Introduction
Welcome to the Customer Discovery Research program for the 2015 FLoW competition! Our educational program is designed to help you learn about business models and validate your ideas in the marketplace. Our goals are:

IN-LA is funded in part by the National Science Foundation I-Corps™ Program under award number 1444080.
1. Give participants an experiential learning opportunity to help determine the commercial readiness of their technologies.
2. Enable participants to develop a clear go/no go decision regarding commercial viability of the effort.
3. Develop a transition plan to move the technology to market.

**National Science Foundation I-Corps Program**

This course is based on the successful National Science Foundation Innovation Corps (“I-Corps”) methodology of linking university engineering with the marketplace. We will provide real-world, hands-on learning experience to successfully transfer knowledge into products and processes that benefit society. You will engage with industry and learn from the marketplace.

This course will not teach how to write a research grant or a business plan. It is not an exercise on your laboratory skill set or your research capabilities. The end result is not a paper to be published.

In this program, you will learn how to conduct, gather, and analyze customer discovery interviews, and you must interview at least 20 potential customers. You will also learn how to modify and test business model hypotheses in response to interviews. If you successfully complete this, you will have the opportunity to attend an Angel Summit at USC in May, 2015.

**Teams that successfully complete this program and satisfy all requirements may qualify to apply for NSF I-Corps Team grants of $50,000. We will provide more information at the end of this course.**

You should aim to complete all deliverables to compete successfully in the FLoW finals.

**Admission and Participation in the Class**

Only select teams will be invited to join the FLoW CaDRE session held in the spring of 2015; those teams will be eligible to apply for the FLoW “Ready to Commercialize” track. **You will need to email your interest in participating by March 16, 2015 in order to be considered for admission. The first class takes place after FLoW submissions close, March 24, 2015.** Teams that are not invited to participate in this cohort will have another chance in the fall of 2015. Those teams may re-apply in spring 2016 and do not need to complete the class again.

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You may not participate in the class if you do not submit all presentations to Dropbox (via LaunchPad Central) by 5 pm the day before the class begins.

You must interview 3 potential customers or strategic partners/stakeholders as part of your submitted application.

**Flipped Classroom**
This course will be conducted completely online and utilizes a “flipped classroom” model focused on your learning rather than our lectures. You are expected to read the lecture material in advance and use it to develop the slide deck due for each session.

If you have questions, you may sign up for Office Hours with the teaching team. Every team must have at least one Office Hours session prior to the final session.

**LaunchPad Central Software**
You will be required to use LaunchPad Central to:
- Access useful resources
- Log your Customer Discovery interviews
- Show your business model canvas

**Class Philosophy**
The startup culture is different from the university culture most of you are familiar with. Startups communicate much differently than inside a university and lab. The class culture can feel brusque and impersonal, but it is intentionally oriented to simulate the time- and cash-constrained environments in which startups operate. We have limited time and we push, challenge, and question you in the hope you will quickly learn. We will be direct, open, and tough – just like the real world. Please recognize that these comments aren’t personal, but part of the process.

We also expect you to question us, challenge our point of view if you disagree, and engage in a real dialogue with the instructors. This approach may seem harsh or abrupt, but it will teach you to challenge yourselves quickly and objectively, and to appreciate that as entrepreneurs, you need to learn and evolve faster than you ever imagined possible.

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**Class Process**
Each week, you will be assigned to a Webex room and group (i.e., Webex room 1, group 2). Review the Session Plan for the start time of your group.

Each group consists of four teams. Each team will give its presentation to the instructor and the other three teams, and then the instructor will give general feedback and facilitate an open discussion.

**Suggested Texts**
*The Startup Owner’s Manual*, Steve Blank and Bob Dorf
*Business Model Generation*, Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur

**Additional Resource Videos**

Getting started
- Pre-Planning Customer Discovery, parts 1, 2, and 3
- Customer Discovery Interviews, parts 1 and 2

Outside the Building
- Death by Demo 1
- Death by Demo 2
- Assuming You Know
- Death by PowerPoint
- Understanding the Problem
- Customers Lie
- The Distracted Customer

Back in the Building
- Engaging the Customer
- Customer Empathy
- The User, the Buyer & the Saboteur
- Multi-Person Interview
- B-to-B to C
- Existing vs. New Markets
- Public Interviews

Extracting Insight from the Data
- Getting the MVP Right
- Pay Attention to Outliers
- The “Other 85%”

**Deliverables**
1. Regular presentations on your business model. Your slide decks **should not contain any proprietary information**. They should focus on your business model and customer discovery.
2. Customer interviews for each session; twenty (20) total (specific goals are specified at each session).
3. A record of your customer discovery progress using LaunchPad Central to capture the narrative, contact information, learning and insight.

You must satisfactorily present all deliverables on time to continue in the competition.

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Application

**Application required reading**

- Watch LaunchPad Central training video [LINK](#)
- Review Lecture 1 and 2 documents provided via Dropbox
- Sign into LaunchPad Central and watch:
  - Lecture 1 – Business Model/Customer Development
    [https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series](https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series)
  - Lecture 2 – Value Proposition
    [https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series](https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series)

**Suggested reading**

- *Business Model Generation*, pages 14-51
- Giff Constable, “12 Tips for Early Customer Development Interviews”
  [http://giffconstable.com/2012/12/12-tips-for-early-customer-development-interviews-revision-3/](http://giffconstable.com/2012/12/12-tips-for-early-customer-development-interviews-revision-3/)
- Previous I-Corps team presentations as examples: [http://venturewell.org/i-c corps/team-materials/](http://venturewell.org/i-c corps/team-materials/) and [http://www.slideshare.net/sblank/tagged/i-corps](http://www.slideshare.net/sblank/tagged/i-corps) (note also the number of customer contacts each team made over the course)

**Application deliverable**

- 3 customer or stakeholder interviews must be uploaded onto LaunchPad Central by the submission deadline.
- An initial business model canvas must be completed on LaunchPad Central in advance of the first session.

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IN-LA is funded in part by the National Science Foundation I-Corps™ Program under award number 1444080.
Session 1: Tuesday, March 24, 2015, 5:30-7:30 PT

Session 1 required reading

- Review Lecture 1 and 2 documents provided via Dropbox
- Sign into LaunchPad Central and watch:
  - Lecture 1 – Business Model/Customer Development
    https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series
  - Lecture 2 – Value Proposition
    https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series

Suggested reading

- Business Model Generation, pages 14-51
- The Startup Owner’s Manual, pages 22-84 and 195-199
- Giff Constable, “12 Tips for Early Customer Development Interviews”
  http://giffconstable.com/2012/12/12-tips-for-early-customer-development-interviews-revision-3/
- http://steveblank.com/category/lean-launchpad/ for background and blog posts on the Lean LaunchPad method and classes
- Previous I-Corps team presentations as examples: http://venturewell.org/i-corps/team-materials/ and http://www.slideshare.net/sblank/tagged/i-corps (note also the number of customer contacts each team made over the course)

Session 1 presentation

Submit a 2-slide presentation to present your Team to the class (4 minutes). Save your presentations to Dropbox using this naming convention: TeamNumber_TeamName_Date e.g., 195_DataComm_05062013

Slide 1: Title Slide

- Team name and number
- Pictures/names of your Team members
- Logo
- Product picture/product description (1 sentence)
- Number of customer contacts to date (3 are due at the time of application)
Slide 2: Populated Business Model Canvas

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### Session 1 plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1: 5:30-6:30 pm PT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four team presentations (4 min., includes questions)</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Discovery Workshop</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrap-up and break for next session</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2: 6:30-7:30 pm PT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and answering questions</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four team presentations (4 min., includes questions)</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Discovery Workshop</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Session 2: Tuesday, March 31, 2015, 5:30-7:30 pm PT

Session 2 required reading
- Review Lecture 3 and 4 documents provided via Dropbox
- Sign into LaunchPad Central and watch:
  - Lecture 3 – Customers/Users/Payers
    https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series
  - Lecture 4 – Value Proposition
    https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series

Suggested reading
- Business Model Generation, pages 86-111, 135-145
- The Startup Owners Manual review pages 53-84, 85–9
- Steve Blank, “A Startup is Not a Smaller Version of a Large Company”,
  http://steveblank.com/2010/01/14/a-startup-is-not-a-smaller-version-of-a-large-company/

Session 2 presentation
Submit a 5-slide presentation to Dropbox (via LaunchPad Central).

Slide 1: Cover slide
- Team name
- Team number
- Member names
- 1 to 2-sentence description of your product
- Number of customer contacts: 1) Last week (5 new interviews due); 2) Cumulative (8 due to date)

Slide 2: Hypotheses: value propositions
- What we thought
- Whom we interviewed
- What we learned
- What we would do next

Slide 3: Hypotheses: customer segments

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• What we thought
• Whom we interviewed
• What we learned
• What we would do next

**Slide 4:** Surprises you learned in the last week

**Slide 5:** Revised business model canvas that indicates changes

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**Session 2 plan**

<table>
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<td><strong>Group 1: 5:30-6:30 pm PT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction and answering questions</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four team presentations (8 min., includes questions)</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up and break for next session</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2: 6:30-7:30 pm PT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and answering questions</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four team presentations (8 min., includes questions)</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Session 3: Tuesday, April 14, 2015, 5:30-7:30 pm PT

Session 3 required reading
- Review Lecture 5 document provided via Dropbox
- Sign into LaunchPad Central and watch:
  - Lecture 5 – Customer Relationships: Get/Keep/Grow
    https://www.launchpadcentral.com/videos/series

Suggested reading
- Business Model Generation, pages 127–133

Session 3 presentation
Submit a 5-slide presentation to Dropbox (via LaunchPad Central):

Slide 1: Cover slide
- Team name
- Team number
- Member names
- 1 to 2-sentence description of your product
- Number of customer contacts: 1) Last week (6 due this week); 2) Cumulative (14 due to date)

Slide 2: Hypotheses: value propositions and customer segments
- What we thought
- Whom we interviewed
- What we learned
- What we would do next

Slide 3: Hypotheses: customer relationships
- What we thought
- Whom we interviewed
- What we learned
- What we would do next

Slide 4: Surprises you learned in the last week

Slide 5: Revised business model canvas that indicates changes
### Session 3 plan

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<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1: 5:30-7:30 pm PT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction and answering questions</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four team presentations (8 min., includes questions) focusing on Customer Relationships</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up and break for next session</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2: 5:30-7:30 pm PT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and answering questions</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four team presentations (8 min., includes questions) focusing on Customer Relationships</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Session 4: Tuesday, April 21, 5:30-7:30 pm PT

Suggested viewing
David Reimer's series of videos on storytelling: http://venturewell.org/i-corps/llpvideos/david-riemer/

Session 4 presentation
Submit a 5-slide presentation to Dropbox (via LaunchPad Central):

Slide 1: Cover slide
- Team name
- Team number
- Member names
- 1 to 2-sentence description of your product
- Number of customer contacts: 1) Last week (6 due this week); 2) Cumulative (20 due to date)

Slide 2: Hypotheses: value propositions and customer segments
- What we thought
- Whom we interviewed
- What we learned
- What we would do next

Slide 3: Hypotheses: Customer relationships and distribution channels
- What we thought
- Whom we interviewed
- What we learned
- What we would do next

Slide 4: Surprises you learned in the last week

Slide 5: Revised business model canvas that indicates changes

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## Session 4 plan

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and answering questions</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four team presentations (6 min., includes questions)</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling workshop and break for next session</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2: 5:30-7:30 pm PT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and answering questions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling workshop</td>
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