Having won an Innovation Central London bursary award in February 2011, Daniel Elkan, founder of snowcarbon, was looking to increase traffic to his site, www.snowcarbon.co.uk; and boost his business. Turning to SMILE, Daniel was linked to mentor Emmanuel Baltyde, and is still reaping the benefits.

Borne out of Daniel’s own frustrations, snowcarbon is a website that helps skiers and snowboarders find out how to travel by train to various ski resorts across France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Andorra. Daniel and co-founder Mark Hodson have aggregated the complex national train provider websites into one interface. In addition to making snow enthusiasts’ lives easier, Daniel wanted to encourage an environmental alternative to flying, particularly to chartered flights.

Since collaborating with Emmanuel and SMILE, snowcarbon’s economic performance has grown by approximately 25%. Emmanuel was able to use his expertise to help snowcarbon update its business plan and prepare a marketing report for existing and prospective partners. The improved focus on key business priorities, coupled with documentation for partners that would demonstrated their unique appeal, resulted in improved existing relations, partnership income and generating new business.

“One of the key benefits of the mentoring process is to sit down with someone who has expertise and interest that overlaps with the field that you operate in, and yet who comes to the table with an outside and fresh perspective.”

Emmanuel’s fresh perspective enabled him to address Daniel’s problems and help him to prioritise his objectives, for example exploring potential revenue streams, communication with partners, and generate an audit of what the business was actually offering.

snowcarbon was also able to benefit from some of SMILE’s workshops including Social Media Marketing and Getting Your User Experience Right. These events encourage the exchange of ideas in a supportive and relaxed environment.

“It’s great to have this support, it makes doing business a lot more enjoyable, less scary, more sure-footed and it delivers results.”

Daniel Elkan, Founder, snowcarbon
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
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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