

# HI Hub incubator

Subscribe to our Monthly Newsletter

December 2022

Dear Mentors, Investors, and Entrepreneurship Students,

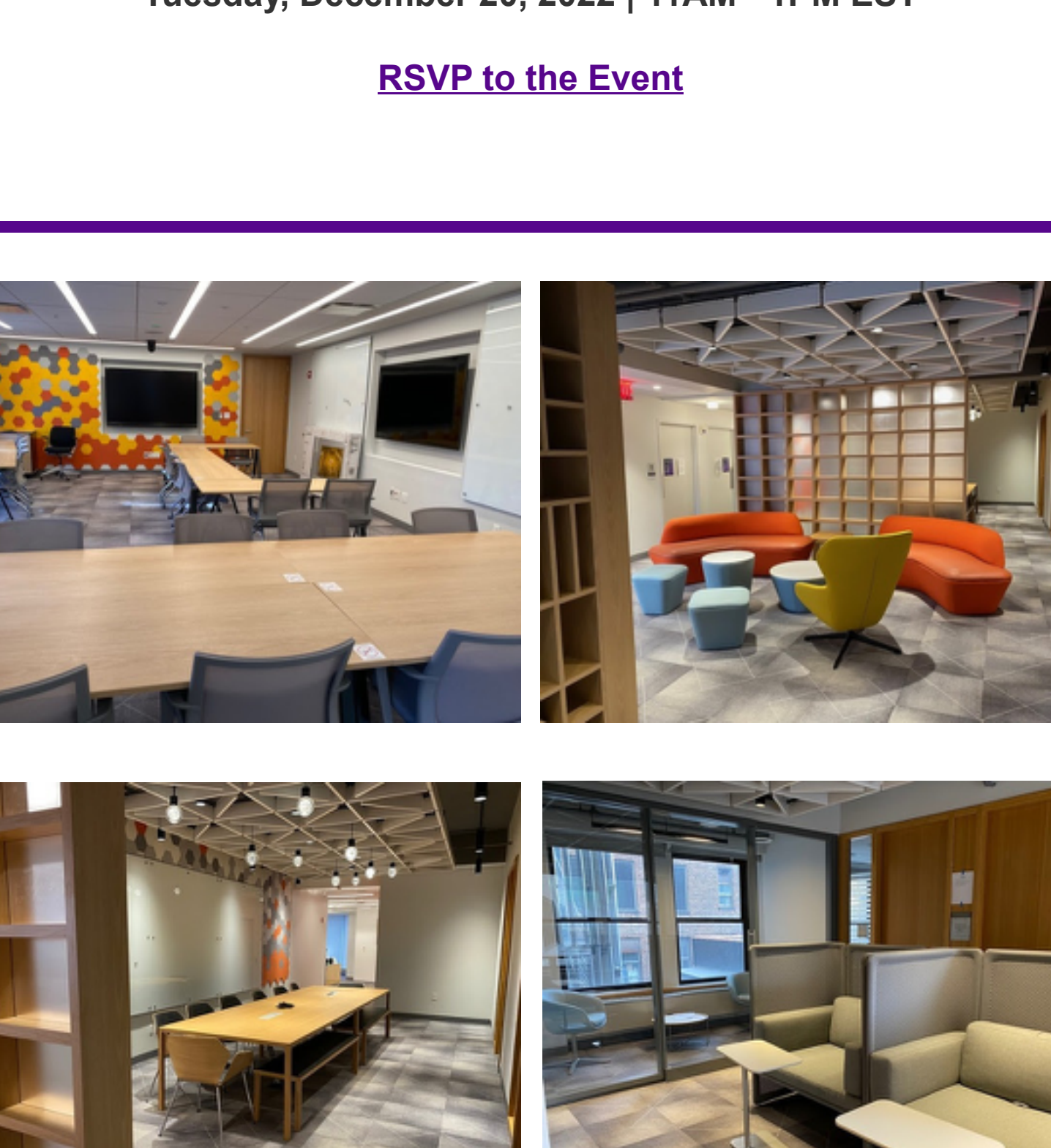
Welcome to the December edition of the HI Hub Incubator Newsletter!

As the semester comes to a close, thank you all for a great semester and we look forward to more HI Hub events in the spring term. We are eager to end the semester on a high note with the HI Hub Incubator Pitch Contest next Tuesday, good luck to all those participating.

Happy holidays!

Best,

Dr. K



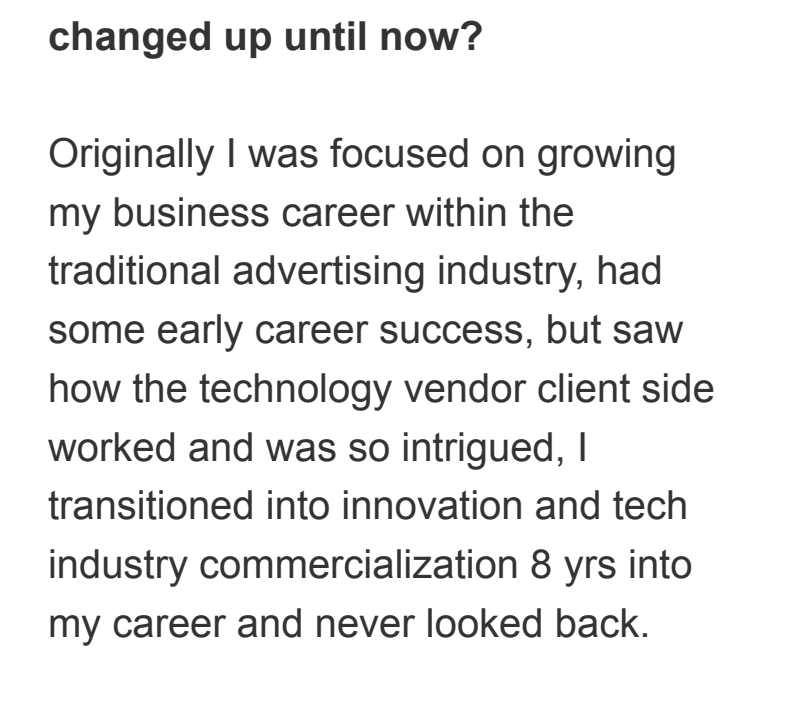
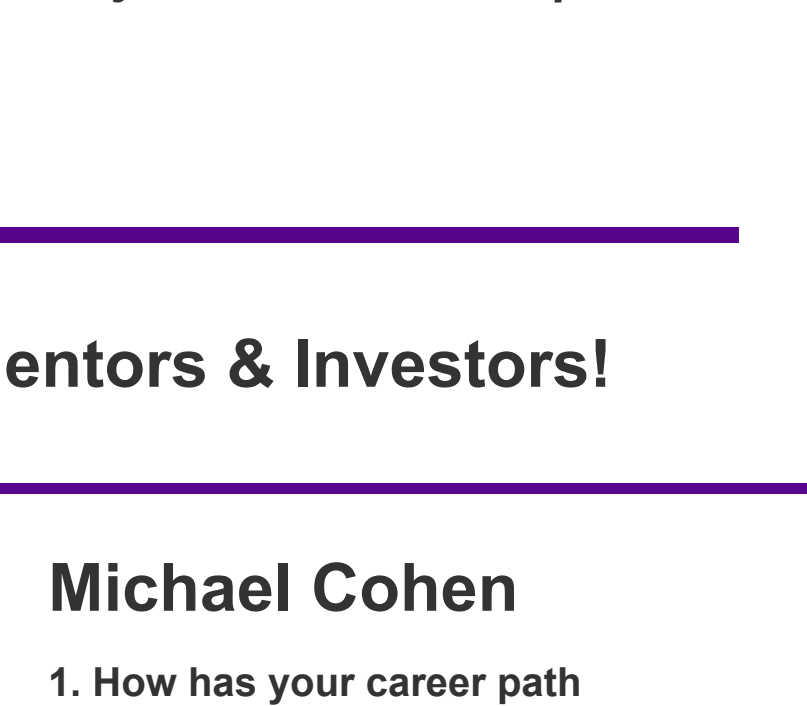
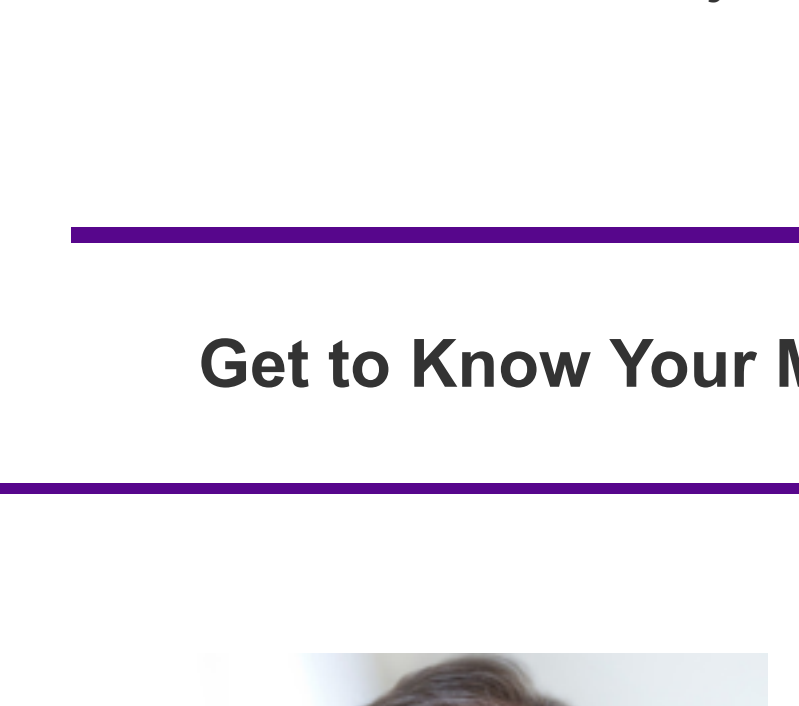
## PITCH YOUR PASSION DAY! SEAL THE DEAL!

NYU SPS Tisch Center of Hospitality HI HUB Incubator Pitch Contest is based on the Elevator Pitch concept, popular in the venture capital community. It is an extremely concise presentation of an entrepreneur's idea, business model, marketing strategy, competitive analysis, and financial plan, which is delivered to potential investors. The premise is that it could be made in a few minutes, should the entrepreneur spot a potential investor on an elevator and have the opportunity to pitch their idea during the brief ride.

Each of the six finalists will have exactly 8 minutes to pitch their venture ideas in person or via zoom to a distinguished panel of judges in alphabetical order for companies' names.

**Tuesday, December 20, 2022 | 11AM - 1PM EST**

[RSVP to the Event](#)



## Call for Application to the Spring 2023 Cohort of the NYU Tisch Center of Hospitality Innovation Hub Incubator Program

HI Hub Incubator is a 3-month program that offers mentorship, industry connections, advisory services, and more to early-stage startups. The program includes individual mentorship, boot camps, networking events, and master classes, and culminates with a pitch competition where the winning team will receive a **\$5,000 cash prize**, the second and third team a **\$2,500 cash prize**.

HI Hub Incubator's mission is to provide all NYU-affiliated startups businesses and young entrepreneurs with four core services; plan your business, launch your business, manage your business, and grow your business.

NYU-affiliated startup founders (current students and alumni) with an active MVP in the travel, tourism, hospitality, and technology industry can apply to join our incubator program for free.

For general questions regarding the application, please send an email to [HIHubIncubator@nyu.edu](mailto:HIHubIncubator@nyu.edu)

[Submit the Online Application](#)

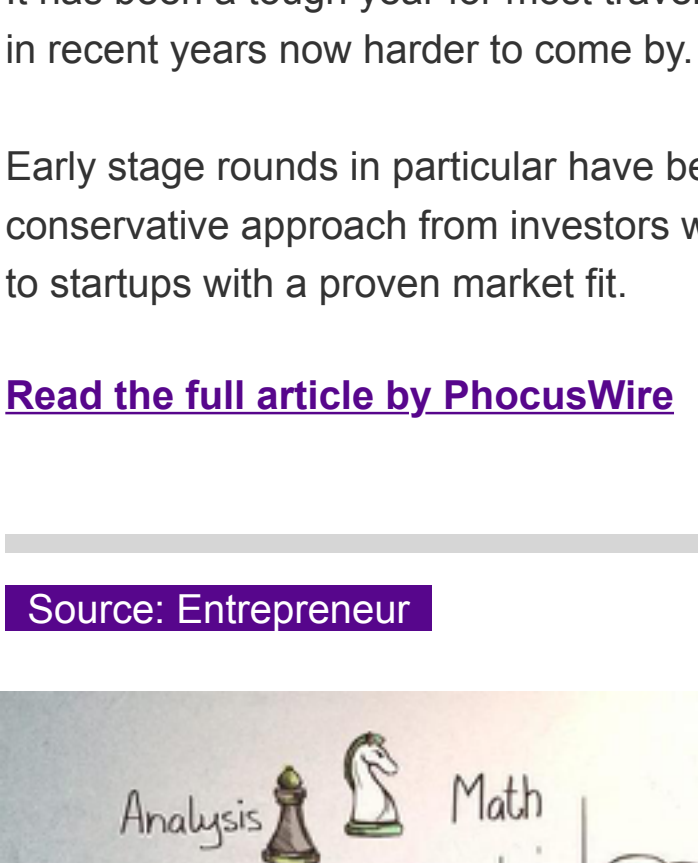
**Submission Deadline: Friday, February 10, 2023, at 11:59 pm EST**

## Get to Know Your Mentors & Investors!

### Michael Cohen

**1. How has your career path changed up until now?**

Originally I was focused on growing my business career within the traditional advertising industry, had some early career success, but saw how the technology vendor client side worked and was so intrigued, I transitioned into innovation and tech industry commercialization 8 yrs into my career and never looked back.



**2. Did you have a mentor who helped you get to where you are now? If so, what would you say is the most important thing you learned from your mentor?**

I was very fortunate to have a select group of mentors over my career who were instrumental in my growth and success for sure. The most important thing I learned is that business ( all areas and types ) is all about people. Ideas, finance and execution are very important, but when you understand that business is about people and "the inventory goes down in the elevator at night", you have the key to success.

[Read the full interview with Michael](#)

### Berrin Avcilar

**1. How has your career path changed up until now?**

I started my career at Ernst Young, which gave me a lot of opportunities to learn an array of skills, exposure to numerous clients within various industries, and a vast-reaching network. After working as an Auditor for about 10 years, I decided to jump to the other side of the table and be a part of the decision-making process within corporations. In the following +20 years of my career, I have worked as a CFO, CEO, Executive Board Member and Chairman in companies of diverse industries (Financial Institutions, Tourism and Real Estate Development, Airline, Manufacturing, Technology, Entertainment etc.). Positive culture and being challenged have always been the main drivers for my career.



**2. Did you have a mentor who helped you get to where you are now? If so, what would you say is the most important thing you learned from your mentor?**

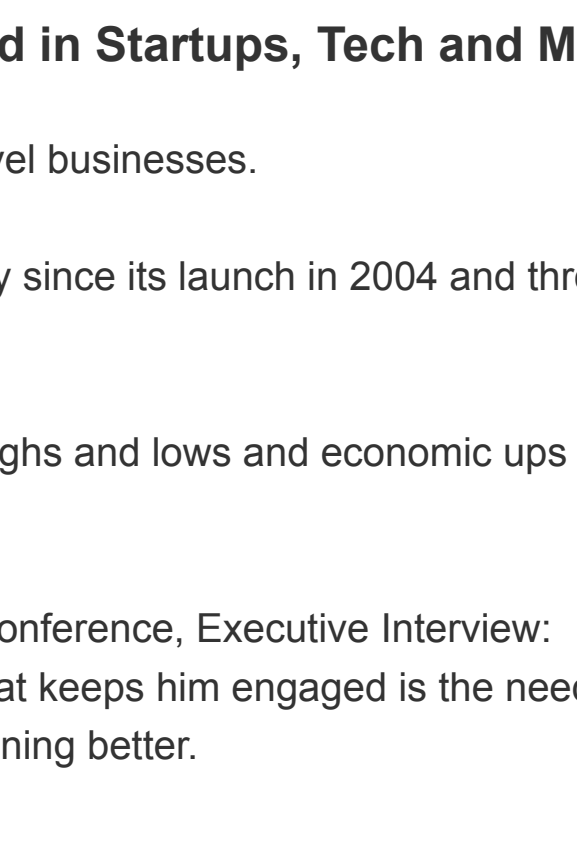
My father was my first mentor who taught me to be brave, work hard and truly enjoy the work that I do. I was so lucky to come across with many inspirational people that I also learned a lot from. The most important thing I learned is effective listening.

[Read the full interview with Berrin](#)

### Sal Esposito

**1. How has your career path changed up until now?**

My education, and my interest was always in the area of sales and marketing. I worked in consumer products after leaving school but always had a love for aviation which eventually led me to work for many different carriers in local, national and global capacities in sales and marketing. It was there I became aware of broader opportunities for innovation on the distribution side of travel. I saw a narrowness and generalization in offered services which led me to leave the airlines and create new businesses and forms of distribution which I knew were needed by consumers.



**2. Did you have a mentor who helped you get to where you are now? If so, what would you say is the most important thing you learned from your mentor?**

At the time I came into the airline business, essentially sales and marketing roles were only filled from within. I needed that one person to simply give an outsider a chance which was not a very popular decision for them to make at the time. I found that person at Eastern Airlines, someone like me from a working class background who was looking for competence over making the popular decision. He taught me to always hire the most qualified person, especially if that is an unpopular thing to do in the organization.

[Read the full interview with Sal](#)

Source: PhocusWire



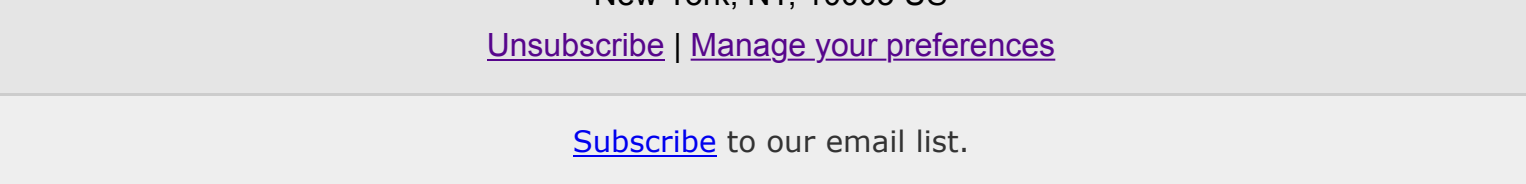
### Tough 2022 For Travel Startups as Investors Turn Cautious

It has been a tough year for most travel startups, with funding that had been plentiful in recent years now harder to come by.

Early stage rounds in particular have been highlighted as impacted by the more conservative approach from investors who, perhaps stung by the pandemic, turned to startups with a proven market fit.

[Read the full article by PhocusWire](#)

Source: Entrepreneur



### Businesses are Struggling. This Technology is Set to Spark a Revolution for Business

In the modern economy, small and midsize businesses face pressures like never before. With margins continually narrowing, a typical small and midsize business (SMB) or small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) doesn't have the same depth of resources to draw on to sustain itself through hard times.

Rather than being able to rely on investment to get them through difficulty, smaller enterprises need to find ways to self-sustain and build momentum right from the get-go. Modern SMBs cannot tread water, even in the short term, and a couple of bad quarters can sometimes be enough to throw a business into freefall. It's a sink-or-swim situation, but in highly competitive markets with numerous rival enterprises, it can often feel like being dropped into a shark tank.

[Read the full article by Entrepreneur](#)

Source: PhocusWire



### Presenting the Hot 25 Travel Startups For 2023

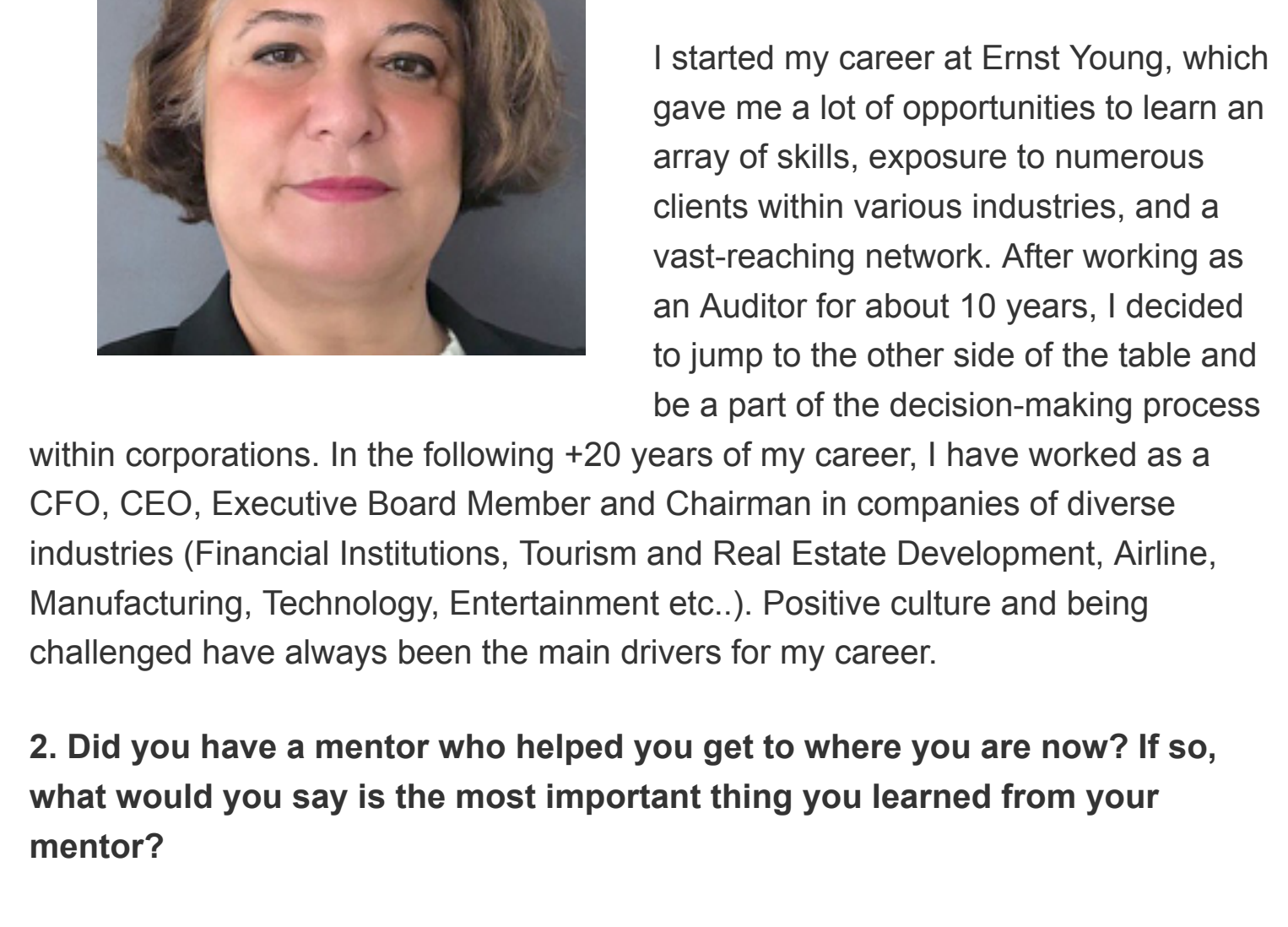
It has long been said that creativity and innovation often arrive in times of crisis. Our selections of the Hot 25 Travel Startups for 2023 certainly validate that mantra.

Of the 25 startups on this list, 14 have been founded since the start of 2020 when travel - and much else in the world - came to a halt as people around the world faced the COVID-19 crisis.

In fact, nine of the 25 launched in 2021 – and are already showing enough promise to warrant their selection.

[Read the full article by PhocusWire](#)

Source: PhocusWire



### Kayak's Hafner on the Good and Bad in Startups, Tech and More

Kayak is one of the longer-standing online travel businesses.

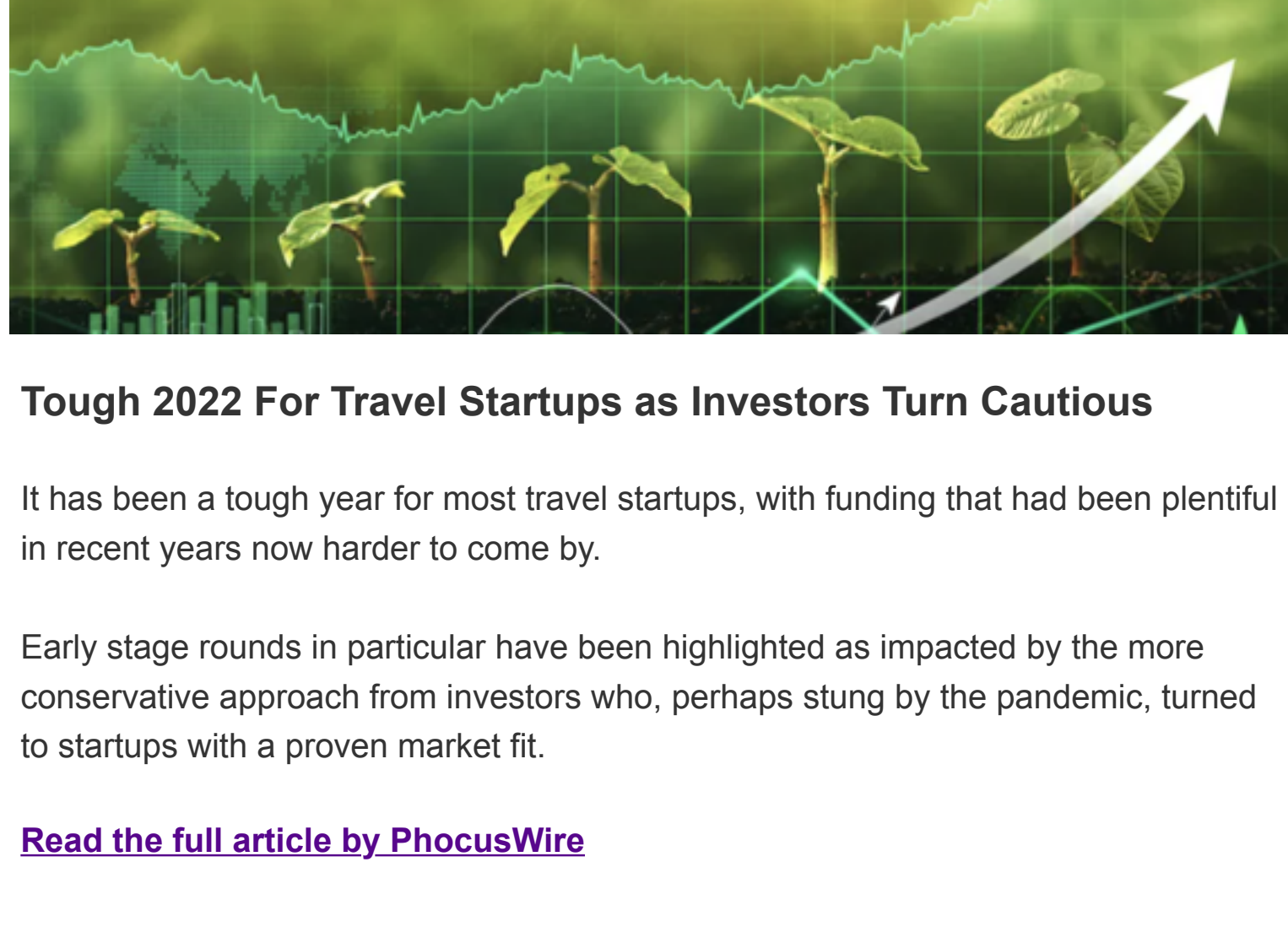
Co-founder Steve Hafner has run the company since its launch in 2004 and through its acquisition by Booking Holdings in 2013.

He has seen startups come and go, funding highs and lows and economic ups and downs in his 18 years at the helm.

In a fast-paced session at the Phocuswright Conference, Executive Interview: Disrupting Disruption, Hafner explains that what keeps him engaged is the need to solve the core problem of making travel and dining better.

[Read the full article by PhocusWire](#)

Source: Forbes

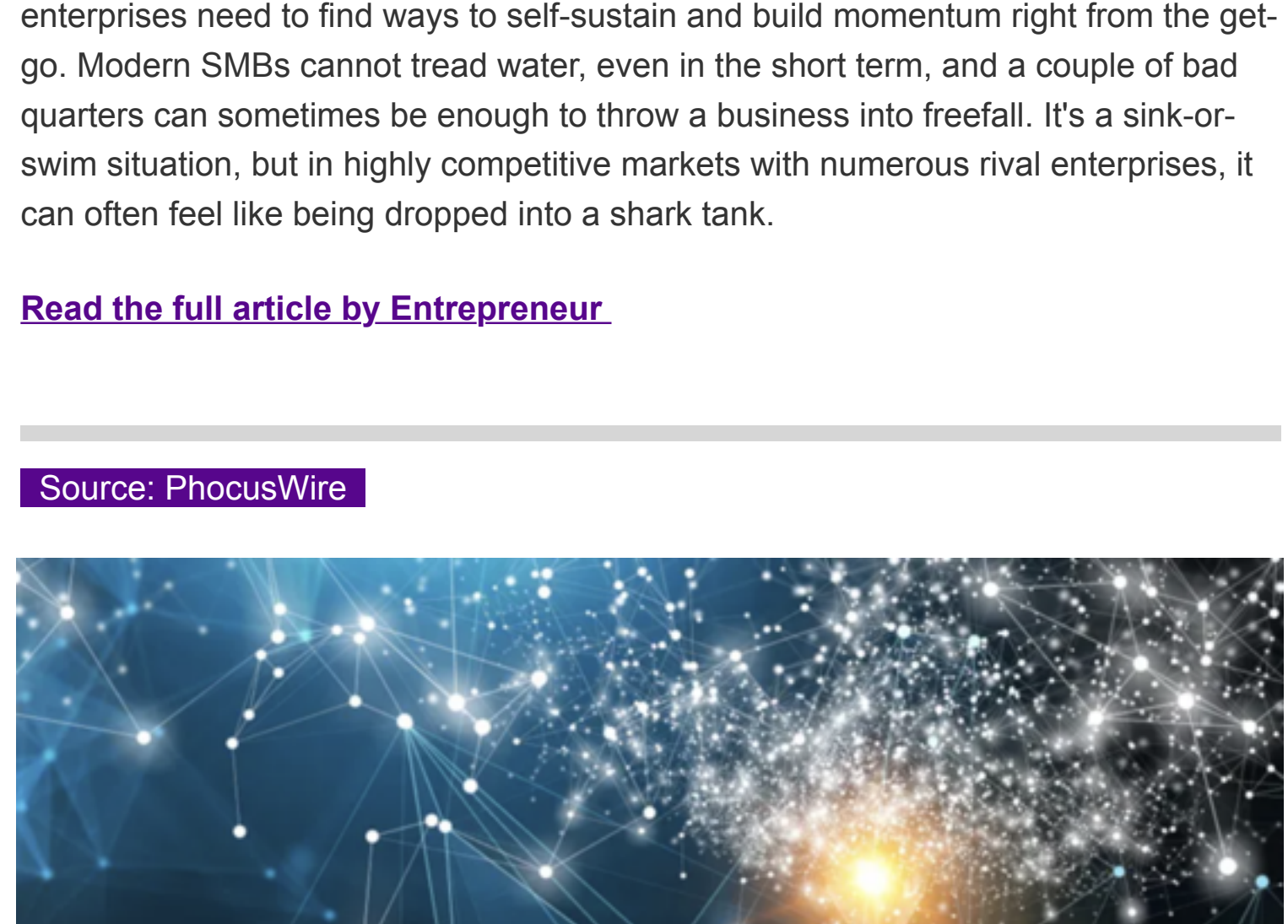


### Is Underinvestment in Tech Holding Your Company Back?

We are in the midst of a worldwide economic downturn. The costs of many day-to-day items are going up, especially energy, which has skyrocketed. Many economies are on the verge of stagflation, with shrinking industries. As soon as businesses crawled out of the shadow of Covid-19 and began recouping their losses, the skies darkened once again in the form of the cost-of-living crisis.

[Read the full article by Forbes](#)

Source: Medium



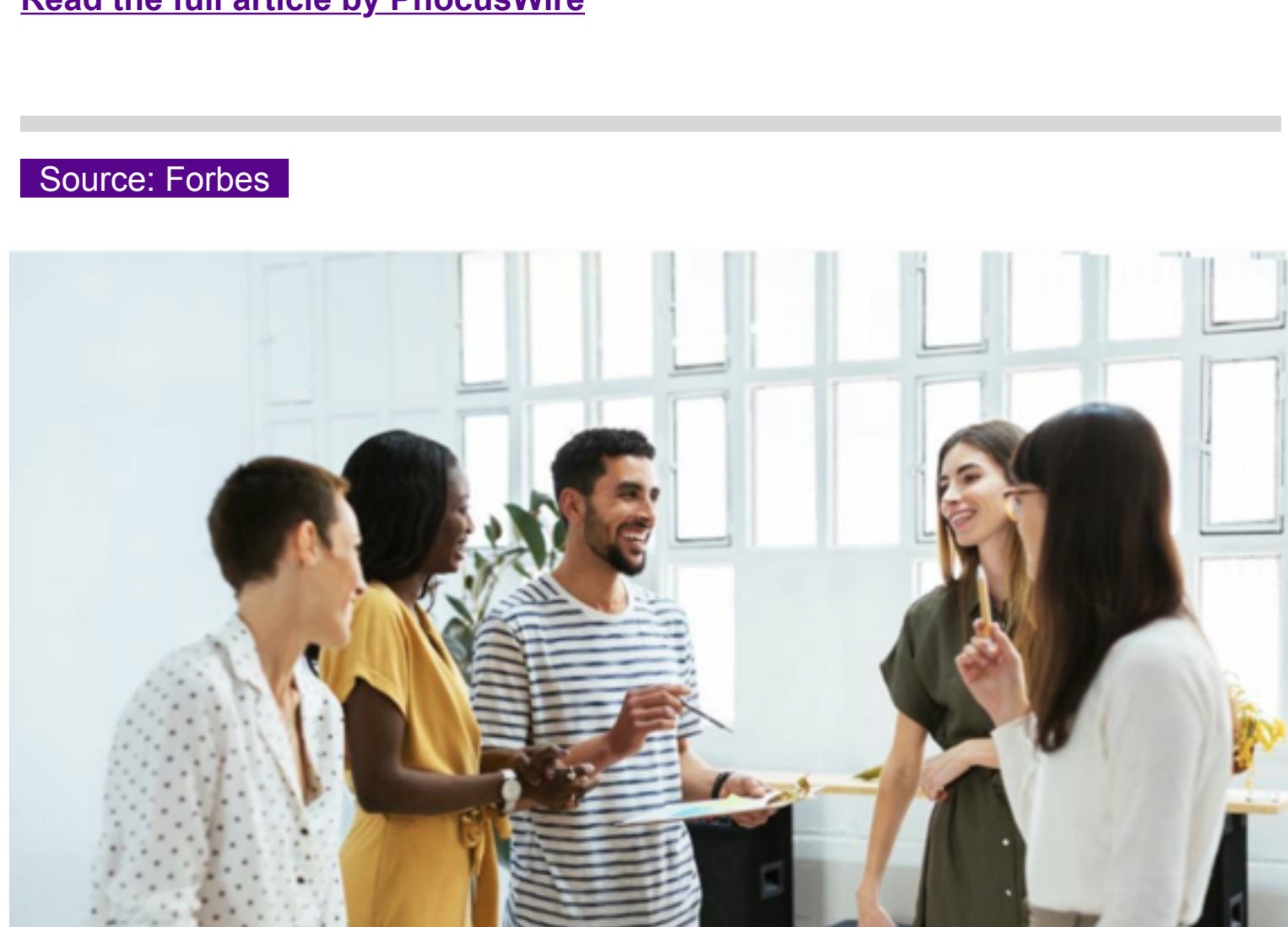
### Own the Problem, Not Just the Solution

Welcome to the first installment in A Quick Look, a VC "lab notebook" from Will McCreddie and Bilal Zuberi.

Our hope is to share some of the interesting thematic spaces we are exploring, and what we are learning about them. We're privileged to meet incredible founders every day who share their vision of what the future could look like with us. They give us an opportunity to learn about new areas, ideas, problems, and solutions. As we take a quick look at these spaces, we learn interesting things about the market, technologies, key players, challenges and opportunities. What we want to do here is share our high-level research notes with you. Post 1, below, covers a framework we find helpful.

[Read the full article by Medium](#)

Source: Medium



### Quote of the Month

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."*

- John Quincy Adams, Former U.S. President

[Become an Incubator Member](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

**NYU School of Professional Studies**  
 7 East 12th Street 7th Floor  
 New York, NY, 10003 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage your preferences](#)

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.