Participant Case Study Ying

This case study highlights Ying's journey through the AI Blueprint Accelerator program. It details her motivations, her experience during the course, and the concrete value she obtained, particularly in applying AI strategically to her work with entrepreneurs.

1. Why Ying Joined the Programme

Ying works at a tech incubator at Queens College, primarily supporting entrepreneurs, startup founders, and small business owners through community building and personalized, on-demand assistance. Her role also involves managing the business side of the incubator, much like a startup founder herself. Her interest in AI is long-standing, having taken AI classes nearly 30 years prior during her PhD studies.

Her key motivations for joining the AI Blueprint Accelerator were:

- **Deepening Strategic AI Application:** While Ying was already using AI (primarily ChatGPT Plus) on a daily basis for learning and creating programs more efficiently, she felt her usage was often tactical. She joined the course because the instructor's approach "resonated" with her desire to "think about it more at a strategic level".
- **Finding Practical AI Use Cases for Small Businesses:** A core professional interest for Ying is "finding use cases that a small business can use, adopt and actually help them help improve either their operations or generate revenue".
- **Fulfilling a Personal Mission:** Ying is passionate about AI and has a personal goal to "motivate like a thousand people this year to use AI".
- **Appreciation for a Structured Framework:** She valued the instructor's "methodical and systemic" approach and the promise of a framework to think about AI from all perspectives.

2. Ying's Experience on the Programme

Ying described the course as "wonderful" and a rich learning environment. She particularly valued:

- **The Comprehensive Framework (AI Compass):** She found the AI Compass framework "eye-opening" and a "really good way to think about anything". She appreciated its structure for categorizing AI applications and how it helps to think about connections between different concepts and areas. The framework provided a way to "think about them, categorize them, and then you can compare them within a similar like, categories and ways to apply them".
- **Strategic and Practical Insights:** Ying liked that the course covered AI at a "high level" with a strategic framework, but also provided "very practical examples" of how AI is used by the instructor and other participants.
- **Cohort Learning and Diverse Perspectives:** The exchange of knowledge within the cohort was a highlight. Hearing how other participants, with diverse backgrounds and levels of AI experience (like one who had tested thousands of tools), were using AI was "very inspiring".
- **Course Structure and Delivery:** She found the weekly schedule, with consistent days for new lessons, Q&A sessions, and group discussions, worked well.

- **Innovative Application of Concepts:** During the course, Ying actively engaged with the AI Compass, even developing her own problem-based or challenge-based approach to query the framework and created a custom GPT to facilitate this.

3. Concrete Value Derived from the Programme

The AI Blueprint Accelerator provided Ying with tangible skills, new perspectives, and tools that she began implementing immediately:

- **Enhanced Strategic Thinking for AI:** The primary takeaway for Ying was the importance of having a personal strategy for using AI, whether for personal or professional life, to avoid overwhelm. The AI Compass framework enabled her to apply AI in a "more methodical way".
- **Adoption of New AI Techniques:** The course "definitely pointed me to the areas that I currently not paying too much attention". She began using the "deep research" feature, which she wasn't using before, to generate comprehensive reports on topics like agriculture and innovation ecosystems, finding it very effective. She also embraced the "conversational part of it," using AI for reflection and synthesizing thoughts, a technique she found "very useful" and started recommending to the immigrant entrepreneurs she coaches.
- **Development of AI-Powered Educational Tools:** Inspired by the course, Ying used AI (Claude and ChatGPT) to create entire interactive websites for teaching concepts like "purpose and tell your origin story" and finance, complete with lessons, exercises, and progress trackers.
- **Improved Workflow for Knowledge Consumption:** She started taking YouTube video summaries generated by AI and turning them into actionable item lists.
- **Personalized AI Application:** The program reinforced her understanding that AI can facilitate the "customization, personalization" of strategies, helping individuals align their actions with their unique purpose and vision.

In essence, the AI Blueprint Accelerator empowered Ying with a strategic framework and practical approaches to not only deepen her own AI use but also to more effectively guide the entrepreneurs she supports in leveraging AI for their ventures.