

Aidan Sharpe

Prof. Payton

Entrepreneurial Engagement Hours Reflection

Throughout the semester, eight entrepreneurial engagement events were attended. This provided the opportunity for more hands-on activities outside of class, and in many cases it gave active and successful entrepreneurs the opportunity to share knowledge with student innovators. Out of the dozens of available events, the eight that I attended were:

1. CEO Club Proftank - Small Group Workshop
2. CEO Club Guest Speaker - Aer Cosmetics
3. Color Theory Workshop
4. Make Teamwork Work with Studio 231
5. Lunch & Learn
6. Innovation Express: Re-investing
7. Thinking Outside the Box
8. Pitch Deck Workshop

For the most part, events were chosen that would boost personal abilities and increase performance at the culminating event of the semester: the New Venture Expo. By absorbing as many tips and tricks as possible, I was able to outline a pathway to success.

The pathway began at CEO Club's "Proftank", a small group workshop that engages attendees in conversation about their startups whether they are just an idea or already are making money. It gave everyone a chance to discuss what their skill sets were, and allowed people with more expertise in certain topics the opportunity to chime in on relevant topics. At the time of attending this event, my new venture expo team had not yet settled on a topic. We were very much still in opportunity recognition phase at the time.

By bouncing ideas off of the other attendees, I was able to get a feel for what people might be interested in.

The next stop was another CEO Club event, this time a guest speaker who also started her venture as a class assignment. Paige DeAngelo attended Drexel University, starting off as a Meteorology major. Being a competitive dancer, she had to balance financials from a young age to continue competing. After realizing that one of her biggest sources of waste was makeup, she learned how to make mascara from scratch. Once she saw that the idea had potential, she switched her major to entrepreneurship and began getting assistance from her professors and classmates. Today, she has manufacturing partners, and has her first set of products for sale on her website. Her story instilled into me that what might seem like a class project could easily become something much larger.

Next, I attended the color theory workshop. Since my new venture expo team was starting to solidify our idea, it was time to start thinking about a color scheme. After all, we would be pitching our startup with a slide deck. This workshop taught me a lot about how to pick, balance, and use colors in both web design, and in a slide deck. One of the most important points made was about brand recognition: having a consistent theme allows your brand to be better recognized.

Following along with the theme of being applicable to the new venture expo, the next event attended was "Make Teamwork Work". This workshop focused on giving everyone a job that best fits their skills. The hands on activity had each group have a "boss", "secretary", and "designer". The boss would have a vision for a design and do his best to communicate that idea to the secretary. The secretary would then do his best to relay that information to the designer in such a way that the idea could be accurately drawn without being seen by the boss or secretary. The designer could then ask the secretary any questions, which would be relayed to the boss, so the cycle could continue. After

playing for several rounds, it became obvious who was the best at each of the roles, and that nobody was the best at all of them.

The Lunch & Learn event was a bit spontaneous, as I was invited to attend only minutes before it started. The group of us played a few rounds of "Unnecessary Inventions", in which a far out problem was to be solved with a (hopefully) reasonable solution. This game is really good at helping people practice brainstorming and it demonstrates that startups should start with a problem, not a solution.

To continue on the new venture expo pathway to success, the next event attended involved a presentation about re-investing funds into a startup. Essentially, bootstrapping a startup and using any profits to expand, grow, and keep the wheel rolling. This event covered everything from potential sources of funds to applications of funds, and there were a lot of applications. Everything from expanding products and staff to marketing and a legal team were discussed in detail. This provided a framework for my new venture team to be able to hammer down where we want to allocate funds in the future.

The "Thinking Outside the Box" workshop was pretty similar to the lunch and learn, but rather than having arbitrary problems that apply to nobody, the problems were attributed to characters that we would have to understand. While we were not able to empathize with the characters (being vampires and ghosts, etc.), we were able to understand the problems they were having and potential solutions. This workshop taught me the importance of having a target market for your startup regardless of whether or not you are part of that target market.

The final event took place very shortly before the new venture expo. At this point in the semester, my team was already beginning to prepare our pitch deck and prototype. This workshop provided a deeper insight into the contents of a pitch deck and which parts and pieces are the most important. While the list of important items was much more than could

fit into the six slides allowed at the expo, it gave me an idea of what needed to be done to make a great pitch.

By incorporating the knowledge accumulated through these activities into every aspect of my team's venture, RU Fit, we were able to follow the pathway to success and take our pitch to the next level. In doing so, we secured the "People's Choice" prize at the new venture expo. My team and I are excited to continue to work on our venture over the summer, and we look forward to continue to apply the knowledge from these events. Overall, I really enjoyed these events, and they proved to be a valuable experience.