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USM HACKING FOR DEFENSE



Mentor and Advisor Guide

Abstract

This document was drawn from the University of Stanford H4D and H4Di.org library and adjusted to meet USM course goals and objectives

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H4D MENTOR AND ADVISOR GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this, you are on the path to becoming a mentor or advisor for the Hacking for Defense course. Thank you very much for volunteering to assist your team(s), we truly appreciate your time and wisdom. In the past, we have found that teams with active and engaged mentors have learned more in the class and that an active mentor is instrumental to a team's success.

The purpose of this document is two-fold:

- 1) Provide a brief overview of the Hacking for Defense teaching methodology
- 2) Outline roles and best practices for mentors/advisors

WHAT IS HACKING FOR DEFENSE AND THE LEAN LAUNCH PAD?

This course provides real world, hands-on learning on what it is like to address a pressing national security problem facing the Department of Defense (DOD), Intelligence Community (IC) and other US Government Agencies. This class is not about how to write a business plan. It is not an exercise on how smart students are in a classroom, or how well students use the research library to size markets. And the end result is not a PowerPoint slide deck for a VC presentation or a Ycombinator Demo Day. And it is most definitely not an incubator where students come to build the "hot-idea" that students have in mind.

This class combines theory with a ton of hands-on practice. Our goal, within the constraints of a classroom and a limited amount of time, is to give students a framework to test the mission model of a startup or established company not currently being applied in this capacity while creating all of the pressures and demands of the real world in an early stage startup. The class is designed to give students the experience of how to work as a team and turn an idea into a solution for a critical problem confronting the DOD/DHS/IC and the many other government agencies tasked with keeping Americans safe at home and abroad.

Students will be getting their hand's dirty talking to end users, stakeholders, partners and competitors alike as they encounter the chaos and uncertainty of how a startup actually works. Students will practice evidence-based entrepreneurship as they learn how to use a "mission model canvas" to brainstorm how to address critical national security problems and beneficiary development to get out of the classroom to see whether their proposed solutions reduce the pains and increase the gains of their key beneficiaries and make progress towards mission achievement. Finally, based on the feedback students

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gathered in the beneficiary discover process, student teams will use agile development to rapidly iterate their product or concept to build/design something the end users and stakeholders wrestling with these problems would actually seek to deploy and adopt within their organizations. Each block will be a new adventure outside the classroom as they test each part of their mission model and then share the hard earned knowledge with the rest of the class.

COURSE GOALS

1. Provide an experiential learning opportunity to see how entrepreneurs and supporting methodologies like the Lean LaunchPad can be applied to address real-world national security challenges. Over the span of this course, each team transforms an idea into a viable solution to a problem facing their DOD/DHS/IC or other government agency sponsor.
2. 10 or more beneficiary/end user/stakeholder interviews by each team per class - the class teaches that the 9 building blocks of a mission model are simply hypotheses until they actually validate them with feedback from end users and partners; and since there are “no facts inside the building, they need to get outside.” This means as part of this class they need to talk to beneficiaries, key partners, domain experts and other sources of relevant expertise in order to gather real-world data – for each part of their plan.

COURSE TOOLS

Hacking for Defense relies on the Mission Model Canvas to enable beneficiary discovery and provide the framework for the iterative efforts focused on developing viable solutions that contribute to mission achievement. The mission model canvas is adapted from Alexander Osterwalder’s Business Model Canvas (BMC). For each segment of the MMC, students will list hypotheses that they will test. Each week of the course covers a different segment of the MMC, and each week’s interviews should center on the assigned segment.

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COURSE LOGISTICS

As the course is structured around the nine parts of the business model canvas, our course schedule is as follows:

- Session 1: Mission Model Canvas
- Session 2: Beneficiaries
- Session 3: Value Proposition
- Session 4: Product Sponsor Fit
- Session 5: Deployment
- Session 6: Buy-in& Support
- Session 7: Mission Achievement
- Session 8: Activities & Resources
- Session 9: Partners and Mission Costs, Draft Final LLP
- Session 10: Final Presentations / Lessons learned

We use a flipped classroom format, meaning that teams watch each week's video lectures online, before arriving in the classroom. Our time in class is dedicated to having each team present their beneficiary discovery findings to the rest of the class.

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YOUR ROLE AS A MENTOR

1. What's my role?

- Offer Mission Model Suggestions
Identify and correct gaps in your team's business knowledge

Tactical Guidance

- Push your team to make 10-15 customer Rolodex help “why don’t you call x? Let me connect you.”
- Push your team to make 10-15 customers

2. How do I interact with my team?

Review your team’s weekly

presentations before they present.

- Best Practice: Schedule a weekly meeting (in person or Skype) to review their presentation in real time
- Comment weekly on your team's customer discovery progress
- Best practice: schedule a weekly meeting (in person or Skype) to hear how your team's presentation went and help them regroup for the next week
- Meet face to face with your team at least twice during the class
- Check in with teaching team at Lesson 3 and 7 to discuss student progress
- Attend weekly 30-minute mentor call with your cohort instructor and other mentors

3. What are other commitments as a mentor?

- Attend 1-hour mentor training session or watch the recording of the session if you cannot make it in person
- Watch lectures and stay one week ahead of the class
- Check in with teaching team at Lesson 3 and 7 to discuss student progress

- Attend weekly 30-minute mentor call with your cohort instructor and other mentors

4. How do I interact with my team?

- Review your team’s weekly presentation *before* they present on Tuesdays
- Best practice: Schedule a weekly meeting (in person or Skype) for the day before your team’s presentation to review their presentation in real time
- Comment weekly on your team’s Customer Discovery progress via the H4D website
 - Best Practice: Log into the USM H4D website every day to read and comment on a few interviews how your team’s presentation went and few interviews
- Respond to the teaching team’s critique: “Good or Bad” we are all learning!
 - Best Practice: Schedule weekly meetings (in person, skype) for the day after the class to hear how your team’s presentation went and help them on their next presentation
- Meet face-to-face with your team at least twice during the class; Skype/Google Hangout etc. and conference calls are OK for other weekly meetings.

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As a mentor, you are an extension of the Teaching Team responsible for the success or failure of one team with four or five students. The role of the mentors is to help their teams test their mission model hypotheses. In ten very short weeks, your team has to get outside the classroom and test all their mission model hypotheses and help their sponsor better understand and address their problem.

- Offering your team **strategic** guidance and wisdom:
 - Offer suggestions on mission achievement
 - Identify and correct gaps in the team's business knowledge
- Providing your team with **tactical** guidance every week:
 - Meet with your team each week (by phone, skype or in person)
 - Review your team's weekly presentation *before they present*
 - Comment *weekly* on your team's Beneficiary Discovery progress (this is hard to do unless you are familiar with the methodology).
 - Respond to the teaching team's critique of your team
 - Rolodex help - "why don't you call x? Let me connect you."
 - Push your team to make 10 - 15 end user/stakeholder contacts each week
 - Meet one-on-one with your team in person, if at all possible, at least twice during the quarter; Skype/Google Hangout etc. and conference calls are OK for other meetings
 - If necessary, check in with teaching team at class 3 and 7 to discuss student progress
 - Help your team focus, and guide to possibly pivot when the data points for the need to change
 - Attend your team's final presentation

As you can see, your teams have their work cut out for them. To the best of your ability, help them network, teach them how to send an email and make phone calls and run beneficiary surveys. Open your Rolodex to whatever level you feel comfortable with.

Your role is to help the teams figure out how to test their hypotheses about their mission model.

Questions that are helpful are, "have you considered x?" "Why don't you look at company or organization z and see how they address a related problem and compare it to yours," or "here are some names of domain experts in the field, you should talk to them." Try to avoid specifically telling them what to do.

Remember: The class is not an incubator or accelerator. We are trying to give students models, heuristics, and experience they can apply when they graduate. The class is about what they learn on the journey.

Mentors are welcome and encouraged to attend the weekly student presentations.

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YOUR ROLE AS AN ADVISOR

Whereas mentors are paired with teams for the duration of the class, advisors engage with teams on a one-off, as-needed basis. As an advisor, you are a class resource for your particular domain expertise.

Here is what you are signing up for:

- Respond to student emails/phone calls within 24-hours
- Skype calls with one/two teams a week, as needed
- If you are comfortable, connecting teams with contacts in your Rolodex

Advisors are welcome and encouraged to attend the weekly student presentations.

FURTHER READING

We hope that you are excited about the course as we are! The best way for you to get a feel for the course is to join in on a few of the weekly sessions. If attendance in person is not feasible to ask your teaching team if they can make a streaming or other virtual option available or if it is possible to view a recording of the session and especially your team's presentation and Teaching team comments.

Outside of class, we recommend the following reading:

- 1) Read about Hacking for Defense <http://steveblank.com/2016/01/26/hacking-for-defense-Stanford/>
- 2) Be familiar with the background and substance of the Mission Model Canvas: <http://steveblank.com/2016/02/23/the-mission-model-canvas-an-adapted-business-model-canvas-for-mission-driven-organizations/>
- 3) Read the blogs about previous classes. <https://steveblank.com/2016/06/03/hacking-for-defense-stanford-lessons-learned-presentations/>
- 4) Download and breeze through the explanation of Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas: http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com/downloads/businessmodelgeneration_preview.pdf
- 5) The course textbooks:
 - a. Alexander Osterwalder & Yves Pigneur, Business Model Generation <http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com/order.php>
 - b. Steven Blank, Four Steps to the Epiphany <http://www.stevenblank.com/books.html>

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- 6) Look at the students' weekly and final presentations:
<http://www.slideshare.net/sblank/tag/stanford>
- 7) Read the class syllabus (course TA should provide)

Issues from the past

1. As a mentor/advisor you have a role as a trusted educational resource. That trust means that during the class, and until the grades have been delivered, you cannot mention investing, financing or even “come see me when the class is over” to any of the individuals or teams. Doing so distorts the educational purpose of the class and is a breach of trust in the class. When the grades have been entered you may discuss your interest in the team.
2. As a mentor/advisor you are a role model to the students. We expect you to maintain interactions with students free from influences that may interfere with their learning and personal development. Sexual or romantic relationships between mentor/advisor and students are prohibited

Thank you for your support, your advice, and mostly your participation, we will make a difference!

The Teaching Team