

# ABORIGINAL STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP JOURNEY

CAREER OPTION

A collaboration of











## Welcome to our Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Round Table Guests



Alice Beaudoin

Hi There! I'm Alice and I love taking photos. Today I am truly happy with my chosen profession. It's so gratifying to see the joy on new parents' faces when they receive their newborn's first photographs, or when you catch the twinkle in a young child's eyes, or when newlyweds embrace. I love capturing those special moments.

There are many areas of photography that interest me. From wonderful newborns, cute kids & maternity, weddings, all the way to food and boudoir photography, I just can't say no.



David Acco

I'm the president and owner of Acosys consulting services Inc. We are an Aboriginal company specializing in IT, HR and Aboriginal policy consulting. In addition to developing my entrepreneurial skills, I've also developed skills in business analysis, systems analysis, user acceptance testing, business plans, strategic planning, business development and economic development for the Aboriginal community. Over the years I have developed an extensive network in both the Aboriginal community and in industry which I leverage for project and stakeholder success.



Marie-Cecile Nottaway

I am of Algonquin ancestry, born in Rapid Lake, but raised in the Parc de la Verendrye, QC. I come from a long line of strong Anishinabe First Nation women, who all have contributed to the proud and hard working person I am today.

I called my business WAWATAY CATERING in honor of my ancestors, as it is believed that the northern lights are the colors of the spirits of our ancestors who continue to guide us from the spirit world.

After receiving my diploma in Chef Training and Culinary Management in 2005, I set my family roots in Kitigan Zibi Algonquin First Nation.

## What do these people have in common?

What do these people have in common? They are...

- Aboriginal,
- Successful entrepreneurs,
- Educated, and
- Two are Algonquin College Alumni



## **ICN Delivers**

## **Practical content to aspiring Aboriginal** entrepreneurs and small business owners.

With the help of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and subject area experts, the Idea Connector Network has delivered more than 300 interviews and panel discussions on topics associated with entrepreneurship and economic growth.

Whether you are seeking to learn more about starting a company, funding it, getting your marketing going, or dealing with human resources, you will likely find a few interviews on the subject.

You may subscribe to the Idea Connector. It's free and content is accessible at no cost. If you subscribe, we'll send you our newsletter (two editions a week) enabling you to keep up to date with new content as it is published.

ICN also produces business articles, an e-zine (Aboriginal Women's Economic Quarterly starting March 24th, and a new radio talk show, Communities' Success Radio.

You may ask questions or share your thoughts on any and all content published.

Our aim is to help aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs, small business owners and community Economic Development Officers to build the essential advantage they need to solve challenges and opportunities associated with entrepreneurship and to deliver lasting results.

Imagine what you are capable of.













## ABORIGINAL STUDENT **ENTREPRENEURSHIP JOURNEY**

This e-book is published thanks to a collaboration between Algonquin College and the Idea Connector Network (ICN)

## www.ldeaConnector.net

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Algonquin College

Publisher: Algonquin College and the Idea Connector Network

Series: Winter 2015

# THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP JOURNEY

**START** HERE

WHO IS HE?

He started his company in 2011 using award money won for his entrepreneurship project while in university and in 2015 he was the recipient of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur Award.

Almost anyone can become an entrepreneur because most successful entrepreneurs have learned to do what they do, and so can you. The attractions of entrepreneurship are obvious independence, flexibility, passion, and pride of starting your own business sound great. However, do you have what it takes?

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR YOU?** 

# **FEAR OF FAILING**

We all know that life is full of barriers waiting to be broken down. Our inactions are often the consequences of our inner fears. We're afraid, so we don't take action because it protects us from our greatest fears. In fact we let our fears decide our future.



Alice Beaudoin

**ALGONQUIN ALUMNI SUCCESS STORIES** 



Marie-Cecile Nottaway

Achieving success as an entrepreneur is like driving a car from one end of the country to another - you don't drive blindly, you build a plan which gives you the needed confidence to achieve your objective. Then you get to work, drive down the road and deal with the many barriers along the way. So why not apply the same rules to becoming a successful entrepreneur?

**WHICH STEPS ARE YOU AT TODAY?** 

I have a business idea that I'd like to get off the ground but have no previous experience in business. Where should I go for initial advice on planning and developing my idea?

> **PREPARE** TO LAUNCH



# Transforming hopes and dreams into skills and knowledge, leading to lifelong career success.

Entrepreneurship is an important theme as a career alternative to traditional jobs, which are rapidly disappearing. Our mission at Algonquin College is to equip students with the skills necessary for success tomorrow's economy. Selfreliance, and the ability to identify evolving problems and develop and implement innovative solutions to solve them, is a critical skill in this regard.

Through entrepreneurship and innovation, we are looking to mobilize Algonquin College's people and physical resources to - enrich student learning inside and outside the classroom; improve student entrepreneurial mindsets, attitudes and skills; enhance faculty and staff entrepreneurial skills, and support social and economic growth in the community through the start-up and growth of Youth-Led Enterprises.

Our goal is to bring students together with faculty, staff and community partners to EXPOSE them to, ENGAGE them in and ENABLE them to practice, entrepreneurship.

These are just a few of the initiatives that are being worked on:

- Start-Up Weekend a 54-hour event where developers, designers, marketers, product managers and start-up enthusiasts come together to share ideas, form teams, build products and launch start-ups
- SUMMIT a 3 month intensive program that will offer youth entrepreneurs guidance from veteran entrepreneurs, a hands-on experience developing their business plan, basic funding to get moving and a network for learning and support
- Mentorship Seasoned entrepreneurs, faculty, and staff will provide coaching and mentorship to YLE. The EIR will provide initial advice and guidance to students' interested in starting their own companies. The EIR will also provide advice and refer students to other services and programs
- Marketplace This service will provide Youth Led Entrepreneurs (YLES) an opportunity to post requirements they have to build their YLE (e.g. web design, product design and 3-D printing, coding) and other youth entrepreneurs to post the services they can provide to YLE5 (e.g. technical writing, user experience
- Events Campus-wide events hosted at the College (e.g. Global Entrepreneurship Week, World Business Forum, L-Spark Book Launch). In addition, there will be seminars, workshops and other events to engage smaller audiences.

**CLICK HERE for our Entrepreneurial Initiatives Poster** 



## **SUMMIT SUMMER INTENSIVE** May 5th - July 29th

Are you developing a business and need guidance, financial support and a hands-on environment to take your idea to fruition.

This three month summer intensive will offer 20 student entrepreneurs a hands-on experience developing your business plan, guidance from veteran entrepreneurs, a network for learning. support and \$5000 to get you moving.

#### **CLICK HERE** for details

www.algonquincollege.com/appliedresearch/ entrepreneurship



## **BOOK LAUNCH, CHAT AND PITCH SESSION** March 25th

Join us for a fireside chat. Q&A and pitch session with investor and entrepreneur Brad Feld and business speaker, author and host of The Naked Entrepreneur, Dr. Sean Wise.

They have collaborated with Ottawa-based Incubator/ Accelerator L-SPARK to hear pitches from Algonquin College and Queens University entrepreneurs.

A panel of judges will select a winning startup, from the 5-city tour, who will receive a package including a \$25,000 investment in their business.

## **SEE MORE AT:**

www.algonquincollege.com/business/ entrepreneurship-events/#sthash.w7NJCOfS.dpuf



## **GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK** November 16th - 22nd

During one week each November, GEW inspires people everywhere through local, national and global activities designed to help them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators. These activities, from large-scale competitions and events to intimate networking gatherings, connect participants to potential collaborators, mentors and even investors-introducing them to new possibilities and exciting opportunities

#### LEARN MORE AT:

ca.gew.co/about#sthash.kkGyviiX.dpuf

#### QUIZ: Who is he?



Kendal Netmaker

If your answer is Kendal Netmaker give yourself an "A".

Kendal is the founder and CEO of Neechie Gear, a lifestyle apparel brand. Kendal has successfully grown his business from a university project into a national brand name. Kendal is the 2015 recipient of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) National Youth Aboriginal Entrepreneur Award.

Kendal's story is one that moves from hardship to transformation to opportunity. Growing up, life was never easy. He and his three sisters were raised by his mother. His father left when Kendal was five. They moved around a lot, often staying in emergency shelters for single moms. Eventually, they came home to his mother's reserve, Sweet Grass First Nation, located west of Battleford, Saskatchewan. The family moved in with Netmaker's now deceased kokum.

His life was transformed while at Cutknife Elementary where he met fellow student Johann Strumpher in grade five. Strumpher's father was a doctor who brought the family to Canada from South Africa. "This kid totally changed my life" says Kendal. The two loved playing soccer. Strumpher wanted to know why Netmaker wasn't playing on an organized team. Netmaker told him his only transportation was the bus. He came from a low-income family and they couldn't afford recreational sports fees. Strumpher's parents paid his fees and picked him up.

Fast forward, Kendal set out to become a teacher. In the fourth year of his teacher's program he had an idea to create a clothing line - one that would give back to the community.

With the help of Ayten Archer, an established business mentor in the community, Kendal made a business plan. He entered two business plan competitions, taking home first place in the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge and third place in the i3 Idea Challenge. His prize money of \$16,000 was used as start-up cash for Neechie Gear. He was then awarded Saskatoon's Finest Entrepreneur by the city's Centre Mall. Part of the prize was a mall cart in which to sell his clothing. The temporary shop went so well that mall managers offered him a one-year lease in a storefront. Netmaker is guick to say that his success would not have been possible without help from others.

Kendal credits his mentor Ayten Archer for opening up his life. "Without her mentorship, I wouldn't have been so successful," says Kendal. "We always had to struggle for everything. If I wanted brand name clothes I had to save up my money. I'm putting all those skills to use now with the businesses. I had to scramble for every bit of cash I had." Learn more about Kendal, his story and his business by visiting www.neechiegear.com/pages/the-story

## Is Entrepreneurship right for you?

Entrepreneurship does have its benefits but like all good things in life it also exerts a toll. There is something to be said for being one's own boss and not be bossed around by people who sometime could benefit from honing their people skills. For you to answer if entrepreneurship is right for you, go and talk with entrepreneurs and ask questions. In the meantime look for answers to questions like...

- How are hard am I willing to work? Working long hours including nights and week-ends is often the entrepreneur's reality. Workload often infringes on your personal time, your family time, and it shortens your vacation
- Am I a self-starter? Having no boss to report to means that you set the rules, but it also requires much selfdiscipline. You need to answer to clients, be responsible towards your employees, generate revenue, manage cash flow, and much more.
- Can I organize myself? When your company is new you'll have no organizational structure and many things will sem unfamiliar. If you are not careful, the lack of structure can turn into confusion. Clients will still want the product or service on time, on budget and of the standard promised regardless of any internal turmoil you may be experiencing.
- Can I deal with an unpredictable income and potential for loss?

It's not uncommon to hear entrepreneurs say they and their family had to limit themselves to a pasta diet for 6 or 12 months before enough revenue was generated to allow the entrepreneur a small income. Also be prepared to pay for your mistakes along the way - for entrepreneurs the expression "the buck stops here!" is real - costly mistakes and loss of income often come out the entrepreneur's pocket.

Can I deal with the associated stress? As an entrepreneur, your reputation, your income, your business-family balance, your need to succeed, the competition, clients' need for top-grade service, suppliers issues, and more can all be sources of intense pressure, particularly when some of these realities converge into hurdles and roadblocks. You'll need have a 'thick skin' and to learn stress management skills. It also very important to have your spouse or family's morale support, as without it, it's likely to be the cause of additional pressure. When combined with your business hurdles the stress can become unbearable.

- Am I flexible?
  - Being flexible will make you more responsive to change. The shifting dynamics of your business environment will mean that you need to adapt and respond to change quickly. Resistance can lead to undue stress. Recognizing and embracing flexibility will help you adapt to difficult situations more easily. Also don't forget, you need to concede from the start that (most of the time) the customer is always right.
- Can I deal with administrative responsibilities? To be your own boss does not make administrative work disappear. For example, there is clerical work to be done, billing, invoices, orders, suppliers, sales tax reporting, etc.. These tasks can be daunting, and they often end up on your to do list after a long day or week of work.
- How are my marketing skills? Canadian Entrepreneur, Philanthropist & former Dragon's Den co-host Brett Wilson tells aspiring entrepreneurs that one of the top skills to develop is marketing. In Wilson's view, marketing is what helps generate ideas and produce a differentiator for your company. For this serial entrepreneur marketing is where it starts.
- Am I willing to be responsible and accountable?

As a small business owner, you're "it". You are responsible for everything the company is, does and should do. There is no place to hide, your reputation is the 'trust' given to your company by clients, bankers and everyone who provides life support to your company. You cannot afford to let small issues simmer in the marketplace. If you do, the festering can become your undoing.

If you fail in your venture are you tough enough to start over?

Very successful entrepreneurs have often had substantial failures before achieving a high degree of success. They had the strength of character to learn from their mistakes, to start over and to not repeat the same mistakes.

#### FEAR OF FAILING

## Are you letting constraints be road blocks to your future as a successful **Entrepreneur? Why?**



We all know that life is full of barriers waiting to be broken down. Our inactions are often the consequences of our inner fears. We're afraid, so we don't take action because it protects us from our greatest fears. In fact, we let our fears decide our future. Let's think about this for a minute.

If any of us with a valid driver's license, a map and car was asked to drive from our home community to another community located at the opposite end of Canada, we would likely decide 'yes, I can do this'. Why? Because we know that if we get ourselves a map, select our roads, then drive, and perhaps with a minimum of sleep and many coffee stops along the way, we'll get there. We know that over the distance we are likely to encounter a few barriers and we'll need to make a few course corrections because of flooded roads or construction, but days later we will reach our destination and celebrate our success and likely catch a few ZZZs.

Why is it that in some circumstances we let our fears control our destiny, when in others we don't? Perhaps in one circumstance we procrastinate and make fool ourselves into believing that we are thinking this great idea through, while in the other we get a map, prepare a solid plan and take action.

Achieving success as an entrepreneur is like driving a car from one end of the country to another, you don't drive blindly, you build a plan which gives you the confidence to achieve your objective, and you then get to work, drive down the road and deal with the many barriers along the way. So why not apply the same rules to becoming a successful entrepreneur?

## 10 steps for Achieving Success as an Entrepreneur

Here are a few steps to ponder:

**Switch mind set** 

Visualize 'you' as a successful entrepreneur. Dare to imagine what success would mean to you, to your family and to your community. Perhaps the thought crossed your mind that successful people are naturally smarter but when asked they'll generally respond that their success has come in part because of their learned behaviour. Also, stay away from negative people, those that tend to criticize your ideas or your ambitions and those that will tell you that yours is a stupid idea. They're likely hiding behind their own fears. READ MORE

Find yourself a mentor

Surround yourself with positive people with whom you can share a few thoughts and ask questions, e.g. the grocery store owner, the catering business owner or what have you. Ask the person to be your mentor.

Come up with an idea

You may have one or two ideas already - pick the one that fits your passions, your goals, strengths, resources and tolerance for risk. It's wise to stay within an area where you have some expertise. But keep in mind that your idea needs to be tested - all you have for now is an assumption that clients will want to buy your offering.

Create a plan and test it

You don't need a detailed plan at this stage, but you do need to make sure that a market exists for your idea. First, create a series of assumptions about your product, your potential clients, your suppliers, and the manufacturing of the product. Then visit potential clients and suppliers and validate your assumptions. Also test elements including your product features, pricing, branding, and customer experience. **VIDEO LINK** 

Align your assumptions

Adjust those assumptions as you move forward, be focussed and don't procrastinate, because if you do have a good idea - a product that customers are willing to buy and suppliers are willing to support - you'll need to move fast. If YOU don't drive your new-found opportunity to success, someone else will run with the idea and make it a success.

**Sell now to clients** 

If you have found early adopters of your product, build that basic product as quickly and inexpensively as you can. Keep it simple, offer the minimum features needed to make it sell and to start bringing in cash.

Make adjustments

Now that you've learned what aspects of your products and marketing works and what doesn't, fix it what needs to be fixed. If you have made a few sales it's because you have done a few things right. Tweak, adjust and do what's needed, but start loving those clients by providing them with great service. You'll want them to see you as a true partner in helping them solve their clients problems. **VIDEO LINK** 

Get ready to grow

Now the time has come for you to write a detailed business plan, update your product, your team, your marketing and your financial strategies. While you're at it also update your technology, write processes and bring in an expert or two to help you deal with areas where your skill set might need reinforcement.

Step on the pedal

With a market-tested plan and resources in place it's now time to step on the accelerator. Make sure your team members are on the same page as you - they must understand where you are heading and what their roles and their objectives are. There is no free lunch! Everyone needs to achieve clearly identified goals. Be ready to call on coaching expertise when needed and reasonably support the team members who need it.

Get ready to celebrate your success

Reward yourself for your hard work and success. It doesn't have to be a big spend - do something special with your family, give back to the community, volunteer to speak at a local school about success and entrepreneurship, become a mentor to a new entrepreneur that has the passion, and let **Idea Connector** know about your success. We also want to celebrate with you.

#### Where do I Start?

You have a business idea that you'd like to get off the ground, but you have no business experience and you're asking yourself "Where do I start?" Since you are now in school it would be worth your while to look into the entrepreneurship courses available, and as a minimum you should take some marketing, accounting/finance and perhaps a couple management courses. You may also want to gain some insight by working for a small company in their administrative or marketing area.

The success of a business has more to do with whether you are able to execute the strategy and goals. Luck and "the big idea" are factors, but they are not nearly as important as the execution itself. What you really need is advice and guidance from someone who has already been a successful entrepreneur and it would be great if your mentor had experience in bringing to market an idea similar to yours. Initially, you at least need a mentor who will provide you with guidance through your start-up phase. As you grow you'll probably want a new mentor; likely a seasoned veteran in your industry.

In your pre-start-up phase you'll want to gain an understanding of whether your idea is worth pursuing and of your ability to execute the idea. Before jumping into the development of a business plan you would be wise to familiarize yourself with the 'Lean Start-up' concept and then follow-through with the preparation of assumptions for each area of your business (i.e. product, manufacturing, marketing, suppliers, human resources, etc.) and then go out to potential customers, suppliers, etc. and test them. You'll likely find the experience enjoyable and worthwhile and in the process you may find a client or two willing to work with you from the very start.

We would also suggest that you make use of the Aboriginal entrepreneurship resource www.ldeaConnector.net, where you'll find a vast collection of video interviews and panel discussions with Aboriginal Entrepreneurs and subject experts on their experience in dealing with the challenges and opportunities facing entrepreneurs.





ALGONQUIN Transforming hopes and dreams into skills and knowledge, leading to lifelong career success.

#### Summit

One-month intensive program where selected youth build their start-up company, followed by a three-month program where they develop their product, process or service towards a market-ready state.

#### Marketplace

A service that provides young entrepreneurs the opportunity to post requirements they have to build their enterprise and other youth entrepreneurs to post the services they can provide.

## **Mentorship**

Seasoned entrepreneurs, faculty, and staff will provide coaching and mentorship to youth led enterprises.

## **Applied Research &** Innovation

ARI brings together Algonquin College's talented professors and students with Ottawa's business, industry, and community organizations to col<mark>laborate on applied</mark> research projects that provide practical solutions to every day issues and create new and innovative products and services.

#### though resources available at the college, events and

Algonquin College Student

**Entrepreneurship Club (SEC)** 

This club is run by students for

exposing them to the joys and

students and focuses on

trials of entrepreneurship

entrepreneurial activities.

**College Academic Programs** Over 100 courses on entrepreneurship, innovation and running a business are offered in various Schools and Faculties.

# **Entrepreneurship** at Algonquin College

#### **Entrepreneurship**

Online resources and workshops designed to help youth move from zero to medium knowledge of entrepreneurship and faculty, staff and mentors prepare to encourage and support youth entrepreneurs.

## Faculty Entrepreneurship **Ambassadors**

**Executive-**in-Residence

provides 1-to-1 mentoring to

student entrepreneurs and

assists in leadership of the

at Algonquin.

entrepreneurship ecosystem

The EIR is a seasoned

business executive who

Student and faculty ambassadors advocating entrepreneurship within their school, faculty or program.

#### **Events**

Campus-wide events, seminars and workshops where youth can learn from experts in the field and/or showcase their products. processes or services.

## Algonquin Students **Association**

The SA mission is to create an environment that inspires a passion for student success - including entrepreneurship.

## **Entrepreneurship Working Group**

The Entrepreneurship Working Group is a group of Student Association and College stakeholders that assist in building visibility of and capability for entrepreneurship at Algonquin College.

#### Ideation

An intensive weekend event where youth identify market problems and then collaborate to determine their root causes. A second weekend develops potential solutions.

#### **Product Development**

Through Applied Research & Innovation, students work with start-ups by collaborating on technical and business development activities or participating in projects.

Expose, Engage, Enable