – Many have studied/worked overseas!
• Alumni associations (high school, university)
• Your religious group/congregation
• Old friends, relatives
• Volunteering
• Internships
• AITI guest speakers :)
How to Win Friends

• Smile

• Ask a question
  – DO NOT INTERRUPT
  – Don’t offer an opinion
  – (that’s my job)

• Listen

• Business cards

• Say the person’s name
Networking

• Listen. Figure out who the person is.
• Get the person to like you
• (Talk about something that’s not the job)
• **Pitch** your idea, tailoring it to the person.
• Ask for more names and advice.
• Offer to follow up. Then follow up as promised.
Networking

• Don’t push the conversation too hard.
• Give yourself a graceful exit.
• “It’s been really great talking to you. I’ll follow up about my experience with web frameworks. Enjoy your afternoon!”
Venture Capital: Create Value First

• When do you ask for outside money for your company?
  – Only ask for money if your idea is awesome
  – Only ask for money if your team is awesome
  – Identify your opportunity first, then...
  – Ask for money later
Networking

• You’re confident.
• Never, ever beg.
• There will be other offers.
What if I’m shy?

• Start small. Find people who look familiar.

• OR! Start big.

• **Ask for introductions.**
  – That really social, loud, outgoing friend? Ask for help. They loooooove being helpful.

• It’s easier to talk about something you care about than yourself.

• Don’t apologize. You’re worth their time.
Shyness

• Humans aren’t shy animals by nature
• We’re communal, tribal creatures
• Something’s caused us to be shy

• Pretend you’re wearing a mask, like in theatre
• Practice talking to other people
• You can hide once the event’s over :)
What if the person’s shy?

• Ask them some questions about who they are
• Where they live, where they work, what they care about
• See if you have a common interest
• Find how you can connect
• LISTEN
Worried?

• Prepare ahead of time
• Practice!
• It’s okay if people tell you no.
• You’ve told people “no” as well.

• The world will not end. Life will go on.
Following Up

• If you say you’ll contact a person, do it
• At the time you specified
• How you specified
• If someone provided you an intro, reply promptly
• “I’m sending this email again in case the original got lost in your inbox...”
Business cards

• Get some business cards, as well as a case
• PROFESSIONAL EMAIL ADDRESS
  • alessondra.springmann@gmail.com versus sailingchick415@hotmail.com
• Name, email, phone sufficient
  – Could add “entrepreneur”
• When you receive a card, jot down notes on the person/conversation
Address books

• Google and Yahoo! have free address books
• Add contact info,
• Birthdays
• Keywords/notes
  – “Kofi not only likes computer science but he’s an auto mechanic.”
  – “Nana is studying to be a doctor but her car breaks down all the time... Hmm...”
Stay in touch

• Send along articles of interest
• Find out their birthdays
• Do favors
• Be generous
• But don’t appear desperate
Ethics

• Be honest.
• No exaggeration.
• Don’t lie.
• Don’t manipulate.
• If you don’t know the answer, say you’ll look it up and get back to the person.
  – Then actually follow up!
  – People love that.
Networking Online

• LinkedIn
  – A lot of you are online!
  – Is your profile up to date?
  – Are there spelling errors, grammatical problems?
  – Has a friend looked it over?
  – Is it an accurate representation of who you are and what you’ve accomplished?
Networking online

- Twitter
  - Everything you say your boss/VC/contact can find!
- Facebook
  - Not for professional networking (as much)
- Don’t say/post stupid things on the Internet.
- They will come to haunt you.
Some links

• Networking for introverts: http://www.businesspundit.com/how-to-network-for-introverts/

• Networking for shy people:

• http://www.cio.com/article/164300/How_to_Network_12_Tips_for_Shy_People
Now, practice

• Do you not have a team yet?
• Go around, practice talking with people
• Meet 3-5 new people today from AITI
  – Listen/get them to like you
  – Talk about shared interests (problems to solve?)
  – Ask them about their attributes
  – Why they’d be good on your team
  – See if you want to work with them
• Meet some non-AITI people?
• Come back here at 1 pm!!!