Gateway

Edson New Venture Concept Proposal

4/1/2014

**Business Concept and Strategy**

We provide a website that uses the format of an interactive game to teach late high school to college age young adults about the entrepreneurship process in order to help them turn their ideas into viable business opportunities. Unlike informational sites like the US Small Business Association and Junior Achievement's mindyourownbusiness.org, which simply list the steps in the entrepreneurship process, or business strategy RPGs (Role Playing Games) like Lemonade Stand, which teach about the precarious balance of market factors through an interactive game but do not offer much in terms of information, our software is both educational and entertaining.

Once a student has an idea, it is very difficult to find out what to do next. After the lightbulb lights up, where does one begin to try to make that dream a reality? There is plenty of information out there. A simple web search yields hundreds of sites claiming to teach the “right” way to start a business, to organize business plans, to market, and to manage employees. There are also many sites that demonstrate - interactively, even – how supply and demand, materials and employees, and market factors fluctuate to affect profits. This information is relevant, yes, but is it really that helpful to an aspiring entrepreneur?

The Gateway team says no. Our guess is that most young adults with an innovative idea have no clue where to even start – and that is where we come in. We put the most emphasis on the first part of the entrepreneurship process, right after a young adult has an idea. We focus on finding a gap or niche in the market, a place where there is significant pain for potential customers. Then, we show how to research and validate that gap. We teach users how to construct useful and effective surveys and then demonstrate the importance of collecting feedback. Finally, we instruct our users on what an elevator pitch does and how to make one. The kicker – we do all of this through games, so that the players are entertained throughout the process. Users, whether individually or in a group like a class or a business camp, create a profile account on our website and then can play the game our team is programming, or what we call a “venture,” for free. As they complete different sections of the venture, which contains a pre-written storyline, the website actually creates and outputs documents containing the results of the games they've finished – a summary of market research, full surveys, and even a written elevator pitch. These are all the elements that a budding entrepreneur would need for their own ideas to then go out and secure funding for marketing, investment capitol, and other essential resources. In addition, these games are all scored, leading to a result that reflects both luck (representing random market factors) and skill – so the students can compete against others in their class or camp groups.

Once a user has completed a venture, he or she can always come back and look at what they've accomplished or even play again and create a new venture. However, Gateway is not meant to just teach about the process but also to provide the resources needed to go forward with users' unique ideas. Thus, users can pay a small fee to go premium – a service that provides a central dashboard with all the resources needed to actually become a small business. Using the expertise gathered by ASU College of Technology and Innovation's Dr. Aram Chavez's *From Aha!! To Exit: Ten Steps to Startup*, Gateway becomes a springboard to launch students' ideas to the next level. From task management services to connections to crowd funding, Gateway can become the center from which all entrepreneurial activities emanate. We will help with business plans, marketing, legal, intellectual property, capital structure, operations, and even unto an exit strategy. Gateway premium users have a helping hand throughout the process, all while enjoying a beautiful and intuitive interface combined with the assurance of data user accessibility and security.

Gateway will be entering the market place at a time rife with interest from young adults in starting their own businesses. According to the Junior Achievement's Teens and Entrepreneurship Survey, out of 1,000 teens aged 12-17 asked in August of 2010, 51% said that they would like to own their own business someday (+/- 3.2% margin of error). However, there is also a lot of trepidation regarding entrepreneurship: when asked what would discourage them from starting their own business, 56% cited insufficient funding, 39% too much risk, 35% fear of failure, 27% no networks/contacts, and 18% insufficient education or skills. These statistics prove that although the desire is there, so is fear. Students are not confident in their abilities to take their ideas and make a business around them. That means that a service like Gateway is perfectly designed to allow users to feel comfortable beginning on the journey to entrepreneurship because they finally will have the necessary resources to do so.

In order to be an effective, free, entertaining, and educational tool, Gateway needs to provide an attractive and navigable interface and fun yet informational games. The website needs to be hosted and secure. To move to phase two of our service, which is premium service, Gateway needs to have relevant and even game-changing information as well as effective connections to important resources. In other words, the website needs a lot of early-stage programming and a moderate level of later-stage maintenance and upkeep.

**Marketing Strategy**

Write a brief paragraph about your primary customers. In other words, who will benefit from and/or pay for yoursolution?

Write a brief paragraph about how many people have this problem. In other words, what is the approximatetotal market size and how did you figure it out?

Write a brief paragraph about who else is solving this basic problem. In other words, who are your currentcompetitors? If you don’t currently have direct competitors, please describe how your customers currentlyoperate within the status quo; or describe substitute products or services that your customers may currentlyuse.

Write a brief paragraph about who else could solve this problem. In other words, who are your potential

competitors? Which companies or organizations could hypothetically do what you’re proposing with the samelevel of success or better than you could?

Write a brief paragraph about how you will beat your competitors. What makes your company and solutionbetter than your current or future competitors? In other words, what is your ‘secret sauce’ or intellectualproperty that will enable you to enter your target market and sustainably capture and control market share?

Consider inserting a competitive analysis chart to briefly summarize how your product or service’s features and benefits stack up against other available options.

Write a brief paragraph about how you will let your target market (potential customers) know about yourinnovative product or service. In other words, how might your customers like to learn about your product orservice?

Write a brief paragraph about how your customers will buy your product or service and how will you deliverwhat they buy. Write a brief paragraph about your key partners and/or key suppliers. What will you acquire from them? What types of key activities will they perform?

**Management Team**

Write a brief paragraph about who is on your founding team. Has the team made an effort to select members from different disciplines/colleges/majors? Briefly explain how your team formed.

Write a brief paragraph about why each member of the founding team is committed and able to help the

company launch, grow, and create value.

If you are missing a key member of your founding team, please write a brief paragraph about how you plan to recruit and retain this person, or people. In other words, you shouldn’t start an auto repair business without a mechanic on the founding team. Likewise, you shouldn’t start a web-based business without a programmer on the team. You should not outsource tasks that are essential to the success of your venture.

Write a brief paragraph about who is currently mentoring your company. Please provide names and brief biographies of faculty members, industry experts, or startup mentors who are helping to advance your venture.

Why is the support of these specific mentors vital to the founding team’s success? If you are missing a key mentor or advisory board member, please explain how you plan to recruit and retain this person, or people.

Write a brief paragraph about entrepreneurial training your founding team has pursued in advance of

submitting an Edson proposal. In other words, have any team members enrolled in ASU entrepreneurship courses or startup training sessions at SkySong or elsewhere?

**Budget**

Write a brief paragraph about several milestones (e.g., build a prototype, launch a beta site, buy inventory, launch a marketing campaign, make sales, hire employees, etc.) that your venture aims to achieve during the Edson award year (July 1 – June 30).

Write a brief paragraph about the specific total amount of money that you’ll need to achieve each of the

aforementioned milestones. You might consider including a simple list-style budget detailing what exactly you plan to purchase with these funds and when.

Write a brief paragraph about any previous financial support or investment that you venture has received to-date. If applicable, how much money have you received, from whom, and for what purpose?

**Sustainability and Impact**

Write a brief paragraph about how you plan to generate revenue or sustain your venture beyond the Edson award year. This applies to non-profit or social enterprises too.

Write a brief paragraph about the value (e.g., product, service, solution, etc.) for which your customers are willing to pay. How often will they pay? How much will they pay?

Write a brief paragraph about how your venture will make an economic impact. In other words, how will the venture generate value for its stakeholders, revenue, jobs, or other financial returns?

Write a brief paragraph about how your venture will make a social impact. In other words, how will the venture address challenges within communities, the environment, healthcare, or other societal arenas?