Michelle: Hello today we have Camilo Syllos in the studio with us today. Camilo recently did a G-Lab project in Malaysia, welcome.

Camilo: Thank you very much

Michelle: We were hoping that maybe you could give us a little background about the project, how you became aware of it, and what kind of the goals and scope of the project were?

Camilo: Sure definitely. The G-Lab experience is a much more group project. So we heard first about a course through some SF08 that really enjoyed the course. And the challenge is to match the academic perspective with a more pragmatic way of things doing in real projects and back to reality. And being this experience related with international perspective in Africa, Asia, South America, this is the most attractive one within the course. So we heard about it and we said, hey we’re following all of that, let’s do it.

Michelle: Was your team made up of other Sloan fellows or was it more of a variety of programs?

Camilo: Yeah, we chose to stay within our Sloan fellow colleagues because the, what the faculty was trying to get us, the real [bondings?] for the project would be how we can manage like one month of working in site and four months of working with the team. So the diversity, the mixing of skills and how we can get along with each other counts a lot. So we decided to work with some people we have already, know but not that much so we can complement each other.

Michael: What were the backgrounds of the different people in your group?

Camilo: We were in four different segments of the economy. I am the more financial profile, we have Alberto Gassmann, which is from Chile, he’s much more into retail operations, he owns a, he used to own his own company, so he has very general management skills. We have Victor Yee, Victor Yee is a very successful entrepreneur, he has his own technological company with the consulting, and the fourth member is Marcello Kuhn is from Brazil as well and he worked for Gerdau, which is one of the top fifteen steel companies in the world, much more related with the production side. So the four of us we had a reaching complement skills and everything.

Michelle: And the project itself, the smart card or SD card project, can you maybe
talk a little bit about that, some of the details?

**Camilo:** Sure, absolutely. The project was pretty straightforward. Our challenge was to get the sense of what a smart card can be, in terms of [trains?] 5 or 10 years from now. And what the company could really achieve in just a small portion of time, two years from now. Because they really had this flagship product which is like paper cards for lotteries and telecommunication. So we delivered a twofold action plan: One is just taking care of the short term, which is like getting the cost down, and getting efficiencies in the sales process, to maintain the company within two years process with high and strong cash flows. And the second plan, which is going in parallel, is just getting the company to the new state of technology. The technology that we recommend for them to go ahead, it was RFID, which is a very well-known technology, but much less implemented in developing cultures.

**Michelle:** Now, a lot of the G-Lab teams that we talk to say that the project or the goals that they received in the classroom on paper, once they hit the ground in the country they were working in, things changed a lot, or a lot of things became apparent that weren’t.

**Camilo:** For sure, many of the factors affect us, and will affect outcome of the whole project when you arrive. But if you have your plan in advance and you work closely with your customers for sure, the outcomes will be much more within your action plan. But it’s much more related with the project that you get into and how much you can really deliver to the company. Because, for example, we had some good projects we were analyzing, but were much more related to companies going public, for example, an IPO, or companies were just getting ready to go abroad, like getting international exposure. You have to really manage what you can deliver for the company and what the company is expecting from you. Because bottom line is the CEOs of those companies, they want results. Even though we have to work five months in a row with the project, we have to deliver something. This experience is much more pragmatic than academic. So it’s a really good opportunity for you to match those two worlds.

**Michael:** is there anything in particular that you took from this experience that you think applies directly to where you came from and where you plan to go back to?

**Camilo:** I guess so. Because G-Lab has another trait that is looked for in entrepreneurs. So you have this room for fostering creativity. I learned a lot with this project, because dealing with our customer, every day we had a new challenge to overcome. And it’s based on creativity. You cannot just do more with less, without having creativity to build something very different. And I learned several lessons from that. But the real reason G-Lab is so successful is because you have to dedicate yourself and be open to learn from other cultures and other environments. Not only business, because it’s all about cross-cultural aspects as well, so it’s all about getting the cultural traits that you’re tapping into. Can be Malaysia, for example, was our experience, I’ve heard from many people within the G-Lab within any country that they have, it’s a common topic. So you might want to tap into that. If you’re for example from South America, maybe you want to enhance your experience to go into another direction like
Asia or Africa. Or the other way around. It’s a great opportunity. I thought G-Lab would be even like a core course, because it’s a really amazing opportunity for you to open your mind, It’s very challenging and can get you to a new stage of maturity. So it’s really like an open door for you to explore new environments and your network, look for opportunity to do business, it’s a great opportunity to go beyond.

**Michael:** So definitely a worthwhile trip.

**Camilo:** Oh, definitely, definitely. It’s time-intensive, time-consuming, you know, the flight is not easy, and you have to work as well – it’s not only for you to be a consultant for just a few hours. It can be really like a 24-hours job if you really want to deliver something that has meaningful content for your client.

**Michelle:** So now when you finish up with the program, you’ll be returning to Brazil, and will it be to the same type of job, or will you be working in a different capacity?

**Camilo:** That’s correct, as a matter of fact I work in the banking industry, so the banking industry is not that trendy anymore, for the time being, so I may stay in my investment management industry for the time being. I’m looking for a new opportunity in what I have learned from here in the U.S., I have to come back to my country and develop something that I hope can be different from what I’m doing right now.

**Michelle:** Excellent, well thank you very much for coming in, and best of luck in your future endeavors.

**Camilo:** Alright, thank you very much Michelle, thank you very much Michael.