Program Details

A vast majority of companies encounter substantial and often unexpected legal costs when starting a new venture. Whether you are an innovation-driven entrepreneur or an entrepreneurial executive launching a new venture within a large organization, Essential Law for Entrepreneurs will help you navigate the key challenges when starting, financing, and selling new ventures.

Participants from across the globe will enter our state-of-the-art, interactive, virtual classroom where they will join live discussions, simulations, working groups, and debate legal issues with the instructor, John Akula, an acclaimed attorney.

In this unique program, you will learn the answers to the following questions:

• How can you protect your interests with an appropriate legal framework for ownership, compensation, incentives, responsibilities, commitment and control?
• If you are a global company expanding into the U.S., what are the legal considerations that will impact how you set up your business?
• How do legal considerations shape an effective IP strategy? How can IP rights be acquired? How can IP be protected from threats such as the departure of key employees?
• What tools does the law provide to protect the entrepreneur?
• How does the startup obtain and finance the legal services that it needs?
• What legal pitfalls must be avoided?

Takeaways

Participants will leave this program better prepared to:

• Execute a legally clean departure from a prior employer, with an understanding of the legal implications of skills and information acquired on a prior job.
• Select and structure a business entity, which includes choosing between a corporation or limited liability company; timing considerations; tax and control features; key organizational documents; and the selection of a name for doing business.
• Understand and negotiate key early contractual agreements such as invention assignment agreements, non-competition agreements, non-disclosure agreements, and shareholder agreements.
• Design an ownership structure and equity-related compensation.
• Serve on or work with a governing board, especially as its role evolves to reflect the interests of investors.
• Anticipate and deal constructively with the evolution of senior management roles.
• Develop and protect early IP, including understanding the role of patents, copyright and trade secrets.
• Design and negotiate early financing, including financing by founders, friends and family, angel investors, venture capital, and strategic partners; and how to evaluate a term sheet or a convertible note.
• Prepare for and participate in the process of selling or buying a company, including the roles of financial and strategic buyers, and the special responsibilities of the seller’s board members.
• Find and make good use of lawyers, including understanding the roles of company counsel and personal counsel.

http://executive.mit.edu/lsg4dx
**Participants**

The program will address the key legal junctures faced by innovation-driven startups from the different perspectives of all of the key players. As such, the program will be useful to those who are (or in the future may be) in any of the following roles:

- Founder
- Early employee
- Financial or strategic investor
- Board member
- Advisor or consultant
- Potential buyer of the venture

As the critical role of innovation-driven startups in a region’s economic success has become more widely appreciated, many government agencies and NGOs have become involved in efforts to encourage these enterprises—to help build a technology-oriented entrepreneurial “ecosystem.” This course is designed to be of benefit to such policy-makers as well.

The focus of the program is U.S. law, but the materials in this course have been found to be useful to those outside the U.S. Many nations are adapting laws and policies that resemble those in the U.S. Even in countries with legal systems very different from the U.S., features of U.S. ventures can be replicated by private law arrangements. Entrepreneurs and investors are increasingly mobile, with a global view of opportunities. For all of these reasons, participants from outside the U.S. may find this course of value, and are welcome to participate.

**Program Faculty**

John Akula is a Senior Lecturer in Law at MIT Sloan, where he has primary responsibility for the business law curriculum. His courses focus on the law-sensitive skills needed by managers in both young and established companies, and the legal framework of entrepreneurship, technology, innovation, and finance.

John earned a PhD at Harvard, where his research focused on the evolution of effective legal commitments. He was a partner at Herrick & Smith until that firm dissolved in 1985, and then joined Goodwin Procter, one of the nation’s leading law firms, as a partner in its business law department.

**The Program Experience**

This program is comprised of six two-hour, live online sessions taking place once a week over six weeks. The sessions will be held on consecutive Thursdays from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time. All sessions will be recorded. All a participant needs is access to the internet; there is no need to undertake the cost or disruption of a trip to MIT.

The one-session-a-week format makes it possible to integrate each session with written materials and assignments which synthesize lessons learned, and better prepare for upcoming sessions. Between sessions, participants can consult with one another. For busy entrepreneurs, this can be an advantage over the more conventional executive education format, which typically consists of a series of all-day sessions on consecutive days.

This is a hands-on program designed to provide practical tools and advice. In addition to presentation of material by the instructor, the program will include the review of key contracts and business entity organizational documents, and simulations of negotiations among key stakeholders over ownership, finance, and control.

**Contact Information**

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