Building an Entrepreneurial Postdoc Association: Bridging the Gap Between Academia & Industry

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Introduction

• AIMS (Association of Industry-Minded Stanford Professionals) - Postdoc Link to Entrepreneurship & Industry

• Started by three postdoctoral fellows in summer of 2010

• Expanded into leadership team of a dozen postdocs with regular seminars and networking events
Outline

• Introduction
  • Needs
• Start-up process
• Events
• Discussion and wrap-up
Why start an Entrepreneurship/Industry Focused Group?

- Academic jobs are limited, but postdocs aren’t typically trained to succeed outside academia.

- After years of lab work and proving yourself as an academic, you become a group leader or PI.

- Entrepreneurship is fun and meritocratic! You get out what you put into it.

- Industry is not the “dark side.” In fact, many professors have companies.
Gap analysis

NEEDS

USERS
Needs vs Users

Academia

Industry

Entrepreneurship

Undergrads

Grad Students

POSTDOCS

Professionals

Undergrad Entrepreneur Societies

Career Fairs & Career Dev Center

Graduate Skill Building Workshops

Professional Societies

Continuing Education Courses

Professional Entrepreneur Societies

Opportunity
Needs vs Users

Academia

Industry

Entrepreneurship

Career Fairs & Career Dev Center
Undergrad Entrepreneur Societies
Graduate Skill Building Workshops
Professional Societies
Continuing Education Courses
Professional Entrepreneur Societies

AIMS

Undergrads
Grad Students
POSTDOCS
Professionals
- Starting an organization is like starting a company.

- Defining the need for your user/customer is key.

- Fail Fast, Fail Cheap (or free!)

- Success through action and iteration, not excessive planning

- Forming a ‘Needs Statement’
Initial Questions:

**Audience:** Big or Small? Industry or Entrepreneurship?

**Niche:** Topic based? Postdoc Based? Opportunity based?

**Logistics:** Network vs Live Seminars & Scale

**Team:** What/who do you need to get the job done.
Busy Stanford Postdocs with an interest in Industrial/Entrepreneurial Careers NEED an organization which provides resources to help them pursue their goals.
Vision should match needs/wants of the founding group and the desired users.

**AIMS:**
- Improve the way Postdocs are perceived
- Increase access to opportunities for Postdocs
- Provide Mentorship to Postdocs, Build Skills & Network
The Start-up Process

• How do you get started?
  – People
  – Resources

• Already around you!
People

• Networking

  – Where do you usually meet postdocs?
  – Organizations, mixer event, or.. already in your lab!
  – Sharing visions, thoughts on needs
  – Passion for change
  – Diverse background / strengths
  – Access to resources
  – Start small...
Experiment

• Activities
  – Seminars
  – Mixers

• Start with small experiments
  – Get the word out, Create buzz
  – Importance of feedback (how?)
  – Records (is it useful for postdocs?)
Building an organization

• Gaining support
  – Peers
  – External groups / organizations
  – Recognition in community

• Building a team
  – Shared vision and mission
  – Build on skills

• Start-up mindset
  – Boot-strap
  – Experiment
  – Adapt
Events

Have fun, and be creative!
Top 10 Most Popular Topics on the Web

- Health: 14%
- Games: 13%
- Auto & Moto: 10%
- IT & Tech: 9%
- Sports: 8%
- Home & Recreation: 8%
- Music: 4%
- Cinema: 3%
- Love & Family: 3%
- Women: 3%

Date: October 2010
Methodology: based on the analysis of 3 months of data (208,530,588 conversations) in 17 countries

[CC]
What AIMS is doing

• "Re-Inventing Yourself: from Academia to Industry"
• "Are YOU an Entrepreneur?“
• "From Exploration to Invention to Innovation: A journey from science to industry“
• "A fireside chat on start-ups“
• "Bridging Science and Business“
• "Thinking Outside the Box“
• "Demystifying Venture Capital“
• ...
Speakers
What AIMS is doing

• It is possible!

Konstantin Guericke, Co-Founder of LinkedIn: Relationships Matter

Event Date: Thursday, May 12, 2011, 6:00-7:30pm
Flyer here

Steve Fodor PhD, Founder of Affymetrix
"From Science to Industry: The story of the microarray"

Event Date: Wednesday, April 27, 2011, 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm
Location: TBA
Support
Some Associations

AIMS

No food will be provided.
Variety of Events
What AIMS is doing

- Seminars
- BBLs (Brown bag lunches)
- Workshops
Discussion

Q&A?

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