Business Strategy for Scientists - homepage

Welcome to the course page for Business Strategy for Scientists

This content is designed to provide an overview of how scientific enterprises use strategy to achieve their overarching goals. What is Strategy? Strategy is knowing where you want to be and how you want to get there. Strategy reflects both the long term and short term organizational goals. Defining your strategy helps you achieve your goals by directing your daily objectives. As a scientist, you may need to develop strategy as an individual, as part of a lab or group, and as part of a scientific enterprise.

The goal of this series is to help prepare scientists who want to start their own labs, and inform scientists who want to go into industry by providing basic knowledge about strategy, how to engage in collaborations strategically, and tools used to develop strategy and monitor progress on your strategic plans. This page has information about the lecture videos, podcasts, and small group activities to help you prepare for the Business Strategy4Scientist workshops.

This course is part of the broader intro series titled Business Concepts for Basic Scientists. You can also view the introductions to Finance [1] and Business Development [2].

LECTURE VIDEOS

This workshop is designed as a flipped classroom - participants will watch the videos before the class and discuss the cases in class.

Participants must watch these videos before attending the workshop to get the most out of the facilitated discuss. Each module defines learning objectives that each participant should be able to learn by the end of workshop. Strategy4Scientists comprises three modules:

For each module, we suggest a few podcast episodes that illustrate the concepts defined as learning objectives for that module. The podcasts cover academic, industry and consulting
settings and are meant to complement the online videos. The podcast episodes can be found on iTunes - Strategy4Scientists [7].

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

The course content can be viewed or listened to at home (or in the lab), but the modules are most effective when paired with in-class discussion. Student groups, career centers, faculty, or peers may choose to meet up and participate in small group discussions. An interactive group activity is provided for each module. For example, the activity for the introductory workshop is to identify one company’s strategy from their website. It is highly suggested to browse the group activity before meeting in person. Participants who browsed the websites before class reported a more positive and engaging in-class or team experience. NOTE: Bring your laptop or tablet for the in-class activity.

Each module also lists questions that you should be able to answer by the end of the group discussion, to make sure you’re on track. Small groups have also presented a poster of their answers to practice organizing and orally discussing the core business concepts.

Speakers and course developers

For each module, we paired with industry professionals and faculty to ask create lectures and podcasts that capture core concepts that grad students, postdocs, and faculty at any stage can apply to their academic research. The speakers were asked to speak from experience, share wisdom about strategic decisions, and give advice to young scientists starting out. Industry speakers were specifically asked what basic business knowledge they would want a new team member to have if they joined their team tomorrow. The content was developed to provide a primer to the basics of strategy and give scientists a better understanding of how enterprises and individuals can engage in strategy.

Course producer - Thi Nguyen, PhD [8], PI of the grants that funded the development of this course. Thi created this content while serving as a program director and career development consultant at UCSF Office of Career and Professional Development. She is now the associate dean for graduate career and professional development at Washington University in St. Louis.

Course manager - Kevin Hartman, UCSF graduate student and co-producer of the Strategy4Scientists podcasts.
The educational videos were produced in collaboration with iBiology [9]. Videos found in the iBioMagazine section under “Business Concepts [10].”

Course funding

This course is provided at no cost to graduate students and postdocs thanks to funding by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund [11] and NIH [12] T32 administrative supplement (co-PI K. Mark Ansel).

Educating graduate students nationwide

Interested in learning more about the course design or delivering this workshop at your university? Stanford University, Harvard University, UT Southwestern Medical Center and Sloan Kettering Cancer Center have adopted all or part of this series at their institutions. Contact Thi at thi.nguyen@wustl.edu [13].