In 2010, having left her job as a barrister, Dupsy Abiola was embarking on a new venture in the form of Intern Avenue, a mutually beneficial platform to better connect companies looking to hire interns and recent graduates looking for internship opportunities. Her own experience of the inefficiencies of law firms hiring interns as well as her younger sister’s own struggle to find employment, following university, had been the inspiration behind Intern Avenue, and she was now in a position to turn her ideas into actions.

While Dupsy had a clear vision of what she wanted her website to achieve, she wasn’t able to provide developers with the level of technical knowledge required to fully launch the site nor to feel confidence that the development work done was solid. This is when Dupsy turned to SMILE and UCL Advances, who was able to match her with Chris Mullaley, senior developer and development team leader, who is also a UCL graduate in Biophysics. As Intern Avenue went through the initial phases of development, Chris was an invaluable source of information, and was able to give his thoughts and opinions on new ideas, as well as providing the much needed technical knowledge to get the project off the ground.

Working with Chris enabled Dupsy to successfully launch her website in its beta version in 2011 to a very warm reception, gaining interest from an array of sources including student unions, universities and corporations. Intern Avenue was coming together as a viable service, and the site began to gain traction. Development continued on the site and investment was secured to fund a larger team to take the business forward.

With Intern Avenue growing beyond its initial stages, Chris was in a position to look at other mentoring opportunities for innovative SMEs still in the position where he initially found Intern Avenue. He has shown keen interest in working with other companies registered with SMILE and will no doubt be a fantastic mentor for other start-ups seeking technical expertise.

“I will not forget the support and help that I have received from SMILE. We have only just begun – there are many very exciting things to come!”

Dupsy Abiola, Founder, Intern Avenue

In the spring of 2012, Dupsy walked into the Dragon’s Den and made an impressive pitch leading two dragons to make her an offer. Intern Avenue’s future certainly looks bright and promising.
About UCL
UCL (University College London) was established in 1826 and is ranked as one of the world’s top-ten universities. The university is a modern, outward-looking institution, with more than 4,000 academic and research staff committed to engaging with the major issues of our times. It has a global reach, with 34% of its students coming from outside the UK, from almost 140 countries.

www.ucl.ac.uk

About UCL Advances
The centre for entrepreneurship at UCL, UCL Advances, offers training, networking and business support for staff, students and external entrepreneurs to encourage and enable new enterprises to get going. Unique in the UK Higher Education sector, its primary role is to promote a culture of entrepreneurship on campus and engagement with entrepreneurs and small businesses beyond UCL’s boundaries, and currently delivers over 30 activity programmes.

UCL Advances is affiliated with UCL Enterprise, which provides UCL’s structures for engaging with business for commercial and societal benefit.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances
www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise

About Business Support
UCL Advances provides direct business support for internal and external organisations through a variety of programmes and activities such as 1–1 advice, problem solving through student consultancy, student internships, mentoring and others.

• We help London-based businesses grow and develop by analysing business needs and connecting them to relevant interventions such as industry mentors;
• Through pairing teams of UCL and LBS students with businesses we deliver short-term consultancy projects addressing specific organisation needs;
• We broker relationships and fund exchanges between new and aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced entrepreneurs in another member state of the European Union;
• Individual angel investors connected to UCL provide seed investment to SMEs engaged with UCL Advances programmes; and
• We offer fully funded SME Internships where UCL students spend eight weeks in a London SME working alongside the director(s) to deliver real results and lasting impact in the host organization whilst learning about enterprise.

www.ucl.ac.uk/advances/business/support