



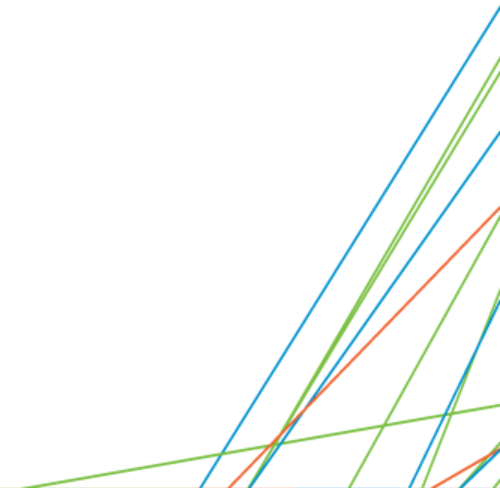
StartSmart Greece

Produced by MIT Enterprise Forum

Starting Smart: An Entrepreneur, Investor and Mentor Perspective

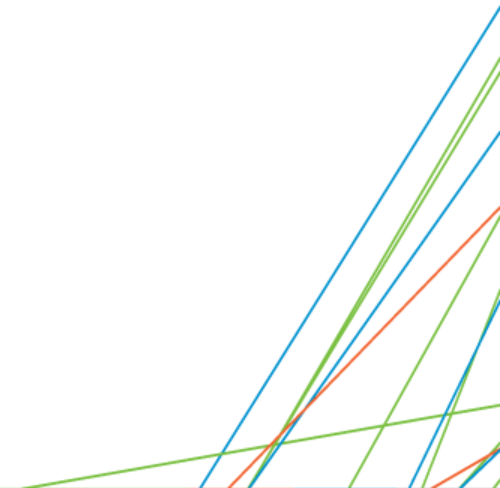
Marina Hatsopoulos

Angel Investor and
Director at Cynosure, Levitronix Technologies and Dear Kate



Agenda

- My Story
- Define Market
- Validate Market
- Business Plan
- Team
- Mentors/Board
- Funding
- Culture
- Focus
- Entrepreneurship in Greece



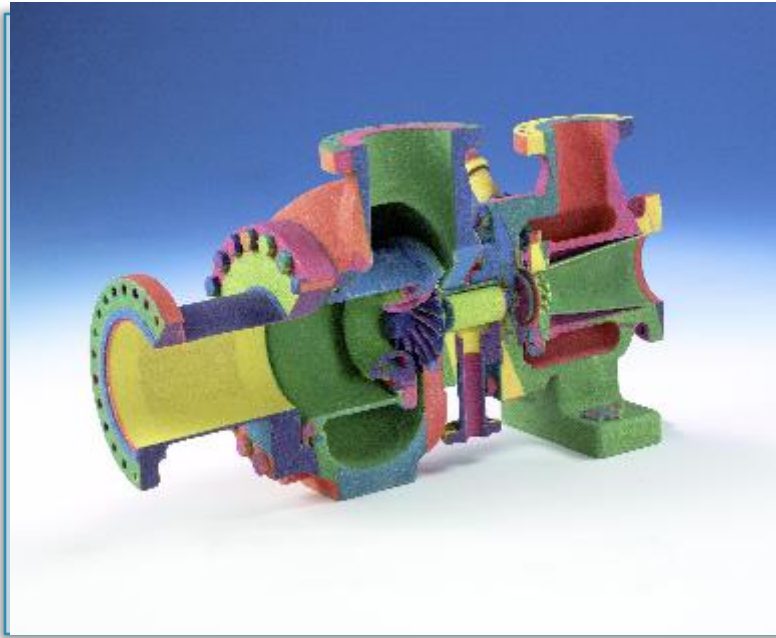
My story

- Wall Street - finance
- Thermo Electron - technology conglomerate
- MIT- mechanical engineering
- Career stall & pivot: search for job>business>technology
- MIT technology licensing office
- Z Corporation - Founder, CEO, - grew to \$30 million & sold
- Investor, director, mentor

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. -Albert Einstein

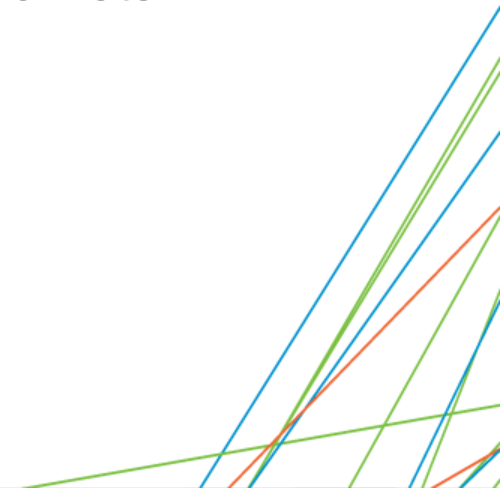


Z Corporation - Early Leader in 3D Printing Out of MIT



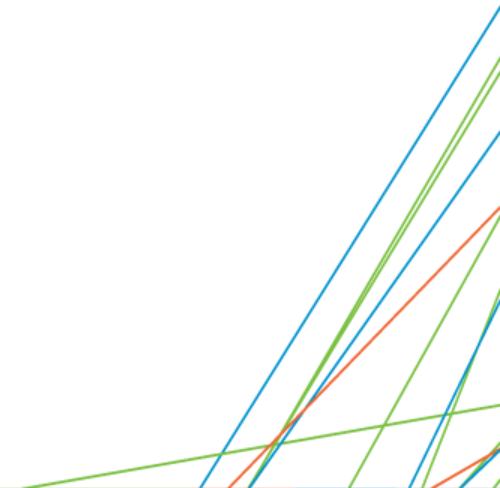
Define Market

- Production differentiation - solve a problem better/faster/cheaper
- Copy successful idea from somewhere else
- Niche markets - not too small, not too big
- Competition in new market can be good
- Consider business-to-business, not just consumer markets



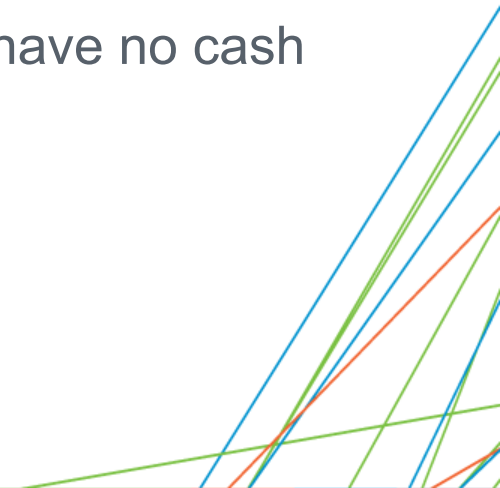
Validate Market

- Value proposition: ROI when selling to businesses
- Try to sell product, before it even exists
- Early prospects help guide development
- Don't worry about people stealing your ideas!



Business Plan

- # Units, revenues, costs-on a napkin, does it make sense?
- Time and investment to get to revenues and profitability
- Development, manufacturing, selling and marketing a product takes more time and money than you expect
- Pricing is critical! We would have gone out of business
- Focus on profitability: businesses fail because they have no cash



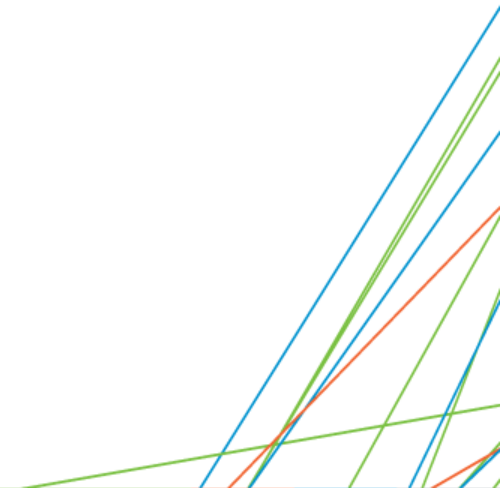
Team

- Teamwork is important-not just group of individuals
- Empower people-give them credit, nurture, help them grow
- Capitalize on greatness of your stars, even if they have holes
- Set up founders equity-consider stock options
- Leverage network but don't hire someone you can't fire
- Hiring philosophy
- Some employees are OK, but not great, huge opportunity cost
- We all make mistakes. Admit them, deal with them & move on



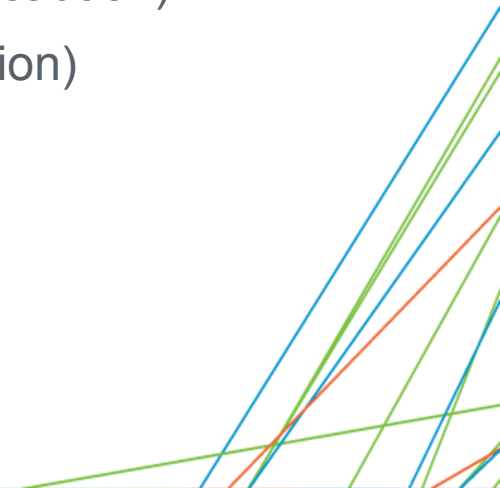
Mentors/Board

- Find a mentor who is successful & honest
- Identify missing areas of expertise and fill those roles as needed
- Start with a small board - hard to get rid of people
- Use your board. Meet quarterly. Allow for open discussion.
- Listen! Feedback is important



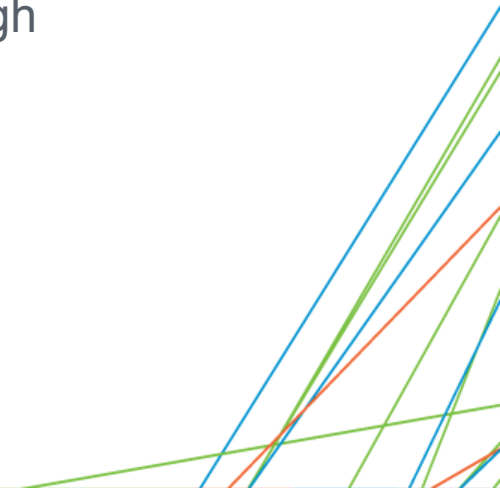
Funding

- Keep it simple! One sentence.
- Front page of pitch or website: what is it? Show me.
- Investors are looking for a strong team
- Find investors in related businesses
- Angels, VC's, customers, distributors, strategic investors (caution)
- Growth (higher value) vs. profitability (lower risk, less dilution)



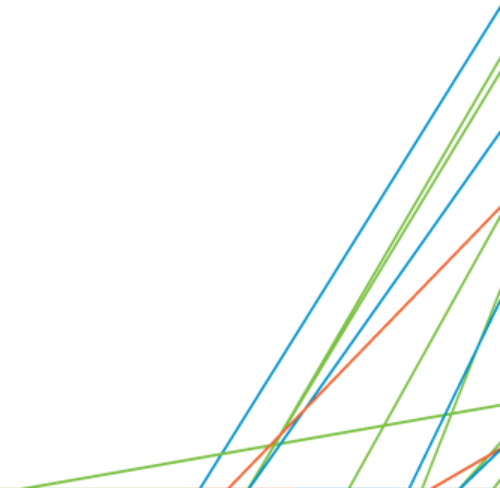
Culture

- Culture is set at the top: integrity, scrappiness, healthy debate
- Clear roles and responsibilities: decision-maker for each decision
- Corporate vs. Academic
- Results-oriented vs. face time
- Strive for excellence but not perfection-the cost is too high
- Negative personalities can poison a company culture
- Failure is information. Use it to move forward.
- Have fun: you may be at this for a while



Focus

- Technology directions
- Inventing is more fun than making a reliable product
- Creativity (innovation) vs. focus (getting product out the door)
- Stay focused but be prepared to pivot if necessary & then focus again



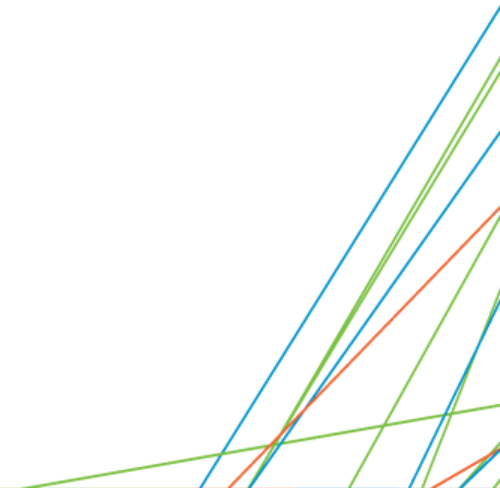
Entrepreneurship in Greece

- Greeks are natural entrepreneurs: scrappy, assertive and resilient
- Cooperate and support each other. biggest hurdle is environment.
- Stop whining. The government & investors will come when you succeed.
- Forget what's out of your control and focus on what's in your control.
- Turn weaknesses into strengths
 - Go global
 - Bootstrap to early profitability
 - Access to large pool of strong talent due to tough employment market



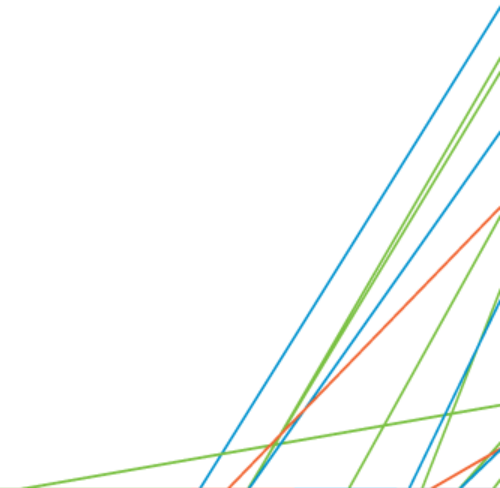
Entrepreneurship in Greece (cont.)

- Think bigger: go to university and commercialize an invention
- What are problems you see that could be solved by innovation?
- What solutions already exist outside of Greece?
- It's hard. Not the time for balance in your life.
- Failures are an inherent part of the process.



Entrepreneurship in Greece (cont.)

- Enjoy the process, celebrate your milestones.
- Persevere-opportunity to be leader in this pivotal moment in Greece's history, to help bring the country to prosperity
- Controlling your own destiny is enriching and fulfilling



Thank you

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