CASE STUDY: SciNet - Clear Village

The Company: Saving Local Governments Money with Responsive Constituent Services
Clear Village is a sophisticated software platform that directly resulted from research conducted by Dr. Ron Eaglin at the University of Central Florida. Dr. Eaglin was contracted by Seminole County, Florida to document the county’s current processes for every service they provide and to design a software platform to help reduce resulting inefficiencies. Over the course of three years, Dr. Eaglin and his research team designed and implemented a software platform, called SciNet, that automated a range of county services such as agenda management, land parcel mapping, building permits, and much more. Other Florida counties began to hear about Dr. Eaglin’s work, and were interested in purchasing the platform as well.

Dr. Eaglin was faced with demand for the SciNet platform, but did not have the business team or financial resources to spin-out the software into a standalone company that could address the demand for his software by other regional government agencies. Furthermore, he had no desire to leave his research role to run a company, so needed a team to assist him with SciNet’s commercialization activities.

The Venture Lab: Branding, Recruiting, Planning
Dr. Eaglin approached the Venture Lab for help in commercializing SciNet into a standalone software startup company. The first advice given to Dr. Eaglin was that a CEO would be needed to run the company. In his dealings with Seminole County, Dr. Eaglin was able to identify for the Venture Lab team some possible candidates. Out of these, the Venture Lab found one particular candidate that had the interest and industry expertise to spin out the company from Dr. Eaglin’s lab.

The Venture Lab quickly began mentoring both the CEO candidate and Dr. Eaglin on business planning, market assessment, business model creation and competitive analysis efforts. In addition, it was recommended that a new brand be created for the company. The SciNet name was too specific to Seminole County, and did not reflect the overall vision behind the platform. After many iterations and coaching sessions, a new brand and business model were created - Clear Village was officially born.

Neither the CEO candidate nor Dr. Eaglin had any experience in creating a business plan, so the Venture Lab agreed to take the lead in writing the plan for the new company. The Venture Lab team intensively interviewed Seminole County, Dr. Eaglin, the new CEO and others in the industry to obtain relevant data for the business plan. In addition, the Venture Lab intern team conducted extensive market research. Over the course of four months, a business plan and detailed financials were completed for Clear Village by the Venture Lab team.

Due to complications with UCF’s contract agreement with Seminole County, all parties eventually agreed to postpone the spin-out of the SciNet platform into Clear Village. However, the project was successful in that all stakeholders felt that the opportunity is valid, and a solid plan is in place to move forward with launching Clear Village when the time is appropriate to do so.

A Word from the CEO
“The Venture Lab team is a fantastic resource that should be used by any faculty member that is considering commercializing research. The Venture Lab team provided a whole new perspective due to their experience in starting and growing a broad range of companies. They can quickly guide faculty members on the best method for taking research out to markets. In the process, I learned a whole bunch about what it takes to launch a new technology venture.” ~ Dr. Ron Eaglin, UCF Faculty Member and SciNet creator