



CLIENT REFERENCES
&
RECENT PRESS

OUR FOUNDER & CEO

In the role of Chief Executive Officer, Demetri Argyropoulos leads strategy, performance, implementation and corporate governance of Avant Global.

Demetri is highly regarded in the global business community for his proven track record in building successful relationships. By establishing value, commonalities and rapport, Demetri creates an atmosphere of trust that enables relationships to flourish. Demetri performs a vital role in helping to succinctly negotiate and close deals between parties.

Since founding Avant Global, Demetri and his partners have been involved in forging relationships, creating opportunities, and generating over \$10 billion in value creation across a range of projects and businesses. He has been the catalyst for successfully originating, co-founding, or seeding over 60 new companies, across a variety of industries ranging from medical devices to Internet advertising.

Demetri is a cofounder of Owl BioMedical (recently acquired by German multi-national Miltenyi Biotec) and on the advisory boards of Juggle Labs, Sword Diagnostics, bSpot, BloomThat and Ripple.com.

In addition to his business interests, Demetri's has raised tens of millions of dollars for charity working with numerous multi-national foundations, charities and non-government organizations including the Clinton Foundation, Promitos, the Santa Barbara Historical Society, 1199 Foundation, Lotus Land Foundation, American Lung Association, Muscular Dystrophy Foundation, Westmont College, CALM, Unity Shop, United Way, Habitat for Humanity, Marymount School, Santa Barbara Symphony, American Hellenic Institute, and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation. He is a member of the National Hellenic Society, YPO-WPO International, Milken Institute Young Leaders Circle, Tiger 21, L100, the Harvard Business School Alumni Organization, and the California Republican Advisory Council. He is also serving as an Engagement Officer on the Executive Committee of the Global Diplomacy Network.

In 2016 in recognition of his achievements and humanitarian actions, Demetri was inducted into the Order of Merit of Savoy, an order of knighthood bestowed by the Royal House of Savoy, the last Kings of Italy. Demetri was also the recipient of the 2010 Gusi Peace Prize for achievements, ideals and values. He is an honorary Naval Aviator, has been recognized as one of the 'Top 40 business leaders under 40' by the Pacific Coast Business Times, and was named as one of 'Greek America's Forty Under 40 Class of 2014.' He was also awarded the 2003 National Leadership Award and the 2003 Business Man of the Year Award by the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Demetri graduated from Westmont College, studied at the American University in Washington, D.C. and Georgetown University's American Government and Foreign Policy program, as well as being a graduate of the Exponential Technologies Executive Program at Singularity University. He is also an alumni of Harvard Business School, where he graduated from the three year Owner/President Management program (OPM) and is a current member of the Harvard Business School Association of Southern California.

SELECTED QUOTES

President Bill Clinton, Former President of the United States of America

“Thank you for introducing Joachim Schoss to the Clinton Foundation. Joachim has become a valued member of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees, and I very much appreciate your efforts to familiarize him with our work. Your support means more to me than you know.”

Thomas ‘Mack’ McLarty, Former Chief of Staff for President Clinton

“I met Demetri during my time in the Clinton Administration, and have seen him on regular occasions since CGI’s Inaugural meeting in 2005. Demetri is a dynamic entrepreneur, with an engaging personality and impressive record of relationship-building, both through the business he founded – Avant Global – and in his civic endeavors.”

Timothy Phillips, Special Advisor to President Clinton

“I am enthusiastically supporting Demetri’s nomination to the Young Global Leaders program due to his exceptional and unusual leadership skills and my confidence that he will emerge as an important voice for his generation in the United States and globally. Demetri established a highly successful company in his early 20’s that continues to grow at an impressive pace and he has leveraged his network of contacts in the private sector to encourage successful business entrepreneurs to engage in philanthropy and to do so in significant and meaningful ways.”

Michael Roux, Chairman of Roux International

“Mr. Argyropoulos has played an active and pro-bono role in the political system in the United States over many years. He is actively involved in the Clinton Foundation. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Museum of Democracy and is a member of the Republican Advisory Council....Mr. Argyropoulos has demonstrated strong leadership at a young age in building a successful consulting firm with international breadth. He has a strong commitment to his work and people and contributes through a number of instruments serving the broader community.”

Chad Oppenheim, Oppenheim Architecture & Design

Demetri is “a true example of the power of positive thinking”.

Arianne Alexander, Rock Your Life Coach

“Demetri is a Powerhouse. That’s the only way I can describe him. I’ve never met anyone like him. He is young, driven, an expert and building and maintaining relationships and has an amazing business. I always experience Demetri as striving for the next level of Life and Leadership.”

John Nevado, President of Nevado Roses

“Demetri is one of the most networked and high-powered individuals I know and he gets things done.”

Rowland Hanson, CEO & Co-Founder of The HMC Company

“Demetri is the person you must know if you want to put together the right deal with the right people.”

CLIENT REFERENCES



Mr. Demetri Argyropoulos
 Founder & CEO
 Avant Global, LLC
 22 El Paseo
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101

- Argentina
- Australia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Brazil
- Canada
- Croatia
- Georgia
- India
- Israel
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Mexico
- Poland
- Russia/Kazakhstan
- Serbia
- Slovenia
- Thailand
- Turkey
- U.S.A.
- Ukraine/Moldova

Dear Demetri,

I would like to thank you and Avant Global for helping us make so many connections with very high-level individuals around the world. These are contacts that we would not have had access to otherwise. For someone like myself, who is not a proficient networker, having an organization like Avant Global evaluate our organization and our needs and then actively search out and connect us with high-level contacts, has had a huge impact. Our reach has grown as a result and awareness of our offering has increased tremendously.

Yours Sincerely,



Shoham Adizes, President of the Adizes Institute

Global Headquarters
 1212 Mark Avenue, Santa Barbara County,
 CP 06720 // 1-805-566-0742 // www.adizes.com



CLIENT REFERENCES

Kay Koplovitz, Koplovitz & Co



KOPLOVITZ & Co

660 Madison Avenue
Suite 1600
New York, NY 10065
212-332-4400
www.koplovitz.com

July 11, 2016

To Whom It May Concern

Demetri Argyropoulos has built his business on creating a network of experts, trusted sources and deal makers who fuel the economy. I have experienced his reach with people who not only have interests in common, people who will ultimately interact in business, but will also come together around issues of social good. His network consists of entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, private equity players, business professionals and policy makers, among others. Connecting people with common interests is a strength of Avant Global.

We met at a conference at Boston University while Demetri was in the formative stages of his business. My relationship with him has remained consistent over 15 years, so I can say he is not in his relationships for short term gain, but endure over time. When he is bringing people together for social good as he does for The Clinton Global Foundation, he undertakes an initiative with passion equal to his business pursuits. He is adding both financial and human capital to the equation, a winning combination.

Kay Koplovitz

Jonathan Levine, CEO of Master & Dynamic

MASTER & DYNAMIC

June 21, 2016

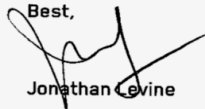
To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Founder & CEO of Master & Dynamic, a premium audio brand obsessed with sound and creativity. We are a New York City-based company with a deep passion for building beautifully crafted, richly appointed, technically sophisticated sound tools for creative minds.

I founded M&D in 2014, and the company has been expanding and growing at a rapid pace since. Demetri has supported M&D from the beginning, making many invaluable connections for us from his astounding network of executives, entrepreneurs, and investors across the world.

If you are looking for someone who can connect you with the right people and help you to build and foster those relationships - look no further than Demetri Argyopoulos.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Levine'.

Jonathan Levine

Michael Sandoval, Chairman & CEO of Atigeo



May 25, 2016

Demetri Argyropoulos
Avant Global LLC
22 El Paseo
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Demetri:

I would like to take a minute to thank you for all the wonderful connections you have made over the years. The business, investor, advisor and other connections you have made have been valuable to me and Atigeo. We have had some long term relationships that are a great asset to us, I appreciate your support and contribution to Atigeo.

I look forward to continuing to work together for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Sandoval', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Sandoval
Chairman and CEO
Atigeo Corporation

800 Bellevue Way NE Ste 600, Bellevue, WA 98004
P: 425.635.3900

David DiGiusto PhD, Stanford Medicine



Stanford | Laboratory for Cell &
MEDICINE | Gene Medicine

DAVID DIGIUSTO PHD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - STEM CELLS AND CELLULAR THERAPEUTIC OPERATIONS
STANFORD HEALTH CARE/STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
300 PASTEUR DR. C32, H3200, M/CS230
STANFORD, CA 94305
O: 650.721.4104 C: 909.576.7378
DDIGIUSTO@STANFORDHEALTHCARE.ORG

June 2, 2016

To whom it may concern,

It is my great pleasure to provide this letter of reference for Avant Global and Demtri Argyropoulos. I have known Demtri for over 6 years and have worked with him on several projects related to the development of devices and products in the biomedical industry. Demetri has not only led the investment and business development of one of these efforts, but also was essential in the sale of the technology to a multinational corporation. I acted as a scientific advisor to the company and personally learned a great deal about business development from Demetri and his team and continue to work with the technology we developed in my position as Executive Director of Stem Cells and Cellular Therapeutics Operations.

I have also engaged Avant Global to help me develop a sustainable business plan for our cell and gene therapy programs at Stanford University. Although early in the program, Demetri has already identified partners and high net worth individuals interested in helping us develop a sustainable business model for candidate cell and gene therapeutics.

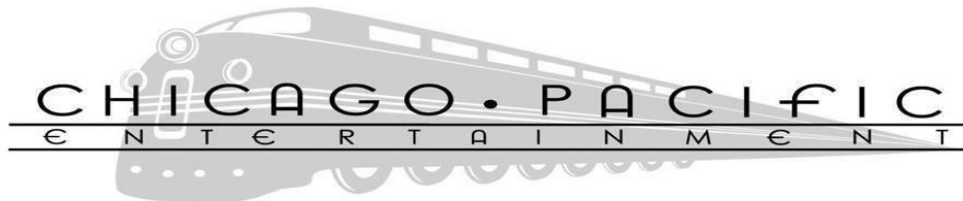
I regard the Avant Global staff and colleagues as high quality professionals who are well educated in their respective disciplines. They are always available to me to support my needs and interests and provide concise, relevant information, contacts and plans as per my needs. The relationships I have built through my interactions with Avant Global will be long lasting and important for my future success. I highly recommend this team to anyone who is in need of business development services, entrepreneurial activities or seeking to develop strategic professional relationships.

Sincerely,



David DiGiusto, PhD
Executive Director, Stem Cell and Cellular Therapeutic Operations
Senior Academic Researcher, Division of Stem Cell Transplantation and Regenerative Medicine
Stanford Healthcare and Stanford University School of Medicine

Andy Davis, Chicago Pacific Entertainment



May 18, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Demetri Argyropoulos is a new style of visionary entrepreneur who is expert in bringing young and old together.

He takes people with good ideas and people with the wherewithal to make those ideas come together and marries them.

For a young man to have this kind of awareness of how older business mavens react to things, understanding how younger markets are developing is truly unique.

It's rare to find a talent that understands capitalism and money and markets that also has a big heart.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Davis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrew Davis
Director/Writer/Producer
Chicago Pacific Entertainment

Kegan Schouwenburg, CEO of SOLS

SOLS

May 5, 2015

AvantGlobal
Attn: Demetri Argyropoulos
St. Kilda East, VIC
3138

Re: AvantGlobal Reference

Dear Demetri:

People stand at the center of AvantGlobal's mission to support business leaders in forming strategic connections, and people are its practice. The allure of machines to make our lives easier is plain to understand, but it is people – moving through the world – that motivates SOLS System's sprint to make the world more mobile.

Demetri and the team at AvantGlobal have proven a dependable strategic partner and have helped guide SOLS Systems to the position of success we are in today. Founders look for investors who provide more than capital infusions. AvantGlobal keenly understands this and provides strategic partnership introductions, corporate guidance, and whether it be a friendly ear, or a key insight, they help pave the bumps and bobs inherent in the startup roadmap.

As a female CEO in an industry of male peers, our goal of manufacturing mobility has been invaluablely aided by AvantGlobal's support so our business, like our product, is strong and nimble. I continue to value my relationship to AvantGlobal years after my introduction to Demetri, and would highly comment them to any of my fellow entrepreneurs.

Sincerely,



Kegan Schouwenburg
CEO

601 West 26th Street, #815
New York, NY 10001
#wearsols

Ben Black, Co-founder of Akkadian Ventures

Akkadian

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Founder and Managing Director of Akkadian Ventures, which is a private equity firm focused on the venture capital industry. An old colleague of mine introduced Demetri Argyropoulos of Avant Global to me in 2012. Demetri made a small investment on our second fund and, since then, we have looked at a number of business opportunities together. In addition, we meet on a regular basis when Demetri visits San Francisco, as well as when I visit Santa Barbara.

From my experience, I can say that Demetri has a very large network that spans a significant part of the technology ecosystem, from China to Bitcoin. He has introduced me to a significant number of talented technology executives, successful entrepreneurs and investors. As a result, I have been impressed with the breadth and responsiveness of Demetri's network.

Anyone looking to improve the breadth and depth of their business relationships will be well served by working with Demetri Argyropoulos.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Black
Co-founder and Managing Director

Romain Peugeot, CEO of Newlion Capital Partners

NEWLION CAPITAL PARTNERS

The Chairman,
Avant Global
22 El Paseo, Santa Barbara,
CA 93101, United States

To whom it may concern,

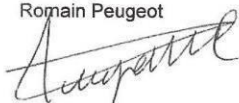
I have known Demetri Argyropoulos for almost a decade. This man has always been a great advisor and more than this, a great friend. I will always remember his immense sense of business and his appetite for the development of new ideas, technologies and relationships.

Demetri and I have shared a lot of ideas of new businesses, spent hours over the phone to establish some guidelines. Demetri is a real facilitator, a real door opener. He is someone to be recommended to anyone who is seeking advice, raising capital or developing a business.

Besides this talented businessman, there is a great team that stands behind him. Professional, devoted and highly qualified are the words to describe those who work at Avant-Global.

Sincerely,

Romain Peugeot

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Peugeot', written over a horizontal line.

CEO, Newlion Capital Partners,
Co-Owner, PSA Group.

Hans Sicat, President of the Philippine Stock Exchange



May 12, 2016

Dear Sir,

Demetri Argyropoulos and I met around 9 years ago. It was an introduction during one of the events of the global peer association, the Young Presidents Organization (“YPO”), where we are both members, that brought us together.

That casual meeting grew into a more productive relationship. Demetri, through Avant Global, provided access to people, transactions and business opportunities to friends, acquaintances and professional relationships of mine. While initially focused on the tech space, these opportunities grew to include other industry groupings and different asset classes. This has been useful, as a good part of my relationships are Asia based.

Demetri and his team are professional, and have an easy going and friendly disposition. They are eager to help, and have proven that in servicing their clients well, they end up growing, too.

I would be glad to provide additional background on Demetri and his team, upon request.

Sincerely,

Hans B. Sicat
 Hans B. Sicat
 Vice Chairman

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL

Governor Gray Davis (Ret.), Former Governor of California



Governor Gray Davis (Ret.)

February 24, 2012

Demetri Argyropoulos
Prima Worldwide
22 El Paseo
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Demetri:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for all of the assistance you have provided me and to express how thoroughly impressed I am by the introductions you have generously made on my behalf. You have continuously sought worthwhile opportunities amongst your clientele and participants in the life sciences for my involvement. I value your wisdom and good counsel.

Thank you for your continued support. I know that the people that I have connected you to are grateful for everything that you have provided.

I am pleased to provide a strong reference for you and value you as a friend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gray".

Governor Gray Davis (Ret.)



10100 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 2200, Los Angeles, California 90067 www.loeb.com
LA2204516.1 (310) 282-2223 ggd@loeb.com
6666-6666

William J. Clinton, Former President of the United States of America



WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

October 18, 2006

Mr. Demetri Argyropoulos
President and Chief Executive Officer
Prima Consulting Group
1230 E-Coast Village Circle
Santa Barbara, California 93108

Dear Demetri:

It was a pleasure to be with you at the 2006 annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative. I am very proud of everything we accomplished, and your participation was invaluable to our success.

With your help, we went beyond simply discussing some of the world's most pressing challenges to identifying innovative and diverse ways in which each of us can contribute to solutions. The commitments we generated together will make a world of difference, and I look forward to learning more about your accomplishments over the coming months.

I truly appreciate your dedication to the Initiative and the global community it serves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Clinton".

William J. Clinton, Former President of the United States of America



WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

January 17, 2007

Demetri Argyropoulos
President and Chief Executive Officer
Prima Worldwide
1230 Coast Village Circle
Santa Barbara, California 93108

Dear Demetri:

Thank you for introducing Joachim Schoss to the Clinton Foundation. Joachim has become a valued member of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, and I very much appreciate your efforts to familiarize him with our work. Your support means more to me than you know.

I hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Dr. Gayle D. Beebe, President of Westmont College

WESTMONT



GAYLE D. BEEBE
PRESIDENT

January 11, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Demetri is a fantastic professional and a wonderful human being. He works with the utmost integrity, has remarkable insight and judgment. By combining his vast network of people and creativity, he is able to envision mutually beneficial relationships and connect people with similar interests. I really enjoy the friendships that have formed as a result of my relationship with Demetri.

With highest regard,

Dr. Gayle D. Beebe
President

James P. Linton, President of Owl biomedical, Inc.



January 17, 2012

Dear Sir/Madam:

I have known and been involved with Demetri Argyropoulos and Prima Worldwide for a number of years now. I consider Demetri a friend and colleague and find him a savvy, hard-working, relentless and creative in business.

When we decided to start our new business, Owl biomedical, Inc., we turned to Demetri for his impressive strategic and investment contacts. Prima Worldwide and Demetri Argyropoulos played an integral part in establishing our company and securing critical investment capital. We have certainly benefitted substantially from Prima and Demetri's extensive contacts and have been very pleased and impressed by the results achieved to date. We certainly expect Owl to continue to benefit from these introductions will, when appropriate, be favorably disposed to explore input, advice and further introductions from Prima and Demetri.

If you are seeking financial investment and strategic relationships for a growing entrepreneurial company, I would certainly recommend you consider Demetri and Prima Worldwide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JPL', written over a light blue circular stamp.

James P. Linton
President
Owl biomedical, Inc.

PRESS

[Avant Global Appoints Admiral Stavridis and Stephen Bonner to Private Equity Advisory and Investment Boards](#)



SANTA BARBARA, Calif., Nov. 07, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Avant Global Fund Partners (“Avant Global”), a General Partner of White Field AG GP LLC, today announces the appointments of Admiral James Stavridis (Carlyle Group) and Stephen Bonner (US Private Equity advisor and healthcare expert) to its growing ranks of thought leaders.

[READ FULL STORY](#)

[Avant Global and White Field Capital Announce Launch Of \\$200 Million Private Equity Growth Fund](#)



SANTA BARBARA, Calif., Oct. 14, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Avant Global, LLC (“AG”) a leading relationship-driven venture capital investment, business advisory and private equity fund management firm, has announced a partnership with White Field Capital Partners (“WFCP”) to launch a \$200 Million private equity growth fund.

[READ FULL STORY](#)

[Alan W. Wilson and Nicolas Peluffo Join Avant Global Team](#)



Santa Barbara Company Brings Onboard Highly Accomplished Executives Focused on Identifying and Forging Deep Relationships With the World’s Most Disruptive Leaders and Investment Opportunities

[READ FULL STORY](#)

PRESS

Entrepreneur Weekly Podcast Episode 79: Mark Gorlin & Demetri Argyropoulos

Interviewed by: Alan Taylor

(As featured on Entrepreneur Weekly- March 24, 2018)



Select Episode 79, skip to 18:40

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/listen/entrepreneur-weekly>

Demetri Argyropoulos: Takes Silicon Valley and wants to stop the Greek “brain drain”

Written by: Reader.gr Team

(As featured on Reader.gr- March 15, 2018)



Demetri Argyropoulos is not the guy next door. At least not our next door. He is one of the Greeks of the Greek community who grew up in Santa Barbara near his grandfather who knew Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Tesla. His dream was to build his own myth at the Mecca of Technology, Silicon Valley. With vision, tenacity, and method focused on setting up new relationships, he founded Avant Global, an investment firm for innovative businesses that enables access to more than a billion dollars of capital. Knowing the right people was the link between the innovative ideas and those who would and could invest in them.

Despite the fact that Mr. Argyropoulos has an extremely successful career in the US, he has set the bar even higher than his achievements so far: he wants to expand his activities in Greece, bringing the spirit of Silicon Valley to our country and contribute in its own way preventing the loss of human potential and the departure of young people abroad. His first step is his return to Greece and his business research of Greek talent. In his interview he mentioned, among other things, where he started, what gave him the impetus to reach his goal, what the biggest difficulties were, and the building blocks of a successful startup

How Avant Global was created?

I started Avant Global 20 years ago in my college room while i was still studying. From an early age, I realized that the most important thing in business and life is to build and invest in human relationships. Behind every successful project there is a group of suitable people for it. The goal of Avant Global's is to build business relationships and bring the right people together.

What were the biggest obstacles during your start and how did you manage to overcome them?

At first I had some failures like everyone. No one succeeds at first. You need commitment to your goal. I had some very good mentors at the beginning of my career. They taught me how to overcome my fears and have faith in myself. You need courage and confidence. The difficulties are within your daily schedule we need to know how to overcome them.

In your point of view, what is the biggest problem in Greece for a potential investor?

Unfortunately, the problems for a potential investor in Greece are enough, but that does not mean that Greece is not an attractive investment destination. The road to success will always have obstacles. The biggest problem for a potential investor is the volatility in issues that affect the investment sector, such as the tax regime. Stability will change Greece to the better and attract investors with more ease.

Do you think Greece could become a pole of attraction for investment funds in innovative businesses?

The economic crisis in Greece has created investment opportunities in various sectors such as tourism, which has been booming in recent years, the e-commerce and technology sector, the real estate sector, and Greek quality consumer products business. What I have noticed in recent years visiting Greece is that there are quite a few young people with very good and innovative ideas. These Greek start-uppers are the ticket to grab the gaze of foreign investors.

What should our country do to avoid “brain drain” and book the talented Greeks here?

We must motivate young people who want to try and succeed in their own country. First steps are very important and the state should create facilities for them while setting goals and supervising results. The success of young Greeks is the key to overcome economic crises.

What is the secret of success? What should one do to achieve his goals?

To achieve your goals, you must be determined and always quick to make good decisions. When you have specific goals, you are not allowed to leave decisions for tomorrow. Hard work and discipline. There is always time to have fun and do things for yourself. What

definitely does not exist is time to waste. If you really want to succeed you have to evaluate your time better.

Have there been moments when you thought to give up or compromise?

In the beginning it was very difficult, just like every start. Many doors were closed but I never accepted 'no' for an answer. I have always had insistence and faith in success. We must not be reconciled when we have clear goals.

What are the critical and basic elements for a startup?

An outstanding team, groundbreaking idea, commitment to the goal, discipline, and hard work.

Link to Greek Version: <https://www.reader.gr/news/stories/dimitris-argyropoylos-katektise-ti-silicon-valley-kai-thelei-na-stamatisei-elliniko>

Here's How MENA Companies Can Find Opportunity in the United States

Written by: Demetri Argyropoulos

(As featured on Entrepreneur Middle East- March 8, 2018)

Entrepreneur
MIDDLE EAST

While many of tech's top disruptors are born, or raised, in Silicon Valley, there are a myriad of others across the globe looking for a way into the booming growth of new tech in the United States. With the Middle East establishing itself as a major player in technology through projects like Smart Dubai (led by IBM and global blockchain specialist firm ConsenSys), it is fast becoming an area where disruption is becoming commonplace.

Yet there is still a disconnect between MENA and the world capital of innovation. Successful companies in the Middle East find it challenging to enter the U.S. market, navigate it, and nurture relationships in its ecosystem. But by taking a few steps in the right direction, you can possess the right tools and relationships that will help to open windows of opportunity in the west.

To give you some context, our California-based firm, Avant Global, helps its clients and portfolio companies by culling its network of CEOs, potential investors, and power players—a vast global system built through years of working in Silicon Valley, and the ability to astutely recognize needs before the client does. The firm advises its clients in a non-traditional way, coupled with the added exclusive benefit of getting to know an industry's movers, shakers, and investors.

Through our business dealings, my team at Avant Global has found that often there are inefficiencies in markets like the Middle East which act as headwinds to entrepreneurs and billionaire businessmen alike who want to invest and diversify. Clientele that includes both legacy companies and startups are looking to develop strategic and symbiotic relationships in the U.S. As trusted scouts in the Valley, we have these tips for you on how to do that.

1. Identifying innovators (and understanding how the VC community evolves) *It's not easy to identify what areas will become the next big disruptors in technology. When you do come across an interesting, innovative, and fast-growing startup, you may find that it's hard to gain access to certain pieces of information in particular accurate financials. If you have the opportunity to invest in what might likely be the next Facebook, Google, or Amazon, requiring cumbersome or expensive amounts of materials can hurt you. Yes, you should always do your due diligence. While the financials of a company are important, equally as crucial to its success is the team running it. You could have all of the information about a company in writing, but ultimately that won't tell you whether the drivers of the vehicle can navigate and execute the ups and downs of building a sustainable company. It's all about the people. In fact, they're the reason why Silicon Valley has done so well. The area houses a uniquely diverse and talented community from around the world, creating solutions that can be scaled fast on a global magnitude. It's hard to compete with that, and it's one of the biggest contributing factors to how Silicon Valley has established itself as a premiere tech hub.*

2. Finding early access to strategic investments *Ambitious investors may find that it's not easy to invest in earlier stage startups, often paying inflated valuations later on.. A no-fail way to gain access before it's too late is to build your network of active early stage investors. As you begin developing relationships in the early stage community, the more the roots of your ecosystem grow. Making introductions and offering to review deal flow of your peers allows others to be aware of your activity and how you think. This activity will only compound itself and serve as nodes of connection that can help you gain exposure to the right people in high quality deals early on. Let those connections know what you're interested in, and actively work towards it. Travel, go to incubator events in your community and in others. The value of a phone call is one that's often overlooked, too. By not limiting yourself to the platforms and*

channels of traditional communications, you can find yourself standing out in a crowd that's more often than not hiding behind screens.

3. Enabling new technologies at old legacy companies *While investing in startups is one way to engage with Silicon Valley, another is to invest in new technologies so that your company can remain competitive. The Middle East has many well-known legacy companies, the majority of which are in banking, financial services, and industrials. Companies that have seen huge success for decades are often the last to recognize the value of new technologies until it's too late, and their competitors have risen to equal ground. It's crucial to identify the competitive gaps that your company is losing out to, then actively backfilling those with strong partnership opportunities, or investments in technology, which support those weaknesses. For example, banking and financial services companies have benefited greatly from investing in the fintech space.*

Finding ways to build a figurative bridge to Silicon Valley can be challenging, and making the wrong moves can quickly turn into missed opportunities. By understanding the priceless value of a potential investment's leadership team and building a strategic network, you can forge ahead of the crowd in finding, and securing, successful investments. Business owners in the Middle East can also benefit from Silicon Valley by enabling new technologies that are created by the California region's innovators. It's a region that has more than just plentiful sunshine. It's a land of enormous opportunity to which investors in all corners of the world continuously turn.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/310121>

A Cross-Country Adviser

Written by: GMI Post

(As featured on GMI Post- March 5, 2018)

The logo for GMI POST, featuring the words 'GMI POST' in a light blue, sans-serif font, centered on a solid black rectangular background.

Whether you're a Rust Belt manufacturer or a startup in the Windy City, building strategic relationships and expanding your company's ecosystem are crucial to its long-term growth.

Since 1999, Avant Global, a U.S.-based business advisory firm, has helped billionaires, business leaders and entrepreneurs in the Great Lakes region, build vital partnerships around the world.

“We see a lot of legacy companies that have been in business for a long time lose market share because they’re stuck in the past. On the other hand, many startups turn up their noses at so-called old school business veterans that can actually be valuable mentors and investors,”
Avant Global Founder Demetri Argyropoulos said.

“By forging connections with the right decision makers, both types of groups can be growing faster and more furiously,” Argyropoulos added.

For nearly two decades, Argyropoulos and his partners have successfully brought together the right kind people in boardrooms to form lucrative partnerships. To date, the firm has helped forge deals that have generated more than \$15 billion in value for its clients.

<http://www.gmipost.com/special-feature/52/us-great-lakes-2018/153/avant-global.html>

Need a Good Mentor? Here’s How to Find One

Written by: Sammi Caramela

(As featured on Business News Daily- February 27, 2018)



**BUSINESS
NEWS DAILY**

When you're just emerging in an industry or you lack the experience needed to progress, you might feel self-conscious and wary of your endeavors. Sometimes, all you need in these moments is someone to look up to, someone who has been in your shoes yet created their own path to success.

"The modern mentor can elevate both your mind and your career in a way that cannot be taught in school, a boardroom or on a business trip," said Demetri Argyropoulos, CEO of Avant Global. "For me, mentorship has been an invaluable part of my career growth."

*Although forming a mentor-mentee relationship must be a mutual process, there are some key factors to keep in mind as you seek a mentor. Mentoring and career experts offered their answers to questions entrepreneurs may have about choosing a mentor who's right for them.
[See related article: Perfecting Your Mentoring Relationship]*

What does a mentor do?

Whether you're the founder of a brand-new startup or an entrepreneur with a bit of business experience under your belt, you can always benefit from a mentor.

"A mentor can serve as a sounding board at critical points throughout your career," said Diane Domeyer, executive director of staffing firm The Creative Group. "They can provide guidance on career management you may not be able to get from other sources and an insider's perspective on the business, as well as make introductions to key industry contacts."

Doña Storey, OPEN Mentorship Institute mentor and American Express OPEN advisor on procurement, noted that mentors can help their mentees identify and avoid business pitfalls, and work through the challenges ahead of them.

What qualities does a good mentor have?

At the most basic level, your mentor should have experience more significant than your own and a track record of success in what they do.

"A great mentor is someone whose qualities make up a much better version of who you envision yourself to become," said Argyropoulos. "On the other hand, some great mentors may help you to learn who not to be like – for example, a very successful businessman who is struggling in his personal life. Great mentors have a complementary skill set and bring different qualities to the table. Different perspectives are valuable in the mentor-mentee relationship."

Doug White, career expert and editor of career and management insights website TCG Blog, advised seeking a mentor who has a strong character and traits worth emulating.

"Look for mentors who are authentic, empathetic, creative and honest," said White. "You need someone who's caring and invested in your professional growth, but also someone who will speak truth to you. Sometimes you need some constructive criticism or a reality check, while other times you need a high five or pat on the back. A well-chosen mentor can provide all of those things."

A mentor in the same business area as yours may better understand your business's challenges and concerns, but Storey said that fruitful mentoring relationships don't necessarily have to happen within the same industry. Leadership philosophy may be more important, she said.

"Make sure that the mentor shares a similar value system in leadership and management," Storey said. "Knowing who you are as a leader is critical before entering into a mentoring relationship. Only then can you align yourself with the right guide."

How do you find one?

When you're looking for a mentor, start by thinking about your career path and narrowing it down to a few leaders who have your dream job or whom you admire, said Bill Driscoll, a district president for Accountemps.

"Successful mentoring relationships happen when the mentor and mentee are the right match," Driscoll said. "Reach out to someone you think you are comfortable with, who can be a neutral sounding board, and [who] will also provide great advice."

It is possible that your perfect advisor could find you by chance and offer their mentorship, but Domeyer said that being proactive in your search for your mentor(s) is the best approach.

"Try to meet as many experienced professionals as you can," she told Business News Daily. "Once you've identified someone, approach your potential mentor and the initial meeting as you would an interview. Be prepared to explain what you hope to learn from the individual and why you value his or her insights and expertise, as well as what you bring to the table."

"Seek out someone who you want to emulate, who can help you in areas where you're deficient in knowledge and skills," Argyropoulos added. "My most impactful mentor experiences evolved through sharing experiences and stories, and at some point, the mentee can also teach the mentor. You want to create an environment where you're paying that knowledge forward to others too."

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/6248-how-to-find-mentor.html>

How Reverting to 'Old School' Ways Helped Me Build Strategic Relationships

Written by: Demetri Argyropoulos

(As featured on Business News Daily- October 10, 2017)



When I was in college, I was eager and hungry to make connections. At 21 years old, as a dorm resident at Westmont College, I founded my business advisory firm, Avant Global. The company has since grown into a global business with well-known, successful clients, including the founding family of the world's largest brick-and-mortar retailer, and one of the largest holding companies in the world.

I credit this to many things, including the people I've surrounded myself with along the way. But I've realized that many of the same tactics and techniques I used on campus in my early dealings are still relevant today. Though technology has paved the way for quicker and more efficient communication, going back to old school ways can help you progress in the competitive business world.

Pick up the phone

My company helps high-profile clients build strategic relationships that drive company growth, investments, funding and more. There are many make-or-break details involved in the day-to-day business within our ecosystem. Email chains and group texts between business associates might be convenient, but calling to speak with colleagues is more effective than a "reply all" exchange.

This is especially true when you've got a global business that's building bridges between Silicon Valley and executives, investors and even successors across the globe. With clients and partners in countries ranging from the Philippines to the United Kingdom, I've learned that the voice lends a human connection that a computer screen cannot compete with.

Write it down

I'm on the road, and often out of the country, much of the year. A digital calendar and iPhone notes just don't cut it sometimes. For many, including myself, taking handwritten notes can help to retain information. It's also valuable to print itineraries and organize them in folders. You never know when a phone battery will die, or a signal will be lost.

Think outside the boardroom

Deeper connections can be made when you're thinking out of the box and meeting outside of the office or conference call. I've found that nurturing relationships with clients by welcoming them to your home or out for coffee can be valuable to all parties, especially when "shop talk" is off the record.

I often host groups that integrate both personal and professional relationships; you can take a hike, offer a feast or go to lunch with business partners or potential clients. Deeper connections are made when you go beyond the white lights of a corporate space.

Get back to your roots

Digging into your roots and acknowledging your heritage can be fruitful on both a personal and professional level. As a Greek-American, I have a community of support domestically and globally that is bound by a cultural thread. Many of my personal contacts are also passionate about philanthropy, investing and other areas I'm immersed in.

It's through these groups that I could connect Amed Khan, a young, successful investment banker who has been building refugee camps for displaced Syrians in Greece, with an influential Greek-Orthodox priest, Father Alex Karloutsos of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (Father Alex has offices in New York City and conducts liturgies at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Hamptons in Long Island). Father Alex then introduced Khan to a Bishop in Athens who helped Khan to navigate the country's bureaucracy. Khan's Elpida Home has since become more successful, hosting hundreds of refugees who otherwise would have no roof over their heads.

These types of unique connections happen when you find ways to relate on a more personal and engaging level that goes beyond a glass screen. By reverting to "old school" tactics, you too can have a competitive edge in building and nurturing strategic relationships.

About the author: Demetri Argyropoulos is the Chief Executive Officer of Avant Global, where he leads strategy, performance, implementation and corporate governance of Avant Global.

Since founding Avant Global, Demetri and his partners have been involved in forging relationships, creating opportunities, and generating over \$10 billion in value creation across a range of projects and businesses. He has been the catalyst for successfully originating, co-founding, or seeding over 50 new companies.

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/10271-demetri-argyropoulos-avant-global-business-relationships.html>

A Venture Capitalist Reveals this is how you get to Silicon Valley

(As featured on CNN Greece- September 12, 2017)

An interview with Avant Global CEO, Demetri Argyropoulos



The secrets of the difficult route from the idea to the big investors of Silicon Valley are revealed by the Greek-American Venture Capitalist, Dimitris Argyropoulos, CEO and creator of Avant Global. As Argyropoulos says in an interview with CNN Greece, "I have built the path of success with failures. I had failures and successes. I started my company 19 years ago and I was hitting doors. I did not accept 'no' as an answer. I was persistent until I got to the right people." Now, Avant Global, based in Santa Barbara, has investment

funds from around the world, it owns the Ripple cryptography technology, while high-profile personalities are among the investors involved.

In the advice given by Mr. Argyropoulos, he stresses that "what counts is the group, the people", while he argues that talented Greek developers must be able to reach economies of states that can pay for their abilities.

<http://www.cnn.gr/synenteyxeis/video/9042/etsi-ftaneis-mexri-ti-silicon-valley-enas-venture-capitalist-apokalyppei>

A Failed Deal Was (Partially) Responsible for My Success



By Demetri Argyropoulos

(As featured in Real Leaders- September 7, 2017)

Yes, you read that headline correctly. A failed deal was, partially, responsible for my success.

When I launched Avant Global nearly 20 years ago, I was introduced to someone I thought would become a long-term partner. After months of collaborating and getting close to a deal (so I thought), I learned that he wasn't entirely truthful throughout the process. After several key revelations came to light about his dishonesty, lack of integrity, and actual valuation of the company, the deal collapsed and, at the time, it was a major setback for my business and me.

After licking my wounds for a few weeks, I was able to get back to the hard work, and the company began to grow and flourish. To date, we've helped fuel more than \$10 billion in added value for our clients, which include one of the wealthiest business magnates in Mexico, the founding family of a well-known retail giant, and one of the largest holding companies in the world.

Looking back years later on this failed deal, I realize that mistakes are part of the journey. If I'm not making mistakes – and learning from them – then I'm not

expanding my knowledge and abilities. I've realized that what I thought of as a "failure" at the time was a pivotal moment that inspired me to work smarter.

The first action we took was to create a thorough and thoughtful due diligence list. This list has evolved into a standard document that we use internally before investing in a company. By having our own internal checklist, and crossing off many questions before the initial partner meeting, we've already taken a lot of the guess work out of the deal.

Next, we reevaluated how we structured the terms and timing of the deal. We approached the process more gradually, with a longer timetable, which gave us a chance to know our partners better. And we established milestones along the way, which required our partners to perform at frequent intervals and establish their credibility.

After this one failed deal, I was extremely upset. This led to clouded judgment and morale issues amongst my team. But from this experience and with age, I learned to always react more mindfully. There is no mistake too

big to fix – everything is a learning experience. By maintaining your cool under a stressful situation, you not only think more clearly but also show those working with you the best way to handle a situation.

Never lose your enthusiasm. I felt very skeptical about other deals moving forward – I wondered how many other dishonest people I may encounter. But if I lose my enthusiasm for my work it becomes just that – work. If I remember every deal is a new opportunity, and I recognize the value of learning from each one, I'm able to see the greater meaning in what I do, and it never feels like 'work.'

The road to success isn't always a straight line. Bumps, curves, and detours arise along the way. That's the nature of taking calculated risks. But if we realize that our perceived setbacks are gifts for learning, we can move forward enthusiastically to create great value in this world.

<https://real-leaders.com/failed-deal-partially-responsible-success/>

An Interview with Entrepreneur Argyropoulos of Avant Global

(As featured in the National Herald- July 2, 2017)

Written by: Eleni Sakellis



THE NATIONAL HERALD



NEW YORK – Greek-American Demetri Argyropoulos- founder and CEO of global advisory firm Avant Global, based in Santa Barbara, CA, loves Greece.

A dual citizen for the last 7 years, he divides his time between his home in California and the homeland.

Argyropoulos spoke with The National Herald about his family, his work, and his love of Hellas.

Argyropoulos said that many members of his family read TNH over the years, and his grandparents were avid readers of the paper. He noted that his family roots are in Peloponessos

and in Athens, but before 1922 his father's family lived in Asia Minor and were refugees who settled in Oropos, Nea Palatia. Argyropoulos' father came to America at the age of 18. His mother was born in the United States to Greek immigrant parents.

Argyropoulos told TNH that he is a proud Greek-American and spends about 3 months a year in Greece and has just recently purchased property in Corfu. He noted that this is one way he is helping the Greek economy and

encouraging his Greek-American friends to also buy property in the homeland.

A successful businessman, Argyropoulos is also a dedicated philanthropist. He was recognized for his support of philanthropic causes and knighted into the Order of Savoy in a ceremony at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York. The knighthood recognizes those who have contributed to the benefit of mankind through good works, the arts and letters, sciences and humanitarian disciplines. He said of the honor that only two people have been knighted in recent years and the experience was humbling and memorable. Argyropoulos noted that friends from all over the world

attended the ceremony and the “history of something like this is very interesting, and it’s quite unique to be a part of that.”

When asked about his recent comments in interviews with the C-Suite Network and CNBC.com on the common characteristic shared by all successful entrepreneurs- making decisions quickly and decisively, Argyropoulos said they do make decisions quickly but with an important differential, they use their instinct and understanding and have “failed enough to know how to succeed.”

Argyropoulos, a serial entrepreneur who made his first million at the young age of 23, also touts an impressive roster of individuals and companies — dozens of billionaires, fast-growing startups, and Fortune 1000 companies. Argyropoulos’ clients include one of the wealthiest business magnates in Mexico, the founding family of a well-known retail giant, and one of the largest holding companies in the world. Since it was founded, Avant Global, known for building strategic relationships for its customers, has helped fuel more than \$10 billion in added value for its clients.

He said, “Fear cannot be your enemy. You have to be fearless, to conquer your fear and take calculated thoughtful risk.” Experience and insight are important, Argyropoulos noted, and gave the example of buying a failing company in order to turn it around. “It won’t work if you don’t have the experience and insight to make the changes to improve the business and eliminate problems.”

To illustrate his point, Argyropoulos spoke about his admiration for Greek-American billionaire Dean Metropoulos and how he saved Twinkies by making the necessary changes to keep the company in business.

About his own work, Argyropoulos said his company assesses risk, uses the currency of relationships to bring people together in “the best team in the world centered around a common purpose.”

He noted the power of believing in that purpose, “You have to believe, whether it’s a company or a country.”

His company builds “great businesses by bringing the right people together,” he added.

When asked about the economic issues in Greece, Argyropoulos pointed out that Greek-Americans can help by investing in the economy and buying real estate. He noted that the Germans should forgive the debt because they owe

Greece a great deal from the past, especially World War II, so at least some of the debt should be forgiven.

Argyropoulos noted that there are too many taxes on the Greek people, consumers cannot spend, their hands are tied. Foreign investment is great, it brings some stimulation to the Greek economy but he wonder about too much foreign control.

The hardworking culture of Greece was passed down to Argyropoulos through his family, his grandfather Vlasios Kokiouisis, he noted, was a great mentor to him and a source of knowledge. Arriving in the US at age 17, Kokiouisis worked for Henry Ford and Thomas Edison, and helped develop the Model-T Ford assembly line, Argyropoulos told TNH. Kokiouisis passed away at the age of 101.

He said that everyone in his family is an entrepreneur and they are great examples to follow in life. The innovative Greek people, he said, will come back to success. He cares very much about the country, noting that he gives back as much as he can. His efforts with the Clinton Initiative, Leadership 100, the National Hellenic Society, and the Greek Orthodox Church and helping with the refugee crisis in Greece by finding abandoned factories and retrofitting them to be used as housing is just one of the ways he gives back.

Proud of his heritage, Argyropoulos said, "My heart is in Greece and my mind in the US."

<https://www.thenationalherald.com/167994/interview-entrepreneur-demetri-argyropoulos-avant-global/>

Walking the Walk and Talking the Talk



(As featured in YPO- June 8, 2017)

Written by: Deborah Stoll



*Having just returned home after a whirlwind round of participation at the Milken Institute Global Conference, the YPO Innovation Summit in Silicon Valley and the Berkshire Hathaway Annual Meeting, **Demetri Argyropoulos** (YPO Europe One) is besieged by friendly faces waving and stopping to say hello as he walks down the streets of Santa Barbara, California, USA.*

His popularity comes as no surprise. As Chief Executive Officer of Avant Global, Demetri and his partners have forged relationships,

created opportunities and generated more than USD10 billion in value creation across a range of projects and businesses. Personally, Demetri has been the catalyst for successfully originating, co-founding or seeding more than 50 new companies and as a philanthropist, has raised tens of millions

of dollars for charity. His work with multi-national foundations, charities and non-government organizations include the Clinton Foundation, the Santa Barbara Historical Society, 1199 Foundation, Lotus Land Foundation, American Lung Association, CALM, Habitat for Humanity and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation to name a few.

We managed to glean a few questions and answers as Demetri made his way through the palm tree-lined streets bordered on one side by the Santa Ynez Mountains and on the other, endless views of the Pacific Ocean.

What was your first job?

I worked for a billionaire when I was 18. I looked at him and asked myself, "How does this guy make so much money every day?"

When I was 19, I volunteered for (then) President of the United States Bill Clinton and experienced the way in which people came into his ecosystem and built their relationships with him based on trust.

Subsequently I had great mentors from then on who reinforced the idea that relationships are what's important – that what we are really selling at the end of the day (regardless of what we are literally selling), is trust.

On your website you say, "Meaningful moments occur when the right mix of opportunity, value and trust collide and that of these three, trust is the most powerful and difficult to obtain." Can you expand on this?

I realized at an early age that it's all about who you know, which is a derivative of who you trust. That is the common denominator of successful people. They value trust over anything. It's okay to fail as long as you're doing it honestly.

You are known as something of 'a connector.' When you bring two people together for a potential business partnership, what qualities do you look for in each?

They should have shared common values and be motivated by the same things, but also have talents that complement each other. This will allow the relationship to flourish in a complimentary way. Accountability is a large part of forging a healthy working relationship.

Plenty of people make connections and do their due diligence, yet more often than not, relationships fall apart. What do you "get" that others don't?

There are a lot of EQ (emotional intelligence) qualities one has that paint a picture of what relationships will place nice together – good communication, an ego or lack thereof and an ability to unite people are a few. I am able to put the relationship puzzle together in a different way.

You have raised tens of millions of dollars for charity. What are the criteria you look for when considering to support a foundation?

The relationships I have with those organizations and my belief in their ability to execute and succeed. The organizations I work with have “taught people how to fish” so that they can become sustainable. I believe philanthropy should have an end-point and that we are in the business of helping the cause in order to enact a solution. In this way, our support has an expiration date. If it didn’t, we are just creating an on-going problem, or making it worse by encouraging dependence on assistance.

How does your business philosophy correlate to your philanthropy?

I create businesses that are sustainable. My goal is to become as obsolete as possible, which means bringing the right people together to do their job. We are all more valuable as a team than individually.

How does your philanthropical acumen affect the work you do at Avant?

I think it creates a culture of giving and the knowledge that we’re here for a bigger purpose. My team at Avant knows I don’t do what I do for money only, but rather, a big part of what I do is meant to help others. That is what is most gratifying for me.

What are some of the processes philanthropy can take away from for-profit businesses?

Through fixing a problem in a sustainable manner you create an exit-strategy. In business, an exit-strategy is, I’ve sold my company; in philanthropy it’s, I’ve solved a problem.

You have been recognized for many of your achievements – what does legacy mean to you?

I hope my legacy will be putting the right people together in order to unlock potential. We are all one community with varying skillsets. I hope to help more people understand this in order to maximize humanity’s potential.

How has being a member of the Social Engagement Network helped you personally, professionally and/or otherwise?

It has made me more mindful, brought more social issues to my attention, helped me understand the modern model of philanthropy and introduced me

to the next generation of leaders and givers. Bringing the right people together to build the best teams around a company is my value. This is the currency I can bring to SEN to help the network remain healthy and vibrant.

<http://avantglobal.com/press-releases/walking-the-walk-and-talking-the-talk/>

The Most Powerful Skill You Need to Succeed in the C-Suite



C-SUITE AdvisorsTM

(As featured in Huffington Post- April 22, 2017)

Written by: Nicole Sawyer

Whether you're CEO of a multi-billion-dollar brand, or a start-up working towards Series A, there is one thing every executive has in common; you want to get to the next level and expand your customer base. Unfortunately,



for most companies, it can be extremely challenging to keep up with change.

At the speed of light, corporate cultures are transforming and innovative technologies call for new leadership skills.

The upside is, regardless of how fast the world moves around you there's one thing that will always stay the same, the most important skill you need to master to prosper in business.

Visionary entrepreneur Demetri Argyropoulos is well-known from New York to Silicon Valley as the king of connections.

His investment firm, Avant Global, has generated over \$10 billion in revenue for clients and created strategic relationships for the world's wealthiest, including Bill and Melinda Gates, Lady Gaga and Bill Clinton.

Argyropoulos was an early investor in Twitter, RedBull and DocuSign, and his Venture Capital fund, AG Venture Capital & Investments, has seeded over 50 diverse start-ups.



Argyropoulos credits his success to one invaluable skill...Networking.

C-Suite TV Correspondent Nicole Sawyer caught up with Demetri to talk about the most powerful skill you need to master to succeed in the C-Suite, and the biggest mistakes executives make when trying to build a strategic relationship.

Nicole Sawyer: *What is the most powerful skill to have at the C-Suite Level?*

Demetri Argyropoulos: *The ability to bring value to your clients and your team. Typically, this value is brought forth through introducing and fostering unique relationships. All businesses and CEOs, despite how powerful they may be, depend on access to strategic relationships. These strategic relationships should monetize the company's ecosystem, strengthen its platform and give a competitive edge over others with sustainable differentiation in the marketplace.*

Sawyer: *What personality traits do successful C-Suite Leaders have in common?*

Argyropoulos: *The most important trait we all have in common is the ability to know what the market wants before it actually happens. This comes from an innate understanding of one's customers or clients. From there, you must be able to make decisions quickly, execute that vision, while staying one step ahead of the rest. All great CEOs are forecasters and firefighters.*

Sawyer: *When it comes to managing your own career, how do you prepare yourself to reach the next level?*

Argyropoulos: *I always have my ultimate end goal in mind. If you understand your end-game, you are able to manifest that into a reality. I always measure progress against this end goal and quantify it along the way with revenue, timelines and objectives.*

Sawyer: *How do you know who the right connections are for different types businesses?*

Argyropoulos: *The key here is to understand the objective at hand – what*

are you trying to accomplish? What is the client trying to achieve? Once you understand that objective, you need to dig deeper to understand the context. This is done through research and by understanding the current behavior at hand to figure out the next important introduction to make. And always remember, relationships only work if there's equal or greater value on both sides.

Sawyer: *You've worked with anyone from Bill Clinton to T-Boone Pickens, what is the secret to get their attention and maintain a business relationships with well-known people who are in high demand?*

Argyropoulos: *When you bring value to a relationship, even if it's the busiest CEO on the planet, he or she will still make time for you. However, following-up is key, especially for those who are extremely busy. Most people don't follow-up, which in business, can lead to distrust. You have to always do what you say you are going to do. It's that simple.*

Sawyer: *Where do business leaders fail when trying to create a relationship?*

Argyropoulos: *Oftentimes, their approach may be too aggressive and their message may not be clear enough.*

Every successful relationship and every failed relationship is a consequence of one thing: how well, or poorly, you communicate. Clear communication is important to set from the beginning.



Put yourself in the other person's shoes and ask the question, "Why do I want to work with this person?" Again the answer comes down to the value you can bring. Deliver value and these problems go away.

Sawyer: *What are some of the biggest mistakes people make when following up?*

Argyropoulos: *They're not entirely truthful. Be impeccable with your word. Just do what you say you're actually going to do. This is so important when building trust in an influential relationship and so few actually do it.*

Sawyer: *What's your advice for dealing with people you don't like? Difficult people?*

Argyropoulos: *Try not to. Seriously. I have a no a-hole rule. I've fired billionaire clients before because it just wasn't worth it. At the end of the day, a billionaire is not better than someone starting out, and vice versa. You have to always respect others and the unique qualities and differences we all have.*

Sawyer: *If your personality is more of an introvert and networking doesn't come natural to you? How can an individual make connections if they really don't like talking to people?*

Argyropoulos: *For starters, that's where companies like ours, Avant Global, come in handy. Sometimes we partner with, or get hired by executives who are not very social so we help to manage new relationships and introduce them to the businesses they need to get in front of. Let's be clear, we're not a social firm! But for those who are more introverted, we simply want them to be the best at what they excel at and we'll do the rest. We can't all be great at everything.*

Sawyer: *What's one example of a major acquisition Avant Global made that transformed its valuation and what can business leaders learn from this example?*

Argyropoulos: *In the case of Owl Biomedical, we took its technology that had been developed and in existence for ten years and formed a new company with this technology in mind and capitalized on it. We sold it to a multi-billion dollar medical device company in Germany called Miltenyi.*

From this example, business leaders can learn that if you know how to assemble the pieces of a company/deal: IP, human capital, and usually a combination of both, you then have all the key pieces ... it becomes about execution and creating value to the market.

Sawyer: *Your investment portfolio includes more than 50 diverse startups. What sectors are you watching to find value now?*

Argyropoulos: *We want someone who is ahead of the curve in terms of where the market is heading- who is that next big game changer? Right now we like the sectors of machine learning, data science and big data for startups. We're also always looking for disruptive investments in high-growth companies in tech, energy, real estate and consumer products.*

Sawyer: *What qualities do successful entrepreneurs have that make them stand out from the herd?*

Argyropoulos: *All successful entrepreneurs are tenacious and never give up. Stay focused on your mission with your goal in mind. Successful entrepreneurs also aren't afraid to fail because they have the ability to see things others may not. It's okay to have bumps along the way, but that fresh perspective is what's going to set you apart.*

Sawyer: *What advice do you have for a startup to break down barriers when approaching a well-known brand about a strategic partnership?*

Argyropoulos: *It's a great time to be a startup. We've never seen so many large corporations working with startups. I'd advise a startup to think about how its technology could actually benefit the large brand it's approaching. Many big companies realize that if they don't change quickly with the times, and evolve, their number may be up. Startups should appeal to the larger brands to evolve with them.*

Sawyer: *You run a very successful VC Fund, what's the best way for an entrepreneur to network with you if they are seeking funding?*

Argyropoulos: *Think to yourself "Why would Demetri and the Avant team want to meet with me? How can I bring value to their firm?" If you can clearly answer those questions, you're already ahead of the curve.*

<http://www.c-suiteadvisors.com/the-most-powerful-skill-you-need-to-succeed-in-the-c-suite/>

Also syndicated nationally on Huffington Post:

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/58f90b75e4b0de26cfeae1d9>

Entrepreneur who works with dozens of billionaires says they share one characteristic



(As featured in CNBC- March 9, 2017)

Written by: Kathleen Elkins

Demetri Argyropoulos is no stranger to big money.

The founder and CEO of [Avant Global](#), a business advisory used by the most affluent families and leaders around the world, connects the elite for a living. "I work for several dozen billionaires and companies," he [explains to Forbes](#). "They call on me to introduce them to the people they need to meet."



What do those billionaires have in common? Argyropoulos says, "They make decisions quickly. They've created a certain platform in their business and they want to continue to expand that and continue to build a moat around their business that is sustainable and efficient. So they don't want to waste time."

"They know what they want," he says.

Argyropoulos isn't the only one to recognize that the richest, most successful people are often decisive.

Author Napoleon Hill, who studied more than 500 self-made millionaires including Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford, reached the same conclusion. "Analysis of several hundred people who had accumulated fortunes well beyond the million dollar mark disclosed the fact that every one of them had the habit of reaching decisions promptly," Hill wrote in his 1937 classic, "[Think and Grow Rich](#)."

That's in contrast to less wealthy folks. "People who fail to accumulate money, without exception, have the habit of reaching decisions, if at all, very slowly, and of changing these decisions quickly and often," wrote Hill.

If you learn to act decisively, it can reap incredible rewards, Hill observed: "Those who reach decisions promptly and definitely know what they want, and generally get it."

<http://www.cnbc.com/2017/03/09/entrepreneur-who-works-with-billionaires-says-they-share-one-trait.html>

Success Mantras From Radically Successful Founders And CEOs

Forbes

(As featured in Forbes- January 30, 2017)

Written by: Patrick Hanlon

There are many theories about what creates success, business school libraries are filled with them. But no one knows better than the brand founders and CEOs who started out with nothing but a scratchpad and a dream.

We thought that it would be interesting to learn what the leaders themselves think about how to create success, so we asked some of our favorite 21st century companies like Warby Parker, SXSW, as well as a few fledgling startups. Some of these companies are established names. For others, success is still a work in progress.

Whether the companies are new or old, large or small, we think the responses will inspire.

Thanks to everyone who helped fill in the blanks on this story.

So, how do you make, create, imagine or inspire success?

“Treat others as you they want to be treated,” says Neil Blumenthal cofounder and co-ceo at Warby Parker (the crossed-out “you” is intentional). And also, “A deliberate, holistic and relentless pursuit of an ever-improving customer experience.”

“For me it comes down to recognizing and championing talent while steadfastly protecting ideas, creativity and craft. Ideas need to be confidently questioned. Does this resonate, is there a reason for it to exist. Is this the right medium for it. When that’s as satisfied as it can be, then you have to become an evangelist of sorts,” says Patrick Milling Smith cofounder of SMUGGLER and Here Be Dragons. Milling Smith is also producer of the Tony- and Grammy-award-winning Once and a board member Punchdrunk Global.

“We always act as if we’re still in Beta!” declare leaders Tony Kretten and Ryan McIntyre at online fashion retail phenom JackThreads. (Note, Ben Lerer is CEO but VPs Tony and Ryan supplied the quote.)

“The deep fear of failing. We never get comfortable and are always thinking of the next thing,” counsels Bob Novogratz, principal at The Novogratz.

“Know your audience and, in some cases, BE the person you’re looking to reach with your business. Figuring out your next big step as a brand is as simple as understanding your consumer’s pain points and where they’re going to find relief/solutions,” advises Kellee Khalil, founder and CEO at bridal website Lover.ly.

“Innovation and looking at the big picture are essential to success,” says Philip Krim, co-founder and chief executive officer at Casper, everyone’s favorite new mattress company. “A fresh, new approach to a basic need can go a long way. We try to create an experience that customers want to be a part of, rather than just selling them a product.”

“Success is creating an emotional connection that leaves a lasting impression,” says Isaac Muwaswes, cofounder of Palette Creative, which runs the brand creative (non-music) and merchandise for G-Eazy, an American rapper from Oakland, California. G-Eazy won Favorite Hip-Hop Artist at People’s Choice Awards 2017. Most recently, Muwaswes was head of brand development at Twitter. “We push the creative freedom to express yourself, in whatever way we feel is most authentic to G and to his fans. Creating experiences and not products, is one of the ways that we evaluate what we do—whether that’s a show, or piece of music or piece of clothing. That’s how we shape the world of Eazy.”

“Just do what you say you’re going to do,” says VC Demetri Argyropoulos at Avant Global. “It sounds so simple. But it’s surprising how many people don’t.”

“It’s called work for a reason. It is supposed to make you feel tired at the end of each day. And yet daily you grow stronger,” says designer Mike Perry, founder of Mike Perry Studio.

“Do what you love. Never forget your roots, and when you wake up everyday to do what you do,” says Allyson Kapin, founder of Women Who Tech and Rad Campaign, “surround yourself with people who have/had different experiences than you. Don’t let money cloud your judgment.”

“It’s the DNA of organizations to resist change. Whenever you hear ‘but we’ve always done it that way, that’s a cue to rethink things.” Roland Swenson, CEO of SXSW.

Blue Bottle Coffee founder James Freeman did not go to business school. Instead, he was a professional clarinet player. He admits freely to being outside the business school template. “I habitually find myself taking significant solace in the words of other, greater minds, often to the benefit of the people I work with,” writes Freeman in an email. “With this spirit in mind, below is a list of things that some of my literary and artistic heroes have said which we have benefitted from recently at Blue Bottle.”

Freeman’s “list of things” is four pages long so that, with his consent, we crudely abbreviated it to the following three quotes:

“Everything is the same but always in a different way.” Goethe

“Everything has been figured out except how to live.” Sartre

“Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face.” Mike Tyson

And just one more, because it resonates with us, from the New York Philharmonic’s most radical conductor, world-famous Leonard Bernstein, “To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan and not quite enough time.”

“What drives our day to day, keeps us going during difficult times and the thing we always fall back on is creating an emotional experience for the women who buy our product and simultaneously creating a platform we can use to empower them,” declare Stephanie Danan and Justin Kern, cofounders/designers of fashion brand Co.

“We never think that we’ve made it. This is just one step in a much longer process,” declares Agris Kipurs at AirDog, winner of the 2014 CES Award. “I’m sure that one day we’ll look back and say, ‘That was interesting, that was fun!’ But that’s not right now. We’ve certainly had some successes, but right now we’re still looking forward to overcoming our present challenge—however that presents itself!”

“Startups move so fast, every second counts. You can’t pat yourself on the back for too long, just like you can’t dwell on past disappointments,” advises Colleen Broomall, founder of YSBnow.com a pop-site for GenZ. “Learn from them, but keep moving forward and working as a team. Remember why you started, and always keep your eyes on the prize.”

“Persistence is vital,” advises Lesley Jane Seymour, founder and CEO of startup CoveyClub.com. “Every day you have to get up and try and figure out how to move the ball one more yard down the field. I’ve heard many successful entrepreneurs say others would have given up when they kept going—because they believed.”

“Community is really the future of work,” declares Adam Neumann, cofounder of WeWork.

“Most of success is knowing what you want, defining what success looks like for you and then going out and making it happen,” says Lauren Schiller creator and host of the radio show and podcast Inflection Point, which features world-changing women. (Schiller is also executive producer of audio for Salon.com.)

“We try to stay focused on our priorities and not schedule too many things at once. There are lots of things that we want to work on, but we know that we can’t do our best work if we do them all at once,” says Steph Liverani, cofounder of free photo site Unsplash.

Finally, Jaunique Sealey, whose latest company is fledgling Regroup Nation, says, “Based on everything I’ve learned in these past years of launching and building businesses, working for Prince, and fighting tooth and nail for my own dreams and those of others, I’ve learned that ‘never give up’ is actually a process, and I hope that sharing my perspective on it will help to change our World for the better. I hope that by giving the best of what I know, and what I’ve learned from some of the incredible people that I’ve been fortunate to call mentors, I will be able to help inspire and encourage others to follow through, and to find the hope in the midst of uncertainty.”

And finally, “Always forward!” from Luke Cage, comic book superhero.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/patrickhanlon/2017/01/30/success-mantras-from-radically-successful-founders-and-ceos/2/#690e0db4799b>

Knight Time

Montecito JOURNAL

*It is becoming quite a year for Montecito business executive **Demetri Argyropoulos**. The 39-year-old entrepreneur, who attended Westmont College and Harvard Business School, became a cavaliere, the youngest knight in the former royal house Order of Merit of Savoy in a ceremony in New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral last month, as I exclusively chronicled here.*

<http://avantglobal.com/press-releases/knight-time/>

Knight Time

It is becoming quite a year for Montecito business executive **Demetri Argyropoulos**.

The 39-year-old entrepreneur, who attended Westmont College and Harvard Business School, became a cavaliere, the youngest knight in the former royal house Order of Merit of Savoy in a ceremony in New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral last month, as I exclusively chronicled here.

And now Demetri, founder of Avant Global, a business networking company, is featured in a glowing article in *Forbes* magazine by writer **Patrick Hanlon**, which reports he has generated \$10 billion in value for his clients, including being an early investor in Twitter.

“I realized that if you put the right people together, you can have great outcomes,” reflects Demetri, whose abilities led to new contacts, new partners, new horizons, and made him a millionaire at 23 years old.

“What I started was essentially a talent agency for business. From talent, we were able to gain momentum, from momentum we were able to get equity from deals, exits from deals. And we were able to get to where we are today.”

He has helped raise money for the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**



Montecito’s Demetri Argyropoulos featured in *Forbes* (photo by Santi Visali)

and the Clinton Global Initiative, as well as creating strategic relationships with personalities including **Deepak Chopra**, **Lady Gaga**, and the Sam Walton family, among others.

“I am grateful to have amazing partners in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Manila, Austin, and New York, who’ve helped me get where I am,” adds Demetri. “We are a family.”

The Knight In The Boardroom

The Forbes logo is displayed in white serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.

(As featured in Forbes- January 14, 2017)

Written by: Patrick Hanlon



Fifth Avenue in New York City was bustling with holiday traffic on a recent Saturday morning, as an Uber driver pulled up to the curb in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral. A dark-haired man wearing a black tuxedo emerged from the car and dodged between holiday shoppers as he sprinted up the cathedral steps.

There was no way for passersby to realize that amidst the chatter of holiday Manhattan, they were just a few meters away from a distinguished ancient ceremony. The unassuming figure just emerged from the Uber was in fact Demetri Argyropoulos, a Silicon Valley multi-millionaire dealmaker, a man about to become the youngest member of the most ancient and prestigious Order of Savoy.

He was about to become Sir Demetri Argyropoulos.

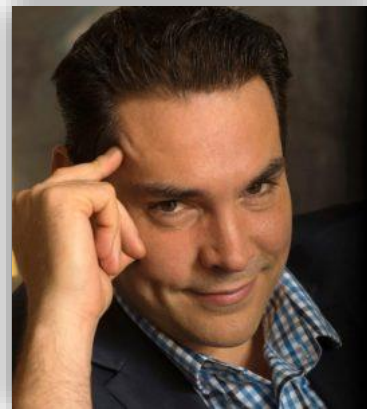
There are over 388,000,000 million entries for "knight" in Google Search, most of them having to do with Dungeons and Dragons or unicorns. It takes some doing to become a real knight.

In daily life Argyropoulos heads Avant Global, a flourishing strategic investment firm on the other side of the continent. Based in Santa Barbara, California, an hour South of Silicon Valley by jet, Argyropoulos has an accelerated schedule that demands he spend much of his time between San Francisco and New York City.

Argyropoulos has been the catalyst in successfully connecting, co-founding, or seeding many dozens of companies in industries from medical devices to Internet advertising. Argyropoulos was an early investor in Twitter. He has helped raise money for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Clinton Global Initiative, invested in a company co-founded by Lady Gaga, and created strategic relationships for the world's top ten wealthiest families. In sum, Argyropoulos and his partners at Avant Global have generated over \$10 billion in value for clients.

It has not been easy money. Sir Demetri Argyropoulos grew up in Santa Barbara California. His father worked in finance, his mother was a part-time interior designer and homemaker.

Santa Barbara is a special place. The town basks on sun-soaked hills between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The average temperature is 61 degrees, average rainfall only 18 inches. It is not weather, but the absence of it, that has made Santa Barbara a legendary basecamp for Hollywood actors, rock stars, retired executives and the entitled.



Growing up in Santa Barbara, Demetri found himself immersed in the population of successful retired executives. "I had mentors from a very young age," admits Argyropoulos. "I had a propensity to be very comfortable with older people. I think part of it was cultural. Greeks are known for having strong, healthy relationships with elders, so it was easy for me to spend time with older adults in business."

Demetri also grew up very close to his grandfather, an electrical engineer who had worked with both Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. "He knew so many amazing people," says Argyropoulos. "He knew Tesla." (His grandfather died in 1996, at the age of 101.)

Exposure to influential people at a young age gave Argyropoulos confidence and courage, even if yet unmerited. It was a stepping stone.

While a student at local Westmont College, Demetri met some tech entrepreneurs. This was in 1995, still the early stages of the Internet, and

relationships were fluid. Many Internet entrepreneurs were freewheelers who wanted to be in on the action, very few knew how.

“I was still a senior at college, living in the dorms, and I was introduced to some tech entrepreneurs,” recalls Argyropoulos. “One of whom was the first company to create public domain books and films on the Internet.”

It so happened that Argyropoulos was going to Europe as part of an international school program, because the entrepreneurs knew he had some relationships in Europe, they agreed to let Demetri help them forge new strategic partnerships.

“At that time, they had their highest European Internet penetration with Nokia and Ericsson,” says Demetri. “So I pieced together an international business development relationship with new content providers and carriers, to deliver content from this American company. That was my first client.”

The deal was a rite of passage. Importantly, the outcomes gave him confidence, courage and the nest capital to do new things.

Before the dot com bubble burst in 1999, he made another introduction for his client and raised \$10 million. “I realized that if you put the right people together you can have great outcomes,” reflects Demetri. This led to new contacts, new partners, new horizons, and it made Argyropoulos a millionaire.

He was 23 years old.

“I have been around some of the smartest people, all of my adult life,” he declares. “I realized that if you build trust with the right people you can do amazing things.”

Together with his partners at Avant Global, Argyropoulos developed a string of relationships with dozens of fast-growing startups, billionaires and Fortune 1000 companies.

“What I started at that time was essentially a talent agency for business. From talent we were able to gain momentum, from momentum we were able to get equity from deals, exits from deals. And we were able to get to where we are today.”

Venture capitalism is filled with public stereotypes: from Daddy Warbucks and Batman's Bruce Wayne to the modern antics of Jordan Belfort and Bobby Axelrod (Leonardo Di Caprio's character in "The Wolf Of Wall Street" and the Damian Lewis character in "Billions", respectively). There is the predator, the maverick, the opportunist, the lone hunter.



In truth, the universe of venture capitalism is a vast infinitude for most people, even for investors. The practice has its own shooting stars, planetary systems and supernovas, its own blazing suns with their unique gravitational pull. There are spheres of influence, Saturn-like rings and fresh new universes. The investor's role is to find that single star flickering in the distance, then to churn the universe to make that star burn bright.

If stars were people, finding the right constellation could be crucial. In fact, finding the right people is where Demetri Argyropoulos excels.

"It's like making a movie," Argyropoulos serves up his own metaphor. "After you read a thousand scripts, you finally come upon a blockbuster. But then you need blockbuster talent, the right director, the right cameraman. You need the right chemistry on the set."

Every startup faces a thousand small decisions that challenge their potential to become a blockbuster and relationships are every startup's most valuable resource. Whether the company is run by a first-time founder, serial entrepreneur, or seasoned executive they all need trusted strategic relationships to fuel company growth.

David DiGiusto is executive director at Stanford Medicine, in Stanford, California. Part of his responsibility is research and developing new medical products.

"I met Demetri through a colleague when we were developing a new device," recalls DiGiusto. "He was an incredible resource for connecting me with the right people to get my program moving forward. When he tells me he's going to do something, it gets done. He's a very credible, honorable person to have an association with."

Two themes surface when talking about Demetri Argyropoulos: first, that he's connected. And second, that he's the nicest guy.

Demetri's first question after answering the phone, is to ask how I'm doing. His manner is friendly, open, congenial. On the day we spoke, the knighthood was still fresh in his mind and he was preparing for a holiday party happening the next day. "It's a hundred thirty people," says Demetri. "People are flying in for it."

Argyropoulos is trademarked for party skills. He likes bringing people together. It's what he does. He brings in a special chef. He takes visitors on hikes at his ranch outside Santa Barbara. Guests jet home, raving about their experience.

Demetri arrives at meetings with a pad of yellow-lined legal paper and writes with a green marker. He is tall, dark-haired. He has the forehead, nose and chin commonly unearthed when digging up Classical antiquities. His face seems designed to frown but, instead, he smiles a lot. While talking about books he is reading, he stalks the room trying to find the latest book by Peter Diamandis ["Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think"]. His other favorites of the moment are "The Happiness Advantage" by Shawn Achor. "Negotiating The Impossible" by Deepak Malhotra. Nothing by John Grisham or James Patterson is on the table.

"If I'm not learning and growing everyday, then I'm not excited," says Demetri. "That, for me, is the theme of my life and the theme of my company. To be constant learners."

Many venture deals are accompanied by what might be described as "noise". The chatter of pitch decks, market statistics, pattern thinking, analysis, square box diagnostics (spread sheets) and the sheer entrepreneurial adrenaline can be overwhelming. Which is why most venture capital firms make only a few deals a year. For Demetri Argyropoulos, it all boils down to the people. And the people who know the people.

"My Rubik's cube has been turned in so many different directions," says Argyropoulos. "I can see things that people can't see. How the platforms are going to work, where the missing voids are, where pieces need to be filled. I've created hundreds of millions of dollars and created great value just by putting the right people together. It's building, building, building trust.

"It's really about the people," Argyropoulos repeats. "Ultimately, the founder is the original salesperson. There has to be efficacy but there also has to be a

vision, which has to be communicated. Someone who is extremely driven and a great communicator, who is extremely grateful.”

Constant traveling between coasts gives Demetri Argyropoulos perspective. “When I’m in New York or San Francisco you never have time for yourself. It’s always going going going,” he laughs.

“When I get back to Santa Barbara, I’m working on all the stuff I picked up when I traveled. That’s one of my advantages. If I was in New York, I think I wouldn’t be as successful.”



His geographic position also places Argyropoulos outside the Silicon Valley echo chambers.

“California is the epicenter of technology,” says Demetri Argyropoulos. “It has the most incredible minds in the world, all coming together in the same place and creating technology for the greatest change we’ve seen ever.

“Why would we want to go anywhere else when we’re right here?”

But because Avant Global is not actually inside Silicon Valley, nor headquartered in New York City, the capitol of capital, the firm has physical and philosophical distance that creates critical advantage. “We can maintain perspective,” says Demetri. “It’s good to have that balance.”

Argyropoulos insists that he works as well with old economy as with the new economy.

“I see ecosystems,” says Argyropoulos. “That’s my thing. It’s forecasting what ecosystems are going to be dominant—understanding that.” To that end, Demetri Argyropoulos has identified several sectors positioned for explosive growth in the years to come.

An example.

One of the problems defining the world right now is that food has become political. The more nutritious organic foodstuffs are more expensive to produce—and therefore more expensive to buy. This puts vitamin-rich

*organics out of the reach of families in lower economic circumstances—
instead, they must rely upon cheaper mass processed foods.*

“One of the biggest expenses in growing organic food is labor,” explains Argyropoulos. So, one of the companies in the Avant Global portfolio is an agricultural tech company that grows organic food with the help of robotics.

The farming operation has systems for temperature and water-control and even harvests and packages via robotics.

“If you look at the health hazards to food,” Argyropoulos pauses a moment to let the hypochondriac imagination roar. “If we can give people clean, healthy, affordable organic food,” he calculates. “Look at the benefits.”

Other sectors on the rise include financial technologies like blockchain and digital currencies.

New healthcare technologies including 3D printing, cell therapies, and telemedicine assisted by artificial intelligence will add new treatments and services.

Cybersecurity will become more important than ever, says Argyropoulos, engaged not only in data protection but also synthetic environments that can simulate situations and predict outcomes.

And the diversified platforms of new media.

Understanding a product’s market fit, quality, design, and engineering necessities—while building a platform and financing growth—depends on a large number of relationships serving a wide range of purposes.

As a result, Argyropoulos spends much of his time both learning and building his network. Just as network theory suggests that it’s your friend’s friend’s friend who will help you get your next job, it might be your friend’s friend’s friend who will help you locate, evaluate or finalize your next high impact project.

“It’s about how humans interact,” says Demetri. “Being devoid of ego. Being passionate about what you do, distinguishing yourself as intellectual property. That’s how I help build brands.”

John Mavredakis is the longest-tenured employee at Houlihan Lokey, the number one mergers and acquisitions advisor in the U.S., according to Thomson Reuters. “When I started there were 15 people, now there are

1400," laughs Mavredakis. Who is now senior managing director and president of Houlihan Lokey Capital, Inc., the company's investment banking subsidiary.

Mavredakis has had a relationship with Argyropoulos for nearly two decades. "When I first met Demetri, I was a little curious to see how successful he would really be," admits Mavredakis, laughing. "I've had nothing but good experiences. He's been very generous in introducing me to people, which has resulted in business. More often than not, if he doesn't know them, he knows someone who does. When I need to connect, the people he connects me to are always very responsive. It's been great!"

"Part of success is just sticking around long enough that people know you're not going away," smiles Argyropoulos. "And you can get good at what you do because you've stayed the course."

Demetri Argyropoulos knows how to succeed. He also knows how to contribute.

Argyropoulos has raised tens of millions of dollars working with multi-national foundations, charities and non-government organizations including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Clinton Global Initiative, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation, Muscular Dystrophy Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, and numerous others. In 2010, Demetri was the youngest person ever to win the GUSI Peace Prize.

Recently, he raised money for Andre Aggasi's magnet schools in Las Vegas. "I like helping people," says Demetri, "because I like the gratification of changing somebody's life for the better."

For this work and other socially conscious efforts to support the underprivileged, Demetri Argyropoulos was awarded a knighthood in the Order of Savoy.

Argyropoulos, who is now 39, has learned many lessons.

"I had mentors along the way giving me great advice on how to develop my business, negotiate deals, be a better leader," Argyropoulos recalls. "And they also taught me about how to fail. When you learn from people that have so much experience you also learn what failure is like because a lot of successful entrepreneurs have failed themselves to success."

Another thing learned. "You need to believe in what you do. And you need people who believe in what you do, who give you validation along the way.

The future? These days, Avant Global has three distinct business units: a strategic advisory, venture capital and investments, and a holding company.

“My biggest problem as a company is that I have created such a big network that it hasn’t even touched the surface of its potential,” he declares. “But I don’t have time to process all the requests of things people want me to do.”

“It’s about finding people and it’s also about finding mission critical solutions. I like people, it’s the root of who I am. It’s never boring.”

Demetri Argyropoulos, philanthropist, successful entrepreneur, youngest Knight in the Order of Savoy, grows quiet. “It about what impact we have,” he says quietly. “While we’re here just for a little while.”

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/patrickhanlon/2017/01/14/the-knight-in-the-boardroom/#61e56f576abc>

Say “Good Knight,” Demetri

Montecito
JOURNAL

(As featured in Montecito Journal- December 16, 2016- January 5, 2017)

Written by: Richard Mineards

Montecito business executive Demetri Argyropoulos received the perfect 39th birthday present- a knighthood.

Demetri, who attended Westmont College and Harvard Business School, is founder of Avant Global, a Santa Barbara business networking company,

and during his successful career has raised tens of millions of dollars for charity, including the Unity Shoppe, CALM, United Way, Habitat for Humanity, the SB Symphony, Lotusland, and the American Hellenic Institute.

To mark his magnificent munificence, Demetri attended an investiture ceremony at New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral earlier this month where he became a cavaliere, a knight in the former royal house Order of Merit of Savoy, a rite presided over by HRH prince Emmanuel Philibert, prince of Venice, whose dynastic orders are among the oldest honors of chivalry in the world.

"Honestly, I was thinking 'Why me?'" says a self-deprecating Demetri. "There are so many more esteemed people out there, but I was feeling extremely grateful. It's such a unique honor and was so different. I feel very blessed in so many ways, but this experience was certainly one of them."



St. Patrick's recently completed a \$110-million renovation.

"It was an extraordinary experience being inside one of the most beautiful and sacred holy places in America," he adds of the ceremony at the 138-year-old cathedral, which is situated on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, a tiara's toss from Rockefeller Center.

The night before the investiture, he attended a reception with friends and officials of the esteemed 146-year-old Knickerbocker Club, whose membership has included J.P. Morgan, David Rockefeller, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

<http://avantglobal.com/press-releases/avant-globals-demetri-argyropoulos-knighted-into-the-order-of-savoy/>

7 Things That Even The Most Successful CEOs Aren't Doing

Inc.

7 unconventional things

that every good leader

needs to do to become great

(As featured in Inc.- October 6, 2016)

Written by: Chris Dessi

I'm lucky. I get to speak to some of the most inspirational leaders in the world. They share their secrets on productivity, motivation and success with me, and I get to share them with you here.

All are interesting, but some are special and leave a lasting impression. Last week I spoke with Demetri Agryopoulos, CEO of Avant Global. Demetri's profound words have been rattling inside my head all week, and I can't wait to share his wisdom with you.

When we spoke he shared 7 things that he's identified that most CEOs don't do.

1. Invest in yourself.

Demetri is thirsty for knowledge. He shared that "the theme of my life is learning." He believes that it's the job of every leader to get better and better.

Continuing that "by investing in myself I become a better leader and then I can pass on that knowledge."

So invest in yourself. Continue your education, and share that wisdom with as many people as possible.

2. Know yourself.

Demetri made a passing comment that I latched onto. He shared that while still in school he had twelve jobs/internships!

By taking on all these different jobs, he feels that he was able to determine what he was bad at. In the process defining the things that he loves.

He likened it to “dating my work.” Continuing, “while you’re in the middle of the metamorphosis of who you’re becoming, you need to have something to measure yourself against.”

Acquiring such a deep well of work experience at a young age allowed Demetri to focus on his strengths. But it also allowed him to define his weaknesses. Something many CEOs forget to do.

So know your strengths, but push to identify your weaknesses too.

3. Seek mentorship.

This is a fascinating one. Demetri spoke about many of the remarkable people who mentored him during his career. Including the Clinton family during his tenure at the Clinton Foundation.

I pushed him a bit. Arguing that many of us don’t have those types of opportunities or connections.

Demetri persisted. Sharing that “we are the company we keep and we are a product of those relationships, so it’s your job to seek out mentors.”

Continuing that to “define what you want to achieve, film the last scene of your movie, and figure out how to get there.”

I love that he pushed back on this point.

I immediately felt a connection with Demetri. He’s grounded by his Greek family origins and has deep reverence for his elders.

Coming from an Italian family, I knew that Demetri and I shared many of the same beliefs. What I also realized is that Demetri is functioning at an elite level, and I should pay close attention to what he was saying.

That’s when he offered advice to young entrepreneurs that stopped me in my tracks ...

4. Postpone gratification.

While talking to Demetri about his storied education. He graduated from Westmont College, studied at the American University, Georgetown University, and Harvard Business School.

I asked him what advice could he give to young entrepreneurs who are in college. His advice is compelling — “put off your summer vacation and wait until you’re 35.”

I chuckled and asked why? He shared “because you’ll enjoy it more. You’ll know yourself better and you’ll be able to share it with people you love and admire.”

Man, I like the way this guy’s brain works.

5. Research & replicate patterns of success.

Demetri confided that there are patterns to success. Sharing that “If you seek out those who have succeeded before you, you can replicate those patterns.”

We discussed how our culture puts older executives “out to pasture” after their tenure at the helm. We agreed that it’s a shame. Demetri acknowledged that “many CEOs don’t share their gifts because society doesn’t demand it.”

So find those who have succeeded before you, and learn from them.

6. Build trust & always follow up.

I combined these two tips from Demetri into one because I believe they stem from the same idea. Demetri believes that we should do what we say we will do.

Part of that is to follow up. He shared that “many executives don’t ever follow up, and this deteriorates trust.” I learned firsthand that this wisdom wasn’t just a platitude that Demetri shared.

Moments after we hung up, he made two introductions via email that he had offered to me while we were talking.

A person that lives and dies by his/her word is person that people want to do business with.

7. Know that we’re all dying.

While talking the conversation got a bit deeper. Demetri shared that “if you live a good long life, you may live until 90, right?” Continuing that “if you assume we’re sleeping for 30 of those years, that leaves 60 years to get things done.”

This serves as a profound reminder to leaders, entrepreneurs and CEOs. Our time here is finite.

Get to it people.

<http://www.inc.com/chris-dessi/7-things-that-even-the-most-successful-ceos-arent-doing.html>

15 Tips You Can Steal From Today's Top Networkers



Featured in Forbes – September 2014

“Networking” can often sound like a dirty word. Those who are bad at it dread it, and those who are good at it tend to banish the word to the realm of cliché. Still, when it comes to making friends and nurturing connections, we all know a few folks who excel at this dark art. To peek behind the curtain, I called up some of the most connected people I’ve encountered or been led to by my personal network —business colleagues, people I’ve interviewed in the past, or simply folks whose social graces I’ve long admired —to see what these master networkers do to make and maintain their vast personal networks. We’re way beyond “firm handshake” territory here.

Follow Up—And Give Before You Ask

“Ninety percent of success is following up. We follow up and create value for the people we just met—and do it in a tactful way—always creating value first before we ever negotiate for anything. If we ever negotiate a transaction in our favor, we’ve already created value.” – Demetri Argyropoulos, Founder and CEO of Avant Global

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/sethporges/2014/09/29/14-tips-you-can-steal-fromtodaystopnetworkers/#16fdd36f7c12>

Game Changers 2014: Demetri Argyropoulos.

Men's Fitness

Connecting you to all the right—and rich—people
 By Maggie Parker for Men's Fitness – September 2014

It really is all about who you know, and Demetri Argyropoulos is a prime example of that. As the founder and CEO of Avant Global—an advisory business, a holding company, and a venture origination business—Demetri is the ultimate networker. He knows pretty much every millionaire and billionaire in the world, and he can introduce you to them—but only if he deems it a big enough opportunity. His job is to seek out new clients and businesses to work with, build those relationships, and connect them to the right people and resources.

"I focus on creating fewer, bigger opportunities and saying no to small - and medium-sized opportunities," Demetri says, a discipline he thinks other businessmen should practice. That basically means your company needs to be the next Amazon or Facebook to be considered by Avant Global. Just take a look at his past clients: Twitter, RedBull, and Clinton Global Initiative. Pretty intimidating. At the moment, his company is in the process of selling a \$100 million-plus oil shale gasland to one of his billionaire clients, a relationship he spent years building.

So how's Demetri changing the business industry? By basically taking old - school networking and giving it a 100-million dollar makeover.

"Relationships are the most valuable resource in business, built by trust," Demetri notes. "When in the history of the world have startups been working so closely with Fortune 500 companies except for now?"

FIT FACT: *"I'm going 400 mph every day, so I start it off working out. I work out 5 to 6 times a week and I hike regularly on the off days. Fitness is the fundamental glue in my success. I regularly invite my partners and clients to come to my training sessions—or use my trainer when I am traveling."*

<http://www.mensfitness.com/life/entertainment/game-changers-2014-demetri-argyropoulos>

Looking for Financing? You Might Try Your Old Boss.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

By Liz Garone for Wall Street Journal – June 2014

*You've asked your family and friends for startup cash. You've asked lenders.
You've asked venture investors.*

How about turning to somebody who used to sign your paycheck?

A Known Quantity

They may also be able to provide support along with the cash, lending "early contracting dollars, partnerships, cornerstone client relationships and material support to a new venture," says Demetri Argyropoulos, founder and chief executive of Prima Worldwide, a business consultancy and venture-origination business based in Santa Barbara, Calif.

Entrepreneurs should take many of the same steps they would to pitch the business to a venture-capital firm, suggests Mr. Argyropoulos. They should prepare a standard business plan and other crucial information, then tailor it for the former employer, "gently showing an insider's knowledge of how they work and why an investment in this particular startup meets their business need.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/looking-for-financing-you-might-try-your-old-boss-1402456899>

Are You A Billionaire Looking To Make A Deal? This Is The Guy You Call



By Seth Porges for Forbes – January 2014

“You gotta meet Demetri while you’re in town.”

The text message had come from an entrepreneur and investor I knew. One of those guys with enviable and inexplicable links to business heroes and at least a couple household- name pop stars. So when he told me I had to meet with somebody while I was in San Francisco, well, at the very least my curiosity was piqued.

A few minutes later I get another text. This one from this Demetri character himself, giving me an address in tony Pacific Heights. I immediately hop in a cab. A bit of traffic later, I pull up to a tall residential building, guarded by a wrought-iron gate, a doorman, and an arc-shaped driveway filled with luxury automobiles.

As soon as the elevator door opened, I knew I wasn’t in the Mission anymore. Before me: A sprawling penthouse, ornately decorated with sculptures, columns, and chandeliers in a way that reminded me of a Vegas casino—or Biff’s penthouse in the dystopian timeline from Back To The Future Part II. A labyrinth of rooms seemed to go on forever, and surrounding it all was wraparound terrace that fed spectacular views of the entire city—from the Golden Gate Bridge to downtown. It was dark, but I’m pretty sure I could see Alcatraz in the distance.

I walk through the ridiculous residence, using my ears to track down the person I was to meet with. I eventually find him in a dining room, where he is chatting with a well-dressed man.

As Demetri stands up, his smile, voice, and handshake give off the gracious vibe of an old friend. “Seth, it’s a pleasure to meet you. I’m just finishing up this meeting, and will be with you shortly.”

He introduces me to the person he’s talking to. I think I recognize the man, but can’t recall from where. Only later does Demetri fill in the gaps: We’re in the home of a billionaire fashion mogul. And the guy he was meeting with? A core member of one of the country’s most famous and beloved musical families.

“He wanted my help,” Demetri says. Well played, I think.

“I connect people,” Demetri Argyropoulos, as his card reveals his full name to be, says. “I work for several dozen billionaires and companies. They call on me to introduce them to the people they need to meet.”

Oh boy, I have to write about this guy.

There’s a certain chutzpah to what Argyropoulos is doing that would raise the skeptic alert in any reasonable person. I mean, this is a man whose firm, Avant Global, touts in bold letters on its homepage that “success starts with knowing the right people.”

Quite frankly, you can’t navigate the business or media worlds for very long before running into your share of snake oil salesmen, swindlers, and would-be startup “advisors” who

promise... promise... that their irreplaceable, utterly unique relationships are valuable

beyond measure. If only... Yawn.

So when I was introduced to the concept of Demetri Argyropoulos, King of the Connectors, my defenses were up.

“Alright, let me show you what I do,” he tells me. “Who in the world are you looking to meet?”

I tell him about the startup I’m launching. “Always nice to meet people who might be able to help with that,” I tell him.

Within 48 hours, my inbox has a half-dozen intros to the sorts of boldface business names who fill this magazine. Industry gurus and gatekeepers.

“These are your new mentors,” he tells me.

"An intro from Demetri goes a long way in my book," one of them writes me back.

Wait a second:

Who is this guy?

Argyropoulos has been at this game for a long time.

"I worked for a very, very wealthy man when I was 18 or 19 in Beverly Hills who ran hundreds of millions of dollars," he says. "It was there that I realized the value of relationships and the power of trust. And that when you have trust with somebody, just how fast things happen." Today, Argyropoulos says his Avant Global business attaches its name to 16 offices in 13 different countries, though these affiliates operate with different levels of involvement from the mother ship. "These are either owned offices where we have full-time staff, or they're partnerships where they use our brand and our reputation for their suite of offerings of their own advisory businesses," he says.

His business, which began in 1999, has also shifted away from simply building relationships, to what he describes as "commercializing technologies" in companies that his firm invests in.

"My core business is taking mature technologies and marrying them with seasoned operators," he says. "We bring in strategic operators, board members and these types of relationships to really create a tipping point for that company's technology or product to be commercialized in the mainstream." Interesting. What's an example?

"Right now, we're in the process of selling a \$100 million-plus oil shale gas land to one of the billionaires we work with, from pretty much the most reputable individual name in the oil industry," Argyropoulos says. "We provided the trusted relationship that took us years to build, and we gave them \$100 to \$200 million of business at the end of the day. And that was just a phone call. So you can understand how it kind of cascades into a much bigger business."

I can. Especially when I look at his website's list of current and past corporate clients. Yeah, I've heard of them. There's Red Bull, Ericsson, Saatchi & Saatchi, Clinton Global Initiative, Twitter; plus a slew of smaller companies.

I click a tab that says "References". The very first link is a glowing letter from Kay

Koplovitz, the legendary media executive and entrepreneur who launched the USA Network. Below that, similar notes from former California Governor Gray Davis and a handful of other names that spark at least passing recognition.

Again: Who is this guy?

I ask around. Start talking to his friends and colleagues. Trying to get a sense of who I'm dealing with. Maybe he buttered them up with business connections or something, but best I can tell, he appears to be the most popular person I'd never heard of. Like the cool kid at your high school who you really want to be a jerk, but actually ends up being really nice.

"Demetri is just likable—and incredibly at ease talking to people," says Hans Sicat, president of the Philippine Stock Exchange. "He's one of the best networkers I've ever met."

"He, quite simply, has an amazing network of trusted people who can get things done," says Scott Mullen, senior managing director at Family Endowment Group and a friend of Argyropoulos.

Demetri laughs when I tell him what his friends and associates had said about him.

"That's all I've wanted to do with my life," he says. "Just build trust with the right people.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/sethporges/2014/01/21/are-you-a-billionaire-looking-to-make-a-deal-this-is-the-guy-you-call/#10500aa63436>