$100K 2010 Winners: C-Crete Technologies

Reducing the environmental impact of concrete

Interviewer: Today we welcome into the studios Natanel Barookhian and Rouzbeh Shasavari. They’re members of C-Crete Technologies, the winners of the MIT 100K entrepreneurship competition. Welcome gentlemen.

Natanel & Rouzbeh: Thank you

Interviewer: Given that you’re fresh off the win from last night maybe you could tell us a little bit about how you’re feeling?

Natanel: You know it’s really been the culmination of about a year’s worth of very difficult work, a lot of late nights, and a lot of brainstorming. And for us it was really a validation that we’re on the right track and we’re working on the right concept, we have the right business model, and we are in the process of putting together long term and sustainable business. And the judges recognized that and we’re very honored to have had that validation from the judges and at the same time we know that this is only the beginning and we have a lot to look forward to and a lot more hard work left ahead of us. So, you know, we’re taking in the experience and at the same time with an eye on the next steps.

Interviewer: Could you talk briefly about what your business idea is?

Rouzbeh: Well our technology pertains to cement and concrete materials. Perhaps I can give you a quick overview. As you may know concrete is the most widely used manufacturing material on the planet. On average each person uses more than three tons of concrete each year. But this wide spread use of concrete comes with a large ecological price as it amounts to five to ten percent of the total carbon dioxide emissions worldwide. And we at C-Crete Technologies trying to change this pattern and reduce the environmental footprint of concrete by going down to the nano of materials and trying to modify the material properties at the heart of, core of the materials.

Interviewer: So on your team is it natural to assume that there’s a scientist to go along with the business side of things?

Rouzbeh: Exactly, I myself am a last year P.H.D. student working on cement and concrete, this was the topic of my P.H.D. basically, on concrete for the last four years and also I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisors at the MIT department of Civil Engineering namely, Professor Franz Joseph Olm and Professor Roland Plank. And they provided us a lot of good feedbacks and good advice for this technology.
Interviewer: Alright and you to worked together prior to this?

Natanel: No actually we didn’t. One of the reasons I came to Sloan was because I wanted to be at a top MBA institution worldwide, but I also wanted access with working with the latest innovations and the highest technology that was coming out of the MIT labs. And in doing that tour, and doing that walk, and meeting with the various scientists, and exploring what are some of the biggest ideas out there that have a capability to change the world? You know, I’ve met with a bunch of different people and I was fortunate enough to talk to Rouzbeh. And you know, his idea, his vision really captivated me. And I knew that this was a project that I wanted to be tied to and attached to in the long run and Rouzbeh with his hard work is really onto something that you know, from a market prospective, you know, it’s a great product, it’s really going to change the whole landscape of cement technology and infrastructure development, but it also has a lot of ecological and environmental benefits as he mentioned. And these are the two things I think you need today in order to build a long term, sustainable business.

Interviewer: So will C-Crete Technologies have a proprietary name over the new cement that you create or is that something that will come along in the future?

Natanel: It’s kind of early right now. There is going to be a strong marketing push behind the product and how we want to bring it out to markets. And we’re currently developing a lot of these ideas and determining what the best avenue is for that.

Interviewer: What is the next step for this start up?

Natanel: Well currently we are in the process of moving the business forward, procuring some of the infrastructure that we need, whether it’s on the scientific side or whether it’s on the day to day business side. And then we’re very excited to get that off the ground and at some point in the fall we’ll be raising money that we need in order to take us to the next step.