Harvard Business School Online

Launching Tech Ventures

Syllabus

Launching Tech Ventures examines management challenges in early-stage startups and the range of experiments that are conducted during the nascent, company creation stage. This online course takes the perspective that a startup is an experimentation machine and that those experiments should cover all facets of the startup's business model.

Modules		Leaders Interviewed	Takeaways	Key Exercises
Module 1	**Designing the Tech Startup Business Model**	• Daniel Choi, Former Head of Product & Co-Founder, Plastiq • Zach Sims, CEO & Co-Founder, Codecademy	• Identify the different elements of startup business models and understand how to design them • Understand the importance of alignment between the different components of a startup business model.	• Perform a business model quality assessment. • Characterize the different types of business models that exist in Startupland
Module 2	**Experiments to Achieve Product-Market Fit**	• Dave Salvant, President & Co-Founder and Songe LaRon, CEO & Co-Founder, Squire • Paris Wallace, Former CEO & Co-Founder Ovia Health	• Understand the search and discovery phase of tech startup development that occurs before achieving product-market fit (PMF) • Assess different go-to-market (GTM) strategies and determine which is best for your venture	• Practice the key steps of the lean startup methodology to design experiments and interpret your results. • Identify and calculate the key metrics for determining if you have achieved product-market fit
Module 3	**Venture Capital and Startup Financing**	• Lindsay Kaplan, Chief Brand Officer & Co-Founder, Chief • Anna Palmer, General Partner, Flybridge Capital & Co-Founder, XFactor Ventures • Daniel Cohen, General Partner, Viola Ventures	• Understand how VC firms specialize by sector, stage, and size • Articulate the unique value of VC funding and understand how to approach a VC and get them interested in your venture. • Describe each stage of a typical fundraising process and how funds are used to run experiments and align your business model. • Negotiate and structure a VC investment	• Identify the specific financing patterns of venture capital-backed startups and determine whether VC funding is right for your startup • Assess the current strength of your network and brainstorm ways to get connected to a VC. • Quiz yourself on the key steps of the financing process and the milestones you should achieve at each step. • Practice interpreting the provisions on a term sheet.
Module 4	**Scaling Post Product-Market Fit**	• Ravish Naresh, CEO & Founder, Khatabook • Sarah Tavel, General Partner, Benchmark	• Articulate how the competitive context can influence early startup decisions • Determine when to apply a product-led growth strategy and understand how to use it to drive customer acquisition. • Assess the tradeoffs between scaling aggressively versus incrementally	• Describe the marketing funnel and how user engagement differs at each level of the funnel • Identify startup playbooks and apply them appropriately under different scenarios and market conditions
Module 5	**Ecosystem and Ethics**	• James Norman, General Partner, Black Ops Ventures • Bailey Richardson, Former Community Team Member, Instagram • Dave Salvant, President & Co-Founder and Songe LaRon, CEO & Co-Founder, Squire • Anna Palmer, General Partner, Flybridge Capital & Co-Founder, XFactor Ventures	• Understand the unconscious and systemic biases in the startup ecosystem and assess a business model's impact on society • Assess the impact of a startup business model on the environment and society, avoiding mistakes that might lead to negative impacts and unintended consequences	• Classify VC questions as either promotion or prevention oriented and craft responses to minimize the effect of gender biases. • Create an impact statement summarizing how you hope to impact the startup ecosystem.

Learning requirements: In order to earn a Certificate of Completion, participants must thoughtfully complete Modules 1-5 and exercises therein by stated deadlines.

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