steve and ben, thanks so much for the opportunity to participate in the class. i am sorry that the technology wasn't better, i guess a good reminder to all of us about the vagaries of the public internet -- and these problems only become harder with wireless links.

following up on some of the things discussed, firstly please do pass my email address on to any and all students or other participants who want it.  john@ignitioncorp.com is the best one to use, and i am reasonably responsive on email unless i am out of town. i would be happy to hear from anyone, on any topic.

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to follow up on some of the questions:

**what am i looking at besides wireless?**  i am a huge believer in focus. one of the biggest reasons i see for failure of projects or companies is lack of focus. as a manager i spend a substantial amount of time worrying about focus and priorities, and trimming off things that distract us from our focus. so in our company, we are completely focused on wireless -- we think it is a huge opportunity area, we think it will have a material and positive impact on society, and it is more than enough for us to think about. if i were going to think about any other areas, it would be broadband. the opportunities to create new software and services for always-connected high-bandwidth users is very great.

**was leaving microsoft hard?**  this was very hard. microsoft is a great company with great people. and large companies like microsoft (or sun or oracle or ...) can take on really big projects and have impact on a lot of people. you can learn critical skills at a company like these, they know how to manage huge businesses that operate at high scale and that operate globally. i would certainly recommend them as places of employment to anyone. so leaving was hard, but personally i wanted to start anew and do some new things, and i found a great set of people with like desires and like values.
are we hiring?  the companies we invest in are absolutely hiring, as are many many startups. there is insatiable demand for great people -- bright people, willing to work hard, willing to take risks. there are more opportunities than there are people.  the first challenge for students is getting exposed to all the opportunities. networking as steve mentioned is important. start to cultivate your network of contacts -- reach out to people you know or have met who are in the technology industry, ask them about opportunities and who you should contact. most of the quality people in the technology industry would be happy to hear from young enthusiastic motivated students and would be happy to give them some help. don't be afraid to reach out, contact people, and sell yourself.

the second challenge is filtering all the opportunities. which are the good ones? which are not so good? i would consider two data points. first, the team -- are the people working at the company you are considering good people? do they have integrity, vision, a good culture, do they have good values, do they care about customers? if they seem like good people with the right kind of values, they are probably a good team. secondly, what does your network of contacts think about the company -- do people outside the company say the right things about it? is the company held in esteem by people outside the company? if it is a good team and people outside think so, then it is probably a good opportunity.

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besides the questions, i had also wanted to talk with your class a little about my experiences with entrepreneurship. your students have a tremendous opportunity in front of them. the amount of innovation in the technology industry continues to be huge, both technical innovation and business innovation. the number of opportunities is great, the number of new companies being formed is tremendous. it is an exciting time to be entering the industry.
it is a completely valid to enter working for a large company like a microsoft. as i mentioned above, you will learn great things at a large company. i can't say enough good about microsoft, or cisco, or intel, or other large tech companies. they are great places to learn and start your career.

that said, some may choose to go with smaller companies or even start their own. my advice on that front:

- **money is easy.** there is an average of about $500M a day entering the industry as venture money. don't worry too much about the money, and don't settle on the first venture capital offering you get. work with an investor who is going to help you in ways beyond money. whether you are starting your own company or joining a startup, this is good advice -- look for companies who have great investors helping them.

- **ideas are easy.** it is easy to sit at a whiteboard and come up with 100 ideas for businesses. there are few companies that have completely unique ideas.

- **execution is hard.** actually getting work done is hard. staying focused, having clear goals and sticking to them, doing excellent work, this is the hard part. related to this...

- **team building is hard.** finding great people is challenging. you always want to work with people who are better than you, who challenge you, who push you. if you are hiring people, you want to hire people better than yourself, people who raise the average talent level at your company, not lower it. you never want to lower your standards on people.

- **culture is hard.** you want a company with great values, focused on customers, working with integrity, building for the long run, etc. if the culture is damaged it is very hard to fix. you want to start with the right culture and enforce it all the way.

whether your students are starting their own companies or joining companies, they should keep the above points in mind, i think they will help the students evaluate opportunities.

i'd really like to be able to reach out and talk with anyone who is interested. the projects i saw were great, very inspiring. the students you have are clearly smart, motivated, hard working, and innovative. i'd love to hear from any of them.

john